

FICTION

Susan Warner

The End of a Coil

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION

THE END OF A COIL.

BY

SUSAN WARNER

AUTHOR OF
"THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD."

"Well begun is half done."

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NOTE TO THE READER.

As in the case of "My Desire," the turning facts of this story are fact; even to the most romantic and unlikely detail. In this is found, I hope, my justification for making the hero in one place repeat something very like what was said by the hero of Queechy on a like occasion. I was unwilling to disturb the absolute truth of the story, so far as I had it.

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THE END OF A COIL.

CHAPTER I.

DOLLY'S ARRIVAL.

The door stands open of a handsome house in Walnut Street--the Walnut Street which belongs to the city of William Penn; and on the threshold stands a lady, with her hand up to her brows, shielding her eyes from the light. She is watching to see what will come out of a carriage just driving up to the curbstone. The carriage stops; there descends first the figure of a handsome, very comfortable-looking gentleman. Mrs. Eberstein's eyes pass over him very cursorily; she has seen him before; and there is hardly a curl on his handsome head which his wife does not know by heart. What comes next? Ah, that is she!--the figure of the expected one; and a little girl of some eleven years is helped carefully out by Mr. Eberstein, and comes up the steps to the waiting and watching lady. A delicate little thing, delicate in frame and feature alike, with a fair, childish face, framed in by loose light brown curls, and a pair of those clear, grave, wise, light hazel eyes which have the power of looking so young and so spiritually old at once. Those eyes are the first thing that Mrs. Eberstein sees, and they fascinate her already. Meanwhile kind arms are opened wide, and take the little one in.

"Come at last, darling! And do you remember your Aunt Hal? and are you half as glad to see her as she is to see you?" So Mrs. Eberstein gives her greeting, while she is drawing the child through the hall and into the parlour; gives it between kisses.

"Why, no," said her husband, who had followed. "Be reasonable, Harry. She cannot be so glad to see you as we

are to see her. She has just come from a long stage-coach journey; and she is tired, and she is hungry; and she has left a world she knows, and has come to a world she doesn't know; hey, Dolly? isn't it true? Tell your Aunt Hal to stop asking questions, and give you something to eat."

"I have come to a world I don't know," repeated the little girl by way of answer, turning her serious small face to her questioner, while Mrs. Eberstein was busily taking off coat and hat and mufflers.

"Yes, that's what I say!" returned Mr. Eberstein. "How do you like the look of it, hey?"

"I wonder who is asking questions now!" said Mrs. Eberstein. "There, darling! now you are at home."

She finished with another kiss; but, nevertheless, I think the feeling that it was a strange world she had come to, was rather prominent in Dolly. She suddenly stooped to a great Maltese cat that was lying on the hearthrug, and I am afraid the eyes were glad of an excuse to get out of sight. She touched the cat's fur tenderly and somewhat diligently.

"She won't hurt you," said her aunt. "That is Mr. Eberstein's pet. Her name is Queen Mab."

"She don't look much like a fairy," was Dolly's comment. Indeed, Queen Mab would outweigh most of her race, and was a magnificent specimen of good feeding.

"You do," thought Mrs. Eberstein. Aloud she asked: "What do you know about fairies?"

"Oh, I know they are only stories. I have read about them."

"Fairy tales, eh?"

"No, not much fairy tales," said Dolly, now rising up from the cat. "I have read about them in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"'Midsummer Night's Dream,' you midget!" exclaimed Mrs. Eberstein. "Have you read that? And everything else you could lay hands on?"

She took the child in her arms again as she spoke. Dolly gave a quiet assent.

"And they let you do just what you like at home? and read just what you like?"

Dolly smiled slightly at the obviousness of the course of action referred to; but the next minute the smile was quenched in a mist of tears, and she hid her head on Mrs. Eberstein's shoulder. Kisses and caresses of course followed, not successfully. At last Mr. Eberstein's repeated suggestion that food, in the circumstances, would be very much in place, was acted upon. Supper was served in the next room, which did duty for a dining-room; and the little family gathered round a bountifully spread table. There were only those three; and, naturally, the attention of the two elder was very much concentrated upon the third new member of the party; although Mr. Eberstein was hungry and proved it. The more Mrs. Eberstein studied her new acquisition, however, the more incitement to study she found.

Dolly was not like most children; one could see that immediately. Faces as pretty, and more pretty, could easily be found; the charm was not in mere flesh and blood, form or colour. Other children's faces are often innocent too, and free from the shadow of life's burdens, as this was. Nevertheless, it is not often, it is very rarely, that one sees the mingling of childish simplicity with that thoughtful, wise, spiritual look into life, which met one in Dolly's serious hazel orbs; not often that sweetness and character speak so early in the lines of the lips; utterly childish in their soft, free mobility, and yet revealing continually a trait of thoughtfulness or of strength, along with the happy play of an unqualified tender disposition. "You are lovely! you are lovely!" was Mrs. Eberstein's inner cry; and she had to guard herself that the thought did not come to too open expression. There was a delicate air of refinement also about the child, quite in keeping with all the rest of her; a neat and noiseless handling of knife and fork, cup and saucer; and while Dolly was evidently hungry as well as her uncle, she took what was given to her in a thoroughly high-bred way; that is, she made neither too much nor too little of it.

Doubtless all the while she was using her power of observation, as Mrs. Eberstein was using hers, though the fact was not obtruded; for Dolly had heart wants quite as urgent as body wants. What she saw was reassuring. With Mr. Eberstein she had already been several hours in company, having travelled with him from New York. She was convinced of his genial kindness and steadfast honesty; all the lines of his handsome face, and every movement of his somewhat ease-loving person, were in harmony with that impression. Mrs. Eberstein was a fit mate for her husband. If Dolly had watched her a little anxiously at first, on account of her livelier manner, she soon made out to her satisfaction

that nothing but kindness, large and bounteous, lodged behind her aunt's face, and gave its character to her aunt's manner. She knew those lively eyes were studying her; she knew just as well that nothing but good would come of the study.

The meal over, Mrs. Eberstein took her niece upstairs to make her acquainted with her new quarters. It was a little room off the hall which had been destined for Dolly, opening out of her aunt's own; and it had been fitted up with careful affection. A small bedstead and dressing-table of walnut wood, a little chest of drawers, a little wardrobe; it was a wonder how so much could have been got in, but there was room for all. And then there were red curtains and carpet, and on the white spread a dainty little eider-down silk quilt; and on the dressing-table and chest of drawers pretty toilet napkins and pincushion. It was a cosy little apartment as ever eleven years old need delight in. Dolly forthwith hung up her hat and coat in the wardrobe; took brush and comb out of her travelling bag, and with somewhat elaborate care made her hair smooth; as smooth, that is, as a loose confusion of curly locks allowed; then signified that she was ready to go downstairs again. If Mrs. Eberstein had expected some remark upon her work, she was disappointed.

In the drawing-room, she drew the child to sit down upon her knee.

"Well, Dolly, what do you think you are going to do in Philadelphia?"

"Go to school--they say."

"Who says so?"

"Father says so, and mother."

"What do you think they want you to go to school for?"

"I suppose that I may become like other people."

Mr. Eberstein burst out into a laugh. His wife's eyes went over to him adjuringly.

"Are you not like other people now, Dolly?"

The child's sweet, thoughtful brown eyes were lifted to hers frankly, as she answered, "I don't know, ma'am."

"Then why do you say that? or why do they say it?"

"I don't know," said Dolly again. "I think they think so."

"I daresay they do," said Mrs. Eberstein; "but if you were mine, I would rather have you unlike other people."

"Why, Aunt Harry?"

"Yes," said Mr. Eberstein; "now you'll have to go on and tell." And Dolly's eyes indeed looked expectant.

"I think I like you best just as you are."

Dolly's face curled all up into a smile at this; brow and eyes and cheeks and lips all spoke her sense of amusement; and stooping forward a little at the same time, she laid a loving kiss upon her aunt's mouth, who was unspeakably delighted with this expression of confidence. But then she repeated gravely--

"I think they want me changed."

"And pray, what are you going to do, with that purpose in view?"

"I don't know. I am going to study, and learn things; a great many things."

"I don't believe you are particularly ignorant for eleven years old."

"Oh, I do not know anything!"

"Can you write a nice hand?"

Dolly's face wrinkled up again with a sense of the comical. She gave an unhesitating affirmative answer.

"And you have read Shakespeare. What else, Dolly?"

"Plutarch."

"Plutarch's Lives?" said Mrs. Eberstein, while her husband again laughed out aloud. "Hush, Edward. Is it Plutarch's Lives, my dear, that you mean? Caesar, and Alexander, and Pompey?"

Dolly nodded. "And all the rest of them. I like them very much."

"But what is your favourite book?"

"That!" said Dolly.

"I have got a whole little bookcase upstairs full of the books I used to read when I was a little girl. We will look into it to-morrow, and see what we can find. Plutarch's Lives is not there."

"Oh, I do not want that," said Dolly, her eyes brightening. "I have read it so much, I know it all."

"Come here," said Mr. Eberstein; "your aunt has had you long enough; come here, Dolly, and talk to me. Tell me which of those old fellows you think was the best fellow?"

"Of Plutarch's Lives?" said Dolly, accepting a position upon Mr. Eberstein's knee now.

"Yes; the men that Plutarch's Lives tell about. Whom do you like best?"

Dolly pondered, and then averred that she liked one for one thing and another for another. There ensued a lively discussion between her and Mr. Eberstein, in the course of which Dolly certainly brought to view some power of discrimination and an unbiassed original judgment; at the same time her manner retained the delicate quiet which characterised all that belonged to her. She held her own over against Mr. Eberstein, but she held it with an exquisite poise of ladylike good breeding; and Mr. Eberstein was charmed with her. The talk lasted until it was broken up by Mrs. Eberstein, who declared Dolly must go to rest.

She went up herself with the child, and attended to her little arrangements; helped her undress; and when Dolly was fairly in bed, stood still looking at the bright little head on the pillow, thinking that the brown eyes were very wide open for the circumstances.

"Are you very tired, darling?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I guess not very."

"Sleepy?"

"No, I am not sleepy yet. I am wide awake."

"Do you ever lie awake, after you have gone to bed?"

"Not often. Sometimes."

"What makes you do it?"

"I don't know. I get thinking sometimes."

"About what can such a midget as you get thinking?"

Dolly's face wrinkled up a little in amusement at this question. "I see a great many things to think about," she answered.

"It's too soon for you to begin that," said Mrs. Eberstein, shaking her head. Then she dropped down on her knees by the bedside, so as to bring her face nearer the child's.

"Dolly, have you said your prayers?" she asked softly.

The brown eyes seemed to lift their lids a little wider at that. "What do you mean, Aunt Harry?" she replied.

"Do you never pray to the Lord Jesus before you go to sleep?"

"I don't do it ever. I don't know anything about it."

The thrill that went over Mrs. Eberstein at this happily the little one did not know. She went on very quietly in manner.

"Don't you know what prayer is?"

"It is what people do in church, isn't it?"

"What is it that people do in church?"

"I do not know," said Dolly. "I never thought about it."

"It is what you do whenever you ask your father or mother for anything. Only that is prayer to your father or mother. This I mean is prayer to God."

"We don't call it prayer, asking them anything," said Dolly.

"No, we do not call it so. But it is really the same thing. We call it prayer, when we speak to God."

"Why should I speak to God, Aunt Harry? I don't know how."

"Why He is our Father in heaven, Dolly. Wouldn't it be a strange thing if children never spoke to their father?"

"But they can't, if they don't know him," said Dolly.

Here followed a strange thing, which no doubt had mighty after-effects. Mrs. Eberstein, who was already pretty well excited over the conversation, at these words broke down, burst into tears, and hid her face in the bedclothes. Dolly looked on in wondering awe, and an instant apprehension that the question here was about something real. Presently she put out her hand and touched caressingly Mrs. Eberstein's hair, moved both by pity and curiosity to put an end to the tears and have the talk begin again. Mrs. Eberstein lifted her face, seized the little hand and kissed it.

"You see, darling," she said, "I want you to be God's own child."

"How can I?"

"If you will trust Jesus and obey Him. All who belong to Him are God's dear children; and He loves them, and the Lord Jesus loves them, and He takes care of them and teaches them, and makes them fit to be with Him and serve Him in glory by and by."

"But I don't know about Jesus," said Dolly again.

"Haven't you got a Bible?"

"No."

"Never read it?"

"No."

"Never went to Sunday School?"

"No, ma'am."

"Little Dolly, I am very glad you came to Philadelphia."

"Why, Aunt Harry?"

"Because I love you so much!" exclaimed Mrs. Eberstein, kissing the child's sweet mouth. "Why, Dolly, Jesus is the best, best friend we have got; nobody loves us so much in the whole world; He gave his life for us. And, then, He is the King of glory. He is everything that is loving, and true, and great, and good; 'the chiefest among ten thousand.'"

"What did He give His life for?" said Dolly, whose eyes were growing more and more intent.

"To save our lives, dear."

"From what?"

"Why, Dolly, you and I, and everybody, have broken God's beautiful law. The punishment for that is death; not merely the death of the body, but everlasting separation from God and His love and His favour; that is death; living death. To save us from that, Jesus died Himself; He paid our debt; He died instead of us."

"Then is He dead?" said Dolly awefully.

"He was dead; but He rose again, and now He lives, King over all. He was God as well as man, so the grave could not hold Him. But He paid our debt, darling."

"You said, death was everlasting separation from God and good," said Dolly very solemnly.

"For us, it would have been."

"But He did not die that way?"

"He could not, for He is the glorious Son of God. He only tasted death for us; that we might not drink the bitter cup to eternity."

"Aunt Harry," said Dolly, "is all that true?"

"Certainly."

"When did He do that?"

"It is almost nineteen hundred years ago. And since then, if any one trusts His word and is willing to be His servant, Jesus loves him, and keeps him, and saves him, and makes him blessed for ever."

"But why did He do that? what made Him?"

"His great love for us."

"Us?" Dolly repeated.

"Yes. You and me, and everybody. He just came to save that which was lost."

"I don't see how He can love me," said Dolly slowly. "Why, I am a stranger to Him, Aunt Harry."

"Ah, you are no stranger! Oh yes, Dolly, He loves you dearly; and He knows all about you."

Dolly considered the matter a little, and also considered her aunt, whose lips were quivering and whose eyes were dropping tears. With a very serious face Dolly considered the matter: and came to a conclusion with promptitude unusual in this one subject of all the world. She half rose up in her bed.

"Then I love Him," she said. "I will love Him, too, Aunt Harry."

"Will you, my darling?"

"But I do not know how to be His servant."

"Jesus will teach you Himself, if you ask Him."

"How will He teach me?"

"He will make you understand His word, and let you know what pleases Him. He says, 'If ye love me, keep My commandments.'"

"His commandments are in the Bible, aren't they?"

"Certainly. You say you have not got a Bible?"

"No."

"Then we will see about that to-morrow, the first thing we do. You shall have a Bible, and that will tell you about His commandments."

"Aunt Harry, I would like Him to know to-night that I love Him."

"Then tell Him so, dear."

"Can I?"

"To be sure you can. Why not?"

"I do not know how."

"Tell Him, Dolly, just as if the Lord Jesus were here present and you could see Him. He is here, only you do not see Him; that is all the difference Tell Him, Dolly, just as you would tell me; only remember that you are speaking to the King. He would like to hear you say that."

"I ought to kneel down when I speak to Him, oughtn't I? People do in church."

"It is proper, when we can, to take a position of respect when we speak to the King; don't you think so?"

Dolly shuffled herself up upon her knees in the bed, not regarding much that Mrs. Eberstein threw a shawl round her shoulders; and waited a minute or two, looking intensely serious and considering. Then laying her hands involuntarily together, but with her eyes open, she spoke.

"O Lord Jesus,--Aunt Harry says you are here though I cannot see you. If you are here, you can see, and you know that I love you; and I will be your servant. I never knew about you before, or I would have done it before. Now I do. Please to teach me, for I do not know anything, that I may do everything that pleases you. I will not do anything that don't please you. Amen."

Dolly waited a moment, then turned and put her arms round her aunt's neck and kissed her. "Thank you!"--she said earnestly; and then lay down and arranged herself to sleep.

Mrs. Eberstein went downstairs and astonished her husband by a burst of hysterical weeping. He made anxious enquiries; and at last received an account of the last half-hour.

"But, oh, Edward, what do you think?" she concluded. "Did you ever hear anything like that in your life? Do you think it can be genuine?"

"Genuine what?" demanded her husband.

"Why, I mean, can it be true religious conversion? This child knows next to nothing; just that Jesus died out of love to her, to save her,--nothing more."

"And she has given her love back. Very logical and reasonable; and ought not to be so uncommon."

"But it is uncommon, Edward. At least, people generally make a longer business of it."

"In which they do not show their wisdom."

"No; but they do it. Edward, can it be that this child is so suddenly a Christian? Will it stand?"

"Only time can show that. But Harry, all the cases,--almost all the cases reported in the New Testament are cases of sudden yielding. Just look at it. John and Andrew took but a couple of hours or so to make up their minds. Nathanael did not apparently take more than two minutes after he saw Christ. Lydia became a Christian at her first hearing the good news; the eunuch made up his mind as quick. Why should not little Dolly? The trouble is caused only by people's obstinate resistance."

"Then you think it may be true work?"

"Of course I think so. This child is not an ordinary child, there is that to be said."

"No," said Mrs. Eberstein thoughtfully. "Is she not peculiar? She is such a child; and yet there is such a wise, deep look in her brown eyes. What pretty eyes they are! There is the oddest mixture of old and young in her I ever saw. She is going to be lovely, Edward!"

"I think she is lovely now."

"Oh yes! but I mean, when she grows up. She will be very lovely, with those spiritual eyes and that loose curly brown hair; if only she can be kept as she is now."

"My dear, she cannot be that!"

"Oh, you know what I mean, Edward. If she can be kept unspoiled; untainted; unsophisticated; with that sort of mixture of wisdom and simplicity which she has now. I wish we need not send her to school."

"We have no choice about that. And the Lord can keep His own. Let us ask Him."

They knelt and did so; with some warm tears on Mrs. Eberstein's part, and great and warm earnestness in them both.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTINA AND HER MOTHER.

Mrs. Eberstein watched during the next few days, to see, if she could, whether the sudden resolve taking on Dolly's part that first evening "meant anything," as she expressed it, or not. She remained in doubt. Dolly was thoughtful certainly, and sweet certainly; "but that don't tell," Mrs. Eberstein remarked; "it is her characteristic." It was equally certain that she had attached herself with a trustful, clinging affection to the new friends whose house and hearts had received her. Dolly's confidence was given to them fully and heartily from that very first day; and they saw that it was.

Nearly a week passed before the school-term began. Meanwhile Dolly was taken about, in walks and drives, to see all that her friends thought would interest her. Everything interested her, they found; and upon every subject presented to her, her little head went to work; the result of which was the putting of a question now and then, which afforded her guardians, perhaps, as much entertainment as the ground of the question had given Dolly. These questions, however, were called forth most of all by the subject which had seized hold of Dolly's mind with such force that first evening. Mrs. Eberstein had not forgotten her promise about the Bible. One of the first expeditions undertaken the next day had been in search of one; successful, in the judgment of both Dolly and her aunt; and since then the book was very often to be seen in Dolly's hands.

"What are you reading there, Dolly?" Mr. Eberstein asked, coming in one evening just before dinner. Dolly was on a low seat at the corner of the fireplace, reading by the shine of a fire of Liverpool coal, which threw warm lights all over the little figure. She looked up and said it was her Bible she was studying.

"You will put out your eyes."

"Oh no, Uncle Edward; the print is so good, and the fire makes such a nice blaze, I can see perfectly."

"And pray, what are you looking for, or what are you finding, in that book, little one?"

"I am looking for a great deal,--and I am finding a little," was Dolly's reply.

"Different with me," said Mr. Eberstein with a short laugh. "I generally find more in the Bible than I look for."

"What do you look for in it?" said Dolly, raising her head which had gone down to the reading.

Mr. Eberstein laughed again.

"Truly, Dolly," he said, "you have hit me there! I believe I often open the Bible without looking for anything in particular."

"Perhaps that makes the difference," said Dolly, letting her eyes fall again to her page.

"Perhaps it does; but, Dolly, I should very much like to know what you are looking for?"

"I am looking to find out the will of God, Uncle Edward."

"Come here, my pet," said Mr. Eberstein, coaxing the little girl into his arms and setting her on his knee. "What do you want to find out the will of God for? what about?"

"About me."

"What do you want to know the will of God about you for?"

"I want to do it, Uncle Edward."

"There couldn't be a better reason. Jesus says, 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.' Do you find what you seek?"

"I find some," said Dolly.

"Where were you reading just now?"

"About Abraham."

"Abraham! What do you find in Abraham's life, may I ask, that tells you the will of God about Dolly Copley? You are not called upon to leave your country and go out into a strange land."

"No; not that. But God said to Abraham, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' And it puzzles me."

"What puzzles you?"

"I don't see how I can 'walk before Him.'"

"Dolly,--the Lord is here, here where we are, wherever we are."

"Yes. I know that."

"Then, if you know that and remember it, and do everything you do in His presence, and feeling that it is in His presence, you will be walking before Him; don't you see? Just as if Jesus were here again upon earth, and you were always with Him; only you do not see Him now. He sees you."

"And 'be perfect'?" said Dolly questioningly.

"Yes. That means, I think, don't try to serve two masters. If you love God with all your heart, and give Him your whole life and service,--not a part of it,--that is what the word to Abraham means, I think. A servant of God is a perfect servant, if he does all the will of God that he knows, and as fast as he knows it. But you cannot do that of yourself, little Dolly."

"Why cannot I, if I want to?"

"Why, because there come temptations, and there come difficulties; and you will want to do something you like, and not what God likes; and you will do it too, unless the Lord Jesus keeps fast hold of you and saves you from making such a mistake. Only He can."

"Can He?"

"Certainly He can."

"Will He?"

"If you want Him to do it, and trust Him to do it, He will. He will just do all that you trust Him to do."

Dolly pondered. "Will He do that because He loves me?" she asked.

"Just for that reason, Dolly."

"Then He will do it," said Dolly confidently; "for I will trust Him. Won't you show me where he says that, Uncle Edward?"

Mr. Eberstein told Dolly to find Matt. xxi. 21. Dolly read eagerly--

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Dolly read to herself, then looked up, eager and confident, for the next reference.

"Turn to John xv. 7."

Again Dolly found and read, in silence--

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"What next, Uncle Edward?"

"Isn't that promise enough?"

"Yes; but I thought you had more."

"There is a great deal more. Look out Thessalonians v. 23, 24."

Dolly read, slowly, aloud now--

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.' That is beautiful, Uncle Edward!"

"Do you want another? Find Jude, and read the 24th and 25th verses."

With some trouble Dolly found it.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Dolly slipped off Mr. Eberstein's knee and retook her old place by the fire; where she sat turning from one passage to another of those she had been reading. Mr. Eberstein watched her, how the ribbon markers of the Bible were carefully laid in two of the places, and a couple of neat slips of paper prepared for the others.

"What have you been doing to-day, Dolly?" he asked at length.

"We went to see the water works."

"Oh, you did! And what did you think of the water works?"

"We went up to the top and walked about. Do the people in Philadelphia want so much water as all that?"

"They want a great deal more. The Fairmount works give only enough for part of the city."

"That is taking a great deal of trouble to get water."

"It would be worse trouble to do without it."

"But why don't people all live in the country, as we do at home? then they would have water for nothing."

"Humph! That would answer, Dolly, if people were contented with water; they all want wine. I mean, my child, that

most people are not satisfied with simple doings; and for anything more they must have money; and they can make money faster in cities. Therefore they build cities."

"Is *that* what they build cities for?" said Dolly.

"Largely. Not altogether. A great many things can be better done where people are congregated together; it is for the convenience of trade and business, in many kinds and in many ways. What have you been doing since you came home from the water works?"

"O Uncle Edward!" said Dolly, suddenly rising now and coming to him, "Aunt Harry has opened for me her old bookcase!"

"What old bookcase? I didn't know she had an old bookcase."

"Oh yes; the one where she keeps the books she had when she was as old as I am."

"And as young, eh? Well, what is in that bookcase? is it a great find?"

"O Uncle Edward, there is a great deal in it! It is wonderful. Books I never saw, and they look so interesting!"

"What, for instance? Something to rival Plutarch's Lives?"

"I don't know," said Dolly; "you know I have not read them yet. There is 'Sandford and Merton;' I was reading in that, and I like it very much; and the 'Looking Glass' is another; and 'Rosamond' I am sure is interesting. Oh there is a whole load of them."

"Well I am glad of it," said Mr. Eberstein. "That is the right sort of stuff for your busy little brain; will not weigh too heavy. Now I suppose you will be reading all the time you are in the house."

"Aunt Harry has begun to teach me to knit."

"Very good," said Mr. Eberstein. "I believe in knitting too. That's safe."

They went to dinner, and after dinner there was a further knitting lesson, in which Dolly seemed absorbed; nevertheless, before the evening was over she brought up a very different subject again.

"Aunt Harry," she began, in the midst of an arduous effort to get the loops of wool on her needles in the right relative condition,--"does mother know about the Bible?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Eberstein, with a glance at her husband, "she knows about it, something."

"Then why did she never tell me anything about it?"

Mrs. Eberstein hesitated.

"I suppose, Dolly, her thoughts were fuller of other things."

"But how *could* they be?" said the little one, laying her hands with their knitting work in her lap, and looking up.

Her aunt did not answer.

"How could her thoughts be fuller of other things, if she knows the Bible?" Dolly urged.

"I don't think she really knows much of what is in the Bible," Mrs. Eberstein said. "She has never read it much."

"I don't think she knows about Jesus," Dolly went on gravely; "for she never told me; and she would if she had known, I think. Aunt Harriet, I think *I* ought to tell *her* now."

"What would you tell her, my darling?"

"Oh, I will tell her that I know Him and love Him; and I will tell her I have got a Bible, and some of the things I have found in it. I will ask her to get one too, and read it. I don't believe she knows."

"The reason why a great many people do not know, Dolly, is, as your Aunt Harry says, that they are so much taken up with other things."

"Then I think one ought to take care not to be too much taken up with other things," said Dolly very seriously.

"But you have got to be taken up with other things," Mr. Eberstein went on. "Here you are going to school in a few days; then your head will be full of English and French, and your hands full of piano keys and harp strings, from morning till night. How are you going to do?"

Dolly looked at the speaker, came and placed herself on his knee again, and laid a hand on his shoulder; eyeing him steadily.

"Ought I not to go to school?"

"Must!--else you cannot be the right sort of a woman, and do the right sort of work."

"How then, Uncle Edward? what shall I do?"

"I'll tell you one thing, Dolly. Don't study and practise to get ahead of somebody else; but to please the King!"

"The King--that is Jesus?"

"Certainly."

Dolly nodded, in full agreement with the rule of action as thus stated; presently brought forward another idea.

"Will He care? Would it please Him to have me play on the piano, or learn French and arithmetic?"

"Dolly, the more you know, and the better you know it, the better servant you can be; you will have the more to use for Jesus."

"Can I use such things for Him? How?"

"Many ways. He will show you how. Do you think an ignorant woman could do as much in the world as an elegant, well-informed, accomplished woman?"

Dolly thought over this question, nodded as one who had come to an understanding of it, and went back to her knitting.

"What ever will become of that child," said Mrs. Eberstein an hour or two later, when she and her husband were alone. "I am full of anxiety about her."

"Then you are taking upon you the part of Providence."

"No, but, Edward, Dolly will have a history."

"So have we all," Mr. Eberstein responded very unresponsively.

"But she will not have a common history. Do you see how open she is to receive impressions, and how fast they stay once they are made?"

"I see the first quality. I never saw a creature quicker to take impressions or to welcome affections. Whether they will prove as lasting as they are sudden,--that we have no means of knowing at present."

"I think they will."

"That's a woman's conclusion, founded on her wishes."

"It is a man's conclusion too; for you think the same thing, Edward."

"Don't prove anything, Harry."

"Yes, it does. When two people come to the same independent view of something, it is fair to suppose there are grounds for it."

"I hope so. Time will show."

"But, Edward, with this extremely sensitive and affectionate nature, how important it is that Dolly should have only the right surroundings, and see only the right sort of people."

"Just so. And so she is going out into the world of a large school; where she will meet all sorts of people and be subjected to all sorts of influences; and you cannot shield her."

"I wish I could keep her at home, and have her taught here! I wish I could!"

"Playing Providence again. We all like to do it."

"No, but, Edward, just look at her," said Mrs. Eberstein with her eyes full of tears.

"I do," said Mr. Eberstein. "I've got eyes. But you will have to trust her, Harry."

"Now she will go, I have no doubt, and write that letter to her mother. I wonder if Sally will get scared, and take her away from us?"

"Why, Hal," said her husband, "your self-will is getting up very strong to-night! What if? Dolly's future does not depend upon us; though we will do what we can for it."

What they did then, was to pray about it again; for these people believed in prayer.

The next day Mrs. Eberstein had invited an acquaintance to come to dinner. This acquaintance had a daughter, also about to enter Mrs. Delancy's school; and Mrs. Eberstein's object was to let the two girls become a little known to each other, so that Dolly in the new world she was about to enter might not feel everything utterly strange. Mrs. Thayer belonged to a good New York family; and it likewise suited her purposes to have her daughter received in so unexceptionable a house as Mrs. Eberstein's, albeit the young lady was not without other Philadelphia friends. So the party fitted together very harmoniously. Mrs. Thayer, in spite of her good connections, was no more than a commonplace personage. Christina, her daughter, on the other hand, showed tokens of becoming a great beauty. A little older than Dolly, of larger build and more flesh and blood development generally, and with one of those peach-blossom complexions which for fairness and delicacy almost rival the flower. Her hair was pretty, her features also pretty, her expression placid. Mrs. Eberstein was much struck.

"They are just about of an age," remarked Mrs. Thayer. "I suppose they will study the same things. Everybody studies the same things. Well, I hope you'll be friends and not rivals, my dears."

"Dolly will not be rivals with anybody," returned Dolly's aunt.

"She don't look very strong. I should think it would not do for her to study too hard," said the other lady. "Oh, rivalry is necessary, you know, to bring out the spirit of boys and girls and make them work. It may be friendly rivalry; but if they were not rivals they would not be anything; might as well not be school girls, or school boys. They would not do any work but what they liked, and we know what that would amount to. I don't know about beating learning into boys; some people say that is the way; but with girls you can't take that way; and all you have to fall back upon is emulation."

"Very few young people will study for the love of it," Mrs. Eberstein so far assented.

"They might, I believe, if the right way was taken," Mr. Eberstein remarked.

"Emulation will do it, if a girl has any spirit," said Mrs. Thayer.

"What sort of spirit?"

"What sort of spirit! Why, the spirit not to let themselves be outdone; to stand as high as anybody, and higher; be No. 1, and carry off the first honours. A spirited girl don't like to be No. 2. Christina will never be No. 2."

"Is it quite certain that such a spirit is the one to be cultivated?"

"It makes them study,"--said Mrs. Thayer, looking at her questioner to see what he meant.

"What do you think the Bible means, when it tells us not to seek for honour?"

"Not to seek for honour?" repeated the lady.

"Not the honour that comes from man."

"I didn't know it forbade it. I never heard that it was forbidden. Why, Mr. Eberstein, it is *natural* to wish for honour. Everybody wishes for it."

"So they do," Mr. Eberstein assented. "I might say, so *we* do."

"It is natural," repeated the lady.

"Its being natural does not prove it to be right."

"Why, Mr. Eberstein, if it is *natural*, we cannot help it."

"How then does trying to be No. 1 agree with the love that 'seeketh not her own?'"

Dolly was listening earnestly, Mr. Eberstein saw. Mrs. Thayer hesitated, in some inward disgust.

"Do you take that literally?" she said then. "How can you take it literally? You cannot."

"But Christ pleased not Himself."

"Well, but He was not like us."

"We are bidden to be like him, though."

"Oh, as far as we can. But you cannot press those words literally, Mr. Eberstein."

"As far as we can? I *must* press them, for the Bible does. I ask no more, and the Lord demands no more, than that we be like our Master *as far as we can*. And He 'pleased not himself,' and 'received not honour from men.'"

"If you were to preach such doctrine in schools, I am afraid you would have very bad recitations."

"Well!" said Mr. Eberstein. "Better bad recitations than bad hearts. Though really there is no necessary connection between my premises and your conclusion. The Bible reckons 'emulations,' Mrs. Thayer, in the list of the worst things human nature knows, and does."

"Then you would have a set of dunces. I should just like to be told, Mr. Eberstein, how on that principle you would get young people to study. In the case of girls you cannot do it by beating; nor in the case of boys, after they have got beyond being little boys. Then emulation comes in, and they work like beavers to get the start of one another. And so we have honours, and prizes, and distinctions. Take all that away, and how would you do, Mr. Eberstein?"

Mr. Eberstein was looking fondly into a pair of young eyes that were fixedly gazing at him. So looking, he spoke,

"There is another sort of '*Well done!*' which I would like my Dolly and Miss Christina to try for. If they are in earnest in trying for that, they will study!" said Mr. Eberstein.

Mrs. Thayer thought, apparently, that it was no use talking on the subject with a visionary man; and she turned to something else. The party left the dinner-table, and Dolly took her new acquaintance upstairs to show her the treasure contained in Mrs. Eberstein's old bookcase.

"Mr. Eberstein is rather a strange man, isn't he?" said Miss Christina on the way.

"No," said Dolly. "I don't think he is. What makes you say so?"

"I never heard any one talk like that before."

"Perhaps," said Dolly, stopping short on the landing place and looking at her companion. Then she seemed to change her manner of attack. "Who do you want to please most?" she said.

"With my studies? Why, mamma, of course."

"I would rather please the Lord Jesus," said Dolly.

"But I was talking about *school work*," retorted the other. "You don't suppose *He* cares about our lessons?"

"I guess He does," said Dolly. They were still standing on the landing place, looking into each other's eyes.

"But that's impossible. Think!--French lessons, and English lessons, and music and dancing, and all of it. That couldn't be, you know."

"Do you love Jesus?" said Dolly.

"Love him? I do not know," said Christina colouring. "I am a member of the church, if that is what you mean."

Dolly began slowly to go up the remaining stairs. "I think we ought to study to please Him," she said.

"I don't see how it should please him," said the other a little out of humour. "I don't see how He should care about such little things."

"Why not?" said Dolly. "If your mother cares, and my mother cares. Jesus loves us better than they do, and I guess He cares more than they do."

Christina was silenced now, as her mother had been, and followed Dolly thinking there were a *pair* of uncomfortably strange people in the house. The next minute Dolly was not strange at all, but as much a child as any of her fellows. She had unlocked the precious bookcase, and with the zeal of a connoisseur and the glee of a discoverer she was enlarging upon the treasures therein stowed away.

"Here is 'Henry Milner,'" she said, taking down three little red volumes. "Have you read that? Oh, it is delightful! I like it almost best of all. But I have not had time to read much yet. Here is 'Harry and Lucy,' and 'Rosamond,' and 'Frank.' I have just looked at them. And 'Sandford and Merton.' do you know 'Sandford and Merton'? I have just read that."

"There are the 'Arabian Nights,'" said Christina.

"Is that good? I haven't read much yet. I don't know almost any of them."

"'The Looking-Glass'"--Christina went on--"'Pity's Gift'--'Father's Tales.'"

"Those are beautiful," Dolly put in. "I read one, about 'Grandfather's old arm-chair.' Oh, it's *very* interesting."

"'Elements of Morality'"--Christina read further on the back of a brown book.

"That don't sound good, but I guess it *is* good," said Dolly. "I just peeped in, and 'Evenings at Home' looks pretty. Here is 'Robinson Crusoe,' and 'Northern Regions;' I want to read that very much. I guess it's delightful."

"Have you ever been to school before?" said Christina. The books had a faint interest for her.

"No," said Dolly.

"Nor have I; but I know somebody who has been at Mrs. Delancy's, and she says there is one lovely thing at that school. Every month they go somewhere."

"They--go--somewhere," Dolly echoed the words. "Who go?"

"Everybody; teachers and scholars and all. There is a holiday; and Mrs. Delancy takes them all to see something. One time it was a rope walk, I think; and another time it was a paper-mill; and sometimes it's a picture-gallery. It's something very interesting."

"I suppose we are not *obliged* to go, are we, if we don't want to?"

"Oh, but we *do* want to. I do."

"I would just as lief be at home with my Aunt Harry," said Dolly, looking lovingly at the book-case. But Christina turned away from it.

"They dress a great deal at this school," she said. "Does your mother dress you a great deal?"

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I don't know what you mean."

"Well, what's your school dress? what is it made of?"

"My school dress for every day! It is grey poplin. It is not new."

"Poplin will do, I suppose," said Christina. "But some of the girls wear silk; old silk dresses, you know, but really handsome still, and very stylish."

"What do you mean by 'stylish'?" said Dolly.

"Why don't you know what 'stylish' means?"

"No."

Christina looked doubtfully at her new little companion. Where could Dolly have come from, and what sort of people could she belong to, who did not know *that*? The truth was, that Dolly being an only child and living at home with her father and mother, had led a very childish life up to this time; and her mother, owing to some invalidism, had lately been withdrawn from the gay world and its doings. So, though the thing was greatly upon her mother's heart, the word had never made itself familiar to Dolly's ear. Christina was reassured, however, by observing that the little girl's dress was quite what it ought to be, and certainly bespoke her as belonging to people who "knew what was what." So the practice was all right, and Dolly needed only instruction in the theory.

"Stylish,"--she repeated. "It means--It is very hard to tell you what it means. Don't you know? 'Stylish' means that things have an air that belongs to the right kind of thing, and only what you see in a certain sort of people. It is the way things look when people know how."

"Know how, what?" inquired Dolly.

"Know how things ought to be; how they ought to be worn, and how they ought to be done."

"Then everybody ought to be stylish," said Dolly.

"Yes, but you cannot, my dear, unless you happen to know how."

"But I should think one could always know how things ought to be," Dolly went on. "The Bible tells."

"The Bible!" echoed Christina.

"Yes."

"The Bible tell one how to be stylish!"

"The Bible tells how things ought to be."

"Why, no, it don't, child! the Bible don't tell you what sort of a hat to put on."

"Yes, it does, Christina. The Bible says, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.' I can show you the words."

"Oh, that is something quite different. That has nothing to do with being stylish. How shall I make you understand? If your cravat wasn't tied in a nice bow there, it wouldn't be stylish."

"Well," returned Dolly, "it wouldn't be to the glory of God either."

"What has that to do with it?"

"I think it would be wrong for a Christian to be anything but nice."

"Oh, it isn't being *nice*!" said Christina. "Your dress wouldn't be stylish if it hadn't those flounces."

"And is it now?"

"Yes--I think it is. I should say, your mother knows what is what. It isn't very easy to be stylish if you are poor; but

I've seen people do it, though."

"I don't think I understand, quite," said Dolly. "But when I am old enough to dress myself,--to choose my own dresses, I mean, I shall dress to please Jesus, Christina."

"You can't," said Christina. "I never heard of such a thing. It's making religion little, I think, to talk so."

"I think, if religion isn't little, it'll *do* so," answered Dolly. Whereby each kept her own opinion; notwithstanding which, at the end of the afternoon they separated, mutually pleased each with her new acquaintance.

CHAPTER III.

THE MARINE DICTIONARY.

As the weeks of the first school term went on, the two girls drew nearer to each other. Everybody inclined towards Dolly indeed; the sweet, fresh, honest little face, with the kindly affections beaming forth from it, and the sensitive nature quick to feel pleasure or pain, and alive to fun in the midst of its seriousness, made such a quaint mingling and such a curious variety and such a lovely creature, that all sorts of characters were drawn towards her. From the head of the school down, teachers and pupils, there was hardly one whose eye did not soften and whose lips did not smile at Dolly's approach. With Christina, on the other hand, it was not just so. She was not particularly clever, not particularly emotional, not specially sociable; calm and somewhat impassive, with all her fair beauty she was overlooked in the practical "selection" which takes place in school life; so that little Dolly after all came to be Christina's best friend. Dolly never passed her over; was never unsympathetic; never seemed to know her own popularity; and Christina's slow liking grew into a real and warm affection as the passing days gave her more and more occasion. In the matter of "style," it appears, Dolly had enough to satisfy her; thanks to her mother; for Dolly herself was as unconventional in spirit and manner as a child should be. In school work proper, on the other hand, she was a pattern of diligence and faithfulness; gave her teachers no trouble; of course had the good word and good will of every one of them. Was it the working of Mr. Eberstein's rule?

The first monthly holiday after school began was spent in Fairmount Park. A few weeks later, Dolly and Christina were sitting together one day, busy with some fancy work, when one of their schoolmates came up to them.

"Guess where we are going next week!" she cried.

"Next week?" said the others, looking up.

"Next holiday--next week--next Saturday. Yes. Where do you think we are going? Just guess. Oh, you can't guess."

"I can't guess," said Dolly; "I don't know what there is to go to. The Mint? Mrs. Delancy did speak of the Mint."

"Not a bit of it! Something else has come up. Guess again."

"Something has *come up*. Then it must be something new."

"It isn't new, either. Can't a thing come to you that isn't new?"

"But you're talking riddles, Eudora," the other two said, laughing.

"Well, I'll tell you. There's a man-of-war come up the river."

"A man-of-war"--Dolly repeated.

"You know what that means, I hope, Dolly Copley?"

"I don't know. It means a soldier. The Bible says, Goliath was a man-of-war from his youth."

Dolly as she spoke looked mystified, and her words were met by a shout of laughter so loud and ringing that it

almost abashed the child. Some other girls had joined the group and were standing around, and there were many to laugh. However, Dolly was never given to false shame. She waited for more light.

"It's a *ship*, Dolly," they cried. "You dear little innocent, don't you know as much as that?"

"It's a ship; and this is a big one. It is lying out in the Delaware."

"Then why is it called a man-of-war?" said Dolly.

"Because it is a war ship. Won't it be fun! just think!--the guns, and the officers, and the midshipmen!"

"What are midshipmen?"

"I don't know!" cried another. "They are somebodies that are always on a man-of-war; and they are young too. Baby officers, I suppose."

"They *are* officers," said the first speaker.

"No, they're not. They are learning to be officers. They're at school, and their school is a man-of-war; and their teachers are the captain, and the lieutenants, and so on."

"And what are their lessons about?" said Dolly.

"I don't know. Oh, they are learning to be officers, you know. Really they are boys at school."

"Some of them are old enough," remarked another.

"Learning *what*, Eudora?" said Dolly.

"How do I know, chicken? I've never been a midshipman myself. You can ask them if you like, when we go on board. For we are going on board, girls! Hurrah! We shall drive over to the Navy Yard, and there we shall get into boats, and then we shall row--I mean be rowed--out into the stream to the ship. It's a big frigate, the 'Achilles;' and Mrs. Delancy knows the captain; and she says it's a good chance, and she will not have us lose it. Hurrah, girls! this is prime."

"What's a *frigate*?" was Dolly's next question.

"Dolly Copley, you are ridiculous! you want to understand everything."

"Don't you?"

"No! I guess I don't. I am tired enough with trying to understand a little. I'll let alone what I can. You'll know what a frigate is when you have been on board of her."

"But I think I should enjoy it a great deal more if I knew beforehand," said Dolly.

"You had best study a ship's dictionary. *I* am going to study what I shall wear."

"That you cannot tell yet," Christina remarked. "You do not know what sort of a day next Saturday, I mean, Saturday week, will be. It may be cold or"----

"It mayn't be hot," said the other. "It will be cold, cold enough. It's November. You can wear your prettiest winter things, young ladies."

A little while after, the group had broken up, and Dolly sought out one of the teachers and begged to know where she could find a "ship's dictionary."

"A ship dictionary? My dear, there is no such thing. What do you want to find out?"

"One of the girls said I could find out about ships in a ship's dictionary. We are going to see a man-of-war next week."

"Oh, and you want to study up the subject? It is a Marine Dictionary you are in quest of. Come to the library."

The library was always open to the girls for study purposes. The teacher was good-natured, and got out a big, brown square volume, and put it in Dolly's hand. Dolly had been followed by Christina; and now the two sat down together in a window recess on the floor, with the book before them. Dolly began at the beginning, and aloud.

"*Aback*."

"That is nothing we want," remarked Christina.

"Oh yes, I think it is. It is 'the situation of the sails when their surfaces are flatted against the masts by the force of the wind.' I do not understand, though. The sails are said to be 'taken aback.'-- Oh, I have heard mother say that. What could she mean? I have heard her say she was taken aback."

"I have heard people say that too," said Christina; "often. I never knew what they meant. Something disagreeable, I think."

"Well, you see," said Dolly, reading further, "it 'pushes the ship *astern*'--what's that? 'See *Backing*.' I suppose it means pushing it back. But I don't understand!" the little girl added with a sigh.

"Oh, well! we don't care about all that," said Dolly's companion. "Go on to something else. Find out about the midshipmen."

"What about the midshipmen?"

"Nothing,--only I would like to know what they are. Madeleine said they were young officers; very young; not older than some of us."

"Then why do you want to know about them?" said Dolly. "We have nothing to do with young officers. We don't know any of them."

"But we might," suggested Christina. "We shall see them, if we go on board the ship."

"I don't care about seeing them," said Dolly. "Young officers are young men, I suppose. I understand *them*; what I don't know about, is the ship. Let us go on in this book, and see what we come to. '*Abaft*--the hinder part of a ship'----"

"O Dolly!" cried Christina, "we have not time to go through everything in this way. You have not turned over one leaf yet Do get on a little."

"It is good it's a holiday," said Dolly, turning the leaf. "We have plenty of time. I like this book. '*Aboard*,--the inside of a ship.' So when we go into the ship, we go aboard. That's it."

"Go on," urged Christina. "Here's '*Admiral*.'"

"'An officer of first rank and command in the fleet.' There is a great deal here about the Admiral. I don't believe we shall see him. We'll look a little further."

Dolly presently was caught by the word "*Anchor*," and lost herself in the study of the paragraphs following, and the plate accompanying; after which she declared that she understood how a ship could be held by its anchor. Urged to go on again, she turned over more leaves, but got lost in the study of "*boats*;" then of "*cannon*;" then of the "*captain's*" office and duties; finally paused at the plate and description of a ship's deck.

"It's just the deck of a ship!" said Christina impatiently. "You will see it when we go on board the '*Achilles*.'"

"I want to understand it."

"You can't."

"Are those guns?" said Dolly, pointing to a row of pieces delineated along the side of the deck.

"Must be guns."

"Well, I should like to go on board of a ship very much," said Dolly. "There are twelve guns on that side. If there are the same on this side, that would make twenty-four. What do they want so many for, Christina, on one ship?"

"Why, to fight with, of course. To fire at other ships."

"But what do they want of *so many*? They would not want to fire twelve at once. I should think one would be enough."

"Perhaps it wouldn't. Go on, Dolly, do! let us get to something else."

It was difficult to get Dolly on. She was held fast again by the description of a naval engagement; then fell to studying the directions for the "*exercise*" of the guns; then was interested in some plates giving various orders of the line of battle. At last in due course they came to the word "*Midshipman*," which was read, or the article under it, by both girls.

"A naval cadet"--repeated Christina.

"And a cadet must be four years at sea before he can become a lieutenant; and two years midshipman besides. I should think they would be tired of it."

"But if they are going to be sailors all their lives, it's no use for them to get tired of it," said Christina.

"They come on shore sometimes, don't they?"

"I suppose so. Oh yes, they have houses, I know, and wives and children. I shouldn't like to be the wife of a sailor!"

"Somebody must, I suppose," said Dolly. "But I shouldn't like to have my home--my principal home, I mean--on the sea; if I was a man. *They* must like it, I suppose."

Dolly went on reading.

"The midshipmen have plenty to do, Christina. They have to learn how to do everything a common sailor does; all the work of the ship; and then they must learn astronomy, and geometry, and navigation and mechanics. Hydrostatics, too; oh dear, I don't know what that is. I can look it out, I suppose. The midshipmen must be very busy, Christina, and at hard work too."

Christina's interest in the Marine Dictionary was exhausted. She went off; but Dolly pored over its pages still, endeavouring to take in details about vessels, and ropes, and sails, and winds, until her head was in a fog. She recurred to the book, however, on the next opportunity; and from time to time, as her lessons permitted, gave her time and attention to this seemingly very unnecessary subject. How much she really learned, is doubtful; yet as little things do touch and link themselves with great things, it may be that the old Marine Dictionary in Mrs. Delancy's library played a not insignificant part in the fortunes of Dolly Copley. As we shall see. She studied, till a ship became a romance to her; till rigging and spars and decks and guns were like the furniture of a new and strange life, which hardly belonged to the earth, being upon the sea; and the men who lived that life, and especially the men who ruled in it, grew to be invested with characteristics of power and skill and energy which gave them fabulous interest in Dolly's eyes.

At home there had been a little scruple about letting Dolly join the party. She had had a cold, and was rather delicate at all times. The scruples, however, gave way before the child's earnest wish; and as Saturday of the particular week turned out mild and quiet, no hindrance was put in the way of the expedition.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "ACHILLES."

It was a very special delectation which the school were to enjoy to-day. The girls thought it always "fun," of course, to quit lessons and go to see anything; "even factories," as one of the girls expressed it, to Dolly's untold astonishment; for it seemed to her that to be allowed to look into the mystery of manufactures must be the next thing to taking part personally in a fairy tale. However, to-day it was not a question of manufactures, but of a finished and furnished big ship, and not only finished and furnished, but manned. "*This* is something lively," Eudora opined. And

she was quite right.

The day was a quiet day in November, with just a spice of frost in it; the air itself was lively, quick and quickening. The party were driven to the Navy Yard in carriages, and there received very politely by the officers, some of whom knew Mrs. Delancy and lent themselves with much kindness to the undertaking. The girls were more or less excited with pleasure and anticipation; but to Dolly the Navy Yard seemed to be already touching the borders of that mysterious and fascinating sea life in which her fancy had lately been roaming. So when the girls were all carefully bestowed in stout little row boats to go out to the ship, Dolly's foot it was which stepped upon enchanted boards, and her eye that saw an enchanted world around her. What a field was this rippling water, crisped with the light breeze, and gurgling under the boat's smooth sweep ahead! How the oars rose and fell, all together, as if moved by only one hand. Was this a part of the order and discipline of which she had read lately, as belonging to this strange world? Probably; for now and then a command was issued to the oarsmen, curt and sharp; and obeyed, Dolly saw, although she did not know what the command meant. Yes, she was in an enchanted sphere; and she looked at the "Achilles" as they drew nearer, with profoundest admiration. Its great hulk grew large upon her view, with an absolute haze of romance and mystery hanging about its decks and rigging. It was a large ship, finely equipped, according to the fashion of naval armament which was prevalent in those days; she was a three-decker; and the port holes of her guns looked in threatening ranks along the sides of the vessel. Still and majestic she lay upon the quiet river; a very wonderful floating home indeed, and unlike all else she had ever known, to Dolly's apprehension. How she and the rest were ever to get on board was an insoluble problem to her, as to most of them; and the chair that was presently lowered along the ship's side to receive them, seemed a very precarious sort of means of transport. However, the getting aboard was safely accomplished; one by one they were hoisted up; and Dolly's feet stood upon the great main deck. And the first view was perfectly satisfactory, and even went far beyond her imaginings. She found herself standing under a mixed confusion of masts and spars and sails, marvellous to behold, which yet she also saw was no confusion at all, but complicated and systematic order. How much those midshipmen must have to learn, though, if they were to know the names and uses and handling of every spar and every rope and each sail among them! as Dolly knew they must. Her eye came back to the deck. What order there too; what neatness; why it was beautiful; and the uniforms here and there, and the sailors' hats and jackets, filled up the picture to her heart's desire. Dolly breathed a full breath of satisfaction.

The Captain of the "Achilles" made his appearance, Captain Barbour. He was a thick-set, grizzly haired man, rather short, not handsome at all; and yet with an air of authority unmistakably clothing him like a garment of power and dignity. Plainly this man's word was law, and the girls stood in awe of him. He was known to Mrs. Delancy; and now she went on to present formally all her young people to him. The captain returned the courtesy by calling up and introducing to her and them some of his officers; and then they went to a review of the ship.

It took a long while. Between Mrs. Delancy and Captain Barbour a lively conversation was carried on; Dolly thought he was explaining things to the lady that she did not understand; but though it might be the case now and then, I think the talk moved mainly upon less technical matters. Dolly could not get near enough to hear what it was, at any rate. The young lieutenants, too, were taken up with playing the host to the older young ladies of the party. If *they* received instruction also by the way, Dolly could not tell; the laughing hardly looked like it. She and the other young ones at any rate followed humbly at the tail of everything, and just came up to a clear view of some detail when the others were moving away. There was nobody to help Dolly understand anything; nevertheless, she wandered in a fairy vision of wonderland. Into the cabins, down to the forecabin, down to the gun deck. What could equal the black strangeness of *that* view! and what could it all mean? Dolly wished for her Uncle Edward, or some one, to answer a thousand questions. She had been reading about the guns, she looked curiously now at the realities, of which she had studied the pictures; recognised here a detail and there a detail, but remaining hugely ignorant of the whole and of the bearing of the several parts upon each other. Yet she did not know how time flew; she did not know that she was getting tired; from one strange thing to another she followed her leaders about; very much alone indeed, for even the other girls of her own age were staring at a different class of objects, and could hardly be said to see what she saw, much less were ready to ask what she wanted to ask. Dolly went round in a confused dream.

At last the party had gone everywhere that such a party could go; Captain Barbour had spared them the lower gun deck. They came back to the captain's cabin, where a very pleasant lunch was served to the ladies. It was served, that is, to those who could get it, to those who were near enough and old enough to put in a claim by right of appearance. Dolly and one or two more who were undeniably little girls stood a bad chance, hanging about on the outskirts of the crowd, for the cabin would not take them all in; and hearing a distant sound of clinking glass and silver and words of refreshment. It was all they seemed likely to get; and when a kindly elderly officer had taken pity on the child and given Dolly a biscuit, she concluded to resign the rest of the unattainable luncheon and make the most of her other opportunities while she had them. Eating the biscuit, which she was very glad of, she wandered off by herself, along the deck; looking again carefully at all she saw; for her eyes were greedy of seeing. Sails,—what strange shapes; and how close rolled up some of them were! Ropes,—what a multitude; and cables. Coils of them on deck; and if she

looked up, an endless tracery of lines seen against the blue sky. There was a sailor going up something like a rope ladder; going up and up; how could he? and how far could he go? Dolly almost grew dizzy gazing at him.

"What are you looking after, little one?" a voice near her asked. An unceremonious address, certainly; frankly put; but the voice was not unkindly or uncivil, and Dolly was not sensitive on the point of personal dignity. She brought her eyes down for a moment far enough to see the shimmer of gold lace on a midshipman's cap, and answered,

"I am looking at that man. He's going up and up, to the top of everything. I should think his head would turn."

"Yours will, if you look after him with your head in that position."

Dolly let her eyes come now to the speaker's face. One of the young midshipmen it was, standing near her, with his arms folded and leaning upon something which served as a support to them, and looking down at Dolly. For standing so and leaning over, he was still a good deal taller than she. Further, Dolly observed a pair of level brows, beneath them a pair of wise-looking, cognisance-taking blue eyes, an expression of steady calm, betokening either an even temperament or an habitual power of self-control; and just now in the eyes and the mouth there was the play almost of a smile somewhat merry, wholly kindly. It took Dolly's confidence entirely and at once.

"You don't think you would like to be a sailor?" he went on.

"Is it pleasant?" said Dolly, retorting the question earnestly and doubtfully.

The smile broke a little more on the other's face. "How do you like the ship?" he asked.

"I do not know," said Dolly, glancing along the deck. "I think it is a strange place to live."

"Why?"

"And I don't understand the use of it," Dolly went on with a really puzzled face.

"The use of what?"

"The use of the whole thing. I know what ships are good for, of course; other ships; but what is the use of such a ship as this?"

"To take care of the other ships."

"How?"

"Have you been below? Did you see the gun decks?"

"I was in a place where there were a great many guns--but I could not understand, and there was nobody to tell me things."

"Would you like to go down there again?"

"Oh yes!" said Dolly. "They will be a good while at lunch yet. Oh, thank you! I should like so much to go."

The young midshipman took her hand; perhaps he had a little sister at home and the action was pleasant and familiar; it seemed to be both; and led her down the way that took them to the upper gun deck.

"How comes it you are not taking lunch too?" he asked by the way.

"Oh, there are too many of them," said Dolly contentedly. "I don't care. I had a biscuit."

"You don't care for your lunch?"

"Yes, I do, when I'm hungry; but now I would rather see things. I never saw a ship before."

They arrived in the great, gloomy, black gun deck. The midshipman let go Dolly's hand, and she stood and looked along the avenue between the bristling black cannon.

"Now, what is it that you don't understand?" he asked, watching her.

"What are these guns here for?"

"Don't you know *that*? Guns are to fight with."

"Yes, I know," said Dolly; "but how can you fight with them here in a row? and what would you fight with? I mean, who would you fight against?"

"Some other ship, if Fate willed it so. Look here; this is the way of it."

He took a letter from the breast of his coat, tore off a blank leaf; then resting it on the side of a gun carriage, he proceeded to make a sketch. Dolly's eyes followed his pencil point, spell-bound with interest. Under his quick and ready fingers grew, she could not tell how, the figure of a ship,—hull, masts, sails and rigging, deftly sketched in; till it seemed to Dolly she could almost see how the wind blew that was filling out the sails and floating off the steamer.

"There," said the artist,—"that is our enemy."

"Our enemy?" repeated Dolly.

"Our supposed enemy. We will suppose she is an enemy."

"But how could she be?"

"We might be at war with England suppose, or with France. This might be an English ship of war coming to catch up every merchantman she could overhaul that carried American colours, and make a prize of her; don't you see?"

"Do they do that?" said Dolly.

"What? catch up merchantmen? of course they do; and the more of value is on board, the better they are pleased. We lose so much, and they gain so much. Now we want to stop this fellow's power of doing mischief; you understand."

"What are those little black spots you are making along her sides."

"The port holes of her guns."

"Port holes?"

"The openings where the mouths of her guns look out. See," said he, pointing to the one near which they were standing,—"that is a port hole."

"That little window?"

"It isn't a window; it is a port hole."

"It is not a black spot."

"Because you are inside, and looking out towards the light. Look at them when you are leaving the ship; they will look like black spots then, you will find."

"Well, that's the enemy," said Dolly, drawing a short breath of excitement. "What is that ship you are making now?"

"That's the 'Achilles'; brought to; with her main topsails laid aback, and her fore topsails full; ready for action."

"I do not know what are topsails or fore topsails," said Dolly.

The midshipman explained; to illustrate his explanation sketched lightly another figure of a vessel, showing more distinctly the principal sails.

"And this is the 'Achilles,'" said Dolly, recurring to the principal design. "You have put her a great way off from the enemy, it seems to me."

"No. Point blank range. Quite near enough."

"Oh, what is 'point blank range'?" cried Dolly in despair. Her new friend smiled, but answered with good-humoured patience. Dolly listened and comprehended.

"Then, if this were an enemy, and that the 'Achilles,' and within point blank range, you would load one of these guns and fire at her?"

The midshipman shook his head. "We should load up all of them--all on that side."

"And five them one after another?"

"As fast as we could. We should give her a broadside. But we should probably give her one broadside after another."

"Suppose the balls all hit her?"

"Yes, you may suppose that. I should like to suppose it, if I were the officer in command."

"What would they do to her?--to that enemy ship?"

"If they all hit? Hinder her from doing any more mischief."

"How?"

"Break her masts, tear up her rigging, make a wreck of her generally. Perhaps sink her."

"But suppose while you are fighting that she fights too?"

"Extremely probable."

"If a shot came in here--could it come in here?"

"Certainly. Cannon balls will go almost anywhere."

"If it came in here, what would it do?"

"Kill three or four of the men at a gun, perhaps; tear away a bit of the ship's side; or perhaps disable the gun."

"While you were firing at the enemy on this side, the guns of the other side, I suppose, would have nothing to do?"

"They might be fighting another enemy on that side," said the midshipman, smiling.

"I should think," said Dolly, looking down the long line of the gun deck, and trying to imagine the state of things described,--"I should think it would be most dreadful!"

"I have no doubt you would think so."

"Don't *you* think so?"

"I have never been in action yet."

"Don't you hope you never will?"

The young man laughed a little. "What would be the use of ships of war, if there were never any fighting? I should have nothing to do in the world."

"You might do something else," said Dolly, gazing at the lines of black guns stretching along both sides of the deck, so near to each other, so black, so grim. "How many men does it take to manage each gun? You said *three or four* might be killed."

"According to the size of the gun. Twelve men for these guns; larger would take fifteen."

Again Dolly meditated; in imagination peopled the solitary place with the active crowd of men which would be there if each gun had twelve gunners, filled the silence with the roar of combined discharges, thought of the dead and

wounded; at last turned her eyes to the blue ones that were watching her.

"I wonder if God likes it?" she said.

"Likes what?" said the midshipman in wonder.

"Such work. I don't see how He *can*."

"How can you help such work? People cannot get along without fighting."

He did not speak carelessly or mockingly or banteringly; rather with a gentle, somewhat deliberate utterance. Yet Dolly was persuaded there was no unmanly softness in him; she never doubted but that he would be ready to do his part in that dreadful work, if it must be done. Moreover, he was paying to this odd little girl a delicate sort of respect and treating her with great consideration. Her confidence, as I said, had been entirely given to him before; and now some gratitude began to mingle with it, along with great freedom to speak her mind.

"I don't think God can like it," she repeated.

"What would you do, then?" he also repeated, smiling. "Let wicked people have their own way?"

"No."

"If they are not to have their own way, you must stop them."

"I think this is a dreadful way of stopping them."

"It's a bad job for the side that goes under," the young officer admitted.

"I don't believe God likes it," Dolly concluded for the third time, with great conviction.

"Is that your rule for everything?"

"Yes. Isn't it your rule?"

"I have to obey orders," he answered, watching her.

"Don't you obey *His* orders?" said Dolly wistfully.

"I do not know what they are."

"Oh, but they are in the Bible. You can find them in the Bible."

"Does it say anything about fighting?"

Dolly tried to think, and got confused. Certainly it did say a good deal about fighting, but in various ways, it seemed to her. She did not know how to answer. She changed the subject.

"How do you get the shot, the balls, I mean, into these guns? I don't see how you get at them. The mouths are out of the windows. Port holes, I mean."

For the upper gun deck had been put to a certain extent in order of action, and the guns were run out.

"You are of an inquiring disposition," said the midshipman gravely.

"Am I?"

"I think you are."

"But I should like to know"--pursued Dolly, looking at the muzzle of the gun by which they were standing.

"The guns would be run in to be loaded."

Dolly looked at the heavy piece of metal, and at him, but did not repeat her question.

"Now you want to know how," he said, smiling. "If I were captain, I would have the men here and show you. The gun is run in by means of this tackle, see!--and when it is charged, it is bowsed out again."

Seeing Dolly's wise grave eyes bent upon the subject, he went on to amuse her with a full detail of the exercise of the gun; from "casting loose," to the finishing "secure your guns;" explaining the manner of handling and loading, and the use of the principal tackle concerned. Dolly listened, intent, fascinated, enchained; and I think the young man was a little fascinated too, though his attentions were given to so very young a lady. Dolly's brown eyes were so utterly pure and grave and unconscious; the brain at work behind them was so evidently clear and busy and competent; the pleasure she showed was so unschoolgirl-like, and he thought so unchildlike, and at the same time so very far from being young lady-like. What she was like, he did not know; she was an odd little apparition there in the gun-deck of the "Achilles," leaning with her elbows upon a gun carriage, and surveying with her soft eyes the various paraphernalia of conflict and carnage around her. Contrast could hardly be stronger.

"Suppose," said Dolly at last, "a shot should make a hole in the side of the ship, and let in the water?"

"Well? Suppose it," he answered.

"Does that ever happen?"

"Quite often. Why not?"

"What would you do then?"

"Pump out the water as fast as it came in,--if we could."

"Suppose you couldn't?"

"Then we should go down."

"And all in the ship?"

"All who could not get out of it."

"How could any get out of it?"

"In the boats."

"Oh!--I forgot the boats. Would they hold everybody?"

"Probably not. The other ships' boats would come to help."

"The officers would go first, I suppose?"

"Last. The highest officer of all would be the last man on board."

"Why?"

"He must do his duty. If he cannot save his ship, at least he must save his men;--all he can. He is there to do his duty."

"I think it would be better not to be there at all," said Dolly very gravely.

"Who would take care of you then, if an enemy's fleet were coming to attack Philadelphia?" said the young officer.

"I would go home," said Dolly. "I don't know what would become of Philadelphia. But I do not think God can like it."

"Shall we go above where it is more cheerful? or have you seen it all?"

Dolly gave him her hand again and let him help her till they got on deck. There they went roaming towards the fore part of the vessel, looking at everything by the way; Dolly asking the names and the meaning of things, and receiving explanations, especially regarding the sails and rigging and steering of the ship. She was even shown where the sailors made their home in the fore-castle. As they were returning aft, Dolly stopped by a coil of rope on deck and began

pulling at an end of it. Her companion inquired what she wanted?

"I would like a little piece," said Dolly; "if I could get it."

"A piece of rope?"

"Yes;--just a little bit; but it is very strong; it won't break."

She was tugging at a loose strand.

"How large a bit do you want?"

"Oh, just a little piece," said Dolly. "I wanted just a little piece to keep--but it's no matter. I wanted to keep it."

"A keepsake?" said the young man. "To remember us by? They are breaking up,"--he added immediately, casting his glance aft, where a stir and a gathering and a movement on deck in front of the captain's cabin could now be seen, and the sound of voices came fresh along the breeze. "They are going--there is no time now. I will send you a piece, if you will tell me where I can send it. Where do you live?"

"Oh, will you? Oh, thank you!" said Dolly, and her face lifted confidently to the young officer grew sunny with pleasure. "I live at Mrs. Delancy's school;--but no, I don't! I don't live there. My home is at Uncle Edward's--Mr. Edward Eberstein--in Walnut Street."

"What number?" said the midshipman, using his pencil again on the much scribbled piece of paper; and Dolly told him.

"And whom shall I send the--the piece of rope, to?"

"Oh, yes!--Dolly Copley. That is my name. Good bye, I must go."

"Dolly Copley. You shall have it," said he, giving the little hand she held out to him a right sailorly grasp. And Dolly ran away. In the bustle and anxiety of getting lowered into the little boat again she forgot him and everything else; however, so soon as she was safely seated and just as the men were ordered to "give way," she looked up at the great ship they were leaving; and there, just above her, leaning on the guards and looking over and down at her, she saw her midshipman friend. Dolly saw nothing else till his face was too small in the distance to be any longer recognised.

CHAPTER V.

THE PIECE OF ROPE.

It was Saturday and holiday, and Dolly went home to her aunt's. There her aunt and uncle, as was natural, expected a long story of the morning's experience. And Dolly one would think might have given it; matter for the detail was not wanting; yet she seemed to have little to tell. On the other hand, she had a great deal to ask. She wanted to know why people could not do all their fighting on land; why ships of war were necessary; Mr. Eberstein tried to explain that there might be great and needful advantages attendant upon the use of them. Then Dolly begged for instances. Had we, Americans, ever fought at sea? Mr. Eberstein answered that, and gave her details of facts, while Mrs. Eberstein sat by silent and watched Dolly's serious, meditative face.

"I should think," said Dolly, "that when there is a fight, a ship of war would be a very dreadful place."

"There is no doubt of that, my little girl," said Mr. Eberstein. "Take the noise, and the smoke, the packed condition of one of those gun decks, and the every now and then coming in of a round shot, crashing through planks and timbers, splintering what comes in its way, and stretching half a dozen men at once, more or less, on the floor in dead and wounded,--I think it must be as good a likeness of the infernal regions as earth can give--in one way at least."

"In what way?" Dolly asked immediately.

"Confusion of pain and horror. Not wickedness."

"Uncle Ned, do you think God can like it?"

"No."

"Then isn't it wicked?"

"No, little one; not necessarily. No sort of pain or suffering can be pleasing to God; we know it is not; yet sin has made it necessary, and He often sends it."

"Don't He always send it?"

"Why no. Some sorts people bring on themselves by their own folly and perverseness; and some sorts people work on others by their own wicked self-will. God does not cause that, though He will overrule it to do what He wants done."

"Uncle Ned, do you think we shall ever have to use our ships of war again?"

"We are using them all the time. We send them to this place and that place to protect our own people, and their merchant vessels and their commerce, from interference and injury."

"No, but I mean, in fighting. Do you think we shall ever have to send them to fight again?"

"Probably."

"To fight whom?"

"That I don't know."

"Then why do you say 'probably'?"

"Because human nature remains what it was, and will no doubt do the same work in the future that it has done from the beginning."

"Why is fighting part of that work, Uncle Ned?"

"Ah, why! Greed, which wants what is the right of others; pride, which resents even a fancied interference with its own; anger, which cries for revenge; these are the reasons."

Dolly looked very deeply serious.

"Why do you care so much about it, Dolly?" her aunt asked at length, after a meditative pause of several minutes.

"I would be sorry to have the 'Achilles' go into battle," said Dolly; and a perceptible slight shudder passed over her shoulders.

"Is the 'Achilles' so much to you, just because you have seen her?"

"No--" said Dolly thoughtfully; "it isn't the *ship*; it's the people."

"Oh!--But what do you know of the people?"

"I saw a good many of them, Aunt Harry."

Politic Dolly! She had really seen only one. Yet she had no idea of being politic; and why she did not say whom she had seen, and what reason she had for being interested in him, I cannot tell you.

From that time Dolly's reading took a new turn. She sought out in the bookcases everything that related to sailors and ships, and especially naval warfare, and simply devoured it. The little *Life of Lord Nelson*, by Southey, in two small calf-bound volumes, became her darling book. Better than any novel, for it was *true*, and equal to any novel for its varied, picturesque, passionate, stirring life story. Dolly read it, till she could have given you at any time an accurate and detailed account of any one of Nelson's great battles; and more than that, she studied the geography of the lands

and waters thereby concerned, and where possible the topography also. I suppose the "Achilles" stood for a model of all the ships in which successively the great commander hoisted his flag; and if the hero himself did not take the form and features of a certain American midshipman, it was probably because there was a likeness of the subject of the Memoir opposite to the title-page; and the rather plain, rather melancholy, rather feeble traits of the English naval captain, could by no effort of imagination be confounded with the quiet strength and gentle manliness which Dolly had found in the straight brows and keen blue eyes and kindly smile of her midshipman friend. That would not do. Nelson was not like him, nor he like Nelson; but Dolly had little doubt but he would do as much, if he had occasion. In that faith she read on; and made every action lively with the vision of those keen-sighted blue eyes and firm sweet mouth in the midst of the smoke of battle and the confusion of orders given and received. How often the Life of Nelson was read, I dare not say; nor with what renewed eagerness the Marine Dictionary and its plates of ships and cannon were studied and searched. From that, Dolly's attention was extended to other books which told of the sea and of life upon it, even though the life were not war-like. Captain Cook's voyages came in for a large amount of favour; and Cooper's "Afloat and Ashore," which happened about this time to fall into Dolly's hands, was devoured with a hunger which grew on what it fed. Nobody knew; she had ceased to talk on naval subjects; and it was so common a thing for Dolly to be swallowed up in some book or other whenever she was at home, that Mrs. Eberstein's curiosity was not excited.

Meanwhile school days and school work went on, and week succeeded week, and everybody but Dolly had forgotten all about the "Achilles;" when one day a small package was brought to the door and handed in "For Miss Dolly Copley." It was a Saturday afternoon. Dolly and her aunt were sitting comfortably together in Mrs. Eberstein's workroom upstairs, and Mr. Eberstein was there too at his secretary.

"For me?" said Dolly, when the servant brought the package in. "It's a box! Aunt Harry, what can it be?"

"Open and see, Dolly."

Which Dolly did with an odd mixture of haste and deliberation which amused Mrs. Eberstein. She tore off nothing, and she cut nothing; patiently knots were untied and papers unfolded, though Dolly's fingers trembled with excitement. Papers taken off showed a rather small pasteboard box; and the box being opened revealed coil upon coil, nicely wound up, of a beautifully wrought chain. It might be a watch chain; but Dolly possessed no watch.

"What is it, Aunt Harry?" she said in wondering pleasure as the coils of the pretty woven work fell over her hand.

"It looks like a watch chain, Dolly. What is it made of?"

Mrs. Eberstein inspected the work closely and could not determine.

"But who could send me a watch chain?" said Dolly.

"Somebody; for here is your name very plainly on the cover and on the paper."

"The boy is waiting for an answer, miss."

"Answer? To what? I don't know whom to answer," said Dolly.

"There's a note, miss."

"A note? where?—Oh, here *is* a note, Aunt Harry, in the bottom of the box. I did not see it."

"From whom, Dolly?"

Dolly did not answer. She had unfolded the note, and now her whole face was wrinkling up with pleasure or fun; she did not hear or heed her aunt's question. Mrs. Eberstein marked how her colour rose and her smile grew sparkling; and she watched with not a little curiosity and some impatience till Dolly should speak. The little girl looked up at last with a face all dimples.

"O Aunt Harry! it's my piece of rope."

"Your *piece of rope*, my dear?"

"Yes; I wanted a piece of rope; and this is it."

"That is not a piece of rope."

"Yes, it is; it is made of it. I could not think what it was made of; and now I see. Isn't it beautifully made? He has picked a piece of rope to pieces, and woven this chain of the threads; isn't it beautiful? And how kind! How kind he is."

"*Who*, Dolly? Who has done it?"

"Oh, the midshipman, Aunt Harry."

"*The* midshipman. What one? You didn't say anything about a midshipman."

"I saw him, though, and he said he would send me a piece of rope. I wanted a piece, Aunt Harry, to remember the ship by; and I could not break a bit off, though I tried; then he saw me trying, and it was just time to go, and he said he would get it and send it to me. I thought he had forgotten all about it; but here it is! I am so glad."

"My dear, do you call that a piece of rope?"

"Why, yes, Aunt Harry; it is woven out of a piece of rope. He has picked the rope apart and made this chain of the threads. I think he is very clever."

"*Who*, my dear? Who has done it, Dolly?"

"The midshipman, Aunt Harry."

"What midshipman?"

"On the 'Achilles.' I saw him that day."

"Did you see only one midshipman?"

"No; I suppose I saw a good many. I didn't notice any but this one."

"And he noticed you, I suppose?"

"Yes, a little"--said Dolly.

"Did he notice nobody beside you?"

"I don't know, Aunt Harry. Not that time, for I was alone."

"Alone! Where were all the rest, and Mrs. Delancy?"

"Eating lunch in the captain's cabin."

"Did you have no lunch?"

"I had a biscuit one of the officers gave me."

"And have you got a note there from the midshipman?"

"Yes, Aunt Harry."

"What does he say?"

Dolly unfolded the note again and looked at it with great consideration; then handed it to Mrs. Eberstein. Mrs. Eberstein read aloud.

"Ship '*Achilles*,'

"*Dec. 5, 18--*

"Will Miss Dolly Copley please send a word to say that she has received her piece of cable safe? I thought she would like it best perhaps in a manufactured form; and I hope she will keep it to remember the 'Achilles' by, and also

"A. CROWNINSHIELD."

"What's all that?" demanded Mr. Eberstein now from his writing-desk. Mrs. Eberstein bit her lips as she answered, "Billet-doux."

"Aunt Harry," said Dolly now doubtfully, "must I write an answer?"

"Edward," said Mrs. Eberstein, "shall I let this child write a note to a midshipman on board the 'Achilles'? What do you think? Come and counsel me."

Mr. Eberstein left his writing, informed himself of the circumstances, read "A. Crowninshield's" note, and gave his decision.

"The 'Achilles'? Oh yes, I know Captain Barbour very well. It's all right, I guess. I think Dolly had better write an answer, certainly."

So Dolly fetched her writing materials. Her aunt looked for some appeals for advice now on her part; but Dolly made none. She bent over her paper with an earnest face, a little flushed; but it seemed she was in no uncertainty what to say or how to say it. She did not offer to show her finished note to Mrs. Eberstein; I think it did not occur to her; but in the intensity of her concentration Dolly only thought of the person she was writing to and the occasion which made her write. Certainly she would have had no objection that anybody should see what she wrote. The simple words ran as follows:

"MR. CROWNINSHIELD,

"I have got the chain, and I think it is beautiful, and I am very much obliged to you. I mean to keep it and wear it as long as I live. You are very kind.

"DOLLY COPLEY."

The note was closed and sent off; and with that Dolly dismissed the subject, so far at least as words were concerned; but Mrs. Eberstein watched her still for some time handling and examining the chain, passing it through her fingers, and regarding it with a serious face, and yet an expression in the eyes and on the lips that was almost equivalent to a smile.

"What are you going to do with it, Dolly?" Mrs. Eberstein asked at length, wishing to get into the child's thoughts.

"I'll keep it, Aunt Harry. And when I have anything to wear it with, I will wear it. When I am old enough, I mean."

"What did you do to that young fellow, to make him show you such an attention?"

"Do to him? I didn't do anything to him, Aunt Harry!"

"It was very kind of him, wasn't it?"

"*Very* kind. I guess he is kind," said Dolly.

"Maybe we shall see him again one of these days, and have a chance to thank him. The midshipmen get leave to come on shore now and then."

But no such chance offered. The "Achilles" sailed out of those waters, and her place in the river was empty.

CHAPTER VI.

END OF SCHOOL TERM.

Dolly's school life is not further of importance in this history; or no further than may serve to fill out the picture already given of herself. A few smooth and uneventful years followed that first coming to Philadelphia; not therefore unfruitful because uneventful; perhaps the very contrary. The little girl made her way among her fellow pupils and the teachers, the masters and mistresses, the studies and drills which busied them all, with a kind of sweet facility; such as is born everywhere, I suppose, of good will. Whoever got into scrapes, it was never Dolly Copley; whoever was chidden for imperfect recitations, such rebukes never fell on her; whoever might be suspected of mischief, such suspicion could not rest for a moment on the fair, frank little face and those grave brown eyes. The most unpopular mistress had a friend in Dolly; the most refractory school-girl owned to a certain influence which went forth from her; the most uncomfortable of her companions found soothing in her presence. People who are happy themselves can drop a good deal of oil on the creaking machinery around them, and love is the only manufactory where the oil is made.

With all this smooth going, it may be supposed that Dolly's progress in knowledge and accomplishments would be at least satisfactory; and it was more than that. She prospered in all she undertook. The teacher of mathematics said she had a good head for calculation; the French mistress declared nature had given her a good ear and accent; the dancing master found her agile and graceful as a young roe; the drawing master went beyond all these and averred that Miss Copley would distinguish him and herself. "She has an excellent manner of handling, madame," he said,--"and she has an eye for colour, and she will have a style that will be distinguished." Moreover, Dolly's voice was sweet and touching, and promised to be very effective.

So things went on at school; and at home each day bound faster the loving ties which united her with her kind protectors and relations. Every week grew and deepened the pleasure of the intercourse they held together. Those were happy years for all parties. Dolly had become rather more talkative, without being less of a bookworm. Vacations were sometimes spent with her mother and father, though not always, as the latter were sometimes travelling. Dolly missed nothing; Mrs. Eberstein's house had come to be a second home.

All this while the "Achilles" had never been heard of again in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Neither, though Dolly I am bound to say searched faithfully all the lists of ship's officers which were reported in any American ports, did she ever so much as see the name of A. Crowninshield. She always looked for it, wherever a chance of finding it might be; she never found it.

Such was the course of things, until Dolly had reached her seventeenth year and was half through it. Then, in the spring, long before school term ended, came a sudden summons for her. Mr. Copley had received the appointment of a consulship in London; he and his family were about to transfer themselves immediately to this new sphere of activity, and Dolly of course must go along. Her books were hastily fetched from school, her clothes packed up; and Dolly and her kind friends in Walnut Street sat together the last evening in a very subdued frame of mind.

"I don't see what your father wanted of a consulship, or anything else that would take him out of his country!" Mr. Eberstein uttered his rather grumbling complaint. "He has enough to satisfy a man without that."

"But what papa likes is precisely something to take him out of the country. He likes change"--said Dolly sorrowfully.

"He won't have much change as American Consul in London," Mr. Eberstein returned. "Business will pin him pretty close."

"I suppose it will be a change at first," said Dolly; "and then, when he gets tired of it, he will give it up, and take something else."

"And you, little Dolly, you are accordingly to be shoved out into the great, great world, long before you are ready for it."

"Is the world any bigger over there than it is on this side?" said Dolly, with a gleam of fun.

"Well, yes," said Mr. Eberstein. "Most people think so. And London *is* a good deal bigger than Philadelphia."

"The world is very much alike all over," remarked Mrs. Eberstein; "in one place a little more fascinating and dangerous, in another a little less."

"Will it be more or less, over there, for me, Aunt Harry?"

"It would be 'more' for you anywhere, Dolly, soon. Why you are between sixteen and seventeen; almost a woman!" Mrs. Eberstein said with a sigh.

"No, not yet, Aunt Harry. I'll be a girl yet awhile. I can be that in England, can't I, as well as here?"

"Better," said Mr. Eberstein.

"But the world, nevertheless, *is* a little bigger out there, Ned," his wife added.

"In what way, Aunt Harry? And what do you mean by the 'world' anyhow?"

"I mean what the Lord was speaking of, when He said to His disciples, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'"

"That means, bad people?"

"Some of them are by no means bad people. Some of them are delightful people."

"Then I do not quite understand, Aunt Harry. I thought it meant not only *bad* people, but gay people; pleasure lovers."

"Aren't you a lover of pleasure, Dolly?"

"Oh yes. But, Aunt Harry," Dolly said seriously, "I am *not* a 'lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.'"

"No, thanks to His goodness! However, Dolly, people may be just as worldly without seeking pleasures at all. It isn't that."

"What is it, then?"

"I don't know how to put it. Ned, can you?"

"Why, Hal," said Mr. Eberstein pondering, "it comes to about this, I reckon. There are just two kingdoms in the world, upon earth I mean."

"Yes. Well? I know there are two kingdoms, and no neutral ground. But what is the dividing line? That is what we want to know."

"If there is no neutral ground, it follows that the border line of one kingdom is the border line of the other. To go out of one, is to go into the other."

"Well? Yes. That's plain."

"Then it is simple enough. What belongs to Christ, or what is done for Him or in His service, belongs to His kingdom. Of course, what is *not* Christ's, nor is done for Him, nor in His service, belongs to the world."

There was a silence here of some duration; and then Dolly exclaimed, "I see it. I shall know now."

"What, Dolly?"

"How to do, Aunt Harry."

"How to do what?"

"Everything. I was thinking particularly just then"--Dolly hesitated.

"Yes, of what?"

"Of dressing myself."

"Dressing yourself, you chicken?"

"Yes, Aunt Harry. I see it. If I do not dress for Christ, I do it for the world."

"Don't go into another extreme now, Dolly."

"No, Aunt Harry. I cannot be wrong, can I, if I do it for Christ?"

"I wonder how many girls of sixteen in the country have such a thought? And I wonder, how long will you be able to keep it, Dolly?"

"Why not, Aunt Harry?"

"O child! because you have got to meet the world."

"What will the world do to me?" Dolly asked, half laughing in her simple ignorance.

"When I think what it will do to you, Dolly, I am ready to break my heart. It will tempt you, child. It will tempt you with beauty, and with pleasant things; pleasant things that look so harmless! and it will seek to persuade you with sweet voices and with voices of authority; and it will show you everybody going one way, and that not your way."

"But I will follow Christ, Aunt Hal."

"Then you will have to bear reproach."

"I would rather bear the world's reproach, than His."

"If you don't get over-persuaded, child, or deafened with the voices!"

"She will have to do like the little girl in the fairy tale," said Mr. Eberstein; "stuff cotton in her ears. The little girl in the fairy tale was going up a hill to get something at the top--what *was* she going for, that was at the top of the hill?"

"I know!" cried Dolly. "I remember. She was going for three things. The Singing bird and the Golden water, and--I forget what the third thing was."

"Well, you see what that means," Mr. Eberstein went on. "She was going up the hill for the Golden water at the top; and there were ten thousand voices in her ears tempting her to look round; and if she looked, she would be turned to stone. The road was lined with stones, which had once been pilgrims. You see, Dolly? Her only way was to stop her ears."

"I see, Uncle Ned."

"What shall Dolly stop her ears with?" asked Mrs. Eberstein.

"These words will do. 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'"

There was little more talking, for as the evening drew on, the heaviness of the parting weighed too hard upon all hearts. The next day Dolly made the journey to Boston, and from there to her parents' house; and her childhood's days were over.

CHAPTER VII.

PLAYTHINGS.

Dolly did not know that her childhood was over. Every pulse of her happy little heart said the contrary, when she found herself again among her old haunts and was going the rounds of them, the morning after her return home. She came in at last to her mother, flushed and warm.

"Mother, what are we going away for?" she began.

"Your father knows. I don't. Men never know when they are well off."

"Do women?"

"I used to think so."

"Is it as pleasant in England as it is here?"

"Depends on where you are placed, I suppose, and *how* you are placed. How can I tell? I have never been in England."

"Mother, we have got the prettiest little calf in the barn that you ever saw."

"In the barn! A queer place for a calf to be, it seems to me."

"Yes, because they want to keep it from the cow. Johnson is going to rear it, he says. I am so glad it is not to be killed! It is spotted, mother; all red and white; and so prettily spotted!"

An inarticulate sound from Mrs. Copley, which might mean anything.

"And, mother, I have been getting the eggs. And Johnson has a hen setting. We shall have chickens pretty soon."

"Dolly Copley, how old are you?"

"Sixteen last Christmas, mother."

"And seventeen next Christmas."

"Yes, ma'am, but next Christmas is not come yet."

"Seems to me, it is near enough for you to be something besides a child."

"What's the harm, mother?"

"Harm?" said Mrs. Copley with a sharp accent; "why, when one has a woman's work to do, one had better be a woman to do it. How is a child to fill a woman's place?"

"I have only a child's place to fill, just now," said Dolly merrily. "I have no woman's work to do, mother."

"Yes, you have. You have got to go into society, and play your part in society, and be married by and by; and *then* you'll know that a woman's part isn't so easy to play."

Dolly looked grave.

"But we are going to England, mother; where we know nobody. I don't see how we are to go into much society."

"Do you suppose," said Mrs. Copley very irately, "that with your father's position his wife and daughter will not be visited and receive invitations? That is the one thing that reconciles me to going. We shall have a very different sort of society from what we have here. Why you will go to court, Dolly; you will be presented; and of course you will see nothing but people of the very best circles."

"I don't care about going to court."

"Why not? You are a goose; you know nothing about it. Why don't you want to go to court? Your father's daughter may, as well as some other people's. Why don't you care about it?"

"It would be a great deal of fuss; and no use."

"No use! Yes, it would; just the use I am telling you. It would introduce you to the best society."

"But I am not going to live in England all my life, mother."

"How do you know?" very sharply. "How do you know where you are going to live?"

"Why, father won't stay there always, will he?"

"I am sure I don't know what your father will take into his head. I may be called to end my days in Japan. But you-- Look here; has your aunt made you as old-fashioned as she is herself?"

"How, mother?"

"I am sure I can't tell how! There are ever so many ways. There's the benevolent sort, and there's the devout sort, and there's the puritanical sort. Has she put it into your head that it is good to be a hermit and separate yourself from the rest of the world?"

Dolly laughed and denied that charge.

"She's a very good woman, I suppose; but she is ridiculous," Mrs. Copley went on. "Don't be ridiculous, whatever you are. You can't do any good to anybody by being ridiculous."

"But people may call things ridiculous, that are not ridiculous, mother."

"Don't let them *call* you ridiculous, then," said Mrs. Copley, chopping her words in the way people do when impatience has the management of them. "You had better not. The world is pretty apt to be right."

Dolly let the subject go, and let it go from her mind too; giving herself to the delights of her chickens, and the calf, and the nests of eggs in the hay mow. More than half the time she was dancing about out of doors; as gay as the daffodils that were just opening, as delicate as the Van Thol tulips that were taking on slender streaks and threads of carmine in their half transparent white petals, as sweet as the white hyacinth that was blooming in Mrs. Copley's window. Within the house Dolly displayed another character, and soon became indispensable to her mother. In all consultations of business, in emergencies of packing, in perplexities of arrangements, Dolly was ready with a sweet, clear common sense, loving hands of skill, and an imperturbable cheerfulness and patience. It was only a few weeks that the confusion lasted; during those weeks Mrs. Copley came to know what sort of a daughter she had. And even Mr. Copley began to divine it.

Mr. Copley has been no more than mentioned. He was a comely, intelligent, active, energetic man; a very good specimen of a typical Yankee who has enjoyed the advantages of education and society. He had plenty of common sense, acute business faculties, and genial manners; and so was generally a popular man among his compeers. His inherited family property made him more than independent; so his business dealings were entered into rather for amusement and to satisfy the inborn Yankee craving to be doing something, than for need or for gain. Mr. Copley laid no special value on money, beyond what went to make him comfortable. But he lacked any feeling for art, which might have made him a collector and connoisseur; he had no love for nature, which might have expended itself in grounds and gardens; he cared little for knowledge, except such as he could forthwith use. What was left to him but business? for he was not of those softly natures which sit down at home in the midst of their families and are content. However, Mr. Copley could value his home belongings, and had an eye to discern things.

He was watching Dolly, one day just before their departure, as she was busying herself with a bunch of violets; putting some of them in a glass, sticking some of them in her mother's hair, finally holding the bunch under her father's nose.

"Dolly," said her father, "I declare I don't know whether you are most of a child or a woman!"

"I suppose I can be both, father; can't I?"

"I don't know about that."

"So I tell her," said Mrs. Copley. "It's all very well as long as she is here; but I tell her she has got to give up being a child and playing with the chickens."

"Why must I?" said Dolly.

"You will find other playthings on the other side," said her father, fondly putting his arm round her and drawing her up to him.

"Will they be as good as chickens? What will they be?"

"Yes, there, 'what will they be,' she asks! I do believe that Dolly has no idea," Mrs. Copley remarked.

"She will find out soon enough," said Mr. Copley contentedly.

"What will they be, father?" Dolly repeated, making for the present a plaything of her father's head; for both her soft arms were around it, and she was touching first one side and then the other side with her own cheeks. Mr. Copley seemed to enjoy the play, for he gave himself up to it luxuriously and made no answer.

"Dolly has been long enough in Philadelphia," Mrs. Copley went on. "It is time she was away."

"So I think."

"Father," said Dolly now, "have I done with going to school?"

There ensued a debate upon this question; Dolly herself taking the negative and her mother the affirmative side. She wanted her daughter at home, she said.

"But not till I am fit to be at home, mother?"

"Fit? Why are you not fit?" said Mrs. Copley. "You know as much as I did when I was married; and I should think that would be enough. I do not see what girls want with so much crammed into their heads, nowadays! It does them no good, and it does nobody else any good."

"What do you think you want, Dolly, more than you have already?" her father asked.

"Why, father, I do not know *anything*. I have only begun things."

"Humph! Not know anything. I suppose you can read and write and cipher?"

"And you can play and sing," added Mrs. Copley.

"Very little, mother."

"And your drawings are beautiful."

"Oh, no, mother! That is one especial thing that I want to do better; a great deal better."

"I think they are good enough. And you have music enough. What's the use? When you are married you will give it all up."

"My music and my drawing, mother?"

"Yes. Every girl does."

"But I am not going to be married."

"Not just yet,"--said Mr. Copley, drawing the soft arms round his neck,--"not just yet, Dolly. But when a girl is known to have so much money as you will have, there are sure to be plenty of fellows after her. Somebody will catch you up, some of these days."

"Somebody who wants my money, father?"

"Everybody wants money"--Mr. Copley answered evasively.

"They would not come and tell you so, I suppose?"

"Not exactly. That isn't the game."

"Then they would pretend to like me, while they only wanted my money?"

"Mr. Copley, do you think what notions you are putting in Dolly's head? Don't you know yet, that whatever you put in Dolly's head, stays there?" Mrs. Copley objected.

"I like that," said Dolly's father. "Most girls' heads are like paper fly traps--won't hold anything but a fly. Dolly, in the pocket of my overcoat that hangs up in the hall, there is something that concerns you."

"Which pocket, father?"

"Ay, you've got your head on your shoulders! That's right. In the inner breast pocket, my dear. You'll find a small packet, tied up in paper."

Being brought and duly opened, Mr. Copley's fingers took out of a small paper box a yet smaller package in silk paper and handed it to Dolly. It was a pretty little gold watch.

"Why didn't you wait till you go to Geneva, Mr. Copley?" said his wife. "You could have got it cheaper and better there."

"How do you know, my dear, without knowing how much I paid for this, or how good it is? I am not going to Geneva, either. Well, Dolly?"

Dolly gave her father a mute kiss, which was expressive.

"*You* think it will do, then. What will you wear it on? I should have thought of that. You must have a chain."

"Oh, I have got a chain!" Dolly cried, and off she ran to fetch it. She came back presently with the little box which had been sent her from the "Achilles," and sat down by the lamp to put the watch on the chain. Her father's eye rested on her as she sat there, and well it might. The lamp-light fell among the light loose curls of brown hair, glanced from the white brow, showed the delicate flush with which delight had coloured her cheeks, and then lit up the little hands which were busy with gold and wreathen work of the cable chain. The eyes he could not see; the mouth, he thought, with its innocent half smile, was as sweet as a mouth could be. Mrs. Copley was looking that way too, but seeing somewhat else. Eyes do see in the same picture such different things.

"What have you got there, Dolly?"

"A chain, mother. I am so glad! I never could wear it, before. Now I am so glad."

"What is it?"

"A chain, mother," said Dolly, holding it up.

"What sort of a chain? Made of what?"

Dolly told her story. Mrs. Copley examined and wondered at the elegance of the work. Mr. Copley promised Dolly a chain of gold.

"I do not want it, father. I like this," said Dolly, putting the chain round her neck.

"Not better than a gold one?"

"Yes, father, I do."

"Why, child?"

"It reminds me of the time, and of the person that made it; and I like it for all that."

"Who was the person? what was his name?"

"A midshipman on the 'Achilles.' His name was Crowninshield."

"A good name," said Mr. Copley.

"Why that was five and a half years ago, child. Did he make such an impression on you? Where is he now?"

"I don't know."

"You have never seen him since?"

"Nor heard of him. I could not even find his name in any of the lists of officers of ships, that I saw sometimes in the paper."

"I'll look for it," said Mr. Copley.

But though he was as good as his word, he was no more successful than Dolly had been.

CHAPTER VIII.

LONDON.

Mrs. Copley did not like London. So she declared after a stay of some months had given her, as she supposed, an opportunity of judging. The house they inhabited was not in a sufficiently fashionable quarter, she complained; and society did not seem to open its doors readily to the new American consul.

"I suppose, mother, we have not been here long enough. People do not know us."

"What do you call 'long enough'?" said Mrs. Copley with sharp emphasis. "And how are people to know us, if they do not come to see us? When people are strangers, is the very time to go and make their acquaintance; I should say."

"English nature likes to know people before it makes their acquaintance," Mr. Copley remarked. "I do not think you have any cause to find fault."

"No; you have all *you* want in the way of society, and you have no notion how it is with me. That is men's way. And what do you expect to do with Dolly, shut up in this smoky old street? You might think of Dolly."

"Dolly, dear," said her father, "are you getting smoked out, like your mother? Do you want to go with me and see the Bank of England to-day?"

Dolly made a joyful spring to kiss her thanks, and then flew off to get ready; but stopped at the door.

"Won't you go too, mother?"

"And tire myself to death? No, thank you, Dolly. I am not so young as I was once."

"You are a very young woman for your years, my dear," said Mr. Copley gallantly.

"But I should like to know, Frank," said Mrs. Copley, thawing a little, "what you do mean to do with Dolly?"

"Take her to see the Bank of England. It's a wonderful institution."

"You know what I mean, Frank. Don't run away from my question. You have society enough, I suppose, of the kind that suits you; but Dolly and I are alone, or as near as possible. What is to become of Dolly, shut up here in smoke and fog? You should think of Dolly. I can stand it for myself."

"There'll be no want of people to think of Dolly."

"If they could see her; but they don't see her. How are they to see her?"

"I'll get you a place down in the country, if you like; out of the smoke."

"I should like it very much. But that will not help Dolly."

"Yes, it will; help her to keep fresh. I'll get her a pony."

"Mr. Copley, you will not answer me! I am talking of Dolly's prospects. You do not seem to consider them."

"How old is Dolly?"

"Seventeen."

"Too young for prospects, my dear."

"Not too young for us to think about it, and take care that she does not miss them. Mr. Copley, do you know Dolly is very handsome?"

"She is better than that!" said Mr. Copley proudly. "I understand faces, if I don't prospects. There is not the like of Dolly to be seen in Hyde Park any day."

"Why don't you take her to ride in the Park then, and let her be seen?"

"Do you want her to marry an Englishman?"

Mrs. Copley was silent, and before she spoke again Dolly came in, ready for her expedition.

London was not quite to Dolly the disappointing thing her mother declared it. She was at an age to find pleasure in everything from which a fine sense could bring it out; and not being burdened with thoughts about "prospects," and finding her own and her mother's society always sufficient for herself, Dolly went gaily on from day to day, like a bee from flower to flower; sucking sweetness in each one. She had a large and insatiable appetite for the sight and knowledge of everything that was worth seeing or knowing; it followed, that London was to her a rich treasure field. She delighted in viewing it under its historical aspect; she would study out the associations and the chronicled events connected with a particular point; and then, with her mind and heart full of the subject, go some day to visit the place with her father. What pleasure she took in this way it is impossible to tell. Mr. Copley was excessively fond and proud of his daughter, even though her mother thought him so careless about her interests; his life was a busy one, but from time to time he would spare half a day to give to Dolly, and then they went sight-seeing together. Old houses, old gateways and courts, old corners and streets, where something had happened or somebody had lived that henceforth could never be forgotten, how Dolly studied them and hung about them! Mr. Copley himself cared for no historical associations, neither could he apprehend picturesque effects; what he did care for was Dolly; and for her sake he would linger hours, if need were, around some bit of old London; and find amusement enough the while in watching Dolly. Dolly studied like an antiquary, and dreamed like a romantic girl; and at the same time enjoyed fine effects with the true natural feeling of an artist; though Dolly was no artist. The sense had not been cultivated, but the feeling was born in her. So the British Museum was to her something quite beyond fairyland; a region of wonders, where past ages went by in procession; or better, stood still for her eyes to gaze upon them. The Tower was another place of indescribable fascination. How many visits they made to it I dare not say; Dolly never had enough; and her delight was so much of a feast to her father that he did not grudge the time nor mind what he would have called the dawdling. Indeed it was a sort of refuge to Mr. Copley, when business perplexities or iterations had fairly wearied him, which sometimes happened; then he would flee away from the dust and confusion of present life in the city and lose himself with Dolly in the cool shades of the past. That might seem dusty to him too; but there was always a fresh spring of life in his little daughter which made a green place for him wherever she happened to be. So Mr. Copley was as contented with the condition of things at this time as it was in his nature to feel. He had enough society, as his wife had stated; he had all he wanted in that line; he was just as well contented to keep Dolly for the present at home and to himself. He did not want her to be snapped up by somebody, he said; and if you don't mean to have a fire, you had best not leave matches lying about; a sentiment which Mrs. Copley received with great scorn.

It would have, so far, suited the views of both parents, to send Dolly to some first-rate boarding school for a year or two. Only, they could not do without her. She was the staple of Mrs. Copley's life, and the spice of life to her husband. Dolly was kept at home therefore, and furnished with masters in music and drawing, and at her pressing request, in languages also. And just because she made diligent, conscientious use of these advantages and worked hard most of the time, Dolly the more richly enjoyed an occasional half day of wandering about with her father. She came home from her visit to the Bank of England in high glee and with a brave appetite for her late luncheon.

"Well," said Mrs. Copley, watching her,--"now you have tired yourself out again; and for what?"

"O mother, it was a very great sight!" said Dolly. "I wish you had been along. I think it has given me the best notion of the greatness of England that I have got from anything yet."

"Money isn't *everything*," said Mrs. Copley scornfully. "I dare say we have just as good banks in America."

"Father says, there is nothing equal to it in the world."

"That is because your father is so taken with everything English. He'd be sure to say that. I don't know why a bank in America shouldn't be as good as a bank here, or anywhere."

"It isn't that, mother. A bank might be *good*, in one sense; but it could not be such a magnificent establishment as this, anywhere but in England."

"Why not?"

"Oh, the abundance of wealth here, mother; and the scale of everything; and the superb order and system. English system is something beautiful." And Dolly went on to explain to her mother the arrangements of the bank, and in especial the order taken for the preservation and gradual destruction of the redeemed notes.

"I should like to know what is the use of such things as banks at all?" was Mrs. Copley's unsatisfied comment.

"Why mother? don't you know? they make business so much easier, and safer."

"I wish there was no such thing as banks, then."

"O mother! Why do you say that?"

"Then your father would maybe let business alone."

"But he is fond of business!"

"I don't think business is fond of him. He gets drawn into a speculation here and a speculation there, by some of these people he is always with; and some day he will do it once too often. He has enough for us all now; if he would only keep to his consul's business and let banks alone."

Mrs. Copley looked worried, and Dolly for a moment looked grave; but it was her mother's way to talk so.

"Why did he take the consulship?"

"Ask him! Because he would rather be a nobody in England than a somebody in America."

"Mother," said Dolly after a pause, "we have an invitation to dinner."

"Who?"

"Father and I."

"Not me!" cried Mrs. Copley. "You and your father, and not your father's wife!"

"I suppose the people do not know you, mother, nor know about you; that must be the reason."

"How do they know about you, pray?"

"They have seen me. At least one of them has; so father says."

"One of whom?"

"One of the family."

"What family is it?"

"A rich banker's family, father says. Mr. St. Leger."

"St. Leger. That is a good name here."

"They are very rich, father says, and have a beautiful place."

"Where?"

"Some miles out of London; a good many, I think."

"Where is your invitation?"

"Where?--Oh, it is not written. Mr. St. Leger asked father to come and bring me."

"And *Mrs.* St. Leger has sent you no invitation, then. Not even a card, Dolly?"

"Why no, mother. Was that necessary?"

"It would have been civil," said Mrs. Copley. "It is what she would have done to an Englishwoman. I suppose they think we don't know any better."

Dolly was silent, and Mrs. Copley presently went on.--"How can you go to dinner several miles away? You would have to come back in the night."

"Oh no; we could not do that. Mr. St. Leger asked us to stay over till next day."

"It is just like everything else in this miserable country!" Mrs. Copley exclaimed. "I wish I was at home!"

"Oh, why, mother? We shall go home by and by; why cannot you enjoy things, while we are here?"

"Enjoy what? Staying here in the house and seeing you and your father go off to dinners without me? At home I am Mrs. Copley, and it means something; here, it seems, I am Mr. Copley's housekeeper."

"But, mother, nobody meant any affront. And you will not see us go off and leave you; for I shall stay at home."

"Indeed you will do no such thing! I am not going to have you asked anywhere, really asked to a dinner, and not go. You shall go, Dolly. But I really think Mr. Copley might have managed to let the people know you had a mother somewhere. That's what he would have done, if it wasn't for business. It is business that swallows him up; and I don't know for my part what life is good for so. Once I had a husband. Now, I declare I haven't got anything but you, Dolly."

"Mother, you *have* me," said the girl, kissing her. And the caress was so sweet that it reminded Mrs. Copley how much that one word "Dolly" signified; and she was quiet. And when Mr. Copley came home, and the subject was discussed anew, she limited herself to inquiries about the family and questions concerning Dolly's dress, refraining from all complaints on her own score.

"St. Leger?" said Mr. Copley. "Who is he? He's a goodish old fellow; sharp as a hawk in business; but he's solid; solid as the Bank. That's all there is about him; he is of no great count, except for his money. He'll never set the Thames on fire. What did he ask us for?--Humph! Well--he and I have had a good deal to do with each other. And then--" Mr. Copley paused and his eyes involuntarily went over the table to his daughter. "Do you remember, Dolly, being in my office one day, a month ago or more, when Mr. St. Leger came in? he and his son?"

Dolly remembered nothing about it; remembered indeed being there, but not who came in.

"Well, *they* remember it," said Mr. Copley.

"Is it a good place for Dolly to go?"

"Dolly? Oh yes. Why not? They have a fine place out of town. Dolly will tell you about it when she has been there."

"And what must Dolly wear?" pursued Mrs. Copley.

"Wear? Oh, just what everybody wears. The regular thing, I suppose. Dolly may wear what she has a mind to."

"That is just what you know she cannot, Mr. Copley. At home she might; but these people here are so very particular."

"About dress? Not at all, my dear. English people let you go your own way in that as much as any people on the face of the earth. They do not care how you dress."

"They don't *care*, no," said Mrs. Copley; "they don't care if you went on your head; but all the same they judge you according to how you look and what you do. And us especially because we are foreigners. I don't want them to turn up their noses at Dolly because she is an American."

"I'd as lieve they did it for that as for anything," said Dolly laughing; "but I hope the people we are going to will know better."

"They *will* know better, there is no fear," answered her father.

The subject troubled Mrs. Copley's head, however, from that time till the day of the dinner; and even after Dolly and her father had driven off and were gone, she still debated with herself uneasily whether a darker dress would have done better, and whether Dolly ought to have had flowers in her hair, to make her very best impression upon her entertainers. For Dolly had elected to wear white, and would deck herself with no ornament at all, neither ribband nor flower. Mrs. Copley half grumbled, yet could not but allow to herself that there was nothing to wish for in the finished effect; and Dolly was allowed to depart; but as I said, after she was gone, Mrs. Copley went on troubling herself with doubts on the question.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PEACOCKS.

No doubts troubled Dolly's mind during that drive, about dress or anything else. Her dress she had forgotten indeed; and the pain of leaving her mother at home was forced to give way before the multitude of new and pleasant impressions. That drive was pure enjoyment. The excitement and novelty of the occasion gave no doubt a spur to Dolly's spirits and quickened her perceptions; they were all alive, as the carriage rolled along over the smooth roads. What could be better than to drive so, on such an evening, through such a country? For the weather was perfect, the landscape exceedingly rich and fair, the vegetation in its glory. And the roads themselves were full of the most varied life, and offered to the little American girl a flashing, changing, very amusing and abundantly suggestive scene. Dolly's eyes were incessantly busy, yet her lips did not move unless to smile; and her father for a long time would not interrupt her meditations. Good that she should forget herself, he thought; if she were recalled to the practical present maybe she would grow nervous. That was the only thing Mr. Copley was afraid of. However, for him to keep absolute silence beyond a limited time was out of his nature.

"Are you happy, Dolly?" he asked her.

"Very happy, father! If only mother was with us."

"Ah, yes, it would have been rather pleasanter for you; but you must not mind that."

"I am afraid I do not mind it enough, I am so amused with everything. I cannot help it."

"That's right. Now, Dolly"

"Yes, father"

"I should like to know what you have been thinking of all this while. I have been watching the smiles coming and going."

"I do not know that I was thinking at all--until just now; just before you spoke."

"And of what then?"

"It came to me, I do not know why, a question. We have passed so many people who seemed as if they were enjoying themselves,--like me;--and so many pretty-looking places, where people might live happy, one would think; and the question somehow came to me, father, what I am going to do with my own life?"

"Do with it?" said Mr. Copley astonished; "why enjoy it, Dolly. Every day as much as to-day."

"But perhaps one cannot enjoy life always," said Dolly thoughtfully.

"All you can, then, dear; all you can. There is nothing to prevent *your* always enjoying it. You will have money enough; and that is the main thing. There is nothing to hinder your enjoying yourself."

"But, father, don't you think one ought to do more with one's life than that?"

"Yes; you'll marry one of these days, and so make somebody else enjoy himself."

"What would become of you and mother then?" asked Dolly shyly.

"We'd get along," said Mr. Copley. "What we care about, is to see you enjoy life, Dolly. Are you enjoying it now, puss?"

"Very much, father."

"Then so am I."

The carriage left the high road here, and Dolly's attention was again, seemingly, all bestowed on what she saw from its windows. Her father watched her, and could not observe that she was either timid or excited in the prospect of the new scenes upon which she was about to enter. Her big brown eyes were wide open, busy and interested, at the same time wholly self-forgetful. Self-forgetful they remained when arriving at the house, and when she was introduced to the family; and her manner consequently left nothing to be desired. Yet house and grounds and establishment were on a scale to which Dolly hitherto had been entirely unaccustomed.

There was a small dinner party gathered, and Dolly was taken in to table by young Mr. St. Leger, the son of their host. Dolly had seen this gentleman before, and so in this concourse of strangers she felt more at home with him than with anybody. Young Mr. St. Leger was a very handsome fellow; with regular features and soft, rather lazy, blue eyes, which, however, were not insipid. Dolly rather liked him; the expression of his features was gentle and good, so were his manners. He seemed well pleased with his choice of a companion, and did his best to make Dolly pleased also.

"You are new in this part of the world?" he remarked to her.

"I am new in any part of the world," said Dolly, dimpling, as she did when something struck her funnily. "I am not very old yet."

"No, I see," said her companion, laughing a little, though in some doubt whether he or she had made the fun. "How do you like us? Or haven't you been long enough here to judge?"

"I have been in England a good many months."

"Then is it a fair question?"

"All questions are fair," said Dolly. "I like some things here very much."

"I should be delighted to know what."

"I'll tell you," said Dolly's father, who sat opposite and had caught the question. "She likes an old suit of armour or a collection of old stones in the form of an arch or a gateway; and in the presence of the crown jewels she was almost as bad as that Scotch lady who worshipped the old Regalia of the northern kingdom. Only it was the antiquity that Dolly worshipped, you know; not the royalty."

"What is there in antiquity?" said Mr. St. Leger, turning his eyes again curiously to Dolly. "Old things were young once; how are they any better for being old?"

"Not any better; only more interesting."

"Pray tell me why."

"Think of what those old stones have seen."

"Pardon me; they have not *seen* anything."

"Think of the eyes that have seen them, then. Or stand before one of those old suits of armour in the Tower, and think where it has been. Think of the changes that have come; and what a strange witness it is for the things that were and have passed away."

"I am more interested in the present," said the young man. "I perceive you are romantic."

Dolly was silent. She thought one of those halls of old armour in the Tower was in its attractions very far beyond the present dinner table; although indeed this amused her. Presently her companion began again and gave her details about all the guests; who they were, and how they happened to be there; and then suddenly asked her if she had ever been to the races? Dolly inquired what races; and was informed that the Epsom races were just beginning. Would she like to go to them? was inquired eagerly.

Dolly had no idea what was the real character of the show she was asked about; and she answered in accordance with her general craving to see everything. Nevertheless she was somewhat surprised, when the gentlemen came up from dinner, to hear the proposition earnestly made; made by both Mr. and Mrs. St. Leger; that she and her father should go with them the next day to the Epsom races; and she was greatly astonished to hear her father agree to the proposal, although the acceptance of it involved the staying another day away from home and the sleeping a second night at the St. Leger place. But Dolly was not consulted. The family expressed their pleasure in undoubted terms, and young Mr. St. Leger's blue eyes had a gleam of satisfaction in them, as he assured Dolly that now they would "show her something of interest in the present."

Dolly was the youngest guest in the house, and by all rules the one entitled to least consideration; yet she went to sleep that night in a chamber the most superb she had ever inhabited in her life. She looked around her with wonder at the richness of every matter of detail, and a little private query how *she*, little Dolly Copley, came to be so lodged? Her mother would have no reason *here* to complain of want of due regard. And all the evening there had been no such complaint to make. People had been very kind, Dolly said to herself as she was falling asleep. But how *could* her father have consented to stay another day, for any races in the world--leaving her mother alone? But she could not help it; and no doubt the next day would be amusing; to-day had been amusing--and Dolly's thoughts went no further.

The next morning everybody drove or rode to the races. Dolly herself was taken by young Mr. St. Leger, along with one of his sisters, in an elegant little vehicle for which she knew no name. It was very comfortable, and they drove very fast--till the crowd hindered them, that is; and certainly Dolly was amused. All was novel and strange to her; the concourse, the equipages, the people, the horses, even before they arrived at the race grounds. There a good position was secured, and Dolly saw the whole of that day's performances. Mr. St. Leger attended to her unremittingly; he and his sister explained everything, and pointed out the people of mark within their range of vision; his blue eyes grew quite animated, and looked into Dolly's to see what they could find there, of response or otherwise. And Dolly's eyes were grave and wide-awake, intent, very busy, very lively, but how far they were brightened with pleasure he could not tell. They were bright, he saw that; fearless, pure, sweet eyes, that yet baffled him; no trace of self-consciousness or self-seeking was to be found in them; and young St. Leger stood a little in awe, as common men will, before a face so uncommon. He ventured no direct question for the satisfying of his curiosity until they had returned, and dinner was over. Indeed he did not venture it then; it was his father who asked it. He too had observed the simple, well-bred, lovely little maiden, and had a little curiosity on his own part.

"Well, Miss Copley--now you have seen Epsom, how do you like it?"

Dolly hesitated. "I have been very much interested, sir, thank you," she said gravely.

"But how do you *like* it? Did you enjoy it?"

Dolly hesitated again. Finally smiled and confessed. "I was sorry for the horses."

"Sorry for the horses!" her host repeated. "What for?"

"Yes, what for?" added the younger St. Leger. "They were not ill treated."

"No,--" said Dolly doubtfully, "perhaps not,--but they were running very hard, and for nothing."

"For nothing!" echoed Mr. St. Leger again. "It was for a good many thousand pounds. There's many a one was there to-day who wishes they had run for nothing!"

"But after all, that is for nothing," said Dolly. "It is no good to anybody."

"Except to those that win," said the old gentleman. "Except to those that win!" Probably *he* had won.

Dolly wanted to get out of the conversation. She made no answer. Another gentleman spoke up, and opined, were it not for the money won and lost, the whole thing would fail of its attraction. It would be no sport indeed, if the horses ran *for nothing*. "Do you have no races in--a--your country?" he asked Dolly.

Dolly believed so. She had never been present at them.

"Nothing like Epsom," said her father. "We shall have nothing to show like that for some time. But Dolly takes practical views. I saw her smiling out of the windows, as we drove along, coming here yesterday; and I asked her what she was thinking of? I expected to hear her say, the beauty of the plantations, or the richness of the country, or the elegance and variety of the equipages we passed. She answered me she was thinking *what she should do with her life!*"

There was a general gentle note of amusement audible through the room, but old Mr. St. Leger laughed out in a broad "ha, ha."

"What did you conclude, my dear?" said he. "What did you conclude? I am interested to know."

"I could not conclude then, sir," said Dolly, bearing the laugh very well, with a pretty little peach-blossom blush coming upon her cheeks.

"Tisn't difficult to know," the old gentleman went on, not unkindly watching Dolly's face play. "There is one pretty certain lot for a pretty young woman. She will manage her household, take care of her husband, and bring up her children,--one of these days."

"That is not precisely the ambition of all pretty young women," remarked one of the party; while Mrs. St. Leger good humouredly drew Dolly down to a seat beside her and engrossed her attention.

"You meant the words perhaps in another sense, more practical, that your father did not think of. You were thinking maybe what profession you would follow?"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am!" said Dolly, quite perplexed now. "How do you mean, profession?"

"Yes; perhaps you were thinking of being a governess some day, or a teacher, or something of that sort; were you?"

Dolly's face dimpled all over in a way that seemed to young St. Leger the very prettiest, winningest, most uncommon loveliness that his eyes had ever been blessed with. Said eyes were inseparable from Dolly; he had no attention but for her looks and words; and his mother knew as much, while she too looked at the girl and waited for her answer.

"Oh no," Dolly said; "I was not thinking of any such thing. My father does not wish me to do anything of the kind."

"Then what *did* you mean, my dear?"

Dolly lifted a pair of sweet grave eyes to the face of her questioner; a full, rather bloated face, very florid; with an expression of eyes kindly indeed, but unresting, dissatisfied; or if that is too strong a word, not content. Dolly looked at all this and answered--

"I don't want to live merely to live, ma'am."

"Don't you? What more do you want? To live pleasantly, of course; for not to do *that*, is not what I call living."

"I was not thinking of pleasant living. But--I do not want my life to be like those horses running to-day," said Dolly smiling; "for nothing; of no use."

"Don't you think a woman is of use and fills her place, my dear, who looks after her household and attends to her family, and does her duty by society?"

"Yes," said Dolly hesitating,--"but that is not enough." The girl was thinking of her own mother at the moment.

"Not enough? Why, yes, it is enough. That is a woman's place and business. What else would you do?"

Dolly was in some embarrassment now. She must answer, for Mrs. St. Leger was waiting for it; but her answer could not be understood. Her eye took in again the rich appliances for present enjoyment which filled the room, above, below, and around her; and then she said, her eye coming back--

"I would like my life to be good for something that would not pass away."

"Not pass away? Why, everything passes away, my child" (and there came a sigh here),--"in time. The thing is to make the best of them while we have them."

Is that all? thought Dolly, as she noticed the untested, rather sad look of her hostess's face; and she wished she could say more, but she dared not. Then young Mr. St. Leger bent forward, and inquired what she could be thinking of that would *not* pass away? His mother saw the look with which his blue eyes sought the face of the little stranger; and turned away with another sigh, born half of sympathy with her boy's feeling and half of jealousy against the subject of it. Dolly saw the look too, but did not comprehend it. She simply wondered why these people put her through the catechism so?

"What could you be thinking of?" St. Leger repeated, sliding into the seat his mother had quitted.

"Don't you know anything that will last?" Dolly retorted.

"No," said the young man, laughing. "Do you? Except that I have heard that 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'"

This, which was a remarkable flight for St. Leger, was lost upon simple Dolly.

"Oh, I know that is true," she answered; "but that is just a way of speaking. It would not be a joy to me, if I had not something else to hold to. I am sorry for you."

"Really? I wish I could think that. It would be delightful to have you sorry for me."

"It would be much better not to need it."

"I don't know about that. Perhaps, if you were very sorry for me, you would try to teach me better."

"Perhaps; but I shall not have time. I suppose we shall go away very early in the morning."

"I should like to show you the gardens, first."

"Haven't we seen them?"

"Why, of course not. All that you have seen is a little shrubbery and a bit of the park. Suppose we go over the gardens in the morning?"

"I am sure we shall return home immediately after breakfast."

"Before breakfast then? Why not?"

This plan went into effect. It was an occasion of great pleasure to both parties. No better time could be for seeing the utmost beauty of the flowers; and Dolly wandered in what was to her a wilderness of an enchanted land. Breakfast was forgotten; and young St. Leger was so charmed with this perfectly fresh, simple, and lively nature, that he for his part was willing to forget it indefinitely. Dolly's utter delight, and her intelligent, quick apprehension, the sparkle in her eye, the happy colour in her cheeks, made her to his fancy the rarest thing he had ever seen. The gardener, who was summoned to give information of which his young master was not possessed, entertained quite the same opinion; and thanks to his admiring gratification Dolly went back to the house the possessor of a most superb bouquet, which he had cut for her and offered through Mr. St. Leger.

There were some significant half smiles around the breakfast table, as the young pair and the flowers made their appearance. St. Leger braved them; Dolly did not see them. Her sweet eyes were full of the blissful enchantment still. Immediately after breakfast, as she had said, her father took leave.

Mrs. Copley had awaited their coming in a mood half irritation, half gratification. The latter conquered when she saw Dolly.

"Now tell me all about it!" she said, before Dolly even could take off her bonnet.

"She went to the races," said Mr. Copley.

"That's a queer place for Dolly to go, Mr. Copley."

"Not at all. Everybody goes that can go."

"I think it's a queer place for young ladies to go," persisted the mother.

"It is a queer place enough for anybody, if you come to that; but no worse for them than for others; and it is they make the scene so pretty as it is."

"I can't imagine how there should be anything pretty in seeing horses run to death!" said Mrs. Copley.

"I just said it is the pretty girls that give the charm," said her husband. "Though *I* can see some beauty in a fine horse, and in good riding; and they understand riding, those Epsom jockeys."

"Jockeys!" his wife repeated. "I don't want to hear you talk about jockeys, Mr. Copley."

"I am not going to, my dear. I give up the field to Dolly."

"Mother, the first thing was the place. It is a most beautiful place."

"The race-ground?"

"No, no, mother; Mr. St. Leger's place. 'The Peacocks,' they call it."

"What do they give it such a ridiculous name for?"

"I don't know. Perhaps they used to have a great many peacocks. But the place is the most beautiful place I ever saw. Mother, we were half an hour driving from the lodge at the park gate to the house."

"The road so bad?"

"So *long*, mother; think of it; half an hour through the park woods, until we came out upon the great lawn dotted with the noblest trees you ever saw."

"Better than the trees in Boston common? I guess not," said Mrs. Copley.

"Those are good trees, mother, but nothing to these. These are just magnificent."

"I don't see why fine trees cannot grow as well on American ground as on English," said Mrs. Copley incredulously.

"Give them time enough," put in her husband.

"Time!"

"Yes. We are a new country, comparatively, my dear. These old oaks here have been growing for hundreds of years."

"And what should hinder them from growing hundreds of years over there? I suppose the *ground* is as old as England; if Columbus didn't discover it all at once."

"The ground," said Mr. Copley, eyeing the floor between his boots,—"yes, the ground; but it takes more than ground to make large trees. It takes good ground, and favouring climate, and culture; or at least to be let alone. Now we don't let things alone in America."

"I know *you* don't," said his wife. "Well, Dolly, go on with your story."

"Well, mother,—there were these grand old trees, and beautiful grass under them, and cattle here and there, and the house showing in the distance. I did not like the house so very much, when we came to it; it is not old; but it is exceedingly handsome, and most beautifully furnished. I never had such a room in my life, as I have slept in these two nights."

"And yet you don't like it!" put in Mr. Copley.

"I like it," said Dolly slowly. "I like all the comfort of it; but I don't think it is very pretty, father. It's very *new*."

"New!" said her father. "What's the harm of a thing's being new? And what is the charm of its being old?"

"I don't know," said Dolly thoughtfully; "but I like it. Then, mother, came the dinner; and the dinner was like the house."

"That don't tell me anything," exclaimed Mrs. Copley. "What was the house like?"

"Mother, you go first into a great hall, set all round with marble figures--statues--and with a heavy staircase going up at one side. It's all marble. But oh, the flower garden is lovely!"

"Well, tell me about the house," said Mrs. Copley. "And the dinner. Who was there?"

"I don't know," said Dolly; "quite a company. There were one or two foreign gentlemen; a count somebody and a baron somebody; there was an English judge, and his wife, and two or three other ladies and gentlemen."

"How did you like the gentlemen, Dolly?" her father asked here.

"I had hardly anything to do with them, except the two Mr. St. Legers."

"How did you like *them*? I suppose, on your principle, you would tell me that you liked the *old* one?"

"Never mind them," said Mrs. Copley; "go on about the dinner. What did you have?"

"Oh, everything, mother; and the most beautiful fruit at dessert; fruit from their own hothouses; and I saw the hothouses, afterwards. Most beautiful! the purple and white grapes were hanging in thick clusters all over the vines; and quantities of different sorts of pines were growing in another hothouse. I had a bunch of Frontignacs this morning before breakfast, father; and I never had grapes taste so good."

"Yes, you must have wanted something," said Mr. Copley; "wandering about among flowers and fruit till ten o'clock without anything to eat!"

"Poor Mr. St. Leger!" said Dolly. "But he was very kind. They were all very kind. If they only would not drink wine so!"

"Wine!" Mrs. Copley exclaimed.

"It was all dinner time; it began with the soup, and it did not end with the fruit, for the gentlemen sat on drinking after we had left them. And they had been drinking all dinner time; the decanters just went round and round."

"Nonsense, Dolly!" her father said; "you are unaccustomed to the world, that is all. There was none but the most moderate drinking."

"It was all dinner time, father."

"That is the custom of gentlemen here. It is always so. Tell your mother about the races."

"I don't like the races."

"Why not?"

"Well, tell me what they were, at any rate," said Mrs. Copley. "It is the least you can do."

"I don't know how to tell you," said Dolly. "I will try. Imagine a great flat plain, mother, level as far as the eye can see. Imagine a straight line marked out, where the horses are to run; and at the end of it a post, which is the goal, and there is the judges' stand. All about this course, on both sides, that is towards the latter part of the course, fancy rows of carriages, drawn up as close as they can stand, the horses taken out; and on these carriages a crowd of people packed as thick as they can find room to sit and stand. They talk and laugh and discuss the horses. By and by you hear a cry that the horses have set off; and then everybody looks to see them coming, with all sorts of glasses and telescopes; and everybody is still, waiting and watching, until I suppose the horses get near enough for people to begin to judge how the race will turn out; and then begins the fearfullest uproar you ever heard, everybody betting and taking bets. *Everybody* seemed to be doing it, even ladies. And with the betting comes the shouting, and the cursing, and the cheering on this one and that one; it was a regular Babel. Even the ladies betted."

"Every one does it," said Mr. Copley.

"And the poor horses come running, and driven to run as hard as they can; beautiful horses too, some of them; running to decide all those bets! I don't think it is an amusement for civilised people."

"Why not?" said her father.

"It is barbarous. There is no sense in it. If the white horse beats the black, I'll pay you a thousand pounds; but if the black horse beats the white, you shall pay me two thousand. Is there any sense in that?"

"Some sense in a thousand pound."

"Lost"--said Dolly.

"It is better not to lose, certainly."

"But somebody must lose. And people bet in a heat, before they know what they ought to say; and bet more than they have to spare; I saw it yesterday."

"*You* didn't bet, Mr. Copley?" said his wife.

"A trifle. My dear, when one is in Rome, one must do as the Romans do."

"Did you lose?"

"I gained, a matter of fifty pounds."

"Who did you gain it from, father?"

"Lawrence St. Leger."

"He has no right to bet with his father's money."

"Perhaps it is his own. I will give you twenty pound of it, Dolly, to do what you like with."

But Dolly would have none of it. If it was to be peace money, it made no peace with her.

CHAPTER X.

BRIERLEY COTTAGE.

A few months later than this, it happened one day that Mr. Copley was surprised in his office by a visit from young St. Leger. Mr. Copley was sitting at a table in his own private room. It was not what you would call a very comfortable room; rather bare and desolate looking; a carpet and some chairs and desks and a table being the only furniture. The table was heaped up with papers, and desks and floor alike testified to an amount of heterogeneous business. Busy the Consul undoubtedly was, writing and studying; nevertheless, he welcomed his visitor. The young man came in like an inhabitant of another world, as he was; in spotlessly neat attire, leisurely manner, and with his blue eyes sleepily nonchalant at the sight of all the stir of all the world. But they smiled at Mr. Copley.

"You seem to have your bands full," he remarked.

"Rather. Don't I? Awfully! Secretary taken sick--confoundedly inconvenient." Mr. Copley went on writing as he spoke.

"There are plenty of secretaries to be had."

"Yes, but I haven't got hold of 'em yet. What brings you here, Lawrence? Not business, I suppose?"

"Not business with the American Consul."

"No. I made out so much by myself. What is it? I see all's right with you, by your face."

"Thank you. Quite so. But you can't attend to me just now."

"Go ahead," said Mr. Copley, whose pen did not cease to scribble. "I can hear. No time for anything like the present minute. I've got *this* case by heart, and don't need to think about it. Go on, Lawrence. Has your father sent you to me?"

"No."

"Sit down, and tell me what I can do for you."

Mr. St. Leger sat down, but did not immediately comply with the rest of the invitation. He rested his elbow on the table, looked at Mr. Copley's pen for a few minutes, and said nothing; until Mr. Copley again glanced up at his face.

"I do not know that you can do anything for me," said the young man then; "only you can perhaps answer a question or two. Mr. Copley, would you like to have me for a son-in-law?"

"No," said the Consul shortly; "nor any other man. I'd as lieve have you as anybody, Lawrence."

"Thank you. I couldn't expect more. But you must allow somebody in that capacity, Mr. Copley."

"Must I? Depends on how much Dolly likes somebody."

"That is just what I want to find out about myself," said the young man eagerly. "Then you would not put any hindrance?"

"In the way of Dolly's happiness? Not if I know it. But *that's* got to be proved."

"You know, Mr. Copley, she would be happy with me."

"How do I know that? I know nothing of the kind. It all depends on Dolly, I tell you. What does she think about it?"

"That's just what I don't know and cannot find out. I have no chance. I cannot get sight of her."

"Her mother's sick, you see. It keeps Dolly at home."

"My mother has proposed several times to take Miss Copley out with her, and she will not go."

"She's very kind, and we are grateful; but Dolly won't leave her mother."

"So she says. Then how am I to see her, Mr. Copley? I can't expect her to like me if I never see her."

"I don't know, my boy. Wait till better times."

"Wait" is a word that lovers never want to hear; and Lawrence sat discontentedly watching the play of Mr. Copley's pen.

"You know it would be all right about the money," he said at length.

"Yes, yes; between your father and her father, I guess we could make it comfortable for you two. But the thing is all the while, what Dolly thinks of you."

"And how am I to find that out?"

"Can't tell, I declare. Unless you volunteer to become my secretary."

"Does your secretary live in your family?"

"Of course he does. One of us completely."

"Will you take me, Mr. Copley?"

"Yes, but you would never take the drudgery. It is not in your line."

"Try me," said the young man. "I'll take it at once. Will you have me, Mr. Copley? But *she* must not know what you take me for. I don't care for the drudgery. Will you let me come? On trial?"

"Why is the boy in earnest? This is Jacob and Rachel over again!"

"Not for seven years, I hope."

"No, I shall not stay in this old crib as long as that. The question will have to be decided sooner. We haven't so much time to spare as those old patriarchs. But Dolly must have time to make up her mind, if it takes seven years. She is a queer little piece, and usually has a mind of her own. About this affair she certainly will. I'll give Mrs. Copley a hint to keep quiet, and Dolly will never suspect anything."

Lawrence was so thoroughly in earnest that he insisted on going to work at once. And the next day he was introduced at the house and made at home there.

It was quite true that Mrs. Copley was unwell; the doctors were not yet agreed as to the cause. She was feeble and nervous and feverish, and Dolly's time was wholly devoted to her. In these circumstances St. Leger's coming into the family made a very pleasant change. Dolly wondered a little that the rich banker's son should care to do business in the American Consul's office; but she troubled her head little about it. What he did in the office was out of her sphere; at home, in the family, he was a great improvement on the former secretary. Mr. Barr, his predecessor, had been an awkward, angular, taciturn fourth person in the house; a machine of the pen; nothing more. Mr. St. Leger brought quite a new life into the family circle. It is true, he was himself no great talker; but his blue eyes were eloquent. They were beautiful eyes; and they spoke of kindness of heart, gentleness of disposition, and undoubted liking for his present companions. There was refinement too, and the habit of the world, and the power of comprehending at least what others spoke; and gentle as he was, there was also now and then a gleam which showed some fire and some persistent self-will; that amount of backbone without which a man's agreeable qualities go for nothing with women. It was pleasant, his respectful attention to Mrs. Copley; it was pleasant too the assistance he was to Mr. Copley's monologues; if he did not say a great deal himself, his blue eyes gave intelligent heed, and he could also now and then say a word in the right place. With Dolly he took very soon the familiar habit of a brother. She liked him, she liked to pour out his coffee for him, it amused her to hear her father talk to him, she was grateful for his kindness to her mother; and before long the words exchanged between themselves came in the easy, enjoyable tone of a thorough good understanding. I don't know but St. Leger would have liked a little more shyness on her part. Dolly was not given to shyness in any company; and as to being shy with him, she would as soon have thought of being on terms of ceremony with Berdan, the great hound that her father was so proud of. And poor St. Leger was more hopelessly in love every day. Dolly was so fresh and cool and sweet, as she came down to breakfast in her white wrapper; she was so despairingly careless and free; and at evening, dressed for dinner, she was so quiet and simple and graceful; it was another thing, he said to himself, seeing a girl in this way, from dancing with her in a cloud of lace and flowers in a crowded room, and talking conventional nothings. Now, on the contrary, he was always admiring Dolly's practical business ways; the quick eye and capable hand; the efficient attention she bestowed on the affairs of the household and gave to her father's and mother's comfort, and also not less to his own. And she was quaint; she moved curiosity. With all her beauty, she never seemed to think of her looks; and with all her spirit and sense, she never seemed to talk but when she had something to say; while yet, if anything in the conversation deserved it, it was worth while to catch the sparkle of Dolly's eye and see her face dimple. Nevertheless, she would often sit for a long time silent at the table, when others were talking, and remind nobody voluntarily of her presence.

Spring had come now, and London was filling; and Lawrence was hoping for some gaieties that would draw Dolly out into society, notwithstanding his secret confession about ball rooms. He wanted to see how she would bear the great world, how she would meet it; but still more he hoped to have some chance to make himself of importance to her. And then the doctors decided that Mrs. Copley must go into the country.

What was to be done? Mr. Copley could not quit London without giving up his office. To any distance Mrs. Copley could not go without him. The dilemma, which Lawrence at first had heard of with dismay, turned for his advantage; or he hoped so. His father owned a cottage in a pretty part of the country, not a great many miles from London, which cottage just then was untenanted. Mr. Copley could run down there any day (so could he); and Mrs. Copley would be in excellent air, with beautiful surroundings. This plan was agreed to, and Lawrence hurried away to make the needful arrangements with his father and at the cottage.

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Copley, when all this was communicated to her,--"why can't we go home?"

"Father is not ready for that, mother," Dolly said somewhat sadly.

"Where is this place you are talking of?"

"Down in Berkshire. Mr. St. Leger says you will be sure to like it."

"Mr. St. Leger doesn't know everything. Is the house furnished?"

"I believe so. Oh, I hope it will be very pleasant, mother dear. It's a pretty place; and they say it will be very good for you."

"Who says so?"

"The doctors"

"*They* don't know everything, either. I tell you what I believe would do me good, Dolly, only your father never wants what I want, unless he wants it at a different time; I should like to go travelling."

"Travelling!--Where?" Dolly exclaimed and inquired.

"Anywhere. I want a change. I am so tired of London, I could die! I have swallowed dust and fog enough to kill me. I should like to go where there is no dust. That would be a change. I should like to go to Venice."

"Venice! So should I," said Dolly in a changed tone. "Well, mother, we'll go down first to this cottage in the country--they say it's delightful there;--and then, if it does you good, you'll be well enough, and we will coax father to take us to Italy."

"I don't care about Italy. I only want to be quiet in Venice, where there are no carts or omnibusses. I don't believe this cottage will do me one bit of good."

"Mother, I guess it will. At any rate, I suppose we must try."

"I wish your father could have been contented at home, when he was well off. It's very unlucky he ever brought us here. I don't see what is to become of you, for my part."

Dolly suppressed a sigh at this point.

"You know what the Bible says, mother. 'All things shall work together for good, to them that love God.'"

"I don't want to hear that sort of talk, Dolly."

"Why not, mother?"

"It don't mean anything. I would rather have people show their religion in their lives, than hear them talk about it."

"But, mother, isn't there comfort in those words?"

"No. It ain't true."

"O mother! *What* isn't true?"

"That. There is a difference between things, and there is no use trying to make out they're all alike. Sour isn't sweet, and hard ain't soft. What's the use of talking as if it was? I always like to look at things just as they are."

"But, mother!--"

"Now, don't talk, Dolly, but just tell me. What is the good of my getting sick just now? just now, when you ought to be going into company? And we have got to give up our house, and you and I go and bury ourselves down in some out-of-the-way place, and your father get along as he can; and how we shall get along without him to manage, I am sure I don't know."

"He will run down to see us often, mother."

"The master's eye wants to be all the while on the spot, if anything is to keep straight."

"But this is such a little spot; I think my eye can manage it."

"Then how are you going to take care of me?--if you are overseeing the place. And I don't believe my nerves are going to stand it, all alone down there. It'll be lonely. I'd rather hear the carts rattle. It's dreadful, to hear nothing."

"Well, we will try how it goes, mother; and if it does not go well, we will try somewhere else."

The house in town was given up, and Mr. Copley moved into lodgings. Some furniture and two servants were sent down to the cottage; but the very day when the ladies were to follow, Mr. Copley was taken possession of by some really important business. The secretary volunteered to supply his place; and in his company Mrs. Copley and Dolly made the little journey, one warm summer day.

Dolly had her own causes for anxiety, the weightier that they must be kept to herself. Nevertheless, the influence of sweet nature could not be withstood. The change from city streets and crowds to the green leafiness of June in the country, the quiet of unpaved roads, the deliciousness of the air full of scents from woodland and field, excited Dolly like champagne. Every nerve thrilled with delight; her eyes could not get enough, nor her lungs. And when they arrived at the cottage, Brierley Cottage it was called, she was filled with a glad surprise. It was no common, close, musty, uncomfortable little dwelling; but a roomy old house with plenty of space, dark oak wainscotings, casement windows with little diamond panes, and a wide porch covered with climbing roses and honeysuckle. These were in blossom now, and the air was perfumed with their incomparable sweetness. Round the house lay a small garden ground, which having been some time without care looked pretty wild.

Dolly uttered her delight as the party entered the porch. Mrs. Copley passed on silently, looking at everything with critical eyes.

"What a charming old house, mother! so airy and so old-fashioned, and *everything* so nice."

"I am afraid there is not much furniture in it," remarked the secretary.

"We don't want much, for two people," said Dolly gaily.

"But when your father brings a dinner party down," said Mrs. Copley; "how does he suppose we shall manage then? You must have chairs for people to sit on."

Dolly did not answer; it had struck her that her father had no intention of bringing dinner parties down, and that he had made his arrangements with an evident exclusion of any such idea. He had thought two women servants enough. For the rest, leaving parties out of consideration, the house had a rambling supply of old furniture, suiting it well enough; it looked pretty, and quaint, and cool; and Dolly for her part was well content.

They went over the place, taking a general survey; and then Mrs. Copley lay down on a lounge while supper was getting ready, and Dolly and Mr. St. Leger went out to the porch. Here, beyond the roses and honeysuckles, the eye found first the wild garden or pleasure ground. There was not much of it, and it was a mere tangle of what had once been pretty and sweet. It sloped, however, down to a little stream which formed the border of the property; and on the other side of this stream the ground rose in a grassy bank, set with most magnificent oaks and beeches. A little foot-bridge spanned the stream and made a picturesque point in the view, as a bridge always does. The sun was setting, throwing his light upon that grassy bank and playing in the branches of the great oaks and beeches. Dolly stood quite still, with her hands crossed upon her bosom, looking.

"The garden has had nothing done to it," said St. Leger. "That won't do. It's quite distressing."

"I suppose father never thought of engaging a gardener," said Dolly.

"We have gardeners to spare, I am sure, at home. I'll send over one to train those vines and put things in some shape. You'd find him useful, too, about the house. I'll send old Peters; he can come as well as not."

"Oh, thank you! But I don't know whether father would choose to afford a gardener," said Dolly low.

"He shall not afford it. I want him to come for my own comfort. You do not think I want your father to pay my gardener."

"You are very kind. What ground is that over there?"

"That? that is Brierley Park. It is a great place. The stream divides the park from this cottage ground."

"Can one go over the bridge?"

"Of course. The place is left to itself; nobody is at the house now."

"Why not?"

"I suppose they like some other place better," said St. Leger, shrugging his shoulders. "You would like to go and see the house and the pictures. The next time I come down I'll take you there."

"Oh, thank you! And may I go over among those grand trees? may I walk there?"

"Walk there, or ride there; you may do what you like; nobody will hinder you. If you meet anybody that has a right to know, you can tell him who you are. But don't go to the house till I come to go with you."

"You are very good, Mr. St. Leger," said Dolly gratefully. But then, as if shy of what he might next say, she turned and went in to her mother. Dolly always kept Mr. St. Leger at a certain fine, insensible distance. He seemed to be very near; he was really very much at home in the family; nevertheless, an atmospheric wall, felt but not seen, divided him from Dolly. It was so invisible that it was unmanageable; it kept him at a distance.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE PARK.

The next day was a delightful one in Dolly's experience. Mr. St. Leger went back to town early in the morning; and as soon as she was free of him, Dolly's delight began. She attended to her mother, and put her in comfort; next, she examined the house and its capabilities, and arranged the little household; and then she gave herself to the garden. It was an unmitigated wilderness. The roses had grown into irregular, wide-spreading shrubs, with waving, flaunting branches; yet sweet with their burden of blushing flowers. Lilac bushes had passed all bounds, and took up room most graspingly. Hawthorn and eglantine, roses of Sharon and stocky syringas, and other bushes and climbers, had entwined and confused their sprays and branches, till in places they formed an impenetrable mass. In other places, and even in the midst of this overgrown thicket, jessamine stars peeped out, lilies and violets grew half smothered, mignonette ran along where it could; even carnations and pinks were to be seen, in unhappy situations, and daisies and larkspur and scarlet geraniums, lupins and sweet peas, and I know not what more old-fashioned flowers, showed their fair faces here and there. It was bewildering, and beyond Dolly's powers to put in order. She wished for old Peter's arrival; and meantime cut and trimmed a little here and there, gathered a nosegay of wildering blossoms, considered what might be done, and lost herself in the sweet June day.

At last it was growing near lunch time, and she went in. Mrs. Copley was lying on an old-fashioned lounge; and the room where she lay was brown with old oak, quaint with its diamond-paned casement windows, and cool with a general effect of wooden floor and little furniture; while roses looked in at the open window, and the light was tempered by the dark panelling and low ceiling. Dolly gave an exclamation of delight.

"What is it?" said Mrs. Copley fretfully.

"Mother, this place is so lovely! and this room,—do you know how perfectly pretty it is?"

"It isn't half furnished. Not half."

"But it is furnished enough. There are only two of us; and certainly here are all the things that we want, and a great deal more than we want; and it is so pretty! so pretty!"

"How long do you suppose there are to be only two of us?"

"I don't know that, mother. Lawrence St. Leger is just gone, and I don't want him back, for my part. In fact, I don't believe we have dinner enough for three."

"That's another thing. Where are we going to get anything to eat?"

"Lunch will be ready in a minute, mother."

"What have we got?"

"What you like. Frizzled beef and chocolate."

"I like it,--but I don't suppose it is very nourishing. Where are we to get what we want, Dolly? how are we to get bread, and butter, and marketing?"

"There's a village half a mile off. And, here is lunch on the table. We shall not starve to-day."

Mrs. Copley liked her chocolate and found the bread good. Nevertheless, she presently began again.

"Are we to live here alone the rest of our lives, Dolly? or what do you suppose your father's idea is? It's a very lonesome place, seems to me."

"Why, mother, we came here to get you well; and it's enough to make anybody well. It is the loveliest place I have ever seen, I think. Mr. St. Leger's grand establishment is nothing to it."

"And what do you mean by what you said about Lawrence St. Leger? Are you glad to have even *him* go away?"

"Yes, mother, a little bit. He was rather in my way."

"In your way! that's very ungrateful. How was he in your way?"

"Somebody to attend to, and somebody to attend to me. I like to be let alone. By and by, when you are sleeping, I shall go over and explore the park."

"What I don't understand," said Mrs. Copley, recurring to her former theme, "is, why, if he wanted me to be in the country, your father did not take a nice house somewhere just a little way out of London,--there are plenty of such places,--and have things handsome; so that he could entertain company, and we could see somebody. We can have nobody here. It looks really quite like poor people."

"That isn't a very bad way to look," said Dolly calmly.

"*Not?* Like poor people?" cried Mrs. Copley. "Dolly, don't talk folly. Nobody likes that look, and you don't, either."

"I am not particularly afraid of it. But, mother, we do not want to entertain company while you are not well, you know."

"No; and so here you are shut up and seeing no creature. I wish we were at home!"

Dolly did not precisely wish that; not at least till she had had time to examine this new leaf of nature's book opened to her. And yet she sighed a response to her mother's words. It was all the response she made.

She was too tired with her unwonted gardening exertions to go further exploring that afternoon. It was not till a day or two later, when Dolly had become somewhat more acquainted with her new life and its conditions, that she crossed the bridge one fair, warm June evening, and set her hesitating steps upon what seemed to her a wonderful piece of ground. She entered it immediately upon crossing the bridge. The green glades of the park woods were before her; the old giants of the park trees stretched their great arms over her and shadowed her footsteps. Such mighty trees! their great stems stood as if they had been there for ever; the leafy crown of their heads was more majestic than any king's diadem, and gave its protecting shelter, each of them, to a wide domain of earth's minor growths. Underneath their branches the turf was all green and gold, for the slant sun rays came in there and gold was in the tree tops, some of the same gold; and the green shadows and the golden bands and flecks of light were all still. There was no stir of air that evening. Silence, the stillness and solitude of a woodland, were all around; the only house visible from here was the cottage Dolly had just quitted, with its rose-covered porch.

Dolly went a little way, and stood still to look and listen, then went on a few steps more. The scene had a sort of regal beauty, not like anything she had ever known in her life before, and belonging to something her life had never touched. For this was not a primeval forest; it was not forest at all; it was a lordly pleasure ground. A "pleasaunce," for somebody's delight; kept so. There was no ragged underbrush; there were no wildering bushes and briars; the green

turf swept away out of sight under the great old trees clean and soft; and they, the oaks and beeches, stretching their arms abroad and standing in still beauty and majesty, seemed to say--"Yes, we belong to the family; we have stood by it for ages." Dolly could see no dead trees, nor fallen lumber or dry branches; the place was dressed, yet unadorned, except by its own magnificent features; so most simple, most lordly. The first impression almost took away Dolly's breath. She again went on, and again stood still, then went further; at last could go no further, and she sat down on the bank under the shadow of a great oak tree which had certainly seen centuries, and gave herself up to the scene and her thoughts. They did not fit, somehow, and took possession of her alternately. Sometimes her eyes filled with glad tears, at the wonderful loveliness and stateliness of nature around her; the sense of beauty overcame all other feelings; filling and satisfying and also concealing a certain promise. It was certainly the will of the Creator that all things should be thus perfect, harmonious, and fair. What was not, could be made so. But then again a shadow would come over this sunshine, as Dolly remembered the anxieties she had brought from home with her. She had meant to let herself look at them here, in solitude and quiet; could she do it, now she was here? But when, if not now? Gradually Dolly gave herself up to thinking, and forgot where she was, or more correctly, saw the objects around her only through a veil of her own thoughts.

She had several anxieties; she was obliged to confess it to herself unwillingly; for indeed anxiety was so new to Dolly that she had hardly entertained it in all her life before; and when it had knocked at her door, she had answered that it came to the wrong place. However, she could not but hear and heed the knock now; and she wanted to consider the matter calmly and see whether the unwelcome visitor must be really taken in, and lodged.

It was not her mother's condition. With the buoyancy of youth, and the inexperience, Dolly expected that Mrs. Copley would soon get well. Her trouble was about her father; and the worst thing about her mother's state of nervous weakness was, that she could not talk to her on the subject or get her help and co-operation. That is, if anything were to be attempted to be done in the matter.--That was another question she wanted to consider.

In the first place, she could not help seeing one thing; that Mr. Copley was not flush with money as he used to be; as he had always been, ever since Dolly could remember. It was wholly unlike him, to send her and her mother down to this cottage with a household of two women servants; barely enough for the work that was indispensably necessary. Evidently, Mr. Copley entertained no idea of showing hospitality here in the country, and Dolly thought he had been secretly glad to be relieved of the necessity of doing it in town. Very unlike him. It was unlike him, too, to content his pride with so meagre an establishment. Mr. Copley loved to handle money, always spent it with a lavish carelessness, and was rather fond of display. What had made this change? Dolly had felt the change in still other and lesser things. Money had not been immediately forthcoming when she asked for it lately to pay her mantua maker's bill; and she had noticed on several occasions that her father had taken a 'bus instead of a hansom, or even had chosen to walk. A dull doubt had been creeping over her, which now was no longer obscure, but plainly enough revealed; her father had lost money. How, and where?

Impossible to answer this question. But at the same time there floated before Dolly's mind two vague images; Epsom and betting,--and a green whist table at Mr. St. Leger's, with eager busy players seated round it. True, the Derby came but once a year; and true, she had always heard that whist was a very gentlemanly game and much money never lost at it. She repeated those facts to herself, over and over. Yet the images remained; they came before her again and again; her father betting eagerly in the crowd of betters on the race course, and the same beloved figure handling the cards opposite to his friend the banker, at the hospitable mansion of the latter. Who should be her guaranty, that a taste once formed, though so respectably, might not be indulged in other ways and companies not so irreproachable? The more Dolly allowed herself to think of it, the more the pain at her heart bit her. And another fear came to help the former, its fit and appropriate congener. With the image of Mr. St. Leger and his cards, rose up also the memory of Mr. St. Leger's decanters; and Dolly lowered her head once in a convulsion of fear. She found she could not bear the course of her thought; it must be interrupted; and she sprang up and hurried on up the bank under the great trees, telling herself that it was impossible; that anything so terrible could not happen to her; it was not to be even so much as thought of. She cast it away from her, and resolved that it could not be. As to the rest, she thought, poverty is not disgrace; she would not break her heart about *that* till she knew there was more reason.

So with flying foot she hastened forward, willing to put a forcible stop to thought by her quick motion and the new succession of objects before her eyes. Yet they were not very new for a while. The ground became level and the going grew easier; otherwise it was the same lovely park ground, the same wilderness of noble trees, a renewal of the same woodland views. Lovely green alleys or glades opened to right and left, bidding her to enter them; then as she went on the trees stood thicker again. The sun getting more low sent his beams more slant, gilding the sides of the great trunks, tipping the ends of branches with leafy glitter, laying lovely lines of light over the turf. Dolly wandered on and on, allured by the continual change and variety of lovely combination in which grass, trees, and sunlight played before her eyes. But after a while the beauty took a different cast. The old oaks and beeches ceased; she found herself

among a lighter growth, of much younger trees, some of them very ornamental, and in the great diversity of kinds showing that they were a modern plantation. What a plantation it was! for Dolly could not seem to get to the end of it. She went fast; the afternoon was passing, and she was curious to see what would succeed to this young wood; though it is hardly right to call it a wood; the trees were not close to each other, but stood apart to give every one a fair chance for developing its own peculiar manner of growth. Some had reached a height and breadth of beauty already; some could be only beautiful at every stage of growth; very many of them were quite strange to Dolly; they were foreign trees, gathered from many quarters. She went on, until she began to think she must give it up and turn back; she was by this time far from home; but just then she saw that the plantation was coming to an end on that side; light was breaking through the branches. She pressed forward eagerly a few steps; and on a sudden stood still, almost with a cry of delight. The plantation did end there abruptly, and at the edge of it began a great stretch of level green, just spotted here and there with magnificent trees, singly or in groups. And at the further edge of this green plain, dressed, not hidden, by these intervening trees, rose a most beautiful building. It seemed to Dolly like a castle in a fairy tale, so bewitchingly lovely and stately it stood there, with the evening sunlight playing upon its turrets, and battlements, and all that grand sweep of lawn lying at its feet. This must be the "house" of which Lawrence had spoken; but surely it was rather a castle. The style was Gothic; the building stretched along the ground to a lordly extent for a "house," and yet in the light grace and adornment of its structure it hardly looked like anything so grim as a castle. The stillness was utter; some cattle under the trees on the lawn were the only living things to be seen.

Dolly could not satisfy herself with looking. This was something that she had read about and heard about; a real English baronial residence. But was it reality? it was so graceful, so noble, so wonderful. She must go a little nearer. Yet it was a good while before she could make up her mind to leave the spot where this exquisite view had first opened to her. She advanced then upon the lawn, going towards the house and scarce taking her eyes from it. There were no paths cut anywhere; it was no loss, for the greensward here was the perfection of English turf; soft and fine and thick and even. It was a pleasure to step on it; and Dolly stepped along, in a maze, caught in the meshes of the beauty around her, and giving herself up to it in willing captivity. But the lawn was enormously wider than she had supposed; her eye had not been able to measure distances on this green level; she had walked already a long way by the time she had got one-third of its breadth behind her. Still, Dolly did not much consider that; her eye was fixed on the house as she now drew nearer to it, busied in picking out the details; and she only now and then cast a glance to right or left of her, and never looked back. It did occur to her at last that she herself was like a mere little speck cast away in this ocean of green, toiling over it like an ant over a floor; and she hurried her steps, though she was beginning to be tired. Slowly, slowly she went; half of the breadth of lawn was behind her, and then three quarters; and the building was unfolding at least its external organisation to her curious eyes, and displaying some of its fine memberment and broken surface and the resulting lights and shadows. Dolly almost forgot her toil, wondering and delighted; though beginning also to question dimly with herself how she was ever to find her way home! Go back over all that ground she could not, she knew; as little could she have told where was the point at the edge of the lawn by which she had entered upon it. *That* way she could not go; she had a notion that at the house, or near it, she might find somebody to speak to from whom she could get directions as to some other way. So she pressed on, feeding her eyes as she approached it upon the details of the house.

When now more than three-fourths of the lawn ground was passed, one of Dolly's side glances, intended to catch the beauty of the trees on the lawn in their evening illumination, revealed to her a disagreeable fact—that, namely, she was looked upon as an intruder by some of the cattle; and that in especial a young bull was regarding her with serious and ominous bearing and even advancing slowly towards her from the group of his companions. It seemed to Dolly not desirable to stand the question, and she set off to run; which proceeding, of course, confirmed the young bull's suspicions, whatever they were, and he followed on a run also. Dolly became aware of this, and now, with all the strength of muscle that remained to her, fled towards the house; no longer seeing its Gothic mouldings and picturesque lights and shadows, only trying very hard to get near. She thought perhaps the creature would be shy of the immediate neighbourhood of the house, and not choose to follow her so far. But just as she reached that desirable vicinity she longed for, she was met by another danger, coming from the quarter from whence she sought safety. An enormous staghound dashed out from his covert somewhere, with an utterance from his deep throat which sounded sufficiently awful to Dolly, an angry or a warning bay, and came springing towards her. Dolly stood still dismayed and uncertain, the dog before and the bull behind; then, even before the former could reach her, a voice was heard calling him off and directing him to the advancing bull. In another minute or two a woman had come over the grass and stood at Dolly's side. Dolly was on her feet no longer; with the first breath of respite she had sunk down on the grass; nerves and muscles all trembling with the exertion and with the fright.

The woman came up with a business air; then as she stood beside Dolly her look changed. This was no common intruder, she saw; this delicate-featured girl; and her dress too, simple as it was, was the dress of a lady. Dolly on her part looked up to a face not delicate-featured; far from it; solid and strong built as was the person to which it belonged;

sense and capacity and kindness, however, were legible even at that first glance.

"You've been rather badly frightened, ma'am, I'm afraid," she said, in a voice which precisely matched the face; strong and somewhat harsh, but kindly in accent.

"Very," said Dolly, whose face began to dimple now. "I am so much obliged to you!"

"Not in the vary least, ma'am. But you are worried with the fright, I fear?"

"No; I'll get up," said Dolly; "I'm only tired. I believe I'm a little weak too. I haven't quite got over trembling, I find."

"You haven't your colour yet again, ma'am. Would you come into my room and rest a bit?"

"Oh, thank you. You are very kind!" said Dolly with sincere delight at this proposition. For now she was upon her feet she felt that her knees trembled under her, and her footsteps were unsteady as she followed the woman over the grass. They went towards a small door in the long line of the building, the staghound coming back from his chase and attending them gravely. The woman opened the door, led Dolly through a passage or two, and ushered her into a cosy little sitting-room, neat as wax, nicely though plainly furnished. Here she begged Dolly to rest herself on the sofa; and while Dolly did so she stood considering her with a kindly, anxious face.

"I'm all right now," said Dolly, smiling.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, but you're growing paler every minute. If you'll allow me, ma'am, I will fetch you a glass of wine."

"Wine? Oh, no," said Dolly. "I don't want any wine. I do not drink wine. I am just tired. If you'll let me rest here a few minutes"----

"Lie still, ma'am, and don't talk."

She left the room, and Dolly lay still, with shut eyes, feeling very much exhausted. It was inexpressibly good to be under shelter and on her back; how she was to get home she could not yet consider. Before that question fairly came up, her entertainer was back again; but Dolly kept her eyes shut. If she opened them, perhaps she would have to talk; and she wanted nothing on earth at that moment but to be still.

After a little interval, however, she heard the door open and a second person enter; and curiosity brought her eyes open then. The second person was a maid-servant with a tray. The tray was set upon a table, and Dolly heard the other woman say--

"You'll bring the tea, Kitty, when I ring."

Dolly took this as a signal that she must go; of course she was in the way; yet rest felt so very comfortable, that for a moment she still lay where she was; and lying there, she gave her hostess a more critical examination than she had hitherto bestowed on her. Who could she be? She was very well, that is very respectably, dressed; her manner and bearing were those of a person in authority; she was at home; but with gentle or noble blood she could have no connection unless one of service. Her features and her manner proved that. Nevertheless, both her face and bearing had a certain attraction for Dolly; a certain quiet and poise, an expression of acute intelligence and efficient activity, flavoured with good will, which was all very pleasant to see. Evidently she was not a person to be imposed upon. Dolly raised herself up at last to a sitting posture, preparatory to going.

"Are you recovered enough to be up, ma'am?" her hostess asked, standing still to survey her in her turn. "I'm afraid not."

"Oh, thank you, yes; I must go home. And I must ask you kindly to direct me; for I do not in the least know the way."

"Have you come far, ma'am? I couldn't make out by what direction it was or could have been; for when I saw you first, you seemed to be coming right from the middle of the lawn."

"Not quite that; but a little one side of the middle I did cross the lawn."

"I do not know, ma'am, anybody that lives in that direction, nor any village."

"Brierley Cottage? You know Brierley Cottage?"

"I ask your pardon, ma'am, I thought that was standing empty for months."

"It was, I suppose. We have just moved in. My mother wants country air, and Mr. St. Leger has let us the cottage. My mother and I are living there, and we came only a day or two ago. I wanted to see the beautiful ground and trees on this side the brook, and came over the bridge. I did not mean to have come so far; I had no notion of seeing the house or getting near it; but everything was so beautiful, I was drawn on from one point to another, till I found myself at the edge of the lawn. And then I saw the cattle, but I never thought of them."

"Why, ma'am," said the woman, looking surprised, "you must have walked a good bit. You must have come all through the plantations."

"I should not have minded the walk so much, if I had not had the fright at the end of it. But now the thing is, to get home. Can you tell me which way? for I am completely out of my reckoning."

"You will take a cup of tea first, ma'am," said the woman, ringing the bell. "I had it made on purpose for you. I am sure you'll be the better for it. I am the housekeeper here, ma'am, and my name is Jersey."

"The housekeeper?" said Dolly. "I thought the family were abroad."

"So they are, ma'am; and to be sure that makes me less to do; but enough still to take care of the place. Put the table up by the sofa, Kitty."

The girl had brought in the tea-pot, and Dolly saw some magnificent strawberries on the board. The table was shoved up, a cup of tea poured out, and Mrs. Jersey cut bread and butter.

"How kind you are!" Dolly cried. "You are taking a great deal of trouble for me; a stranger."

"Is it for somebody that loves my Master?" said Mrs. Jersey, looking at her with keen eyes.

Dolly's face dimpled all up at this, which would have completed her conquest of Mrs. Jersey's heart, if there had been by this time any ground in that region not already subjected.

"Your Master?" she said. "You mean--?"

"Yes, ma'am, I mean that. My Master is the Lord Jesus Christ; no other. One cannot have two masters; and I serve Lord Brierley only under Him."

"And what made you think--how did you know--that I am His servant too?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said the housekeeper, smiling. "I guessed it when I saw you sitting on the grass there. It seems to me, if the Lord don't just yet write His name in their foreheads, He does put a letter or two of it there, so one can tell."

"I am very glad to find I have a friend in the neighbourhood," said Dolly. "I am Dolly Copley; my father is American Consul at London, and a friend of Mr. St. Leger."

"I know Mr. St. Leger, ma'am; by name, that is."

By this time Dolly's tea was poured out. The housekeeper served her, and watched her as she drank it and eat her strawberries, both of which were refreshing to Dolly.

"I think, ma'am, if you'll allow me to say it, you should not try your strength with quite such long walks."

"I did not mean it. I was drawn on; and when I got a sight of the house from the other side of the lawn, I wanted to look at it nearer. I had no notion the distance was so much."

"Ay, ma'am, it's a good bit across the lawn. Perhaps you would like to come another day and see the house inside. I would show it to you with pleasure."

"Oh, may I?" said Dolly. "I should like it; oh, very much! But you are extremely kind, Mrs. Jersey!"

"It is only what I do for a great many indifferent people, ma'am. I would think it a privilege to do it for you. My lord and lady being away, I have plenty of time on my hands."

"I wonder anybody can stay away from so beautiful a home."

"They have no choice, ma'am; at least so the doctors say. Lady Brierley is delicate, and the air of England does not agree with her."

"And she must be banished from her own home!" said Dolly, looking out into the lovely landscape visible from the window. "How sad that is!"

"There's only one home one can always keep, ma'am," said the housekeeper, watching her.

"Heaven, you mean?"

"We are not in heaven yet. I meant what David says, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.'"

"I am not sure I understand it."

"Only love does understand it, ma'am."

"How do you mean, please?"

"Ma'am, it is only love that can live in the life of another; and when that other is God, one lives in a secure and wealthy abode. And then it does not much matter where one's body is. At least, so I find it."

Dolly looked very thoughtful for a minute; then she rose up.

"I am coming again," she said; "I am coming very soon, Mrs. Jersey. Now, will you tell me how I can get home? I must be as quick as I can."

"That is provided for, ma'am," said Mrs. Jersey. "It's a longish way round by the road, farther than even you came this afternoon; and you're not fit for it; far from it, I should say. I have ordered the dog-cart to take you home; and it's ready."

"How could you be so kind to a stranger?" said Dolly, giving her hand. But the housekeeper smiled.

"You're no stranger to me, ma'am," she said, clasping the hand Dolly had given. "It is true I never saw you before; but whenever I see one of my Lord's children, I say to myself, 'Jersey, there is another of the family, and the Lord expects you to do what you can for him, or for her, as the case may be.'"

Dolly laughed and ran away. The adventure was taking beautiful shape. Here she was to have a charming drive home, to end the day; a drive through the pretty country lanes. And they were charming in the evening light. And the dog-cart did not bring her to Brierley Cottage a bit too soon; for Mrs. Copley was already fidgeting about her.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOUSE.

Dolly did not tell all her experiences of that afternoon. She told only so much as might serve to quiet and amuse her mother; for Mrs. Copley took all occasions of trouble that came in her way, and invented a few more. Mrs. Jersey had sent along in the dog-cart a basket of strawberries for the sick lady; so Dolly hoped her mother's impressions of this day at least would be favourable.

"Did you ever see such magnificent berries, mother? black and red?"

"Why haven't we berries in our garden?" Mrs. Copley returned.

"Mother, you know the garden has not been kept up; nobody has been living here lately."

"Then why did not your father get some other house, where the garden *had* been kept up, and we could have our own fruit and vegetables? I think, to be in the country and not have one's own garden and fresh things, is forlorn."

"There is one thing, mother; there are plenty of markets in this country."

"And plenty of high prices for everything in them. Yes, if you have no end to your purse, you can buy things, certainly. But to look at what is around us here, one would think your father didn't mean us to have much of anything!"

"Mother, he means you to have all you want. We thought you just wanted country air."

"And nothing to eat?"

"We are not starving *yet*," said Dolly, smiling, and arranging the strawberries.

"These are a gift. A gift I shouldn't think your father would like to take, or have us take, which comes to the same thing. We used to have enough for ourselves and our neighbours too, once, when we were at home, in America. We are nobody here."

"We are just ourselves, mother; what we always were. It does not make much difference what people think of us."

"Not much difference," cried Mrs. Copley, "about what people think of you! And then, what is to become of you, I should like to know? Nobody seeing you, and no chance for anything! I wonder if your father means you never to be married?"

"You do not want me married, mother; and not to an Englishman, anyhow."

"Why not? And how are you going to marry anybody else, out here? Can you tell me? But, O Dolly! I am tormented to death!"

"Don't, dear mother. That is what makes you ill. What is the matter? What troubles you?"

Mrs. Copley did not answer at once.

"You are as sweet as a honeysuckle," she said. "And to think that nobody should see you!"

Dolly's dimples came out here strong.

"Are you tormented to death about that?"

Another pause came, and Mrs. Copley finally left the table with the air of one who is thinking what she will not speak. She went to the honeysuckle porch and sat down, resting her head in her hand and surveying the landscape. Twilight was falling over it now, soft and dewy.

"I don't see a sign of anything human, anywhere," she remarked. "Is it because it is so dark?"

"No, mother; there are no houses in sight."

"Nor from the back windows?"

"No, mother."

"Where is the village you talk about?"

"Half a mile away; the woods and rising ground of Brierley Park hide it from us."

"And in this wilderness your father expects me to get well!"

"Why, I think it is charming!" Dolly cried. "My drive home to-night was perfectly lovely, mother."

"I didn't have it."

"No, of course; but the country is exceedingly pretty."

"I can't make your father out."

Dolly was hushed here. She was at a loss likewise on this point.

"He acts just as if he had lost his money."

Dolly did not know what to say. She had had the same impression. To her inexperience, this did not seem the first of evils; but she guessed it would wear another face to her mother.

"And if he *has*," Mrs. Copley went on, "I am sure I wish we were at home. England is no sort of a place for poor folks."

"Why should you think he has, mother?"

"I *don't* think he has," Mrs. Copley flamed out. "But if he hasn't, I think he has lost his wits."

"That would be worse," said Dolly, smiling, though she felt anything but merry.

"I don't know about that. Nobody'll ask about your wits, if you've got money; and if you *haven't*, Dolly, nobody'll care what else you have."

"Mother, I think it is good to have one's treasure where one cannot lose it."

"I thought I had that when I married your father," said Mrs. Copley, beginning to cry. This was a very strange thing to Dolly and very terrible. Her mother's nerves, if irritable, had always been wont to show themselves of the soundest. Dolly saw it was not all nerves; that she was troubled by some unspoken cause of anxiety; and she herself underwent nameless pangs of fear at this corroboration of her own doubts, while she was soothing and caressing and arguing her mother into confidence again. The success was only partial, and both of them carried careful hearts to bed.

A day or two more passed without any variation in the state of things; except that old Peters the gardener made his appearance, and began to reduce the wilderness outside to some order. Dolly spent a good deal of time in the garden with him; tying up rose trees, taking counsel, even pulling up weeds and setting plants. That was outside refreshment; within, things were unchanged. Mr. Copley wrote that he would run down Saturday, or, if he could not, he would send Lawrence. "Why shouldn't he come himself?" said Mrs. Copley; and, Why should he send Lawrence? thought Dolly. She liked it better without him. She was pleasing herself in her garden; finding little ways of activity that delighted her in and out of the house; getting wonted; and she did not care for the constraint of anybody's presence who must be treated as company. One thing she determined upon, however; Lawrence should not make the next visit with her at Brierley House; and to prevent it, she would go at once by herself.

She went that afternoon, and by an easier way of approach to the place. Mrs. Jersey was very glad to see her, and as soon as Dolly was rested a little, entered upon the fulfilment of her promise to show the house. Accordingly she took her visitor round to the principal entrance, in another side of the building from the one Dolly had first seen. Here, before she would go in, she stood to admire and wonder at the rich and noble effect; the beauty of turrets, oriels, mouldings, and arched windows, the wide and lofty pile which stretched away on two sides in such lordly lines. Mrs. Jersey told her who was the first builder; who had made this and that extension and addition; and then they went in. And the first impression here was a contrast.

The place was a great hall of grand proportions. There was nothing splendid here to be seen; neither furniture nor workmanship called for admiration, unless by their simplicity. There were some old paintings on the walls; there were some fine stags' horns, very large and very old; there were some heavy oaken settles and big chairs, on which the family arms were painted; the arms of the first builder; and there were also, what looked very odd to Dolly, a number of leather fire buckets, painted in like manner. Yet simple as the room was, it had a great charm for her. It was lofty, calm, imposing, superb. She was not ready soon to quit it; and Mrs. Jersey, of course, was willing to indulge her.

"It is so unlike anything at home!" Dolly exclaimed.

"That's in America?" said the housekeeper. "Have you no old houses like this there, ma'am?"

"Why, we are not old ourselves," said Dolly. "When this house was first begun to be built, our country was full of red Indians."

"Is it possible! And are there Indians there yet, ma'am?"

"No. Oh, yes, in the country, there are; but they are driven far off--to the west--what there are of them--This is

very beautiful!"

"I never heard anybody call this old hall beautiful before," said the housekeeper, smiling.

"It is so large, and high, and so simple; and these old time things make it so respectable," said Dolly.

"Respectable! yes, ma'am, it is that. Shall we go on and see something better?"

But her young visitor had fallen to studying the ceiling, which had curious carvings and panellings, and paintings which once had been bright. There was such a flavour of past ages in the place, that Dolly's fancy was all alive and excited. Mrs. Jersey waited, watching her, smiling in a satisfied manner; and then, after a while, when Dolly would let her, she opened the door into another apartment. A great door of carved oak it was, through which Dolly went expectantly, and then stood still with a little cry. The first thing she saw was the great windows, down to the floor, all along one side of a large room, through which a view was given into the park landscape. The grand trees, the beautiful green turf, the sunlight and shadow, caught her eye for a minute; and then it came back to the view within the windows. Opposite this row of windows was an enormous marble chimney-piece; the family arms, which Dolly was getting to know, blazoned upon it in brilliant colours. Right and left of the fireplace hung old family portraits. But when Dolly turned next to give a look at the side of the hall from which she had entered, she found that the whole wall was of a piece with the great carved door; it was filled with carvings, figures in high relief, very richly executed. For a long while Dolly studied these figures. Mrs. Jersey could give her little help in understanding them, but having, as she fancied, got hold of a clue, Dolly pursued it; admiring the life and expression in the figures, and the richly-carved accessories. The whole hall was a study to her. On the further side went up the staircases leading to the next story. Between them opened the entrance into the dining-hall.

Further than these three halls, Mrs. Jersey almost despaired of getting Dolly that day. In the dining-hall was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth; and before it Dolly sat down, and studied it.

"Did she look like that?" she said finally.

"Surely, she must," said the housekeeper. "The picture is thought a deal of. It was painted by a famous painter, I've been told."

"She was very ugly, then!" said Dolly.

"Handsome is that handsome does," said the housekeeper, smiling; "and, to be sure, I never could make out that Her Majesty was altogether handsome in her doings; though perhaps that's the fault of my stupidity."

"She looks cold," said Dolly; "she looks cruel."

"I'm afraid, by all I have read of her, she was a little of both."

"And how she is dressed!--Who is that, the next to her?"

"Mary Stuart; Mary, Queen of Scotland; this lady's rival."

"Rival?" said Dolly. "No, I do not think she was; only Elizabeth chose to think her so. How lovely, how lovely!"

"Yes, and by all accounts the portrait tells truth. They say, so she was to be sure."

"She looks so innocent, so sweet," said Dolly, fixed before the two pictures.

"Do you think she wasn't?"

"One cannot feel quite comfortable about her. The story is ugly, Mrs. Jersey. But how a woman with that face could do anything fearfully wicked, it is hard to imagine. Poor thing!"

"You are very kind, I am sure, to a person of whom you hold such a bad opinion," said the housekeeper, amused.

"I am sorry for them both," said Dolly. "Life wasn't much good to either of them, I should think."

"Queen Elizabeth had power," said Mrs. Jersey; "and Queen Mary had admiration, I understand."

"Yes, but Elizabeth wanted the admiration, and Mary Stuart wanted the power," said Dolly. "Neither of them got

what she wanted."

"Few people do in this world, my young lady."

"Do you think so?"

"Young people generally think they will," said the housekeeper;--"and old people know better."

"But why should that be?"

"Does Miss Dolly Copley know already what *she* wants?" the housekeeper asked.

"No," said Dolly, laughing out; "not at all. I do not know what I want. I do not think I want anything in particular, Mrs. Jersey."

"Keep so, my dear; that is best."

"Why? Because I should be so sure to be disappointed?"

"You might. But it is safe to let God choose for us, Miss Copley; and as soon as we begin to plan, we begin to work for our plans, generally; and if our plan is not *His* plan,--that makes trouble, you see, and confusion."

"Of course," said Dolly thoughtfully. "Yet it seems to me it would be pleasant to have some particular object that one was striving after. The days go by, one after another, one like another, and seem to accomplish nothing. I should like to have some purpose, some end in life, to be striving for and attaining."

"A servant of Christ need never want that," said the housekeeper.

"I have not anything in special to do," said Dolly, looking at her.

"Every servant has something special to do," the other answered.

"I have to take care of mother. But that is not work; it is not work for Christ, at least, Mrs. Jersey."

"Dear, it may be. Everything you do, you may do for Him; for He has given it to you to do for Him. That is, unless it is something you are choosing for yourself."

Dolly pondered.

"And if there be nothing ready to hand that you call work, there is always preparation for work to be done," Mrs. Jersey went on.

"What sort?"

"The knowledge of the Bible,--and the knowledge of Christ, to seek and win. That surely."

"The knowledge of the Bible? Mrs. Jersey, I know the Bible pretty well."

"And Christ also?"

Dolly mused again, with a very grave face.

"I do not quite know what you mean."

"Then, there is something to be gained yet."

"But,--of course I know what the Bible says about Him."

"That is one sort of knowledge," said the housekeeper; "but it is not the knowledge of Him."

"What then?"

"Only knowing about Him, dear."

"What more can we have?"

"Just *Himself*, Miss Copley; and till you have that, dear, you don't rightly know what the Bible means."

"I don't think I quite understand you."

"Suppose I told you all I could about my Lady Brierley; would that make you know her as I know her?"

"No, certainly; it would not make me really know her at all."

"That is what I was thinking."

"But for *that* there must be sight, and intercourse, and the power of understanding."

"All that," said Mrs. Jersey, smiling; "and the more of that power you speak of, the more and the nearer knowledge there will be."

"But in the case you are speaking of, the knowledge of Christ, sight is not possible."

"No, not sight with the bodily eyes. It is not; and if it were, it mightn't do. Did all the people know the Lord that saw Him with the bodily eyes? 'Ye have neither known My Father nor Me,' He said to the Jews. 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?'"

"You are setting me a regular puzzle, Mrs. Jersey."

"I hope not, my dear. I do not mean it; and it is the last thing I wish."

"But without sight, how is such knowledge to be gained?"

"Do you remember, Miss Copley, it is written,--'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' And Jesus promised to him that loves Him and keeps His commandments, 'I will manifest Myself to him.' Doubtless we must seek the fulfilment of the promise too."

"How?"

"The same way as with other things. We must ask, and expect, and use the means. And no doubt one must be single-eyed and true-hearted. But dear, there is no knowledge like that, once get it; and no friend to be had, that can equal the Lord Jesus Christ."

Dolly sat still and pondered, gazing at the two portraits.

"It is very hard to think that this world is nothing!" she said at last. "To most people it seems everything. Just look at those two faces! How they struggled and fought; and how little good their life was to them, after all."

"Ay, and folks can struggle and fight for less things than what divided them, and lose all just the same. So the Lord said, 'He that loveth his life, shall lose it;' but He said too, 'He that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it.'"

"You are talking riddles again, Mrs. Jersey," said Dolly, laughing. "I thought I was beginning to understand you; but I do not understand that."

"No, dear; and surely it is a hard saying to many. But I'll give you a key. Just you give your life to the Lord Jesus, and He will show you what the losing it means, and the gaining it, too."

"Thank you. I will," said Dolly.

They went on again after that, through more rooms of the house; but the afternoon did not serve for the whole. Dolly must return to her mother. Mrs. Jersey sent her home again in the dog-cart. The evening was very bright and fair; the hedgerows sweet with flowers; the light glittered on the foliage of trees and copsewood and shrubbery; the sky was clear and calm. Dolly tasted and rejoiced in it all; and yet in the very midst of her pleasure an echo from Mrs. Jersey's words seemed to run through everything. It did not depress; on the contrary, it excited Dolly. With all the beauty and enjoyment of this very beautiful and very enjoyable world, there was something still better to be sought and found; somewhat still more beautiful, far more enjoyable; and the correlative fact that the search and attainment were, or might be, attended with some difficulty and requiring some effort or resolution, was simply an additional

stimulus. Dolly breathed the air with intense taste of it. Yes, she thought, I will seek the knowledge Mrs. Jersey spoke of. That must be better than anything else.

CHAPTER XIII.

PREACHING AND PRACTICE.

"How long you have stayed, Dolly!" was Mrs. Copley's greeting. "I don't see what is to become of me in this lonely place, if you are always trotting about. I shall die!"

Dolly took this cold-water bath upon her pleasure with her usual sweetness.

"Dear mother, I did not know I was so long away. I will not go again, if it is bad for you."

"Of course it is bad for me. It is very bad for me. It is bad for anybody. I just think and think, till I am ready to fly.-- What have you been doing?"

"Looking at Brierley House. So beautiful as it is, mother!"

This made a diversion. Mrs. Copley asked and received a detailed account of all Dolly had seen.

"It don't sound as if *I* should like it," was her comment. "I should never have those old chairs and things sticking about."

"O mother! yes, you would; they are most beautiful, and so old-fashioned; with the arms of the barons of Copleby carved on them."

"I shouldn't want the arms of the barons of Copleby on the chairs in my house, if I was the Earl of Brierley."

"But they are everywhere, mother; they are cut and painted over the fireplace in the baron's hall."

"I'd cut 'em out, then, and put up my own. Fire buckets, too! How ridiculous. What ornaments for a house!"

"I like them," said Dolly.

"Oh, you like everything. But, Dolly, what does your father think is to become of us? He in London, and we here! Such a way of living!"

"But you wanted country air, mother."

"I didn't; not in this way. Air isn't everything. Did he say, if he could not come down Saturday, he would send Mr. St. Leger?"

"I do not see why he should," said Dolly gaily. "We don't want him."

"Now, what do you say that for, Dolly?"

"Just because *I* don't want him, mother. Do you?"

"He's a very good young man."

Dolly was silent.

"And very rich."

Dolly said nothing.

"And I am sure he is very agreeable."

Then, as her utterances still met no response, Mrs. Copley broke out. "Dolly, why don't you say something? I have nobody to talk to but you, and you don't answer me! I might as well talk to the wall."

"Mother, I would rather have father come down to see us. If the choice lies between them, I would rather have father."

Mrs. Copley leaned her head on her hand. "Dolly," she began again, "your father acts exactly as if he had lost money."

Dolly again did not answer. The repeated words gave her a very startled thrill.

"As if he had lost a good deal of money," Mrs. Copley went on. "I can't get it out of my head that he has."

"It's no use to think about it, mother," Dolly said as lightly as she could. "Don't you trouble yourself, at any rate."

"That's foolish. How can I help troubling myself? And if it *was* any use to think about it, to be sure I needn't be troubled. Dolly, it torments me day and night!" And tears that were bitter came into Mrs. Copley's eyes.

"It need not, dear mother. Money is not the only thing in the world; nor the best thing."

"And that's silly, too," returned her mother. "One's bread and butter may not be the best thing in the world,--I am sure this bread ain't,--but you can't live without it. What can you do without money?"

"I never tried, you know," said Dolly; "but I should think it would be possible to be happy."

"Like a child!" said her mother. "Children always think so. What's to make you happy, when the means are gone? No, Dolly; money is everything, in this world. Without it you are of no consequence, and you are at everybody's mercy; and I can tell you one thing besides;--if the women could be happy without money, the men cannot. If you don't give a man a good breakfast, he'll be cross all day; and if his dinner don't suit him, you'll hear of it for a week, and he'll go off to the club besides."

"He cannot do *that* without money," said Dolly, trying to laugh.

"Then he'll stay at home, and torment you. I tell you, Dolly, life ain't worth having, if you haven't got money. That is why I want you to like"---- Mrs. Copley broke off suddenly.

"I should think one might have good breakfasts and dinners even if one was poor," said Dolly. "They say French women do."

"What French women do is neither here nor there. I am talking about you and me. Look at this bread,--and see that omelette. I can tell you, nothing on earth would keep your father down here if he couldn't have something better to eat than, that."

Dolly began to ponder the possibility of learning the art of cookery.

"What puzzles me," Mrs. Copley went on, "is, how he *could* have lost money? But I am sure he has. I feel it in all my bones. And he is such a clever man about business too!"

Dolly tried with all her might to bring her mother off this theme. At last she succeeded; but the question lingered in her own mind and gave it a good deal to do.

After a day or two more, Mr. St. Leger came as threatened. Dolly received him alone. She was in the garden, gathering roses, at the time of his arrival. The young man came up to her, looking very glad and shy at once, while Dolly was neither the one nor the other. She was attending to the business she had in hand.

"Well, how are you?" said her visitor. "How is Mrs. Copley? Getting along, eh?"

"When's father coming down, Mr. St. Leger?"

"To-morrow. He'll come down early, he said."

"Sunday morning?" cried Dolly, and stopped, looking at the young man.

"Oh yes. He'll come down early. He couldn't get off to-night, he told me. Some business."

"What business? Anything he could not put off? What kept him, Mr. St. Leger?"

"I don't know, 'pon my honour. He'll be down in the morning, though. What's the matter? Mrs. Copley isn't worse, I hope?"

"No, I think not," said Dolly, going back to her rose-pulling, with a hand that trembled.

"May I help you? What are all these roses for? Why, you've got a lot of 'em. How do you like Brierley, Miss Dolly? It likes you. I never saw you look better. How does your mother fancy it?"

"Mother has taken a fancy to travel. She thinks she would like that better than being still in one place."

"Travel! Where to? Where does she want to go?"

"She talks of Venice. But I do not know whether father could leave his post."

"I should say he couldn't, without the post leaving him. But, I say, Miss Dolly! maybe Mrs. Copley would let me be her travelling-courier, instead. I should like that famously. Venice--and we might run down and see Rome. Hey? What do you think of it?"

Dolly answered coolly, inwardly resolving she would have no more to say about travelling before Mr. St. Leger. However, in the evening he brought up the subject himself; and Mrs. Copley and he went into it eagerly, and spent a delightful evening over plans for a possible journey; talking of routes, and settling upon stopping places. Dolly was glad to see her mother pleased and amused, even so; but herself took no sort of part in the talk. Next day Mr. Copley in truth arrived, and was joyfully received.

"Well, how do you do?" said he, after the first rejoicings were over, looking from his wife to his daughter and back again. It was the third or fourth time he had asked the question. "Pretty jolly, eh? Dolly is. *You* are not, my dear, seems to me."

"You are not either, it seems to me, Mr. Copley."

"I? I am well enough."

"You are not 'jolly,' father?" said Dolly, hanging upon him.

"Why not? Yes, I am. A man can't be very jolly that has anything to do in this world."

"O father! I should think, to have nothing to do would be what would hinder jolliness."

"Anything to do but enjoy, I mean. I don't mean *nothing* to do. But it ain't life, to live for business."

"Then, if I were you, I would play a little, Mr. Copley," said his wife.

"So I do. Here I am," said he, with what seemed to Dolly forced gaiety. "Now, how are you going to help me play?"

"*We* help *you*," said his wife. "Why didn't you come yesterday?"

"Business, my dear; as I said. These are good berries. Do they grow in the garden?"

"How should strawberries grow in a garden where nobody has been living?" said his wife. "And what is your idea of play in an out-of-the-way place like this, Mr. Copley?"

"Well--not a catechism," said he, slowly putting strawberries in his mouth one after the other. "What's the matter with the place? I thought it would just suit you. Isn't the air good?"

"Breathing isn't quite the only necessary of life," said his wife; "and you were asking about play. I think a change would be play to me."

"Well, this is a change, or I don't know the meaning of the word. You've just come, and have not examined the ground yet. Must have a good market, if this fruit is any sign."

"There is no market or anything else, except what you can find in a little village. The strawberries come from Brierley House, where Dolly goes to get *her* play. As for me, who cannot run about, on my feet, or anyway, I sit here and wonder when she will be back again. Are we to have no carriage here, Mr. Copley?"

"We had better find out how you like it first, seems to me. Hardly worth while, if you're not going to stay."

Mr. Copley rose and sauntered out to the porch, and Dolly looked furtively at her mother. She saw a troubled, anxious face, lines of nervous unrest; she saw that her father's coming had not brought refreshment or relief; and truly she did not perceive why it should. Dolly was wholly inexperienced, in all but the butterfly life of very happy young years; nevertheless, she could not fail to read, or at least half read, some signs of another sort of life. She noticed that her father's manner wanted its ordinary careless, confident ease; there was something forced about it; his face bore tokens of loss of sleep, and had a trait of uneasiness most unwonted in Mr. Copley. Dolly sat still a little while, and then went out and joined her father in the porch. Mr. St. Leger had come in, so that she did not leave her mother alone. Dolly came close and laid her arm round her father's neck, her fingers playing with his hair; while he fondly threw one arm about her.

"How is it, Dolly?" he asked. "Don't you like it here?"

"I do, very much. But mother finds it very quiet. I think she would like to travel, father."

"Travel! But I can't go travelling. I cannot get away from London for more than a day. Quiet! I thought she wanted quiet. I heard of nothing but her want of quiet, till I got her down here; and now she wants noise."

"Not noise, exactly, but change."

"Well, what is this but change? as I said. I do not know what would please her."

"I know what would please me," said Dolly, with her heart beating; for she was venturing on unknown ground--"A little money."

"Money!" exclaimed her father. "What in the world do you want with money down here?"

"To pay the servants, father," Dolly said low. "Margaret asked me for her month's wages, and I said I would ask you. Can you give it to me?"

"She cannot do anything with money down here either. She don't want it. Her wages are safe, tell her. I'll take care of them for her."

"But, father, if she likes to take care of them for herself, she has the right. Such people like to see their money, I suppose."

"I have yet to find the people that don't," said her father. "But, really, she'll have to wait, my child. I have not brought so much in my pocket-book with me."

This also struck Dolly as very unusual. Never in her life, that she could remember, had her father confessed before to an empty purse.

"Then, could you send it to me, father, when you go back to London?"

"Yes, I'll send it. Or better, wait till I come down again. You would not know how to manage if I sent it. And Margaret really cannot be in a hurry."

Dolly stood still, fingering the locks of her father's thick hair, while her mental thermometer went down and down. She knew by his whole manner that the money was not at hand even were he in London; and where then was it? Mr. Copley had always till now had plenty; what had happened, or what was the cause of the change? And how far had it gone? and to what point might it go? and what should she do, if she could not soon pay Margaret? and what would become of her mother, if not only her travelling projects were shattered, but also her personal and household comforts should fail her where she was? What could Dolly do, to save money? or could she in any way touch the source of the evil, and bring about an essential bettering of this new and evil state of things? She must know more first; and how

should she get more knowledge?

There came a sigh to her ears here, which greatly touched her. Nevertheless, for the present she could not even show sympathy, for she dared not seem aware of the need for it. Tears came to her eyes, but she commanded them back; that would not do either.

"Suppose we take a walk, Dolly, in that jolly old wood yonder?" Mr. Copley said. "That's Brierley Park, ain't it? We might go and see the house, if you like."

"It is Sunday, father."

"Well, what then? The world is pretty much the same thing Sunday that it is other days, eh?"

"Yes, father--the world; but not the day. That is not the same as the rest."

"Why not? We cannot go to church to-day, if that is what you are thinking of. I took church-time to come down here. And if you wanted to go to church, Dolly, you couldn't have a finer temple than over yonder."

"Oh, if you'll go to church there, father, I'll go."

"To be sure I will. Get your hat."

"And my Bible?"

"Bible?" Mr. Copley looked at her. "I didn't say anything about a Bible. We are going to take a walk. You don't want a book to carry."

"How are we going to church there, then?"

"Think good thoughts, and enjoy the works of the good Creator. That's all you can do in any church, Dolly. Come, little Puritan."

Dolly did not quite know what to do; however, she got her hat, finding that her mother was willing; and she and her father went down to the bridge. There, to her dismay somewhat, they were joined by Mr. St. Leger. But not to Mr. Copley's dismay; he welcomed the young man openly. Dolly would have gone back now, but she did not dare.

"Going to see the house?" Lawrence asked.

"It is Sunday," said Dolly. "You cannot."

"There's a way of opening doors, even on Sunday," said the other.

"No, not here. The housekeeper will not let you in. She is a Christian."

"She is a Methodist, you mean," said Mr. Copley.

"I believe she is a Methodist. She is a good friend of mine."

"What business have you to make friends with Methodists? we're all good Church people; hey, Lawrence? What grand old woods these are!"

"How old do you suppose these trees to be, father?"

"Can't guess; less than centuries would not do. Centuries of being let alone! I wonder how men would get on, if they could have as good a chance? Glorious! Go on, children, and take your walk; I will lie down here and rest. I believe I want that more than walking."

He threw himself down at full length on the turf in the shadow of a giant beech. Dolly and her remaining companion passed slowly on. This was not what she had reckoned upon; but she saw that her father wished to be left alone, and she did not feel, nevertheless, that she could go home and leave the party. Slowly she and Mr. St. Leger sauntered on, from the shadow of one great tree to another; Dolly thinking what she should do. When they were gotten out of sight and out of earshot, she too stopped, and sat down on a shady bank which the roots of an immense oak had thrown up around its base.

"What now?" said Lawrence.

"This is a good place to stay. Father wishes to be left to himself."

"But aren't you going any further?"

"There is nothing to be gained by going any further. It is as pretty here as anywhere in the wood."

"We might go on and see the pheasantry. Have you seen the pheasantry?"

"No."

"That does not depend on the housekeeper's pleasure; and the people on the place are not all Methodists. I fancy we should have no trouble in getting to see that. Come! It is really very fine, and worth a walk to see. I am not much of a place-hunter, but the Brierley pheasantry is something by itself."

"Not to-day," said Dolly.

"Why not to-day? I can get the gate opened."

"You forget it is Sunday, Mr. St. Leger."

"I do not forget it," said he, throwing himself down on the bank beside her. "I came here to have the day with you. It's a holiday. Mr. Copley keeps a fellow awfully busy other days, if one has the good fortune to be his secretary. I remember particularly well that it is Sunday. What about it? Can't a fellow have it, now he has got it?"

The blue eyes were looking with a surprised sort of complaint in them, yet not wholly discontented, at Dolly. How could they be discontented? So fair an object to rest upon and so curiosity-provoking too, as she was. Dolly's advantages were not decked out at all; she was dressed in a simple white gown; and there were none of the formalities of fine ladyism about her; a very plain little girl; and yet, Lawrence was not far wrong when he thought her the fairest thing his eyes had ever seen. *Her* eyes had such a mingling of the childlike and the wise; her hair curled in such an artless, elegant way about her temples and in her neck; the neck itself had such a pretty set and carriage, the figure was so graceful in its girlish outlines; and above all, her manner had such an inexplicable combination of the utterly free and the utterly unapproachable. Lawrence lay thinking all this, or part of it; Dolly was thinking how she should dispose of him. She could not well say anything that would directly seem to condemn her father. And while she was thinking what answer she should make, Lawrence had forgot his question.

"Do you like this park?" he began on another tack.

"Oh, more than I can tell you! It is perfect. It is magnificent. There is nothing like it in all America. At least, *I* never saw anything like it there."

"Why not?" said Lawrence. "I mean, why is there not anything like this there?"

Then Dolly's face dimpled all up in one of its expressions of extreme sense of fun.

"We are not old enough," she said. "You know when these trees were young, our land was filled with the red men, and overgrown with forests."

"Well, those forests were old."

"Yes, but in a forest trees do not grow like this. They cannot. And then the forest had to be cut down."

"Then you like England better than America?"

"I never saw in my life anything half so beautiful as Brierley Park."

"You would be contented with such a home, wherever it might be?"

"As far as the trees went," said Dolly, with another ripple of fun breaking over her face.

"Tell me," said Lawrence, "are all American girls like you?"

"In what way? We do not all look alike."

"No, no; I do not mean looks; they are no more like you in *that*, than you say America resembles Brierley Park. But you are not like an English girl."

"I am afraid that is not an equal compliment to me. But why should Americans be different from English people? We went over from England only a little while ago."

"Institutions?" Lawrence ventured.

"What, because we have a President, and you have a King? What difference should that make?"

"Then you see no difference? Am I like an American, now?"

"You are not like my father, certainly. But I do not know any American young men--except one. And I don't know him."

"That sounds very much like a riddle. Won't you be so good as to explain?"

"There is no riddle," said Dolly. "I knew him when I was at school, a little girl, and I have never seen him since."

"Then you don't know him now, I should say."

"No. And yet I feel as if I knew him. I should know him if we saw each other again."

"Seems to have made a good deal of an impression!"

"Yes, I think he did. I liked him."

"Before you see him again you will have forgotten him," said Lawrence comfortably. "Do you not think you could forget America, if somebody would make you mistress of such a place as this?"

"And if everybody I loved was here? Perhaps," said Dolly, looking round her at the soft swelling green turf over which the trees stretched their great branches.

"But," said Lawrence, lying on his elbow and watching her, "would you want *everybody* you love? The Bible says that a woman shall leave father and mother and cleave to her husband."

"No; the Bible says that is what the man shall do; leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife."

"They work it the other way," said Lawrence. "With us, it is the woman who leaves her family to go with the man."

"Mr. St. Leger," said Dolly suddenly, "father does not look well. What do you think is the matter with him?"

"Oh--aw--yes! Do you think he doesn't look well?" Lawrence answered vaguely.

"Not *ill*--but not just like himself either. What is it?"

"I--well, I have thought that myself sometimes," replied the young man.

"What is the matter with him?" Dolly repeated anxiously.

"Oh, not much, he spends too much time at--at his office, you know!"

"He has no need to do that. He does not want the office--not for the money's sake."

"Most men want money," said Lawrence.

"But do you think he does?"

"Oh, why not? Why, *my* father wants money, always wants money; and yet you would say he has enough, too. Dolly"---- She interrupted him.

"But what did you mean? You meant to say he spends too much time at--at what? Say what you were going to

say."

Lawrence rolled himself over on the bank so that he could look up straight into her face. It was a good look of his blue eyes. "Dolly," said he, "if you will leave father and mother for my sake, figuratively, I mean,--of course, figuratively,--I will take care that neither of them ever wants anything for the rest of their lives. And you shall have a place as good as Brierley Park."

Dolly's spirits must have taken one or two quick leaps, for her colour changed so; but happily Lawrence's speech was long enough to let her get possession of herself again. She answered with an *a plomb* which, born of necessity as it was, and natural, equalled that of the most practised fine lady which should show her artificial habit or skill. Like an instinct of self-preservation, I suppose; swift in action, correct in adjustment, taking its measures with unpremeditated good aim. She answered with absolute seeming calmness--

"You evade my question, I observe."

"I am sure you evade mine!" said the young man, much more hotly.

"Perhaps I do. Naturally, I want mine answered first."

"And then will you give me the answer to my question?" said he eagerly.

"That would seem to be no more than good manners."

"What do you want to know, Dolly? I am sure I can't tell what to say to you."

"Tell me what makes my father look unlike himself," said Dolly quietly. She spoke quietly; not as if she were greatly concerned to know the answer; yet if Lawrence had guessed how her heart beat he would have had still more difficulty with his reply. He had some, as it was; so much that he tried to turn the matter off.

"You are imagining things," he said. "Mr. Copley seems to me very much what I have always known him."

"He does not seem to me as *I* have always known him," said Dolly. "And you are not saying what you are thinking, Mr. St. Leger."

"You are terribly sharp!" said he, to gain time.

"That's quite common among American women. Go on, Mr. St. Leger, if you please."

"I declare, it's uncanny. I feel as if you could see through me, too. And no one will bear such looking into."

"Go on, Mr. St. Leger," Dolly repeated with an air of superiority. Poor child, she felt very weak at the time.

"I don't know what to say, 'pon my honour," the young man averred. "I have nothing to say, really. And I am afraid of troubling you, besides."

Dolly could *not* speak now. She preserved her calm air of attention; that was all.

"It's really nothing," St. Leger went on; "but I suppose, really, Mr. Copley may have lost some money. That's nothing, you know. Every man does, now and then. He loses, and then he gains."

"How?" said Dolly gravely.

"Oh, well, there are various ways. Betting, you know, and cards. Everybody bets; and of course he can't always win, or betting would stop. That's nothing, Miss Copley."

"Have you any idea how much he has lost?"

"Haven't an idea. People don't tell, naturally, how hard they are hit. I am sure it is nothing you need be concerned about."

"Are not people often ruined in that way?" Dolly asked, still preserving her outside calm.

"Well, that does happen, of course, now and then, with careless people. Mr. Copley is not one of that sort. Not

that kind of man."

"Do not people grow careless, in the interest and excitement of the play?"

St. Leger hesitated, and laughed a little, casting up his blue eyes at Dolly as if she were a very peculiar specimen of young womanhood and he were not quite sure how to answer her.

"I assure you," he said, "there is nothing that you need be concerned about. I am certain there is not."

"Not if my father is concerned about it already?"

"He is not concerned, I am sure. Oh, well! there may be a little temporary embarrassment--that can happen to any man, who is not made of gold--but it will be all right. Now, Miss Copley"----

She put out her hand to stop him.

"Mr. St. Leger, can you do nothing to help? You are kind, I know; you have always been kind to us; can you do nothing to help now?"

The young man rather opened his eyes. Was this asking him for an advance? It was a very cool proceeding in that case. "Help?" he repeated doubtfully. "What sort?"

"There is only one way that you could help," said Dolly.

He saw she meant what she meant, if he could know what that was; her cheeks had even grown pale; the sweet, clear brown eyes sought his face as if they would reach his heart, which they did; but then,--to assume any of Mr. Copley's responsibilities--

"I'll assume all Mr. Copley's responsibilities, Dolly," he said with rash decision--"if you'll smile upon me."

"Assume?--Oh, did you think I meant *that*?" cried Dolly, while a furious flush came up into her face. "What a notion you must have of Americans, Mr. St. Leger! Do you think father would make over his responsibilities to another man? I did not mean anything so impossible as that."

"Forgive me Then what did you mean?"

"Perhaps something as impossible," said Dolly sadly, while the flush slowly paled. "I meant--couldn't you--could you--I don't know but it is just as impossible!"----

"Could I, what? I could do most things, if you wished it, Dolly."

"Then you must not call me that till I give you leave. I was going to say, could you perhaps do anything to get my father away from this habit, or pleasure"----

"Of betting?"

"Betting--and cards--it's all the same. He never used to do it. Can you help, Mr. St. Leger?"

Dolly's face was a sort of a marvel. It was so childlike, it was so womanly; it was so innocent, and it was so forceful. Lawrence looked, and would have liked to do the impossible; but what could he? It was specially at his own father's card-table, he knew, that Mr. Copley had lost money; it was wholly in his father's society that he had been initiated into the fascination of wagers--and of something else. Could he go against his own father? and how could he? and himself a player, though a very cautious one, how should he influence another man not to play?

"Miss Copley--I am younger than your father"---- Lawrence began.

"I know. But you might speak where I cannot. Or you might do something."

"Mr. Copley only does what my father does, and what everybody does."

"If you were to tell your father,--could not *he* perhaps stop it?--bring my father off the notion?" Dolly had reached the very core of the subject now and touched what she wanted to touch; for she had a certain assurance in her own mind that her father's intercourse with the banker and his circle of friends had led to all this trouble. Lawrence

pondered, looked serious; and finally promised that he would "see what he could do." He would have urged his own question then; but to Dolly's great relief Mr. Copley found by this time that he had had enough of his own company; and called to them. However she could not escape entirely.

"I have answered your question, Miss Copley," Lawrence said as they were going down the slope towards the yet unseen caller. "Hallo! yes, we're coming.--Now am I not to have the promised answer to mine?"

"How did you put it? the question?" said Dolly, standing still and facing her difficulties.

"You know. *I* don't know how I put it," St. Leger said with a half laugh. "But I meant, Dolly, that you are more to me than everything and everybody in the world; and I wanted to know what I am to you?"

"Not *that*, Mr. St. Leger." Dolly was quiet, and did not shun his eyes; and though she did grow rosy, there were some suspicious dimples in her fair little face; very unencouraging, but absolutely irresistible at the same time.

"What then?" said the young man. "Of course, I could not be to you what you are to me, Dolly. Naturally. But I can take care of your father and mother, and I will; and I will put you in a place as good as Brierley Park. I am my father's only son, and his heir, and I can do pretty much what I like to do. But I care for nothing if you will not share it with me."

"I am not going to leave my father and mother at present," said Dolly, shaking her head.

"No, not at present," said he eagerly, catching at her words. "Not at present. But you do not love anybody else, Dolly?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then you will let me hope? You will let me hold myself your best friend, after them?"

"I believe you are that," said Dolly, giving him her hand;--"except my old Methodist acquaintance, Mrs. Jersey." Which addition was a little like a dash of cold water; but Lawrence was tolerably contented after all; and pondered seriously what he could do in the matter of Mr. Copley's gaming tendencies. Dolly was right; but it is awkward to preach against what you practise yourself.

CHAPTER XIV.

DIFFICULTIES.

Dolly on her part had not much comfort in the review of this afternoon. "It was no good," she said to herself; "I am afraid it has encouraged Lawrence St. Leger in nonsense. I did not mean that, but I am afraid he took it for encouragement. So much for going walking Sunday. I'll never do it again."

Lawrence had taken leave very cheerfully; that was certain. As much could not be said for his principal. Dolly had privately asked her father to send her down the money for the servants' wages; and Mr. Copley had given an offhand promise; but Dolly saw that same want of the usual ready ease in his manner, and was not surprised when days passed and the money did not come. The question recurred, what was she to do? She wrote to remind her father; and she took a fixed resolve that she would buy no more, of anything, that she could not on the spot pay for. This, however, was not a resolve immediately taken; it ensued when after several weeks the women again pressed for their money, and again in vain. Dolly started back then from the precipice she saw she might be nearing, and determined to owe no more debts. She wrote to her father once more, begging for a supply. And a supply came; but so meagre that Dolly could but partially pay her two servants and keep a little in hand to go to market with. Mr. Copley had not come down to Brierley in the meanwhile. Lawrence had.

Her unaccustomed burden of care Dolly had kept to herself; therefore it startled her when one day her mother began upon the subject.

"What's this about Margaret's wages, Dolly?"

"She asked me for some money the other day," Dolly answered as easily as she could.

"You didn't give it to her?"

"I have given her part; I had not the whole."

"Haven't you *any*?"

"Yes, mother, but not enough to give Margaret all she wants."

"Let her have what you've got, and write your father to send you some. I never like to keep servants waiting. What's theirs, isn't yours; and besides, they never serve you so well, and you're in their power."

"Mother, I want to keep a little in the house, for every day calls, till I get some more."

"Your father will send it immediately. Why he don't come himself, I don't see. *I'm* not gaining, all alone in this wilderness, with nothing but the trees of Brierley Park to look at. I can't think what your father is dreaming about!"

Dolly was silent, and hoped the subject had blown over. Yet it could not blow over for ever, she reflected. What was she to do? Then her mother startled her again.

"Dolly have you told your father that you want money?"

Dolly hesitated; had to say yes.

"And he did not give it to you?"

"Yes, mother; he sent me some."

"When?"

"It was--it must have been three weeks ago."

"How much?"

"Not enough to pay all that is due to Margaret."

Mrs. Copley laid down her face in her hands. A terrible pain went through Dolly's heart; but what could she say. It seemed as if pain pricked her like a shower of arrows, first on this side and then on that. She thought her mother *had* gained somewhat in the past weeks; how would it, or could it, be now? Presently Mrs. Copley lifted up her head with a further question.

"Is Sarah paid?"

"No, mother; not yet," said poor Dolly.

"Has Peter been paid anything?"

"Not by us. We do not pay Peter at all," replied Dolly, feeling as if the words were stabbing her.

"Who does?" said her mother quickly.

"Mr. St. Leger sent him here. He is their servant really, and they take care of him."

"I don't see how your father can content himself with that," said Mrs. Copley. "But I suppose that is one of the debts that *you* will pay, Dolly."

Dolly forced herself to speak very quietly, though every nerve and fibre was trembling and quivering. She said, "How, mother?"

"I suppose you know. Mr. St. Leger knows, at any rate; and your father too, it seems."

"Mother," said Dolly, sitting up a little straighter, "do you think I will pay debts in *that* way?"

"What other way will you pay them, then, child? what do you and your father expect? What *can* you do, if you have not the money?" Mrs. Copley spoke bitterly. Dolly waited a little, perhaps to bite down or swallow down some

feeling.

"Mother," she said, somewhat lower, "do you think father would want me to pay his debts so?"

"Want to?" echoed Mrs. Copley. "I tell you, Dolly, when people get into difficulties the question is not what they *want* to do. They have to pocket their likings, and eat humble pie. But how has your father got into difficulties?" she burst out with an expression of frightened distress. "He always had plenty. Dolly!--tell me!--what do you know about it? what is it? How *could* he get into difficulties! Oh, if we had staid at home! Dolly, how is it possible? We have always had plenty--money running like water--all my life; and now, how *could* your father have got into difficulties?"

Perhaps the difficulty was but transient and would soon pass over, Dolly faintly suggested.

"It don't look like it," said Mrs. Copley miserably, "and your father don't look like it. Here we are down in this desert, you and I, to keep us out of the way, and where we will cost as near nothing as can be; and we can't pay that! Do you know nothing about it, Dolly? how it has come about?"

"I couldn't ask father such a question, mother, you know."

"And what is to become of me!" Mrs. Copley went on; "when travelling is the thing I need. And what is to become of you, Dolly? Nobody to be seen, or to see you, but St. Leger. Have you made up your mind to be content with him? Will you have him, Dolly? and is that the way your father is going to take care of you?"

Poor Mrs. Copley, having so long swallowed her troubles in secret, dreading to give pain to Dolly, now that her mouth was once opened poured them forth relentlessly. Why not? the subject was broached at last, and having spoken, she might go on to speak. And poor Dolly, full of her own anxieties, did not know where to begin to quiet those of her mother.

"Mr. St. Leger is nothing to me," she said, however, in answer to Mrs. Copley's last suggestions.

"He thinks he is."

"Then he is very foolish," said Dolly, reddening.

"It is you that are foolish, and you just do not know any better. I don't think, Dolly, that it would be at all a bad thing for you;--perhaps it would be the very best; though I'd rather have you marry one of our own people; but St. Leger is rich, very rich, I suppose; and your father has got mixed up with them somehow, and I suppose that would settle everything. St. Leger is handsome, too; he has a nice face; he has beautiful eyes; and he is a gentleman."

"His face wants strength."

"That's no matter. I begin to believe, Dolly, that you have wit enough for two."

"I am not speaking of wit; I mean *strength*; and I should never like any man that hadn't it; not like him in the way you mean, mother."

"Strength? what sort of strength?"

"I mean manliness; power to do right; power over himself and others; power over the wrong, to put it down, and over the right, to lift it up and give it play. I don't know that I can tell you what I mean, mother; but that is my notion of a man."

"You are romantic, I am afraid, Dolly. You have been reading novels too much."

"What novels, mother? I have not read any, except Scott's and Miss Austen's and 'The Scottish Chiefs.'"

"Well, you have got romantic ideas, I am afraid. Your talk sounds romantic. You won't find that sort of man."

"I don't care," said Dolly. "But if I don't, I'll never marry any other sort."

"And that is a delusion too," said Mrs. Copley. "You will do just as other girls do. Nobody marries her fancy. And besides, St. Leger thinks he has got you; and I don't know but he and your father will manage it so. He don't ask my advice."

Now this was not quite true; for the subject of Mr. St. Leger had been discussed more than once between Dolly's parents; though certainly Mrs. Copley did see that matters were out of her hand and beyond her guidance now. Dolly was glad to have the conversation turn to something else; but the several subjects of it hardly left her head any more.

It is blessedly true, that at seventeen there is a powerful spring of elasticity in the mind, and an inexhaustible treasury of hope; also it is true that Mrs. Copley was not wrong in her estimate of Dolly when she adjudged her to have plenty of "wit;" otherwise speaking, resources and acuteness. That was all true; nevertheless, Dolly's seventeen-year-old heart and head were greatly burdened with what they had to carry just now. Experience gave her no help, and the circumstances forbade her to depend upon the experience of her mother. Mrs. Copley's nerves must not be excited. So Dolly carried her burden alone, and found it very heavy; and debated her questions with herself, and could find an answer to never a one of them. How should she give her mother the rest and distraction of travelling? The doctor said, and Dolly believed, that it would be the best thing for her. But she could not even get speech of her father to consult over the matter with him. Mr. Copley was caught in embarrassments of his own, worse than nervous ones. What could Dolly do, to break him off from his present habits, those she knew and those she dimly feared? Then when, as was inevitable, the image of Mr. St. Leger presented itself, as affording the readiest solution of all these problems, Dolly bounded back. Not *that*, of all possible outcomes of the present state of things. Dolly would neither be bought nor sold; would not in that way even be her parents' deliverer. She was sure she could not do that. What else could she do?

She carried these questions about with her, out into the garden, and up into her room; and many a hot tear she shed over them, when she could be long enough away from her mother to let the tears dry and the signs of them disappear before she met Mrs. Copley's eyes again. To her eyes Dolly was unfailingly bright and merry; a most sweet companion and most entertaining society; lively, talkative, and busy with endless plans for her mother's amusement. Meanwhile she wrote to her father, begging him to come down to Brierley; she said she wanted to talk to him.

Three days after that letter came Lawrence St. Leger. Mr. Copley could not spare the time, he reported.

"Spare the time from what?" Dolly asked.

"Oh, business, of course. It is always business."

"What sort? Not consul business."

"All sorts," said Lawrence. "He couldn't come. So he sent me. What is the thing, Miss Dolly? He said something was up."

"I wanted to talk to my father," Dolly said coldly.

"Won't I do?"

"Not at all. I had business to discuss."

"The journey, eh?"

"That was one thing," Dolly was obliged to allow.

"Well, look here. About that, I've a plan. I think I can arrange it with Mr. Copley, if you and your mother would be willing to set off with me, and let Mr. Copley join us somewhere--say at Baden Baden, or Venice, or where you like. He could come as soon as he was ready, you know."

"But you know," said Dolly quietly, "I specially want *him*, himself."

"But then your mother wants the journey. She really does. The doctor says so, you know, and I think he's right. And Mr. Copley won't leave London just now. He could send his secretary, you know. That's all right."

"I must see father before I can do anything," said Dolly evasively. "I will write a letter for you to carry back to him. And I will go do it at once."

"And I will take a look at what Peter is doing," said the young man. "Such fellows always want looking after."

Dolly had looked after Peter herself. She paused before an upper window in her way to her room, to cast a glance down into the garden. Old Peter was there, at some work she had set him; and before him stood Lawrence, watching

him, and she supposed making remarks; but at any rate, his air was the air of a master and of one very much at home. Dolly saw it, read it, stood still to read it, and turned from the window with her heart too full of vexation and perturbation to write her letter then. She felt a longing for somebody to talk to, even though she could by no means lay open all her case for counsel; the air of the house was too close for her; her breath could not be drawn free in that neighbourhood. She must see somebody; and no one had poor Dolly to go to but the housekeeper, Mrs. Jersey. Nobody, near or far. So she slipped out of the house and took a roundabout way to the great mansion. She dared not take a straight way and cross the bridge, lest she should be seen and followed; so she made a circuit, and got into the park woods only after some time of warm walking through lanes and over fields. Till then she had hurried; now, safe from interruption, she went slowly, and pondered what she was going to do or say. Pondered everything, and could not with all her thinking make the confusion less confusion. It was a warm, still, sultry day; the turf was dry, the air was spicy under the great trees; shadow and sunshine alternately crossed her path, or more correctly, her path crossed them. A certain sense of contrast smote her as she went. Around her were the tokens of a broad security, sheltering protection, quiet and immovable possession, careless wealth; and within her a tumult of fear, uncertainty, exposure, and craving need. Life seemed a very unequal thing to the little American girl. Her step became slower. What was she going to say to Mrs. Jersey? It was impossible to determine; nevertheless, Dolly felt that she must see her and speak to her. That was a necessity.

Through the trees she caught at last sight of the grand old house. The dog knew her by this time and she did not fear him. She found the housekeeper busy with some sewing and glad to welcome her. Mrs. Jersey was that always. To-day she looked a little closer than usual at her visitor, discerning that Dolly's mind was not just in its wonted poise. And besides, she loved to look at her.

Yet it is not easy to describe that for which our eyes seek and dwell upon a face or form. It is easy to say brown eyes and lightly curled, waving, beautiful hair; but hair is beautiful in different ways, and so faces. Can we put Dolly's charm into words? Mrs. Jersey saw a delicate, graceful, active figure, to begin with; delicate without any suspicion of weakness; active, in little quick, gracious movements, which it was fascinating to watch; and when not in motion, lovely in its childlike unconsciousness of repose. Her hair was exceedingly beautiful, not on account of its mass or colour so much as for the great elegance of its growth and curly arrangement or disarrangement around the face and neck; and the face was a blending of womanly and childlike. It could seem by turns most of the one or most of the other; but the clear eyes had at all times a certain deep *inwardness*, along with their bright, intelligent answer to the moment's impression, and also a certain innocent outlook, which was very captivating. And then, at a moment's notice, Dolly's face from being grave and thoughtful, would dimple all up with some flash of fun, and make you watch its change back to gravity again, with an intensified sense both of its merry and of its serious charm. She smiled at Mrs. Jersey now as she came in, but the housekeeper saw that the eyes had more care in their thoughtfulness than she was accustomed to see in them.

"And how is the mother, dear?" she asked, when Dolly had drawn up a chair and sat down; for they were grown familiar friends by this time.

"She is not getting on much, Mrs. Jersey. I wanted to talk to you about her. The doctor says travelling would be the best thing."

"And you will go and travel? Where will you go?"

"I don't know yet whether we can go anywhere. Mother wants to go." Dolly looked out hard into the tree groups on the lawn. They barred the vision.

"That is one sign then that the doctor is right," said Mrs. Jersey. "It is good for sick folks to have what they like."

"Isn't it good for people that are not sick?"

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Jersey, smiling. "But sometimes not; or else the good Lord would let them have it, when He does not let them. What are *you* wanting, Miss Dolly?"

"I want everything different from what it is just now!" said Dolly, the tears starting to her eyes. The housekeeper was moved with a great sympathy; sympathy that was silent at first.

"Can I help?" she asked.

"Maybe you can help with your counsel," said Dolly, brushing her hand over her eyes; "that is what I came here for to-day. I wanted to speak to somebody; and I have nobody but you, Mrs. Jersey."

"Your mother, my dear?"

"I can't worry mother."

"True. You are right. Well, my dear? What do you want counsel about?"

"It is very difficult to tell you. I don't know if I can. I will try. One thing. Mrs. Jersey, is it right sometimes, is it a girl's duty ever--to sacrifice herself for her parents?"

The housekeeper had not expected this form of dilemma, and hesitated a few minutes.

"Sacrifice herself how, Miss Dolly?"

"Marrying, for instance."

"Marrying somebody she does not care for?"

"Yes."

"How 'for her parents'?"

"Suppose--I am just supposing,--suppose he has money, and they haven't. Suppose, for instance, they are in difficulties, and by her sacrificing herself she can put them out of difficulty? Such a case might be, you know."

"Often has been; or at least people have thought so. But, Miss Dolly, where is a young lady's first duty?"

"To God, of course; her first duty."

"And next after God?"

"To her parents, I suppose."

"And besides her parents?"

"I don't know; nobody, I think."

"Let us see. She owes something to herself."

"Does she?"

"And do you not think she owes something to the other party concerned? don't you think she owes something to the gentleman she is to marry?"

"Yes, of course," said Dolly slowly. "I do not know exactly what, though; nor exactly what she owes to herself."

"Before taking any course of action, in a matter that is very important, shouldn't she look all round the subject? and see what will become of all these duties?"

"Certainly. But the first comes first."

"The first comes first. How does the first look to you?"

"The first is her duty to God."

"Well. What does her duty to God say?"

"I don't know," said Dolly very gravely. "I am all in a puzzle. Something in me says one thing, and something else in me cries out against it. Mrs. Jersey, the Bible says, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.'"

"Yes, and it says, 'Children, obey your parents.' But the next words that come after, are--*in the Lord.*"

"How is that?"

"So as you can without failing in your duty to Him."

"Can duties clash?"

"No," said the housekeeper, smiling; "for, as you said, 'the first comes first.'"

"I do not understand," said Dolly. "It is my duty to obey His word; and His word says, obey them."

"Only not when their command or wish goes against His."

"Well, how would this?" said Dolly. "Suppose they wish me to marry somebody, and my doing so would be very good for them? The Bible says, 'Love seeks not her own.'"

"Most true," said the housekeeper, watching the tears that suddenly stood in Dolly's bright eyes. "But it says some other things."

"What, Mrs. Jersey? Do make it clear to me if you can. I am all in a muddle."

"My dear, I am not a very good hand to explain what I mean. But do you not think you owe it both to yourself and to God, not to do what would blast your life? you cannot serve Him so well with a blasted life."

"It seems to me," said Dolly, speaking slowly, "I have a right to give up my own happiness. I do not see the wrong of it."

"In anything else," said the housekeeper. "In anything else, my dear; only not in marriage! My dear, it is not simply giving up one's happiness; it is a long torture! No, you owe it to yourself; for in that way you could never grow to be what you might be. My dear, I have seen it tried. I have known a woman who married so, thinking that it would not matter so much; she fulfilled life's duties nobly, she was a good wife and mother and friend; but when I asked her once, after she had told me her story, how life had been to her?--I shall never forget how she turned to me and said, 'It has been a hell upon earth!' Miss Dolly, no good father and mother would buy *anything* at such a price; and no man that really loved a woman would have her at such a price; and so, if you follow the rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them'--you will never marry in that way."

There was a little silence, and then Dolly said in an entirely changed tone, "You have cleared up the mist, Mrs. Jersey."

"Then there is another thing," the housekeeper went on. She heard the change in Dolly's voice, out of which the anxiety had suddenly vanished, but she was willing to make assurance doubly sure. "Did you ever think what a woman owes to the man she marries?"

"I never thought about it," said Dolly. "What a man asks for, is that she will marry him." How Dolly's cheeks flamed up. But she was very serious, and the housekeeper if possible yet more so.

"Miss Dolly, she owes him the best love of her heart, after that she gives to God."

"I don't see how she can," said Dolly. "I do not see how she *can* love him so well as her father and mother."

"He expects it, though, and has a right to it. And unless a woman can give it, she cannot be a true wife. She makes a false vow at the altar. And unless she do love him so, it may easily happen that she will find somebody afterwards that she will like better than her husband. And then, all is lost."

"After she is married?" said Dolly.

"Perhaps after she has been married for years. If she has not married the right man, she may find him when she cannot marry him."

"But that is dreadful!" cried Dolly.

"The world is a pretty mixed-up place," said the housekeeper. "I want *your* way to be straight and clear, Miss Dolly."

There was a pause again, at the end of which Dolly repeated, "Thank you, Mrs. Jersey. You have cleared up the mist for me."

"I hear it in your voice," said her friend, smiling. "It has got its clear, sweet ring again. Is *all* the trouble disposed

of?"

"Oh no!" said Dolly, a shadow crossing her face anew; "but I am relieved of one great perplexity. That was not all my trouble;--I cannot tell you all. I wish I could! One thing,--I want to see my father dreadfully, to talk to him about mother's going travelling; and I cannot get sight of him. He stays in London. And time is flying."

"Write," said the housekeeper.

"Oh, I have written. And I have sent messages. I would go up to London myself, but I cannot go alone."

"Miss Dolly," said the housekeeper, after a minute's thought, "perhaps I can help here too. I have to go up to London for a few days, and was thinking to go next week. If you will trust yourself to me, I will take you, and take care of you."

Dolly was overjoyed at this suggestion. A little more conversation to settle preliminaries and particulars, and Dolly set off on her way home with a much lightened heart.

"Ah me!" thought the housekeeper, as she stood at the door looking after her, "how hard we do make it for each other in this world!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONSUL'S OFFICE.

Before Dolly had reached home she was joined by Mr. St. Leger. He was still in the park.

"Have you been for a walk?" said he in astonished fashion.

"I suppose that would be a natural conclusion," said Dolly. She spoke easily; it rejoiced her to find how easily she could now meet Mr. St. Leger. Yet the game was not all played out, either.

"Why didn't you let me know, that I might go with you?" he went on.

"That was not in my purpose," rejoined Dolly lightly.

"That is very unkind, Dolly."

"Truth is never unkind."

"Yes, indeed, it may be; it is now."

"Would you like falsehood better?"

"You need not be false."

"I must be either false or true, must I not? Which would you rather have, Mr. St. Leger?"

"It would be no good, my choosing," said he, with a half laugh; "for you would never give me anything but absolute truth, I know. I believe that is one of your attractions, Dolly. All other girls put on something, and a fellow never can tell what he is served to, the dish is spiced so cleverly. But you are like a piece of game, with no flavour but your own; and that is wild enough, and rare enough too."

"Mr. St. Leger," said Dolly gravely, "you ought to study rhetoric."

"Have. Why?"

"I am afraid that last speech was rather mixed up."

"Look here,--I wish you'd call me Lawrence. We know each other quite well enough."

"Is that the custom in your country?"

"It is going to be your country, as well. You need not speak in that fashion."

"I am thinking of leaving the country," Dolly went on unconcernedly. "Mother is longing to travel; and I am going to bring it about."

"I have tried Mr. Copley on that subject, I assure you."

"I shall try now, and do it."

"Think so? Then we will consult about plans and routes again this evening. Mrs. Copley likes that almost as well as the thing itself. For, Dolly, you cannot get along without me."

Which assertion Dolly left uncontroverted.

A few days after Lawrence had gone back to town was the time for Mrs. Jersey's journey. Dolly told her mother her plan; and after a deal of doubts and fears and arguings on Mrs. Copley's part, it was finally agreed to. It seemed the hopefulest thing to do; and Mrs. Copley could be left well enough with the servants for a few days. So, early one morning Mrs. Jersey called for her, and Dolly with a beating heart kissed her mother and went off.

Some business reasons occasioned the housekeeper to make the journey in a little covered carriage belonging to the house, instead of taking the public post-coach. It was all the pleasanter for Dolly, being entirely private and quiet; though the time consumed was longer. They were then in the end of summer; the weather was delicious and warm; the country rich in flowers and grain fields and ripening fruit. Dolly at first was full of delight, the change and the novelty were so welcome, and the country through which they drove was so exceeding lovely. Nevertheless, as the day went by there began to creep over her a strange feeling of loneliness; a feeling of being out on the journey of life all by herself and left to her own skill and resources. It was not the journey to London; for *that* she was well accompanied and provided; it was the real undertaking upon which she had set out, the goal of which was not London but--her father. To find her father not only, but to keep him; to prevent his being lost to himself, lost to her mother, to life, and to her. Could she? Or was she embarked on an enterprise beyond her strength? A weak girl; what was she, to do so much! It grew and pressed upon her, this feeling of being alone and busy with a work too great for her; till gradually the lovely country through which she was passing ceased to be lovely; it might have been a wilderness, for all its cheer or promise to her. Dolly had talked at first, in simple, gleeful, girlish pleasure; little by little her words grew fewer, her eye lost its glad life; until she sat back, withdrawn into herself, and spoke no more unless spoken to.

The housekeeper noticed the change, saw and read the abstracted, thoughtful look that had taken place of the gay, interested delight of the morning. She perceived that Dolly had serious work on hand, of some sort; and she longed to help her. For the fair, sweet, womanly thoughtfulness was as lofty and lovely in its way, as the childlike simplicity of enjoyment before had been bewitching. She was glad when the day's ride came to an end.

The stoppage was made at a little wayside inn; a low building of grey stone, overgrown with ivy and climbing roses, with a neatly kept bit of grass in front. Here Dolly's interest and delight awoke again. This was something unlike all she had ever seen. Simple and plain enough the inn was; stone flooring and wooden furniture of heavy and ancient pattern made it that; but at the same time it was substantial, comfortable, neat as wax, and with a certain air of well-to-do thrift which was very pleasant. Mrs. Jersey was known here and warmly received. The travellers were shown into a cosy little room, brown wainscoted, and with a great jar of flowers in the chimney; and here the cloth was immediately laid for their dinner, or supper. For the supper itself they had to wait a little; and after putting off her bonnet and refreshing herself in an inner room, Dolly sat down by one of the small windows. The day was declining. Slant sunbeams shot across a wide plain and threw long shadows from the trees. The trees, especially those overhanging the inn, were old and large and fine; the lights and shadows were moveless, calm, peaceful; one or two neighbouring fields were stocked with beautiful cattle; and a flock of geese went waddling along over the green. It was removed from all the scenes of Dolly's experience; as unlike them as her being there alone was unlike the rest of her life; in the strangeness there was this time an element of relief.

"How beautiful the world is, Mrs. Jersey!" she remarked.

"You find it so here?" answered her friend.

"Why, yes, I do. Don't you?"

"I suppose I am spoiled, Miss Dolly, by being accustomed to Brierley."

"Oh, this is not Brierley! but I am not comparing them. This is very pretty, Mrs. Jersey! Why, Mrs. Jersey, you don't despise a daisy because it isn't a rose!"

"No," said her friend; "but I suppose I cannot see the daisy when the rose is by." She was looking at Dolly.

"Well," said Dolly, "the rose is not by; and I like this very much. What a neat house! and what a pleasant sort of comfort there is about everything. I would not have missed this, Mrs. Jersey, for a good deal."

"I am glad, Miss Dolly. I was thinking you were not taking much good of your day's ride--the latter part."

Dolly was silent, looking out now somewhat soberly upon the smiling scene; then she jumped up and threw off her gravity, and came to the supper-table. It was spread with exquisite neatness, and appetising nicety. Dolly found herself hungry. If but her errand to London had been of a less serious and critical character, she could have greatly enjoyed the adventure and its picturesque circumstances. With the elastic strength of seventeen, however, she did enjoy it, even so.

"How good you are to me, Mrs. Jersey!" she said, after the table was cleared and the two were sitting in the falling twilight. The still peace outside and inside the house had found its way to Dolly's heart. There was the brooding hush of the summer evening, marked, not broken, by sounds of insects or lowing of cattle, and the voices of farm servants attending to their work. It was yet bright outside, though the sun had long gone down; inside the house shades were gathering.

"I wish I could be good to you, Miss Dolly," was the housekeeper's answer.

"Oh, you are! I do not know what in the world I should have done, if you had not let me go with you to London now."

"What can I do for you when we get there?"

"Oh, nothing! thank you."

"You know exactly where to go and what to do?"

"I shall take a cab and go--let me see,--yes, to father's rooms. If I do not find him there, I must go to his office."

"In the City?"

"Yes. Will that be very far from your house? Why, yes, of course; we shall be at the West End. Well, all the same, near or far, I must see my father."

"You must be so good as to let me go in the cab with you," said Mrs. Jersey. "I cannot let you drive all about London alone by yourself."

"Oh, thank you!" said Dolly again, with an undoubted accent of relief. "But"----

That sentence remained unfinished. Dolly meditated. So did the housekeeper. She was wise enough to see that all was not exactly clear and fair in her young friend's path; of what nature the trouble might be she could only surmise.

"What if Mr. Copley should not be in London?" she ventured.

"Oh, he must be. At least he was there a very few days ago. He never is away from London, except when he goes to visit somewhere."

"It is coming towards the time now when the gentlemen go down into the country to shoot."

"Father does not care for shooting. I mean to get him to go to Venice instead, with mother and me."

"Suppose you should fail in that plan, Miss Dolly? is your business done then?"

"No. Oh no!" said Dolly, for a moment covering her face with her hands. "O Mrs. Jersey! if I could not manage that, I do not know what I should do!" Dolly's voice had a premonition of despair. "But I guess I can do it," she added

with a resumption of cheerfulness. And she talked on from that time merrily of other things.

When they arrived in London next day, it was already too late for Dolly to do anything. She was fain to let Mrs. Jersey lodge her and feast her and pet her to her heart's content. She was put in a pretty room in the great house; she was entertained royally, as far as the viands went; and in every imaginable way the housekeeper was carefully kind. Well for Dolly; who needed all the help of kindness and care. The whole long day she had been brooding on what she had to do, and trying to imagine how things would be. Without data, that is a specially wearisome occupation; inasmuch as one may imagine anything, and there is nothing to contradict the most extravagant speculations. Dolly's head and heart were tired by the time night came, and her nerves in an excited condition, to which Mrs. Jersey's ministrations and the interest of the place gave a welcome relief. Dolly tried to put off thought. But everything pressed upon her, now that she was so near seeing her father; and seventeen-years-old felt as if it had a great load on its young shoulders.

"Mrs. Jersey," she began, after supper, "you are quite sure that it is never right for a girl to sacrifice herself for the sake of benefiting her parents?"

"In the way of marrying a man she does not love? Miss Dolly, a Christian man would never have a young lady marry him on those terms."

"Suppose he is not a Christian man?"

"Then he may be selfish enough to do it. But in that case, Miss Dolly, a Christian woman can have nothing to say to him."

"Why not? She might bring *him* to be Christian, you know."

"That isn't the Lord's way, Miss Dolly."

"What is His way, then?"

"You will find it in the sixth chapter of 2nd Corinthians. 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.'"

"But that means"----

"It *says*--Miss Dolly; it *says*--do not be yoked up with one who is not following the Lord; neither in marriage, nor in business. Two oxen in a yoke, Miss Dolly, have to pull the same way; and if they don't want to, the weakest must go with the strongest."

"But might not the Christian one be the strongest?"

"His disobeying the Lord's command just shows he isn't that."

Dolly let the subject drop. She took a little cushion and sat down by her friend's side and laid her head in her lap; and they sat so a while, Mrs. Jersey looking fondly down upon the very lovely bright head on her knees, and marvelling sorrowfully at the fathers and mothers who prepare trouble for such tender and delicate creatures as their young daughters.

The next morning she admired her charge under a new view of her. Dolly appeared at breakfast with a calm, measured manner, which, if it were in part the effect of great pressure upon her spirits, had at the same time the grace of a very finished breeding. Mrs. Jersey looked and admired, and wondered too. How had the little American got this air? She could not put it on herself; but she had seen her mistresses in the great world wear it; a certain unconscious, disengaged dignity which sat marvellously well upon the gracious softness and young beauty of this little girl.

The breakfast was rather silent. The drive, which they entered upon immediately after, was almost wholly so. Mrs. Jersey, true to her promise, let her own affairs wait, and accompanied her young friend. Dolly had changed her plan, and went now first to Mr. Copley's office in the city. It was the hour when he should be there, and to go to his lodging would have taken them out of the way. So they drove the long miles from Grosvenor Square to the American Consul's office. Dolly's mood was eager and hopeful now; yet with too much pressure to allow of her talking.

The cab stopped opposite the entrance of a narrow covered way between two walls of houses. Following this narrow passage, Mrs. Jersey and Dolly emerged into a little court, very small, on one side of which two or three steps led to the American Consul's offices. The first one they entered was full of people, waiting to see the Consul or

parleying with one or another of the clerks. Dolly left Mrs. Jersey there to wait for her, and herself went on into the inner room, her father's special private office. In those days the office of American Consul was of far more importance and dignity than to-day; and this room was a tolerably comfortable one and respectably furnished.

Here, however, her father was not; and it immediately struck Dolly that he had not been there very lately. How she gathered this impression is less easy to tell, for she could hardly be said to see distinctly any one of the characters in which the fact was written. She did not know that dust lay thick on his writing-table, and that even the papers piled there were brown with it; she did not know that the windows were fastened down this warm day, nor that an arm-chair which usually stood there for the accommodation of visitors was gone, having been slipped into the outer office by an ease-loving clerk. It was a general air of forsakenness, visible in these and in yet slighter signs, which struck Dolly's sense. She stood a moment, bewildered, hoping against sense, as it were; then turned about. As she turned she was met by a young man who had followed her in from the outer office. Dolly faced him.

"Where is Mr. Copley?"

"He ain't here." The Yankee accents of home were unmistakable.

"I see he is not here; but where is he?"

"Couldn't say, reelly. 'Spect he's to his place. We don't generally expect ladies at this time o' day, or I guess he'd ha' ben on hand." The clerk grinned at Dolly's beauty, the like of which to be sure was not often seen anywhere at that, or any other, time of day.

"When was Mr. Copley here, sir?"

"Couldn't say. 'Tain't very long, nother. Was you wantin' to see him on an a'pintment?"

"No. I am Miss Copley. Where can I find my father? Please tell me as quick as you can."

"Sartain--ef I knowed it. Now I wisht I did! Mr. Copley, he comes and he goes, and he don't tell me which way; and there it is, you see."

"Where is Mr. St. Leger?"

"Mr. Silliger? Don't know the gentleman. Likely Mr. Copley doos. But he ain't here to say. Mebbe it 'ud be a good plan to make a note of it. That's what Mr. Copley allays says; 'make a note of it.'"

"You do not know, sir, perhaps, whether Mr. Copley is in London?"

"He was in London--'taint very long ago, for he was in this here office, and I see him; but that warn't yesterday, and it warn't the day before. Where he's betaken himself between whiles, ain't known to me. Shall I make a note, miss, against he comes?"

"No," said Dolly, turning away; "no need. And no use."

She rejoined Mrs. Jersey and they went back to the carriage.

"He is not there," she said excitedly; "and he has not been there for several days. We must go to his lodgings--all the way back almost!"

"Never mind," said the housekeeper. "We have the day before us."

"It is almost twelve," said Dolly, looking at her watch. "Before we get there it will be one. I am a great deal of trouble to you, I fear, Mrs. Jersey; more than I meant to be."

"My dear, it's no trouble. I am happy to be of any use to you. What sort of a chain is that you wear, Miss Dolly?"

"Curious, isn't it?" said Dolly. "It was given me long ago. It is woven of threads of a ship cable."

"It is a beautiful chain," said her friend, examining it admiringly. "But that is very clever, Miss Dolly! I should never fancy it was a piece of cable. Is there an anchor anywhere?"

"No," said Dolly, laughing. "Though I am not sure," she added thoughtfully. "My memory goes back along this chain a great way;--back to the time when I was a little girl, quite little, and very happy at school and with a dear aunt, whom I lived with then. And back there at the end of the chain are all those pleasant images; and one most beautiful day, when we went to visit a ship; a great man-of-war. A most beautiful day!" Dolly repeated with the accent of loving recollection.

"And you brought back a piece of cable from the ship, and braided this?"

"No. Oh no! I did not do it; I could not. It was done for me."

"By a friend's fingers?"

"Yes, I suppose you may say so," said Dolly; "though it is a friend I have never seen since then. I suppose I never shall. But I always wear the chain. Oh, how long that seems ago!--Is childhood the happiest time of a person's life, Mrs. Jersey?"

"Maybe I might say yes. Miss Dolly; but if I did, I should mean not what you mean. I should mean the little-child life that one can have when one is old. When the heart says, 'Not my will, but Thine'--when it says, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' You know, the Master said, 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I don't believe I am just as much of a child, then, as I used to be," remarked Dolly.

"Get back to it, my dear, as fast as you can."

"But when one *isn't* a child, things are so different. It is easy to trust and give up for a child's things; but when one is a woman"----

"It is just the same, dear Miss Dolly! Our great affairs, they are but child's matters to the Lord's eyes. The difference is in ourselves--when our hearts get proud, and our self-will gets up."

"I wish I could be like a child now," said Dolly from the depths of her heart. "I feel as if I were carrying the whole family on my shoulders, and as if I must do it."

"You cannot, my dear! Your shoulders will break. 'Casting your care upon Him,' the Bible says--'for He careth for you.'"

"One does not see Him"---- said Dolly, with her eyes very full.

"Faith can see," the housekeeper returned; and then there was a long silence; while the carriage rattled along over the streets, and threaded its way through the throng of business, or bread-seekers or pleasure-seekers. So many people! Dolly wondered if every one of them carried his secret burden of care, as she was doing; and if they were, she wondered how the world lived on and bore the multitudinous strain. Oh, to be a child, in the full, blessed sense of the term!

CHAPTER XVI.

A FIGHT.

The cab stopped, and Dolly's heart gave a great thump against her ribs. What was she afraid of?

Mrs. Jersey said she would wait in the cab, and Dolly applied herself to the door-knocker. A servant came, a stupid one seemingly.

"Is Mr. Copley at home?"

"I dunno."

"Will you find out, please?"

"Jemima, who's that?" called a voice of authority from behind the scenes.

"Somebody arter the gentleman, ma'am. I dunno, is he in his room?"

The owner of the voice came forward; a portly, respectable landlady. She surveyed Dolly, glanced at the cab, became very civil, invited Dolly in, and sent the maid upstairs to make inquiries, declaring she did not know herself whether the gentleman were out or in. Dolly would not sit down. The girl brought down word that Mr. Copley was not out of his bedroom yet.

"I went in the parlour, ma'am, and knocked, ma'am; and I might as well ha' axed my broom, ma'am."

"I'll go up," said Dolly hastily; and waiting for no answer, she brushed past landlady and maid and ran up the stairs. Then paused.

"Which rooms? on the first floor?"

The woman of the house came bustling after her up the stairs and opened the door of a sitting-room. It was very comfortably furnished.

"You couldn't go wrong, ma'am," she said civilly, "I 'ave no one in my rooms at this present, except Mr. Copley. I suppose you are his daughter, ma'am?"

"His daughter," Dolly repeated, standing still and facing the landlady, and keeping down all outward expression of the excitement which was consuming her. She knew she kept it down; she faced the woman steadily and calmly, and the landlady was more and more humbly civil. "Mr. Copley is not ill?" Dolly went on.

"Oh, dear, no, ma'am! not to call h'ill. Mr. Copley is in enjoyment of very good 'ealth; as I 'ave occasion to know, ma'am, who cooks his meals for him. I can allers tell by that. When a gentleman or a lady 'as good taste for their victuals, I think it's no 'arm if they sleeps a little long in the morning; it's a trifle onconvenient to the 'ouse, it may be, when things is standing roun', but it's good for theirselves, no doubt, and satisfyin' and they'll be ready for their breakfast when they comes h'out. And shall I wake Mr. Copley for you, ma'am? It's time for him, to be sure."

"Thank you, no; you need not do anything. I will sit here and wait a little."

"And Mr. Copley's coffee'll be ready for him, ma'am, when he's ready for h'it. Mr. Copley, he sets a good deal by his coffee, and likes it made particular, and he *gets* it made particular. Didn't Mr. Copley tell you, ma'am, as his coffee was satisfactory?"

"I daresay it is," said Dolly; "and I will ring for it when my father wants it. You may leave me; I will wait here."

The landlady had been going round the room, picking up a bit of paper here and wiping her apron over a table there, the while taking a careful view of Dolly and examining her all over. Dolly's figure and manner were irreproachable; and with renewed proffers of service, the woman at last, having no choice, left the room. Dolly stood still a moment then, collecting herself and looking at the situation. Past one o'clock, and her father not out of his room! That was not like any of his habits, as she knew them; and Dolly stood with the shadow of a nameless fear falling across her spirit. Nameless, and formless; she did not discern it clearly or attempt to examine it; the mere shadow of it chilled her to the bone. She stood thinking, and trembling. Not at his office for several days, though business must be calling for him; not out of his room at one o'clock in the afternoon, though all his old simple home habits were opposed to such a waste of daylight! Should she try to arouse him? Dolly did try, after a little while; for she could not bear the still waiting; she knocked at the inner door; but she got no response. Then she went down to Mrs. Jersey at the cab, and told her the state of the case, begging her to go away and not wait any longer. *She* must wait, and it was impossible to say how long.

"Miss Dolly, does your father often rise so late?"

"They say so. He never used, but it seems he does now."

"It's the way with a many," said the housekeeper. "Never mind me, my dear. I'll wait here, or if I get tired of that, I will come in and sit with the landlady. I shall not leave you."

Inwardly thankful, Dolly went back to her post and sat down and looked around her. She could tell nothing by the room or its contents. Both were nice enough; there was a slight smell of cigars, that was all to find fault with. Dolly waited. The stillness grew dreadful. To seventeen years old the first trouble comes hard; albeit seventeen years old has also a great fund of spirit and strength to meet and conquer trouble. But what was the trouble here? It was not the unusual scantiness of means; *that* could soon be made right, if other things were not wrong which wrought to cause it. On the other hand, if her father had fallen irreparably into bad habits--Dolly would not admit the "irreparably" into her thoughts. But it was bitter to her that children should ever have to find their parents in the wrong; dreadful to have occasion to be ashamed of them. She knew, if her case proved such a one, it would be only one of a great many; she had read of such things, although chiefly among another class of people who were of coarser habits and duller natures, and if they fell had less distance to fall to get to the lowest level of society. But *her father!*--Dolly cowered with her head down upon the back of a chair, and a cry in her heart calling upon his name. Her father? could she have to blush for him? All her nature revolted against it; the thought came over her as a thick black cloud, so thick that for the moment light was banished from all her little landscape. Oh, how can fathers do such things! and how can daughters live under them! Death might be borne easier; but disgrace? Death would leave the loved one still her own; disgrace seemed to have a power of annihilation. Still, Dolly knew not that such trouble was really come upon her; alas, she did know too well that the fear of it had. And what a descent did that alone imply! She raised her head again, and sat with dry eyes and a beating heart, waiting.

At last she was sure she heard some movement in the inner room. She heard the click of things that were moved; the fall of a chair that was knocked over, sounds of steps. Finally the door opened, and Mr. Copley appeared on the threshold. The sight of him smote his daughter. His dress was carelessly thrown on; *that* was not so very remarkable, for Mr. Copley never was an exact man in matters of the toilet. It was not merely that. But Dolly's eye saw that his step was unsteady, his face dull and flushed, and his eye had a look which even a very little experience understands. His air was haggard, spiritless, hopeless; so unlike the alert, self-sufficient, confident manner of old, that Dolly's heart got a great wrench. And something in the whole image was so inexpressibly pitiful to her, that she did the very last thing it had been in her purpose to do; she fled to him with one bound, threw herself on his breast, and burst into a heartbreak of tears.

Poor Mr. Copley was greatly startled and sorely perplexed. He had not been prepared to see his daughter; and though miserably conscious that he offered ground enough himself for Dolly's passion, he could not yet be sure that it concerned him. It might be wrought by some other cause; and in sore dismay and uncertainty he was not able to bring out a word of question. Dolly sobbed, and sobbed; and putting her arms up around his neck strained him in an embrace that was most pitifully longing and tender. Mr. Copley felt the pitifulness; he did not know what it meant. It was not till Dolly had released him and was trying to dry her eyes that he brought out a question.

"What's the matter with you, Dolly?"

Dolly heard the thick and lumbering accent of his words, and burst forth in a despairing cry. "O father! what is the matter with you?"

"I'm all right," said poor Mr. Copley. "I'm all right. What are you here for?"

"I wanted to see you. Why did you never come down? You haven't been near us."

"I was coming--hindered always--I was coming, Dolly. How's your mother?"

Dolly made a great effort after voice and calmness.

"She is well--I mean, she is no worse than usual. Will you have your coffee, father?"

But Dolly's voice choked with a sob. Mr. Copley looked at her in a helpless kind of way and made no answer. Dolly rang the bell.

"How--a--how did you get here?" was the next question, put in evident embarrassment.

"You wouldn't come to Brierley, father; so I had to come to London. I came with a friend."

"St. Leger?"

"St. Leger! No, indeed. Oh, I came with a very nice friend, who took good care of me. Now, here's your breakfast."

Dolly was glad of the chance to get upon common everyday ground, till her breath should be free again. She

helped arrange the dishes; dismissed the maid; poured out Mr. Copley's coffee and served him.

"Better take some yourself, Dolly. Had your breakfast? Let Mrs. Bunce do you another chop."

Dolly at first said no; but presently felt that she was faint and exhausted, and agreed to the suggestion. She rang for another cup and plate, and ordered the chop. Meanwhile Mr. Copley drank coffee and made a poor hand of the rest of his breakfast.

"What did you come up for, Dolly?"

"To see you, sir."

"You might have waited for that."

"But how long? I had waited."

"What's up?--if your mother's well."

"I wanted to talk to you, father, and I couldn't do it in letters; because there the talking was all on one side, and I wanted to hear what you would say."

"Why, didn't I answer you?"

"No, sir."

"Well, what do you want, Dolly?"

"I want a great deal, father. Wait, please, till I get my chop; for I cannot talk to you till I do."

"'Ill talking between a full man and a fasting,' eh? Well, here's your breakfast."

It was only the bespoken cup and plate, however, and Mr. Copley had to wait longer. It came at last, the chop; and till it came Dolly said no more. Her father watched her, and watched her, and could not take his eyes off her. The flush on her cheek and the sparkle in her eye, the moisture still lingering on her eyelashes, how sweet she was! and how indefinably lovely! Dolly had grown into a woman; she had the presence and poise that belong to a high-bred woman; and yet she had not lost her girlhood nor grown out of its artless graces; and as Mr. Copley looked he saw now and then a very childlike trembling of the under lip. It troubled his heart. He had been very uncomfortable ever since his meeting with his daughter; the discomfort began now to develope into the stings and throes of positive pain. What was she there for? whence had come that agony of tears? and why when those tears were pouring from her eyes did her soft arm clasp him so? did she want help from him? or for him? Mr. Copley grew extremely uneasy; restless and fidgeting. Dolly ate her chop and her potatoe, needing it, I fancy; and perhaps she wanted to gain time too. Mr. Copley had no appetite. He had none to begin with, and certainly Dolly's appearance had not given him what he had not before.

"You don't make much of a breakfast, father," Dolly observed.

"Never do," he returned. "No time to eat, when a man has just got up. A cup of coffee is the only thing. The French way is the best."

"You did not use to be up so late, in the old days."

"Don't think it's the best time either; but--you must do as the rest of the world do; swim with the--what is it?--swim with the current."

"How if the current goes the wrong way?"

"Can't help yourself; you must go along, if you are in it."

Dolly was silent, finishing her luncheon. She ate fast and hurriedly. Then she pushed her chair away and came round and sat upon her father's knee; laying one arm round his neck and looking into his face.

"Father," she said in her clear, musical voice, sweet as a bird's notes,--"father, suppose we get out of the current?"

"What current do you mean? It makes a great confusion to try to have your meals at a different hour from the rest of the world."

"I don't mean that, father."

"What have you come up to town for?"

"To see about it," said Dolly, with a smile that dimpled her cheeks most charmingly, and covered the anxiety she did not want to show.

"To see about what? Dolly, you are grown a woman."

"Yes, father."

"And, I declare you're a beautiful woman, child. It's time we were thinking of getting you married."

"You're not in a hurry, are you, father?"

"In a hurry!" said Mr. Copley, gazing at her admiringly. "Why, yes. I want you to be married while you can choose your place in the world, and enjoy it when you have got it. And you can choose now, Dolly."

"What, sir?"

"Your husband."

"But, father," cried Dolly, while her cheeks covered themselves with the most brilliant roses, "I cannot choose what is not presented to my choice!"

"No, child; take what *is*. That's what I am thinking of. Good enough too. Don't you like the ticket you have drawn?"

"Father," said Dolly, turning the tables now on her side, and laying her face in his neck, "I wish you would have nothing to do with lotteries or gaming!"

"I have nothing to do with lotteries, child."

"But with gaming?"

"What put such a thing into your head?"

Dolly hesitated, strained him a little closer in her embrace, and did not answer directly.

"Father, I wish you would!"

"What folly are you talking, Dolly?" said Mr. Copley angrily. "You are meddling with what you do not understand."

But Dolly only clung closer, and having once broken the ice would not now give back. She must speak now.

"Father," she said, half sobbing, yet commanding the sobs down, "we are getting ruined. We are losing each other. Mother and I live alone--we do not see you--we are poor--we have not money to pay our dues--mother is not getting better--and I am breaking my heart about her, and about you. O father, let us come and live together again."

Dolly got no answer to this outburst, and hardly was conscious that she got none, she was so eagerly trying to swallow down the emotion which threatened to master her voice. Mr. Copley had no answer ready.

"Father," Dolly began again, "mother wants to travel; she wants to go to Venice. Suppose we go?"

"Can't travel without money, Dolly. You say we haven't any."

"Would it cost more to travel than to live as we are living?"

"You say we cannot do that."

"Father, do *you* say so?"

"I am merely repeating your statements, Dolly, to show you how like a child you talk."

"Answer me as if I were a child then, father, and tell me what we can do. But *don't* let us go on living as we are doing!"

"I thought I had done the very best thing possible for your mother, when I got her that place down at--I forget what's the name of the place."

"Brierley."

"I thought I had done the very best thing for her, when I settled her there. Now she is tired of it."

"But father, we cannot pay our way; and it worries her."

"She is always worrying about something or other. If it wasn't that, it would be something else. Any man may be straightened for cash now and then. It happens to everybody. It is nothing to make a fuss about."

"But, father, if I cannot pay the servants, *they* must be without cash too; and that is hard on poor people."

"Not half so hard as on people above them," replied her father hastily. "They have ways and means; and they don't have a tenth or a hundredth as many wants, anyhow."

"But those they have are wants of necessary things," urged Dolly.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" said Mr. Copley, with as much of harshness in his manner as ever could come out towards Dolly. "I cannot coin money for you, well as I would like to do it."

"Father, let us take what we have got, and go to Venice! all together. We'll travel ever so cheaply and live ever so plainly; only let us go! Only let us go!"

"Think your mother'd like travelling second-class?" said Mr. Copley in the same way.

"She wouldn't mind so very much; and I wouldn't mind it at all. If we could only go."

"And what is to become of my business?"

Dolly did not dare give the answer that rose to her tongue, nor let her father know how much she knew. She came up on another side of the subject, and insisted that the consulate might be dispensed with. Mr. Copley did not need the office and might well be tired of it by this time. Dolly pleaded, and her father heard her with a half embarrassed, half sullen face; feeling her affectionate entreaties more than was at all convenient, and conscious at the same time of a whole side of his life that he would be ashamed his daughter should know; and afraid of her guessing it. Alas, for father and child both, when such a state of things comes about!

"Come, father!" said Dolly at last, touching her forehead to his forehead in a sweet kind of caress,--"I want you."

"Suppose I find somebody else to go with you instead of me?"

"Nobody else will do. Come, father! Do come."

"You might set off with Lawrence," said Mr. Copley as if considering, "and I might join you afterwards; at Venice, perhaps, or Nice, or somewhere. Hey?"

"That won't do. I would not go with Mr. Lawrence."

"Why not?"

"Too much of an honour for him."

"You need not be afraid of showing him too much honour, for he is willing to give you the greatest man can give to a woman."

Dolly coloured again, and again touched her forehead to her father's forehead and sat so, leaning against him. Maybe with an instinct of hiding her cheeks.

"Father, let us go to Venice!" she began again, leaving Mr. St. Leger. "Just think what fun it would be, to go all together. We have been living so long without you. I believe it would just make mother up. Think of seeing Venice together, father!--and then maybe we would go on to Geneva and get a look at Mont Blanc."

"Geneva is a place for lovers," said Mr. Copley.

"Why?"

"Romantic."

"Can't anybody else be romantic, except that sort of people? I am romantic,--and I do not care a straw about anybody but mother and you."

"Don't tell Mr. St. Leger that."

"He might as well know it. Come, father! Say you'll go."

It was hard to withstand her. The pure, gentle intonations rang upon Mr. Copley's soul almost like bells of doom, because he did withstand her. She was his saving good angel; he half knew it; he was ashamed before his child, and conscience knocked hard at the door of his heart; but the very shame he felt before her made her presence irksome to him, while yet it was, oh, so sweet! Alas, "he that doeth evil hateth the light." He was entangled in more than one sort of net, and he lacked moral power to break the meshes. The gentle fingers that were busy with the net, trying to unloose it, were a reproach and a torment to him. She *must* marry St. Leger; so his thoughts ran; it was the best thing that could happen to her; it was the best he could do for her. Then she would be secure, at all events.

"Dolly, why don't you like Lawrence?" he began.

"He's too handsome, father,--for one thing."

"I never heard of such a reason for a lady's dislike. That's play, Dolly."

"And he knows it; there's another thing."

"Well, of course he knows it. How can he help knowing it?"

"And he's too rich."

"Dolly, you are talking nonsense."

"And he knows that."

"He doesn't know he's *too* rich," said Mr. Copley, with a little bitterness. "No St. Leger ever did that."

"Well, father, that's what he is. Very handsome, and very rich. He is nothing else. He would suit some people admirably; but he don't suit me."

"What sort of thing would suit you?"

"A very perverse sort of a person, who is called Frank Collinshaw Copley."

"Well, you've got me," said her father, laughing a little at her. He could not help it. "You want something else besides."

"I don't, father, indeed."

"And, my child, money is necessary in this world. You cannot get along without money."

"Father, will you come to Venice? and we'll get along with very little money. Father, we *must* go, for mother. The doctor says so, and she is just longing to go. We ought to go as soon as ever you can be ready."

"You show how much you know about it, when you talk of Venice and a *little* money! You had better take Mr. St. Leger."

"Father, everybody says living is cheap in Switzerland."

"You talked of Venice."

"And Italy. The doctor says mother ought to stay some time at Nice, or Naples. Father, you can arrange it. Do! Give up the consulate, and let us take mother to Italy; and then home if you like. I don't much care, so that we have you." And again Dolly's forehead bent over to give a soft impact to her father's brown brow.

"Who did you come to town with?" he said suddenly. She told him.

"Well, now you had better go back with her, and I will see what I can do."

"You will go, father?"

"If I cannot immediately, I will send you and come on after."

"I cannot go without you, father. Oh, come, come!" And Dolly rained kisses upon his face, and stroked his forehead and cheeks, and was so entirely delicious in her tenderness and her sweetness, her love and her anxiety, that the heart of ordinary man could not stand it. Anything else became more easy than to refuse her. So Mr. Copley said he would go; and received a new harvest of caresses in reward, not wholly characterised by the usual drought of harvest-time, for some drops of joy and thankfulness still came falling, a sunlit shower.

"Now, my child," said her father, "you had better go back to your good housekeeper, and then back to your mother, and get all things ready for a start."

"Father, I can stay here to-night, can't I?"

Mr. Copley was not sure that he wanted her; yet he could not refuse to make inquiry. There was no difficulty; plenty of room; and Dolly joyously prepared herself to gather in the fruits of her victory, through that following care and those measures of security for want of which many a victory has been won in vain. Mrs. Jersey had long since been informed that she need not wait, and had driven away. Dolly now sent for her portmanteau, and established herself in her father's sitting room.

Mr. Copley looked on, helplessly; half delighted, half bored. He would not have chosen to have Dolly there just then; yet being there she was one of the most lovely visions that a father's eye could rest upon. Grown to be a woman--yes, she was; ordering and arranging things with a woman's wisdom and skill; ordering *him*, Mr. Copley felt with a queer sensation; and yet, so simple and free and sweet in all her words and ways as might have become seven instead of seventeen. St. Leger might be glad if he could get her! Yet she was inconvenient to Mr. Copley. She stood in his way, like the angel in Balaam's; only not with a sword drawn, but with loving looks, and kisses, and graces, and wiles of affection; and who could withstand an angel? He gave up trying; he let her have her way; and when dinner time came, Dolly and he had an almost jovial dinner. Until Mr. Copley rose from table, unlocked a cupboard, and took out a bottle of wine. Dolly's heart gave a sudden leap that meant a throe of pain. Was there another fight to be fought? How should she fight another fight? But the emergency pressed her.

"O father," she cried, "is that sherry?"

"No, it is better," said her father--pouring out a glass,--"it is Madeira."

Dolly saw the hand tremble that grasped the bottle, and she sprang up. She went round to her father, fell down on her knees before him, and laid one hand on the hand that had just seized the glass, the other on his shoulder.

"Please, father, don't take it! please don't take it!" she said in imploring tones. Mr. Copley paused.

"Not take it? Why not?" said he.

"It is not good for you. I know you ought not to take it, father. Please, please, don't!"

Dolly's eagerness and distress were too visible to be disregarded, by Mr. Copley at least. Her hand was trembling too. His still held the glass, but he looked uncertainly at Dolly, and asked her why it should not be good for him? Every

gentleman in the land drank wine--that could afford it.

"But, father," said Dolly, "can you afford it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Copley. "Get up, Dolly. Here is the wine; it costs no more to drink it than to let it alone." And he swallowed the wine in the glass at a single draught.

"O father, don't take any more!" cried Dolly, seeing a preparatory movement of the hand towards the bottle. "O father! don't, don't! One glass is enough. Don't take any more to-day!"

"You talk like a goose, Dolly," said Mr. Copley, filling his glass. "I feel better already for that. It has done me good."

"You only think so. It is not doing you good. O father! if you love me, put the bottle away. Don't take a drop more!"

Dolly had turned pale in her agony of pleading; and her father, conscious in part, and ashamed with that secret consciousness, and taken by surprise at her action, looked at her and--did not drink.

"What's the matter with you, child?" he said, trying for an unconcerned manner. "Why should not I take wine, like everybody else in the world?"

"Father, it isn't good for people."

"I beg your pardon; it is very good for me. Indeed, I cannot be well without it."

"That's the very thing, father; people cannot do without it; and then it comes to be the master; and then--they cannot help themselves. Oh, do let it alone!"

"What's the matter, Dolly?" Mr. Copley repeated with an air of injury, which was at the same time miserably marred by embarrassment. "Do you think I cannot help myself? or how am I different from every other gentleman who takes wine?"

"Father, a great many of them are ruined by it."

"Well, I am not ruined by it yet."

"Father, how can you tell what might be? Father, I can't bear it!" Dolly could not indeed; she broke down. She sat on the floor and sobbed.

If Mr. Copley could have been angry with her; but he could not, she was so sweet in every pleading look and tone. If he could have dismissed her pleading as the whim of a fool; but he could not, for he knew it was wise truth. If he had been further gone in the habit which was growing upon him, to the point of brutality; but he was not yet; he was a man of affectionate nature. So he did not get angry, and though he wished Dolly at Brierley instead of in his room, he could not let her break her heart, seeing that she was there. He looked at her in uncomfortable silence for a minute or two; and then the bitterness of Dolly's sobs was more than he could stand. He rose and put the bottle away, locked it up, and came back to his place. Dolly's distress hindered her knowing what he had done.

"It's gone," Mr. Copley said in an injured tone, as of one oppressed and persecuted. "It is put away, Dolly; you need not sit there any longer."

Dolly looked up, rose from the floor, came into her father's arms, laid her two arms about his neck and her weary head upon his shoulder. It was a soft little head, and the action was like a child. Mr. Copley clasped her tenderly.

"Dolly," he said,--"my child--you are giving yourself a great deal more trouble than you need."

Dolly murmured, "Thank you, father!"

"You mustn't be superstitious."

Alas! Dolly had seen his face already altered by the indulgence of his new habits. Involuntarily her arms pressed him closer, and she only by an effort prevented a new outbreak of bitter sorrow. That was not best just now. She put a force upon herself; after a while looked up, and kissed her father; kissed him again and again.

"I declare!" said Mr. Copley, half delighted and half conscience-stricken, "you are a little witch, Dolly. Is this the way you are going to rule other folks beside me? Mr. St. Leger, for instance?"

"Mercy, father! no," said Dolly, recoiling.

"I don't believe he would be hard to manage. He's desperately in love with you, Dolly."

"Father, I don't want to manage. And I don't think Lawrence is in any danger. It isn't in him to be desperate about anything."

"So much the better, I think," said her father. "What if he should want to go with us to Venice?"

"Don't let him! We do not want him."

"He would be useful, I daresay. And I should have to take my secretary, Dolly."

"Take that other fellow, the one I saw in your office to-day."

"What, Babbage? He's a raw article, Dolly, very raw. I put him there to answer questions. The fellow was in a forlorn state here with nothing to do."

They calmed down after a while; and the rest of the evening was largely spent in considering plans and details of their projected movements. It was agreed that Dolly should rejoin Mrs. Jersey the next day, to be ready to return to Brierley with her; that then all preparations should be made for a speedy start to the Continent. Father and daughter talked themselves into ordinary composure, and when they had bid each other good night, Dolly went to rest with a feeling of some hopefulness.

CHAPTER XVII.

RUPERT.

Mrs. Jersey could not leave town the next day. Dolly had to wait. It was hard waiting. She half wished she had stayed that day also with her father; yet when she asked herself why?--she shuddered. To take care of him? to watch and keep guard over him? What use, for one day, when she could do it no longer? Mr. Copley must be left to himself; and a feeling of helplessness stole over her. From the momentary encouragement and hope, she fell back again to take a more comprehensive view of the subject; she saw that all was not gained yet, and it might be that nothing! And she could do no more, except pray. Poor Dolly did that; but the strain of fear, the horror of shame, the grief of hurt affection, began to make her very sore. She was not getting accustomed to her burden; it was growing more insupportably galling; the only hope for the whole family lay in getting together and remaining together, and in this journey taking Mr. Copley away from his haunts and his tempters. Yet Dolly reflected with trembling that the temptation, both temptations, would meet them on their way; if a man desired to drink or to play, he would never be at a loss for the opportunity or the companions. Dolly wrung her hands and prayed again.

However, something was gained; and Dolly on her return reported to her mother that they were to set off for the Continent in a few days. She brought down money, moreover, to pay off the servants; and with a heart so far lightened, went bravely at the preparations to be made.

"And will your father go with us to Venice?"

"Of course, mother. We cannot go without him."

"What if Venice shouldn't agree with me?"

"Oh, then we'll go on further. I think Naples would agree with you. There is a very nice house at Sorrento--nice people--where Lady Brierley spent a summer; and Mrs. Jersey has given me the address. Perhaps we'll go there."

"But if Lady Brierley was there, I guess it's an expensive place."

"No, Mrs. Jersey says not. You must have what you want anyhow, mother dear."

"I always used," said poor Mrs. Copley; "but of late I have been obliged to sing another tune."

"Go back to the old tune, then, dear. If father hasn't got the money, I'll find some way of raising it myself. I mean you shall go to Sorrento. Mrs. Jersey says it's just charming there."

"I wonder what she knows about it! A housekeeper! Queer person to tell you and me where to go."

"Why, a finger-post can do that, mother. Mrs. Jersey knows a great deal besides, about a great many things."

"Well!" Mrs. Copley said again with another sigh--"it is new times to me altogether. And I wish the old times would come back!"

"Perhaps they will, mother. When once we get hold of father again, we must try to charm him into staying with us."

And it seemed to Dolly that they might do so much. The spirit of seventeen is not easily kept down; and with the stir of actually getting ready for the journey, she felt her hope and courage moving also. A change at any rate was before her; and Dolly had a faint, far-off thought of possibly working upon her father to induce him at the close of their Italian journey to take ship for home.

So she bustled about from morning till night; packed what was to go and what was to be left; grew very cheery over her work, and cheered and amused her mother. September was on its way now; it was time to be off; and Dolly wrote to her father to tell him she was ready.

A few days later, Dolly was in the porch resting and eating a fine pear, which came out of a basket Mrs. Jersey had sent. It was afternoon, sunny and hazy, the air fragrant from the woods, the silence now and then emphasised by a shot somewhere in the distance. Dolly was happy and hopeful; the weather was most lovely, the pear was excellent; she was having a pleasant half hour of musing and anticipation. Somebody came on foot along the road, swung open the small lattice gate, and advanced up the path towards her.

Who was it? Not Mr. St. Leger, which had been Dolly's first momentary fear. No, this was a different creature. A young man, but how unlike that other. St. Leger was trim-built, smooth, regular, comely; this young fellow was lank, long-limbed, none of his joints played symmetrically with the others; and the face, though shrewd enough and good-natured, had no remote pretensions to beauty. His dress had not been cut by the sort of tailor that worked for the St. Legers; his gait, instead of the firm, compact, confident movement which Dolly was accustomed to see, had a swinging stride, which indeed did not lack a kind of confidence; the kind that makes no doubt of getting over the ground, and cares little for obstacles. As Dolly looked, she thought she had seen him before. But it was very odd, nevertheless, the sort of well-pleased smile his face wore. He took off his hat when he got to the foot of the steps, and stood there looking up at Dolly in the porch.

"You don't recollect me, I guess," said he.

"No," said Dolly gravely.

"I am Rupert Babbage. And *that* don't make you much wiser, does it?"

"No," said Dolly. "Not at all."

"Likely. But Mr. Copley has sent me down."

"Has he?"

"I recollect you first-rate," the stranger went on, feeling in his coat pocket for something and producing therefrom a letter. "Don't you know the day you came to your father's office?" And mounting a step or two, without further preface he handed the letter to Dolly. Dolly saw her father's handwriting, her own name on the cover, and put a stop to the wonder which was creeping over her, by breaking the seal. While she read the letter the young man's eyes read her face.

"DEAR DOLLY,--

"I can't get quit of this confounded Babel yet--and you must want somebody badly. So I send Rupert down. He'll do everything you want, better in fact than I could, for he is young and spry, and as good a boy as lives. He will see to everything, and you can get off as soon as you like. I think he had better go along all the way; his mother wit is worth a dozen stupid couriers, even though he don't know quite so much about routes and hotels; he will soon pick all that up. Will you want to stay more than a night in town? For that night my landlady can take you in; and if you let me know when you will be ready I will have your passage taken in the packet.

"Hurried, as always, dear Dolly, with my love to your mother,

"F. C. COPLEY,

"CONSUL'S OFFICE LONDON,

"*Sept. 9, 182-*."

Poor Dolly read this note over and over, having thrown away the remainder of her sweet pear as belonging only to a time of easy pleasure-taking which was past. Was her father not coming to Brierley then? she must get off without him? Why? And "*your* passage"! why not "*our*" passage? Dolly felt the ground giving way under her feet. No, her father could not be coming to Brierley, or he would not have sent this young fellow. And all things in the world were hovering in uncertainty; nothing sure even to hope.

The eyes that watched her saw the face change, the fair, bright, young face; saw her colour pale, and the lovely lines of the lips droop for a moment to an expression of great sadness. The eyelids drooped too, and he was sure there was a glistening under them.

"Did Mr. Copley say why he could not come?" she asked at length, lifting her head.

"He did not. I am very sorry!" said Rupert involuntarily. "I guess he could not get his business fixed. And he said you were in a hurry."

But not without him! thought Dolly. What was the whole movement for, if he were to be left out of it? What should she do? But she must not let the tears come. That would do nobody any good, not even herself. She brushed away the undue moisture, and raised her head.

"Did Mr. Copley tell you who I am?" the young man asked. "I guess he didn't forget that."

"No. Yes!" said Dolly, unable to help smiling at the question and the simple earnestness of the questioner's face. "He told me your name."

"Left you to find out the rest?" said he. "Well, what can I do first? That's what for I'm come."

"I don't think there is anything to do," said Dolly.

"All ready?"

"Yes. Pretty much. All except finishing."

"Lots o' baggage?"

"No, not so very much. We did not bring a great deal down here."

"Then it'll go by the coach easy enough. How will it get to the coach?"

"I don't know. We must have a waggon from the village, I suppose, or from some farmhouse."

"When do you want to go? and I'll soon fix that."

Dolly reflected and said, "The day after to-morrow."

"All right."

He was setting forth immediately, with a world of energy in his gait. Dolly called after him.

"To-morrow will be time enough for the waggon, Mr. Babbage."

"There'll be something else for to-morrow," he answered without pausing.

"Tea'll be ready at six," said Dolly, raising her voice a little.

"All right!" said he, and sped away.

Dolly looked after him, so full of vexation that she did not know what to do. Not her father, and in his place this boy! This boy to go with them on the journey; to be one of the party; to be always on hand; for he could not be relegated to the place of a servant or a courier. And Dolly wanted her father, and was sure that the expense of a fourth person might have been spared. The worst fear of all she would not look at; it was possible that they were still to be three, and her father, the fourth, left out. However, for the present the matter in hand was action; she must tell her mother about this new arrival before she met him at supper. Dolly went in.

"Your father not coming?" said Mrs. Copley when she had heard Dolly's report. "Then we have nothing to wait for, and we can get right off. I do want to see your father out of that miserable office once!"

"Well, he promised me, mother," said Dolly, sighing.

"Can we go to-morrow?"

"No, mother; there are too many last things to do. Next day we will."

"Why can't we go and leave this young man to finish up after us?"

"He could not do it, mother; and we must let father know, besides."

Rupert came back in due time and was presented to Mrs. Copley; but Mrs. Copley did not admire his looks, and the supper-table party was very silent. The silence became unbearable to the new-comer; and though he was not without a certain shyness in Dolly's presence, it became at last easier to speak than to go on eating and not speaking.

"Plenty of shootin' round about here, I s'pose," he remarked. "I heard the guns going."

"The preserves of Brierley are very full of game," Dolly answered; "and there are some friends of Lord Brierley staying at the house."

"I engaged a waggon," Rupert went on. "It'll be here at one, sharp."

"I ought to have sent a word to the post-office, for father, when you went to the village; but I did not think till it was too late."

"I did that," said Rupert.

"Sent a word to father?"

"All right. Told him you'd be up on Wednesday."

"Oh, thank you. That was very thoughtful."

"You're from America," said Mrs. Copley.

"Should think I was!"

"Whereabouts? where from, I mean?"

"About two miles from your place--Ortonville is the spot. My native."

"What made you come over here?"

"Well, I s'pose it would be as true as anything to say, Mr. Copley made me come."

"What for?"

"Well, I guess it was kindness. Most likely."

"Kindness!" echoed Mrs. Copley. "Poor kindness, I call it, to take a man, or a boy, or any one else, away from his natural home. Haven't you found it so? Don't you wish you were back there again?"

"Well," said Rupert with a little slowness, and a twinkle in his eye at the same time,--"I just don't; if I'm to tell the truth."

"It is incomprehensible to me!" returned the lady. "Why, what do you find here, that you would not have had at home?"

"England, for one thing," said the young man with a smile.

"England! Of course you would not have had England at home; but isn't America better?"

"I think it is."

"Then what do you gain by exchanging one for the other?" said Mrs. Copley with heat.

"That exchange ain't made yet. I calculate to go back, when I have got all I want on this side."

"And what do you want? Money, I suppose. Everything is for money, with everybody. Country, and family, and the ease of life, and the pleasure of being together--nothing matters, if only one may get money! I don't know but savages have the best of it. At least they don't live for money."

Mrs. Copley forgot at the moment that she was wishing her daughter to marry for money.

"I counsel you, young man," she began again. "Money won't buy everything."

He laughed good-humouredly. "Can't buy much without it," he said, with that shrewd twinkle in his eye.

"And what can Mr. Copley do for you, I should like to know?" she went on impatiently.

"He's put me in a likely way," said Rupert. "I am very much beholden to Mr. Copley. But the best thing he has done for me is this--by a long jump."

"*This?* What?"

"Letting me go along this journey. I do *not* think money is the very best of all things," the young man said with some spirit.

"Letting you---- Do you mean that you are going to Venice in our party?"

"If it is Venice you are going to."

Silence fell. Mrs. Copley pondered the news in some consternation. To Dolly it was not news, and she did not mean it should be fact, if she could help it.

"Perhaps you have business in Venice?" Mrs. Copley at length ventured.

"I hope it'll turn out so," said Rupert. "Mr. Copley said I might have the pleasure of taking care of you. I should enjoy that, I guess, more than making money."

"Good gracious!" was all the speech Mrs. Copley was capable of. She sat and looked at the young man. So, furtively, did Dolly. He was enjoying his supper; yes, and the prospect too; for a slight flush had risen to his face. It was not a symmetrical face, but honesty was written in every line of it.

"You've got your plans fixed?" Rupert next inquired. "Know just which way you are going? Be sure you are right, and then go ahead, you know."

"We take the boat to Rotterdam," said Dolly.

"Which way, then? Mr. Copley told me so much."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Copley. "If I could once get hold of Mr. Copley we could soon settle it."

"What points do you want to make?"

"Points? I don't want to make any points. I don't know what you mean."

"I mean, where do you want to go in special, between here and Venice? or are there no places you care about?"

"Places? Oh!--Well, yes, there are. I should like to see the place where the battle of Waterloo was fought."

"Mother, that would be out of our way," said Dolly.

"Which is our way?" said Mrs. Copley. "I thought we had not fixed it."

"You don't go up the Rhine, then?" said Rupert.

"I'm going nowhere by boat except where I can't help myself. I like to feel land under me. No, we are not going up the Rhine. I can see mountains enough in America, and rivers enough too."

Rupert had finished his supper, and took up an atlas he saw lying near.

"Rotterdam," he said, opening at the map of Central Europe,--"that is our one fixed point, that and Venice. Now, how to get from the one to the other."

Mrs. Copley changed her seat to come nearer the map; and an animated discussion followed, which kept her interested and happy the whole of the evening. Dolly saw it and was thankful. It was more satisfactory than the former consultation with St. Leger, who treated the subject from quite too high and lordly a point of view; referring to the best hotels and assuming the easiest ways of doing things; flinging money about him, in imagination, as Mrs. Copley said, as if it were coming out of a purse with no bottom to it; which to be sure might be very true so far as he was concerned, but much discomposed the poor woman who knew that on her part such pleasant freehandedness was not to be thought of. Rupert Babbage evidently did not think of it. He considered economy. Besides, he was not so distractingly *au fait* in everything; Mrs. Copley could bear a part in the conversation. So she and Rupert meandered over the map, talked endlessly, took a vast deal of pleasure in the exercise, and grew quite accustomed to each other; while Dolly sat by, glad and yet chafing. Rupert certainly was a comfort, for the hour; but she wished he had never been thought of, nevertheless.

But he was a comfort next day again. Cheery and busy and efficient, he managed people, sent the luggage off, helped and waited upon Mrs. Copley, and kept her quiet with his talk, up to the time when the third day they took their places in the coach.

"Really, Mr. Babbage, you are a very handy young man!" Mrs. Copley once had uttered her admiration; and Rupert laughed.

"I shouldn't think much of myself," he said, "if I couldn't do as much as that. You see, I consider that I'm promoted."

Dolly made the journey up to town in a state between relief and disgust. Rupert did take a world of trouble off her hands; but she said to herself that she did not want it taken off. And she certainly did not want this long-legged fellow attending upon them everywhere. It was better to have him than St. Leger; that was all you could say.

The days in London were few and busy. Mr. Copley during this interval was very affectionate, very kind and attentive; in fact, so attentive to supplying or providing against every possible want that he found little time to be with his family. He and Rupert were perpetually flying out and in, ordering this and searching for that; a sort of joyous bustle seemed to be the order of the day; for he carried it on gleefully.

"Why, Mr. Copley," his wife said, when he brought her an elegant little leather case for holding the tinctures and medicines in which she indulged, "I thought we must economise so hard? I thought you had no money now-a-days? How is this, and what does it mean? this case must have cost a pound."

"You are worth more than a pound, my dear," Mr. Copley said with a sort of semi-earnestness.

"But I thought you were so poor all of a sudden?"

"We are going to turn a new leaf, and live frugally; so you see, on the strength of that, we can afford to be extravagant now and then."

"That seems to me a very doubtful way, Mr. Copley," said his wife, shaking her head.

"Don't be doubtful, my dear. Whatever else you do, go straight to your mark, and don't be doubtful. Humming and hawing never get on with anything. Care killed a cat, my dear."

"It has almost killed me," said poor Mrs. Copley. "Are we out of need of care, Frank?"

"*You* are. I'll take all the care for the family. My dear, we are going in for play, and Venice."

Dolly heard this, and felt a good deal cheered. What was her consternation, then, when the day of sailing came, and at the last minute, on board the packet, her father declared he must wait; he could not leave London yet for a week or two, but he could not let *them* be delayed; he would let St. Leger go to look after them, and he would catch them up before they got to Venice. All this was said in a breath, in a rush and hurry, at the moment of taking leave; the luggage was on board, Rupert was looking after it, Mr. St. Leger's elegant figure was just stepping across the gangway; and Mr. Copley kissed and shook hands and was off, with a word to Lawrence as he passed, before Mrs. Copley or Dolly could throw in more than an exclamation of dismay to stop him. Stop him! one might as well stop a gust of wind. Dolly saw he had planned it all; reckoned the minutes, got them off on purpose without himself, and *with* Mr. St. Leger. And here was Mr. St. Leger to be spoken to; coming up with his assured step and his handsome, indolent blue eyes, to address her mother. St. Leger was a nice fellow; he was neither a fool nor a coxcomb; but the sight of him was very disagreeable to Dolly just then. She turned away, as full of vexation as she could hold, and went to Rupert's side, who was looking after the luggage.

"Do you want to see your berth right away?" he asked her.

"My berth?" said Dolly.

"Well, yes; your cabin--state-room--whatever you call it--where you are to sleep. You know which it is; do you know where it is? I always like to get such things straightened out, first thing. Would you like to see it?"

"Oh yes, please," said Dolly; and grasping one of the hand-bags she turned away gladly from the deck. Anything for a little respite and solitude, from Mr. St. Leger. Rupert found the place, stowed bags and wraps and rugs conveniently away, and made Dolly as much at home as she could be at five minutes' notice.

"How long will the passage take?" she asked.

"Well, if I knew what the weather would be, I would tell you. Shall you be sick?"

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I believe I wish I may. Mr. Babbage, are you a Christian?"

"Well, I ain't a heathen, anyhow," said he, laughing a little.

"No, but that isn't what I mean. Of course you are not a heathen. But I mean--do you serve the Lord Jesus, and do you love Him?"

Dolly had it not in mind to make a confidant of her new squire; but in the terrible confusion and trouble of her spirits she grasped at any possible help or stay. The excitement of the minute lifted her quite out of ordinary considerations; if Rupert was a Christian, he might be a stand-by to her, and anyhow would understand her. So she asked. But he looked at her and shook his head. The thought crossed him that he was *her* servant, and her service was all that he was distinctly pledged to in his own mind. He shook his head.

"Then what do you do when you are in trouble?" she asked.

"Never been there," said Rupert. "Always find some way out, when I get into a fix. Why, are you in trouble?" he asked sympathetically.

"Oh," cried Dolly, "I am in trouble to death, because father hasn't come with us!" She could bear it no longer; even

seventeen years old gives out sometimes; she burst into tears and sat down on a box and sobbed. All her hopes dashed to pieces; all her prospects dark and confused; nothing but disappointment and perplexity before her. What should she do with her mother, she alone? What should she do with Mr. St. Leger? a still more vexatious question. And what would become of her father, left to himself, and at what possible time in the future might she hope that he would break away from his ties and temptations and come to rejoin his family? Dolly sobbed in sorrow and bitterness of heart. Rupert Babbage stood and looked on wofully; and then delicately went out and closed the door.

Dolly's tears did her good. I think it was a help to her too, to know that she had so efficient and faithful a servant in the despised Rupert Babbage. At any rate, after a half hour or so, she made her appearance on deck and met Mr. St. Leger with a calm apparent unconcern, which showed her again equal to the occasion. Circumstances were making a woman of Dolly fast.

Mr. St. Leger's talk had in the meantime quieted Mrs. Copley. He assured her that her husband would soon come after and catch up with them. Now he turned his attention to Dolly and Rupert.

"Who is that fellow?" he asked Dolly, when Rupert had left them for a minute.

"He is a young man in my father's office. Did you never see him there?"

"But what is he doing *here*? We do not want him, it strikes me."

"He is very useful, and able."

"Well--aw--but cannot he keep his good qualities to their proper sphere? He is not an addition of much value to our society."

"Take care, Mr. St. Leger! He is an American; he cannot be set down with the servants."

"Why not, if his education and habits make that his place?"

"Oh, but they do not."

"It seems to me they do, if you will pardon me. This fellow has never been in any gentleman's society, except your father's."

"He will be a gentleman himself, in all essentials, one day, Mr. St. Leger. There is the difference. The capability is in him, and the ambition, and the independent and generous feeling. The foundations are all there."

"I'll confess the house when I see it."

"Ay, but you must in the meantime do nothing to hinder its building."

"Why must not I?" said Lawrence, laughing. "It is not my part to lay hold on a trowel and be a social mason. Still less is it yours."

"Oh, there you are wrong. I think it is everybody's part."

"Do you? But fancy, what a dreadful thing life would be in that way. Perpetual rubbish and confusion. And pardon me--can you pardon me?--that is my idea of America."

"I do not think it is a just one," said Dolly, as Rupert now drew near again.

"Is there not perpetual building going on there, of this kind as well as of the more usual?"

"Perhaps. I was very young when I left home. But what then?"

"Nothing. I have a preference for order and quiet, and things in their places."

"At that rate, you know," said Dolly, "nothing would ever have been built anywhere. I grant you, the order and quiet are pleasant when your own house is all that you desire. But don't you want to see your neighbour's house come up?"

"No," said Lawrence, laughing. "I have a better prospect from my windows if he remains as he is."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SQUARE PARTY.

The passage was stormy and long. Mrs. Copley and her daughter were both soon fully occupied with attending to their own sensations; and neither Rupert nor Lawrence had any more power to annoy them till they reached quiet water again. But even in the depths of sea misery, Dolly's deeper distress broke forth. "My father! my father! What shall I do to save my father!" she was crying in her heart; all the while with a sense that every hour was bringing her further from him and from the chance of saving him.

Still, Dolly was seventeen; and at seventeen one cannot be always cast down; and when rough water and troubled skies, and ship noises and smells, were all left behind, as it seemed, in the German ocean, and Dolly found herself one morning in the hotel at Rotterdam, eating a very good breakfast, her spirits sprang up in spite of herself. The retiring wave of bodily misery carried with it for the moment all other. The sun was shining again; and after breakfast they stood together at one of the windows looking out upon the new world they had come to. Their hotel faced the quay: they saw before them an extent of water glittering in the sunshine, steamers waiting for their time of sailing, small craft flying about in all directions, and activity, bustle, and business filling every nook and corner of the scene. Dolly's heart leaped up; the stir was very inspiring; and how lovely the sunshine was, and how pleasant the novelty! And then, to think that she had but touched the shore of novelty; that all Central Europe was behind her as she stood looking out on the quay!--Her father would surely catch them up somewhere, and then all would go well. She was silent, in the full joy of seeing.

"What's the next move?" said Lawrence. He did not care for Rotterdam quay. He had been looking at Dolly, charmed with the delicate, fresh picture she made. The line of frank pleasure on her lips, it was as frank as a child's, and the eyes were as absorbed; and yet they were grave, womanly eyes, he knew, not easy to cheat, with all their simplicity. The mingling of qualities was delicious, and not to be found elsewhere in all his sphere of experience. Even her little hands were full of character, with a certain precision of action and calm of repose which gave to all their movements a certain thorough-bred grace, which Lawrence could recognise though he could not analyse. Then the little head with its masses of wavy hair was so lovely, and the slim figure so full of that same certainty of action and grace of rest which he admired; there was nothing undecided about Dolly, and yet there was nothing done by rule. That again was a combination he did not know elsewhere. Her dress--he considered that too. It was the simplest of travelling dresses, with nothing to mark it, or draw attention, or make it unfit for its special use--in perfectly good taste. How did she know? thought Lawrence; for he knew as well as I do that she had not learned it of her mother. There was nothing marked about Mrs. Copley's appearance; nevertheless she lacked that harmony of simple good taste which was all over Dolly. Lawrence looked, until he saw that Rupert was looking too; and then he thought it was time to break up the exercise. "What is the next move?" he said.

"We have not settled that," said Dolly. "We could think of nothing on board ship. Mother, dear, now we are here, which way shall we go?"

"I don't know anything about ways," said Mrs. Copley. "Not here in this strange country."

"Then put it another way," said Lawrence. "Where do you want to go?"

"Why, to Venice," said Mrs. Copley, looking at him.

"Of course; but you want to see something by the way?"

"I left all that to Mr. Copley," said she, half whimpering. "When do you think he will come, Mr. St. Leger? I depended on my husband."

"He will come soon," said Lawrence. "But I would not recommend staying in Rotterdam to wait for him. What do you say to our asking him to meet us in Wiesbaden? To be sure, the season is over."

"Wiesbaden?" said Mrs. Copley.

"Wiesbaden?" cried Dolly. "Oh no, Mr. St. Leger! Not there, nor in any such place!"

"The season is over, Miss Dolly."

"I don't want to go to Wiesbaden. Mother, you wanted to see something--what was it?"

"Waterloo"---- Mrs. Copley began.

"That would take us out of the way of everything--down into Belgium--and you would not see anything when you got there, Mrs. Copley. Only some fields; there is nothing left of the battle."

"But if I saw the fields, I could imagine the battle," said Mrs. Copley.

"Could you? Let us imagine something pleasanter. You don't want to go up the Rhine?"

"I don't want to go anywhere in a boat, Mr. St. Leger. I am going to keep on land, now I've got there. But I was thinking.--Somebody told me of some wonderful painted glass, somewhere near Rotterdam, and told me not to miss seeing it. Where is it?"

"I know," said Dolly; "the place was Gonda; in the cathedral. But where is Gonda?"

"Nine miles off," said Rupert.

"Then that's where I want to go," said Mrs. Copley. "I have heard all my life of painted glass; now I should like to see what it amounts to."

"Perhaps that would take us out of our way too, mother."

"I thought we just said we had no way settled," said Mrs. Copley in an irritated tone. "What's the use of being here, if we can't see anything now we are here? Nine miles isn't much, anyhow."

"We will go there, dear," said Dolly. "We can go so far and come back to this place, if necessary."

"And there is another thing I want to see, now we are here," Mrs. Copley went on. "I want to go to Dresden."

"Dresden!" cried St. Leger. "What's at Dresden?"

"A great many things, I suppose; but what I want to see is the Green vaults and the picture gallery."

"Mrs. Copley," said Lawrence quietly, "there are galleries of pictures everywhere. We shall find them at every step--more than you will want to look at, by a hundred fold."

"But we shall not find Green vaults, shall we? And you will not tell me that the Dresden madonna is anywhere but at Dresden?"

"I did not know you cared so much about pictures, mother," Dolly ventured.

"I don't!" said Mrs. Copley,--"not about the pictures; but I don't like to be here and not see what there is to see. I like to say I have seen it. It would be absurd to be here and not see things. Your father told me to go just where I wanted to; and if I don't go to Waterloo, I want to see Dresden."

"And from there?" said Lawrence.

"I don't know. I suppose we can find our way from there to Venice somehow."

"But do you not include Cologne Cathedral in the things you wish to see?"

"Cologne? I don't know about cathedrals. We are going to see one now, aren't we? Isn't one as good as another?"

"To pray in, I have no doubt," said Lawrence; "but hardly to look at."

"Well, you don't think churches ought to be built to look at, do you? I think that is wicked. Churches are meant for something."

"You would not object to looking at them when they *are* built? would you? Here we are now, going to see Gonda Cathedral."

"No, I am not," said Mrs. Copley. "I am going to see the glass windows. We shall not see them to-day if we stand here talking."

Lawrence ordered a carriage, and the party set out. He wished devoutly that it had numbered five instead of four, so that Rupert could have been sent outside. But the carriage held them all comfortably.

Dolly was a little uneasy at the travelling problem before her; however, no uneasiness could stand long against the charm of that morning's drive. The blessed familiar sun shone on a world so very different from all the world she had ever known before. On every hand were flower gardens; on both sides of the way; and in the midst of the flower gardens stood pleasant-looking country houses; while the road was bordered with narrow canals, over which drawbridges of extravagant size led to the houses. It was a rich and quaint and pretty landscape under the September sun; and Dolly felt all concern and annoyance melting away from her. She saw that her mother too was amused and delighted. Surely things would come out right by and by.

The town interested three of the party in a high degree.

"Well!" said Mrs. Copley, "haven't they learned here *yet* to turn the front of their houses to the street?"

"Perhaps they never will," said Lawrence. "Why should they?"

"Because things ought to be right, if it is only the fronts of houses," said the lady.

"I wouldn't mind which *way* they looked, if they would only hold up straight," said Rupert. "What ails the town?"

"Bad soil, most likely," returned Lawrence. "The foundations of Holland are moral, not physical."

"What do you mean by that?" said Mrs. Copley. "I am sure they have plenty of money. Is this the cathedral we are coming to?"

"St. Jans Kirk."

"Well, if that's all!--It isn't handsome a bit!"

"It's real homely, that's a fact," said Rupert.

"You came to see the glass windows," said Lawrence. "Let us go in, and then pass judgment."

They went in, and then a low exclamation from Rupert was all that was heard. The ladies were absolutely mute before the blaze of beauty that met them.

"Well!" said Rupert after a pause of deep silence--"now I know what folks mean when they say something 'beats the Dutch.' That beats all *I* ever saw!--hollow."

"But how delicious!" exclaimed Dolly. "The work is so delicate. And oh, the colours! Mother, do you see that purple? Who is the person represented there, Mr. St. Leger?"

"That is Philip the Second. And it is not likely, I may remark, that any Dutchman painted it. That broken window was given to the church by Philip."

"Who did paint it, then?"

"I cannot say, really."

"What a pity it is broken!"

"But the others are mostly in very good keeping. Come on--here is the Duke of Alva."

"If I were a Dutch woman, I would break that," said Dolly.

"No, you wouldn't. Consider--he serves as an adornment of the city here. Breaking his effigy would not be breaking *him*, Miss Dolly."

"It must be a very strange thing to live in an old country," said Dolly. "I mean, if you belong to it. Just look at

these windows!--How old is the work itself, Mr. St. Leger?"

"I am not wise in such things;--I should say it must date from the best period of the art. I believe it is said so."

"And when was that?"

"Really, I don't know; a good while ago, Miss Dolly."

"Philip II. came to reign about the middle of the sixteenth century," Rupert remarked.

"Exactly," St. Leger said, looking annoyed.

"Well, sir," Rupert went on, "I would like to ask you one thing--can't they paint as good a glass window now as they could then?"

"They may paint a better glass window, for aught I know," said Lawrence; "but the painting will not be so good."

"That's curious," said Rupert. "I thought things went forward, and not back, in the world. Why shouldn't they paint as well now as ever?"

Nobody spoke.

"Why should they not, Mr. St. Leger?" Dolly repeated.

"I don't know, I'm sure. Mrs. Copley, I'm afraid you are fatiguing yourself."

Mrs. Copley yielded to this gentle suggestion; and long, long before Dolly was ready to go, the party left the church to repair to a hotel, and have some refreshment. They were all in high spirits by this time.

"Is it settled where we are to go next?" Mr. St. Leger inquired as they sat at table.

"I don't care where *next*," said Mrs. Copley; "but only I want to come out at Dresden."

"But Dresden, mother"--said Dolly gently, "it is not in our way to Venice." She interpreted the expression she saw in Lawrence's face.

"Dolly, the Green vaults are in Dresden. I am not going to be so near and not see them. Wasn't I right about the painted windows? I never saw anything so beautiful in my life, nor you didn't. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Now you'll see if I ain't right about the Green vaults."

"What do you expect to find in them?" Lawrence asked. "I do not remember anything about such a mysterious place."

"I have heard about it in London," Mrs. Copley answered. "Somebody who had been there told me about it, and I made up my mind I'd see it if ever I got a chance. It is like having Aladdin's lamp and going down into *his* vault--only you can't take away what you've a mind to; that's the only difference."

"But what is there? Aladdin's grotto was full of precious stones, if I remember."

"And so are these," cried Mrs. Copley. "There is an egg with a hen in it."

At this there was a general laugh.

"It's a fact," said Mrs. Copley. "And in the hen, or under it--*in* the hen, I believe--there is a crown of gold and diamonds and pearls, with a motto. Oh, it's wonderful. It's better than the Arabian Nights, if it's true."

"Except that we cannot take the egg away with us," said Lawrence. "However--pray, do they let in the indiscriminate public to see these wonders?"

"I don't know. I suppose there are ways to get in, or nobody would have been in."

"No doubt; the problem is, to find the way. Influence may be necessary, possibly."

"I daresay Mr. Copley can manage it. Do write and ask him what we must do, Dolly; and ask him to send us letters,

or leave, or whatever we must have. Write to-day, will you? and ask him to send it right away. Of course there are ways to do things."

"May I make a suggestion?" said Lawrence. "If we are to go on to Dresden, why should we return to Rotterdam? We might send back to the hotel for our luggage, and meanwhile you can rest here. And then we can go on to Utrecht early to-morrow; or this evening, if you like. It would save time."

This plan met approval. Rupert volunteered to go back and bring Mrs. Copley's belongings safely to Gonda.

"And while you are about it, bring mine too, my good fellow, will you?" said St. Leger as Rupert was about to go. He spoke somewhat superciliously. But the other answered with cool good humour,

"All right. I'll do that, on the understanding that you'll do as much for me next time." And he went.

"Confound him!" said Lawrence; while Dolly smiled.

"Hush!" she said. "I am sure that is a fair bargain."

"Where did Mr. Copley pick up such a green hand?"

"Did you never see him at the office?"

"What office?"

"The Consul's office, in London. You have been there enough."

"Oh, ah--the Consul's office," said Lawrence. "True, if he was there I must have seen him. But what do we want of him here?"

"He is useful to you just now," said Dolly.

But afterwards she took up the question again and, what Lawrence did not dream of, included his name in it. Why was either of these young men there? This time of waiting at the hotel gave Dolly a chance to think; and while she sat at the window and watched the strange figures and novel sights in the street, her mind began to go over more questions than one. She felt in a sort lost without her father. Here were she and her mother taking a journey through Europe in the care of these two young men. What were they there for? Rupert certainly for her pleasure and service, she knew; Lawrence, she was equally sure, for his own. How should she manage them? for Lawrence must not be encouraged, while at the same time he could not be sent away. At least, not yet. Careful, and cool, and womanly, she must be; and that was not so very difficult, for poor Dolly felt as if glad childish days were past for her.

Another question was, how she should get the most good of her journey, and how she could help Rupert, who, she could see, was on the watch to improve himself. Dolly had a sympathy for him. She resolved that she would study up every subject that presented itself, and set Rupert upon doing the same. St. Leger might take care of himself. Yet Dolly's conscience would not let him go so. No; one can be nobody's travelling companion for days or weeks, without having duties to fulfil towards him; but Dolly thought the duties were very difficult in this her particular case. If her father would but come! And therewith Dolly sat down and wrote him the tenderest, lovingest of letters, telling him about their journey, and the glass windows; and begging him to meet them in Dresden or before, so that they might see the fabulous Green vaults together. In any case, she begged him to make such provision that Mrs. Copley might not be disappointed of seeing them. All Dolly's eloquence and some tears were poured out upon that sheet of paper; and as she sealed it up she felt again that she was surely growing to be a woman; the days of her childhood were gone.

Not so far off, however, but that Dolly's spirits sprang up again after the letter was despatched, and were able to take exquisite pleasure in everything the further journey offered. Even the unattractive was novel, and what was not unattractive was so charming. She admired the quaint, clean, bright, fanciful Dutch towns; the abundance of flowers still to be seen abroad; the smiling country places surrounding the towns; the strange carvings and devices on the houses; the crooked streets.

"You are the first person I ever saw," Lawrence said admiringly, "who found beauty in crooked streets."

"Do you like straight ones?" said Dolly.

"Certainly. Why not?"

"You look from end to end; you see all there is at once; walk and walk as you may, there is no change, but the same wearisome lines of houses. Now when streets are not straight, but have windings and turnings, you are always coming to something new."

"I suppose you like them to be up hill and down too?"

"Oh, very much!"

"You do not find that in Holland."

"No, but in Boston."

"Ah, indeed!" said Lawrence.

"I wonder," Dolly went on, "what makes one nation so different from another. *You* are on an island; but here there is only a line between Holland and Germany, and the people are not alike."

"Comes from what they eat," said Lawrence.

"Their *food*?" said Dolly.

"Yes. The Scotchman lives upon porridge, the Englishman on beef and porter, the German on sausages and beer."

"The French?"

"Oh, on soup and salad and sour wine."

"And Italians?"

"On grapes and olives."

"That will do to talk about," said Dolly; "but it does not touch the question."

"Not touch the question! I beg your pardon—but it does touch it most essentially. Do you think it makes no difference to a man what sort of a dinner he eats?"

"A great difference *to* some men; but does it make much difference in him?"

"Yes," said Rupert; and "Yes!" said Lawrence, with a unanimity which made Dolly smile. "I can tell you," the latter went on, "a man is one thing or another for the day, according to whether he has had a good breakfast or a bad one."

"I understand. That's temper."

"It is not temper at all. It is physical condition."

"It's feeling put to rights, *I* think," said Rupert.

"I suppose all these people are suited, in their several ways," said Dolly. "Will mother like Venice, Mr. St. Leger, when we get there? What is it like?"

"Like a city afloat. *You* will like it, for the strangeness and the beautiful things you will find there. I can't say about Mrs. Copley, I'm sure."

"What do they drink there?" said Rupert. "Water?"

"Well, not exactly. You can judge for yourself, my good fellow."

"But that is Italy," said Dolly. "I suppose there is no beer or porter?"

"Well, you can find it, of course, if you want it; there are people enough coming and going that *do* want it; but in Venice you can have pure wine, and at a reasonable price, too."

"At hotels, of course," said Dolly faintly.

"Of course, at some of them. But I was not thinking of hotels."

"Of what, then?"

"Wine-shops."

"Wine-shops! Not for people who only want a glass, or two glasses?"

"Just for them. A glass or two, or half a dozen."

"Restaurants, you mean?"

"No, I do not mean restaurants. They are just wine-shops; sell nothing but wine. Odd little places. There's no show; there's no set out; there are just the casks from which the wine is drawn, and the glasses-mugs, I should say; queer things; pints and quarts, and so on. Nothing else is there, but the customers and the people who serve you."

"And people go into such places to drink wine? merely to drink, without eating anything?"

"They can eat, if they like. There are street venders, that watch the custom and come in immediately after any one enters; they bring fruit and confections and trifles."

"You do not mean that *gentlemen* go to these places, Mr. St. Leger?"

"Certainly. The wine is pure, and sold at a reasonable rate. Gentlemen go, of course--if they know where to go."

Dolly's heart sank. In Venice this!--where she had hoped to have her father with her safe. She had known there was wine enough to be had in hotels; but that, she knew too, costs money, if people will have it good; and Mr. Copley liked no other. But cheap wine-shops, "if you know where to go,"--therefore retired and comparatively private places,--were *those* to be found in Venice, the goal of her hopes? Dolly's cheeks grew perceptibly pale.

"What is the matter, Miss Dolly?" Lawrence asked, watching her. But Dolly could not answer; and she thought he knew, besides.

"There is no harm in pure wine," he went on.

Dolly flashed a look at him upon that, a most involuntary, innocent look; yet one which he would have worked half a day for if it could have been obtained so. It was eloquent, it was brilliant, it was tender; it carried a fiery appeal against the truth of his words, and at the same time a most moving deprecation of his acting in consonance with them. She dared not speak plainer, and she could not have spoken plainer, if she had talked for an hour. Lawrence would have urged further his view of the subject, but that look stopped him. Indeed, the beauty of it put for the moment the occasion of it out of his head.

Thanks to Rupert's efficient agency, they were able to spend that night at Utrecht, and the next day went on. It seemed to Dolly that every hour was separating her further from her father; which to be sure literally was true; nevertheless she had to give herself up to the witchery of that drive. The varied beauty, and the constant novelty on every hand, were a perpetual entertainment. Mrs. Copley even forgot herself and her grievances in looking out of the carriage windows; indeed, the only trouble she gave was in her frequent changing places with Dolly to secure now this and now that view.

"We haven't got such roads in Massachusetts," remarked Rupert. "This is what I call first-rate going."

"Have you got such anything else there?" Lawrence inquired smoothly.

"Not such land, I'm bound to say."

"No," said Dolly, "this is not in the least like Massachusetts, in anything. O mother, look at those cattle! why there must be thousands of them; how beautiful! You would not find such an immense level green plain in Massachusetts, Mr. St. Leger. I never saw such a one anywhere."

Mrs. Copley took that side of the carriage.

"It wouldn't be used for a pasture ground, if we had it there," said Rupert.

"Perhaps it would. I fancy it is too wet for grain," St. Leger answered.

"Now here is a lake again," said Dolly. "How large, and how pretty! Miles and miles, it must be. How pretty those little islands are, Mr. Babbage!"

Mrs. Copley exchanged again, and immediately burst out--

"Dolly, Dolly, did you see that woman's earrings? I declare they were a foot long."

"I beg your pardon--half a foot, Mrs. Copley."

"What do you suppose they are made of?"

"True gold or silver."

"Mercy! that's the oddest thing I've seen yet. I suppose Holland is a very rich country."

"And here come country houses and gardens again," said Dolly. "There's a garden filled with marble statues, mother."

Mrs. Copley shifted her seat to the other side to look at the statues, and directly after went back to see some curiously trimmed yews in another garden. So it went on; Dolly and her mother getting a good deal of exercise by the way. Mrs. Copley was ready for her dinner, and enjoyed it; and Dolly perceiving this enjoyed hers too.

Then they were delighted with Arnheim. They drove into the town towards evening; and the quaint, picturesque look of the place, lying bright in the sunshine of a warm September day, took the hearts of both ladies. The odd gables, the endless variety of building, the balconies hung with climbing vines; and above all, the little gardens, gay with fall flowers and furnished with arbours or some sort of shelter, under some of which people were taking tea, while in others the wooden tables and chairs stood ready though empty, testifying to a good deal of habitual out-of-door life; they stirred Dolly's fancy and Mrs. Copley's curiosity. Both of them were glad to spend the night in such a pretty place.

After they had had supper comfortably, Dolly left her mother talking to St. Leger and slipped out quietly to take a walk, having privately summoned Rupert to attend her. The walk was full of enjoyment. It lasted a good while; till Dolly began to grow a little tired, and the evening light was dying away; then the steps slackened which had been very brisk at setting out, and Dolly began to let her thoughts go beyond what was immediately before her. She was very much inclined to be glad now of Rupert's presence in the party. She perceived that he was already devoted to her service; not with Mr. St. Leger's pretensions, but with something more like the adoration a heathen devotee pays to his goddess. Rupert already watched her eyes and followed her wishes, sometimes before they were spoken. It was plain that she might rely upon him for all to which his powers would reach; and a strong element of good-will began to mix with her confidence in him. What could she do, to help make this journey a benefit to the boy? He had known little of good or gentle influences in his life; yet he was gentle himself and much inclined to be good, she thought. And he might be very important to her yet, before she got home.

"I don't know the first thing about this country," he broke the silence. "It was always a little spot in the corner of the map that I thought was no sort of count. Why, it's a grand place!"

"You ought to read about it in history."

"I never read much history, that's a fact," Rupert answered. "Never had much to read," he added with a laugh. "Fact is, my life up to now has been pretty much of a scrimmage for the needful."

"Knowledge is needful," said Dolly.

"That's a fact; but a fellow must live first, you see. And that warn't always easy once."

"And what are your plans or prospects? What do you mean to be--or do? what do you mean to make of yourself?"

Rupert half laughed. "I haven't any prospects--to speak of. In fact, I don't see ahead any further than Venice. As to what I am to be, or do,--I expect that will be settled without any choice of mine. I've got along, so far, somehow; I guess I'll get along yet."

"Are you a Christian?" Dolly asked, following a sudden impulse.

"I guess I ain't what you mean by that."

"What do you mean by it?"

"Well--where I come from, they call Christians folks that have j'ined the church."

"That's making a profession," said Dolly.

"Yes, I've heard folks call it that."

"But what is the reality? *What* do you think a man professes when he joins the church?"

"I'll be shot if I know," Rupert answered, looking at her hard in the fading light. "I'd like first-rate to hear you say."

"It is just to be a servant of Christ," said Dolly. "A true servant, 'doing the will of God from the heart.'"

"How are you going to know what His will is? I should be bothered if you asked *me*."

"Oh, He has told us that," said Dolly, surprised. "In the Bible."

"Then I s'pose you've got to study *that* considerable."

"Certainly."

"Well, don't it say things pretty different from what most folks do?"

"Yes. What then?"

"Then it wouldn't be just easy to get along with it, I should think."

"What then?"

"Well!" said Rupert,--"how are you going to live in the world, and not do as the world do?"

"Then you *have* studied the Bible a little?"

"No, fact, I haven't," said Rupert. "But I've heard folks talk now and again; and that's what I think about it."

"Suppose it is difficult?" said Dolly. "But it is really not difficult, if one is a true servant of God and not only make-believe. Suppose it were difficult, though. Do you remember what Christ said of the two ways, serving Him and not serving Him?"

Rupert shook his head.

"Have you got a Bible of your own?"

"No," said Rupert. "That's an article I never owned yet. I've always wanted other things more, you see."

"And I would rather want everything else in the world," said Dolly. "I mean, I would rather be without everything else."

"Surely!" said Rupert.

"Because I am a servant of Christ, you see. Now that is what I want you to be. And as to the question of ease or difficulty--this is what I was going to repeat to you. Jesus said, that those who hear and obey Him are like a house planted on a rock; fixed and firm; a house that when the storms come and the winds blow, is never so much as shaken. But those who do not obey Him are like a house built on the sand. When the storms blow and the winds beat, it will fall terribly and all to ruins. It seems to me, Mr. Babbage, that *that* is harder than the other."

"Suppose the storms do not come?" said Rupert.

"I guess they come to most people," said Dolly soberly. "But the Lord did not mean these storms merely. I don't

know whether He meant them at all. He meant the time by and by.--Come, we must go home," said Dolly, beginning to go forward again. "I wish you would be a servant of Christ, Mr. Babbage!"

"Why?"

"Oh, because all that is sure and strong and safe and happy is on that side," said Dolly, speaking eagerly. "All that is noble and true and good. You are sure of nothing if you are not a Christian, Mr. Babbage; you are not sure even of yourself. Temptation may whirl you, you don't know where, and before you know it and before you can help it. And when the storms come, those storms--your house will--go down--in the sands"---- And to Rupert's enormous astonishment, Dolly's voice broke here, and for a second she stood still, drawing long sobs; then she lifted her head with an effort, took his arm and went swiftly back on the way to the hotel. He had not been able to say one word. Rupert could not have the faintest notion of the experience which had pointed and sharpened Dolly's last words; he could not imagine why, as they walked home, she should catch a hasty breath now and then, as he knew she did, a breath which was almost a sob; but Rupert Babbage was Dolly's devoted slave from that day.

Lawrence himself marvelled somewhat at the appearance and manner of the young lady in the evening. The talk and the thoughts had roused and stirred Dolly, with partly the stir of pain, but partly also the sense of work to do and the calling up of all her loving strength to do it. Her cheek had a little more colour than usual, her eye a soft hidden fire, her voice a thrill of tender power. She was like, Lawrence thought, a most rare wild wood flower, some spiritual orchis or delicious and delicate geranium; in contrast to the severely trained, massive and immovable tulips and camellias of society. She was at a vexatious distance from him, however; and handled him with a calm superiority which no woman of the world could have improved upon. Only it was nature with Dolly.

CHAPTER XIX.

SEEING SIGHTS.

The next day's journey was uninteresting and slow. Mrs. Copley grew tired; and even dinner and rest at a good hotel failed to restore her spirits.

"How many more days will it be before we get to Dresden?" she desired to know.

"Keep up your courage, Mrs. Copley," said Lawrence. "Remember the Green vaults! We have some work before us yet to get there."

"We shall not get there to-morrow?"

"We shall hardly do more than reach Cassel to-morrow."

"I don't know anything about Cassel. Will it be nothing but sand all the way, like to-day? We have left everything pretty behind us in Holland."

"I think the way will mend a little," Lawrence allowed.

"What place is next to Cassel?"

"As our resting place for the night? I am afraid it will take us two days to get to Weimar."

"And then Dresden?"

"No, then Leipzig."

"Oh, I should like to see Leipzig," cried Dolly.

"What for?" said her mother. "I am sure all these places are nothing to us, and I think the country is very stupid. And I like travelling where I know what the people say. I feel as if I had got five thousand miles from anywhere. What do you suppose keeps your father, Dolly?"

"I don't know, mother."

"You may write and tell him, if he don't come to us in Dresden I shall go back. This isn't *my* notion of pleasure."

"But it is doing you good, mother."

"I hadn't anything I could eat this evening. If you don't mind, Dolly, I'll go to bed."

Dolly did mind, for she longed for a walk again among the strange scenes and people. As it was not to be had this time, she sat at her window and looked out. It was moonlight, soft weather; and her eye was at least filled with novelty enough, even so. But her thoughts went back to what was not novel. The day had been dull and fatiguing. Dolly's spirits were quiet. She too was longing for her father, with a craving, anxious longing that was more full of fear than of hope. And as she thought it over again, she did not like her position. Her mother was little of a shield between her and what she wanted to escape, Lawrence St. Leger's attentions; and she could but imperfectly protect herself. True, she knew she gave him no direct encouragement. Yet he was constantly with her, he had the right of taking care of her, he let her see daily what a pleasure it was, and she was not able to turn it into the reverse of pleasure. She could not repulse him, unless he pushed his advances beyond a certain point; and Lawrence was clever enough to see that he had better not do that. He took things for granted a little, in a way that annoyed Dolly. She knew she gave him no proper encouragement; nevertheless, the things she could not forbid might seem to weave a tacit claim by and by. She wished for her father on her own account. But when she thought of what was keeping him, Dolly's head went down in agony. "O father, father!" she cried in the depths of her heart, "why don't you come? how can you let us ask in vain? and what dreadful, dreadful entanglement it must be that has such power over you to make you do things so unlike yourself! Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? I cannot reach him now--only by letters."

Mrs. Copley got up next morning in renewed spirits. "Dolly," she inquired while she was dressing, in which business Dolly always helped her,--"is anything settled between St. Leger and you?"

"Settled, mother? He is father's secretary,--at least so he calls himself,--taking care of us in father's absence. There is nothing else settled, nor to be settled."

"You know why he is here, child."

"Because father isn't, mother; and I should like to make the exchange as quickly as possible."

"What's the matter with him, Dolly?"

"The principal thing is, he won't take a hint."

"No, no; I mean, what fault do you find in him?"

"That, mother. Nothing else."

"He worships the ground you tread on."

"Mother, I think that is a pity. Don't you?"

"I think you ought to be very glad of it. I am. Dolly, the St. Legers are *very* well off; he is rich, and his father is rich; and there is that beautiful place, and position, and everything you could desire."

"Position!" Dolly repeated. "Mother, I think I make my own position. At any rate, I like it better than his."

"O Dolly! the St. Legers"----

"They are not anything particular, mother. Rich bankers; that is all."

"And isn't that enough?"

"Well, no," said Dolly, laughing. "It would take a good deal more to tempt me away from you and father."

"But, child, you've got to go. And Mr. St. Leger is as fond of you as ever he can be."

"He will not break his heart, mother. He is not that sort. Don't think it."

"I don't care if he did!" said Mrs. Copley, half crying. "It is not *him* I am thinking of; it is you."

"Thank you, mother," said Dolly, putting her arms round her mother's neck and kissing her repeatedly. "But I am not going to leave you for any such person. And I don't think so much of money as you do."

"Dolly, Dolly, money is a good thing."

"There is not enough of it in the world to buy me, mother. Don't try to fix my price."

The rest of that day Dolly was gay. Whether from the reaction of spirits natural to seventeen, or whether she were lightened in heart by the explicitness of her talk with her mother in the morning, she was the life of the day's journey. The road itself mended; the landscape was often noble, with fine oak and beech woods, and lovely in its rich cultivation; meadows and ploughed fields and tracts of young grain and smiling villages alternating with one another. There was no tedium in the carriage from morning to night. St. Leger and Rupert laughed at Dolly, and with her; and Mrs. Copley, in spite of chewing the cud of mortification at Dolly's impracticableness, was beguiled into forgetting herself. Sometimes this happy effect could be managed; at other times it was impossible. But more days followed, not so gay.

"I'm as tired as I can be!" was Mrs. Copley's declaration, as they were approaching Leipzig.

"We'll soon get to our hotel now," said Lawrence soothingly.

"Tain't that," said Mrs. Copley; "I am tired of hotels too. I am tired of going from one place to another. I should like to stay still somewhere."

"But it is doing you good, mother."

"I don't see it," said Mrs. Copley. "And what do you mean by its doing me good, Dolly? What is good that you don't feel? It's like something handsome that you can't see; and if you call that good, I don't. I wonder if life's to everybody what it is to me!"

"Not exactly," said Lawrence. "Not everybody can go where he likes and do what he will, and have such an attendant handmaiden everywhere."

"Do what I will!" cried Mrs. Copley, who like other dissatisfied people did not like to have her case proved against her,—"much you know about it, Mr. St. Leger! If I had my will, I would go back to America."

"Then you would have to do without your handmaiden," said Lawrence. "You do not think that we on this side are so careless of our own advantage as to let such a valuable article go out of the country?"

It was said with just such a mixture of jest and earnest that Dolly could hardly take it up. The words soothed Mrs. Copley, though her answer hardly sounded so.

"I suppose that is what mothers have to make up their minds to," she said. "Just when their children are ready to be some comfort to them, off they go, to begin the same game on their own account. I sometimes wonder whether it is worth while to live at all!"

"But one can't help that," said Rupert.

"I don't see what it amounts to."

"Mother, think of the Dresden Green vaults," said Dolly.

"Well, I do," said Mrs. Copley. "That keeps me up. But when I have seen them, Dolly, what will keep me up then?"

"Why, Venice, mother."

"And suppose I don't like Venice? I sometimes think I shan't."

"Then we will not stay there, dear. We will go on to Sorrento."

"After all, Dolly, one can't keep always going somewhere. One must come to a stop."

"The best way is not to think of that till one is obliged to do it," said Lawrence. "Enjoy while you have to enjoy."

"That ain't a very safe maxim, seems to me," said Rupert. "One's rope might get twisted up."

"It is the maxim of a great many wise men," said Lawrence, ignoring the figure.

"Is it wise?" said Dolly. "Would you spend your money so, like your time? spend to the last farthing, before you made any provision for what was to be next?"

"No, for I need not. In money matters one can always take care to have means ahead."

"So you can in the other thing."

"How?" said Rupert, and "How?" said Lawrence, in the same breath. "You cannot always, as Mrs. Copley said, go on finding new places to go to and new things to see."

"I'd have what would put me above the need of that."

"What? Philosophy? Stoicism?"

"No," said Dolly softly.

"Have you discovered the philosopher's stone?" said Lawrence; "and can you turn common things into gold for your purposes?"

"Yes," said Dolly in the same way.

"Let us hear how, won't you? Is it books, or writing, or art perhaps? You are very fond of that, I know."

"No," said Dolly slowly; "and I cannot show it to you, either, Mr. St. Leger. It is like the golden water in the story in the Arabian Nights, which was at the top of a hill, and people went up the hill to get it; but on the way so many strange voices sounded in their ears that they were tempted to look round; and if they looked round they were turned to stone. So the way was marked with stones."

"And nobody got the golden water?"

"Yes. At last one went up, who being forewarned, stopped her ears and never looked round. She got to the top and found the golden water. We in these times give it another name. It is the water of life."

"What *are* you talking about, Dolly?" said her mother.

"Must one go up the hill with one's ears stopped *now*, to get the wonderful water?" Lawrence asked. Dolly nodded.

"And when you have got it--what then?"

"Then you have got it," said Dolly. "It is the water of life. And you have done with this dry wilderness that mother is complaining of, and you are recommending."

Lawrence stroked and pulled his moustache, as he might have done if a lady had spoken to him in polite Sanscrit. Rupert looked gravely out of the carriage window. Neither answered, and nobody spoke another word, till Mrs. Copley exclaimed, "There's Leipzig!"

"Looks sort o' peaceful now," remarked Rupert.

"Peaceful? Why, ain't the place quiet?" Mrs. Copley asked anxiously.

"Quiet enough," said Lawrence; "but there was a time, not so long ago, when it wasn't exactly so."

"When was that?"

"When all the uniforms of Europe were chasing through it," said Dolly; "some chased and some chasing; when the country was covered with armies; when a half a million of men or so fought a long battle here, and the suburbs of

Leipzig were full of dead and wounded and sick and starving; there was not much peace then in or out of the city; though there was some rejoicing."

"Oh," said Mrs. Copley, "you mean"----

"When Napoleon was beaten here, mother."

"War's a mean thing!" said Rupert.

"That's not precisely the view civilised peoples take of it," said Lawrence with a slight sneer.

"True, though," said Dolly.

"Mean?" said Lawrence. "Do you think it was a mean thing for Germany to rise up and cast out the power that had been oppressing her? or for the other powers of Europe to help?"

"No; but very mean for the side that had given the occasion."

"That's as you look at it," said Lawrence.

"No, but how God looks at it. You cannot possibly think," said Dolly slowly, going back to her old childish expression,--"that He likes it."

Lawrence could not help smiling at this very original view. "Very few people that make war ask that question," he said.

"God will ask them, though," said Dolly, "why they did not. I think few people ask that question, Mr. St. Leger, about anything."

"It is not usual, except for a little saint here and there like you," he allowed.

"And yet it is the only question. There is nothing else to be asked about a matter; almost nothing else. If that is settled, it is all settled."

"If we were only all saints," Lawrence put in.

"Why are not we?"

"I don't know. I suppose everybody is not cut out for such a vocation."

"Everybody ought to be a saint."

"Do you mean that?" cried Rupert. "I thought,--I mean, I thought it was a special gift."

"Yes," said Dolly with a smile at him; "but God gives it to every one that wants it. And when the King comes, Mr. St. Leger, He will gather His saints to Him, and none others; don't you want to be counted among them then?--I do!"

I don't know what had wrought up Dolly to this sudden burst; but she dropped her veil upon eyes all alight, while some soft dripping tears were falling from them like diamonds. Every one knows the peculiar brilliancy of a sunlit shower; and the two young men remained fairly dazzled. Rupert, however, looked very grave, while the other wore a cloud on his brow.

Dolly was as matter-of-fact as possible when she came out from under her veil again; and declared she should not go to a hotel in Dresden, but take a lodging.

"Why?" Lawrence enquired.

"Cheaper. And pleasanter. And much quieter. We shall probably have to stay several days in Dresden. We must get letters there."

"But you do not know where to go to find lodgings."

"Yes, I do. Or I shall. I hope so. I have sent for the address of the woman with whom Lady Brierley had lodgings a

whole winter."

"Where do you expect to receive this address?"

"In Leipzig, I hope."

"Really, Dolly, you take a good deal upon you, considering how old you are," said her mother. "Don't you think Mr. St. Leger knows best?"

"No, mother, not for you and me. Oh, *he* can go to a hotel. He will, of course."

However, this Mr. St. Leger did not desire. He was obliged to do it, nevertheless. The letter was found at Leipzig, the lodgings were found in Dresden, but not roomy enough to hold them all. Mrs. Copley and her daughter and their attendant Rupert were very comfortably accommodated; and to Dolly's great joy found themselves alone. Frau Wetterhahn was all obligingness, hearing Lady Brierley's name, and made them right welcome. This Frau Wetterhahn! She was the most lively, active, capable, talkative, bright-eyed, good-humoured, free and easy little woman that you can imagine. She was really capable, and cooked them a nice supper. Dolly had unpacked a few things, and felt herself at home, and the three sat down comfortably to their meal.

"Now, mother, dear," said Dolly, "this is pleasant!"

"Well," said Mrs. Copley, "I think it is. If you only hadn't sent Lawrence away!"

"He couldn't stay, mother. Frau Wetterhahn sent him away--not I. Change will be good for him. And for me too. I am going to make believe we are at home for a little while. And you are going to see the Green vaults; and I am going to see everything. And these rooms are so cosy!"

"Aren't you going to see the Green vaults too?"

"Indeed, I hope so. But we may have to wait a day or two, dear mother; that will be good, and you can have a rest."

"I'm sure I'm glad of it," said Mrs. Copley. "I am just tired of riding, and more tired yet of seeing everlasting new things. I am aching for something I've seen before in my life."

"Well, here's a cup of coffee, mother."

Mrs. Copley tasted.

"If you think *that's* like anything I used to have at home, I'm sorry for you!" she said with a reproachful look.

"Don't you like it? I do. I like it because it is different. But I think it is very good, mother. And look--here is some delicious bread."

"It's like no bread I ever saw till I came to Germany. Oh, mercy! why must folks have so many ways? I wonder how things will be at Venice!"

"Stranger than ever, mother, I'm afraid."

"Then I shall get tired of it. Isn't this a very roundabout way that we are going to Venice--round this way by Dresden?"

"Why, yes, mother, of course; but the Green vaults are here, and you were bound to see the Green vaults."

"I wouldn't have come, if I had known it was so far," said Mrs. Copley.

But she relished her supper, and was not nervous, and slept well; and Dolly was somewhat in hopes that Dresden was not a bad move after all. They had to wait, as she said, for letters, and for the sight of the glories that had attracted them hither. Several days passed by.

They passed in delights, for Dolly. Two mornings were spent in the great picture gallery. Mrs. Copley's desires and expectations having focussed upon the Green vaults, were hardly able to see anything else clearly; indeed, she declared that she did not think the wonderful Madonna was so very wonderful after all; no woman could stand upon

clouds in that way, and as she *was* a woman, she did not see why the painter did not exhibit her in a possible situation; and those little angels at the foot of the picture--where was the other half of them supposed to be? she did not like half of anything. But Dolly dreamed in rapture, before this and many another wonder of art. Mrs. Copley made processions round the rooms constantly, drawing, of course, St. Leger with her; she could not be still. But Dolly would stop before a picture and be immovable for half an hour, drinking in pleasure and feeding upon knowledge; and Rupert generally took post behind her and acted as body-guard. What he made of the show, I do not know. Dolly asked him how he liked it? He said, "first-rate."

"Well, what do you think of it, Rupert?" Dolly asked gaily.

"Well, I guess I don't just see into it," was the dubious answer. "If these are likenesses of folks, they ain't like my folks."

"Oh, but they are not likenesses; most of them are not."

"What are they, then? and what is the good of 'em, if they don't mean anything?"

"They are out of people's imagination; as the painter imagined such and such persons might have looked, in such situations."

"How the painter imagined they might have looked!" cried Rupert.

"Yes. And they mean a great deal; all that was in the painter's mind."

"I don't care a red cent how a man fancies somebody looked. I'd like the real thing, if I could get it. I'd go some ways to see how the mother of Christ *did* look; but you say that ain't it?"

"No," said Dolly, smiling.

Rupert surveyed the great picture again.

"Don't you think it is beautiful, Rupert?" Dolly pursued, curious to know what went on in his thoughts.

"I've seen as handsome faces--and handsomer," he said slowly; "and I like flesh and blood a long sight better than a painting, anyhow."

"Handsome?" said Dolly. "Oh, it is not *that*--it is so much more!"----

"What is it, Miss Dolly?" said Lawrence, just then coming up behind her. "I should like to hear your criticism. Do put it in words."

"That's not easy; and it is not criticism. But I'll tell you how it seems to me; as the painting, not of anybody's features, but of somebody's nature, spirit. It is a painting of the spiritual character."

"Mental traits can be expressed in words, though," said Lawrence. "You'll go on, I hope?"

"I cannot," said Dolly. "It is not the lovely face, Mr. Babbage; it is thought and feeling, love and purity, and majesty--but the majesty of a person who has no thought of herself."

Dolly could not get out of that one room; she sat before the Raphael, and then stood fixed before the "Notte" or the "Magdalene" of Correggio; and would not come away. Rupert always attended on her, and Mrs. Copley as regularly made progresses through the rooms on Lawrence's arm, till she declared herself tired out. They were much beholden to Lawrence and his good offices these days, more than they knew; for it was past the season when the gallery was open to the public, and entrance was obtained solely by the influence of St. Leger's mediation and money; how much of the latter they never knew. Lawrence was a very good escort also; his address was pleasant, and his knowledge of men and things sufficient for useful purposes; he knew in general what was what and who was who, and was never at a loss. Rupert followed the party like a faithful dog, ready for service and with no opportunity to show it; Lawrence held the post of leader and manager now, and filled it well. In matters of art, however, I am bound to say, though he could talk more, he knew as little as Rupert himself.

"What is to be done to-morrow?" he asked, in the evening of that second day.

"We haven't got our letters yet," said Mrs. Copley. "I can't see why they don't come."

"So the Green vaults must wait. What else shall we do?"

"Oh," said Dolly, "might we not go to the gallery again?"

"Another day?" cried her mother. "Why, you have been there two whole mornings, child. Ain't that enough?"

"Mother, I could go two months, I think."

"Then you'd catch your death," said Mrs. Copley. "That inner room is very chill now. For my part, I do not want to see another picture again in days and days. My head swims with looking at them. I don't see what you find in the old things."

Dolly could not have told. She sighed, and it was agreed that they would drive about the city and its environs next day; Lawrence assuring them that it was one of the pleasantest towns in Germany. But the next morning early came the letters from Mr. Copley; one to his wife and one to Dolly.

Dolly read them both and pondered them; and was unsatisfied. They were rather cheerful letters; at the same time Mr. Copley informed his wife and daughter that he could not join them in Dresden; nor at any rate before they got to Venice. So much was final; but what puzzled and annoyed Dolly yet more than this delay was the amount of money he remitted to her. To her, for Mrs. Copley, as an invalid, it was agreed, should not be burdened with business. So the draft came in the letter to Dolly; and it was not half large enough. Dolly kept the draft, gave the letter to her mother to read, and sat in a mazed kind of state, trying to bring her wits to a focus upon this condition of affairs.

What was her father thinking of? It is one thing to be short of funds at home, in one's own country and in one's own house; it is bad enough even there; what is it when one is in a strange land and dependent upon the shelter of other people's houses, for which an equivalent must be paid in money? and when one is obliged to travel from one place to another, and every mile of the way demands another equivalent in money? Mr. Copley had sent a little, but Dolly knew it would by no means take them to Venice. What did he intend? or what did he expect her to do? Apply to Lawrence? Never! No, not under any pressure or combination that could be brought to bear. He would demand an equivalent too; or worse, think that it was guaranteed, if she made such an application. How could Mr. Copley place his child in such a predicament? And then Dolly's head went down in her hands, for the probable answer crushed her. He never would, he never could, but for yielding to unworthy indulgences; becoming entangled in low pleasures; taken possession of by the influence of unprincipled men. Her father!--Dolly felt as if her heart would break or her head burst with its burden of pain,--"Oh, a father never should let his child feel ashamed for him!" was the secret cry down in the depths of her heart. Dolly would not speak it out ever, even to herself, but it was there, all the same; and it tortured her, with a nameless, exquisite torture, under which she mentally writhed, without being able to get the least relief. Every surge of the old love and reverence broke on those sharp rocks of pain more hopelessly. "O father!--O father!" she cried silently, with a pitiful vain appeal which could never be heard.

And then the practical question came back, taking away her breath. What was she to do? If they did not stay too long in Dresden they would have enough money to pay their lodging-bill and go, she calculated, half the way to Venice. What then? And if Mr. Copley met them in Venice, according to promise, who would assure her that he would then come provided with the necessary funds? and what if he failed to come?

Dolly started up, feeling that she could not sit any longer thinking about it; her nerves were getting into a hard knot. She would not think; she busied herself in making her mother and herself ready for their morning's excursion. And Lawrence came with a carriage; and they set off. It was a lovely day, and certainly the drive was all it had promised; and Dolly barred off thought, and *would* look and enjoy and talk and make others enjoy; so the first part of the day passed very well. Dolly would make no arrangements for the afternoon, and Mrs. Copley was able for no more that day.

But when the early dinner was over, Dolly asked Rupert to walk with her. Rupert was always ready, and gave a delighted assent.

"Are you going out again? and to leave me all alone?" said Mrs. Copley.

"You will be lying down, mother dear; you will not want me; and I have business on hand, that I must attend to."

"I don't see what business," said Mrs. Copley fretfully; "and you can't do anything here, in a strange place. You'd better get Mr. St. Leger to do it for you."

"He cannot do my work," said Dolly lightly.

"But you had better wait and take him along, Dolly. He knows where to go."

"So do I, mother. I want Rupert this time, and not Mr. St. Leger. You sleep till I come back."

Dolly had said she meant business, but at first going out things did not look like it. She went slowly and silently along the streets, not attending much to what she was passing, Rupert thought; till they arrived at an open spot from which the view of the river, with the bridge and parts of the town, could be enjoyed; and there Dolly sat down on a step, and still without speaking to Rupert, bent forward leaning on her knees, and seemed to give herself up to studying the beautiful scene. She saw it; the river, the picturesque bridge, the wavy, vine-clad hills, the unfamiliar buildings of the city, the villas scattered about on the banks of the Elbe; she saw it all under a clear heaven and a sunny light which dressed everything in hues of loveliness; and her face was fixed the while in lines of grave thought and gave back no reflection of the beauty. It had beauty enough of its own, Rupert thought; who, I must say, paid little heed to the landscape and watched his companion instead. The steady, intent, sweet eyes, how much grave womanliness was in them; how delicate the colour was on the cheek, and how tender were the curves of the lips; while the wilful, clustering curly hair gave an almost childish setting to the features whose expression was so very unchildish. For it was exceedingly grave. Dolly did see the lovely landscape, and it made her feel alone and helpless. There was nothing wanted or familiar; she seemed to herself somehow cast away in the Saxon capital. And truly she was all alone. Lawrence she could not apply to, her mother must not even be talked to; she knew nobody else. Her father had let her come on this journey, had sent her forth, and now left her unprovided even for the barest necessities. No doubt he meant that she should be beholden to Mr. St. Leger, to whom he could return the money by and by. "Or not at all," thought Dolly bitterly, "if I would give him myself instead. O father, could you sell me!" Then came the thought of the entanglements and indulgences which had brought Mr. Copley to do other things so unlike himself; and Dolly's heart grew too full. She could not bear it; she had borne up and fought it out all the morning; now feeling and truth must have a minute for themselves; her head went down on her hands and she burst into quiet sobs.

Quiet, but deep. Rupert, looking on in dismayed alarm, saw that this outbreak of pain had some deep grounded cause; right or wrong, it came from Dolly's very heart, and her whole nature was trembling. He was filled with a great awe; and in this awe his sympathy was silent for a time; but he could not leave the girl to herself too long.

"Miss Dolly," he said in a pause of the sobs, "I thought you were such a Christian?"

Dolly started, lifted her quivering, tearful face, and looked straight at him. "Yes," she said,--"what then?"

"I always thought religious folks had something to comfort them."

"Don't think they haven't," said Dolly. But there she broke down again, and it was a storm of a rain shower that poured from her eyes this time. She struggled to get the better of it, and as soon as she could she sat up again, brushing the tears right and left with her hands and speaking in a voice still half choked.

"Don't think they haven't! If I had not *that*, my heart would just break and be done with it. But being a Christian does not keep one from suffering--sometimes." Her voice failed.

"What is the matter? No, I don't mean that you should tell me that; only--can't I do something?"

"No, thank you; nobody can. Yes, you are doing a great deal, Rupert; you are the greatest comfort to me. I depend upon you."

Rupert's eyes glistened. He was silent for sheer swelling of heart. He gulped down something--and went on presently.

"I was thinkin' of something my old mother used to say. I know I've heard her say it, lots o' times. I don't know what the trouble is, that's a fact--so maybe I hadn't oughter speak; but *she* used to say that nothing could happen to Christians that would do 'em any real hurt."

"I know," said Dolly, wondering to herself how it could be true; "the Bible says so."--And then conscience rebuked her. "And it *is* true," she said, lifting up her head; "everything is true that the Bible says, and that is true; and it says other things"----

"What?" said Rupert; more for her sake, I confess, than for his own.

"It says--'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid upon Thee;' I was reading it this morning. You see I must be a very poor Christian, or I should not have doubted a minute. But even a Christian, and the best, must be

sorry sometimes for things he cannot help," said Dolly.

"Then you were not troubled about yourself just now?" said Rupert.

"Yes, I was! I was indeed, in spite of all those words and a great many others. I believe I forgot them."

"I should think, if God gives people promises, He would like them to be trusted," said Rupert "That's what *we* do."

Dolly looked at him again as if he had said something that struck her; and then she got up, and taking his arm, set off this time at a business pace. She knew, she said, where to find what she wanted; however, she had gone out of her way, and it cost her some trouble and time to get to the place. It was a store of artists' materials, among other things; and here Dolly made careful purchases of paper, colours, and camel's-hair pencils. Rupert was reassured as to a suspicion that had crossed him, that part of Dolly's trouble might have been caused by want of means; seeing that she was buying articles of amusement with a free hand. Then Dolly went straight home.

All the rest of that afternoon she sat drawing. The next two days, the weather was unfavourable for going out, and she sat at her work persistently, whenever she was not obliged to be reading to her mother or attending upon her. The day following the long-planned visit to the Green vaults was made. In the evening Lawrence came to see them.

"Well, Mrs. Copley; tired?"--he began.

"I don't know which part of me's most tired," said the lady; "my eyes, or my head, or my feet."

"Did it pay, after all?"

"Pay! I wouldn't have missed it for a year's length of life! It went ahead of all I ever thought of or dreamt of. It was most like Aladdin's lamp--or what he saw, I mean, when he went down into fairyland. I declare, it was just as good."

"Only that you could not put things in your pockets. What would you have brought, Mrs. Copley, if it had been safe and allowable? The famous egg?"

"Mercy, no, Mr. St. Leger! I shouldn't have a minute's peace of my life, for fear I should lose it again."

"That's about how they say the first owner felt. They tell of him, that a lady once coaxed him to let her have the egg in her hand; and she kept it in her hand; and the prince forgot; and she drove back to Dresden with it."

"Where was he, the prince?"

"At some hunting castle, I believe. It was night before he found out his loss; and then he booted and spurred in hot haste and rode to Dresden in the middle of the night to fetch the egg from the lady again."

"What's the use of things that give folks so much trouble?" said Rupert.

"A matter of taste!" said Lawrence, shrugging his shoulders. "But I am glad to have been through those rooms myself; and I never should, but for you, Mrs. Copley. I suppose there is hardly the like to be seen anywhere else."

"What delicious things there were in the ivory room," said Dolly. "Those drunken musicians, mother, of Albert Durer; and some of the vases; how beautiful they were!"

"I did not see the musicians," said Mrs. Copley. "I don't see how drunken musicians, or drunken anything, could be pretty. Odd taste, I think."

"Then perhaps you didn't like the piece with the fallen angels?" said Rupert. "That beat me!"

"How could there be peace with the fallen angels?" Mrs. Copley asked scornfully. At which, however, there was a great burst of laughter. "I liked best of all the room where the egg was, I believe. But the silver room was magnificent."

"I liked the ivory better than the silver, mother."

"Who does it all belong to?" Rupert asked.

"The reigning house of Saxony," Lawrence answered.

"The whole of it?"

"Yes."

"And that big picture gallery into the bargain?"

"Yes."

"That's bein' grasping, for any one family to have so much," was Rupert's conclusion.

"Well, you see," said Lawrence, "we get the good of it, and they have the care."

"I don't see how we get the good of it," said Mrs. Copley. "I suppose if I had one of those golden birds, now, with the eyes of diamonds; or one of those wonderfully chased silver caskets; I should have enough to keep me in comfort the rest of my life. *I* think things are queer, somehow. One single one of those jewels that lie heaped up there, and I should want for nothing more in this world. And there they lie and nobody has 'em."

"Do you want for anything now, mother dear?" asked Dolly. She was busy at a side table, arranging something in a little frame, and did not look up from her work.

"I should think I did!" was Mrs. Copley's rejoinder. "What don't I want, from breath up?"

"Here you have had one wish fulfilled to-day--you have seen the Green vaults--and now we are going to Venice to fulfil another wish--what would you have?"

"I don't like to think I am going away from here. I like Dresden best of all the places we've been in. And I would like to go through the Green vaults--but why they are called so, I cannot conceive--about once every month. I would *never* get tired."

"So you would like to settle in Dresden?" said Lawrence. "I don't think it would be safe to let you go through the Green vaults often, Mrs. Copley; you would certainly be tempted too much for your principles. Miss Dolly, we had better get her away. When *do* we go, by the by?"

Instead of answering, Dolly rose up and brought him something to look at; a plain little oval frame of black wood within which was a head in light water colours.

"Mrs. Copley!" exclaimed Lawrence.

"Is it like?"

"Striking! capital. I'm not much of a judge of painting in general, but I know a friend's face when I see it; and this is to the life. To the life! Graceful, too. Where did you get it?"

"I got the paper and the paints at a little shop in--I forget the name of the *strasse*;--and mother was here to my hand. Ecco!"

"You *don't* mean you did it?" said Lawrence, while the others crowded near to look.

"I used to amuse myself with that kind of thing when I was at school, and I had always a knack at catching likenesses. I am going to try you, Rupert, next."

"Ah, try me!" cried Lawrence. "Will you? and we will stay in Dresden till it is done."

"Suppose I succeed," said Dolly softly,--"will you get me orders?"

"Orders?"

"Yes. To paint likenesses, like this, in miniature. I can take ivory, but I would not waste ivory on this one. I'll do yours on ivory if you like."

"But *orders*?" said Lawrence, dumbfounded.

"Yes," said Dolly, nodding, "orders; and for as high pay as you think I can properly ask. Hush! say nothing to

mother" ----

"Is that like me?" Mrs. Copley asked, after studying the little picture.

"Capitally like you!" Lawrence cried.

"Then I've changed more'n I thought I had, that's all. I don't think I care about your painting me any more, Dolly, if that's the best you can do."

"Why, Mrs. Copley," said Lawrence, "it's beautiful. Exactly your turn of the head, and the delicate fresh colour in your cheeks. It's perfect!"

"Is it?" said Mrs. Copley in a modified tone. "So that's what you've been fussing about, Dolly, these two days. Well, take Mr. St. Leger next. I want to see what you'll make of him. She won't flatter you," the lady went on; "that's one thing you may lay your account with; she won't flatter you. But if we're going away, you won't have much chance; and, seems to me, we had better settle which way we are going."

Lawrence did not take up this hint. He sat gazing at the little miniature, which was in its way very lovely. The colours were lightly laid in, the whole was rather sketchy; but the grace of the delineation was remarkable, and the likeness was perfect; and Dolly had shown a true artist's eye in her choice of position and point of view.

"I did not know you had such a wonderful talent," he remarked.

Dolly made no answer.

"You'll do me next?"

"If you like my conditions."

"I do not understand them," he said, looking up at her.

"I want orders," Dolly said almost in a whisper.

"Orders? To paint things like this? For money? Nonsense, Dolly!"

"As you please, Mr. St. Leger; then I will stay here a while and get work through Frau Wetterhahn. She wants me to paint *her*."

"You never will!"

"I'll try."

"As a favour then?"

Dolly lifted her eyes and smiled at the young man; a smile that utterly and wholly bewitched him. Wilful? yes, he thought it was wilful, but sweet and arch, and bright with hope and purpose and conscious independence; a little defiant, a great deal glad.

"Paint me," said he hastily, "and I'll give you anything you like."

Dolly nodded. "Very well," said she; "then you may talk with mother about our route."

CHAPTER XX.

LIMBURG.

Lawrence did talk with Mrs. Copley; and the result of the discussion was that the decision and management of their movements was finally made over to him. Whether it happened by design or not, the good lady's head was quite confused among the different plans suggested; she could understand nothing of it, she said; and so it all fell into

Lawrence's hand. I think that was what he wanted, and that he had views of his own to gratify; for Dolly, who had been engaged with other matters this time, expressed some surprise a day or two after they set out, at finding herself again in Weimar.

"Going back the way we came?" she cried.

"Only for a little distance--a few stages," explained Lawrence; "after that it will be all new."

Dolly did not much care, nor know enough to correct him if he was going wrong; she gave herself up to hopeful enjoyment of the constantly varying new scenes and sights. Mrs. Copley, on the contrary, seemed able to enjoy nothing beyond the shortening of the distance between her and Venice. If she had known how much longer than was necessary Lawrence had made it!

So it happened that they were going one day down a pleasant road which led along a river valley, when an exclamation from Dolly roused her mother out of a half nap. "What is it?" she asked.

"Mother, such a beautiful, beautiful old church! Look--see how it sits up there grandly on the rock."

"Very inconvenient, I should think," said Mrs. Copley, giving a glance out of the carriage window. "I shouldn't think people would like to mount up there often."

"I believe," said Lawrence, also looking out now, "that must be a famous old church--isn't this Limburg?--yes. It is the cathedral at Limburg; a very fine specimen of its style, Miss Dolly, they say."

"What is the style? it's beautiful! Gothic?"

"No,--aw--not exactly. I'm not learned myself, really, in such matters. I hardly know a good thing when I see it--never studied antiquities, you know; but this is said, I know, to be a very good thing."

"How old? It does not look antiquated."

"Oh, it has been repaired and restored. But it is not Gothic, so it dates further back; what they call the Transition style."

"It is very noble," said Dolly. "Is it as good inside as outside?"

"Don't know, I declare; I suppose so. We might go in and see; let the horses feed and Mrs. Copley take a rest."

This proposition was received with such joy by Dolly that it was at once acted upon. The party sought out an inn, bespoke some luncheon, and arranged for Mrs. Copley's repose. But chancing to hear from Lawrence that the treasures of art and value in the church repositories were both rich and rare, she gave up the promised nap and joined the party who went to the dome. After the Dresden Green vaults, she said, she supposed nothing new could be found; but she would go and see. So they went all together. If Lawrence had guessed to what this chance visit would lead! But that is precisely what people can never know.

Dolly was in a condition of growing delight, which every step increased. Before the great front of the cathedral she stood still and looked up, while Rupert and Mrs. Copley turned their backs and gazed out upon the wide country view. Lawrence, as usual when he could, attended upon Dolly.

"I did not know you were so fond of *this* kind of thing," he remarked, seeing a little enviously her bright, interested eyes.

"It lifts me almost off my feet!" said Dolly. "My soul don't seem big enough to take it all in. How grand, how grand!--Whose statues are those?"

"On each side?" said Lawrence, who had been collecting information. "That on the one hand is Heinrich von Isenburg, the founder; and the other is the architect, but nobody knows his name. It is lost. St. George is on the top there."

"Well," said Dolly, "he is just as well off as if it hadn't been lost!"

"Who? the architect? How do you make that out? He loses all the glory."

"How does he lose it? Do you think," said Dolly, smiling, "he would care, in the other world, to know that you and I liked his work?"

"The other world!" said St. Leger.

"You believe in it, don't you?"

"Yes, certainly; but you speak as if"----

"As if I believed in it!" said Dolly merrily. "You speak as if you didn't."

"I do, I assure you; but what is fame then?"

"Nothing at all," said Dolly.--"Just nothing at all; if you mean people's admiration or applause given when we have gone beyond reach of it."

"Beyond reach of it!" said Lawrence, echoing her words again. "Miss Dolly, do you think it is no use to have one's name honoured by all the world for ages after we have lived?"

"Very good for the world," said Dolly, with a spice of amusement visible again.

"And nothing to the man?"

"What should it be to the man?" said Dolly, seriously enough now. "Mr. St. Leger, when a man has got beyond this world with its little cares and interests, there will be just one question for him,--whether he has done what God put him here to do; and there will be just one word of praise that he will care about,--the 'Well done!'--if he may have it,--from those lips."

Dolly began quietly, but her colour flushed and her lip trembled as she went on, and her eye sparkled through a sudden veil of tears. Lawrence was silenced by admiration, and almost forgot what they were talking about.

"But don't you think," he began again, as Dolly moved towards the church door, "that the one thing--I mean, the praise here,--will be a sort of guaranty for the praise there?"

"No," said Dolly. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God--often, often." She pushed open the door and went in. Only a little way in; there she stood still, arrested by all the glory and the beauty that met her eye. The nobleness of form, the wealth of colour, the multiplied richness of both, almost bewildered her at first entering. Pillars, arches, vaultings, niches, galleries, arcades--a wilderness of harmonised form; and every panel and fair space filled with painting. She could not see details yet; she was lost in the greatness of the whole.

"Whom has Mrs. Copley picked up?" asked Lawrence in an undertone. After all, if the architect's posthumous fame had depended on him, it would not have been worth much effort. Mrs. Copley, it may be mentioned, had passed on while Dolly and St. Leger had stood talking outside; and now she was seen in the distance the centre of a group of lively talkers; at least there was one lady who was free to exercise her gifts in that way. Lawrence and Dolly slowly advanced, even Dolly's attention taken for a moment from the church by this extraordinary combination. Yes, Mrs. Copley had found acquaintances. The talker was a lady of about her own age; a gentleman stood near, a little behind was a younger lady, while Rupert balanced the group on the other side.

"There's something uncommon over yonder," whispered Lawrence. "Do you see that blond girl? not blond neither, for her hair isn't; but what an exquisite colour!--and magnificent figure. Do you know her?"

"No," said Dolly,--"I think not. Yet I do. Who can it be? I do not know the one talking to mother."

"And this is she?" the elder lady was saying as Dolly now came up, looking at her with a smiling face. "It's quite delightful to meet friends in the midst of a wilderness so; like the print of a man's foot on the sands in a desert; for really, in the midst of strange people one feels cast away. She's handsomer than you were, Mrs. Copley. My dear, do you know your old schoolfellow?"

"Christina Thayer!" exclaimed Dolly, as the other young lady came forward; and there was a joyful recognition on both sides.

"Who is your friend?" Mrs. Thayer next went on. "Won't you introduce him?--St. Leger? Don't I know your

father? Ernest Singleton St. Leger?--Yes! Why, he was a great beau of mine once, a good while ago, you know," she added, nodding. "You might not think it, but he was. Oh, I know him very well; I know him like a book. You must be my friend. Christina, this is Mr. St. Leger; my old friend's son.--Mr. Thayer."

Mr. Thayer was nothing remarkable. But Christina had fulfilled the promise of her girlhood, and developed into a magnificent beauty. Her skin showed the richest, clear, creamy white tints, upon which in her cheeks and lips the carmine lay like rose leaves. Her hair was light brown and abundant, features regular, eyes sweet; she was one of those fair, full, stately, placid Saxon types of beauty, which are not very common in America and remarkable anywhere. Her figure was roundly and finely developed, rather stately and slow moving; which characteristic harmonised with all the rest of her. The two girls were as unlike each other as possible. It amused and half fascinated Lawrence to watch the contrast. It seemed to be noon of a summer day in the soul of Christina, a still breadth of light without shadow; there was a murmur of content in her voice when she spoke, and a ripple of content in her laugh when she laughed. But the light quivered on Dolly's lip, and gleamed and sparkled in her brown eyes, and light and shadow could flit over her face with quick change; they did so now.

Meanwhile people had forgotten the old cathedral. Christina seemed unaffectedly glad at the meeting with her friend of the school days.

"I'm so delighted," she said, drawing Dolly a little apart. "Where are you? where do you come from, I mean? How come you to be here?"

"We come from Dresden; we are on our way"----

"You are living in London, aren't you? I heard that. It's too good to meet you so! for Europe is full of people, no doubt, but there are very few that I care for. Oh, tell me where you are going?"

"Venice first."

"And further south? you are going on into Italy?"

"Yes, I think so."

"That's delightful. Oh, there's nothing like Italy! It is not your wedding journey, Dolly?"--with a glance at the very handsome young man who was standing in waiting a few paces off.

"What are you thinking of!" cried Dolly. "Christina, we are travelling for mother's health."

"Oh, well, I didn't suppose it; but it might be, you know; it will be, before you know it. It isn't *mine*, either; though it only wants two things of it. Oh, I want to tell you all about myself, Dolly, and I want to show you somebody; I have got somebody to show, you see. You will come and make us a visit, will you not? Oh, you must! I must have you."

"You said it wanted only *two things* of being your wedding journey? What things?"

"The presence of the gentleman, and the performance of the ceremony." And as Christina said it, a delicate peach-blossom bloom ripened in her cheeks; you could hardly say that she blushed. "Oh, the gentleman is somewhere, though he is not here," she went on, with that ripple of laughter; "and the ceremony is somewhere in the distance, too. I want you to see him, Dolly. I am proud of him. I think everything in the world of him."

"I suppose I may know his name?"

"Christina," cried Mrs. Thayer, "where are you? My dear, we cannot stand here and talk all the afternoon; our friends have got to see the church. Isn't it a delicious old place? Just go round and examine things; I could stay here for ever. Every little place where there is room for it is filled with the quaintest, queerest, charmingest paintings. Where there is room for it, there is a group; and where there is not a group, there is an apostle or a saint; and where there is not room for that, there is something else, which this unintelligible old guide will explain to you. And think--for years and years it has held the richest collection--oh, just wait and see! it is better than the church itself. My dear, the riches of its treasures are incalculable. Fancy, a mitre, a bishop's mitre, you know, so heavy with precious stones that the good man cannot bear it on his head but a few minutes; over three thousand pearls and precious stones in it; and the work, oh, the work of it is wonderful! just in the finest Renaissance"----

"We have just come from the Green vaults at Dresden," put in Mrs. Copley. "I suppose that goes ahead of everything else."

"Oh, my dear, I don't know; I don't see how anything can be superior to the show here. Is Mr. St. Leger fond of art?"

"Fonder of nature," Mr. St. Leger confesses with a bow.

"Nature,--well, come to see us at Naples. We have got a villa not far from there--you'll *all* come and stay with us. Oh, we cannot let you off; it is such a thing to meet with one's own people from home. You will certainly want to see us, and we shall want to see you. Venice, oh yes, after you have seen Venice, and then we shall be at home again; we just set off on this journey to use up the time until the 'Red Chief' could come to Naples. We are going back soon, and we'll be all ready to welcome you. And Mr. St. Leger, of course. Mr. St. Leger, I could tell you a great deal about your father. He and I flirted dreadfully once; and, you know, if flirting is *properly* carried on, one always has a little sneaking kindness for the people one has flirted with."

"No more than that?" said St. Leger with a polite smile.

"Why, what would you have? after one has grown old, you know. You would not have me in love with him! Here is my husband and my daughter. Don't you have a kindness for the people you flirt with?"

"I must not say anything against flirting, in the present company"---- Lawrence began.

"No, of course you mustn't. We all flirt, at a certain age. How are young people to get acquainted with one another and find out what they would like? You never buy cheese without tasting it, you know, not in England. Just as well call things by their right names. I don't think anybody ought to deny flirting; it's nature; we must do it. Christina flirts, I know, in the most innocent way, with everybody; not as I did; she has her own style; and your daughter does it too, Mrs. Copley. I can see it in her eyes. Ah me, I wish I was young again! And what a place to flirt in such an old church is!"

"O mamma!" came from Christina.

"Very queer taste, I should say," remarked Mrs. Copley.

"It isn't taste; it is combination of circumstances," Mrs. Thayer, smiling, went on. "You see if I don't say true. My dear, such a place as this is full of romance, full! Just think of the people that have been married here; why, the first church was built here in 814; imagine that!"

"Enough to keep one from flirting for ever," said Dolly, on whom the lady's eye fell as she ended her sentence.

"Just go in and see those jewels and hear the stories," said Mrs. Thayer, nodding at her. "That old woman will tell you stories enough, if you can understand her; Christina had to translate for me; but, my dear, there's a story there fit to break your heart; about a blood jasper. It is carved; Mr. Thayer says the carving is very fine, and I suppose it is; but all I thought of was the story. My dear, the stone is all spotted with dark stains, and they are said to be the stains of heart's blood. Oh, it is as tragical as can be. You see, the carver, or stone-cutter,--the young man who did the work,--loved his master's daughter--it's a very romantic story--and she"----

"Flirted?" suggested St. Leger.

"Well, I am afraid she did; but it is the old course of things; her father thought she might look higher, you know, and she *did*; married the richest nobleman in Verona; and the young man had been promised her if he did his work well, and the work is magnificently done; but he was cheated; and he drove a sharp little knife into his heart. Christina, what was the old master's name?"

"I forget, mamma."

"You ought not to forget; you will want to tell the story. Of course *I* have forgotten; I did not understand it at the time, and I never remember anything besides; but he was very famous, and everybody wanted the things he did, and he could not execute all the commissions he got; and this young man was his best favourite pupil."

"How came the stains upon the stone?" asked Lawrence. "Did it bleed for sympathy?"

"I don't know; I have forgotten. Oh yes! the stone was in his hand, you know."

"And it was sympathy?" said Lawrence quite gravely, though Dolly could not keep her lips in order.

"No, it was the blood. Go in and you'll see it, and all the rest. And there---- Where are you going? to Venice? We are going on to Cologne and then back to Rome. We shall meet in Rome? You will stay in Venice for a few weeks, and then be in Rome about Christmas; and then we will make arrangements for a visit from you all. Oh yes, we must have you all."

Lawrence accompanied the lady to the door, and Christina following with Dolly earnestly begged for the meeting in Rome, and that Dolly would spend Christmas with her. "I have so much to tell you," she said; "and my--the gentleman I spoke of--will meet us in Rome; and he will spend Christmas with us; and I want you to see him. I admire Mr. St. Leger, very much!" she added in a confidential whisper.

"Mr. St. Leger is nothing to me," said Dolly steadily, looking in her friend's face. "He is father's secretary, and is taking care of us till my father can come."

"Oh, well, if he is not anything to you *now*, perhaps--you never know what will be," said Christina. "He is very handsome! Don't you like him? I long to know how you will like--Mr. Rayner."

"Who is he?" said Dolly, by way of saying something.

"Didn't I tell you? He is first officer on board the 'Red Chief,' one of our finest vessels of war; it is in the Mediterranean now; and we expect him to come to us at Christmas. Manage to be at Rome then, do, dear; and afterwards you must all come and make us a visit at our villa, near Naples, and we'll show you everything."

"Christina," said Mrs. Thayer, when she and her daughter and her husband were safe in the privacy of their carriage, "that is a son of the rich English banker, St. Leger; they are *very* rich. We must be polite to him."

"You are polite to everybody, mamma."

"But *you* must be polite to him."

"I'll try, mamma--if you wish it."

"I wish it, of course. You never know how useful such an acquaintance may be to you. Is he engaged to that girl?"

"I think not, mamma. She says not."

"That don't prove anything, though."

"Yes, it does, with her. Dolly Copley was always downright--not like the rest."

"Every girl thinks it is fair to fib about her lovers. However, I thought *he* looked at you, Christina, not exactly as if he were a bound man."

"He is too late," said the girl carelessly. "I am a bound woman."

"Well, be civil to him," said her mother. "You never know what people may do."

"I don't care, mamma. Mr. St. Leger's doings are of no importance to me."

Mrs. Thayer was silent now; and her husband remarked that Mr. St. Leger could not do better than pick up that pretty, wise-eyed little girl.

"Wise-eyed! she is that, isn't she?" cried Christina. "She always was. She is grown up wonderfully pretty."

"She is no more to be compared to you, than--well, never mind," said Mrs. Thayer. "I hope we shall see more of them at Christmas. Talk of eyes,--Mr. St. Leger's eyes are beautiful. Did you notice them?"

Dolly on her side had seen the party descend the rocks, looking after them with an odd feeling or mixture of feelings. The meeting with her school friend had brought up sudden contrasts never so sharply presented to her before. The gay carelessness of those old times, the warm shelter of her Aunt Hal's home, the absolute trust in her father and mother,--where was all that now? Dolly saw Christina's placid features and secure gaiety, saw her surrounded and sheltered by her parents' arms, strong to guard and defend her; and she seemed to herself lonely. It fell to her to guard and defend her mother; and her father? what was he about?--There swept over her an exceeding bitter cry of desolateness, unuttered, but as it were the cry of her whole soul; with again that sting of pain which seemed

unendurable, how can a father let his child be ashamed of him! She turned away that St. Leger might not see her face; she felt it was terribly grave; and betook herself now to the examination of the church.

And the still beauty and loftiness of the place wrought upon her by and by with a strange effect. Wandering along among pillars and galleries and arcades, where saints and apostles and martyrs looked down upon her as out of past ages, she seemed to be surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses." They looked down upon her with grave, high sympathy, or they looked up with grave, high love and trust; they testified to work done and dangers met, and suffering borne, for Christ,—and to the glory awaiting them, and to which they then looked forward, and which now they had been enjoying—how long? What mattered the little troubled human day, so that heaven's long sunshine set in at the end of it? And that sun "shall no more go down." Dolly roved on and on, going from one to another sometimes lovely sometimes stern old image; and gradually she forgot the nineteenth century, and dropped back into the past, and so came to take a distant and impartial view of herself and her own life; getting a better standard by which to measure the one and regulate the other. She too could live and work for Christ. What though the work were different and less noteworthy; what matter, so that she were doing what He gave her to do? Not to make a noise in the world, either by preaching or dying; not to bear persecution; just to live true and shine, to comfort and cheer her mother, to reclaim and save her father, to trust and be glad! Yes, less than that latter would not do full honour to her Master or His truth; and so much as that He would surely help her to attain. Dolly wandered about the cathedral, and mused, and prayed, and grew quiet and strong, she thought; while her mother was viewing the church treasures with Mr. St. Leger, Dolly excused herself, preferring the church.

"Dolly, Dolly," said Mrs. Copley when at last she came away, "you don't know what you have lost."

"It is not so much as I have gained, mother."

"I'm glad we have seen it, Mr. St. Leger; and I'm glad we have done with it! I don't want to see any more sights till we get to Venice. Where are the Thayers going, Dolly?"

"To Cologne, mother, and to Nice and Mentone, they said."

"I wish they were coming to Venice. How fat Christina has grown!"

"O mother! She is a regular beauty—she could not do with less flesh; she ought not to lose an ounce of it. She is not fat. She is perfect. Is she not, Mr. St. Leger?"

Lawrence assented that Miss Thayer had the symmetry of a beautiful statue.

"Too fat," said Mrs. Copley. "If she is a statue now, what will she be by and by? I don't like that sort of beauties. Her face wants life."

"It does not want sweetness," said Lawrence. "It is a very attractive face."

"I am glad we stopped here, if it was only for the meeting them," said Mrs. Copley. "But I can't see how you could miss all those diamonds and gold and silver things, Dolly. They were just wonderful."

"All the Green vaults did not give me the pleasure this old church did, mother."

CHAPTER XXI.

VENICE.

"You and your friend are the most perfect contrast," remarked Lawrence as they were driving away. "She is repose in action—and you are activity in repose."

"That sounds well," Dolly answered after a pause. "I am trying to think whether there is any meaning in it."

"Certainly; or I hope so. She is placidity itself; one wonders if she could be anything but placid; while you"----

"Never mind about me," said Dolly hastily. "I am longing to know whether mother will like Venice."

"Shall you?"

"Oh, I like everything."

Which was the blissful truth. Even anxiety did not prevent its being the truth; perhaps anxiety even at times put a keener edge upon enjoyment; Dolly fled from troublesome thoughts to the beauties of a landscape, the marvels of a piece of mediæval architecture, the bewitchment of a bit of painting from an old master's hand; and tasted, and lingered, and tasted over again in memory, all the beauty and the marvel and the bewitchment. Lawrence smiled to himself at the thought of what she would find in Venice.

"There's one thing I don't make out," Rupert broke in.

"Only one?" said Lawrence. But the other was too intent to heed him.

"It bothers me, why the people that could build such a grand church, couldn't make better houses for themselves."

"Ah!" said Lawrence. "You manage that better in America?"

"If we didn't--I'd emigrate! We don't have such splendid things as that old pile of stones,"--looking back at the dome,"--"but our farmhouses are a long sight ahead of this country."

"I guess, Rupert," Dolly remarked now, "the men that built the dome did not build the farmhouses."

"Who built the dome, as you call it, then? But I don't see any dome; there's only a nest of towers."

"The nobles built the great cathedrals."

"And if you went through one of *their* houses," said Lawrence, "you would not think they neglected number one. You never saw anything like an old German *schloss* in America."

"Then the nobles had all the money?"

"Pretty much so. Except the rich merchants in some of the cities; and *they* built grand churches and halls and the like, and made themselves happy with magnificence at home in other ways; not architecture."

"I am glad I don't belong here," said Rupert. "But don't the people know any better?"

"Than what?"

"Than to let the grand folks have it all their own way?"

"They were brought up to it," said Lawrence. "That's just what they like."

"I expect they'll wake up some day," said Rupert. Which observation Lawrence did not think worthy of answer; as it was ahead of the time and of him equally.

They made no unnecessary delay now in going on to Venice. I think Lawrence had had a secret design to see some one of the great gaming watering-places; and they had come back to the banks of the Rhine on purpose. But, however, both Dolly and her mother were in such haste that he could not induce them by any motive of curiosity or interest to stop. Dolly indeed had a great horror of those places, and did not want, she said, to see how beautiful they were. She hoped for her father's coming to them in Venice; and Mrs. Copley with the nervous restlessness of an invalid had set her mind on that goal, and would not look at anything short of it. So they only passed through Wiesbaden and went on.

But Dolly did want to see Switzerland. When the party came to the lake of Constance, however, Mrs. Copley declined that proposal. Everybody went to Switzerland, she said; and she did not care about it. The hope would have fallen through, only that Lawrence, seeing Dolly's disappointment, proposed taking a route through the Tyrol. Comparatively few people went there, he assured Mrs. Copley; and furthermore, that it was as good a way to Venice as any other. Mrs. Copley gave consent; and to Dolly's immeasurable and inexpressible satisfaction through the Tyrol they went. Nothing could spoil it, even although Mrs. Copley every day openly regretted her concession and would have taken it back if she could. The one of them was heartily sorry, the other as deeply contented, when finally the plains of Lombardy were reached.

It was evening and rainy weather when they came to the last stage of their journey, and left the carriage of which Mrs. Copley had grown so weary.

"What sort of a place is this?" she asked presently.

"Not much of a place," said Lawrence. "We will leave it as fast as possible."

"Well, I should hope so. What are these things? and is that a canal?"

"We should call it a canal in our country," said Rupert; "but *there* there'd be something at the end of it."

"But what are those black things?" Mrs. Copley repeated. "Do you want me to get into one of them? I don't like it."

"They are gondolas, mother; Venetian gondolas. We must get into one, if we want to go to Venice."

"Where is Venice?" said Mrs. Copley, looking over the unpromising landscape.

"I don't know," said Dolly, laughing, "but Mr. St. Leger knows. We shall be there in a little while mother, if you'll only get in."

"I don't like boats. And I never saw such boats as those in my life," said Mrs. Copley, holding back. "I would rather keep the carriage and go on as we came; though all my bones are aching. I would rather go in the carriage."

"But you cannot, mother; there are no carriages here. The way is by water; and boats are the only vehicles used in Venice. We may as well get accustomed to them."

"No carriages!"

"Why, surely you knew that before."

"I didn't. I knew there were things to go on the canals; I never knew they were such forlorn-looking things; but I supposed there were carriages to go in the streets. Are there no carts either? How is the baggage going?"

"There are no streets, mother. The ways are all water ways, and the carriages are gondolas; and it is just as lovely as it can be. Come, let us try it."

"What are the houses built on?"

"Mother, suppose you get in, and we'll talk as we go along. We had better get out of the rain; don't you think so? It is falling quite fast."

"I had rather be in the rain than in the sea. Dolly, if it isn't too far, I'll walk."

"It is too far, dear mother. You could not do that. It is a long way yet."

Lawrence stood by, biting his lips between impatience and a sense of the ridiculous; and withal admiring the tender, delicate patience of the girl who gently coaxed and reasoned and persuaded, and finally moved Mrs. Copley to suffer herself to be put in the gondola, on the forward deck of which Rupert had been helping the gondoliers to stow some of the baggage. Dolly immediately took her place beside her mother; the two young men followed, and the gondola pushed off. Mrs. Copley found herself comfortable among the cushions, felt that the motion of the gondola was smooth, assured herself that it would not turn over; finally felt at leisure to make observations again.

"We can't see anything here," she remarked, peering out first on one side, then on the other.

"There is nothing to see," said Lawrence, "but the banks of the canal."

"Very ugly banks, too. Are we going all the way by water now?"

"All the way, to our hotel door."

"Do the boatmen know where to go?"

"Yes. Have no fear."

"Why don't they have streets in Venice?"

"Mother, don't you remember, the city is built on sand banks, and the sea flows between? The only streets possible are like this. Could anything be better? This motion will not fatigue you; and are not your cushions comfortable?"

"The *sea*, Dolly?" cried Mrs. Copley, catching the word. "You never told me that. If the sea comes in, it must be rough sometimes."

"No, mother; it is a shallow level for miles and miles, covered at high tide by a few feet of water, and at low tide bare. Venice is built on the sand banks of islands which rise above this level."

"What ever made people choose such a ridiculous place to build a city, when there was good ground enough?"

"The good ground was not safe from enemies, mother, dear. The people fled to these sand islands for safety."

"Enemies! What enemies?"

So the history had to be further gone into; in the midst of which Mrs. Copley burst out again.

"I'm so tired of this canal!--just mud banks and nothing else. How much longer is it to last?"

"We shall come to something else by and by. Have patience," said Lawrence.

But the patience of three of them was tried, before they fairly emerged from the canal, and across a broader water saw the lines of building and the domes of Venice before them.

"You'll soon be out of the gondola now, mother, dear," said Dolly delightedly. For the rain clouds had lifted a little, and the wide spread of the lagoon became visible, as well as the dim line of the city; and Dolly's heart grew big. Mrs. Copley's was otherwise.

"I'll never get into one again," she said, referring to the gondolas. "I don't like it. I don't feel as if I was anywhere. There's another,--there's two more. Are they all painted black?"

"It is the fashion of Venetian gondolas."

"Well! there is nothing like seeing for yourself. I always had an idea gondolas were something romantic and pretty. Is the water deep here?"

"No, very shallow," Lawrence assured her.

"It looks just as if it was deep. I wouldn't have come to Venice if I had known what a forlorn place it is."

But who shall tell the different impression on Dolly's mind, when the city was really reached and the gondola entered one of those narrow water-ways between rows of palaces. The rain had begun to come down again, it is true; a watery veil hung over the buildings, drops plashed busily into the canal; there were no beautiful effects of sunlight and shadow; and Lawrence himself declared it was a miserable coming to Venice. But Dolly was in a charmed state. She noted eagerly every strange detail; bridges, boats, people; was hardly sorry for the rain, she found so much to delight her in spite of it.

"What's our man making such noises for?" cried Mrs. Copley.

"Just to give warning before he turns a corner," Lawrence explained, "lest he should run against another gondola."

"What would happen then? Is the water deep enough to drown? It would be horrid water to be drowned in!" said Mrs. Copley shuddering.

"No danger, mother; we are not going to try it," Dolly said soothingly.

"Nobody is ever drowned in Venetian canals," said Lawrence. "They will carry us safe to our hotel, Mrs. Copley;

never fear."

"But hasn't the water risen?" she exclaimed presently.

"It is up to the steps of that house there."

"It is up to all the steps, mother, so that people can get into their gondolas at their very door; don't you see?"

"It goes ahead of everything!" exclaimed Rupert, who had scarce spoken. "It's like being in a fairy story."

"I can't see much beside water," said Mrs. Copley. "Water above and water below. It must be unhealthy. And I thought Venice had such beautiful old palaces. I don't see any of 'em."

"We have passed several of them," said Lawrence.

"I can see nothing but black walls--except those queer painted sticks; what are *they* for?"

"To the gondolas in waiting."

"What are they painted so for?"

"The colours belonging to the family arms."

"Whose family?"

"The family to whom the house belongs."

"Dolly," said Mrs. Copley, "we shall not want to stay here long. We might go on and try Rome. Mrs. Thayer says spring-time is the best at Naples."

"It will all look very different, Mrs. Copley, when you see it by sunlight," said Lawrence. "Wait a little."

Dolly would have enjoyed every inch of the way, if her mother would have let her. To her eyes the novel strangeness of the scene was entrancing. Not beautiful, certainly; not beautiful yet; by mist and rain and darkness how should it be? but she relished the novelty. The charmed stillness pleased her; the gliding gondolas; the but half revealed houses and palaces; the odd conveyance in which she herself was seated; the wonderful water-ways, the strange cries of the gondoliers. It was not half spoiled for her, as it was; and she trusted the morning would bring for her mother a better mood.

Something of a better mood was produced that evening when Mrs. Copley found herself in a warm room, before a good supper. But the next morning it still rained. Dark skies, thick atmosphere, a gloomy outlook upon ways where no traveller for mere pleasure was to be seen; none but people bent on business of one sort or another. Yet everything was delightful to Dolly's eyes; the novelty was perfect, the picturesqueness undeniable. What she could see of the lagoon, of the vessels at anchor, the flying gondolas, the canals and the bridges over them, and the beautiful Riva, put Dolly in a rapture. Her eye roved, her heart swelled. "O mother!" she exclaimed, "if father would only come!"

"What then?" said Mrs. Copley dismally. "He would take us away, I hope."

"Oh, but not until we have seen Venice."

"I have seen Venice enough to content me. It is the wettest place I was ever in my life."

"Why, it rains, mother. Any place is wet when it rains."

"This would be wet at all times. I think the ground must have sunk, Dolly; people would never have built in the water so. The ground must have sunk."

"No, mother; I guess not. It has been always just so."

"What made them build here then, when there is all the earth beside? What did they take to the water for? And what are the houses standing on, any way?"

"Islands, mother, between which these canals run. I told you before."

"I should think the people hadn't any sense."

And nothing would tempt Mrs. Copley out that day. Of course Dolly must stay at home too, though she would most gladly have gone about through the rainy, silent city, in one of those silent gondolas, and feed her eyes at every step. However, she made herself and made her mother as comfortable as she could; got out her painting and worked at Rupert's portrait, which was so successful that Lawrence begged she would begin upon him at once.

"You know the conditions," she said.

"I accept them. Finish one of me so good as that, and I will send it to my mother and ask her what she will give for it."

"But not tell her?"----

"Certainly not."

"I find," said Dolly slowly, "that it is a very great compliment for a lady to paint a gentleman's likeness."

"Why?"

"She has to give so much attention to the lines of his face. I shouldn't like to paint some people. But I'll do anybody, for a consideration."

"Your words are not flattering," said Lawrence, "even if your actions are."

"No," said Dolly. "Compliments are not in my way."

And though she made a beginning upon St. Leger's picture, and studied the lines of his face accordingly, he did not feel flattered. Dolly's clear, intelligent eyes looked at him as steadily and as unmovedly as if he had been a Titian.

The next day brought a change. If Dolly had watched from her balcony with interest the day before, now she was breathless with what she found. The sun was shining bright, a breeze was rippling the waters of the lagoon, and gently fluttering a sail and a streamer here and there; the beautiful water was enlivened with vessels of all kinds and of many lands, black gondolas darted about; and the buildings lining the shores of the lagoon stood to view in their beauty and magnificence and variety before Dolly's eye; the Doge's palace, here and there a clock tower, here and there the bridge over a side canal. "O mother!" she cried, "we have seen nothing like this! nothing like this!"

"I am glad it don't rain at least," said Mrs. Copley. "But it can't be healthy here, Dolly; it must be damp."

And when they all met at breakfast, and plans for the day began to be discussed, she declared that she did not want to see anything.

"Not St. Mark's?" said Lawrence.

"What is St. Mark's? It is just a church. I am sure we have seen churches enough."

"There is only one St. Mark's in the world."

"I don't care if there were a dozen. Is it better than the church we went to see--at that village near Wiesbaden?"

"Limburg? Much better."

"Well--that will do for me."

"There is the famous old palace of the Doges; and the Bridge of Sighs, Mrs. Copley, and the prisons."

"Prisons? You don't think I want to go looking at prisons, do you? Why should I? what's in the prisons?"

"Not much. There has been, first and last, a good deal of misery in them."

"And you think that is pleasant to look at?"

Dolly could not help laughing, and confessed she would like to see the prisons.

"Well, you may go," said her mother. "*I don't want to.*"

Lawrence saw that Dolly's disappointment was like to be bitter.

"I'll tell you what I'll show you, Mrs. Copley, if you'll trust yourself to go out," he said. "I have got a commission from my mother which must take me into one of the wonderful shops of curiosities here. You never saw such a shop. Old china, of the rarest, and old furniture of the most delightful description, and old curiosities of art out of decayed old palaces, caskets, vases, trinkets, mirrors, and paintings."

Mrs. Copley demurred. "Can we go there in a carriage?"

"No such thing to be had, except a gondola carriage. Come! you will like it. Why, Mrs. Copley, the streets are no broader than very narrow alleys. Carriages would be of no use."

Mrs. Copley demurred, but was tempted. The gondola went better by day than in the night. Once out, Lawrence used his advantage and took the party first to the Place of St. Mark, where he delighted Dolly with a sight of the church. Mrs. Copley was too full of something else to admire churches. She waited and endured, while Dolly's eyes and mind devoured the new feast given to them. They went into the church, up to the roof, and came out to the Piazza again.

"It is odd," said Dolly--"I see it is beautiful; I see it is magnificent; more of both than I can say; and yet, it does not give me the feeling of respect I felt for that old dome at Limburg."

"But," said Lawrence; "that won't do, you know. St. Mark's and Limburg! that opinion cannot stand. What makes you say so?"

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I have a feeling that the people who built that were more in earnest than the people who built this."

"More in earnest? I beg your pardon!" said Lawrence. "What can you mean? I should say people were in earnest enough here, to judge by the riches of the place. Just see the adornment everywhere, and the splendour."

"Yes," said Dolly, "I see. It is partly that. Though there was adornment, and riches too, at the other place. But the style of it is different. Those grave old towers at Limburg seemed striving up into the sky. I don't see any striving here; in the building, I mean."

"Why, there are pinnacles enough," said Lawrence, in comical inability to fathom her meaning, or answer her.

"Yes," said Dolly; "and domes; but the pinnacles do not strive after anything, and the cupolas seem to settle down like great extinguishers upon everything like striving."

Lawrence laughed, and thought in his own mind that Dolly was a little American, wanting culture, and knowing nothing about architecture.

"What is that great long building?" Mrs. Copley now inquired.

"That, mother?--that is the palace of the Doges. Where is the Bridge of Sighs?"

They went round to look at it from the Ponte della Paglia. Nearer investigation had to be deferred, or, Dolly saw, it would be too literally a bridge of sighs to them that morning. They turned their backs on the splendours, ecclesiastical and secular, of the Place of St. Mark, and proceeded to the store of second-hand curiosities St. Leger had promised Mrs. Copley, the visit to which could no longer be deferred. Dolly was in a dream of delight all the way. Sunlight on the old palaces, on the bridges over the canals, on the wonderful carvings of marbles, on the strange water-ways; sunlight and colour; ay, and shadow and colour too, for the sun could not get in everywhere. Between the beauty and picturesqueness, and the wealth of old historic legend and story clustering about it everywhere, Dolly's dream was entrancing.

"I do not know half enough about Venice," she remarked by the way. "Rupert, we must read up. As soon as I can get the books," she added with a laugh.

However, Dolly was susceptible to more than one sort of pleasure; and when the party had reached the Jew's shop, she was perhaps as much pleased though not so much engrossed as her mother. For Mrs. Copley, figuratively

speaking, was taken off her feet. This was another thing from the Green vaults and the treasure chamber of Limburg; here the wonders and glories were not unattainable, if one had the means to reach them, that is; and not admiration only, but longing, filled Mrs. Copley's mind.

"I must have that cabinet," she said. "I suppose we can do nothing till your father comes, Dolly. Do write and tell him to bring plenty of money along, for I shall want some. Such a chance one does not have often in one's life. And that cup! Dolly, I *must* have that cup; it's beyond everything I ever did see!"

"Mother, look at this ivory carving."

"That's out of my line," said Mrs. Copley with a slight glance. "I should call that good for nothing, now. What's the use of it? But, O Dolly, see this sideboard!"

"You don't want *that*, mother."

"Why don't I? The price is not so very much."

"Think of the expense of getting it home."

"There is no such great difficulty in that. You must write your father, Dolly, to send if he does not come, at once. I should not like to leave these things long. Somebody else might see them."

"Hundreds have seen them already, Mrs. Copley," said Lawrence. "There's time enough."

"I'd rather not trust to that."

"What things do you want, dear mother, seriously? Anything?"

Dolly's voice carried a soft insinuation that her mother's wanting anything there was a delusion; Mrs. Copley flamed out.

"Do you think I am coming into such a place as this, Dolly, and going to let the chance slip? I *must* have several of these things. I'll tell you. This cup--that isn't much. Now that delicious old china vase--I do not know what china it is, but I'll find out; there is nothing like it, I don't believe, in all Boston. I have chosen that sideboard; *that* is quite reasonable. You would pay quite as much in Boston, or in London, for a common handsome bit of cabinet-maker's work; while this is--just look at it, Dolly; see these drawers, see these compartments--that's for wine and cordials, you know"----

"We don't want wine and cordials," said Dolly.

"See the convenience and the curiousness of these arrangements; and look at the inlaying, child! It's the loveliest thing I ever saw in my life. Oh, I must have that! And it would be a sin to leave this screen, Dolly. Where ever do you suppose that came from?"

"Eastern work," said Lawrence.

"What eastern work?"

"Impossible for me to say. Might have belonged to the Great Mogul, by the looks of it. Do you admire *that*, Mrs. Copley?"

"How should it come here?"

"Here? the very place!" said Lawrence. "What was there rare or costly in the world, that did not find its way to Venice and into the palaces of the old nobles?"

"But how came it *here*?"

"Into this curiosity shop? The old nobles went to pieces, and their precious things went to auction; and good Master Judas or Master Levi bought them."

"And these things were in the palaces of the old nobles?"

"Many of them. Perhaps all of them. I should say, a large proportion."

"That makes them worth just so much the more."

"You need not tell Master Levi that. And you have admired so much this morning, Mrs. Copley, if you will take my advice, it will be most discreet to come away without making any offer. Do not let him think you have any purpose of buying. I am afraid he will put on a fearful price, if you do."

Whether Lawrence meant this counsel seriously, or whether it was a feint to get Mrs. Copley safely out of the shop, Dolly was uncertain; she was grateful to Lawrence all the same. No doubt he had seen that she was anxious. He had been in fact amused at the elder lady not more than interested for the younger one; Dolly's delicate attempts to draw off her mother from thoughts of buying had been so pretty, affectionate, and respectful in manner, sympathising, and yet steady in self-denial. Mrs. Copley was hard to bring off. She looked at Lawrence, doubtful and antagonistic, but his suggestion had been too entirely in her own line not to be appreciated. Mrs. Copley looked and longed, and held her tongue; except from exclamations. They got out of the shop at last, and Dolly made a private resolve not to be caught there again if she could help it.

In the afternoon she devoted herself to painting Lawrence's picture. Her first purpose had been to take a profile or side view of him; but St. Leger declared, if the likeness was for his mother she would never be satisfied if the eyes did not look straight into her eyes; so Dolly had to give that point up; and accordingly, while she studied him, he had full and equal opportunity to study her. It was a doubtful satisfaction. He could rarely meet Dolly's eyes, while yet he saw how coolly they perused him, how calmly they studied him as an abstract thing. He wanted to see a little shyness, a little consciousness, a little wavering, in those clear, wise orbs; but no! Dolly sat at her work and did it as unconcernedly as if she were five years old, to all appearance; with as quiet, calm poise of manner and simplicity of dignity as if she had been fifty. But how pretty she was! Those eyes of hers were such an uncommon mingling of childhood and womanhood, and so lovely in cut and colour and light; and the mouth was the most mobile thing ever known under that name, and charming in every mood of rest or movement. The whole delicate face, the luxuriant brown hair, the little hands, the supple, graceful figure, Lawrence studied over and over again; till he felt it was not good for him.

"Painting a person must make you well acquainted with him," he began after a long silence, during which Dolly had been very busy.

"Outside knowledge," said Dolly.

"Does not the outside always tell something of what is within?"

"Something," Dolly allowed in the same tone.

"What do you see in me?"

"Mrs. St. Leger will know, when she gets this."

"What you see *in* me?"

"Well, no--perhaps not."

"Couldn't you indulge me and tell me?"

"Why should I?"

"Out of kindness."

"I do not know whether it would be a kindness," said Dolly slowly.

"You see, Dolly, a fellow can't stand everything for ever! I want to know what you think of me, and what my chances are. Come! I've been pretty patient, it strikes me. Speak out a bit."

Mrs. Copley was lying down to rest, and Rupert had left the room. The pair were alone.

"What do you want me to say, Mr. St. Leger?"

"Tell me what you see in me."

"What would be the good of that? I see an Englishman, to begin with."

"You *see* that in me?"

"Certainly."

"I am glad, but I didn't know it. Is that an advantage in your eyes?"

"Am I an Englishwoman?"

"Not a bit of it," said Lawrence, "nor like it. I never saw an English girl the least like you. But you might grow into it, Dolly, don't you think?"

She lifted her face for an instant and gave him a flashing glance of fun.

"Won't you try, Dolly?"

"I think I would just as lieve be an American."

"Why? America is too far off."

"Very good when you get there," said Dolly contentedly.

"But not better than we have on our side?"

"Well, you have not all the advantages on your side," said Dolly, much occupied with her drawing.

"Go on, and tell me *what* we have not."

"I doubt the wisdom."

"I beg the favour."

"It would not please you. In the first place, you would not believe me. In the second place, you would reckon an advantage what I reckon a disadvantage."

"What *do* you mean?" said Lawrence, very curious and at the same time uneasy. Dolly tried to get off, but he held her to the point. At last Dolly spoke out.

"Mr. St. Leger, women have a better time in my country."

"A better time? Impossible. There are no homes in the world where wives and daughters are better cared for or better loved. None in the world!"

"Ah," said Dolly, "they are too well cared for."

"How do you mean?"

"Too little free."

"Free?" said Lawrence. "Is *that* what you want?"

"And not quite respected enough."

"Dolly, you bewilder me. What ever did you see or hear to make you think our women are not respected?"

"I dare say it is a woman's view," said Dolly lightly. But Lawrence eagerly begged her to explain or give an instance of what she meant.

"I have not seen much, you know," said Dolly, painting away. "But I heard a gentleman once, at his own dinner-table, and when there was company present—I was not the only visitor—I heard him tell his wife that the *soup was nasty*."

And Dolly glanced up to see how Lawrence took it. She judiciously did not tell him that the house was his own father's, and the gentleman in question Mr. St. Leger himself. Lawrence was silent at first. I presume the thing was not so utterly unfamiliar as that he should be much shocked; while he did perceive that here was some difference of the point of view between Dolly's standpoint and his own, and was not ready to answer. Dolly glanced up at him significantly: still Lawrence did not find words.

"That didn't mean anything!" at last he said. Dolly glanced at him again.

"I suppose the soup *wasn't* good. Why not say so?"

"No reason why he should not say so, at a proper time and place."

"It didn't mean any harm, Dolly."

"I suppose not."

"Then what's the matter?"

"It is not the way *we* do," said Dolly. "In America, I mean. Not when we are polite."

"Do you think husband and wife ought to be polite to each other--in that way?"

"In what way?"

"That they should not call things by their right names?"

Here Dolly lifted her sweet head and laughed; a merry, ringing, musical, very much amused laugh.

"Ah, you see you are an Englishman," she said. "That is the way you will speak to your wife."

"I will never speak to *you*, Dolly, in any way you don't like."

"No" said Dolly gravely, and returning to her work.

"Aren't you ever going to give me a little bit of encouragement?" said he. "I have been waiting as patiently as I could. May I tell my mother who did the picture, when I send it?"

"Say it was done by a deserving young artist, in needy circumstances; but no names."

"But that's not true, Dolly. Your father is as well off as ever he was; his embarrassments are only temporary. He is not in needy circumstances."

"I said nothing about my father. Here, Mr. St. Leger--come and look at it."

The finished likeness was done with great truth and grace. Dolly's talent was an extraordinary one, and had not been uncultivated. She had done her best in the present instance, and the result was a really delicious piece of work. Lawrence saw himself given to great advantage; truly, delicately, characteristically. He was delighted.

"I will send it right off," he said. "Mamma has nothing of me half so good."

"Ask her what she thinks it is worth."

"And I want you to paint a duplicate of this, for me; for myself."

"A duplicate!" cried Dolly. "I couldn't."

"Another likeness of me then, in another view. Set your own price."

"But I shall never make my fortune painting you," said Dolly. "You must get me some other customers; that is the bargain."

"What notion is this, Dolly? It is nonsense between me and you. Why not let things be settled? Let us come to an understanding, and give up this ridiculous idea of painting for money;--if you are in earnest."

"I am always in earnest. And we are upon an excellent understanding, Mr. St. Leger. And I want money. The thing is as harmonious as possible."

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. COPLEY.

Lawrence could get no more satisfaction from Dolly. She left him, and went and stood at the window of her mother's room, looking out. The sunset landscape was glorious. Bay and boats, shipping, palaces, canals and bridges, all coloured in such wonderful colours, brilliant in such marvellous lights and shades, as northern lands do not know, though they have their own. Yet she looked at it sadly. It was Venice; but when would her father come? All her future seemed doubtful and cloudy; and the sunshine which is merely external does not in some moods cast even a reflection of brightness upon one's inner world. If her father would come, and Lawrence would go--if her father would come and be his old self--but what large "ifs" these were. Dolly's eyes grew misty. Then her mother woke up.

"What are you looking at, Dolly?"

"The wonderful sunset, mother. Oh, it is so beautiful! Do come here and see the colours on the sails of the boats."

"When do you think your father will be here?"

"Oh, soon, I hope. He ought to be here soon."

"Did you tell him I would want money to buy things? I must not lose that sideboard."

"There was no need to write about that. He can always get money, if he chooses, as well here as in London. If he has it, that is; but you know, mother"----

"I know," Mrs. Copley interrupted, "that is all nonsense. He *has* it. He always did have it. He has been spending it in other ways lately; that's what it is. Getting his own pleasure. Now it is my turn."

"You shall have it, dear mother, if I can manage it. You are nicely to-day, aren't you? Venice agrees with you. I'm so glad!"

"I think everything would go right, Dolly, if you would just tell Mr. St. Leger that you will have him. I don't like such humming and hawing about anything. He really has waited long enough. If you would tell him that, now, or tell *me*, then he would lend me the money I want to get those things. I am afraid of losing them. Dolly, when you know you are going to say yes, why not say it? I believe I should get well then, right off. *You* would be safe too, any way."

Dolly sighed imperceptibly, and made no answer.

"You don't half appreciate Mr. St. Leger. He's just a splendid young man. I don't believe there's such another match for you in all England. You should have seen how keen Mrs. Thayer was to know all about him. Wouldn't she like him for her daughter, though! and she is handsome enough, according to some taste. I wish, Dolly, you'd have everything fixed and square before we meet the Thayers again; or you cannot tell what may happen. He may slip through your fingers yet."

Dolly made as little answer as possible. And further, she contrived for a few days to keep her mother from the curiosity shops. It could be done only by staying persistently within doors; and Dolly shut herself up to her painting, and made excuses. But she found this was telling unfavourably on her mother's spirits, and so on her nerves and health; and she began to go out again, though chafing at her dependence on Lawrence, and longing for her father exceedingly.

He came at last; and Dolly to her great relief thought he looked well; though certainly not glad to be in Venice.

"How's your mother?" he asked her when they were alone.

"I think she will be well now, father; now that you have come. And I have so wanted you!"

"I have no doubt she could have got along just as well without me till she went to Sorrento, if she had only thought so."

"I don't think she could. And *I* could not, father. I do not like to be left so much to Mr. St. Leger's care."

"He likes it. How has he behaved?"

"He has behaved very well."

"Then what's the matter?"

"I don't want him to think he has a right to take care of us."

"He has the right, if I give it to him. And you know you mean to give him the right, Dolly, in permanence. What's the use of fighting shy about it? Oh, girls, girls! You must have your way, I suppose. Well, now I'm here to look after you."

And the business of sight-seeing was carried on from that time with unabating activity. They went everywhere, and still Mr. Copley found new things for them to see. Mrs. Copley took him into the curiosity shops, but as surely he took her out of them, with not much done in the way of purchases. Dolly enjoyed everything during the first week or two. She would have enjoyed it hugely, only that the lurking care about her father was always present to her mind. She was not at rest. Mr. Copley seemed well and cheery; active and hearty as usual; yet Dolly detected something hollow in the cheer and something forced in the activity. She thought him restless and uneasy, in spite of all the gaiety.

One day after an excursion of some length the party had turned into a restaurant to refresh themselves. Chocolate and coffee had been brought; and then Mr. Copley exclaimed, "Hang it! this won't do. Have you drunk nothing but slops all this while, Lawrence?" And he ordered the waiter to bring a flask of Greek wine. Dolly's heart leaped to her mouth.

"Oh no, father!" she said pleadingly, laying her hand on his.

"Oh no, what, my child?"

"No wine, please, father!" There was more intensity in Dolly's accents than perhaps anybody knew but Mr. Copley; he had the key; and the low quaver in Dolly's voice did not escape him. He answered without letting himself meet her eyes.

"Why not? Hasn't Lawrence given you any *vino dolce* since you have been in foreign parts? One can get good wine in Venice; and pure."

"If one knows where to go for it," added St. Leger. "So I am told."

"You have not found out by experience yet? We will explore together."

"Not for wine, father?" murmured Dolly.

"Yes, for wine. Wine is one of the good things. What do you think grapes grow for, eh? Certainly, wine is a good thing, if it is properly used. Eh, Lawrence?"

"I have always thought so, sir."

"Cheer your mother up now, Dolly. I believe it would do her lots of good. Here it is. We'll try."

Dolly flushed with pain and anxiety. Yet here, how could she speak plainly? Her father was opening the bottle, and the waiter was setting the glasses.

"We have it on good authority, Miss Dolly," Lawrence said, looking at her, and not sure how far he might venture, "that wine 'maketh glad the heart of man.'"

"And on the same authority we have it that 'wine is a mocker.'"

"What will you do with contradictory authority?"

"They are not contradictory, those two words," said Dolly. "It is deceitful; it gets hold of a man, and then he cannot get loose from it. You *know*, Mr. St. Leger, what work it does."

"Not *good* wine," said her father, tossing off his glass. "That's fair; nothing extra. I think we can find better. Letitia, try it; I have a notion it will do you good;--ought to have been tried before."

And he filled his wife's glass, and then Dolly's, and then Rupert's. Dolly felt as nearly desperate as ever in her life. Her father had the air of a man who has broken through a slight barrier between him and comfort. Mrs. Copley sipped the wine. Lawrence looked observingly from one face to another. Then Dolly stretched out her hand and laid it upon Rupert's glass.

"Please stand by me, Rupert!" she begged.

"I will!" said the young man, smiling. "What do you want me to do?"

"Do as I do."

"I will."

Dolly lifted her glass and poured the contents of it into the nearly emptied chocolate jug. Rupert immediately followed her example.

"What's that for?" said her father, frowning.

"It's waste," added her mother. "I call that waste."

"Don't make yourself ridiculous, Dolly!" Mr. Copley went on. "My child, the world has drunk wine ever since before you were born, and it will go on drinking it after you are dead. What is the use of trying to change what cannot be changed? What can *you* do?"

"Father, I will not help a bad cause."

"How is it a bad cause, Miss Dolly?" said Lawrence now. "It is a certain pleasure,--but what harm?"

"Do you ask me that?" said she, with a look of her clear, womanly eyes, which it was not very pleasant to meet.

"Well, of course, if people misuse the thing,"---- he began.

"Do they often misuse it, Mr. St. Leger?"

"Well, yes; perhaps they do."

"Go on. What are the consequences, when they misuse it?"

"When people drink too much bad brandy of course--but wine like *this* never hurt anybody."

Dolly thought, it had hurt *her* that day; but she could not trust her voice to say it. Her lips trembled, her beautiful eyes filled, she was obliged to wait. And how, there before her father whom the fruit of the vine had certainly hurt grievously, and before Mr. St. Leger who knew as much and had seen it, could she put the thing in words? Her father had chosen his time cruelly. And where was his promise? Dolly fought and swallowed and struggled with herself; and tried to regain command of voice.

"It's a narrow view, ray dear," said Mr. Copley, filling his glass again, to Dolly's infinite horror; "a narrow view. Well-bred people do not hold it. It is always a mistake to set yourself against the world. The world is generally right."

"O father, do you think so?"

"Not a doubt of it," said Mr. Copley, sipping the wine and looking from one to another of the faces in the little group. "Dolly is a foolish girl, Rupert; do not let her persuade you."

"It certainly is not the wine that is to be condemned," said Lawrence, "but the immoderate use of it. That's all."

"What do you call immoderate use of it?" Rupert asked now, putting the question in Dolly's interest.

"More than your head can bear," said Lawrence. "Keep within that limit, and you're all right."

"Suppose your neighbour cannot bear what you can?" said Dolly, looking at him. "And suppose your example tempts him?"

"It's his business to know what he can take," said Lawrence. "It isn't mine."

"But suppose he is drawn on by your example, and drinks more than he can bear? What follows, Mr. St. Leger?"

Dolly's voice had a pathetic clang which touched Rupert, and I think embarrassed Lawrence.

"If he is so unwise, of course he suffers for it. But as I said, that is his business."

"And not yours?"

"Of course not!" Mr. Copley broke in. "Dolly, you do not understand the world. How can I tell St. Leger how much he is to drink? or he tell me how much I must? Don't be absurd, child! You grow a little absurd, living alone."

"Father, I think the world might be better than it is. And one person helps on another for good or for evil. And St. Paul was not of your opinion."

"St. Paul? What did he say about it? That one must not drink wine? Not at all. He told Timothy, or somebody, to take it, for his stomach's sake."

"But he said,—that if meat made his brother to offend, he would eat no meat while the world stood, lest he made his brother to offend. And meat is certainly a good thing."

"Well, there are just two things about it," said Mr. Copley; "meat is not wine, and I am not St. Paul. A little more, Lawrence. If it is not a man's duty to look after his neighbour's potations, neither is it a woman's. Dolly is young; she will learn better."

If she did not, Lawrence thought, she would be an inconvenient helpmeet for him. He was very much in love; but certainly he would not wish his wife to take up a crusade against society. Perhaps Dolly *would* learn better; he hoped so. Yet the little girl had some reason, too; for her father gave her trouble, Lawrence knew. "I'm sorry," he thought, "deuced sorry! but really I can't be expected to take Mr. Copley, wine and all, on my shoulders. Really it is not my look-out."

Dolly went home very sober and careful. It is true, not much wine had been drunk that day. Yet she knew a line had been passed, the passing of which was significant of future licence, and introductory to it. And that it had been done in her presence was to prove to her that her influence could avail nothing. It was bravado. What lay before her now?

"Rupert," she said suddenly, as they were walking together, "let us make a solemn pledge, you and I, each to the other, that we will never drink wine nor anything of the sort; unless we must, for sickness, you know."

"What would be the good of that?" said the young man, laughing.

"I don't know," said Dolly, from whose eyes, on the contrary, hot tears began to drop. "Perhaps I shall save you, and you may save me; how can we tell?"

"But we could keep from it just the same, without pledging ourselves?" said Rupert, soberly enough now.

"Could; but we might be tempted. If we do this, maybe we can help other people, as well as each other."

The tears were coming so thick from Dolly's eyes that Rupert's heart was sore for her. She was brushing them away, right and left, but he saw them glitter and fall; and he thought the man who could, for the sake of a glass of wine, cause such tears to be shed, was—I won't say what he thought he was. He was mad against Mr. Copley and St. Leger too. He promised whatever Dolly wanted.

And when they were at home, and an opportunity was found, the agreement abovementioned was written out, and Rupert made two copies, and one of them he kept and one Dolly kept; both signed with both their names.

So Rupert was safe. From that day, however, things went less well with Mr. Copley. He began by small degrees to withdraw himself from the constant attendance upon his wife and daughter which he had hitherto practised, leaving

them again to Lawrence's care. By little and little this came about. Mr. Copley excused himself in the morning, and was with them in the evening; then after a while he was missing in the evening. Dolly tried to hold him fast, by getting him to sit for his picture; and the very observation under which she held him so, showed her that he was suffering from evil influences. His eyes had lost something of their frank, manly sparkle; avoided hers; looked dull and unsteady. The lines of his whole face inexplicably were changed; an expression of feebleness and something like humiliation taking place of the alert, bold, self-sufficient readiness of look and tone which had been natural to him. Dolly read it all, with a heart torn in two, and painted it as she read it; making a capital picture of him. But it grieved Dolly sorely, while it delighted everybody else.

"What is it worth, father?" she asked, concealing as well as she could what she felt.

"Worth? it's worth anything you please. It is glorious, Dolly!"

"I work for money," she said archly.

"Upon my word, you could turn a pretty penny if you did. This is capital work," said he, turning to Lawrence. "If this had been done on ivory, now"---

"I did a likeness of Mr. St. Leger for his mother--that was on ivory. She sent me ten pounds for it."

"Ten pounds to *her*. To anybody else, I should say it was worth twenty,--well," said Mr. Copley.

"So I say, sir," Lawrence answered. "I am going to pay that price for my copy."

"Then will you pay me twenty pounds, sir?"

"I?" said Mr. Copley. "Not exactly, Dolly! I am not made of money, like your friend Lawrence here. Wish I could, and you should have it."

"Will you get me customers, then, father?"

"Customers!" echoed Mr. Copley.

"Yes. Because you are not made of money, you know, father; and I want a good deal of money."

"You!" said Mr. Copley, looking at her. For, indeed, Dolly had never been one of those daughters who make large demands on their father's purse. But Dolly answered now with a calm, practical tone and manner.

"Yes, I do, father; and mother has a longing for some of those Arabian Nights things in the curiosity shops. You know people enough here, father; show them your picture and get me customers."

"Don't be ridiculous, Dolly," said her father. "We are not at the point of distress yet. And," he added in a graver tone, as Lawrence left the room, "you must remember, that even if I were willing to see my daughter working as a portrait-painter, Mr. St. Leger might have a serious objection to his wife doing it--or a lady who is to be his wife."

"Mr. St. Leger may dispose of his wife when he gets her," said Dolly calmly. "I am not that lady."

"Yes, you are."

"Not if I know anything about it."

"Then you don't!" said Mr. Copley. "It is proverbial that girls never know their own minds. Why, Dolly, it would be the making of you, child."

"No, father; only of my dresses."

Mr. Copley was a little provoked.

"What's your objection to St. Leger? Can you give one?" he asked hotly.

"Father, he doesn't suit me."

"You don't like him, because you don't like him. A real woman's reason! Isn't he handsome?"

"Very. And sleepy."

"He's wide awake enough for purposes of business."

"Maybe; not for purposes of pleasure. Father, beautiful paintings and grand buildings are nothing to him; nothing at all; and music might be the tinkling of tin kettles for all the meaning he finds in it. Father, dear, do get me some customers!"

"You are a silly girl, Dolly!" said her father, breaking away, and not very well pleased. Neither did he bring her customers. Those were not the days of photographs. Dolly took to painting little bits of views in Venice; here a palace; there a bridge over a canal; the pillars with the dragon and St. Theodore, the Place of St. Mark, bits of the Riva with boats; she finished up these little pictures with great care and delicacy of execution, and then employed Rupert to dispose of them in the stationers' and fancy shops. He had some difficulty at first in finding the right market for her wares; however, he finally succeeded; and Dolly could sell as many pictures as she could paint. True, not for a great price; they did not pay so well as likenesses; but Dolly took what she could get, feeling very uncertain of supplies for a time that was coming. Mr. Copley certainly was not flush with his money now; and she did not flatter herself that his ways were mending.

Less and less did his wife and daughter see of his company.

"Rupert," said Dolly doubtfully, one day, "do you know where my father goes, so much of the time?"

"No," said Rupert; "that's just what I don't. But I can find out, easy."

Dolly did not say, Do; she did not say anything; she stood pondering and anxious by the window. Neither did Rupert ask further; he acted.

It came by degrees to be a pretty regular thing, that Mr. Copley spent the evening abroad, excused himself from going anywhere with his family, and when they did see him wore an uncertain, purposeless, vagrant sort of look and air. By degrees this began to strike even Mrs. Copley.

"I wish you would just make up your mind to marry Mr. St. Leger!" she said almost weepingly one day. "Then all would go right. I believe it would make me well, to begin with; and it would bring your father right back to his old self."

"How, mother?" Dolly said sadly.

"It would give him spirit at once. It is because he is out of spirits that he does so." (Mrs. Copley did not explain herself.) "I know, if he were once sure of seeing you Mrs. St. Leger, all would come right. Lawrence would help him; he *could* help him then."

"Who would help me?"

"Nonsense, Dolly! Who would help you choose your dresses and wear your diamonds; that is all the difficulty you would have. But all's going wrong!" said Mrs. Copley, sinking into tears; "and you are selfish, like everybody else, and think only of yourself."

Dolly bore this in silence. It startled her, however, greatly, to find her own view of things held by her much less sharp-sighted mother. She pondered on what was best to do. Should she sit still and quietly see her father lost irretrievably in the bad habits which were creeping upon him? But what step could she take? She asked herself this question evening after evening.

It was late one night, and Lawrence as well as her father had been out ever since dinner. Mrs. Copley, weary and dispirited, had gone to bed. Dolly stood at the window looking out, not to see how the moonlight sparkled on the water and glanced on the vessels, but in a hopeless sort of expectancy watching for her father to come. The stream of passers-by had grown thin, and was growing thinner.

"Rupert," Dolly spoke after a long silence, "do you know where my father is?"

"Can't say I do. I could give a pretty fair guess, though, if you asked me."

"Could you take me to him?"

"Take you to him!" exclaimed the young man, starting.

"Can you find the way? Where is it?"

"I've been there often enough," said Rupert.

"What place is it?"

"The queerest place you ever saw. Do you recollect Mr. St. Leger telling us once about wine-shops in Venice? You and he were talking"----

"Yes, yes, I remember. Is it one of those? Not a cafe?"

"Not a cafe at all; neither a cafe nor a trattoria. Just a wine-shop. Nothing in it but wine casks, and the mugs or jugs of white and blue crockery that they draw the wine into; it's the most ridiculous place altogether I ever was in. I haven't been in it now, that's a fact."

"What were you there for so often, then?"

"Well," said Rupert, "I was looking after things."

"Drink wine and eat nothing!" said Dolly again. "Are there many people there?"

"Well, you can eat if you have a mind to; there are folks enough to sell you things; though they don't belong to the establishment. They come in from the street, with ever so many sorts of things, directly they see a customer sit down; fish and oysters, and cakes and fruit. But the shop sells nothing but wine. Mr. St. Leger says that is good."

"Not many people there?" Dolly asked again.

"No; not unless at a busy time. There won't be many there now, I guess."

"What makes you think my father is there?"

"I've seen him there pretty often," Rupert said in a low voice.

Dolly stood some minutes silent, thinking, and struggling with herself. When she turned to Rupert at the end of those minutes, her air was quite composed and her voice was clear and calm.

"Can you take me there, Rupert? Can you find the way?"

"I know it as well as the way to my mouth. You see, I didn't know but maybe--I couldn't tell what you might take a notion to want me to do; so I just practised, till I had got the ins and outs of the thing. And there are a good many ins and outs, I can tell you. But I know them."

"Then we will go," said Dolly. "I'll be ready in two minutes."

It was a brilliant moonlight night, as I said. Venice, the bride of the Adriatic, lay as if robed in silver for her wedding. The air was soft, late as the time of year was; Dolly had no need of any but a light wrap to protect her in her midnight expedition. Rupert called a gondola, and presently they were gliding along, as still as ghosts, under the shadow of bridges, past glistening palace fronts, again in the deep shade of a wall of buildings. Wherever the light struck it was like molten silver; facades and carvings stood sharply revealed; every beauty of the weird city seemed heightened and spiritualised; almost glorified; while the silence, the outward peace, gave still more the impression of a place fair-like and unreal. It was truly a wonderful sail, a marvellous passage through an enchanted city, never to be forgotten by either of the two young people; who went for some distance in a silence as if a spell were upon them too.

At Dolly's age, with all its elasticity, some aspects of trouble are more overwhelming than in later years. When one has not measured life, not learned yet the relations and proportions of things, one imagines the whole earth darkened by the cloud which is but hiding the sun from the spot where our feet stand. And before one has seen what wonders Time can do, the ruin wrought by an avalanche or a flood seems irreparable. It is inconceivable, that the bare and torn rocks should be clothed again, the choking piles of rubbish ever be anything but dismal and unsightly, the stripped fields ever be green and flourishing, or the torn-up trees be ever replaced. Yet Time does it all. Come after a while to look again, and the traces of past devastation are not easy to find; nature's weaving has so covered, and nature's embroidery has so adorned, the bald places. In human life there is something like this often done; though, as I said,

youth wots not of it and does not believe in it. So Dolly this night saw her little life a wilderness, which had been a garden of flowers. Some flowers might be lifting their heads yet, but what Dolly looked at was the destruction. Wrought by her own father's hand! I cannot tell how that thought stung and crushed Dolly. What would anything else in the world have mattered, so she could have kept him? help could have been found; but to lose *him*, her father, and not by death, but by change, by dishonour, by loss of his identity--Dolly felt indeed that a storm had come upon the little garden of her life from the sweeping ruin of which there could be no revival. She could hardly hold her head up for a long distance of that midnight sail; yet she did, and noted as they passed the fairy glories of the scene. Just noted them, to deepen, if possible, the pangs at her heart. All this beauty, all this outward delight, mocked the inner reality; and made sharp the sense of it with the contrast of what might have been. As they went along, Venice became to her fancy a grave and monument of lost things, which floated together in her mind's vision. Past struggles for freedom, beaten back or faded out; vanished patriotism and art, with their champions; extinct ambitions and powers; historical glories evaporated, as it were, leaving only a scent upon the air; what was left at Venice but monuments? and like it now her own little life gone out and gone down! For so it seemed to Dolly. Even if she succeeded in her mission, and brought her father home, what safety, what security could she have? And if she did *not* bring him--then all was lost indeed. It was lost anyhow, she thought, as far as her own life was concerned. Her father could not be what he had been again. "O father! my father!" was poor Dolly's bitter cry, "if you had taken anything else from me, and only left me yourself!"

After a long time, when she spoke to Rupert, it was in a quiet, unaltered voice.

"Is this the shortest way, Rupert?"

"As like as not it's the longest. But, you see, it's the only way I know. I've always got there starting from the Place of St. Mark; and that way I know what I am about; but though I daresay there's a short cut home, I've never been it, and don't know it."

Dolly added no more.

"It's a bit of a walk from St. Mark's," Rupert went on. "Do you mind?"

"No," said Dolly, sighing. "Rupert, I wish you were a Christian friend! You are a good friend, but I wish you were a Christian!"

"Why just now?"

"Nobody else can give one comfort. You cannot, Rupert, with all the will in the world; there is no comfort in anything you could tell me. I have only one Christian friend on this side of the Atlantic; and that is Mrs. Jersey; and she might as well be in America too, where Aunt Hal is!"

Dolly was crying. It went to Rupert's heart.

"What could a Christian friend say to you?" he asked at length.

"Remind me of something, or of some words, that I ought to remember," said Dolly, still weeping.

"Of what?" said Rupert. "If you know, tell me. Remind yourself; that's as good as having some one else remind you. What comfort is there in religion for a great trouble? Is there any?"

"Yes," said Dolly.

"What then? Tell us, Miss Dolly. I may want it some time, as well as you."

"I suppose everybody is pretty sure to want it, some time in his life," said Dolly sadly, but trying to wipe away her tears.

"Let's have the comfort then," said Rupert, "if you've got it."

"Why, are *you* in trouble, Rupert?" she said, rousing up. "What about?"

"Never mind; let's have the comfort; that's the thing wanted just now. What would you say to me now if I wanted it pretty bad?"

"The trouble is, it is so hard to believe what God says," Dolly said, speaking half to herself and half to her companion.

"What does He say? Is it anything a fellow can take hold of and hold on to? I never could make out much by what I've heard folks tell; and I never heard much anyhow, to begin with."

"One of the things that are good to me," said Dolly, bowing her face on her hand, "is--that Jesus knows."

"Knows what?"

"All about it--everything--my trouble, and your trouble, if you have any."

"I don't see the comfort in that. If He knows, why don't He hinder? I suppose He *can* hinder?"

"He does hinder whatever would be real harm to His people; He has promised that."

"Well, ain't this real harm, that is worrying you?" said Rupert. "What do you call harm?"

"Pain and trouble are not always harm," said Dolly, "for His children often have them, I know; and no trouble seems sweet at the minute, but bitter; and the sweet fruits come afterward. Oh, it's so bitter now!" cried poor Dolly, unable to keep the tears back again;--"but He knows. He knows."

"If He knows," said Rupert, wholly unable to understand this reasoning, "why doesn't He hinder? That's what I look at."

"I don't know," said Dolly faintly.

"What comforts you in that, then?" said Rupert almost impatiently. "That's too big a mouthful for me."

"No, you're wrong," said Dolly. "He knows why. I have the comfort of that, and so I am sure there *is* a why. It is not all vague chance and confusion, with no hand to rule anything. Don't you see what a difference that makes?"

"Do you mean to say, that everything that happens is for the best?"

"No," said Dolly. "Wrong can never be as good as right. Only, Rupert, God will so manage things that to His children--to His children--good shall come out of evil, and nothing really hurt them."

"Then the promise is only for them?"

"That's all. How could it be for the others?"

"I don't see it," said Rupert. "Seems to my eyes as if black was black and white white; it's the fault of my eyes, I s'pose. It is only moonshine to my eyes, that makes black white."

"Rupert, you do not understand. I will tell you. You know the story of Joseph. Well, when his brothers tried to murder him, that was what you call evil, wasn't it?"

"Black, and no moonshine on it."

"Yet it led to his being sold into Egypt."

"What was the moonshine on that? He was a slave, warn't he?"

"But that brought him to be governor of Egypt; he was the means of the plenty in the land through those years of famine; and by his power and influence his family was placed in the best of the land when starvation drove them down there."

"But why must he be sold a slave to begin with?"

"Good reasons. As a servant of Potiphar he learned to know all about the land and its produce and its cultivation, and the peasant people that cultivated it. If it had not been for the knowledge he gained as a slave, Joseph could never have known what to do as a governor."

"I never thought of that," said Rupert, his tone changing.

"Then when he was thrown into prison, *you* would have said that was a black experience too?"

"I should, and no mistake."

"And there, among the great prisoners of state, he learned to know about the politics of the country, and heard what he never could have heard talked about anywhere else; and there, by interpreting their dreams, he recommended himself to the high officers of Pharaoh. Except through the prison, it is impossible to see how he, a poor foreigner, could ever have come to be so distinguished at the king's court; for the Egyptians hated and despised foreigners."

"I'll be whipped if that ain't a good sermon," said Rupert drily; "and what's more, I can understand it, which I can't most sermons I've heard. But look here,—do you think God takes the same sort of look-out for common folks? Joseph was Joseph."

"The care comes of His goodness, not out of our worthiness," said Dolly, the tears dripping from her eyes. "To Him, Dolly is Dolly, and Rupert is Rupert, just as truly. I know it, and yet I am so ungrateful!"

"But tell me, then," Rupert went on, "how comes it that God, who can do everything, does not make people good right off? Half the trouble in the world comes of folks' wrong-headedness; why don't He make 'em reasonable?"

"He tries to make them reasonable."

"*Tries!* Why don't He do it?"

"You, for instance," said Dolly—"because He has given you the power of choice, Rupert; and you know yourself that obedience would not be obedience if it were not voluntary."

On this theological nut Rupert ruminated, without finding anything to say.

"You have comforted me," Dolly went on presently. "Thank you, Rupert. You have made me remember what I had forgotten. Just look at that palace front in the moonlight!"

"The world's a queer place, though," said Rupert, not heeding the palace front.

"What are you thinking of?"

"This city, for one thing. I've been, reading that book you lent me. Hasn't there been confusion enough, though, up and down these canals, and in and out of those palaces! and the rest of the world is pretty much in the same way. Only in America it ain't quite so bad. I suppose because we haven't had time enough."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WINE-SHOP.

It was past twelve by the clock tower when the two left the gondola and entered the Place of St. Mark. The old church with its cupolas, the open Place, the pillars with St. Theodore and the dragon, the palace of the Doges with its open stone work, showed like a scene out of another world; so unearthly beautiful, so weird and so stately. There had been that day some festival or public occasion which had called the multitude together, and lingerers were still to be seen here and there, and the windows of cafes and trattorie were lighted, and the buzz of voices came from them. Dolly and Rupert crossed the square, however, without more than a moment's lingering, and plunged presently into what seemed to her a labyrinth of confused ways. Such ways! an alley in New York would be broad in comparison; two women in hoops would have been obliged to use some skill to pass each other; they threaded the old city in the strangest manner. Rupert went steadily and without hesitation, Dolly wondered how he could, through one into another, up and down, over bridge after bridge, clearly knowing his way; yet it was a nervous walk to her, for more than one reason. Sometimes the whole line of one of these narrow streets, if they could be called so, would be perfectly dark; the moonlight not getting into it, and only glittering on a palace cornice or a street corner in view; others, lying right for the moonbeams, were flooded with them from one turning to another. Most of the shops were closed; but the

sellers of fruit had not shut up their windows yet, and now and then a cook-shop made a most peculiar picture, with its blazing fire at the back, and its dishes of cooked and uncooked viands temptingly displayed at the street front. Steadily and swiftly Rupert and Dolly passed on; saw these things without stopping to look at them, but yet saw them so that in all after-life those peculiar effects of light and shade, fireshine and moonlight, Italian fruits and vegetables, and fish coloured by the one or the other illumination, were never lost from memory. Here there would be a red volcanic glow in the interior of a shop where the furnace fire was flaming up about the pots and pans of cookery; and at the street front, at the window, the moonlight glinting white from the edge of a dish, or glancing from a pane of glass; and then again reflected from the still waters of a canal. The two saw these things, and never forgot; but Dolly was silent and Rupert did not know what to say. Yet he thought he felt her arm tremble sometimes, and would have given a great deal to be able to speak to the purpose. Perhaps Dolly at length found the need of distraction to her thoughts, for she it was that first said anything.

"I hope mother will not wake up!"

"Why?"

"She would not understand my being away."

"Then she does not know?"

"I did not dare tell her. I had to risk it. I do not want her ever to know, Rupert, if it can be helped."

"She'll be no wiser for me. What are you going to do now, Miss Dolly? We ain't far off the place."

"I am going to get my father to go home with me. You needn't come in. Better not. You go back to the gondola and wait there for a little say--a quarter or half an hour; if I do not come before that, then go on home."

"But you cannot go anywhere alone?"

"Oh no; I shall have father; but I cannot tell which way he may take to get home. You go back to the gondola,--or no, be in front of St. Mark's; that would be better."

"I am afraid to leave you, Miss Dolly."

"You need not. One gets to places where there is nothing to fear any more."

Rupert was not sure what she meant; her voice had a peculiar cadence which struck him. Then they turned another corner, and a few steps ahead of them saw the light from a window making a strip of illumination across the street, which here was unvisited by the moonbeams.

"That is the place," said Rupert.

Dolly slackened her walk, and the next minute paused before the window and looked in. The light was not brilliant, yet sufficient to show several men within, some sitting and drinking, some in attendance; and Dolly easily recognised one among the former number. She drew her arm from Rupert's.

"Now go back to St. Mark's," she whispered. "I wish it. Yes, I would rather go in alone. Wait for me a little while in front of St. Mark's."

She stood still yet half a minute, making her observations or getting up her resolution; then with a light, swift step passed into the shop. Rupert could not obey her and go at once; he felt he must see what she did and what her reception promised to be; he came a little nearer to the window and gazed anxiously in. The minutes he stood there burned the scene for ever into his memory.

The light shone in a wide, spacious apartment, which it but gloomily revealed. There was nothing whatever of the outward attractions with which in New York or London a drinking saloon, not of a low order, would have been made pleasant and inviting. The wine had need to be good, thought Rupert, when men would come to such a place as this and spend time there, simply for the pleasure of drinking it. Yet several men were there, taking that pleasure, even so late as the hour was; and they were respectable men, at least if their dress could be taken in testimony. They sat with mugs and glasses before them; one had a plate of olives also, another had some other tit-bit or provocative; one seemed to be in converse with Mr. Copley, who was not beyond converse yet, though Rupert saw he had been some time drinking. His face was flushed a little, his eyes dull, his features overspread with that inane stupidity which comes

from long-continued and purely sensual indulgence of any kind, especially under the fumes of wine. To the side of this man, Rupert saw Dolly go. She went in, as I said, with a light, quick step, looked at nobody else, made straight to her father, and laid a hand upon his shoulder. With that she threw back her head-covering a little,—it was some sort of a scarf, of white and brown worsted knitting, which lay around her head like a glory, in Rupert's eyes,—and showed her face to her father. Fair and delicate and sweet, bright and grave at once, for she *did* look bright even there, she stood at his side like his good angel, with her little hand upon his shoulder. No wonder Mr. Copley started and looked frightened; that was the first look; and then confused. Rupert understood it all, though he could not hear what was said. He saw the man was embarrassed.

"Dolly!" said Mr. Copley, falling back upon his first thought, as the easiest to speak of,— "what is the matter?"

"Nothing with me, father. Will you take me home?"

"Where's your mother?"

"She is at home. But it is pretty late, father."

"Where's Lawrence?"

"I don't know."

"Where is Rupert, then?"

"He is out, somewhere. Will you go home with me, father?"

"How did you come here?" said Mr. Copley, sitting a little straighter up, and now beginning to replace or conceal confusion with displeasure.

"I will tell you. I will tell you on the way. But shall we go first, father? I don't like to stay here."

"Here? What in the name of ten thousand devils---- Who brought you here?"

"I am alone," said Dolly. "Hadn't we better go, father? and then we can talk as we go."

At this point a half tipsy Venetian rose, and stepping before the pair with a low reverence, said something to Mr. Copley, of which Dolly only understood the words, "La bella signorina;" they made her, however, draw her scarf forward over her face and brought Mr. Copley to his feet. He could stand, she saw, but whether he could walk very well was open to question.

"Signer, signor"---- he began, stammering and incensed. Dolly seized his arm.

"Shall we go, father? It is so late, and mother might want me. It is very late, father. Never mind anything, but come!"

Mr. Copley was sufficiently himself to see the necessity; nevertheless, his score must be paid; and his head was in a bad condition for reckoning. He brought out some silver from his pocket, and stood somewhat helplessly looking at it and at the shopman alternately; then with an awkward movement of his elbow contrived to throw over a glass, which fell on the floor and broke. Everybody was looking now at the father and daughter, and words came to Dolly's ears which made her cheek burn. But she stood calm, self-possessed, waiting with a somewhat lofty air of maidenly dignity; helped her father solve the reckoning, paid for the glass, and at last got hold of his arm and drew him away; after a gentle, grave salutation to the attendant which he answered profoundly, and which brought everybody in the little shop to his feet in involuntary admiration and respect. Dolly looked at nobody, yet with sweet courtesy made a distant sign of acknowledgment to their homage, and the next minute stood outside the shop in the dark little street and the mild, still air. I think, even at that minute, with the strange, startling inappropriateness of license which thoughts give themselves, there flashed across her a sense of the ironical contrast of things without and within her; without, Venice and her historical past and her monumental glory; within, a trembling little heart and present danger and a burden of dishonour. But that was only a flash; the needs of the minute banished all thinking that was not connected with action; and the moment's business was to get her father home. She had no thought now for the picturesque revealings of the moonlight and obscurings of the shadow. Yet she was conscious of them, in that sharp flash of contrast.

At getting upon his feet and out into the air and gloom of the little street, Mr. Copley's head was very contused; or else he had taken more wine than his daughter guessed. He was not fit to guide himself, or to take care of her. As he

seemed utterly at a standstill, Dolly naturally and unconsciously set her face to go the way she had come; for one or two turnings at least she was sure of it. Before those one or two turnings were made, however, she was shocked and scared to find that her father's walk was wavering; he swayed a little on his feet. The street was empty; and if it had not been, what help could Dolly ask for? A pang of great terror shot through her. She took her father's arm, to endeavour to hold him fast; a task rather too much for her little hands and slight frame; and feeling that in spite of her he still moved unsteadily, and that she was an insufficient help, Dolly's anguish broke forth in a cry; natural enough in its unreasoningness--

"O father, don't!--remember, I am all alone!"

How much was in the tone of those last words Dolly could not know; they hardly reached Mr. Copley's sense, though they went through and through another hearer. The next minute Rupert stood before the pair, and was offering his arm to Mr. Copley. Not trusting his patron, in the circumstances, to take care of his young mistress, Rupert had disobeyed her orders so far as to keep the two figures in sight; he had watched them from one turning to another, and had seen that his help was needed, even before he heard Dolly's cry. Then, with a spring, he was there. Mr. Copley leaned now upon his arm, and Dolly fell behind, thankful unspeakably for the relief. She knew by this time that she could never have found her way; and it was plain her father could not.

"Rupert," said Mr. Copley, half recognising the assistance afforded him, "you're a good fellow, and always in the way when you aren't wanted, by George!" But he leaned on his arm heavily.

Dolly followed close; she could not well keep beside them; and felt in that hour more thoroughly lonely perhaps than at any other of her life before or after. Rupert was a relief; and yet so the shame was increased. She stepped along through moonlight and shadow, feeling that light was gone out of her pathway of life for ever, as far as this world was concerned. What was left, when her father was lost to her?--her father!--and not by death; *that* would not have been to lose him utterly; but now his very identity was gone. Her father, whom all her life she had loved; manly, frank, able, active, taking the lead in every society where she had seen him, making other men do his bidding always, until the passion of gaining and the lust of drink got hold of him! Was it the same, that figure in front of her, leaning on somebody's arm and glad to lean, and going with lame, unsteady gait whither he was led, so like the way his mental course had been lately? Was that her father? The bitterness of Dolly's feeling it is impossible to put into words. Tears could bring no relief, and nature did not summon them to the impossible service. The fire at her heart would have burnt them up; for there was a strange passion of resistance and sense of wrong mixed with Dolly's bitter pain. The way was not short, and it seemed threefold the length it was; every step was so hard, and the crowd of thoughts was so disproportionately great.

They were rather ruminating thoughts of grief and pain, than considerative of what was to be done. For the first, the thing was to get Mr. Copley home. Dolly did not look beyond that. She was glad to find herself arrived at St. Mark's again; and presently they were all three in the gondola. Mr. Copley leaned in a corner, laid his head against a cushion, and slept, or seemed to sleep. The other two were as silent; but I think both felt at the moment as if they would never sleep again. Rupert's face was in shadow; he watched Dolly's face which was in light. She forgot it could be watched; her eyes stared into the moonshine, not seeing it, or looking through it; the sweet face was so very grave that the watcher felt his heart ache. Not the gentle gravity of young maidenhood, looking into the vague light; but the anxious, searching gaze of older life looking into the vague darkness. Rupert did not dare speak to her, though he longed. What would he not have given for the right and the power to comfort! But he knew he had neither. He had sense enough not to try.

It was customary for Mr. Copley, after he had been late out at night, to keep to his room until a late hour the next morning; so Dolly knew what she had to expect. It suited her very well this time, for she must think what she would say to her father when she next saw him. She took care that a cup of coffee such as he liked was sent him; and then, after her own slight breakfast, sat down to plan her movements. So Rupert found her, with her Bible in her lap, but not reading; sitting gazing out upon the bright waters of the lagoon. He came up to her, with a depth of understanding and sympathy in his plain features which greatly dignified them.

"Does that help?" said he, glancing at the book in Dolly's lap.

"*This?*" said Dolly. "What other help in the world is there?"

"Friends?" suggested Rupert.

"Yes, you were a great help last night," Dolly said slowly. "But there come times--and things--when friends cannot do anything."

"And then--what does the book do?"

"The book?" Dolly repeated again. "O Rupert! it tells of the Friend that can do everything!" Her eyes flushed with tears and she clasped her hands as she spoke.

"What?" said Rupert; for her action was eloquent, and he was curious; and besides he liked to make her talk.

Dolly looked at him and saw that the question was serious. She opened her book.

"Listen. 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'"

"That makes pretty close work of it. Can you get hold of that rope? and how much strain will it bear?"

"I believe it will bear anything," said Dolly slowly and thoughtfully; "if one takes hold with both hands. I guess the trouble with me is, that I only take hold with one."

"What do you do with the other hand?"

"Stretch it out towards something else, I suppose. For, see here, Rupert;--"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee!--I am just ashamed of myself!" said Dolly, breaking down and bursting into tears.

"What for?" said Rupert.

"Because I do not trust so."

"I should think it would be very difficult."

"It ought not to be difficult to trust a friend whose truth you know. There! that has done me good," said the girl, sitting up and brushing away the tears. "Rupert, if there is anything you want to see or to do here in Venice, be about it; for I think we shall go off to Rome at once."

She told the same thing to St. Leger when he came in; and having got rid of both the young men set herself anew to consider how she should speak to her father. And consideration helped nothing; she could not tell; she had to leave it to the moment to decide.

It was late in the morning, later than the usual hour for the *dejeuner a la fourchette*, which Mr. Copley liked. He did not want anything to-day, his wife said; and she and Dolly and Rupert had finished their meal. Dolly contrived then that her mother should go out under Rupert's convoy, to visit the curiosity shop again, (nothing else would have tempted her), and to make one or two little purchases for which Dolly gave Rupert the means. When they were fairly off, she went to her father's room; he was up and dressed, she knew. She went with a very faint heart, not knowing in the least what she would do or say, but feeling that something must be said and done, both.

Mr. Copley was sitting listlessly in a chair by the window; miserable enough, Dolly could see by the gloomy blank of his face; looking out, and caring for nothing that he saw. His features showed traces of the evening before, in red eyes and pale cheeks; and yet worse, in the spiritless, abased expression, which was more than Dolly could bear. She had come in very quietly, but when she saw this she made one spring to his side and sank down on the floor before him, hiding her face on his knee. Mr. Copley's trembling hand presently lifted her up into his arms, and Dolly sat on his knee and buried her face in his breast. Neither of them was ready to speak; neither did speak for some time. It was Mr. Copley who began.

"Well, Dolly,--I suppose you will say to me that I have broken my word?"

"O father!"--it came in a sort of despair from Dolly's heart,--"what shall we do?"

Mr. Copley had certainly no answer ready to this question; and his next words were a departure.

"How came you to be at that place last night?"

"I was afraid you were there"----

"How did you dare come poking about through all those crooked ways, and at that time of night?"

"Father," Dolly said, without lifting her head, "that was nothing. I dared nothing, compared with what you dared!"

"I? You are mistaken, child. I did not run the slightest risk. In fact, I was only doing what everybody else does. You make much of nothing, in your inexperience."

"Father," said Dolly, with a great effort, "you promised me. And when a man cannot keep his promise"----

She had meant to be perfectly quiet; she had begun very calmly; but at that word, suddenly, her calmness failed her. It was too much; and with a sort of wailing cry, which in its forlornness reached and wrung even Mr. Copley's nerves, she broke into a terrible passion of weeping. Terrible! young hearts ought never to know such an agony; and never, never should such an agony be known for the shame or even the weakness of a father. The hand appointed to shield, the love which ought to shelter,--when the blow comes from *that* quarter, it finds the heart bare and defenceless indeed, and comes so much the harder in that it comes from so near. No other more distant can give such a stroke. And to the young heart, unaccustomed to sorrow, new to life, not knowing how many its burdens and how heavy; not knowing on the other hand the equalising, tempering effects of time; the first great pain comes crushing. The shoulders are not adjusted to the burden, and they feel as if they must break. Dolly's sobs were so convulsive and racking that her father was startled and shocked. What had he done? Alas, the man never knows what he has done; he cannot understand how women die, before their time, that death of the heart which is out of the range of masculine nature.

"Dolly!--Dolly!" Mr. Copley cried, "what is the matter? Don't, Dolly, if you love me. My child, what have I done? Don't you know *everybody* takes a little wine? Are you wiser than all the world?"

"You promised, father!" Dolly managed to say.

"Perhaps I promised too much. You see, Dolly,--*don't* cry so!--a man must do as the rest of the world do. It isn't possible to live a separate life, as you would have me. It would make me ridiculous. It would not do. There's no harm in a little wine, child."

"Father, you promised!" Dolly repeated, clinging to him. She was not shrinking away; her arms of love were wrapped round his neck as tenderly as even in old childish days; they had power over Mr. Copley, power which he could not quite resist nor break away from. He returned their pressure, he even kissed her, feeling, I am happy to say, a little ashamed of himself.

"You don't want me to be ridiculous, Dolly?" he repeated, not knowing what to say.

What should she answer to that? No, she did not want him to be ridiculous; and as he spoke she recalled the staggering, impotent figure of last night, in its unmanly feebleness and senseless idiocy. A sense of the difficulty of her task and the vanity of her representations came over Dolly; it gave her new food for tears, but the present effect was to make her stop them. I suppose despair does not weep. Dolly was not despairing, either.

"What shall we do, father?" she asked, ignoring all his remarks and suggestions.

"Do, Dolly? About what?"

"Don't you think we will not stay any longer in Venice?"

"For all I care! Where, then?"

"To Rome, father?"

"I thought you were to be in Rome at Christmas?"

"It is not so very long till Christmas."

"Is your mother agreed?"

"She will be, if you say so."

"If it pleases you, Dolly--I don't care."

"And, father, dear father! won't you keep your promise to me? What is to become of us, father?"

Some bitter tears flowed again as she said this quietly; but Mr. Copley knew they were flowing, and he had an intuitive sense that they were bitter. They embarrassed him.

"I'll make a bargain, Dolly," he said after a pause. "I'll do what you want of me--anything you want--if you'll marry St. Leger."

"But, father, I have not made up my mind to like him enough for that."

"You will like him well enough. If you were to marry him you would be devoted to him. I know you."

"I think the devotion ought to come first."

"Nonsense. That is romantic folly. Novels are one thing, and real life is another."

"I daresay; but do you object to people's being a little romantic?"

"When it interferes with their bread and butter, I do."

"Father, if you would drink no wine, we could all of us have as much bread and butter as we choose."

"You are always harping on that!" said Mr. Copley, frowning.

"Because, our whole life depends on it, father. You cannot bear wine as some people can, I suppose; the habit is growing on you; mother and I are losing you, we do not even have but half a sight of you; and--father--we are wanting necessaries. But I do not think of *that*," Dolly went on eagerly; "I do not care; I am willing to live on dry bread, and work for the means to get it; but I cannot bear to lose you, father! I cannot bear it!--and it will kill mother. She does not know; I have kept her from knowing; she knows nothing about what happened last night. O father, do not let her know! Would anything pay you for breaking her heart and mine? Is wine more to you than we are? O father, father! let us go home to America, and quit all these people and associations that make it so hard for you to be yourself. I want you to be your dear old self, father! Your dear self, that I love"----

Dolly's voice was choked, and she sobbed. Mr. Copley was not quite insensible. He was silent a good while, hearing her sobs, and then he groaned; a groan partly of real feeling, partly, I am afraid, of desire to have the scene ended; the embarrassment and the difficulty disposed of and behind him. But he thought it had been an expression of deeper feeling solely.

"I'll do anything you like, my dear child," he said. "Only stop crying. You break my heart."

"Father, will you really do something if I ask you?"

"Anything! Only stop crying so."

"Then, father, write and sign it, that you will not ever touch wine. Rupert and I have taken such a pledge already."

"What is the use of writing and signing? I don't see. A man can let it alone without that."

"He can, if he wants to let it alone; but if he is very much tempted, then the pledge is a help."

"What did you and Rupert do such a thing as that for?"

"I wanted to save him."

"Make *him* take the pledge, then. Why you?"

"How could I ask him to do what I would not do myself? But I've done it, father; now will you join us?"

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Copley, displeased. "Now you have incapacitated yourself from appearing as others do in society. How would you refuse, if you were asked to drink wine with somebody at a dinner-table?"

"Very easily. I should think all women would refuse," said Dolly. "Father, will you join us, and let us all be unfashionable and happy together?"

"Did St. Leger pledge himself?"

"I have not asked him."

"Well, I will if he will."

"For him, father, and not for me?" said Dolly.

"Ask him," said Mr. Copley. "I'll do as he does."

"Father, you might set an example to him."

"I'll let him set the example for me," said Mr. Copley rising. And Dolly could get no further.

But it was settled that they were to leave Venice. What was to be gained by this step Dolly did not quite know; yet it was a step, that was something. It was something, too, to get out of the neighbourhood of that wine-shop, of which Dolly thought with horror. What might await them in Rome she did not know; at least the bonds of habit in connection with a particular locality would be broken. And Venice was grown odious to her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PAST GREATNESS.

They went to Rome.

Dolly had little comfort from her conversation with her father. She turned over in her mind his offer to quit wine if St. Leger would do the same. St. Leger would not give any such pledge, Dolly was very clearly aware; except, indeed, she paid him for it with another pledge on her part. With such a bribe she believed he would do it, or anything else that might be asked of him. Smooth and quiet as the young gentleman was outwardly, he had a power of self-will; as was shown by his persistence in following her. Dolly was obliged to confess that his passion was true and strong. If she would have him, no doubt, at least she believed there was no doubt, Lawrence would agree to be unfashionable and drink no more wine to the day of his death for her sake. If he agreed to that, her father would agree to it; both of them would be saved from that danger. Dolly pondered. Ought she to pay the price? Should she sacrifice herself, and be the wife of a rich banker, and therewith keep her father and all of them from ruin? Very soberly Dolly turned the whole thing over in her mind; back and forward; and always she was certain on one point,—that she did not want to be Lawrence's wife; and to her simple, childlike perceptions another thing also seemed clear; that it is a bad way to escape one wrong by doing another. She always brought up with that. And so, she could not venture and did not venture to attack Lawrence on the wine question. She knew it would be in vain.

Meanwhile, they were in Rome. Two of the gentlemen being skilled travellers, they had presently secured a very tolerable apartment; not in the best situation, indeed, but so neither was it of the most expensive sort; and clubbing their resources, were arranged comfortably enough to feel quite at home. And immediately Dolly began to use her advantage and see Rome. Mrs. Copley had no curiosity to see anything; all her wish was to sit at her window or by her fire and talk to her husband; and as Mr. Copley shared her lack of enterprise and something withheld him from seeking either gambling or drinking-shops, Dolly could go out with an easy mind, and give herself undividedly to the intense enjoyment of the place and the time. Yes, undividedly; for she was eighteen, and at eighteen one has a power of, for a time, throwing off trouble. Trouble was on her, she knew; and, nevertheless, when Dolly found herself in the streets of Rome, or in presence of its wonders of art or marvels of antiquity, she and trouble parted company. She forgot all but the present; or even if she did not forget, she disregarded. Her spirit took a momentary leap above all that ordinarily held it down, and revelled, and rejoiced, and expanded, and rose into a region of pure exquisite life. Rupert, who always accompanied her, was rather opening the eyes of his mind, and opening them very wide indeed, and as is the case with eyes newly opened, not seeing very clearly; yet taking great pleasure in what he did see. St. Leger, her other companion, had a certain delight in seeing Dolly's enjoyment; for himself, alas! it was too plain that art said little to him, and antiquity nothing.

One afternoon, when they had been perhaps a week in Rome, Dolly declared her intention of taking Rupert to the Museo Capitolino.

"You were there the day before yesterday," St. Leger remarked, rousing himself from a comfortable position and a

magazine.

"Yes, thank you; and now I am going to do for Mr. Babbage what you did for me; introduce him to a scene of delights. You know, one should always pass on a good thing that one has received."

"Don't you want me?"

"No, indeed! I wouldn't bore you to that extent."

"But you will allow me, for my own pleasure," said Lawrence, getting up.

"No, I will not. You have done your part, as far as that museum is concerned; and besides, I have heard that a lady must not dance too many dances with one gentleman. It is Mr. Babbage's turn."

And with a merry little nod of her head, and smile at the irresolute St. Leger, Dolly went off. Rupert was generally of the party when they went sight-seeing, but it had happened that it was not the case when the visit to the Capitoline Museum had been made.

"You are not going to this place for my sake?" Rupert said as Dolly hurried along.

"For your sake, and for my sake," she answered. "I was there for about two minutes, and I should like two days. O Rome, Rome! I *never* saw anything like Rome."

"Why?" said Rupert. "It hasn't got hold of me so."

"Wait, and it will. I seem to be touching the history of the world here, till I don't know whereabouts in the ages I am. Is this the nineteenth century?--Here we are."

Half an hour later, the two found themselves in the Hall of the Emperors.

"Do you know Roman history, Rupert?"

"A little. Not much. Not far down, you see. I know about Romulus and Remus."

"Then you know more than anybody else knows. That's a myth. Look here. Let us begin at the beginning. Do you know this personage?"

"Julius Caesar? Yes. I have read about him."

"Did you ever read Plutarch's Lives? They used to be my delight when I was a little girl. I was very fond of Julius Caesar then. I know better now. But I am glad to see him."

"Why, wasn't he a great man?"

"Véry. So the world says. I have come to perceive, Rupert, that that don't mean much."

"Why not? I thought the world was apt to be right."

"In some things. No doubt this man *might* have been a very great man; he had power; but what good did he do to the world? He just worked for himself. I tell you what the Bible says, Rupert; 'The things which are highly esteemed among men, are abomination in the sight of God.' Look, and you will see it is so."

"If you go by *that*--- Who is this next man? Augustus. He was the first Roman emperor, wasn't he?"

"And all around here are ranged his successors. What a set they were! and they look like it."

"How do you know they are likenesses?"

"Know from coins. Do you know, almost all these men, the emperors, died a violent death? Murdered, or else they killed themselves. That speaks, don't it, for the beauty and beneficence of their reigns, and the loveliness of their characters?"

"I don't know them very well. Some of them were good men, weren't they?"

"See here, Nos. 11 and 12. Here are Caligula and Claudius. Caligula was murdered. Then Claudius was poisoned by his wife Agrippina; there she is, No. 14. She was killed by her son Nero; and Nero killed himself; and No. 13, there is another wife of Claudius whom he killed before he married Agrippina; and here, No. 17, was a wife of Nero whom he killed by a kick. And that is the way, my dear Rupert, they went on. Don't you wish you had belonged to the Imperial family? There's greatness for you!"

"But there were some really great ones, weren't there? Which are they?"

"Well, let us see. Come on. Here is Trajan. He was not a brute; he was a philosopher and a sceptic. He was quite a distinguished man in the arts of war and peace. But he ordered that the profession of Christianity should be punished with death. He legalised all succeeding persecutions, by his calm enactments. Do you think he was a great man in the sight of God?"

"Were the Christians persecuted in his reign?"

"Certainly. In Asia Minor, under the good governor Pliny. Simon the son of Cleophas was crucified at that time."

"Perhaps Trajan did not know any better."

"He might have known better, though. Ignorance is no plea that will stand, when people have the means of knowledge. But come on. Here is Marcus Aurelius; here, Rupert, Nos. 37 and 38. He was what the world calls a very great man. He was cultivated, and wise, and strong, a great governor, and for a heathen a good man; and how he treated the Christians! East and west, and at Rome here itself, how they were sought out and tortured and killed! What do you think the Lord thinks of such a great man as that? Remember the Bible says of His people, 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye.' What do you think the Lord thought of Marcus Aurelius' greatness? Look here, Rupert--here is Decius, and here is Diocletian."

"Were they persecutors too?"

"Great. It is so strange to look at their faces here, in this museum, after so many centuries. I suppose they will stand here, maybe, till the end of the world. Come away--we have been so long in this gallery we have not left time enough for the other rooms."

They went to the Hall of the Gladiator; and there Dolly studied the figure which gives name to the place, with a kind of rapt intensity. She described to her companion the meaning of the marble; but it was not the same thing to them both. Dolly was lost in delighted contemplation. Rupert looked on with a kind of incredulous scorn.

"You don't care for it?" she said suddenly, catching a sight of his face.

"What's it good for?" said Rupert. "This ain't a likeness of anybody, is it?"

"It is a likeness of a great many people. Hundreds and hundreds died in such fashion as that, for the pleasure of the Roman people."

"Well, would it have been any satisfaction to you to see it?"

"Why, no! I hope not."

"Then why do you like to see it here now?"

"I don't! this is not reality, but an image."

"I can't see why you should like to look at the image, when you couldn't bear the reality."

"Why, Rupert"---- Dolly began, but her further words were cut off.

"Met again!" said a soft voice. "You here! we did not know you would be in Rome so soon."

"Dolly!" exclaimed Christina, who followed her mother. "That's delightful. Dolly Copley in Rome! and in the Museo Capitolino. Who is with you?"

"We are all here," said Dolly, smiling.

"Yes, yes, in Rome, of course; but you are not in the museum alone?"

Dolly presented Mr. Babbage.

"And how is your mother?" Mrs. Thayer went on. "Better! I am so glad. I thought she would be better in Italy. And what have you done with your handsome *cavaliero servente*--Mr. St. Leger?"

"I left him at home with a magazine, in which I *think* there was a story," said Dolly.

"Impossible! his gallantry allowed you to come alone?"

"Not his gallantry, but perhaps his sense of weakness," Dolly answered.

"Of weakness, my dear? Is he a weak young man? He does not look it."

"Very good muscular power, I daresay; but when we talk of power of will, you know 'weakness' is relative. I forbade him, and he did not dare to come."

"You forbade him! and he obeyed? But, Christina, I do not think you have Mr. Shubrick in such training as that. Would he obey, if you gave him orders?"

"Probably the relations are different," said Dolly, obliging herself to keep a grave face. "I am in a happy independence of Mr. St. Leger which allows me to command him."

"Independence!" said Mrs. Thayer, with an air half curious, half confounded, which was a severe trial to Dolly's risible muscles. "I know young ladies are very independent in these days--I don't know whether it is a change for the better or not--but I do not think Christina would boast of her independence of *her* knight-errant."

"No," said Dolly. "The cases are different--as I said. Mr. St. Leger does not stand in that particular relation to me."

"Doesn't he? But, my dear, I hope you haven't quarrelled?"

"Not at all," said Dolly. "We do not like each other well enough to quarrel."

"But he struck me as a most delightful young man."

"I believe he generally makes that impression."

"I used to know his father," said Mrs. Thayer. "He was a sad flirt. I know, you see, my dear, because I was one myself. I am glad Christina does not take after me. But I used to think it was great fun. Is Mr. St. Leger anything of a flirt?"

"I have had no opportunity of knowing, ma'am," said Dolly gravely.

"Well, you will bring him to see us? You are all coming to make us a visit at our villa, at Sorrento; and Mr. Shubrick is coming; Christina wants to show him to you; you know a girl is always proud of her conquests; and then we will go everywhere and make you see everything. You have just no notion how delightful it is at Sorrento in the spring and summer. It's Paradise!"

"But you are coming first to spend Christmas with me, Dolly," said her friend, who until now had hardly been able to get in a word. "I have five thousand things to talk to you about. My sailor friend has promised to be here too, if he can, and his ship is in the Mediterranean somewhere, so I guess he can; and I want you to see him. Come and spend Christmas Eve with me--do! and then we shall have a chance to talk before he comes. Of course there would be no chance after," she added with a confident smile.

Dolly was not much in a mood for visiting, and scantily inclined to mix in the joyous circle which must be breathing so different an atmosphere from her own. She doubted besides whether she could leave her watch and ward for so long a time as a night and a day. Yet it was pleasant to see Christina, and the opportunity to talk over old times was tempting; and her friend's instances were very urgent. Dolly at last gave a conditional assent; and they parted; Dolly and Rupert taking the way home.

"Is that lady a friend of yours?" Rupert enquired.

"The daughter; not the mother."

"The old lady, I meant. She has a mind to know all about us."

"Why?"

"She asked me about five hundred and fifty questions, after she quitted you."

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her what she knew before," said Rupert, chuckling. "Her stock of knowledge hasn't grown *very* much, I guess, by all she got out of me. But she tried."

Dolly was silent. After a short pause, Rupert spoke again in quite another tone.

"Miss Dolly, you've put me in a sort of a puzzle. You said a little while ago, or you spoke as if you thought, that all those grand old Roman emperors were not after all great men. Then, if *they* were not great, what's a fellow to try for? If a common fellow does his best, he will not get to the hundredth or the thousandth part of what those men did. Yet you say they were not great. What's the use of my trying, for instance, to do anything, or be anything?"

"What did they do, Rupert?"

"Well, you seem to say, nothing! But don't you come to Rome to admire what they did?"

"Some of the things they did, or made. But stand still here, Rupert, and look. Do you see the Rome of the Caesars? You see an arch here and a theatre there; but the city of those days is buried. It is under our feet. The great works of art here, those that were done in their day, were not done by them. Do you think it is any good to one of those old emperors in the other world--take the best of them--is it any good to him now that he had some of these splendid buildings erected, or marbles carved? Or that his armies conquered the world, and his government held order wherever his arms went? If he is happy in the presence of God, is it anything to him, now, that we look back and admire his work? --and if he is unhappy, banished that Presence, is it anything to him then?"

"Well, what *is* greatness then?" said Rupert. "What is worth a man's trying for, if these greatest things are worth nothing?"

"I do not think anything is really great or worth while," said Dolly, "except those things that God likes."

"You come back to religion," said Rupert. "I did not mean religion. What are those things?"

"I do not think anything is worth trying for, Rupert, except the things that will last."

"What things will last?" said he half impatiently.

"Look here," said Dolly. "Step a little this way. Do you see the Colosseum over yonder? Who do you think will remember, and do remember, that with most pleasure; Vespasian and Titus who built it, or the Christians who gave themselves to the lions there for Christ's sake?"

"Yes," said Rupert, "of course; but *that* isn't the thing. There are no lions here now."

"There are lions of another sort," said Dolly, standing still and with her eyes fixed upon the wonderful old pile in the distance. "There is always work to be done for God, Rupert, and dangers or difficulties to be faced; and to the people who face *any* lions for His sake, there is a promise of praise and honour and blessing that will last for ever."

"Then you would make all a man's work to be work for God?" said Rupert, not satisfied with this view of the question. "What is to become of all the rest of the things that are to be done in the world?"

"There ought not to be anything else done in the world," said Dolly, laughing, as she turned and began to walk on again. "It ought all to be done for Him. Merchants ought to make money for His service; and lawyers ought to strive to bring God's order between man and man, and justice to every one, and that never wrong should be done or oppression exercised by anybody. 'Break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.' And soldiers ought to fight for no other reason but to protect weaker people from violence and wrong. And so on of everything else. And, Rupert, God has promised a city, of His own preparing, for His people; it will be a place of delights; and I am thinking of that word,--'Blessed are they that do His commandments; that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the

gates into the city.' I don't believe anybody that is left outside will think much of what we call greatness in that day."

"Why, the world wouldn't be the world, at that rate," cried Rupert.

"Think it wouldn't be altered for the better?"

"But a few people can't make it like that."

"Suppose they make only a very little piece of it like that?--But then comes the end, Rupert, and the King's 'Well done!'"

"Then you wouldn't have a man make as much as he can of himself," said Rupert after a dissatisfied pause.

"Certainly I would."

"What use?"

"Oh, to be a better servant to his Master, the best he possibly can; and to do more work for Him; the most he can do."

"It seems to me, Miss Dolly, if you are right, pretty much all the rest of the world are wrong."

"Yes, Rupert; don't you remember the Bible says that the wrong way is the broad way, where almost all the people go?"

Rupert's meditations this time held him till they got home.

The days that intervened before Christmas were filled full with delightful business. Dolly had her anxieties, it is true; but she was in Rome. What could stand against the witchery of the enchantress city? Anxieties fell into the background; and with all the healthy, elastic spring of her young years Dolly gave herself to the Present and the Past, and rejoiced, hour by hour and step by step, in what the Present and the Past opened up to her. True, her father and mother hardly shared in her pleasure; Mr. Copley's taste was blunted, I fear, for all noble enjoyment; and Mrs. Copley cared mainly to be comfortable in her home quarters, and to go out now and then where the motley world of fashion and of sight-seeing did most congregate. Especially she liked to go to the Pincian Hill Sunday afternoon, and watch the indescribable concourse of people of all nationalities which is there to be seen at that time. But there Dolly would not go.

"It is very absurd of you, Dolly!" cried her mother, greatly disappointed; for she had a pride in seeing the universal attention which was drawn to Dolly in every public place. "What harm should there be in looking at the beautiful view and hearing music? we are not going to *do* anything."

"It's the Lord's day, mother," said Dolly, looking up at her sorrowfully.

"You went to church this morning all right," her mother said. "There is no church for you to go to at this time of day, that I know of; and if there were, I should think it very ridiculous to go again. If you want to think, you could think about good things, I should hope, on the Pincian. What is there to hinder you?"

"Only everything I should see and hear, mother."

"Hinder you from thinking about good things!"

"Hinder me from thinking about anything," said Dolly, laughing a little.

"Seriously, Miss Dolly," said Lawrence, who stood by, hat in hand, ready to go; the Pincian Hill Sunday evening was something he quite approved of;--"seriously, do you think there is anything *wrong* in sitting up there for an hour or two, and seeing the beautiful sunset colours, and hearing the music?"

"She's a little Puritan," said her father; "and the Puritans were always an obstinate set, Lawrence; always, and in every nation and people. I wonder why the two things should go together."

"What two things, father?"

"What you call Puritanism and obstinacy."

"I suppose because those you call Puritans love the truth," said Dolly; "and so hold to it."

"And do you not think other people, who are not Puritans, also love the truth, Miss Dolly?" Lawrence asked.

"I don't think anybody loves the truth he disobeys," Dolly said with a gentle shake of her head.

"There!" said her mother. "There's Dolly all over. She is right, and nobody else is right. I wonder what she supposes is to become of all the rest of the world! Everybody in Rome will be on the Pincian to-night except Dolly Copley. And every other mother but me will have her daughter with her."

In answer to which Dolly kissed her, pulled the strings of her bonnet into a prettier bow, and looked at her with sweet, shining eyes, which said as plainly as possible without words that Mrs. Copley knew better. The party went off, nevertheless; and Lawrence, lingering till the others had turned their backs, held out his hand to Dolly.

"Will you tell me," said he, "as a favour, what you think is the harm of what we are doing?"

"You are just robbing the King of heaven and earth," Dolly answered gravely.

"Robbing! Of what?"

"Of time which He says is His, and of honour which He says ought to be His."

"How?"

"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

"This is not the seventh; it is the first."

"Quibbling, Mr. St. Leger. It is not the seventh from Monday, but it *is* the seventh from Sunday; it is the one day set apart from the seven."

"And what ought we to do with it? Sabbath means *rest*, does it not? What are we going to do but rest up there on the Pincian? only rest most delightfully. You will not rest so here."

"I suppose your bodies will rest," said Dolly. "Your minds will have most uncommon powers of abstraction if they do."

"But you are putting yourself out of the world, Dolly."

"I mean it," said she with a little nod at him. "The Lord's people are not of the world, Mr. St. Leger; and the world does not like their ways. Never did."

"I wonder if all Puritans are as quaint as you," said he, kissing the hand he held. But then he went off to the Pincian.

And there, surely, was a most wonderful, rich, and varied scene; a concourse of people of all characters and nationalities--except the small party in the world which Dolly represented; a kaleidoscope view of figures and costumes, classes and callings, most picturesque, most diversified, most changeful. There were the Thayers, amongst others; and as they joined company with the Copley party, of course Mrs. Copley's pleasure was greatly increased; for in a crowd it is always pleasant to know somebody. Mr. Copley knew several people. Mrs. Thayer had leisure to tell and ask whatever she had a mind with Mrs. Copley, and to improve her acquaintance with Mr. St. Leger; who on his part managed to get some conversation with the beautiful Christina. It was a distinction to be talking to such a beauty, and he felt it so; and Christina on her part was not insensible to the fact that the young man was himself very handsome, and unexceptionably well dressed, and the heir to many thousands; therefore a person of importance. The time on the Pincian Hill that evening was very pleasantly spent; and so Mrs. Copley told her daughter on their return.

"Mrs. Thayer said she was very sorry not to see you," Mrs. Copley added.

"I am much obliged to her."

"You are not obliged to her at all, for she didn't mean it. That's what you get by staying behind."

"What?" said Dolly, dimpling up.

"That woman had it all her own way; talked to Mr. St. Leger, and let him talk to her daughter. You see, Dolly, Christina is very handsome when you are not by."

"Mother, she is at any time. She's beautiful. You must not set me up in comparison with her."

"Well, she's engaged," said Mrs. Copley. "I wish you were. You let everything hang by the eyelids, Dolly; and some fine morning what you look for won't be there."

CHAPTER XXV.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Christmas Eve came, and Rupert attended Dolly to the Piazza di Spagna, where her friends had apartments in a great hotel. Dolly was quite prepared to enjoy herself; the varied delights of the foregoing days had lifted her out of the quiet, patient mood of watchful endurance which of late had been chronic with her, and her spirits were in a flow and stir more fitted to her eighteen years. She was going through the streets of Rome! the forms of the ages rose before her mind's eye continually, and before her bodily eye appeared here and there tokens and remains which were like the crumbings of those ages; tangible proofs that once they had been, and that Rome was still Rome. Dolly drew breaths of pleasure as she and Rupert walked along.

"You are going to stay all night?" said Rupert.

"Yes, they want me."

"And they have asked nobody but you?" said Rupert, who was not conventional.

"They wanted nobody but me. It is not a party; it is my old school-friend only, who wants to show me her future husband."

Rupert grunted his intelligence, and at the same time his mystification. "What for?" he asked. And Dolly laughed.

"I don't know! It is natural, I suppose, to some people. Here we are. Good night."

The Thayers were very well lodged indeed. Dolly found herself in really charming rooms, well furnished and well lighted. She was joyfully received, and Christina led her forthwith through saloon and dining-room to the sanctuary of her own chamber. A certain feeling of contrast began to fall upon Dolly already, Christina looked so very fresh and fair and well kept; the lightest veil of anxiety had never shadowed her bloom; the most remote cloud of embarrassment or need had never risen on her horizon. Careless, happy, secure, her mind knew no burden. It made Dolly feel the pressure of her own; and yet she was glad, for a little, to get into this atmosphere of peace and confidence, and enjoy it even by the contrast. Christina's room looked like a curiosity shop. It was littered with recent purchases; all sorts of pretty things, useful and useless.

"One cannot help buying," she said, excusing herself. "I see something at every step that I want; and I must get it when I see it, or I may never see it again, you know. It is great fun, but sometimes I almost get tired. Here, dear, I can lay your things here. Isn't my fire nice? Now sit down and warm yourself. It's too delightful to have you! It is like a bit of home, and a bit of old times. Those old school days were pleasant?"

"Very pleasant!" said Dolly, sitting down and looking into the queer but bright fire of small sticks which burned in Christina's chimney. "Very pleasant! I was with my dear Aunt Hal, in Philadelphia."

"But these days are better, Dolly," Miss Thayer went on. "That wasn't much compared to this."

"I don't know," said Dolly. "There was no care in those times."

"Care?" exclaimed Christina, as if she did not know the meaning of the word. "What care have you, Dolly? I have none, except the care to make my money buy all I want--which it won't, so I may as well make up my mind to it, and I do. What have you been getting in Rome?"

"Oh, more pleasure than I knew so many days could hold," said Dolly, laying some of the sticks of the fire straight.

"Isn't it wonderful? I think there's nothing like Rome. Unless, perhaps, Paris."

"Paris!" said Dolly. "What's at Paris?"

"Ah, you don't know it, or you wouldn't ask! Everything, my dear. Rome has a good deal, certainly, but Paris has *everything*. Now tell me,--are you engaged?"

"I? No. Of course not."

"I don't see why it's of course. Most people are at one time or another; and I didn't know but your time had come."

"No," said Dolly. "Neither the time nor the man. I've come to hear about yours."

"If he's good, you'll see him; the man, I mean. He promised to be with us at Christmas, if he could; and he always keeps his promises."

"That's a good thing," said Dolly. .

"Ye-s," said Christina, "that is, of course, a good thing. One likes to have promises kept. But it is possible to have too much of a good thing."

"Not of keeping promises!" said Dolly in unfeigned astonishment.

"I don't know," said Christina. "Sandie is so fixed in everything; he holds to his opinions and his promises and his expectations; and he holds a trifle too fast."

"He has a right to hold to his expectations, surely," said Dolly, laughing.

"Not too much," said Christina. "He has no right to expect everybody to keep their promises as precisely as he does his! People aren't made alike."

"No; but honour is honour."

"Come, now, Dolly," said Christina laughing in her turn, "you are another! You are just a little bit precise, like my Sandie. You cannot make all the world alike, if you try; and he can't."

"I am not going to try, and I think it would be a very stupid world if I could do it; but nobody ought to raise *expectations* he is not prepared to gratify."

"Like a sentence out of a book!" cried Christina. "But Sandie is the most unchangeable person; he will not take any views of anything but the views he has always taken; he is as fixed as the rock of Gibraltar, and almost as distinct and detached from the rest of the world."

"And don't you like that?"

"No; confess I do not. I'd like him to come down a little from his high place and mix with the rest of us mortals."

"What expectations does he indulge which you are not willing to meet?"

"That's the very thing!" cried Christina, in her turn stooping to arrange the little sticks and pile more on; "he is unreasonable."

"How?"

"Wants me to marry him."

"Is that unreasonable?"

"Yes! till things are ready for such a step, and I am ready."

"What things?"

"Dolly, he is only the first officer of his ship. He was distinguished in the last war, and he has the prospect of promotion. I don't want to marry him till he is a captain."

"Why?" said Dolly.

"Why?--Don't you understand? He would have a better position then, and better pay; and could give me a better time generally; and mamma thinks we ought to wait. And I like waiting. It's better fun, I do think, to be engaged than to be married. *I know* I shouldn't have my head near so much if I was married to Sandie. I do just as I like now; for mamma and I are always of a mind."

"And are not you and Mr. Shubrick of a mind?"

"Not about this," said Christina, getting up from the hearth, and laughing.

"Pray, if one may ask, how long have you and he been waiting already?"

"Oh, *he* thinks it is a great while; but what is the harm of waiting?"

"Well, how long is it, Christina?"

"Dolly, we were engaged very young. It was before I left school; one summer when I was home for the vacation. I was sixteen; that is four years ago, and more."

"Four years!" cried Dolly.

"Yes. Of course we were too young then to think of marrying. He was home on furlough, and I was home for the vacation; and our houses were near together; and so we made it up. His people were not very well off, but mine were; so there was nothing in the way, and nobody objected much; only mother said we must wait."

"What are you waiting for now, Christina?"

"I told you. I am in no hurry, for my part. I want Sandie to get his ship; and in the meanwhile it is just as nice to be as we are. We see each other when we can; and Italy is Italy; and I am very contented. Unfortunately, Sandie isn't."

"How long do you propose to go on waiting?"

"I don't know. Oh, I don't know! and I don't care. What is the harm of waiting?"

"That depends on what you promise yourselves in being married."

"Dolly," said Christina thoughtfully, "I don't promise myself anything much better than I have got now. If Sandie would only be content, I could go on so for ever."

"And not be married?"

"Besides, Dolly, I don't want to keep house in a small way. I do not! and if I married a lieutenant in the navy, I couldn't do anything else. You see, Sandie would not live upon papa's money; though papa would do anything for me; but Sandie won't; and on *his* means we should live on a very small scale indeed."

"But you would have enough?"

"Enough for what? We should have enough to eat. But, Dolly, I do not like to have to think of economy. I have never been used to it. Look at my room; see the things I have got together these last few days. Look here--this is a ring I want you to wear for me. Isn't it delicious? It is as old as the best time of cameo-cutting, they say, but I do not remember when that was; it's rather large for a lady's ring, but it is an undoubted beauty. Jupiter's eagle, with the thunderbolts. Just look at the plumage of the bird,--and its fierce eye!"

Dolly was greatly delighted. Of all the pretty things she had seen during the weeks past, she had bought nothing, save one or two bits for her mother. This gift was vastly more to Dolly than Christina could imagine. She had so literally everything she wanted, that no further acquisition could give her great pleasure. It lacked the enhancement of difficulty and rarity. I suppose the ring was more to Dolly than her whole roomful beside to Christina. It was in truth a very exquisite cameo. Dolly put it on her finger and looked at it in different lights, and admired it and enjoyed it hugely; while at the same time it gave an odd grace of setting-off to her simple dress. Dolly was in a plain black silk, with no

adornment at all, until she put the ring on. Unless her quaint old cable chain could be called such. *That* Dolly always wore. She was a sweet, quaint figure, illuminated by the firelight, as Christina observed her; girlish and graceful, with a fair face and beautiful hair; the sober dress and the true womanly eyes making a certain hidden harmony, and the cameo setting a seal of daintiness and rareness to the whole. Christina was seized with admiration that had a good deal of respect blended with it of a sudden.

"You don't agree with me, Dolly," she said after a little, when Dolly's thanks and the beauty of the ring had been sufficiently discussed, and a pause had brought the thoughts of both back to the former subject.

"What do you want, Christina?"

"I just want to be happy and comfortable," said the girl, "as I always have been. I don't want to come down to pinching. Is that unreasonable?"

"You would not have to pinch, Christina."

"Yes, I should; to live like the rest of the world."

"Are you obliged to do that?"

"Live like the rest of the world? Yes, or be out of the world."

"I thought you were a Christian," said Dolly softly.

"A Christian! Yes, so I am. What has that got to do with it?"

"A good deal, I should say. Tiny, you cannot follow Christ and be like the world."

"I don't want to be like the world, in bad things; but I mean things that are not bad. One must be like the world in some ways, if one can. Don't you set up for being any better than me, Dolly, for I won't stand it; we are all really just alike."

"The world and Christians?"

"Yes; in some things."

"Ways of living?"

"Yes,--in some ways."

"Christina, did you use to think so in old times?"

"I was young then; I did not know the world. You have *got* to do as the world do, in a measure, Dolly."

Dolly was silent a bit. She too, on her part, observed her friend. Fair and handsome she was; very handsome; with the placid luxuriance of nature which has never known shocks or adverse weather. Dolly felt the contrast which Christina had also felt, but Dolly went deeper into it. She and her friend had drifted apart, not in regard for each other, but in life and character; and Dolly involuntarily compared their experiences. Trouble to Christina was a word of unknown meaning; to herself it was become daily bread. Had that made the difference? Christina was living on the surface of things; skimming a smooth sea in a gilded gondola; shelter and adornment were all about her life, and plenty within. Dolly had been, as it were, cast into the waves and was struggling with them; now lifted on a high crest, and now brought down to the bottom. Was that how she had learned to know that there were wonderful things of preciousness and beauty at the bottom of the sea? and must one perhaps be tossed by the storm to find out the value and the power of the hand that helps? It did smite Dolly with a kind of pain, the sense of Christina's sheltered position and security; the thought of the father's arms that were a harbour for her, the guardianship that came between her and all the roughness of the world. And yet, Dolly along with the bitterness of this, was tasting also something else which did not enter Christina's cup of life; a rarer sweetness, which she would not have exchanged for Christina's whole draught. She had found jewels more precious at the depth of the sea than ever Christina could pick up in her pleasure sail along shore. Christina, with all her luxury, was missing something, and in danger of losing more. Dolly resolved to speak.

"Do you know, Tiny," she said, "if I were Mr. Shubrick, I should not be satisfied?"

"Why not?" said Christina carelessly.

"Why, you are preferring the world to him."

"I am not! No such thing, Dolly. I love him dearly."

"By your own showing, you love--what shall I say?--luxuries and position, more."

"I only want to wait a little."

"And, Christina--I don't believe God likes it."

"Likes what?"

"Your wanting to do as the world do."

"How do you know I do?"

"You said so."

"I like to have a nice house, and servants enough, and furniture to please me, and means to entertain my friends; and who doesn't? That's all I ask for."

"And to do what everybody else does."

"Yes," said Christina smiling. "Who don't?"

"You were on the Pincian Hill Sunday afternoon."

"Yes," said Christina suddenly, looking up. "Why not? Why weren't you there?"

"If you will read the last two verses of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, you will know."

"I can't read in this light," said Christina, looking round the room, "and I don't know just where I have laid my Bible. Everybody goes to the Pincian. It's no harm."

"Would Mr. Shubrick go?"

"Who told you he wouldn't?" said Christina. "I declare, if you are going to help him in his crotchets, I won't let you see much of him! Sandie!--he's just an unmanageable, unreasonable bit of downrightiness.--And uprightness," she added, laughing. "Dolly, he can have his own way aboard ship; but in the world one can't get along so. One must conform a little. One must."

"Does God like it?" said Dolly.

"What queer questions you ask! This is not a matter of religion; it is only living."

Dolly remembered words which came very inconveniently across Christina's principles; yet she was afraid of saying too much. She reflected that her friend was breathing the soft air of luxury, which is not strengthening, and enveloped in a kind of mist of conventionality, through which she could not see. With herself it was different. She had been thrown out of all that; forced to do battle with necessity and difficulty, and so driven to lay hold of the one hand of strength and deliverance that she could reach. What wonder if she held it fast and held it dear? while Christina seemed hardly to have ever felt the need of anything.

"Now, Dolly, tell me all about yourself," Christina broke in upon her meditations.

"There isn't much to tell."

"What have you been doing?"

"Painting miniatures--one of the last things."

"Oh, delightful! Copies?"

"Copies from life. May I take you? and then perhaps, if I succeed, you will get me work."

"Work!" repeated Christina.

Dolly nodded. "Yes; I want work."

"Work!" cried Christina again. "Dolly, you don't mean that you *need* it? Don't say that!"

"I do. That's nothing so dreadful, if only I can get it. I paint miniatures for--I have had ten and I have had twenty pounds," said Dolly with a laugh; "but twenty is magnificent. I do not ask twenty."

Christina exclaimed with real sorrow and interest, and was eager to know the cause of such a state of things. Dolly could but give her the bare facts, not the philosophy of them.

"You poor, dear, lovely little Dolly!" cried Christina. "A thought strikes me. Why don't you marry this handsome, rich young Englishman?"

Again Dolly's face dimpled all over.

"The thought don't strike me," she said.

"But he's very rich, isn't he?"

"Yes. That is nothing to me. I wouldn't give my father and mother for him."

"But for your father and mother's sake?"--There was a knock at the door here. "What is it? dinner? Come, Dolly; we'll reason afterwards."

The dinner was excellent. More than the excellence, however, went to Dolly's enjoyment. The rare luxury of eating without having to think what it cost, and without careful management to make sure that enough was left for the next day's breakfast and lunch. It was great luxury! and how Dolly felt it, no one there could in the least guess. With that, however, as the evening went on and the unwonted soft atmosphere of ease was taking effect upon her, Dolly again and again drew the contrast between herself and her friend. How sheltered and guarded, and fenced in and fenced off, Christina was! how securely and safely blooming in the sacred enclosure of fatherly and motherly care! and Dolly--alas, alas! *her* defences were all down, and she herself, delicate and tender, forced into the defender's place, to shield those who should have shielded her. It pressed on her by degrees, as the sweet unaccustomed feeling of ease and rest made itself more and more sensible, and by contrast she realised more and more the absence of it in her own life. It pressed very bitterly.

The girls had just withdrawn again after dinner to the firelight cosiness of Christina's room, when Mrs. Thayer put her head in.

"Christina, here's Baron Kramer and Signor Count Villa Bella, come to know if you will go to the Sistine Chapel."

"Mother!--how you put titles together! Oh, I remember; there is music at the Sistine to-night. But Sandie might come."

"And might not," said Mrs. Thayer. "You will have time enough to see Sandie; and this is Christmas Eve, you know. You may not be in Rome next Christmas."

"Would you like to go, Dolly?" said Christina doubtfully.

Dolly's heart jumped at the invitation; music and the Sistine Chapel! But it did not suit her to make an inconvenient odd one in a *partie carree*, among strangers. She declined.

"I said I would go," said Mrs. Thayer. "Since the gentlemen have come to take you, I think you had better. Dolly will not mind losing you for an hour or two."

Which Dolly eagerly confirmed; wondering much at the same time to see Christina hesitate, when her lover, as she said, might come at any minute.

She, too, finally resolved against it, however; and when Mrs. Thayer and the gentlemen had gone, and Mr. Thayer had withdrawn, as his custom was, to his own apartment, the two girls took possession of the forsaken drawing-room.

It was a pretty room, very well furnished, and like every other part of the present home of the Thayers, running over with new possessions in the shape of bits of art or antiquity, pictures, and trinkets of every kind, which they were always picking up. These were an infinite amusement to Dolly; and Christina was good-humouredly pleased with her pleasure.

"There's no fun in being in Rome," she remarked, "if you cannot buy all you see. I would run away if my purse gave out."

"But there is all that you cannot take away," said Dolly. "Think of what your mother has gone to this evening."

"The Sistine Chapel," said Christina. "I don't really care for it. Those stupid old prophets and sybils say nothing to me; though of course one must make a fuss about them; and the picture of the Last Judgment, *I think*, is absolutely frightful."

But here Dolly's eyes arrested her friend.

"Well, I tell you the truth; I do think so," she said. "I may tell the truth to you. I do not care one pin for Michael Angelo."

"Mayn't you tell the truth to anybody?"

"Not unless I want to be stared at; and I do not want to be stared at, in *that* way. I am glad I did not go with mamma and those people; if Sandie had come, I do not think he would have altogether liked it. Though I don't know but it is good to make men jealous. Mamma says it is."

"Oh no!" said Dolly. "Not anybody you care for."

"What do *you* know?" said Christina archly. Before she could receive an answer, then, she had started and sprung up; for the door gently opened and on the threshold presented himself a gentleman in naval uniform.

"Sandie!" cried Christina.

"Didn't you expect me?" he said with a frank and bright smile.

Dolly had heard enough about this personage to make her very curious; and her eyes took keen note of him. She saw a tall, upright figure, with that free poise of bearing which is a compound of strength and ease; effortless, quiet, graceful, and dignified. Though in part the result of a certain symmetry of joints and practised activity in the use of them, this sort of bearing refers itself also, and yet more surely, to the character, and makes upon the beholder the impression again of strength and ease in the mental action. It is not common; it struck Dolly in the first five steps he made into the room and in the manner of his greeting his betrothed. Out of delicate consideration, I suppose, for the company in which they found themselves, he offered only a look and a hand-clasp; but Christina jumped up and kissed him. She was not short, yet she had to make a little spring to reach his lips. And then, quietly putting an arm round her, he gave her her kiss back. Christina was rosy when she turned to present him, and both were smiling. Letting her go, he bowed low before Christina's friend; low and gravely; with such absolute gravity that Dolly almost felt herself in the way; as if he wished her not there. Then they sat down around the fire; and the same feeling came over her again with a rush. They were three; they ought to have been but two; she was one too many; they must wish her away. And yet, Christina had asked her precisely and specially that she might be one of the company that night. Dolly would have wished herself away, nevertheless; only that she was so very much interested, and could not. The newcomer excited her curiosity greatly, and provoked her observation; and, if the truth must be told, exercised also a powerful attraction upon her. He sat before the fire, full in her view, and struck Dolly as different from all the people she had ever seen in her life. She took glances from time to time, as she could, at the fine, frank, manly face, which had an unusual combination of the two qualities, frankness and manliness; was much more than usually serious, for a man of his age; and yet, she saw now and then, could break to tenderness or pleasure or amusement, with a sweetness that was winning. Dolly was fascinated, and could not wish herself away; why should she, if Christina did not?

In all her life she never forgot the images of two of the people around the fire that evening. "Sandie" in the middle, in front of the blaze; Christina on the other hand of him. She was in a glistening robe of dark blue silk, her fair hair knotted and wound gracefully about her head; a beautiful creature; looking at her lover with complacent looks of possession and smiles of welcome. Dolly never knew what sort of a figure the third was; she could not see herself, and she never thought about it. Yet she was a foil to the other two, and they were a foil to her, as she sat there at the corner of the hearth on a low cushion, in her black dress, and with no ornament about her other than the cameo ring. A

creature very different from the beauty at the other corner of the fireplace; more delicate, more sensitive, more spiritual; oddly and inexplicably, more of a child and more of a woman. That's a rare mixture. There was something exceedingly sweet and simple in her soft brown eyes and her lips; but the eyes had looked at life, the brow was grave, and the lips could close into lines of steady will. The delicate vessel was the shrine of a soul, as large as it could hold, and so had taken on the transparent nobility which belongs to the body when the soul is allowed to be dominant. One point of the contrast between the two girls was in the character and arrangement of their hair. Christina's was smooth, massed, and in a sort massive; Dolly's clustered or was knotted about her head, without the least disorder, but with a wilfulness of elegant play most harmonious with all the rest of her appearance. To characterise the two in a word, Christina was a beautiful pearl, and Dolly was a translucent opal.

They sat down round the fire.

"Well, Sandie, you naughty boy," Christina began, "what has kept you away all this time?"

"Duty."

"Duty! I told you so, Dolly; this man has only two or three words in his vocabulary, which he trots out on all occasions to do general service. One of them is 'duty;' another is 'must.'"

"'Must' is the true child of 'duty,'" the gentleman remarked.

"Oh no, I don't allow that; it is a marriage connection, which may be dissolved by a dispensation."

"Is that your idea of the marriage connection?" said he with a smile.

"But, Sandie! don't you want something to eat?"

"No, thank you."

"Because you can have it in a moment."

"I have dined, Christina."

"Where have you been all this while--weeks and weeks?"

"Have you not received any letters from me?"

"Yes, indeed! but words are so different spoken and written. We have been half over Europe. I wish you could have been along! Sandie, we went to Baden-Baden."

"What for?"

"*What for!* Why, to see it. And we saw the gaming."

"How did you like it?"

"It is fascinating. I never saw such a scene in my life; the people's faces; and then the mad eagerness with which they went at it; old men and young men, and women. Oh, it was astonishing to see the women!"

"What was the effect upon you?"

"I don't know; astonishment."

"How did Mrs. Thayer like it?"

"Do you know, I think she half wanted to try her hand? I was so amazed at mother! I told her she must not."

"You observe, Miss Copley, Miss Thayer knows the use of one of my words."

It was a strange, novel, absorbing experience to Dolly. Sitting at one corner of the hearth, quiet, and a little as it were a one side, she watched the play and the people. She was so delightfully set free for the moment from all her home cares and life anxieties. It was like getting out of the current and rush of the waves into a nook of a bay, where her tossed little skiff could lie still for a bit, and the dangers and difficulties of navigation did not demand her attention. She

rested luxuriously and amused herself with seeing and hearing what went on. And to tell the whole truth, Dolly was more than amused; she was interested; and watched and listened keenly. Christina was a lovely figure in her bright dress and bright beauty, a little excited, and happy, not too much; not too much to make Dolly's presence desirable and agreeable; just enough to make her more lovely than usual. The other figure of the little party was more interesting yet to Dolly. She thought he was very peculiar, and unlike any one she had ever seen. His repose of demeanour was striking; he seemed to make no unnecessary movement; he sat still; neither hand nor head nor foot betrayed any restlessness either of mind or body; and yet when he did move, were it only hand or foot or head, the impression he gave Dolly was of readiness for the keenest action, if the time for action once came. How the two seemingly contradictory impressions were conveyed together, Dolly did not stop to think; she had no time to moralise upon her observations; however, this mingling of calm and vigour was very imposing to her; it attracted and fascinated. No man could sit more quiet in company; and yet, if he turned his head or shifted the position of his hand, what Dolly saw was power and readiness to move with effect if there were anything to be done; and the calm intensified the power to her mind. And then, apart from all this, the room in which they were sitting was filled with pretty things and charming things which the Thayers had been collecting since they came to Rome. Dolly's eye strayed from one to another, as she sat listening to her companions; though the pretty things never diverted her attention from what these were saying or what they were doing. It was a charmed hour altogether! of rest and relief and enjoyment. Taken out of herself and away from her cares, Dolly tasted and delighted in the fairy minutes as they flew, and did not even trouble herself to think how soon they would be flown by and gone.

"You have been a great while away, Sandie," Christina was saying. "Why could you not join us before? You might have skipped something. Here have I stayed away from the Sistine to-night, for your sake."

"Is it any special loss, this evening of all others?"

"Certainly! It is Christmas; there is music, and company."

"Do you enjoy the Sistine Chapel, apart from music and company?"

"No, indeed I don't! I don't like it at all. Such horrid things on the walls, as are enough to give one the nightmare after being there. I know it is Michael Angelo, and I am horribly out of order in saying so; but what is the use of pretending in *this* company?"

"What is the use of pretending in any company?"

"Oh, nonsense, Sandie! a great deal. Everybody pretends, at some time or other. What would become of us if we spoke out all we had in our minds?"

"You do not like the Sistine Chapel. What do you enjoy most in Rome?"

"Most? The Pincian, Sunday afternoon."

"Sunday! Why Sunday?"

"Music, and all the world there. It's the most beautiful scene, in the first place, and the most amusing, that you can find. There is *everybody* there, Sandie; people from all the quarters of the earth; of all nationalities and costumes; the oddest and the prettiest; everybody you know and everybody you don't know."

"But why on Sunday?"

"Oh, that's the special day; that and Thursday, I believe; but I generally have something else to do Thursday; and anyhow there isn't as good a show. I rarely go Thursday."

"And Sunday you have nothing else to do. I see."

"Well, Sandie, of course we have been to church in the morning, you know. There is nothing to go to in the afternoon. What should one do?"

"Miss Copley, do you enjoy the Pincian on Sunday evenings?"

"I have not tried it," said Dolly.

"Your mother and father were there, though, last Sunday," said Christina. "Sandie, what are you thinking of? You

have some superstitious objection? I daresay you have!"

"Not I," said Mr. Shubrick. "But it occurs to me that there is a command somewhere, touching the question."

"What command? In the Bible! Sandie, do you think those Sunday commands are to be taken just as they stand--to mean just so? and shut one stupidly up in the house for all day Sunday except when one is going in procession to church?"

"You know," said Mr. Shubrick, "I am like the centurion in the Bible, 'a man under authority,' having other men under me; 'and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come and he cometh.' I know nothing about orders that are not to be obeyed."

"And is that the way you would rule your house?" said Christina, half pouting.

"I should leave that to you," he answered smiling. "It is enough for me to rule my ship. The house would be your care."

"Would it? Does that mean that you expect always to be a sailor?"

"It is my profession. A man must do something."

"If he *must*. But not if he has no need to do anything?"

The young officer looked at her with a considerative sort of gravity, and inquired if she could respect a lazy man.

"No, and you never would be lazy, or could be lazy," she said, laughing. "But surely there are things enough to be done on shore."

"Things enough. The question for every one is where he can do most."

"Why, Sandie," Christina cried, "it is not possible that you should have your time to yourself on shipboard, and as an acting officer, as you could at home on shore. Reading and study, that, you like, I know; and then painting, and all art pleasures, that you think so much about, much more than I do; and a thousand other things;--you have no chance for them at sea."

"You talk as if one had nothing to do but to please himself."

"Well," said Christina, "so far as one can, why not? Does not all the world?"

"Yes. All the world. You are right. All the world, except a little body of men who follow Christ; and *He*, pleased not Himself. I thought you knew I was one of His servants, Christina."

"Does that forbid your pleasing yourself?"

"Not in one way," said Mr. Shubrick, smiling again, a smile that made Dolly's heart throb with its meaning. "It is my pleasure to do my Master's will. The work He has given me to do, I would rather do of all things."

"I can't think what work you mean, Sandie. I really do not understand."

"Do you understand, Miss Copley?"

Dolly started. "I believe so," she said.

"Will you have the goodness to explain to Christina?"

"Why don't you explain yourself, Sandie?" said his betrothed.

"I am talking too much. Besides, it will come better from Miss Copley's lips."

"I don't think so; but however.--Well, Dolly, if you are to explain, please explain. But how come *you* to understand, when I don't understand? What work does he mean?"

"I suppose," said Dolly, "Mr. Shubrick means work for other people."

"Work for other people!" cried Christina. "Do you think *we* do not do work for other people? Mamma gives away loads; she does a great deal for the poor. She is always doing it."

"And you?"

"Oh, I help now and then. But she does not want my help much."

"Did you think, Miss Copley, I meant work for poor people?"

"No," said Dolly. "At least--that is--I thought you meant the work that is for Christ."

"Well, I am sure He commanded us to take care of the poor," said Christina.

"He commanded us also to carry the gospel to every creature."

"That's for ministers, and missionaries," said Christina.

"The order was given to all the disciples, and He commanded us to be lights in the world."

"Of course--to set good examples."

"That is not quite the whole," said Mr. Shubrick; "though people do take it so, I believe."

"I have always taken it so," said Dolly. "What more can it be?"

"Remember the words--'Whatsoever *doth make manifest* is light.' There is the key. There are good examples--so called--which disturb nobody. There are others,"--he spoke very gravely,--"before which sin knows itself, and conscience shrinks away; before which no lie can stand. Those are the Lord's light-bearers."

"Sandie, what has got you into this vein of moralising? Is this talk for Christmas Eve, when we ought to be merry? Don't you lead a dreadful dull life on board ship?"

"No," said he. "Never. Neither there nor anywhere else."

"Are you always picking at the wick of that light of yours, to make it shine more?"

"By no means. No lamp would stand such treatment. No; the only thing for us to do in that connection is to see that the supply of oil is kept up."

"Sandie, life would be fearful on your terms!"

"I do not find it so."

And, "Oh no, Christina!" came from Dolly's lips at the same time. Christina looked from one to the other.

"I had better gone to the Sistine," she said. "I suppose you would tell me there to look at Michael Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment. But I assure you I never do. I make a point not to see it."

"What do *you* enjoy most in this old city, Miss Copley?" Mr. Shubrick said now, turning to her.

"I hardly can tell," said Dolly; "I enjoy it all so very much. I think, of all--perhaps the Colosseum."

"That old ruin!" said Christina.

"But it is such a beautiful ruin! Have you seen it by moonlight? And I always think of the time when it was finished, and full, and of the things that were done there; and I fancy the times when the moonlight shone in just so after the days when Christians had been given to the lions. I never get tired of the Colosseum."

"You, too!" exclaimed Christina. "What pleasant and enlivening contemplations!"

"Yes," said Dolly. "Grand. I see the moonlight shining on the broken walls of the Colosseum, and I think of the martyrs in their white robes. There is no place brings me nearer to heaven, and the world looks so small."

"Dolly Copley!" cried Christina. "Do you want the world to look small, as long as you are obliged to live in it?"

"It looks big enough," said Dolly, smiling, "as soon as I get home."

The conversation, however, after this did take a turn, and ran upon more everyday topics; less interesting to Dolly however. But the speakers were interesting always; and she watched them, the play of sense and nonsense, of feeling and fun, not caring much that the matter of the talk did not concern her; until Mrs. Thayer and her escort were heard returning.

And then, indeed, the evening changed its character; however the fascination remained for Dolly. The talk was no longer on personal subjects; it went gaily and jovially over all sorts of light matters; an excellent supper was served; and in the novelty and the brightness and the liveliness of all about her, Dolly was in a kind of bewitchment. It was a lull, a pause in the midst of her cares, a still nook to which an eddy had brought her, out of the current; Dolly took the full benefit. She would not think of trouble. Sometimes a swift feeling of contrast swept in upon her, the contrast of her friend's safe and sheltered life. No care for her; no anxiety about ways and means; no need to work for money; and no need to fear for anybody dear to her. Christina's father was *her* guardian, not she his; he might be a very humdrum man, and no doubt was, but his daughter had no cause to be ashamed for him; had not the burden of his life and character on her own shoulders to take care of. A swift, keen feeling of this contrast would come over Dolly; but she put it away as instantly, and would not see or hear anything but what was pleasant.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NAPLES.

Dolly shared her friend's room. Talk ran on, all the while they were undressing, upon all manner of trifles. When they were laid down, however, and Dolly was just rejoicing to be quiet and think, Christina began to speak in a different tone.

"Dolly, how do you like him?"

I think, if Dolly had liked him less, she would have been fuller in his praise. I do not know by what sort of hidden instinct and unconscious diplomacy she answered very coolly and with no enthusiasm.

"I like him very well. I think he is true."

"True! Of course he is true. If he wouldn't be so stupid. To expect one to be unlike all the world."

Dolly was silent.

"He's crochetty, that's what he is," Christina went on. "I hate a man to be crochetty. I shall work him out of it, if ever we come to live together."

"I don't believe you will, Christina."

"Why not?"--quickly.

"I don't *think* you will," Dolly repeated.

"Because you have the same notions that he has. My dear little Dolly! you don't know the world. You *can't* live in the world and be running your head perpetually against it; indeed you cannot. You may break your head, but you won't do anything else. And the world will laugh at you."

"But, Christina, whom do you serve? For it comes to that."

"Whom do I serve! Pooh, that's not the question."

"It comes to that, Christina."

"Well, of course there is but one answer. But Sandie would have me give up everything;--everything!--all I like, and all I want to do."

"Christina, it seems to me the Bible says we must give Christ our whole selves."

"Oh, if you are going to take the Bible literally"----

"How else can you take it?"

"Seasonably."

"But how are you going to settle what is reasonable? Didn't the Lord know what He wanted His people to do? And He said we must give Him ourselves and all we have got."

"Have you?" said Christina.

"What?"

"Given up all, as you say?"

"I think I have," Dolly answered slowly. "I am sure, Christina, I do not want anything but what God chooses to give me."

"And are you ready to give up all your own pleasure and amusement, and your time, and be like no one else, and have no friends in the world?" Christina spoke the words in a kind of hurry.

"You go too fast," said Dolly. "You ask too many things at once; and you forget what Mr. Shubrick said--that it is pleasure to please our Master. *He* said it was His meat to do His Father's will; and He is our pattern. And doing His will does not prevent either pleasure or amusement, of the right sort; not at all. O Christina! I do not think anybody is rightly happy, except those who love Christ and obey him."

"Are you happy?" was the next quick question. Dolly could not answer it as immediately.

"If I am not," she said at last, "it is because there are some things in my life just now that--trouble me."

"Dear Dolly!" said Christina affectionately. "But you looked quite happy this evening."

"I was," said Dolly. "You made me so."

Christina kissed her, and thereupon at once fell asleep. But Dolly was not sleepy. Her thoughts were wide awake, and roved over everything in the world, it seemed to her; at least over all her friend's affairs and over all her own. She was not fretting, only looking at things. Christina's ease and security and carelessness, her own burdens and responsibilities; the fulness of means here, the difficulty of getting supplies in her own household; Sandie Shubrick, finally, and Lawrence St. Leger! What a strange difference between one lot and another! It was a bright night; the moonlight streamed in at one of the windows in a yellow flood. Dolly lay staring at the pool of light on the floor. Roman moonlight! And so the same moonlight had poured down in old times upon the city of the Caesars; lighted up their palaces and triumphal arches; yes, and the pile of the Colosseum and the bones of the martyrs. The same moonlight! Old Rome lay buried; the oppressor and the oppressed were passed away; the persecutor and his victims alike long gone from the scene of their doings and sufferings; and the same moon shining on! What shadows we are in comparison! thought Dolly; and then her thoughts instantly corrected themselves. Not we, but *this*, is the shadow; this material, so unchanging earth. Sense misleads us. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Then it is only to do that, thought Dolly; be it hard or easy; that is the only thing to care about. And therewith another word came to her; it seemed to be written in the moonlight:--"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" It came so soft and sweet upon Dolly's heart as I can hardly tell; her eyelids dropped from their watch, and in another minute she too was fast asleep.

The next day was wholly pleasant to her. It was merry, as Christmas ought to be; and Dolly had laid aside her own cares and took everything as light-heartedly as anybody else. More, perhaps, if the truth were known; for Dolly had laid her cares she knew where, and that they would be looked after. The pleasant people, whose festivities she shared, were all kind to her; she had not been forgotten in the gifts which were flying about; and altogether the day was a white one. It only ended too soon. At four o'clock Dolly prepared to go home. Christina protested that she was not wanted there.

"I am wanted more than you think. I must give mother a piece of my Christmas Day."

"Well, you're all coming to us at Sorrento, remember; and that will be charming. We will go everywhere together. And Sandie;—you will be with us, Sandie? in the spring, at the villa? Oh, you must!"

"If I possibly can," he said gravely.

"And Sandie will take you home now, as you must go. I see he is ready."

Dolly would have objected, but she could not alter this arrangement; and Mr. Shubrick walked home with her. It was a very matter-of-fact walk, however. There was as nearly as possible no conversation between the two. Nevertheless, the walk had its fascination for Dolly. The stately, straight, manly figure beside her, inspired her with an admiration which had a little awe mixed with it; to walk with him, even in silence, was an undoubted pleasure; and when he took leave of her at the door of her lodgings and turned away, Dolly felt, and not till then, that her holiday was over.

She went up the stairs slowly. Her short holiday was over. Now work again. Well! Dolly remembered the conclusion of last night's thoughts in the moonlight; took up her burden on her shoulders, and carried it up stairs with her.

She found her mother alone.

"Dearest mother, how do you do?" she said, kissing her; "and how has the day been? I have stayed away pretty late, but I could hardly help it; and I have had a very nice time."

"I don't like holidays," was Mrs. Copley's answer. "They're the wearisomest days I know; especially when every one else is out and enjoying himself. This Christmas has been a year long, seems to me. Who did you see?"

"Just themselves, and Christina's friend, Mr. Shubrick."

"What's he like?"

"He's very fine, mother, I think. Christina ought to be a happy woman."

"He hasn't got anything, as I understand?" said Mrs. Copley. "I don't think Mrs. Thayer is at all delighted with the match. I know I shouldn't be."

"Mrs. Thayer does not see things with my eyes, probably; and you don't see them at all, mother, dear, not knowing Mr. Shubrick. Look at my presents; see this lovely cameo ring; Christina gave it to me Christmas Eve; and this brooch is from Mrs. Thayer; and Mr. Thayer gave me this dear little bronze lamp."

"What do you want with such a thing as that? you can't use it."

"Oh, for the antique beauty, mother; and the lovely shape. It's real bronze, and Mr. Thayer says the workmanship is very fine."

"But he has nothing, has he?" said Mrs. Copley, weighing the bronze lamp in her hand disapprovingly.

"Who? He has another just like it. Do you mean Mr. Thayer?"

"Pshaw, child, no! I mean the other man, Christina's intended. He has nothing, has he?"

"I do not know what you call 'nothing.' He has a very fine figure, an excellent face, sense and firmness and gentleness; and a manner that's fascinating. I never saw anybody with a finer manner. I think he has a good deal."

"Mr. St. Leger has all that, Dolly, and money to boot."

"Mother! There is all the difference in the world between the two men."

"St. Leger has the money, though; and that makes more difference than anything else I know of. Dolly, I *wish* you would make up your mind. I think that would bring your father all right."

"Where is father, mother?"

"Gone out."

"But I thought he would stay with you while I was away. Couldn't you keep him at home, mother? just this one day?"

"I never try to influence your father's motions, Dolly. I never did. And it would be no use. Men do not bear that sort of thing."

"What sort of thing?"

"Interference. They never do. No man of any spunk does. They are all alike in that."

"Do you mean that no man will give up any of his pleasure for a woman that he loves, and that loves him?"

"While men are just in love, Dolly, and before they are married, they will make fools of themselves; and for a little while after. Then things fall into their regular train; and their regular train is as I tell you. Let a man alone, if you want to keep the peace and have a comfortable time, Dolly. *I never* interfere with your father. I never did."

Would it have been better if she had? Dolly queried. *She* must interfere with him now, and it was hard. Dolly thought the wife might have done it easier than the daughter. She did not believe her father was looking up antiquities; she had not faith in his love of art; he could be on no good errand, she greatly feared. Christmas Day! and he would go out and leave his nervous, invalid wife to count her fingers in solitude; not even waiting till Dolly should be at home again. *Are* all men like that? Mr. Shubrick, for instance? But what was to be done? If Mr. Copley had found places and means of dissipation in Rome, then Rome was a safe abode for him no longer. Where would be a safe abode? Dolly's heart was bitter in its sorrow for a moment; then she gathered herself up.

"Mother, do you like Rome?"

"Why should I like it? I think we came away from Venice a great deal too soon. You would come, Dolly. There is nothing here, for me, but old tumbledown places; and the meals are not near so good as we had there in Venice. No, I'm sick and tired of Rome. I'm glad you've had a good Christmas Day; it's been forlorn to me."

"I won't go again from you, mother. Will you like to make a visit to the Thayers at their villa?"

"I don't know. Is Mr. St. Leger invited?"

"Particularly."

"And the other man?"

"What other man?" said Dolly, laughing.

"You know,--Christina's man."

"He is asked. I do not know about his coming. He would if he could, he said. Why? do you want to see him?"

"No."

It was well on in the evening before Mr. Copley made his appearance. And then he was taciturn and not in an agreeable temper. The worse for wine he was not, in one sense; he was in no measure overcome by it; but Dolly knew that he had been taking it somewhere. O fathers! she thought, if you are not to "provoke your children to anger," neither ought you to drive them to despair; and you ought never, never, to let them blush for you! That I should be ashamed for *my father!*

She said nothing that night but what was in the way of sweetest ministry to both father and mother. She talked of all that she had seen and done during her visit. She got out a supper of fruit, and would have them eat it. Not very easy work, for her father was glum and her mother unresponsive; but she did what could be done. Next day she proposed going on to Sorrento.

"It does not agree very well with mother here; at least I do not think she is gaining; and she does not enjoy it."

"You enjoy it, don't you?"

"Oh yes; as far as that goes. But I care more for mother and you."

"And I care for you, Dolly. No, no; we are old people; it doesn't signify a rush whether we like it or no. You are young, and you are here for once, in Rome, and I am not going away till you've seen it fairly. Don't you say so, mother, hey? Now she has got a good chance, she must use it."

"I'm afraid it's expensive," put in Mrs. Copley.

"Nonsense; no more than anywhere else. It'll be just about the same thing at Sorrento, or wherever you go. See all you can, Dolly. We'll stay."

"I should think you would send Rupert home, at least," said his wife rather disconsolately; but true to her principles she put in no objection to her husband's pleasure. "We might save so much."

"We shouldn't save anything. Rupert makes himself very useful; if we had not him, we should want some rogue of a courier. I'll keep Rupert. How he enjoys it, the dog!"

Rupert was invaluable to Dolly, though she said nothing about it. Always ready to attend upon her, always devoted to her wishes, her intelligent companion, and her most faithful and efficient servant in making purchases of drawing materials or in disposing of her finished work. Dolly attempted to overrule the decision made ostensibly in her favour, that their stay in Rome should be prolonged; but had no success. Everybody, except only her mother, was against her. And though she feared sadly that her father's motive was twofold and regarded his own pleasure more than hers, she could not change the present status of things.

They remained at Rome all winter. It was a winter of mingled delight and distress to Dolly; strangely mingled. The immediate money cares were lifted off; that was one thing. The family lived cheaply, and gave themselves few indulgences, but the bills were paid, somehow; and it was a perpetual indulgence only to be in Rome. How Dolly took the good of it, I have not room to describe. She was busy, too; she even worked hard. Before the Thayers went away, she had taken all their portraits; and with so much acceptance that they introduced her to other friends; and Dolly's custom grew to be considerable. It paid well, for her pictures were really exquisite. Her great natural gift had been trained judiciously, so far as it was trained at all, in America; and now necessity spurred her, and practice helped her, and habitually conscientious work lost no time, and maturing sense and feeling added constant new charm to her performances, discernment to her eye, and skill to her hand. Dolly was accumulating a little stock of money against a time of need; and the secret knowledge of this was a perpetual comfort.

And when she gave herself play-time, how she played! Then, with her father if she could get him, or with Rupert if, as most often was the case, Mr. Copley was out of the way or indisposed for sight-seeing, Dolly went about the old city, drinking in pleasure; revelling in historical associations, which were always a hobby of hers; feasting with untiring enjoyment on the wonders of architecture old and new; or in churches and galleries losing herself in rapt ecstasy before this or that marvel of the painter's art. It was a wonderful winter to Dolly. Many a young lady has passed the same season in the same place, but it is only one here and there who finds the hundredth part of the mental food and delectation that Dolly found. Day by day she was growing, and knew it; in delicacy of appreciation, in tenderness of feeling, in power of soul to grasp, in largeness of heart to love, in courage to do and suffer. For all Dolly's studying and enjoying she did in the light of Bible truth and the enriching of heavenly influences; and so, in pictures of the old masters and creations of the grand architects of old and new time, she found truth and teaching and testimony utterly missed by those who have not the right key. It is the same with nature and with all the great arts; for Truth is one; and if you are quite ignorant of her in her highest and grandest revelations, you cannot by possibility understand the more subordinate and initiative. Some dim sense of the hidden mystery, some vague appreciation of the outward beauty of the language without getting at its expressed meaning, or but very partially, just so far as you have the key; that is all there is for you.

In all Dolly's horizon there was but one cloud. Lawrence was one of the company, it is true, almost one of the family; treated with greatest consideration and familiarity by both father and mother. But Dolly was not a weak young woman. She knew her own mind, and she had given Lawrence to know it; she was in no confusion about him, and her conscience was clear. Lawrence was also enjoying Rome, after his own fashion; if he was staying for her, Dolly did not know it, and it was not her fault.

So her one only shadow upon the brightness at Rome came from her father. Not that he went into any great excesses; or if he did, they were hidden from Dolly; but he indulged himself, she knew, in one at least of his mischievous pleasures. She had no reason to suppose that he gambled; as I said, there was always money to discharge the weekly bills; but he found wine somewhere and drank it; that was certain; and when did ever evil habits stand still? If he kept within bounds now, who should warrant her that he would continue to do so? Mr. Copley came home

sometimes cheerful and disposed to be merry; he had taken only enough to exhilarate him; at other times he came home gloomy and cross, and then Dolly knew he had drunk enough to confuse his head and slightly disturb his conscience. What could she do? She clenched her little hands sometimes when she was walking the streets, and sometimes she wrung them in impotent grief. She strove to win her father to share in her pleasures; with little success. She was lovely to him as a daughter could be, always; and at the same time she let him see by her grave face and subdued manner when he came home with the breath of wine upon his lips, that she was troubled and grieved. What more could she do? So her winter was a complication of great enjoyment with anxiety and mortification.

About the end of March they left the delightful old city and set off southwards. To Sorrento, was Dolly's fond hope. But when they got to Naples, she found that all the men of the party were against proceeding further, at least before the pleasures and novelties of that place had also been tasted.

"There's a famous museum here, Dolly," said her father. "You could not pass that?"

"And Pompeii--don't you want to see Pompeii?" cried Rupert.

"It will be pleasanter at Sorrento later in the season," said Lawrence; "much pleasanter. Wait till it grows warm here; then Sorrento will be delightful. We are taking everything just at the right time."

"And it is as beautiful here as you can find anything," added Mr. Copley. "You want to look at the bay of Naples, now you have the chance."

Yes, said Dolly to herself, and they say the wines are good at Naples too! But she gave up the question. They established themselves in a hotel.

"For how long, I wonder?" said Mrs. Copley to Dolly when they were alone. "It seems as if I wasn't going to get to Sorrento. I don't know what I expect there, either, I am sure; only we set out to go to Sorrento for my health; and here we are in Naples after five months of wandering and lounging about! and here we are going to stay, it seems."

"The wandering and lounging about was very good for you, mother, dear. You are a great deal improved in your looks."

"I wish I was in my feelings."

"You are, aren't you?"

"What does your father want to do in Naples?"

"I don't know. They all want to stay here a while, you see. And, mother, don't you enjoy this wonderful view?" For their windows commanded the bay.

"I'd rather see Boston harbour, by half."

"Oh, so would I!--on some accounts. But, mother, it is a great thing to see Naples."

"So your father thinks. Men never do know what they want; only it is always something they haven't got."

"We're in Naples, though, mother."

"We shan't be long."

"Well, we don't *want* to be here long, mother."

"I'd like to be still somewheres. Your father'd as lieve be anywhere else as at home; but I like to see my own fire burn. I don't know as I ever shall again. Unless you'll marry Mr. St. Leger, Dolly. That would bring all right, at one stroke." From which suggestion Dolly always escaped as fast as possible.

It turned out that they were to stay a good while at Naples. Perhaps Mr. Copley feared the seclusion of a private house at Sorrento. However that were, he seemed to find motives to detain him where he was, and Lawrence St. Leger was nothing loth. The days went by, till Dolly herself grew impatient. They went very much after the former manner, as far as the gentlemen were concerned; Lawrence found society, and Mr. Copley too, naturally, took pleasure in meeting a good many people to whom he was known. What other pleasure he took in their company Dolly could but guess; with him things went on very much as they had done in Rome.

With her, not. Dolly knew nobody, kept close by her mother, who eschewed all society, and so of course had no likenesses to paint. She worked busily at the other sort of painting which had engaged her in Venice; made lovely little pictures of Naples; rather of bits of Naples; characteristic bits; which were done with so much truth and grace that Rupert without difficulty disposed of them to the fancy dealers. The time of photographs was not yet; and Dolly made money steadily. She enjoyed this work greatly. Her other pleasures were found in walks about the city, and in visits to the museum. There was not in Naples the wealth of art objects which had been so inexhaustible in Rome; nevertheless, the museum furnished an interest all its own; and Dolly went there day after day. Indeed, the interest grew; and objects which at her first going she passed carelessly by, at the fourth or fifth she began to study with intent interest. The small bronzes found at Pompeii were pored over by her and Rupert till they almost knew the several pieces by heart, and had constructed over them a whole system of the ways of private life in those old days when they were made and used. Dolly often managed to persuade her father to be her escort when she went to the museum; and Mr. Copley would go patiently, for Dolly's sake, seeing the extreme delight it afforded her; but Mr. Copley was not always to be had, and then Dolly chose certain parts of the collection which she and Rupert could study together. So they gave a great deal of time to the collection of coins; not at first, but by degrees drawn on. So with the famous collection of antique bronzes. Rupert looked on these in the beginning with a depreciating eye.

"What's the fun here? I don't get at it," he remarked.

"O Rupert! the beauty of the things."

"They are what I call right homely. What a colour they have got. Is it damp, or what?"

"Don't you know? these dark ones come from Herculaneum, and were locked up in lava; the others, the greenish ones, are from Pompeii, where the covering was lighter and they were exposed to damp, as you say."

"Well, I suppose they are curious, being so ancient."

"Rupert, they are most beautiful."

But Rupert as well as Dolly found a mine of interest in the Greek and gladiatorial armour and weapons.

"It makes my head turn!" said Rupert.

"What?"

"Why, it is eighteen hundred years ago. To think that men lived and fought with those helmets and weapons and shields, so long back! and now here are the shields and helmets, but where are the men?"

Dolly said nothing.

"Do you think they are anywhere?"

"Certainly!" said Dolly, turning upon him. "As certainly as they wore that armour once."

"Where, then?"

"I can't tell you that. The Bible and the ancients call it Hades--the place of departed spirits."

"But here are their shields,--and folks come and look at them."

"Yes."

"It gives one a sort of queer feeling."

"Yes," said Dolly. "One of those helmets may have belonged to a conqueror, and another may have been unclasped from a dead gladiator's head. And it don't matter much to either of them now."

"It seems as if nothing in the world mattered much," said Rupert.

"It don't!" said Dolly quickly. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

"You think such a one is better off than the rest?" said Rupert. "How? You say the rest are living somewhere."

"Existing."

"What's the difference?"

"Just all the difference between light and darkness;--or between life and death. You would not call it living, if all joy and hope were gone out of existence; you would wish that existence could end."

"How do you know all about it so well, Miss Dolly?" the young man asked a little incredulously.

"Rupert, it begins in this world. I know a little of the difference now. I never was where all joy and hope were gone out of existence--though I have seen trouble," said Dolly gravely. "But I *do* know that nothing in this world is so good as the love of Christ; and that without Him life is not life."

"People seem to have a good time without it," said Rupert.

"For a little. How would they be, do you think, if all their pleasures were taken away?--their money, and all their money gets for them; friends and all?"

"Wretched dogs," said Rupert.

"But nobody in the world that loved Christ was ever that," Dolly said, smiling.

There was in her smile something so tender and triumphant at once, that it silenced Rupert. It was a testimony quite beyond words. For that instant Dolly's spirit looked out of the transparent features, and the light went to Rupert's heart like an arrow. Dolly moved on, and he followed, not looking at the gladiators' shields or Greek armour.

"Then, Miss Dolly," he burst out, after his thoughts had been seething a little while,--"if this world is so little count, what's the use of anything that men do? what's the good of studying--or of working--or of coming to look at these old things?--or of doing anything else, but just religion?"

Dolly's eyes sparkled, but she laughed a little.

"You cannot 'do' religion that way, Rupert," she said. "The old monks made a mistake. What is the use? Why, if you are going to be a servant of Christ and spend your life in working for Him, won't you be the very best and most beautiful servant you can? Do you think a savage has as much power or influence in the world as an educated, accomplished, refined man? Would he do as much, or do it as well? If you are going to give yourself to Christ, won't you make the offering as valuable and as honourable as you can? That is what you would do if you were giving yourself to a woman, Rupert. I know you would."

Rupert had no chance to answer, for strangers drew near, and Dolly and he passed on. Perhaps he did not wish to answer.

There were other times when Dolly visited the museum with her father. Then she studied the frescoes from Pompeii, the marble sculptures, or sat before some few of the pictures in the collections of the old masters. Mr. Copley was patient, admiring her if he admired nothing else; but even he did admire and enjoy some of the works of art in which the museum is so rich; and one day he and Dolly had a rare bit of talk over the collection of ancient glass. Such hours made Dolly only the more grieved and distressed when she afterwards perceived that her father had been solacing himself with other and very much lower pleasures.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SORRENTO.

It was not till the end of May that they got away from Naples. Mrs. Copley was long tired of her stay there, and even, she said, tired of the bay! Dolly was glad to have her father at a distance from hotels and acquaintances, even though but for a time; and the gentlemen liked moving, as men always do. So the little party in the carriage were in very

good spirits and harmony. Rupert had gone on before with the luggage, to make sure that all was right about the rooms and everything ready. They were engaged in the house to which Lady Brierley's housekeeper had given them the address.

The day was one of those which travellers tell us of in the south of Italy, when spring is in its glory or passing into summer. In truth, the weather was very warm; but Dolly at least never regarded that, in her delight at the views presented to her. After Castellamare was passed, and as the afternoon wore on, her interest grew with every step. Villages and towns, rocks and trees, were steeped in a wonderful golden light; vineyards and olive groves were etherealised; and when they drew near to Meta, and the plain of Sorrento opened before them, Dolly hung out of the carriage almost breathless.

"Is it better than the bay of Naples?" asked Lawrence, smiling.

"I am not comparing," said Dolly. "But look at the trees! Did you ever see such beautiful woods?"

"Hardly woods, are they?" said Lawrence. "There's variety, certainly."

"Said to be a very healthy place," remarked Mr. Copley. "I envy you, Dolly. You can get pleasure out of a stick, if it has leaves on it. Naturally, the plain of Sorrento---- But this sun, I confess, makes me wish for the journey's end."

"That is not far off, father. Yonder is Sorrento."

And soon the carriage rolled into the town, and turning then aside brought them to a house on the outskirts of the place, situated on a rocky cliff overhanging the shore of the sea. Rupert met them at the gate, and announced a neat house, civil people, comfortable lodgings, and dinner getting ready.

"I only hope they will not give us macaroni with tomatoes," said Mrs. Copley. "I am so tired of seeing macaroni with tomatoes."

"Don't mind for to-day, mother, dear," said Dolly. "We'll have it all right to-morrow."

The rooms were found so pleasant, bright and clean, that even Mrs. Copley was satisfied. The dinner, which was ready for them as soon as they were ready for it, proved also excellent; with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit. Till the meal was over, Dolly had scarce a chance to see where she was; but then she left the others at the table and went out at the open glass door upon a piazza which extended all along the sea front of the house. Here she stood still and cried to the others to follow her. The house was built, as I said, like many houses in Sorrento, on the edge of a rocky cliff, from which there was fair, unhindered view over the whole panorama of sea and land. The sun was descending the western sky, and the flood of Italian light seemed to transfigure the world. Between the verandah and the absolute edge of the rocks, the space was filled with beds of flowers and shrubbery; and a little a one side, so as not to interrupt the view, were fig-trees and pomegranate-trees and olives. Dolly ran down the steps into the garden, and the rest of the party could not but come after her. Dolly's face was flushed with delight.

"Did anybody ever see such colours before?" she cried. "Oh, the colours! Look at the blue of the water, down there in the shade; and then see that delicious green beyond, set off by its fringe of white foam; and then where the sun strikes, and where the clouds are reflected."

"It is just what you have been seeing in the bay of Naples," said Mrs. Copley.

"And Vesuvius, mother! Do look at Vesuvius; how noble it is from here, and in this light."

"We had Vesuvius at Naples too," said Mrs. Copley. "It is a wonder to me how people can be so fond of being near it, when you never know what tricks it will play you."

"Mother, dear, the lava *never* comes so far as this, in the worst eruptions."

"The fact that it never did does not prove what it may do some time."

"You are not afraid of it, surely?" said Mr. Copley.

"No," said his wife. "But I have no pleasure in looking at anything that has done, and is going to do, so much mischief. It seems to me a kind of monster."

"You cannot be fond of the sea, at that rate, Mrs. Copley," Lawrence observed.

"No, you are right," she said. "The only thing I like about it is, that it is the way home."

"You don't want to see the way home just now, my dear," said Mr. Copley. "You have but now got to the place of your desires."

"If you ask me what that is, it is Boston," said Mrs. Copley.

But, however, for a while she did take satisfaction in the quiet and beauty and sweet air of Sorrento. Dolly revelled in it all. She was devoted to her mother and her mother's pleasure, it is true; and here as at Rome and Naples she was thus kept a good deal in the house. Nevertheless, here, at Sorrento, she tempted her mother to go out. A little carriage was procured to take her to the edge of one of the ravines which on three sides enclose the town; and then Dolly and her mother, with Rupert's help, would wind their way down amid the wilderness of lovely vegetation with which the sides and bottom of the ravine were grown. At the bottom of the dell they would provide Mrs. Copley with a soft bed of moss or a convenient stone to rest upon; while the younger people roved all about, gathering flowers, or finding something for Dolly to sketch, and coming back ever and anon to Mrs. Copley to show what they had found or tell what they had seen; and Mrs. Copley for the time forgot her ills, and even forgot Boston, and was amused, and enjoyed the warm air and the luxuriant and sweet nature of Italy. Sometimes Lawrence came instead of Rupert; and Dolly did not enjoy herself so well. But Lawrence was at his own risk now; she could not take care of him. Except by maintaining her calm, careless, disengaged manner; and that she did. There were other times when Dolly and Rupert went out in a boat on the sea. Steps in the rock led immediately down from the garden to the shore; on the shore were fishermen's huts, and a boat was always to be had. Long expeditions by water could not be undertaken, for Mrs. Copley could not be tempted out on the sea, and she might not be long left alone; but there were lovely hours, when Rupert rowed the boat over the golden and purple waves, when all the air seemed rosy and all the sea enamelled, and the sky and the clouds (as Rupert said) were as if they had come out of a fairy book; every colour was floating there and sending down a paradise of broken rainbows upon water and land and the heads of the two pleasure-takers.

But even at Sorrento there was a shadow over Dolly.

For the first weeks the gentlemen, that is, Mr. Copley and his supposed secretary, made numerous excursions. Mrs. Copley utterly declined to take part in anything that could be called an excursion; and Dolly would not go without her. Lawrence and Mr. Copley therefore went whither they would alone, and saw everything that could be seen within two or three days of Sorrento; for they were gone sometimes as long as that. They took provisions with them; and Dolly sadly feared, nay, she knew, that wines formed a large part of their travelling stock on these occasions; she feared, even, no small part of the attraction of them. Mr. Copley generally came back not exactly the same as when he went; there was an indescribable look and air which made Dolly's heart turn cold; a disreputable air of license, as if he had been indulging himself in spite of strong pledges given, and in disregard of gentle influences that were trying to deter him. And when he had not been on excursions, Dolly often knew that he had found his favourite beverage somewhere and was a trifle the worse for it. What could she do? she asked herself with a feeling almost of desperation. She had done all she knew; what remained? Her father was well aware how she felt. Yet no! not that. He could not have the faintest conception of the torture he gave his daughter by making her ashamed of him, nor of the fearful dread which lay upon her of what his habit of indulgence might end in. If he *had*, Mr. Copley could not, at this stage of things at least, have borne it. He must have yielded up anything or borne anything, rather than that she should bear this. But he was a man, and could not guess it; if he had been told, he would not have understood it; so he had his pleasure, and his child's heart was torn with sorrow and shame.

There came a day at last when in their lodgings Mr. Copley called for a bottle of wine at dinner. Dolly's heart gave a great jump.

"O father, we do not want wine!" she cried pleadingly.

"I do," said Mr. Copley, "and St. Leger does. Nonsense, my dear! no gentleman takes his dinner without his wine. Isn't it so, Lawrence?"

And the wine was brought, and the two gentlemen helped themselves. Mrs. Copley accepted a little; Rupert,--Dolly looked to see what he would do,--Rupert quietly put it by.

So it had come to this again. Not all her prayers and tears and known wishes could hold her father back from his desire. The desire must already be very strong! Dolly kept her composure with difficulty. She ate no more dinner. And it was a relief to thoughts she could scarcely bear, when Rupert in the evening asked her to go out and take a row on the

water.

Such an evening as it was! Dolly ran gladly down the rocky steps which led to the shore, and eagerly followed Rupert into the boat. She thought to escape from her trouble for a while. Instead of that, when the boat got away from the shore, and Dolly was floating on the crimson and purple sea, with a flush of crimson and purple sent down upon her from the clouds, and everything in the world glowing with colour or tipped with gold,—her face as she gazed into the glory took such an expression of wan despair, that Rupert forgot where he was. Greatly he longed to say something to break up that look; and could not find the words. The beauty and the peace of the external world wrought, as it sometimes does, by the power of contrast; and had set Dolly to thinking of her father and of his and her very doubtful future. What would become of him if his present manner of life went on?—and what would become of his wife and of her? What could she do, more than she had done, in vain? Dolly tried to think, and could not find. Suddenly, by some sweet association of rays of light, there came into her mind the night before Christmas, and the moonshine in Christina's room, and the words that were so good to her then. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Yes, thought Dolly,—that is sure. Nothing can come between. Nothing can take *that* joy from me; "neither death nor life; nor things present, nor things to come." But, oh! I wish my father and mother had it too!—With that came a rush of tears to her eyes; she turned her face away from Rupert so that he might not see them. Had she done anything, made any efforts, to bring them to that knowledge? With her mother, yes; with her father, no. It had seemed hopelessly difficult. How could she set about it? As she pondered this question, Rupert saw that the expression of her face had changed, and now he ventured to speak.

"Miss Dolly, you set me a thinking in Rome."

"Did I?" said Dolly, brightening. "About what?"

"And in Naples you drove the nail further in."

"What nail? what are you talking about, Rupert?"

"Do you remember what you said when we were coming from the Capitoline Museum? We were looking at the Colosseum."

"I do not recollect."

"I do. You drove the nail in then; and when we were in Naples, at the museum there, you gave it another hit. It's in now."

Dolly could not help laughing.

"You are quite a riddle, Rupert. I make nothing of it."

"Miss Dolly, I've been thinking that I will go home."

"Home?" And Dolly's face now grew very grave indeed.

"Yes. I've been splitting my head thinking; and I've about made up my mind. I think I'll go home." Rupert was very serious too, and pulled the oars with a leisurely, mechanical stroke, which showed he was not thinking of *them*.

"What home? London, do you mean?"

"Well, not exactly. I should think not! No, I mean Boston, or Lynn rather. There's my old mother."

"Oh!—your mother," said Dolly slowly. "And she is at Lynn. Is she *alone* there?"

"She's been alone ever since I left her; and I'm thinking that's what she hadn't ought to be."

Dolly paused. The indication seemed to be, that Rupert was taking up the notion of duty; duty towards others as well as pleasure for himself; and a great throb of gladness came up in her heart, along with the sudden shadow of what was not gladness.

"I think you are quite right, Rupert," she said soberly. "Then you are purposing to go back to Lynn to take care of her?"

"I set out to see the world and to be something," Rupert went on, looking thoughtfully out to sea;—"and I've done

one o' the two. I've seen the world. I don' know as I should ever be anything, if I staid in it. But your talk that day-- those days--wouldn't go out of my head; and I thought I'd give it up, and go home to my old mother."

"I'll tell you what I think, Rupert," said Dolly; "a man is a great deal more likely to come out right in the end and 'be something,' if he follows God's plan for him, than if he makes a plan for himself. Anyhow, I'd rather have that 'Well done,' by and by"---- She stopped.

"How's a man to find out God's plan for him?"

"Just the way you are doing. When work is set before you, take hold of it. When the Lord has some more for you He'll let you know."

"Then you think this *is* my work, Miss Dolly, to go home and take care of her? She wanted me to make a man of myself; and when Mr. Copley made me his offer, she didn't hold me back. But she cried some!"

"You cannot do another so manly a thing as this, Rupert. I wouldn't let her cry any more, if I were you."

"No more I ain't a-goin' to," said the young man energetically. "But, Miss Dolly"----

"What?"

"Do you think it is my duty, because I do one thing, to do t'other? Do you think I ought to take to shoemaking?"

"Why to shoemaking, Rupert?"

"Well, my father was a shoemaker. They're all shoemakers at Lynn, pretty much."

"That is no reason why you should be. Your education, the education you have got since you came over to this side, has fitted you for something else, if you like something else better."

"That's just what I do!" said Rupert with emphasis. "But I could make a good living that way--I was brought up to it, you see;--and I s'pose *she'd* like me to take up the old business; but I feel like driving an awl through a board whenever I think of it."

"I wouldn't do it, Rupert, if I could do something I was more fit for. People always do things best that they like to do. I think the choice of a business is your affair. Do what you can do best. But I'd make shoes rather than do nothing."

"I don't know what I am fit for," said Rupert, evidently relieved, "but--oh yes, I would *cobble* shoes rather than do nothing. I don't want to eat idle bread. Then I'll go."

"Your experience here, in London and on this journey, will not have been lost to you," Dolly observed.

"It's been the best thing ever happened to me, this journey," said the young man. "And you've done me more good, Miss Dolly, than anybody in this world,--if it ain't my mother."

"I? I am very glad. I am sure you have done a great deal for me, Rupert."

"You have put me upon thinking. And till a fellow begins to think, he ain't much more good than a cabbage."

"When will you go, Rupert? I wish we were going too!"

"Well, I guess my old mother has sat lookin' for me long enough. I guess I'll start pretty soon."

"Will you?" said Dolly. "But not before we have made our visit to Mrs. Thayer's villa? We are going there next week."

"I'll start then, I guess."

"And not go with us to the Thayers'?"

"I guess not."

"Didn't they invite you?"

"Not a bit of it! Took good care not, I should say."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, Miss Dolly, Mrs. Thayer was standing two feet from me and asking Mr. St. Leger, and she didn't look my way till she had got through and was talking of something else; and then she looked as if I had been a pane of glass and she was seeing something on the other side--as I suppose she was."

Dolly was silent for a few minutes and then she said, "How I shall miss you, Rupert!"--and tears were near, though she would not let them come.

And Rupert made no answer at all, but rowed the boat in.

Yes, Dolly knew she would miss him sadly. He had been her helper and standby and agent and escort and friend, in many a place now, and on many an occasion. He had done for her what there was no one else to do, ever since that first evening when he had made his appearance at Brierley and she had wished him away. So little do people recognise their blessings often at first sight. Now,--Dolly pondered as she climbed the cliff,--how would she get along without Rupert? How long would her father even be content to abide with her mother and her in their quiet way of living? she had seen symptoms of restlessness already. What should she do if he became impatient? if he left them to St. Leger's care and went back to London? or if he carried them off with him perhaps? To London again! And then afresh came the former question, what was there in her power, that might draw her father to take deeper and truer views of life and duty than he was taking now? A question that greatly bothered Dolly; for there was dimly looming up in the distance an answer that she did not like. To attack her father in private on the subject of religion, was a step that Dolly thought very hopeless; he simply would not hear her. But there was another thing she could do--could she do it? Persuade her father and mother to consent to have family prayer? Dolly's heart beat and her breath came quick as she passed through the little garden, sweet with roses and oleander and orange blossoms. How sweet the flowers were! how heavenly fair the sky over her head! So it ought to be in people's hearts, thought Dolly;--so in mine. And if it were, I should not be afraid of anything that was right to do. And this *is* right to do.

Dolly avoided the saloon where the rest of the family were, and betook herself to her own room; to consider and to pray over her difficulties, and also to get rid of a few tears and bring her face into its usual cheerful order. When at last she went down, she found her mother alone, but her father almost immediately joined them. The windows were open towards the sea, the warm, delicious air stole in caressingly, the scent of roses and orange blossoms and carnations filled the house and seemed to fill the world; moonlight trembled on the leaves of the fig-tree, and sent lines of silver light into the room. The lamp was lowered and Mrs. Copley sat doing nothing, in a position of satisfied enjoyment by the window.

As Dolly came in by one door, Mr. Copley entered by another, and flung himself down on a chair; his action speaking neither enjoyment nor satisfaction.

"Well!" said he. "How much longer do you think you can stand this sort of thing?"

"What sort of thing, father?"

"Do you sit in the dark usually?"

"Come here, father," said Dolly, "come to the window and see the moonshine on the sea. Do you call that dark?"

"Your father never cared for moonshine, Dolly," said Mrs. Copley.

"No, that's true," said Mr. Copley with a short laugh. "Haven't you got almost enough of it?"

"Of moonshine, father?"

"Yes--on the bay of Sorrento. It's a lazy place."

"You have not been very lazy since you have been here," said his wife.

"Well, I have seen all there is to be seen; and now I am ready for something else. Aren't you?"

"But, father," said Dolly, "I suppose, just because Sorrento is what you call a lazy place it is good for mother."

"Change is good for her too--hey, wife?"

"You will have a change next week, father; you know we are going for that visit to the Thayers."

"We shall not want to stay there long," said Mr. Copley; "and then we'll move."

Nobody answered. Dolly looked out sorrowfully upon the beautiful bright water. Sorrento had been a place of peace to her. Must she go so soon? The scent of myrtles and roses and oranges came in bewilderingly at the open window, pleading the cause of "lazy" Sorrento with wonderfully persuasive flatteries. Was there any other place in the world so sweet? Dolly clung to it, in heart; yearned towards it; the glories of the southern sun were what she had never imagined, and she longed to stay to enjoy and wonder at them. The fruits, the flowers, the sunny air, the fulness and variedness of the colouring on land and sea, the leisure and luxury of bountiful nature,--Dolly was loath, loath to leave them all. No other Sorrento, she was ready to believe, would ever reveal itself to her vision; and she shrank a little from the somewhat rough way she had been travelling before and must travel again. And now in the further way, Rupert, her helper and standby, would not be with her. Then again came the words of Christmas Eve to her--"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"--and with the words came the recollection of the new bit of service Dolly had found to do in her return and answer to that love. Yet she hesitated, and her heart began to beat faster, and she made no move until her father began to ask if it were not time to leave the moonlight and go to bed. Dolly came from the window, then to the table where the lowered lamp stood.

"Mother and father, I should like to do something," she said with an interrupted breath. "Would you mind--may I--will you let me read a chapter to you before we go?"

"A chapter of what?" said her father; though he knew well enough.

"The Bible."

There was a pause. Mrs. Copley stirred uneasily, but left the answer for her husband to give. It came at last, coldly.

"There is no need for you to give yourself that trouble, my dear. I suppose we can all read the Bible for ourselves."

"But not as a family, father?"

"What do you mean, Dolly?"

"Father, don't you think we ought together, as a family,--don't you think we ought to read the Bible together? It concerns us all."

"It's very kind of you, my daughter; but I approve of everybody managing his own affairs," Mr. Copley said, as he rose and lounged, perhaps with affected carelessness, out of the room. Dolly stood a moment.

"May I read to you, mother?"

"If you like," said Mrs. Copley nervously; "though I don't see, as your father says, why we cannot every one read for ourselves. Why did you say that to your father, Dolly? He didn't like it."

Dolly made no reply. She knelt down by the low table to bring her Bible near the light, and read a psalm, her voice quivering a little. She wanted comfort for herself, and half unconsciously she chose the twenty-seventh psalm.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Her voice grew steady as she went on; but when she has finished, her mother was crying.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT THE VILLA.

The place inhabited by the Thayers was a regular Italian villa. It had not been at all in order that suited English notions of comfort, or American either; when they moved in; but they had painted and matted and furnished, and filled the rooms with pretty things, pictures and statues and vases and flowers; till it looked now quite beautiful and festive. Its situation was perfect. The house stood high, on the shore overlooking the sea, with a full view of Vesuvius, and it was surrounded with a paradise of orange-trees, fig-trees, pomegranates, olives, oaks and oleanders, with roses and a multitude of other flowers; in a wealth of sweetness and luxuriance of growth that northern climes know nothing of. The reception the visitors met with was joyous.

"I am so glad you are come!" cried Christina, as she carried off Dolly through the hall to her particular room. "That bad boy, Sandie, has not reported yet; but he will come; and then we will go everywhere. Have you been everywhere already?"

"I have been nowhere. I have staid with mother, and she wanted to be quiet."

"Well, she can be quiet now with my mother; they can take care of each other. And you have not been to Capri?"

"No."

"Just think of it! How delightful! You have not seen the Grotta azzurra?"

"I have seen nothing."

"Nor the grotto of the Sirens? You have seen *that*? It was so near."

"No, I have not. I have been nowhere; only with mother to gather ferns and flowers in the dells around Sorrento. We used to take mother in a donkey cart--a calessino--to the edge of the side of the dell, and then help her down, and get loads of flowers and ferns. It was very pleasant."

"I wish Sandie would only come--the tiresome fellow! There's no counting on him. But he will come. He said he would if he could, and he can of course. I suppose you have not visited Paestum yet then?"

"I believe father went there. We did not."

"Nor we, yet. I don't care so much--only I like to keep going--but father is crazy to see the ruins. You know the ruins are wonderful. Do you care for ruins?"

"I believe I do," said Dolly, smiling, "when the ruins are of something beautiful. And those Greek temples--oh, I *should* like to see them."

"I would rather see beautiful things when they are perfect; not in ruins; ruins are sad, don't you think so?"

"I suppose they ought to be," said Dolly, laughing now. "But somehow, Christina, I believe the ruins give me more pleasure than if they were all new and perfect--or even old and perfect. It is a perverse taste, I suppose, but I do."

"Why? They are not so handsome in ruins."

"They are lovelier."

"Lovely!--for old ruins! I can understand papa's enthusiasm; he's a kind of antiquity worshipper; but you--and 'lovely!'"

"And interesting, Christina. Ruins tell of so much; they are such grand books of history, and witnesses for things gone by. But beautiful--oh yes, beautiful beyond all others, if you talk of buildings. What is St. Peter's, compared to the Colosseum?"

Christina stared at her friend. "What is St. Peter's? A most magnificent work of modern art, I should say; and you compare it to a tumbledown old bit of barbarism. That's *too* like Sandie. Do you and your friend agree as harmoniously as Sandie and I? We ought to exchange."

"I have no 'friend,' as you express it," said Dolly, pulling her wayward, curling locks into a little more order. "Mr. St. Leger is nothing to me--if you are speaking of him."

"I am sure, if he told the truth, he would not say that of you," said Christina, looking with secret admiration at the

figure before her. It was a rare kind of beauty, not of the stereotyped or formal sort; like one of the dainty old vases of alabaster, elegant in form and delicate and exquisite in chiselling and design, with a pure inner light showing through. That was not the comparison in Christina's mind, and indeed she made none; but women's eyes are sometimes sharp to see feminine beauty; and she confessed that Dolly's was uncommon, not merely in degree but in kind. There was nothing conventional about it; there never had been; her curling hair took a wayward way of its own; her brown eyes had a look of thoughtfulness mingled with childlike innocence; they always had it more or less; now the wisdom was more sweet and the innocence more spiritual. Her figure and her manner were all in harmony, wearing unconscious grace and a very simple, free dignity.

"We cannot go to Paestum at this season of the year, they say," Christina began again, at a distance from her thoughts; "but one *can* go to the Punta di Campanella and Monte San Costanzo; and as soon as Sandie comes, we will. We will wait a day for him first."

Dolly was quite willing to wait for him; for, to tell the truth, one of her pleasures in the thought of this visit had been the possibility of seeing Mr. Shubrick again. She did not say so, however; and the two girls presently went back to the hall. This was a luxurious apartment, occupying the centre of the house; octagonal, and open to the outer world both at front and back. Warm and yet fresh air was playing through it; the odours of flowers filled it; the most commodious of light chairs and settees furnished it; and scattered about the wide, delicious space were the various members of the party. Mrs. Thayer and Mrs. Copley had been sitting together; just now, as the girls entered, Mrs. Thayer called St. Leger to her.

"I am delighted to see you here, Mr. St. Leger," she said graciously. "You know your father was a very old friend of mine."

"That gives me a sort of claim to your present kindness," said St. Leger.

"You might put in a claim to kindness anywhere," returned the lady. "Don't you get it, now, if you tell the truth?"

"I have no reason to complain--in general," said the young man, smiling.

"You are a little like your father. He was another. We were great cronies when I was a girl. In fact, he was an old beau of mine. We used to see a vast deal of each other;--flirting, I suppose you would call it; but how are young people to get along without flirting? I liked him very much, for I always had a fancy for handsome men; and if you ask him, he will tell you that I was handsome too at that time. Oh, I was! you may look at me and be incredulous; but I was a belle in those days; and I had a great many handsome men around me, and some not handsome.Was I English? No. You don't understand how I could have seen so much of your father. Well, never doubt a story till you have heard the whole of it. I was an American girl; but my father and mother were both dead, and I was sent to England, to be brought up by an aunt, who was the nearest relation I had in the world. She had married an Englishman and settled in England."

"Then we may claim you," said Lawrence. "To all intents and purposes you are English."

"Might have been," returned Mrs. Thayer. "The flirtation ran very high, I can tell you, between your father and me. He was a poor man then. I understand he has nobly recovered from that fault. Is it true? People say he is made of gold."

"There is no lack of the material article," Lawrence admitted.

"No. Well, the other sort we know he had, or this would never be true of him now. I did not look so far ahead then. There is no telling what would have happened, but for a little thing. Just see how things go. I might have married in England, and all my life would have been different; and then came along Mr. Thayer. And the way I came to know him was this. A cousin of mine in America was going to be married, and her friend was a friend of Mr. Thayer. Mr. Thayer was coming over to England, and my cousin charged him with a little piece of wedding cake in white paper to bring to me. Just that little white packet! and Mr. Thayer brought it, and we saw one another, and the end was, I have lived my life on the other side instead of on this side."

"It's our loss, I am sure," said St. Leger civilly.

"You are too polite to say it is mine, but I know you think so. Perhaps it is. At any rate, I was determined, and am determined, that my daughter shall see and choose for herself which hemisphere she will live in. What are you doing in Italy?"

"What everybody does in Italy, looking at the old and enjoying the new."

"Ah, that's what it is!" said Mrs. Thayer approvingly. "That is what one enjoys. But my husband is one of the other sort. We divide Italy between us. He looks at the marbles, and I eat the pomegranates. Do you like pomegranates? --No? I delight in them, and in everything else fresh and new and sweet and acid. But what I want to know, Mr. St. Leger, is--how come these old ruins to be so worth looking at? Hasn't the human race made progress? Can't we raise as good buildings now-a-days, and as good to see, as those old heathen did?"

"I suppose we can, when we copy their work exactly."

"But how is that? Christians ought to do better work than heathens. I do not understand it."

"No," said St. Leger, "I do not understand it."

"Old poetry--that's what they study so much at Oxford and Cambridge, and everywhere else;--and old pictures, and old statues. I think the world ought to grow wiser as it grows older. I believe it is prejudice. There's my husband crazy to go to Paestum,--I'm glad he can't; the marshes or something are so unhealthy; but I'm going to arrange for you an expedition to the Punta--Punta di something--the toe of the boot, you know; it's delightful; you go on donkeys, and you have the most charming views, and what I know you like better than anything,--the most charming opportunities for flirtation."

"It will have to be Miss Thayer and I then," said Lawrence. "Miss Copley does not know how."

"Nonsense! Don't tell me. Every girl does. She has her own way, I suppose. Makes it more piquant--and *piquing*."

Lawrence looked over towards the innocent face, so innocent of anything false, he knew, or even of anything ambiguous; a face of pure womanly nature, childlike in its naturalness, although womanly in its gravity. Perhaps he drew a swift comparison between a man's chances with a face of that sort, and the counter advantages of Christina's more conventional beauty. Mr. Thayer had sat down beside Dolly and was drawing her into talk.

"You are fond of art, Miss Copley. I remember we met you first in the room of the dying gladiator, in the Capitoline Museum. But everybody has to go to see the dying gladiator and the rest."

"I suppose so," said Dolly.

"I remember, though, I thought you were enjoying it."

"Oh, I was."

"I can always find out whether people really enjoy things. How many times did you go to see the gladiator? Let me see,--you were in Rome three months?"

"Nearer four."

"Four! Well, and how many times did you see the gladiator?"

"I don't quite know. Half a dozen times, I think. I went until I had got it by heart; and now I can look at it whenever I like."

"Humph!" said Mr. Thayer. "The only thing Christina wanted to see a second time was the mosaics; and those she did not get by heart exactly, but brought them away, a good many of them, bodily. And have you developed any taste for architecture during your travels?"

"I take great pleasure in some architecture," said Dolly.

"May I ask what instances? I am curious to see how our tastes harmonise."

"Ah, but I know nothing about it," said Dolly. "I am entirely--or almost entirely--ignorant; and you know and understand."

"Almost entirely?" said Mr. Thayer. "You have studied the subject?"

"A little," said Dolly, smiling and blushing.

"Do favour me. I am desirous to know what you have seen that particularly pleased you."

"The cathedral at Limburg."

"Limburg. Oh--ah! yes, it was *there* we first met you. I was thinking it was in the museum of the Capitol. Limburg. You liked that?"

"Very much!"

"Romanesque--or rather Transition."

"I do not know what Romanesque is, or Transition either."

"Did you notice the round arches and the pointed arches?"

"I do not remember. Yes, I do remember the round arches; but I was thinking rather of the effect of the whole."

"The church at Limburg shows a mixture of the round Romanesque and the pointed Gothic; Gothic was preparing; that sort of thing belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century. Well, that bespeaks very good taste. What next would you mention, Miss Dolly?"

"I don't know; I have enjoyed so many things. Perhaps I should say the Doge's palace at Venice."

"Ha! the Doge's palace, hey? You like the pink and white marble."

"Don't you, Mr. Thayer?"

"That's not what one looks for in architecture. What do you say to St. Peter's?"

"You will find a great deal of fault with me. I did not care for it."

"Not? It is Michael Angelo's work."

"But knowing the artist is no reason for admiring the work," said Dolly, smiling.

"You are very independent! St. Peter's! Not to admire St. Peter's!"

"I admired the magnificence, and the power, and a great many things; but I did not like the building. Not nearly so much as some others."

"Now I wish we could go to Paestum, and see what you would say to pure old Greek work. But it would be as much as our lives are worth, I suppose."

"Yes, Mr. Thayer," his wife cried; "don't talk about Paestum; they are going to-morrow to the point."

"The point? what point? the coast is full of points."

"The Punta di Campanella, papa," said Christina.

"I thought you were going to Capri?"

"We'll keep Capri till Sandie comes. He would be a help on the water. All our marine excursions we will keep until Sandie comes. I only hope he'll be good and come."

The very air seemed full of pleasant anticipations; and Dolly would have been extremely happy; was happy; until on going in to dinner she saw the wineglasses on the table, and bottles suspiciously cooling in water. Her heart sank down, down. If she had had time and had dared, she would have remonstrated; but yet what could she say? She knew, too, that the wine at Mr. Thayer's table, like everything else on it, would be of the best procurable; better and more alluring than her father could get elsewhere. In her secret heart there was a bitter unspoken cry of remonstrance. O friends! O friends!--she was ready to say,--do you know what you are doing? You are dropping sweet poison into my life; bitter poison; deadly poison, where you little think it; and you do it with smiles and coloured glasses! She could hardly eat her dinner. She saw with indescribable pain and a sort of powerless despair, how Mr. Copley felt the license of his friend's house and example, and how the delicacy of the vintages offered him acted to dull his conscience; Mr.

Thayer praising them and hospitably pressing his guest to partake. He himself drank very moderately and in a kind of mere matter-of-fact way; it was part of the dinner routine; and St. Leger tasted, as a man who knows indeed what is good, but also makes it a matter of no moment; no more than his bread or his napkin. Mr. Copley drank with eager gusto, and glass after glass; even, Dolly thought, in a kind of bravado. And this would go on every day while their visit lasted; and perhaps not at dinner only; there were luncheons, and for aught she knew, suppers. Dolly's heart was hot within her; so hot that after dinner she could not keep herself from speaking on the subject to Christina. Yet she must begin as far from her father as possible. The two girls were sitting on the bank under a fig-tree, looking out on the wonderful spectacle of the bay of Naples at evening.

"There is a matter I have been thinking a great deal about lately," she said, with a little heartbeat at her daring.

"I daresay," laughed Christina. "That is quite in your way. Oh, I do wish Sandie would come! He *ought* to be here."

"This is no laughing matter, Christina. It is a serious question."

"You are never anything but serious, are you?" said her friend. "If you have a fault, it is that, Dolly. You don't laugh enough."

Dolly was silent and swallowed her answer; for what did Christina know about it? *She* had not to watch over her father; her father watched over her. Presently she began again; her voice had a little strain in its tone.

"This is something for you and me to consider; for you and me, and other women who can do anything. Christina, did you ever think about the use of wine?"

"Wine?" echoed Miss Thayer, a good deal mystified. "The use of it? I don't know any use of it, except to give people, gentlemen, something to talk of at dinner. Oh, it is good in sickness, I suppose. What are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking of the harm it does," said Dolly in a low voice.

"Harm? What harm? You are not one of those absurd people I have heard of, who cut down their apple-trees for fear the apples will be made into cider?"

"I have no apple-trees to cut down," said Dolly. "But don't you know, Christina, that there is such a thing as drinking too much wine? and what comes of it?"

"Not among our sort of people," said Christina. "I know there are such things as drunkards; but they are in the lower classes, who drink whisky and gin. Not among gentlemen."

Dolly choked, and turned her face away to hide the eyes full of tears.

"Too much wine?" Christina repeated. "One may have too much of anything. Too much fire will burn up your house; yet fire is a good thing."

"That's only burning up your house," said Dolly sorrowfully.

"*Only* burning up your house! Dolly Copley, what are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking of something infinitely worse. I am thinking of a man losing his manhood; of families losing their stay and their joy, because the father, or the husband, or the brother, has lost himself!--gone down below his standing as an intellectual creature;--become a mere animal, given up to low pleasures which make him sink lower and lower in the scale of humanity. I am thinking of *his* loss and of *their* loss, Christina. I am thinking of the dreadfulness of being ashamed of the dearest thing you have, and the way hearts break under it. And don't you know that when the love of wine and the like gets hold of a person, it is stronger than he is? It makes a slave of him, so that he cannot help himself."

Christina's thoughts made a rapid flight over all the persons for whom Dolly could possibly fear such a fate, or in whom she could possibly have seen such an example. But Mr. St. Leger had the clear, fresh colour of perfect health and condition; Mr. Copley loved wine evidently, but drank it like a gentleman, and gave, to her eyes, no sign of being enslaved. What could Dolly be thinking of? Her mother was out of the question.

"I don't make out what you are at, Dolly," she said. "Such things do not happen in our class of society."

"Yes, they do. They happen in every class. And the highest ought to set an example to the lowest."

"No use if they did. Anyhow, Dolly, it is nothing you and I can meddle with."

"I think we ought not to have wine on our tables."

"Mercy! Everybody does that."

"It is offering temptation."

"To whom? Our friends are not that sort of people."

"How do you know but they may be? How can you tell but the taste or the tendency may be where you least think of it?"

"You don't mean that Mr. St. Leger has anything of that sort?" said Christina, facing round upon her.

"No more than other people, so far as I know. I am speaking in general, Christina. The thing is in the world; and we, I do think, we whose example would influence people,--I suppose everybody's example influences somebody else--I think we ought to do what we can."

"And not have wine on our dinner-tables!"

"Would that be so very dreadful?"

"It would be very inconvenient, I can tell you, and very disagreeable. Fancy! no wine on the table. No one could understand it. And how our dinner-tables would look, Dolly, with the wine-glasses and the decanters taken off! And then, what would people talk about? Wine is such a help in getting through with a dinner-party. People who do not know anything else, and cannot talk of anything else, can taste wine; and have plenty to say about its colour, and its *bouquet*, and its age, and its growth, and its manufacture, and where it can be got genuine, and how it can be adulterated. And so one gets through with the dinner quite comfortably."

"I should not want to see people who knew no more than that," said Dolly.

"Oh, but you must."

"Why?"

"And it does not do to be unfashionable."

"Why, Christina! Do you recollect what is said in the epistle of John--'The world knoweth us not'? I do not see how a Christian *can* be fashionable. To be fashionable, one must follow the ways of the world."

"Well, we must follow some of them," cried Christina, flaring up, "or people will not have anything to do with you."

"That's what Christ said,--'Because ye are not of the world, ... therefore the world hateth you.'"

"Do you like to have people hate you?"

"No; but rather that than have Jesus say I do not belong to Him."

"Dolly," said Christina, "you are *very* high-flown! That might just do for one of Sandie's speeches."

"I am glad Mr. Shubrick is such a wise man."

"He's just a bit too wise for me. You see, I am not so superior. I should like to take him down a peg. And I--will if he don't come soon."

He did not come in time for the next day's pleasure-party; so the young ladies had only Mr. St. Leger and Mr. Thayer to accompany them. Mrs. Copley "went on no such tramps," she said; and Mrs. Thayer avowed she was tired of them. The expedition took all day, for they went early and came back late, to avoid the central heat of midday. It was an extremely beautiful little journey; the road commanding a long series of magnificent views, almost from their first

setting out. They went on donkeys, which was a favourite way with Dolly; at Massa they stopped for a cup of coffee; they climbed Monte San Costanzo; interviewed the hermit and enjoyed the prospect; and finally settled themselves for as pleasant a rest as possible among the myrtles on the solitary point of the coast. From here their eyes had a constant regale. The blue Mediterranean spread out before them, Capri in the middle distance, and the beauties of the shore nearer by, were an endless entertainment for Dolly. Christina declared she had seen it all before; Mr. Thayer found nothing worthy of much attention unless it had antiquities to be examined; and the fourth member of the party was somewhat too busy with human and social interests to leave his attention free.

Mr. St. Leger had been now for a long time very unobtrusive in his attentions to Dolly, and Dolly partly hoped he had given her up; but that was a mistake. Perhaps he thought it was only a matter of time, for Dolly to get acquainted with him and accustomed to him; perhaps he thought himself sure of his game, if the fish had only line enough. Having the powerful support of Dolly's father and mother, all worldly interests on the side of his suit, a person and presence certainly unobjectionable, to say the least; how could a girl like Dolly, in the long run, remain unimpressed? He would give her time. Meanwhile, Mr. St. Leger was enjoying himself; seeing her daily and familiarly; he could wait comfortably. It would appear by all this that Lawrence was not an ardent man; but constitutions are different; there is an ardour of attack, and there is an ardour of persistence; and the latter, I think, belonged to him. Besides, he had sense enough to see that a too eager pressing of his cause with Dolly would ruin all. So he had waited, not discontentedly, and bided his time. Now, however, he began to think it desirable on many accounts to have the question decided. Mr. Copley would not stay much longer in Italy, Lawrence was certain, and the present way of life would come to an end; if his advantages were ever to bear fruit, it should be ripe now. Moreover, one or two other, and seemingly inconsistent, considerations came in. Lawrence admired Miss Thayer. Her beauty was even more striking, to his fancy, than Dolly's; if it were also more like other beauties he had seen. She had money too, and Dolly had none. Truly, Mr. St. Leger had enough of his own; but when did ever a man with enough not therefore desire more? He admired Christina very much; she suited him; if Dolly should prove after all obdurate, here was his chance for making himself amends. Cool! for an ardent lover; but Mr. St. Leger *was* of a calm temperament, and these suggestions did come into his mind back of his liking for Dolly.

This liking was strong upon him the day of the excursion to the Punta di Campanella. Of necessity he was Christina's special attendant, Mr. Thayer being Dolly's. Many girls would not have relished such an arrangement, Lawrence knew; his sisters would not. And Dolly was in an acme of delight. Lawrence watched her whenever they came near each other, and marvelled at the sweet, childish-womanish face. It was in a ripple of pleasure; the brown, considerate eyes were sparkling, roving with quick, watchful glances over everything, and losing as few as possible of the details of the way. Talking to Mr. Thayer now and then, Lawrence saw her, with the most innocent, sweet mouth in the world; her smile and that play of lip and eye bewitched him whenever he got a glimpse of it. The play of Christina's features was never so utterly free, so absent from thought of self, so artless in its fun. Now and then, too, there came the soft, low ring of a clear voice, in laughter or talking, bearing the same characteristics of a sweet spirit and a simple heart; and yet, when in repose, Dolly's face was strong in its sense and womanliness. The combination held Mr. St. Leger captive. I do not know how he carried on his needful attentions to his companion; with a mechanical necessity, I suppose; when all the while he was watching Dolly and contrasting the two girls. He was not such a fool as not to know which indications promised him the best wife; or if not him, the man who could get her. And he resolved, if a chance offered, he would speak to Dolly that very day. For here was Christina, if his other hope failed. He *was* cool; nevertheless, he was in earnest.

They had climbed up Monte San Costanzo and admired the view. They had rested, and enjoyed a capital lunch among the myrtles on the point. It was when they were on their way home in the afternoon, and not till then, that the opportunity presented itself which he had wished for. On the way home, the order of march was broken up. Christina sometimes dropped St. Leger to ride with her father; sometimes called Dolly to be her companion; and at last, declaring that she did not want Mr. St. Leger to have a sense of sameness about the day, she set off with her father ahead, begging Dolly to amuse the other gentleman.

Which Dolly made not the least effort to do. The scenery was growing more lovely with every minute's lengthening shadows; and she rode along, giving all her attention to it, not making to Mr. St. Leger even the remarks she might have made to Mr. Thayer. The change of companions to her was not welcome. St. Leger found the burden of conversation must lie upon him.

"We have not seen much of each other for a long time," he began.

"Only two or three times a day," said Dolly.

"And you think that is enough, perhaps!" said Lawrence hastily.

"Don't you think more would have a tendency to produce what Christina calls a 'sense of sameness'?" said Dolly, turning towards him a face all dimpled with fun.

"That is according to circumstances. The idea is not flattering. But, Miss Dolly," said Lawrence, pulling himself up, "in all this while--these months--that we have been travelling together, we have had time to learn to know each other pretty well. *You* must have been able to make up your mind about me."

"Which part of your character?"

"Miss Dolly," said Lawrence with some heat, "you know what I mean."

"Do I? But I did not know that I had to make up my mind about anything concerning you; I thought that was done long ago."

"And you do not like me any better now than you did then?"

"Perhaps I do," said Dolly slowly. "I always liked you, Mr. St. Leger, and I had cause. You have been a very kind friend to us."

"For your sake, Dolly."

"I am sorry for that," she said.

"And I have waited all this time in the hope that you would get accustomed to me, and your objections would wear away. You know what your father and mother wish concerning us. Does their wish not weigh with you?"

"No," said Dolly very quietly. "This is my affair, not theirs."

"It is their affair so far as your interests are involved. And I do not wish to praise myself; but you know they think that those interests would be secured by a marriage with me. And I believe I could make you happy, Dolly."

Dolly shook her head. "How could you?" she said. "We belong to two opposite parties, and are following two different lines of life. You would not like my way, and I should not like yours. How could either of us be happy?"

"Even granting all that," said Lawrence, "why should you not bear with my peculiarities, and I with yours, and neither be the worse? That is very frequently done."

"Is it? I do not think it ought to be done."

"Let us prove that it can be. I will never interfere with you, Dolly."

"Yes, you would," said Dolly, dimpling all over again. "Do you think you would make up your mind to have no wine in your cellar or on your table? Take that for one thing. I should have no wine on mine."

"That's a crotchet of yours," said he, smiling at her: he thought if *this* were all, the thing might be managed.

"That is only one thing, Mr. St. Leger," Dolly went on very gravely now. "I should be unfashionable in a hundred ways, and you would not like that. I should spend money on objects and for causes that you would not care about nor agree to. I am telling you all this to reconcile you to doing without me."

"Your refusal is absolute, then?"

"Yes."

"You would not bring up these extraneous things, Dolly, if you had any love for me."

"I do not know why that should make any difference. It might make it hard."

"Then you *have* no love for me?"

"I am afraid not," said Dolly gently. "Not what you mean. And without that, you would not wish for a different answer from me."

"Yes, I would!" said he. "All that would come; but you know your own business best."

Dolly thought she did, and the proposition remained uncontroverted. Therewith the discourse died; and the miles that remained were made in unsocial silence. Dolly feared she had given some pain, but doubted it could not be very great; and she was glad to have the explanation over. Perhaps the pain was more than she knew, although Lawrence certainly was not a desperate wooer; nevertheless, he was disappointed, and he was mortified, and mortification is hard to a man. For the matter of that, it is hard to anybody. It was not till the villa occupied by the Thayers was close before them that he spoke again.

"Do you expect to stay much longer in Italy?"

"I am afraid not," Dolly answered.

"I have reason to think Mr. Copley will not. Indeed, I know as much. I thought you might like to be informed."

Dolly said nothing. Her eyes roved over the beautiful bay, almost with an echo of Eve's "Must I then leave thee, Paradise?" in her heart. The smoke curling up from Vesuvius caught the light; little sails skimming over the sea reflected it; the sweetness of thousands of roses and orange blossoms, and countless other flowers, filled all the air; it was a time and a scene of nature's most abundant and beautiful bounty. Dolly checked her donkey, and for a few minutes stood looking; then with a brave determination that she would enjoy it all as much as she could while she had it, she went into the house.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHITHER NOW?

The days that followed were full of pleasure; and Dolly kept to her resolution, not to spoil the present by care about the future. Indeed, the balmy air and the genial light and all the wealth that nature has bestowed upon southern Italy, were a help to such a resolution. The infinite lavish fulness of the present quite laughed at the idea of barrenness or want anywhere in time to come. Dolly knew that was nature's subtle flattery, not to be trusted, and yet she willingly admitted the flattery. Nothing should spoil these days.

One evening she and Christina were sitting again on the bank, wondering at the marvellous sunset panorama.

"How difficult it is, looking at this," said Dolly, "to believe that there is want and misery in the world."

"Why should you believe it?" said Christina. "I don't think there is, except where people have brought it upon themselves."

"People bring it upon other people. But to look at this, one would say it was impossible. And this is how the world was meant to be, I suppose."

"What do you mean? how?" said Christina. "It is rich to hear you talk."

"Oh, look at it, Christina! Look at the colours and the lights and the sparkle everywhere, the perfect wealth of loveliness in form as well as colour; and if you think a minute you will know that He who made it all meant people to be happy, and meant them to be as full of happiness as the earth is full of beauty."

"I don't see 'lights' and 'colours' so much as you do, Dolly; I am not an artist; but if God meant them to be happy, why aren't they happy?"

"Sin," said Dolly.

"What's the use of thinking about it? You and I cannot help it."

"Christina, that is not true. We can help some of it."

"By giving money, you mean? Well, we do, whenever we see occasion; but there is no end of the cheaterly."

"Giving money will not take away the world's misery, Christina."

"What will, then? It will do a good deal."

"It will do a good deal, but it does not touch the root of the trouble."

"What does, Dolly?--you dreamer."

"The knowledge of Christ."

"Well, it is the business of clergymen and missionaries to give them that."

"Prove it."

"Why, that's what they are for."

"Do you think there are enough of them to preach the good news to every creature?"

"Well, then, there ought to be more."

"And in the meantime?--Tell me, Christina, to whom was that command given, to preach the gospel to every creature?"

"To the apostles, of course!"

"Twelve men? Or eleven men, rather. They could not. No, it was given to all the disciples; and so, Christina, it was given to you, and to me."

"To preach the gospel!" said Christina.

"That is, just to tell the good news."

"And to whom do you propose we should tell it?"

"The command says, everybody."

"How can you and I do that, Dolly?"

"That is just what I am studying, Christina. I do not quite know. But when I look out on all this wonderful beauty, and see what it means, and think how miserable the world is,--just the very opposite,--I feel that I must do it, somehow or other."

Christina lifted her arms above her head and clapped her hands together. "Mad, mad!" she exclaimed--"you are just gone mad, Dolly. Oh, I wish you'd get married, and forget all your whimsies. The right sort of man would make you forget them. Haven't you found the right sort of man yet?"

"The right sort of man would help me carry them out."

"It must be my Sandie, then; there isn't another match for you in extravagant ideas in all this world. What does Mr. St. Leger think of them?"

"I never asked him. I suppose he would take very much your view."

"And you don't care what view he takes?" said Christina, looking sharply at her.

"Not in the least. Except for his own sake."

The one drawback upon the perfect felicity of this visit was, that the said Sandie did not appear. They could not wait for him; they went on the most charming of excursions, by sea and land, wishing for him; in which wish Dolly heartily shared. It had been one of the pleasures she had promised herself in coming to the Thayers' that she should see Mr. Shubrick again. He had interested her singularly, and even taken not a little hold of her fancy. So she was honestly disappointed when at last a note came from him, saying that he found it impossible to join the party.

"That means just that he has something on hand that he calls 'duty'--which anybody else would put off or hand

over," said Christina, pouting.

"Duty is a very good reason," said Dolly. "Don't you see, you are sure of Mr. Shubrick, that in any case he will not do what he thinks wrong? I think you ought to be a very happy woman, Christina."

But the excursions were made without Mr. Shubrick's social or material help. They went to Capri; they visited the grottoes; nay, they made a party to go up Vesuvius. All that was to be seen, they saw; and, as Christina declared, they left nothing undone that they could do. Then came the breaking up.

"Are you expecting to go back to that stuffy little place at Sorrento?" Mr. Copley asked. It was the evening before their departure, and all the party were sitting, scattered about upon the verandah.

"Father!" cried Dolly. "It is the airiest, floweriest, sunniest, brightest, most delightful altogether house, that ever took lodgers in!"

"It certainly wasn't stuffy, Mr. Copley," said his wife.

"Dolly likes it because you couldn't get a glass of good wine in the house. Whatever the rest of humanity like, she makes war upon. I conclude you are reckoning upon going back there, my wife and daughter?"

"Are not you, Mr. Copley?" his wife asked.

"I must be excused."

"Then where are you going?"

"Home."

"Home!" exclaimed Mrs. Copley. "Do you mean *home*? Boston?"

"A Boston woman thinks Boston is the centre of the universe, you may notice," said Mr. Copley, turning to Mr. Thayer. "It's a curious peculiarity. No matter what other cities on the face of the earth you show her, her soul turns back to Boston."

"Don't say anything against Boston," said Mrs. Thayer; "it's a good little place. I know, when Mr. Thayer first carried me there, it took me a while to get accustomed to it;--things on a different scale, you know, and looked at from a different point of view; but I soon found admirers, and then friends. Oh, I assure you, Boston and I were very fond of each other in those days; and though I lost my claims to admiration a long time ago, I have kept my friends."

"I have no doubt the admirers are still there too," said Mr. Copley. "Does Mrs. Thayer mean to say she has no admirers? I profess myself one!"

"Christina takes the admiration now-a-days. I am contented with that."

"And so you conquer by proxy."

"Mr. Copley," here put in his wife, "if you do not mean America by 'home,' what do you mean? and where are you going?"

"Where my home has been for a number of years. England--London."

"But you have given up your office?"

"I am half sorry, that is a fact."

"Then what should you do in London?"

"My dear, of the many hundred thousands who call London their home, very few have an office."

"But they have business of some kind?"

"That is a Boston notion. Did you ever observe, Thayer, that a Massachusetts man has no idea of life without business? It is the reason why he is in the world, to him; it never occurs to him that *play* might be occasionally useful. I

declare! I believe they don't know the meaning of the word in America; it has dropped out, like a forgotten art."

"But, father," Dolly spoke up now, "if you are going to London, mother and I cannot possibly go to Sorrento."

"I don't quite see the logic of that."

"Why, we cannot be here in Italy quite alone."

"I'll leave you St. Leger to take care of you and bring you back; as he took you away."

"I should be very happy to fall in with that plan," said Lawrence slowly; "but I fear I cannot make it out. I have been making arrangements to go into Greece, seeing that I am so near it. And I may quite possibly spend another winter in Rome."

There was a pause, and when Mr. Copley spoke again there was another sound in his voice. It was not his will to betray it, but Dolly heard the chagrin and disappointment.

"Well," said he, "such independent travellers as you two ladies can do pretty comfortably alone in that paragon of lodging-houses."

"But not make the journey home alone, father."

"When are you coming?"

"When you do, of course," said his wife.

Dolly knew it must be so and not otherwise. She sat still and down-hearted, looking abroad over the bay of Naples, over all the shores of which the moonlight was quivering or lying in still floods of calm beauty. From this, ay, and from everything that was like this, in either its fairness or its tranquillity, she must go. There had been a little lull in her cares since they came to Sorrento; the lull was over. Back to London!--And that meant, back to everything from which she had hoped to escape. How fondly she had hoped, once her father was away from the scene of his habits and temptations, he could be saved to himself and his family; and perhaps even lured back to America where he would be comparatively safe. Now where was that hope, or any other? Suddenly Dolly changed her place and sat down close beside Mr. Copley.

"Father, I wish you would take us back to our real old home--back to Roxbury!"

"Can't do it, my pet."

"But, father, why not? What should keep you in England?"

"Business."

"Now that you are out of the office?"

"Yes. Do you think all business is confined to the consuls' offices? A few other people have something to do."

Dolly heard no tone of hope-giving in her father's words. She ceased and sat silent, leaning upon his knee as she was and looking off into the moonlight. Mrs. Thayer and Mr. St. Leger were carrying on a lively discourse about people and things unknown to her; Mr. Thayer was smoking; Mrs. Copley was silent and sorry and cast-down, like herself, she knew. Dolly's eye went roving through the moonlight as if it were never going to see moonlight again; and her heart was taking up the old question, and feeling it too heavy to carry, how should she save her father from his temptation? Under the pressure Dolly's heart felt very low; until again those words came and lifted her up,--"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" After that the sweet moonbeams seemed to be full of those words. I am *not* alone, thought Dolly, I am *not* forgotten; and He does not mean that I should be crushed, or hurt, by this arrangement of things, which I strove so to hinder. I will not be one of the "little faith" people. I will just trust the Lord--my Lord. What I cannot do, He can; and His ways are wonderful and past finding out.

So she was quieted. And yet as she sat there it came over Dolly's mind, as things will, quite unbidden; it came over her to think how life would go on here, in Italy, with Christina, after she was gone. When the lovely Italian chapter of her own life was closed up and ended, when she would be far away out of sight of Vesuvius, in the fogs of London, the sun of Naples would still be shining on the Thayers' villa. They would go sailing on blue water, or floating over the

gold and purple reflections which sometimes seemed to fill both water and air; they would see the white shafts of Paestum, yes, it would be soon cool enough for that; or if they must wait for Paestum, there were enough old monasteries and ruined castles and beauties of the like sort to keep them busy for many a day. Beauties which Dolly and Mr. Thayer loved. Nobody else in the house loved them. Christina had hardly an eye for them; and St. Leger, if he looked, did not care for what he saw. Nevertheless, they three would go picnicking through the wonderful old land, where every step was on monumental splendour or historical ashes, and the sights would be before them; whether they had eyes to see or no. For Dolly it was all done. She was glad she had had so much and enjoyed so much; and that enjoyment had given memory such a treasure of things to keep, that were hers for all time, and could be looked at in memory's chambers whenever she pleased. Yet she could not see the moonlight on the bay of Naples this evening for the last time, and remember towards what she was turning her face, without some tears coming that nobody saw--tears that were salt and hot.

The journey home was a contrast to the way by which they had come. It pleased Mr. Copley to go by sea from Naples to Marseilles, and from thence through France as fast as the ground could be passed over, till they reached Dover. And although those were not the days of lightning travel, yet travelling continually, the effect was of one swift, confused rush between Naples and London. Instead of the leisurely, winding course pursued to Dresden, and from Dresden to Venice, deviating at will from the shortest or the most obvious route, stopping at will at any point where the fancy took them, dawdling, speculating, enjoying, getting good out of every step of the way,--this journey was a sort of flash from the one end of it to the other, with nothing seen or remembered between but the one item of fatigue. So it came about, that when they found themselves in a London lodging-house, and Mrs. Copley and Dolly sat down and looked at each other, they had the feeling of having left Sorrento last evening, and of being dazed with the sudden transition from Sorrento and sunshine to London and smoke.

"Well!" said Mr. Copley, rubbing his hands, "here we are!"

"I don't feel as if I was anywhere," said his wife. "My head's in a whirl. Is this the way you like to travel, Frank?"

"The purpose of travelling, my dear," said Mr. Copley, still rubbing his hands--it must have been with satisfaction, for it could not have been with cold--"the purpose of travel is--to get over the ground."

"It wasn't my purpose when I went away."

"No--but when you came back."

"It wasn't my purpose anyway," said Mrs. Copley. "I should never stir from my place if I had to move the way you have kept me moving. My head is in a whirl."

"I'll take hold and turn it round the other way."

"I think it is quite likely you will! I should like to know what you mean to do with us, now you have got us here."

"Keep you here."

"What are you going to do with yourself, Mr. Copley?"

"There are always so many uses that I can make of myself, more than I have time for, that I cannot tell which I shall take hold of first."

With which utterance he quitted the room, almost before it was fairly out of his mouth. The two left behind sat and looked at the room, and then at each other.

"What are we going to do now, Dolly?" Mrs. Copley asked in evidently dismayed uncertainty.

"I don't know, mother."

"How long do you suppose your father will be contented to stay in this house?"

"I have no means of guessing, mother. I don't know why we are here at all."

"We had to go somewhere, I suppose, when we came to London--just for the first; but I can't stay *here*, Dolly!"

"Of course not, mother."

"Then where are we going to? It is all very well to say 'of course not;' but where can we go, Dolly?"

"I have been thinking about it, mother, dear, but I have not found out yet. If we knew how long father wanted to stay in London"----

"It is no use asking that. I can tell you beforehand. He don't know himself. But it is my belief he'll find something or other to make him want to stay here the rest of his life."

"O mother, I hope not!"

"It is no use speaking to him about it, Dolly. Even if he knew, he would not own it, but that's my belief; and I can't bear London, Dolly. A very few days of this noise and darkness would just put me back where I was before we went away. I know it would."

"This is a darker day than common; they are not all so."

"They are all like gloom itself, compared to where we have been. I tell you, Dolly, I cannot stand it. After Sorrento, I cannot bear this."

"It's my belief, mother, you want home and Roxbury air. Why don't you represent that to father, forcibly?"

"Dolly, I never put myself in the way of your father's pleasure. He must take his pleasure; and he likes London. How he can, I don't see; but he does, and so do a great many other people; it may be a want of taste in me; I daresay it is; but I shall not put myself in the way of his pleasure. I'll stand it as long as I can, and when I cannot stand it any longer, I'll die. It will come to an end some time."

"Mother, don't talk so! We'll coax father to finish up his business and go home to Roxbury. I am quite setting my heart on it. Only you have patience a little, and don't lose courage. I'll talk to father as soon as I get a chance."

"What a dirty place this is!" was Mrs. Copley's next remark.

"Yes. It is not like the rocks and the sea. A great city must be more or less so, I suppose."

"I believe great cities are a mistake. I believe they were not meant to be built. They don't agree with me, anyway. Well, I'll lie down on that old sofa there--it's hard enough to have been one of Job's troubles--and see if I can get to sleep."

Dolly drew a soft shawl over her, and sat down to keep watch alone. The familiar London sounds were not cheering to the ears which had been so lately listening to the lap of the waves and the rustling of the myrtle branches. And the dingy though comfortable London lodging-house was a poor exchange for the bay of Sorrento and the bright rooms full of the scents of orange flowers and roses and carnations. Dolly gave way a little and felt very down-hearted. Not merely for this change of her outside world, indeed; Dolly was not so weak; only in this case the outward symbolised the inward, and gave fitting form and imagery for it. The grime and confusion of London streets, to Dolly's fancy, were like the evil ways which she saw close upon her; and as roses and myrtles, so looked a fair family life of love and right-doing. Why not?--when He, who is Love itself and Righteousness immaculate, declares of Himself,--"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." I do not think those words occurred to Dolly that night, but other Bible words did, after a while. Promises of the life that shall be over all the earth one day, when the wilderness and the desert places shall be no longer desolate or barren, but shall "rejoice and blossom as the rose;" when to the Lord's people, "the sun shall no longer be their light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light" to them; when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away," and "the days of their mourning shall be ended." The words were like a lovely chime of bells,--or like the breath from a whole garden of roses and orange flowers,--or like the sunset light on the bay of Naples; or anything else most majestic, sweet, and fair. What if there were shadowed places to go through first?--And a region of shadow Dolly surely knew she had entered now. She longed for her father to come home; she wanted to consult with him about their arrangements, and so arrive at some certainty respecting what she had to do and expect. But Dolly knew that an early coming home was scarce to be hoped for; and she providently roused her mother at ten o'clock, and persuaded her to go to bed. Then Dolly waited alone in truth, with not even her sleeping mother's company; very sad at heart, and clutching, as a lame man does his stick, at some of the words of comfort she knew. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." The case was not quite so bad, nor so good, with her as that; but the words were a strong staff to lean upon, nevertheless. And those

others: "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;" ... And, "There shall no evil happen to the just." Dolly stayed her heart on such words, while she waited for her father's coming. As it grew later and yet later she doubted whether she ought to wait. She was waiting however when he came, between twelve and one, but nearer the latter. She listened to his step on the stair, and knew all was not right; and when he opened the door, she saw. Her father had surely been taking wine or something; his face was flushed, his eyes were excited, and his manner was wandering.

"Dolly!--What are you here for?"

"I waited for you, father. I wanted to have a talk with you. But it's too late now," Dolly said, trembling.

"Too late--yes, of course. Go to bed. That's the thing for you. London is a great place, Dolly!"

Alas! His expression of satisfaction was echoed in her heart by an anathema. It was no time then to say anything. Dolly went to bed and cried herself to sleep, longing for that sunshiny time of which it is promised to the Lord's people--"Thy sun shall no more go down by day;" and thankful beyond all power of words to express, even then in her sorrow, that another sun had even already risen upon her, in the warm light of which no utter darkness was possible.

It was a day or two before, with her best watching, she could catch an opportunity to speak to her father. The second morning Mrs. Copley had headache and staid in bed, and Dolly and Mr. Copley were at breakfast alone.

"How long, father, do you think you may find affairs to keep you in England?" Dolly began with her father's first cup of coffee.

"As long as I like, my dear. There is no limit. In England there are always things going on to keep a man alive, and to keep him busy."

"Isn't that true in America equally?"

"I don't think so. I never found it so. Oh, there is enough to do there; but you don't find the same facilities, nor the same men to work with; and you don't know what to do with your money there when you have got it. England is the place! for a man who wants to live and to enjoy life."

"It isn't for a woman," said Dolly. "At least, not for one woman. Father, don't you know mother is longing to go home, to Roxbury?"

"Dolly, she is longing for something or other impossible, every day of her life."

"But it would do her a great deal of good to be back there."

"It would do me a great deal of harm."

There was a pause here during which Dolly meditated, and Mr. Copley buttered pieces of toast and swallowed them with ominous despatch. Dolly saw he would be soon through his breakfast at that rate.

"But, father," she began again, "are we to spend all the rest of our lives in England?"

"My dear, I don't know anything about the future. I never look ahead. The day is as much as I can see through. I advise you to follow my example."

"What are mother and I to do, then? We cannot stay permanently here, in this house."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Nothing, as a lodging-house; but mother would not thrive or be happy in a London lodging-house."

"People's happiness is in their own power. It does not depend upon place. All the clergymen will tell you so. You must talk to your mother, Dolly."

"Father, I talked to *you* at Sorrento; but I remember you thought you could not live there."

"That was Sorrento; but London!--London is the greatest city in the world. Every taste may be suited in London."

"You know the air does not agree with mother. She will not be well if we keep her here," said Dolly anxiously; for she saw the last piece of toast on its way.

"Nonsense! That is fancy."

"If it is fancy, it is just as good as reality. She was pining when we were here before, until we went down to Brierley; and she will lose all she has gained in her travelling if we keep her here now."

"Well--I'll see what I can do," said Mr. Copley, rising from the table. "When is St. Leger coming back?"

"How should I know? I know nothing at all of his purposes but what he told us."

"Have you thrown him over?"

"I never took him up."

"Then you are more of a goose than I thought you. He'll be caught by that fair friend of yours, before he gets out of Italy. Good morning!"

Mr. Copley hurried away; and Dolly was left to her doubts. What could so interest and hold him in a place where he had no official business, where his home was not, and he had no natural associations? Was it the attraction of mere pleasure, or was it pleasure under that mischievous, false face of gain, which men delight in and call speculation. And from speculation proper, carried on among the business haunts of men, there is not such a very wide step in the nature of things to the green level of the gaming-table. True, many men indulge in the one variety who have a horror of the other; but Dolly's father, she knew, had a horror of neither. Stocks, or dice, what did it matter? and in both varieties the men who played with him, she knew too, would help their play with wine. Against these combined powers, what was she? And what was to become of them all?

Part of the question was answered at dinner that evening. Mr. Copley announced that Brierley Cottage was unoccupied and that he had retaken it for them.

"Brierley!" cried Mrs. Copley. "Brierley! Are we going back *there* again! Frank, do you mean that we are to spend all our lives apart in future?"

"Not at all, my dear! If you will be so good as to stay with me, I shall be very happy."

"In London! But you know very well I cannot live in London."

"Then you can go down to Brierley."

"And how often shall you come there?"

"When the chinks of business are wide enough to let me slip through."

"Business! All you live for is business. Mr. Copley, what do you expect is to become of Dolly, shut up in a cottage down in the country?"

"How is she to get married, you mean? *She* expects a fairy prince to come along one of these days; and of course he could find her at Brierley as easily as anywhere. It makes no difference in a fairy tale. In fact, the unlikely places are just the ones where the princes turn up."

"You will not be serious!" sighed Mrs. Copley.

"Serious? I am nothing but serious. The regular suitor, proposed by the parents, has offered himself and been rejected; and now there is nothing to do but to wait for the fairy prince."

Poor Mrs. Copley gave it up. Her husband's words were always too quick for her.

Brierley was afterwards discussed between her and Dolly. The proposal was welcome to neither of them. Yet London would not do for Mrs. Copley; she grew impatient of it more and more. And so, within a week after their arrival, they left it and went down again to their old home in the country. It felt like going to prison, Mrs. Copley said. Though the country was still full of summer's wealth and beauty; and it was impossible not to feel the momentary delight of the change from London. The little garden was crowded with flowers, the fields all around rich in grass and grain; the great

trees of the park standing in their unchanged regal beauty; the air sweet as air could be, without orange blossoms. And yet it seemed to the two ladies, when Mr. Copley left them again after taking them down to the cottage, that they were shut off and shut up in a respectable and very eligible prison, from whence escape was doubtful.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOWN HILL.

To do Mr. Copley justice, he left the prison very well provided and furnished. The store closet and pantry were stocked; the house put in tolerable order, and two maids were taken down. The old gardener had disappeared, but Dolly declared she would keep the flowers in order herself. So for a number of weeks things really went not ill with them at Brierley. Dolly did keep the flowers in order, and she did a great many other things; the chief of which, however, was attending to her mother. How exquisitely she did this it would take a great deal of detail to tell. It was shown, or felt rather, for a great part, in very small particulars. Not only in taking care of her mother's wardrobe and toilette, like the most skilled of waiting-maids; not only in ordering and providing her meals like the most dainty of housekeepers; not only in tireless reading aloud of papers and books, whatever could be got to interest Mrs. Copley; these were part, but besides these there were a thousand little touches a day given to Mrs. Copley's comfort, that even herself hardly took any note of. Dolly's countenance never was seen to fall in her mother's presence, nor her spirits perceived to flag. She was like the flowers with which she filled the house and dressed the table; sweet and fresh and cheery and lovely. And so ministering, and so ministered to, I cannot say that the life of the mother and daughter was other than a happy one. If Mrs. Copley was sensible of a grievous want here and there, which made her nervous and irritable whenever she thought of it, the tenderness of Dolly's soothing and the contagion of Dolly's peace were irresistible; and if Dolly had a gnawing subject of care, which hurt and pricked and stung her perpetually, a cloud of fear darkening over her, from the shadow of which she could not get free; yet the loving care to ward off both the pain and the fear from her mother, helped at least to keep her own heart fresh and strong to bear whatever was coming.

So in their little room, at their table, or about the flowers in the garden, or sitting in the honeysuckle porch reading, the mother and daughter were always together, and the days of late summer and then of autumn went by sweetly enough. And when the last roses were gone and the honeysuckle vines had ceased to send forth their breath of fragrance, and leaves turned sear, and the winds blew harsh from the sea, Dolly and Mrs. Copley made themselves all the snigger in the cottage; and knitting and reading was carried on in the glow of a good fire that filled all their little room with brightness. They were ready for winter; and winter when it came did not chill them; the household life was warm and busy. All this while they had the stir of frequent visits from Mr. Copley, and between whiles the expectation of them. They were never long; he came and went, Mrs. Copley said, like a gust of wind, with a rush and a whistle and a roar, and then was gone, leaving you to feel how still it was. However, these gusts of wind brought a great deal of refreshment. Mr. Copley always came with his hands full of papers; always had the last London or Edinburgh Quarterly, and generally some other book or books for his wife and daughter to delight themselves withal. And though Dolly was not always satisfied with her father's appearance, yet on the whole he gave her no new or increased occasion for anxiety.

So the autumn and winter went not ill away. The cottage had no visitors. It was at some distance from the village, and in the village there was hardly anybody that would have held himself entitled to visit there. The doctor was an old bachelor. The rector took no account of the two stranger ladies whom now and then his eye roved over in service time. Truly they were not often to be seen in his church, for the distance was too far for Mrs. Copley to walk, unless in exceptionally good days; when the weather and the footing and her own state of body and mind were in rare harmony over the undertaking. There was nobody else to take notice of them, and nobody did take notice of them; and in process of time it came to pass, not unnaturally, that Mrs. Copley began to get tired of living alone. For though it is extremely pleasant to be quiet, yet it remains true that man was made a social animal; and if he is in a healthy condition he craves contact with his fellows. As the winter wore away, some impression of this sort seemed to force itself upon Mrs. Copley.

"I wonder what your father is dreaming of!" she said one day, when she had sat for some time looking at Dolly, who was drawing. "He seems to think it quite natural that you should live down here at this cottage, year in and year out, like a toad in a hole; with no more life or society. We might as well be shut up in a nunnery, only then there would be more of us. I never heard of a nunnery with only two nuns."

"Are you getting tired of it, mother?"

"Tired!--that isn't the word. I think I am growing stupid, and gradually losing my wits."

"We have not been a bit stupid this winter, mother, dear."

"We haven't seen anybody."

"The family are soon coming to Brierley House, Mrs. Jersey says. I daresay you will see somebody then."

"I don't believe we shall. The English don't like strangers, I tell you, Dolly, unless they come recommended by something or other;--and there is nothing to recommend us."

Mrs. Copley uttered this last sentence with such a dismal sort of realisation, that Dolly laughed out.

"You are too modest, mother. I do not believe things are as bad as that."

"You will see," said her mother. "And I hope you will stop going to see the housekeeper then."

"I do not know why I should," said Dolly quietly.

However, this question began to occupy her; not the question of her visiting Mrs. Jersey or of any one else visiting them; but this prolonged living alone to which her mother and she seemed to be condemned. It was not good, and it was not right; and Dolly saw that it was beginning to work unfavourably upon Mrs. Copley's health and spirits. But London? and a lodging-house? That would be worse yet; and for a house to themselves in London Dolly did not believe the means were at hand.

Lately, things had been less promising. Mr. Copley seemed to be not so ready with his money; and he did not look well. Yes, he was well, he said when she asked him; nevertheless, her anxious eye read the old signs. She had not noticed them during the winter, or but slightly and rarely. Whether Mr. Copley had been making a vigorous effort to be as good as his word and spare Dolly pain; whether his sense of character had asserted itself, whether he had been so successful in speculation or play that he did not need opiates and could do without irritants; I do not know. There had been an interval. Now, Dolly began to be conscious again of the loss of freshness, the undue flush, the weak eyes, the unsteady mouth, the uneven gait. A stranger as yet might have passed it all by without notice; Dolly knew the change from her father's former quick, confident movements, iron nerves and muscular activity. And what was almost worse than all to her, among indications of his being entered on a downward course, she noticed that now he avoided her eye; looked at her, but preferred not meeting her look. I cannot tell how dreadful this was to Dolly. She had been always accustomed, until lately, to respect her father and to see him respected; to look at him as holding his place among men with much more than the average of influence and power; he was apt to do what he wished to do, and also to make other men do it. He was recognised as a leader in all parties and plans in which he took any share; Mr. Copley's word was quoted and Mr. Copley's lead was followed; and as is the case with all such men, his confidence in himself had been one of his sources of power and means of success. Dolly had been all her life accustomed to this as the natural and normal condition of things. Now she saw that her father had ceased to respect himself. The agony this revelation brought to Mr. Copley's loyal little daughter, it is impossible to tell. She felt it almost unbearable, shrank from it, would have closed her eyes to it; but Dolly was one of those whose vision is not clouded but rather made more keen by affection; and she failed to see nothing that was before her.

The ministry Dolly applied to this new old trouble was of the most exquisite kind. Without making it obtrusive, she bestowed upon her father a sort of service the like of which not all the interest of courts can obtain for their kings. She was tender of him, with a tenderness that came like the touch of a soft summer wind; coming and going, and coming again. It calls for no answer or return; only it is there with its blessing, comforting tired nerves and soothing ruffled spirits. Mr. Copley hardly knew what Dolly was doing; hardly knew that it was Dolly; when now it was a gentle touch on his arm, leading him to the tea-table, and now a specially prepared cup, and Dolly bringing it, and standing before him smiling and tasting it, looking at him over it. And Mr. Copley certainly thought at such times that a prettier vision was not to be seen in the whole United Kingdom. Another time she would perch herself upon his knee and stroke back his hair from his temples, with fingers so delicate it was like the touch of a fairy; and then sometimes she would lay her head caressingly down on his shoulder; and though at such times Dolly could willingly have broken her heart in weeping, she let Mr. Copley see nothing but smiles, and suffered scarce so much as a stray sigh to come to his ear.

"Have you seen anything of the great people?" he asked one evening, when Dolly had moved his sudden admiration.

"Do you mean the people at the House?" his wife said. "No, of course. Don't you know, Mr. Copley, you must be great yourself to have the great look at you."

"Humph! There are different ways of being great. I shouldn't wonder, now, if you could show Lady Brierley as much as Lady Brierley could show you--in some ways."

"What extravagant notions you do have, Frank," said his wife. "You are so much of an American, you forget everybody around you is English."

"Lady Brierley has been only a little while come home," said Dolly. "We need not discuss her yet."

And so speaking, Dolly brought out the Bible. The reading with her mother had become a regular thing now, greatly helpful to Mrs. Copley's good rest, Dolly believed, both by day and night; and latterly when he had been at the cottage her father had not run away when she brought her book. Alone with her mother, Dolly had long since added prayer to the reading; not yet in her father's presence. Her heart beat a little, it cost an effort; all the same Dolly knew it must now be done. With a grave little face she brought out her Bible, laid it on the table, and opened it at the fifth chapter of Matthew.

"Here comes our domestic chaplain!" said her father. Dolly looked up at him and smiled.

"Then of course you would not interfere with anything the chaplain does?" she said.

"Only not preach," said her father in the same tone. "I don't approve of any but licensed preaching. And that one need not hear unless one has a mind to."

"I let the Bible do the preaching, generally," said Dolly. "But we do pray, father."

"Who?" said Mr. Copley quickly. "Your mother and you? Everybody prays, I hope, now and then."

"We do it now, and then too, father. Or rather, *I* do it now, after reading."

Mr. Copley made no reply; and Dolly went on, feeling that the way was open to her, if it were also a little difficult to tread. She read part of the chapter, feeling every word through and through. Alas, alas, alas! The "poor in spirit," the "pure in heart," the "meek,"--where were these? and what had their blessing to do with the ears to which she was reading? The "persecuted for righteousness' sake,"--how she knew her father and mother would lay that off upon the martyrs of olden time, with whom and their way of life, they thought, the present time has nothing to do! and so, with the persecuted dismiss the meek and the pure. The blessings referred certainly to a peculiar set of persons; no one is called on in these days to endure persecution. Dolly knew how they would escape applying what they heard to themselves; and she knew, with her heart full, what they were missing thereby. She went on, feeling every word so thrillingly that it was no wonder they came from her lips with a very peculiar and moving utterance; that is the way with words that are spoken from the heart; and although indeed the lovely sentences might have passed by her hearers, as trite or unintelligible or obsolete, the inflexions of Dolly's voice caught the hearts of both parents and stirred them involuntarily with an answering thrill. She did not know it; she did know that they were very still and listening; and after the reading was done, though she trembled a little, her own feelings were so roused that it was not very difficult for Dolly to kneel down by the table and pray.

But she had only scanty opportunities of working upon her father in this or in any way; Mr. Copley's visits to Brierley, always short, began now to be more and more infrequent.

As weeks went on and the spring slipped by, another thing was unmistakable about these visits; Mr. Copley brought less money with him. Through the autumn and winter, the needs of the little household had been indifferently well supplied. Dolly had paid her servants and had money for her butcher and grocer. Now this was no longer always the case. Mr. Copley came sometimes with empty pockets and a very thin pocket-book; he had forgotten, he said; or, he would make it all right next time. Which Dolly found out he never did. Her servants' wages began to get in arrear, and Dolly herself consequently into anxious perplexity. She had, she knew, a little private stock of her own, gained by her likenesses and other drawings; but like a wise little woman as she was, Dolly resolved she would not touch it unless she came to extremity. But what should she do? Just one thing she was clear upon; she would *not* run in debt; she would not have what she could not pay for. She paid off one servant and dismissed her. This could not happen without the knowledge of Mrs. Copley.

"But however are you going to manage? the latter asked in much concern.

"Honestly, mother. Oh, and nicely too. You will see. I must be a poor thing if I could not keep these little rooms in order."

"And make beds? and set tables? and wash dishes?"

"I like to set tables. And what is it to wash two cups and spoons? And if I make the beds, we shall have them comfortable."

"Jane certainly had her own ideas about making beds, and they were different from mine," said Mrs. Copley. "But I hate to have you, Dolly. It will make your hands red and rough."

"Nothing does that for my hands, luckily, mother, dear. Don't you mind. We shall get on nicely."

"But what's the matter? haven't you got money enough?"

"Mother, I won't have servants that I cannot pay punctually."

"Don't your father give you money to pay them?"

"He gave me money enough to pay part; so I pay part, and send the other part away," said Dolly gaily.

"I *hope* he has not got into speculation again," said Mrs. Copley. "I can't think what he busies himself about in London."

This subject Dolly changed as fast as she could. She feared something worse than speculation. Whether it were cards, or dice, or betting, or more business-like forms of the vice, however, the legitimate consequences were not slow to come; the supply of money for the little household down at Brierley became like the dribbles of a stream which has been led off from its proper bed by a side channel; only a few trickling drops instead of the full, natural current. Dolly could not get from her father the means to pay the wages of her remaining servant. This was towards the beginning of summer.

Dolly pondered now very seriously what she should do. The lack of a housemaid she had made up quite comfortably with her own two busy hands; Mrs. Copley at least had been in particular comfort, whenever she did not get a fit of fretting on Dolly's account; and Dolly herself had been happy, though unquestionably the said hands had been very busy. Now what lay before her was another thing. She could not consult her mother, and there was nobody else to consult; she must even make up her mind as to the line of duty the best way she might; and however the difficulty and even the impossibility of doing without anybody stared her in the face, it was constantly met by the greater impossibility of taking what she could not pay for. Dolly made up her mind on the negative view of the case; what she *could* being not clear, only what she could not. She would dismiss her remaining servant, and do the cooking herself. It would be only for two. And perhaps, she thought, this step would go further to bring her father to his senses than any other step she could take.

Dolly, however, went wisely to work. Quite alone in the house she and her mother could not be. She went to her friend Mrs. Jersey and talked the matter over with her; and through her got a little girl, a small farmer's daughter, to come and do the rough work. She let her mother know as little as possible about the matter; she took some of her own little stock and paid off the cook, representing to her mother no more than that she had exchanged the one helpmeet for the other. But poor Dolly found presently that she did not know how to cook. How should she?

"What's become of all our good bread?" said Mrs. Copley, a day or two after the change. "And, Dolly, I don't know what you call this, but if it is meant for hash, it is a mistake."

Dolly heard in awed silence; and when dinner and breakfast had seen repeated animadversions of the like kind, she made up her mind again and took her measures. She went to her friend Mrs. Jersey, and asked her to teach her to make bread.

"To make bread!" the good housekeeper repeated in astonishment. "You, Miss Dolly? Can that be necessary?"

"Mother cannot eat poor bread," said Dolly simply. "And there is nobody but me to make it. I think I can learn, Mrs. Jersey; cannot I?"

The tears stood in the good woman's eyes. "But, my dear Miss Dolly," she began anxiously, "this is a serious matter. You do not look very strong. Who does the rest of the cooking? Pardon me for being so bold to ask; but I am

concerned about you."

Therewith Dolly's own eyes became moist; however, it would never do to take that tone; so she shook off the feeling, and confessed she was the sole cook in her mother's establishment, and that for her mother's well-doing it was quite needful that what she eat should be good and palatable. And Dolly declared she would like to know how to do things, and be independent.

"You've got the realest sort of independence," said the housekeeper. "Well, my dear, come, and I'll teach you all you want to know."

There followed now a series of visits to the House, in which Mrs. Jersey thoroughly fulfilled her promise. In the kind housekeeper's room Dolly learned not only to make bread and biscuit, and everything else that can be concocted of flour, but she was taught how to cook a bit of beefsteak, how to broil a chicken, how to make omelettes and salads and a number of delicate French dishes; stews and soups and ragouts and no end of comfortable things. Dolly was in great earnest, therefore lost not a hint and never forgot a direction; she was quick and keen to learn; and Mrs. Jersey soon declared laughingly that she believed she was born to be a cook.

"And it goes great qualities to that, Miss Dolly," she said. "You needn't take it as low praise. There are people, no doubt, that are nothing *but* cooks; that's the fault of something else, I always believe. Whoever can be a real cook can be something better if he has a chance and a will."

"It seems to me, it is just common sense, Mrs. Jersey."

"I suppose you are not going to tell me that *that* grows on every bush? Yes, common sense has a great deal to do, no doubt; but one must have another sort of sense; one must know when a thing is right; and one must be able to tell the moment of time when it is right, and then one must be decided and quick to take it then and not let it have the other moment which would make it all wrong. Now, Miss Dolly, I see you know when to take off an omelette--and yet you couldn't tell me how you know."

Dolly's learning was indeed by practising with her own hands. One day it happened that Lady Brierley had come into the housekeeper's room to see about some arrangements she was making for Mrs. Jersey's comfort. While she was there, Dolly opened the door from an adjoining light closet, with her sleeves rolled up to her elbows and her arms dusted with flour. Seeing somebody whom she did not know, Dolly retreated, shutting the door after her.

"Whom have you got there, Mrs. Jersey?" said the lady, forgetting what she had come about. "That girl is too handsome to be among the maids."

"She's not among the maids, my lady. She is not in the house. She only came to get some instruction from me, which I was very glad to give her?"

"Of course. That is quite in your way. But she does not belong in the village, I think?"

"No, my lady, nor hereabouts at all, properly. She lives in Brierley Cottage; she and her mother; I believe the father is there now and by times, but they live alone mostly, and he is in London. They have been much better off; and last year they went travelling all through Europe. I thought I should never see them again; but here they are back, and have been for a year."

"I think I have heard of them. Are they poor?"

"I am much afraid so, my lady."

"Would it do any good, Jersey, if I went there?"

"It would be a great kindness, my lady. I think it might do good."

The final result of all which was a visit. It was now full summer; the season had come into its full bloom and luxuriance. Roses were opening their sweet buds all around Brierley Cottage; the honeysuckles made the porch into an arbour; the garden was something of a wilderness, but a wilderness of lovely, old-fashioned things. One warm afternoon, Dolly with a shears in her hand had gone out into the garden to cut off the full-blown roses, which to-morrow would shed their leaves; doing a little trimming by the way, both of rose-bushes and other things; the wildering of the garden had been so great. And very busy she was, and enjoying it; "cutting in" here, and "cutting out" there, flinging the refuse shoots and twigs carelessly from her into the walk to be gathered up afterwards. She was so busy

she never heard the roll of carriage wheels, never heard them stop, nor the gate open; knew nothing, in fact, but the work she was busy with, till a slight sound on the gravel near by made her look round. Then she saw at one glance the lady standing there in laces and feathers, the carriage waiting outside the gate, and the servants in attendance around it. Dolly shook herself free of the roses and stepped forward, knowing very well who it must be. A little fresh colour had been brought into her cheeks by her exercise and the interest in her work; a little extra flush came now, with the surprise of this apparition. She was as lovely as one of her own rose-branches, and the wind had blown her hair about, which was always wayward, we know, giving perhaps to the great lady the impression of equal want of training. But she was very lovely, and the visitor could not take her eyes off her.

"You are Miss--Copley?" she said. "I have heard Mrs. Jersey speak of you."

"Mrs. Jersey is a very kind friend to me," said Dolly. "Will Lady Brierley walk in?"

Mrs. Jersey is her friend, thought the lady as she followed Dolly into the cottage. Probably she is just of that level, and my coming is thrown away. However, she went in. The little cottage sitting-room was again something of a puzzle to her; it was not rich, but neither did it look like anything Mrs. Jersey would have contrived for her own accommodation. Flowers filled the chimney and stood in vases or baskets; books lay on one table, on the other drawing materials; and simple as everything was, there was nevertheless in everything the evidence, negative as well as positive, that the tastes at home there were refined and delicate and cultivated. It is difficult to tell just how the impression comes upon a stranger, but it came upon Lady Brierley before she had taken her seat. Dolly too, the more she looked at her, puzzled her. She had set down her basket of roses and thrown off her garden hat, and now opened the blinds which shaded the room too much, and took a chair near her visitor. The girl's manner, the lady saw, was extremely composed; she did not seem at all fluttered at the honour done her, and offered her attentions with a manner of simple courtesy which was graceful enough but perfectly cool. So cool, that it rather excited Lady Brierley's curiosity, who was accustomed to be a person of great importance wherever she went. Her eye took in swiftly the neatness of the room, its plainness, and yet its expression of life and mental activity; the work and workbasket on the chair, the bunch of ferns and amaranthus in one vase, the roses in another, the violets on the table, the physiognomy of the books, which were not from the next circulating library, the drawing materials; and then came back to the figure seated before her, with the tossed, beautiful hair and the very delicate, spirited face; and it crossed Lady Brierley's mind, if she had a daughter like that!--with the advantages and bringing up she could have given her, what would she not have been! And the next thought was, she was glad that her son was in Russia. Dolly had opened the window and sat quietly down. She knew her mother would not wish to be called. Once, months ago, Dolly had a little hoped for this visit, and thought it might bring her a pleasant friend, or social acquaintance at least; now that so long time had passed since Lady Brierley's return, with no sign of kindness from the great house, she had given up any such expectation; and so cared nothing about the visit. Dolly's mind was stayed elsewhere; she did not need Lady Brierley; and it was in part the beautiful, disengaged grace of her manner which drew the lady's curiosity.

"I did not know Brierley Cottage was such a pretty place," she began.

"It is quite comfortable," said Dolly. "Now in summer, when the flowers are out, I think it is very pretty."

"You are fond of flowers. I found you pruning your rose-bushes, were you not?"

"Yes," said Dolly. "The old man who used to attend to it has left me in the lurch since we went away. If I did not trim them, they would go untrimmed. They do go untrimmed, as it is."

"Is there no skill required?"

"Oh yes," said Dolly, her face wrinkling all up with fun; "but I have enough for that. I have learned so much. And pruning is very pretty work. This is not just the time for it."

"How can it be pretty? I do not understand."

"No, I suppose not," said Dolly. "But I think it is pretty to cut out the dead wood which is unsightly, and cut away the old wood which can be spared, leaving the best shoots for blossoming the next year. And then the trimming in of overgrown bushes, so as to have neat, compact, graceful shrubs, instead of wild, awkward-growing things--it is constant pleasure, for every touch tells; and the rose-bushes, I believe seem almost like intelligent creatures to me."

"But you would not deal with intelligent creatures so?"

"The Lord does," said Dolly quietly.

"What do you mean?" said the lady sharply. "I do not understand your meaning."

"I did not mean that all people were rose-bushes," said Dolly, with again an exquisite gleam of amusement in her face.

"But will you not be so good as to explain? What *can* you mean, by your former remark?"

"It is not a very deep meaning," said Dolly with a little sigh. "You know, Lady Brierley, the Bible likens the Lord's people, Christians, to plants in the Lord's garden; and the Lord is the husbandman; and where He sees that a plant is growing too rank and wild, He prunes it--cuts it in--that it may be thrifter and healthier and do its work better."

"That's a dreadful idea! Where did you get it?"

"Christ said so," Dolly answered, looking now in the face of her questioner. "Is it a dreadful idea? It does not seem so to me. He is the husbandman. And I would not like to be a useless branch."

"You have been on the Continent lately?" Lady Brierley quitted the former subject.

"Yes; last year."

"You went to my old lodging-house at Sorrento, I think I heard from Mrs. Jersey. Did you find it comfortable?"

"Oh, delightful!" said Dolly with a breath which told much. "Nothing could be nicer, or lovelier."

"Then you enjoyed life in Italy?"

"Very much. But indeed I enjoyed it everywhere."

"What gave you so much pleasure? I envy you. Now I go all over Europe, and find nothing particular to hold me anywhere. And I see by the way you speak that it was not so with you."

"No," said Dolly, half smiling. "Europe was like a great, real fairyland to me. I feel as if I had been travelling in fairyland."

"Do indulge me and tell me how that was? The novelty, perhaps."

"Novelty is pleasant enough," said Dolly, "but I do not think it was the novelty. Rome was more fascinating the last week than it was the first."

"Ah, Rome! there one never gets to the end of the novelties."

"It was not that," said Dolly shaking her head. "I grew absolutely fond of the gladiator; and Raphael's Michael conquering the dragon was much more beautiful to me the last time I saw it than ever it was before; and so of a thousand other things. They seemed to grow into my heart. So at Venice. The palace of the doges--I did not appreciate it at first. It was only by degrees that I learned to appreciate it."

"Your taste for art has been uncommonly cultivated!"

"No" said Dolly. "I do not know anything about art. Till this journey I had never seen much."

"There is a little to see at Brierley," said the lady of the house. "I should like to show it to you."

"I should like dearly to see it again," said Dolly. "Your ladyship is very kind. Mrs. Jersey did show me the house once, when we first came here; and I was delighted with some of the pictures, and the old carvings. It was all so unlike anything at home."

"At home?" said Lady Brierley enquiringly.

"I mean, in America."

"Novelty again," said the lady, smiling, for she could not help liking Dolly.

"No," said Dolly, "not that. It was far more than that. It was the real beauty,--and then, it was the tokens of a family

which had had power enough to write its history all along. There was the power, and the history; and such a strange breath of other days. There is nothing like that in America."

"Then we shall keep you in England?" said Lady Brierley still with a pleased smile.

"I do not know," said Dolly; but her face clouded over and lost the brightness which had been in it a moment before.

"I see you would rather return," said her visitor. "Perhaps you have not been long enough here to feel at home with us?"

"I have been here for several years," said Dolly. "Ever since I was fifteen years old."

"That is long enough to make friends."

"I have not made friends," said Dolly. "My mother's health has kept her at home--and I have stayed with her."

"But, my dear, you are just at an age when it is natural to want friends and to enjoy them. In later life one learns to be sufficient to one's self; but not at eighteen. I am afraid Brierley must be sadly lonely to you."

"Oh no," said Dolly, with her sweet gleam of a smile, which went all over her face; "I am not lonesome."

"Will you come and see me sometimes?"

"If I can. Thank you, Lady Brierley."

"You seem to me to be a good deal of a philosopher," said the lady, who evidently still found Dolly a puzzle. "Or is it rather an artist, that I should say?"--glancing at the drawing-table--"I know artists are very sufficient to themselves."

"I am neither one nor the other," said Dolly, laughing.

"You are not apathetic--I can see that. What is your secret, Miss Copley?"

"I beg your pardon--what secret does your ladyship mean?"

"Your secret of content and self-reliance. Pardon me--but you excite my envy and curiosity at once."

Dolly's look went back to the fire. "I have no secret," she said gravely. "I am not a philosopher. I am afraid I am not always contented. And yet I *am* content," she added, "with whatever the Lord gives me. I know it is good."

Lady Brierley saw tears in the eyes, which were so singularly wise and innocent at once. She was more and more interested, but would not follow Dolly's last lead. "What do you draw?" she asked, again turning her head towards the drawing materials.

"Whatever comes in my way," said Dolly. "Likenesses, sometimes; little bits of anything I like."

Lady Brierley begged to be shown a specimen of the likenesses; and forthwith persuaded Dolly to come and make a picture of herself. With which agreement the visit ended.

If she had come some months ago, thought Dolly as she looked after the retreating figure of her visitor, I should have liked it. She might have been a friend, and a great help. Now, I don't think you can, my lady!

CHAPTER XXXI.

HANDS FULL.

Dolly was, however, partly mistaken. Lady Brierley was a help. First, for the likenesses. Dolly painted so charming a little picture of her ladyship that it was a perpetual letter of recommendation; Lady Brierley's friends desired to have Dolly's pencil do the same service for them; neighbouring families saw and admired her work and came to beg to have

her skill exerted on their behalf; and, in short, orders flowed in upon Dolly to the full occupation of all the time she had to give to them. They paid well, too. For that, Dolly had referred to Lady Brierley to say what the price ought to be; and Lady Brierley, guessing need on the one hand and knowing abundance on the other, had set the price at a very pretty figure; and money quite piled itself up in Dolly's secret hoard. She was very glad of it; for her supplies from her father became more and more precarious. He seemed to shut his eyes when he came to Brierley, and not recognise the fact that anything was wanting or missing. And well Dolly knew that such wilful oversight could never happen if Mr. Copley were himself doing true and faithful work; she knew he was going in false and dangerous ways, without being able to follow him and see just what they were. Her one comfort was, that her mother did not seem to read the signs that were so terribly legible to herself.

And here too Lady Brierley's new-found friendship was of use. She wrought a diversion for the girl's troubled spirits. She was constantly having Dolly at the House. Dolly objected to leaving her mother; at the same time Mrs. Copley very much objected to have Dolly stay at home when such chances offered; so, at first to paint, and then to give her sweet company, Dolly went often, and spent hours at a time with Lady Brierley, who on her part grew more and more fond of having the little American girl in her society. Dolly was a novelty, and a mystery, and a beauty. Lady Brierley's son was in Russia; so there was no harm in her being a beauty, but the contrary; it was pleasant to the eyes. And Dolly was *naive*, and fresh, and independent too, with a manner as fearless and much more frank than Lady Brierley's own, and yet with as simple a reserve of womanly dignity as any lady could have; and how a girl that painted likenesses for money, and made her own bread, and learned cookery of Mrs. Jersey, could talk to Lord Brierley with such sweet, quiet freedom, was a puzzle most puzzling to the great lady. So it was to others, for at Brierley House Dolly often saw a great deal of company. It did her good; it refreshed her; it gave her a world of things to tell for the amusement of her mother; and besides all that, she felt that Lady Brierley was really a friend, and would be kind if occasion were; indeed, she was kind now.

Dolly needed it all, for darker days were coming, and the shadow of them was "cast before," as the manner is. With every visit of Mr. Copley to the cottage, Dolly grew more uneasy. He was not looking well, nor happy, nor easy; his manner was constrained, his spirits were forced; and for all that appeared, he might suppose that Dolly and her mother could live on air. He gave them nothing else to live on. What did he live on himself, Dolly queried, besides wine? and she made up her mind that, hard as it was, and doubtful as the effect, she must have a talk with him the next time he came down. "O father, father!" she cried to herself in the bitterness of her heart, "how can you! how can you! how can you! It never, never ought to be, that a child is ashamed for her father! The world is turned upside down."

How intensely bitter it was, the children who have always been proud of their parents can never know. Dolly wrung her hands sometimes, in a distress that was beyond tears; and then devoted herself with redoubled ardour to her mother, to prevent her from finding out how things were going. She would have a plain talk with her father the next time he came, very difficult as she felt it would be; things could not go on as they were; or at least, not without ending in a thorough breakdown. But what we purpose is one thing; what we are able to execute is often quite another thing.

It was a week or two before Mr. Copley made his appearance. Dolly was looking from the window, and saw the village fly drive up and her father get out of it. She announced the fact to her mother, and then ran down to the garden gate to meet him. As their hands encountered at the gate, Dolly almost fell back; took her hand from the latch, and only put it forth again when she saw that her father could not readily get the gate open. He was looking ill; his gait was tottering, his eye wavering, and when he spoke his utterance was confused. Dolly felt as if a lump of ice had suddenly come where her heart used to be.

"You are not well, father?" she said as they went up the walk together.

"Well enough," returned Mr. Copley--"all right directly. Cursed wet weather--got soaked to the bone--haven't got warm yet."

"Wet weather!" said Dolly; "why, it is very sunny and warm. What are you thinking of, father?"

"Sun don't *always* shine in England," said Mr. Copley. "Let me get in and have a cup of tea or coffee. You don't keep such a thing as brandy in the house, do you?"

"You have had brandy enough already," said Dolly in a low, grave voice. "I will make some coffee. Come in--why, you are trembling, father! Are you *cold*?"

"Haven't been warm for three days. Cold? yes. Coffee, Dolly, let me have some coffee. It's the vilest climate a man ever lived in."

"Why, father," said Dolly, laying her hand on his sleeve, "your coat is wet! What have you done to yourself?"

"Wet? no,--it isn't. I put on a dry coat to come down--wouldn't be such a fool as to put on a wet one. Coffee, Dolly! It's cold enough for a fire."

"But how *did* your coat get wet, father?"

"Tisn't wet. I left a wet coat in London--had enough of it. If you go out in England you must get wet. Give me some coffee, if you haven't got any brandy. I tell you, I've never been warm since."

Dolly ran up stairs, where Mrs. Copley was making a little alteration in her dress.

"Mother," she cried, "will you go down and take care of father? He is not well; I am afraid he has taken cold; I am going to make him some coffee as fast as I can. Get him to change his coat;--it is wet."

Then Dolly ran down again, every nerve in her trembling, but forcing herself to go steadily and methodically to work. She made a cup of strong coffee, cooked a nice bit of beefsteak she had in the house, rejoicing that she had it; and while the steak was doing she made a plate of toast, such as she knew both father and mother were fond of. In half an hour she had it all ready and carried it up on a tray. Mrs. Copley was sitting with an anxious and perplexed face watching her husband; he had crept to the empty fireplace and was leaning towards it as towards a place whence comfort ought to be looked for. His wife had persuaded him to exchange the wet coat for an old dressing-gown, which change, however, seemed to have wrought no bettering of affairs.

"What is the matter?" said poor Mrs. Copley with a scared face. "I can't make out anything from what he says."

"He has caught cold, I think," said Dolly very quietly; though her face was white, and all the time of her ministrations in the kitchen she had worked with that feeling of ice at her heart. "Father, here is your coffee, and it is good; maybe this will make you feel better."

She had set her dishes nicely on the table; she had poured out the coffee and cut a piece of the steak; but Mr. Copley would look at no food. He drank a little coffee, and set the cup down.

"Sloppy stuff! Haven't you got any brandy?"

"You have had brandy already this afternoon, father. Take the coffee now."

"Brandy? my teeth were chattering, and I took a wretched glass somewhere. Do give me some more, Dolly! and stop this shaking."

"Where did you get cold, Mr. Copley?" asked his wife. "You have caught a terrible cold."

"Nothing of the kind. I am all right. Just been in the rain; rain'll wet any man; my coat's got it."

"But *when*, Frank?" urged his wife. "There has been no rain to-day; it is clear, hot summer weather. When were you in the rain?"

"I don't know. Rain's rain. It don't signify when. Have you got nothing better than this? I shall not stop shaking till morning."

And he did not. They got him to bed, and sat and watched by him, the mother and daughter; watching the feverish trembling, and the feverish flush that gradually rose in his cheeks. They could get no more information as to the cause of the mischief. The truth was, that two or three nights previous, Mr. Copley had sat long at play and drunk freely; lost freely too; so that when at last he went home, his condition of mind and body was so encumbered and confused that he took no account of the fact that it was raining heavily. He was heated, and the outer air was refreshing; Mr. Copley walked home to his lodgings; was of course drenched through; and on getting home had no longer clearness of perception enough in exercise to know that he must take off his wet clothes. How he passed the night he never knew; but the morning found him very miserable, and he had been miserable ever since. Pains and aches, flushes of heat, creepings of inexplicable cold, would not be chased away by any potations his landlady recommended or by the stronger draughts to which Mr. Copley's habits bade him recur; and the third day, with something of the same sort of dumb instinct which makes a wounded or sick animal draw back to cover, he threw himself into the post coach and went down to Brierley. Naturally, he took advantage of stopping places by the way to get something to warm him; and so reached home at last in an altogether muddled and disordered state of mind and

body.

Neither Mrs. Copley nor Dolly would go to bed that night. Not that there was much to do, but there was much to fear; and they clung in their fear to each other's company. Mrs. Copley dozed in an easy-chair part of the time; and Dolly sat at the open window with her head on the sill and lost herself there in slumber that was hardly refreshing. The night saw no change; and the morning was welcome, as the morning is in times of sickness, because it brought stir and the necessity of work to be done.

It was still early when Dolly, after refreshing herself with water and changing her dress, went downstairs. She opened the hall door, and stood still a moment. The summer morning met her outside, fresh with dew, heavy with the scent of roses, musical with the song of birds; dim, sweet, full of life, breathing loveliness, folding its loveliness in mystery. As yet, things could be seen but confusedly; the dark bank of Brierley Park with its giant trees rose up against the sky, there was no gleam on the little river, the outlines of nearer trees and bushes were merged and indistinct; but what a hum and stir and warble and chitter of happy creatures! how many creatures to be happy! and what a warm breath of incense told of the blessings of the summer day in store for them! For them, and not for Dolly? It smote her hard, the question and the answer. It was for her too; it ought to be for her; the Lord's will was that all His creatures should be happy; and some of his creatures would not! Some refused the rich invitation, and would neither take themselves nor let others take the bountiful, tender, blessed gifts of God. It came to Dolly with an unspeakable sore pain. Yes, the Lord's will was peace and joy and plenty for them all; fulness of gracious supply; the singing of delighted hearts, loving and praising Him. And men made their own choice to have something else, and brought bitterness into what was meant to be only sweet. Tears came slowly into her eyes, mournful tears, and rolled down her cheeks hopelessly. Whatever was to become now of her little family? Her father, she feared, was entering upon a serious illness, which might last no one knew how long. Who would nurse him? and if Dolly did, who would do the work of the household? and if her father was laid by for any considerable time, whence were needful supplies to come from? Dolly's little stock would not last for ever. And how would her mother stand the strain and the care and the fatigue? It seemed to Dolly as she stood there at the door, that her sky was closing in and the ground giving way beneath her feet. Usually she kept up her courage bravely; just now it failed.

"Dolly," her mother's voice came smothered from over the balusters of the upper hall.

"Yes, mother?"

"Send Nelly for the doctor as soon as you can."

"Yes, mother. As soon as it is light enough."

The doctor! that was another thought. Then there would be the doctor's bill. But at this point Dolly caught herself up. "*Take no thought for the morrow*"--what did that mean? "*Be careful for nothing*"; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." And, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The words loosed the bands which seemed to have bound Dolly's heart in iron; she broke down, fell down on her knees in the porch, resting her head on the seat, and burst into a thunder-shower of weeping, which greatly cleared the air and relieved the oppression under which she had been labouring. This was nearly as uncommon a thing for Dolly as her former hopeless mood; she rose up feeling shaken, and yet strengthened. Ready for duty.

She went into the little sitting-room, set open the casement, and put the furniture in order, dusting and arranging. Leaving that all right, Dolly went down to the kitchen and made the fire. She was thinking what she should do for breakfast, when her little handmaid made her appearance. Dolly gave her some bread and butter and cold coffee, and sent her off to the village with a note to the doctor which she had meanwhile prepared. Left to herself then, she put on her kettle, and looked at the untouched pieces of beefsteak she had cooked last night. She knew what to do with them, thanks to Mrs. Jersey. The next thing was to go out into the dewy garden and get a handful of different herbs and vegetables growing there; and what she did with them I will not say; but in a little while Dolly had a most savoury mess prepared. Then she crept upstairs to her mother. Here everything was just as it had been all night. Dolly whispered to her mother to come down and have some breakfast. Mrs. Copley shook her head.

"You must, mother, dear. I have got something nice--and father is sleeping; he don't want you. Come! I have got it in the kitchen, for Nelly is away, and it's less trouble, and keeps the coffee hot. Come! father won't want anything for a little while, and you and I do, and must have it, or we cannot stand what is on our hands. Come, mother. Wash your face, and it will refresh you, and come right down."

The little kitchen was very neat; the window was open and the summer morning looking in; nobody was there but themselves; and so there might be many a worse place to take breakfast in. And the meal prepared was dainty, though

simple. Mrs. Copley could not eat much, nor Dolly; and yet the form of coming to breakfast and the nicety of the preparation were a comfort; they always are; they seem to say that all things are not confusion, and give a kind of guaranty for the continuance of old ways. Still, Mrs. Copley did not eat much, and soon went back to her watch; and Dolly cleared the table and considered what she could have for dinner. For dinner must be as usual; on that she was determined. But the doctor's coming was the next thing on the programme.

The doctor came and made his visit, and Dolly met him in the hall as he was going away. He was a comfortable-looking man, with the long English whiskers; ruddy and fleshy; one who, Dolly was sure, had no objection, for his own part, to a good glass of wine, or even a good measure of beer, if the wine were not forthcoming.

"Your father, is it?" said the doctor. "Well, take care of him--take care of him."

"How shall we take care of him, sir?"

"Well, I've left medicines upstairs. He won't want much to eat; nor much of anything, for a day or two."

"What is it? Cold?"

"No, my young lady. Fever."

"He got himself wet in the rain, a few days ago. He was shivering last night."

"Very likely. That's fever. Must take its course. He's not shivering now."

"Will he be long ill, sir, probably?"

"Impossible to say. These things are not to be counted upon. May get up in a day or two, but far more likely not in a week or two. Good morning!"

A week or two! Dolly stood and looked after the departing chaise which carried the functionary who gave judgment so easily on matters of life and death. The question came back. What would become of her mother and her, if watching and nursing had to be kept up for weeks?--with all the rest there was to do. Dolly felt very blue for a little while; then she shook it off again and took hold of her work. Nelly had returned by this time, with a knuckle of veal from the butcher's. Dolly put it on, to make the nicest possible delicate stew for her mother; and even for her father she thought the broth might, do. She gathered herbs and vegetables in the garden again, and a messenger came from Mrs. Jersey with a basket of strawberries; Dolly wrote a note to go back with the basket, and altogether had a busy morning of it. For bread had also to be made; and her small helpmate was good for only the simplest details of scrubbing and sweeping and washing dishes. It was with the greatest difficulty after all that Dolly coaxed her mother to come down to dinner; Nelly being left to keep watch the while and call them if anything was wanted.

"I can't eat, Dolly!" Mrs. Copley said, when she was seated at Dolly's board.

"Mother, it is necessary. See--this is what you like, and it is very good, I know. And these potatoes are excellent."

"But, Dolly, he may be sick for weeks, for aught we can tell; it is a low fever. Oh, this is the worst of all we have had yet!" cried Mrs. Copley, wringing her hands.

It did look so, and for a moment Dolly could not speak. Her heart seemed to stand still.

"Mother, we don't know," she said. "We do not know anything. It may be no such matter; it may *not* last so; the doctor cannot tell; and anyhow, mother, God does know and He will take care. We can trust Him, can't we? and meanwhile what you and I have to do is to keep up our strength and our faith and our spirits. Eat your dinner like a good woman. I am going to make a cup of tea for you. Perhaps father would take some."

"And you," said Mrs. Copley, eyeing her. Dolly had a white kitchen apron on, it is true, but she was otherwise in perfect order and looked very lovely. "What about me?" she said.

"Doing kitchen work! You, who are fit for--something so different!" Mrs. Copley had to get rid of some tears here.

"Doing kitchen work? Yes, certainly, if that is the thing given me to do. Why not? Isn't my veal good? I'll do anything, mother, that comes to hand, provided I *can* do it. Mother, we don't trust half enough. Remember who it is gives me the cooking to do. Shall I not do what He gives me? And I can tell you one little secret--*I like* to do cooking.

Isn't it good?"

Mrs. Copley made a very respectable dinner after all.

This was the manner of the beginning of Mr. Copley's illness. Faith and courage were well tried as the days went on; for though never violently ill, he never mended. Day and night the same tedious low fever held him, wearing down not his strength only but that of the two whose unaided hands had to manage all that was done. Dolly did not know where to look for a nurse, and Mrs. Copley was utterly unwilling to have one called in. She herself roused to the emergency and ceased to complain about her own troubles; she sat up night after night, with only partial help from Dolly, who had her hands full with the care of the house and the day duty and the sick cookery. And as day after day went by, and night after night was watched through, and days and nights began to run into weeks, the strength and nervous energy of them both began at times to fail. Neither showed it to the other, except as pale faces and weary eyes told their story. Mrs. Copley cried in secret, at night, with her head on the window-sill; and Dolly went with slow foot to gather her herbs and vegetables, and sat down sometimes in the porch, in the early dawn or the evening gloom, and allowed herself to own that things were looking very dark indeed. The question was, how long would it be possible to go on as they were doing? how long would strength hold out?--and money? The doctor's fees took great pinches out of Dolly's fund; and for the present there was no adding to it. Lady Brierley was away; she had gone to the seaside. Mrs. Jersey was very kind; fruit and eggs and vegetables came almost daily from the House to Dolly's help, and the kind housekeeper herself had offered to sit up with the sick man; but this offer was refused. Mr. Copley did not like to see any stranger about him. And Dolly and her mother were becoming now very tired. As the weeks went on, they ceased to look in each other's faces any more with questioning eyes; they knew too well how anxiety and effort had told upon both of them, and each was too conscious of what the other was thinking and fearing. They did not meet each other's eyes with those mute demands in them any more; but they stole stealthy glances sometimes each to see how the other face looked; what tokens of wear and tear it was showing; taking in at a rapid view the lines of weariness, the marks of anxiety, the faded colour, the languor of spirit which had gradually taken the place of the earlier energy. In word and action they showed none of all this. All the more, no doubt, when each was alone and the guard might be relaxed, a very grave and sorrowful expression took possession of their faces. Nothing else might be relaxed. Day and night the labour and the watch were unintermitting.

And so the summer wore on to an end. Dolly was patient, but growing very sad; perhaps taking a wider view of things than her mother, who for the present was swallowed up in the one care about her husband's condition. Dolly, managing the finances and managing the household, had both parents to think of; and was sometimes almost in despair.

She was sitting so one afternoon in the kitchen, in a little lull of work before it was time to get supper, looking out into the summer glow. It was warm in the small kitchen, but Dolly had not energy to go somewhere else for coolness. She sat gazing out, and almost querying whether all things were coming to an end at once; life and the means to live together, and the strength to get means. And yet she remembered that it is written--"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and *verily thou shalt be fed.*" But then,--it came cold into her heart,--it could not be said that her father and mother had ever fulfilled those conditions; could the promise be good for *her* faith alone? And truly, where was Dolly's faith just now? Withal, as she sat gazing out of the window, she saw that full wealth of summer, which was a pledge and proof of the riches of the hand from which it came.

"There's a gentleman, mum," Dolly's little helpmate announced in her ear. Dolly started.

"A gentleman? what gentleman? It isn't the doctor? He has been here."

"It's no him. I knows Dr. Hopley. It's no him."

"I cannot see company. Is it company, Nelly?"

"The gentleman didn't say, mum."

"Where is he?"

"He's a standin' there at the door."

Dolly slowly rose up and doubtfully took off her great kitchen apron; doubtfully went upstairs. Perhaps she had better see who it was. Mrs. Jersey might have sent a messenger,--or Lady Brierley! She went on to the hall door, which was open, and where indeed she saw a tall figure against the summer glow which filled all out of doors. A tall figure, a tall, upright figure; at first Dolly could see only the silhouette of him against the warm outer light. She came doubtfully

close up to the open door. Then she could see a little more besides the tallness; a peculiar uprightness of bearing, a manly, frank face, a head of close curling dark hair, and an expression of pleasant expectation; there was a half smile on the face, and a deferential look of waiting. He stood bareheaded before her, and had not the air of a stranger; but Dolly was quite bewildered. Somebody altogether strange, and yet somehow familiar. She said nothing; her eyes questioned why, being a stranger, he should stand there with such a look upon his face.

"I am afraid I am not remembered," said the gentleman, with the smile coming out a little more. His look, too, was steady and straightforward and observant,—where had Dolly seen that mixture of quietness and resoluteness? Her eyes fell to the little cap in his hand, an officer's cap, and then light came into them.

"Oh!" she cried,—"Mr. Shubrick!"

"It is a long time since that Christmas Day at Rome," he said; a more wistful gravity coming into his face as he better scanned the face opposite to him, which the evening light revealed very fully.

"Oh, I know now," said Dolly. "I do not need to be reminded; but I could not expect to see you here. I thought you were in the Mediterranean. Will you come in, Mr. Shubrick? I am very glad to see you; but my thoughts were so far away"----

"You thought I was in the Mediterranean?" he said as he followed Dolly in. "May I ask, why?"

"Your ship was there."

"*Was* there; but ships are not stationary things."

"No, of course not," said Dolly, throwing open the blinds and letting the summer light and fragrance stream in. "Then, when did you see Christina?"

"Not for months. The Red Chief has been ordered to the Baltic and is there now; and I got a furlough to come to England. But—how do you do, Miss Copley?"

"I am well, thank you."

"Forgive me for asking, if that information can be depended on?"

"Yes, indeed I am well. I suppose I look tired. We have had sickness here for a good while—my father. Mother and I are tired, no doubt."

"You look very tired. I am afraid I ought not to be here. Can you make me of use? What is the matter? Please remember that I am not a stranger."

"I am very glad to remember it," said Dolly. "No, I do not feel as if you were a stranger, Mr. Shubrick, after that day we spent together. You asked what was the matter—oh, I don't know! a sort of slow, nervous fever, not infectious at all, nor very alarming; only it must be watched, and he always wants some one with him, and of course after a while one gets tired. That cannot be helped. We have managed very well."

"Not Mrs. Copley and you alone?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"It is five weeks now."

"And no improvement yet?"

"I do not know. Mother thinks a little," said Dolly, faltering. This speaking to eyes and ears of sympathy, after so long an interval, rather upset her; her lips trembled, tears came, she was upon the point of breaking down; she struggled for self-command, but her lips trembled more and more.

"I have come in good time," said her visitor.

"It is pleasant to see somebody, to be able to speak to somebody, that is so good as to care," said Dolly, brushing

her hand over her eyes swiftly.

"You are worn out," said the other gently. "I am not going to be simply somebody to speak to. Miss Copley, I am a countryman, and a sort of a friend, you know. You will let me take the watch to-night."

"You!" said Dolly, starting. "Oh no!"

"I beg your pardon. You ought to say 'Oh yes.' I have had experience. I think you may trust me."

"Oh, I cannot. We have no right to let you do so."

"You have a right to make any use of me you can; for I place myself at your disposal."

"You are *very* kind, Mr. Shubrick!"

"Don't say anything more. That is settled," said he, taking up his cap, as if in preparation for departure. Dolly was a little bewildered by the quiet, decided manner, just like what she remembered of Mr. Shubrick; unobtrusive and undemonstrative, but if he moved, moving straight to his goal. She rose as he rose.

"But," she stammered, "I don't think you can. Father likes nobody but mother and me about him."

"He will like me to-morrow," Mr. Shubrick answered with a smile. "Don't fear; I will manage that."

"You are very kind!" said Dolly. "You are very kind!"--Already her heart was leaping towards this offered help, and Mr. Shubrick looked so resolute and strong and ready; she could hardly oppose him. "But you are *too* kind!" she said suddenly.

"No," said he gravely; "that is impossible. Remember, in the family we belong to, the rule is one which we can never reach. That ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

What it was, I do not know, in these words which overcame Dolly. In the words and the manner together. She was very tired and overstrung, and they found some unguarded spot and reached the strained nerves. Dolly put both hands to her face and burst into tears, and for a moment was terribly afraid that she was going to be hysterical. But that was not Dolly's way at all, and she made resolute fight against her nerves. Meanwhile, she felt herself taken hold of and placed in a chair by the window; and the sense that somebody was watching her and waiting, helped the return of self-control. With a sort of childish sob, Dolly presently took down her hands and looked up through the glistening tears at the young man standing over her.

"There!" she said, forcing a smile on the lips that quivered,--"I am all right now. I do not know how I could be so foolish."

"I know," said Mr. Shubrick. "Then I will just return to the village for half an hour, and be back here as soon as possible."

"But"--said Dolly doubtfully. "Why don't you send for what you want?"

"Difficult," said the other. "I am going to get some supper."

"Oh!" said Dolly. "If *that* is what you want--sit down, Mr. Shubrick. Or send off your fly first, and then sit down. If you are going to stay here to-night, I'll give you your supper. Send away the fly, Mr. Shubrick, please!"

"I do not think I can. And you cannot possibly do such a thing as you propose. I shall be back here in a very little time."

Dolly put her hand upon Mr. Shubrick's cap and softly took it from him.

"No," she said. "It's a bargain. If I let you do one thing, you must let me do the other. It would trouble me to have you go. It is too pleasant to see a friend here, to lose sight of him in this fashion. There will be supper, of some sort, and you shall have the best we can. Will you send away your fly, please, and sit down and wait for it?"

If Dolly could not withstand him, so on this point there was no resisting her. Mr. Shubrick yielded to her evident urgent wish; and Dolly went back to her preparations. The question suddenly struck her, *where* should she have supper? Down here in the kitchen? But to have it in order, upstairs, would involve a great deal more outlay of strength

and trouble. The little maid could not set the table up there, and Dolly could not, with the stranger looking on. That would never do. She debated, and finally decided to put her pride in her pocket and bring her visitor down to the kitchen. It was not a bad place, and if he was going to be a third nurse in the house, it would be out of keeping to make any ceremony with him. Dolly's supper itself was faultless. She had some cold game, sent by Lady Brierley or by her order; she had fresh raspberries sent by Mrs. Jersey, and a salad of cresses. But Mrs. Copley would not be persuaded to make her appearance. She did not want to see strangers; she did not like to leave Mr. Copley; in short, she excused herself obstinately, to Dolly's distress. However, she made no objection to having Mr. Shubrick take her place for the night; and she promised Dolly that if she got a good night's sleep and was rested, she would appear at breakfast.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE NURSE.

Dolly made her mother's excuses, which seemed to her visitor perfectly natural, and ushered him down to the supper laid in the little kitchen; Dolly explaining very simply that her mother and she had lived there since there had been sickness in the house, and had done so for want of hands to make other arrangements possible. And Mr. Shubrick seemed also to find it the most natural thing in the world to live in the kitchen, and for all that appeared, had never taken his meals anywhere else in his life. He did justice to the supper too, which was a great gratification to Dolly; and lifted the kettle for her from the hob when she wanted it, and took his place generally as if he were one of the family. As for Dolly, there came over her a most exquisite sense of relief; a glimpse of shelter and protection, the like of which she had not known since she could hardly remember when. True, it was transient; it could not abide; Mr. Shubrick was sitting there opposite her like some one that had fallen from the clouds, and whom mist and shadow would presently swallow up again; but in the meanwhile, what a gleam of light his presence brought! He would go soon again, of course; he must; but to have him there in the meantime was a momentary comfort unspeakable. More than momentary; he would stay all night. And her mother would get a night's sleep. For her own part, this feeling of rest was already as good as sleep. Yes, for once, for a little, a strong hand had come between her and her burdens. Dolly let herself rest upon it, with an intense appreciation of its strength and sufficiency.

And so resting, she observed her new helper curiously. She noticed how entirely he was the same man she had seen that Christmas Day in Rome; the same here as there, with no difference at all. There was the calm of manner that had struck her then, along with the readiness for action; the combination was peculiar, and expressed in every turn of head and hand. Here, in a strange house, he was as absolutely at ease and unconstrained as if he had been on the quarterdeck of his own ship. Is it the habit of command? thought Dolly. But that does not necessarily give a man ease of manner in his intercourse with others who are not under his command. Meanwhile, Mr. Shubrick sat and talked, keeping up a gentle run of unexciting thoughts, and apparently as much at home in the kitchen of Brierley Cottage as if he had lived there always.

"When have you seen Christina?" Dolly asked.

"Not in some months."

"Are they at Sorrento yet?"

"No; they spent the winter in Rome, and this summer they are in Switzerland. I had a letter from Miss Thayer the other day. I mean, a few weeks ago."

It occurred to Dolly that one or the other of them must be a slack correspondent.

"I almost wonder they could leave Sorrento," she remarked.

"They got tired of it."

"I never get tired of lovely things," said Dolly. "The longer I know them the better pleasure I take in them. I could have stayed in Venice, it seemed to me, for years; and Rome--I should never have got away from Rome of my own accord, if duty had not made me; and then at Naples, I enjoyed it better the last day than the first. And Sorrento"----

"What about Sorrento?"

"Oh, it was--you know what Sorrento is. It was roses and myrtles and orange blossoms, and the fire of the pomegranate flowers and the grey of the olives; and the Italian sun, and the Italian air; and, Mr. Shubrick, you know what the Mediterranean is, with all its colours under the shadow of the cliffs and the sunlight on the open sea. And Vesuvius was always a delightful wonder to me. And the people were so nice. Sorrento is perfect." A soft breath of a sigh came from Dolly's heart.

"You do not like England so well?"

"No. Oh no! But I could like England. Mr. Shubrick, my time at Sorrento was almost without care; and you know that makes a difference."

"Would you like to live without care?" said he.

Dolly looked at him, the question seemed so strange. "Without anxious care--I should," she answered.

"That you may, anywhere."

"How is it possible, sometimes?" Dolly asked wistfully.

"May I be Yankee enough to answer your question by another? Is it any relief to you to have me come in and take the watch for to-night?"

"The greatest," said Dolly. "I cannot express to you how great it is; for mother and I have had it all to do for so long. I cannot tell you, Mr. Shubrick, in what a strange lull of rest I have been sitting here since we came downstairs. I have just let my hands fall."

"How can you be sure it is safe to do that?" he said, smiling.

"Oh," said Dolly, "I know you will take care; and while you do, I need not."

Mr. Shubrick was silent. Dolly pondered.

"Do I know what you mean?" she said.

"I think you do," he replied. "Do you remember it is written, --'Casting your care upon Him, *for He careth for you*'?"

"And that means, not to care myself?"

"Not anxiously, or doubtfully. You cannot trust your care to another, and at the same time keep it yourself."

"I know all that," said Dolly slowly; "or I thought I knew it. How is it, then, that it is so difficult to get the good of it?"

"Was it very difficult to trust me?" Mr. Shubrick asked.

"No," said Dolly, "because--you know you are not a stranger, Mr. Shubrick. I feel as if I knew you."

He lifted his eyes and looked at her; not regarding the compliment to himself, but with a steady, keen eye carrying Dolly's own words home to her. He did not say a word; but Dolly changed colour.

"Oh, do you mean *that*?" she cried, almost with tears. "Is it because I know Christ so poorly that I trust Him so slowly?"

"What else can it be? And you know, Miss Dolly, just that absolute trust is the thing the Lord wants of us. And you know it is the thing of all others that we like from one another. We need not be surprised that He likes it; for we were made in His image."

Dolly sat silent, struck and moved both with sorrow and gladness; for if it were possible so to lay down care, what more could burden her? and that she had not done it, testified to more strangeness and distance on her part towards her best Friend than she liked to think of. Her musings were interrupted by Mr. Shubrick.

"Now may I be introduced to Mr. Copley?" he said.

Dolly was rather doubtful about the success of this introduction. However, she brought her mother out of the sick-room, and took Mr. Shubrick in; and there, in obedience to his desire, left him, without an introduction; for her father was asleep.

"He will never let him stay there, Dolly," said Mrs. Copley. "He will not bear it at all." And Dolly waited and feared and hoped. But the night drew on, and came down upon the world; Mrs. Copley went to bed, at Dolly's earnest suggestion, and was soon fast asleep, fatigue carrying it over anxiety; and Dolly watched and listened in vain for sounds of unrest from her father's room. None came; the house was still; the summer night was deliciously mild; Dolly's eyelids trembled and closed, and opened, and finally closed again, not to open till the summer morning was bright and the birds making a loud concert of their morning song.

Mr. Shubrick, left alone with his patient, sat down and waited; reviewing meanwhile the room and his surroundings. It was a moderate-sized, neat, pretty room, with one window looking out upon the garden. The casement was two-leaved, and one leaf only was part open. The air consequently was close and hot. And if the room was neat, that applies only to its natural and normal condition; for if neatness includes tidiness, it could not be said at present to deserve that praise. There was an indescribable litter everywhere, such as is certain to accumulate in a sick-room if the watchers are not imbued with the spirit of order. Here were one or two spare pillows, on so many chairs; over the back of another chair hung Mr. Copley's dressing-gown; at a very unconnected distance from his slippers under a fourth chair. On still another chair lay a plate and knife with the remains of an orange; on the mantelpiece, the rest of the chairs, the tables, and even the floor, stood a miscellaneous assortment of cups, glasses, saucers, bottles, spoons, and pitchers, large and small, attached to as varied an assemblage of drinks and medicines. Only one medicine was to be given from time to time, Mr. Shubrick had been instructed; and that was marked, and he recognised it; what were all the rest of this assemblage doing here? Some books lay about also, and papers, and magazines; here a shawl, there some articles of female apparel; and a basket of feminine work. The litter was general, and somewhat disheartening to a lover of order; Mrs. Copley being one of those people who have nothing of the sort belonging to them, and indeed during the most of her life accustomed to have somebody else keep order for her; servants formerly, Dolly of late. Mr. Shubrick sat and looked at all these things, but made no movement, until by and by his patient awoke. It was long past sunset now, the room in partial twilight, yet illumination enough still reflected from a very bright sky for the two people there to see each what the other looked like. Mr. Copley used his eyes in this investigation for a few minutes in silence.

"Who are you?" he inquired abruptly.

"A friend."

"What friend? You are a friend I don't know."

"That is true; but it will not be true to-morrow," Mr. Shubrick said quietly.

"What are you here for?"

"To act the part of a friend, if you will allow me. I am here to wait upon you, Mr. Copley."

"Thank you, I prefer my own people about me," said the sick man curtly. "You may go, and send them, or some of them, to me."

"I cannot do that," said the stranger, "and you must put up with me for to-night. Mrs. Copley and your daughter are both very tired, and need rest."

"Humph!" said the invalid with a surprised grunt. "Did *they* send you here?"

"No. They permitted me to come. I take it as a great privilege."

"You take it before you have got it. I have not given my leave yet. What are you doing there?"

"Letting some fresh air in for you." Mr. Shubrick was setting wide open both leaves of the casement.

"You mustn't do that. The night air is not good for me. Shut the window."

"You cannot have any air at night *but* night air," replied Mr. Shubrick, uttering what a great authority has since spoken, and leaving the window wide open.

"But night air is very bad. I don't want it; do you hear?"

"If you will lie still a minute or two, you will begin to feel that it is very good. It is full of the breath of roses and mignonette, and a hundred other pleasant things."

"But I tell you that's poison!" cried Mr. Copley, beginning to excite himself. "I choose to have the window shut; do you hear me, sir? Confound you, I want it shut!"

The young man, without regarding this order, came to the bedside, lifted Mr. Copley's head and shook up his pillows and laid him comfortably down again.

"Lie still," he said, "and be quiet. You are under orders, and I am in command here to-night. I am going to take care of you, and you have no need to think about it. Is that right?"

"Yes," said the other, with another grunt half of astonishment and half of relief,--"that's right. But I want the window shut, I tell you."

"Now you shall have your broth. It will be ready presently."

"I don't want any broth!" said the sick man. "If you could get me a glass of wine;--*that* would set me up. I'm tired to death of these confounded slops. They are nothing for a man to grow strong upon. Never would make a man strong--never!"

Mr. Shubrick made no answer. He was going quietly about the room.

"What are you doing?" said the other presently, watching him.

"Making things ship-shape--clearing decks."

"What do you know about clearing decks?" said Mr. Copley.

"I will show you."

And the sick man watched with languid amusement to see how, as his new nurse went from place to place, the look of the room changed. Shawls and clothing were folded up and bestowed on a chest of drawers; slippers were put ready for use at the bedside; books were laid together neatly on the table; and a small army of cups and glasses and empty vials were fairly marched out of the room. In a little while the apartment was in perfect order, and seemed half as large again. The invalid drew a long breath.

"You're an odd one!" said he, when he caught Mr. Shubrick's eye again. "Where did you learn all that? and who are you? and how did you come here? I have a right to know."

"You have a perfect right, and shall know all about me," was the answer; "but first, here is your broth, hot and good." (Mr. Shubrick had just received it from the little maid at the door). "Take this now, and to-morrow, if you behave well, you shall have something better."

Mr. Copley suffered himself to be persuaded, took the broth, and then repeated his question.

"I am Sandie Shubrick, lieutenant in the United States navy, on board ship 'The Red Chief,' just now on furlough, and in England."

"What did you come to England for?"

"Business and pleasure."

"Which do you call this you are about now?"

"Both," said Mr. Shubrick, smiling. "Now you may lie still, and keep the rest of your questions for another time."

Mr. Copley yielded, and lay looking at his new attendant, till he dozed off into unconsciousness. Waking then after a while, hot and restless, his nurse brought water and a sponge and began sponging his face and neck and hands; gently and soothingly; and kept up the exercise until restlessness abated, breaths of satisfied content came at easy intervals; and finally Mr. Copley slumbered off peacefully, and knew no more. When he awoke the sun was shining on the oaks of Brierley Park. The window was open, as it had been all night, and by the window sat Mr. Shubrick, looking out. The sick man eyed him for a while.

"Are you asleep there?" he said at last, growing impatient of the silence. Mr. Shubrick got up and came to him.

"Good morning!" said he. "How have you rested?"

"I believe it's the best night I've had yet. What were you doing to me in the night? using a sponge to me, weren't you? It put me to sleep. I believe it would cure a man of a fever, by Jupiter."

"Not by Jupiter," said Mr. Shubrick. "And you must not say such things while I am here."

"Why not?" Mr. Copley opened his eyes somewhat.

"It is no better than counterfeit swearing."

"Would you rather have the true thing?"

"I never permit either, where I am in authority?"

"Your authority can't reach far. You've got to take the world as you find it."

"I dispute that. You've got to take the world and make it better."

"What do you do where your authority is not sufficient?"

"I go away."

"Look here," said Mr. Copley. "Do you call yourself in authority *here*?"

"Those are the only terms on which I could stay," said Mr. Shubrick, smiling.

"Well, see," said the other,--"I wish you would stay. You've done me more good than all the doctor and everybody else before you."

"I come after them all, remember."

"I wish you had come before them. Women don't know anything. There's my wife,--she would have let the room get to be like a Jew's old clothes shop, and never be aware of it. I didn't know what was choking me so, and now I know it was the confusion. You belong to the navy?"

"I told you so last evening," said Mr. Shubrick, who meanwhile was sponging Mr. Copley's face and hands again and putting him in order generally, so as a sick man's toilet might be made.

"By Jupiter!--I beg your pardon--I believe I am going to get over this, after all," said Mr. Copley "I am sure I shall, if you'll stay and help me."

"I will do it with pleasure. Now, what are you going to have for your breakfast?"

"But, look here. Why should you stay with me? I am nothing to you. Who's to pay you for it?"

"I do not come for pay; or rather, I get it as I go along. Make yourself easy, and tell me about your breakfast."

"How do you come here? I don't know you. Who does know you?"

"I have been a friend of your friends, Mr. and Mrs. Thayer, for many years."

"Humph. Ah! Well. About breakfast, I don't know what they have got for me downstairs; some lollypop or other."

"We'll do better for you than that," said Mr. Shubrick.

The morning meanwhile had come to the other inmates of the house. Dolly had left the sofa where she had spent the night, with a glad consciousness that the night was over and there had been no disturbance. Her mother had slept all the night through and was sleeping yet. What refreshment and comfort it was. What strength and rest, to think of that kind, calm, strong, resolute man in her father's room; somebody that could be depended upon. Dolly thought Christina ought to be a happy woman, with always such a hand to support her all her life long. "And he drinks no wine," thought Dolly; "that temptation will never overtake him; she will never have to be ashamed of him. He will hold

her up, and not she him. She is happy."

The worst thing about Mr. Shubrick's coming was, that he must go away again! However, not yet; he would be seen at breakfast first; and to prepare breakfast was now Dolly's next care. Then she got her mother up and persuaded her to make herself nice and appear at the meal.

"You are never going to bring him down into the kitchen?" said Mrs. Copley, horrified, when she got there.

"Certainly, mother; it is no use trying to make a fuss. I cannot give him breakfast anywhere else."

"Then I would let him go to the village, Dolly, and get his breakfast there."

"But that would be very inhospitable. He was here at supper, mother; I don't think he was frightened. He knows just how we are situated."

"He doesn't know you have nobody to help you, I hope?"

"How could he help knowing it? The thing is patent. Never mind, mother; the breakfast will be good, if the breakfast-room is only so so. If you do not mind, nobody else will."

"That you should come to this!" said Mrs. Copley, sinking into a chair. "My Dolly! Doing a servant's work, and for strangers, and nobody to help or care! And what are we coming to? I don't see, for my part. You are ruined."

"Not yet," said Dolly cheerfully. "If I am, I do not feel like it. Now, mother, see if you can get Mr. Shubrick down here before my omelette is ruined; for that is the greatest danger just at present."

It was not quite easy to get Mr. Shubrick down there, however; he demurred very seriously; and I am afraid the omelette was something the worse before he came. But then the breakfast was rather gay. The watcher reported a quiet night, and as he was much inclined to think, an amended patient.

"Quiet!" echoed Mrs. Copley. "How could you keep him quiet?"

"I suppose I imagined myself on board ship," said the young man, smiling, "and gave orders, as I am accustomed to do there. Habit is a great thing."

"And Mr. Copley minded your orders?"

"That is understood."

"Well!" ejaculated Mrs. Copley. "He never would do the least thing I or Dolly wanted him to do; not the least thing. *He* has been giving the orders all along; and as fidgetty as ever he could be. Fidgetty and nervous. Wasn't he fidgetty?"

"No; very docile and peaceable."

"You must be a wonderful man," said Mrs. Copley.

"Habit," said Mr. Shubrick. "As I said, it is a great thing."

"He has been having his own way all along," said Mrs. Copley; "and ordering us about, and doing just the things he ought not to do. He was always that way."

"Not the proper way for a sick room," said Mr. Shubrick. "You had better install me as head nurse."

How Dolly wished they could do that! As she saw him there at the table, with his quiet air of efficiency and strength, Dolly thought what a treasure he was in a sick house; how strong she felt while she knew he was near. Perhaps Mrs. Copley's thoughts took the same turn; she sighed a little as she spoke.

"You have been very kind, Mr. Shubrick. We shall never forget it. You have been a great help. If Mr. Copley would only get better now"----

"I am going to see him better before I go."

"We could not ask any *more* help of you."

"You need not," and Mr. Shubrick smiled. "Mr. Copley has done me the honour to ask me."

"Mr. Copley has asked you!" repeated Mrs. Copley in bewilderment. "What?"

"Asked me to stay."

"To stay and nurse him?"

"Yes. And I said I would. You cannot turn me away after that."

"But you have your own business in England," Dolly here put in.

"This is it, I think."

"Your own pleasure, then. You did not come to England for this."

"It seems I did," he said. "I am off duty, Miss Dolly, I told you; here on furlough, to do what I like; and there is nothing else at present that I should like half so well."

Dolly scored another private mark here to the account of Mr. Shubrick's goodness; and in the ease which suddenly came to her own mind, felt as if her head were growing light and giddy. But it was no illusion or dream. Mr. Shubrick was really there, finishing his breakfast, and really going to stay and take care of her father; and Dolly felt as if the tide of their affairs had turned.

So indeed it proved. From that time Mr. Shubrick assumed the charge of the sick-room, by night and also by day. He went for a walk to the village sometimes, and always got his dinner there; the rest of the time he was at the cottage, attending to everything that concerned Mr. Copley. Dolly and her mother were quite put away from that care. And whether it were the moral force of character, which acted upon Mr. Copley, or whether it were that his disorder had really run its length and that a returning tide of health was coming back to its channels, the sick man certainly was better. He grew better from day to day. He had been quiet and manageable from the first in his new nurse's hands; now he began to take pleasure in his society, holding long talks with him on all possible subjects. Appetite mended also, and strength was gradually replacing weakness, which had been very great. Anxiety on the one score of her father's recovery was taken away from Dolly.

Other anxieties remained, and even pressed harder, when the more immediately engrossing care was removed. In spite of Mr. Shubrick's lecture about casting off care, Dolly found it difficult to act upon the truth she knew. Her little fund of money was much reduced; she could not help asking herself how they were going to live? Would her father, as soon as he was strong enough, go back to his former ways and be taken up with his old companions? and if he did, how much longer could the little household at Brierley struggle on alone? What had become of all her father's property in America, from which in old time the income had always been more than sufficient for all their wants and desires? Was it gone irrevocably? or had only the ready money accruing from it been swallowed up in speculation or pleasure? And whence could Dolly get light on these points, or how know what steps she ought to take? Could her weakness do anything, in view of that fact to which her mother had alluded, that Mr. Copley always took his own way? It was all utter and dark confusion as she looked forward. Could Dolly trust and be quiet?

In her meditations another subject occupied her a good deal. The presence of Sandie Shubrick was such a comfort that it was impossible not to think what she would do without him when he was gone. He was a universal comfort. Since he had taken charge of the sick-room, the sickness was disappearing; while he was in command, there was no rebellion; the affairs of the household worked smoothly, and Dolly had no need to draw a single long breath of perplexity or anxiety. The sound of that even, firm step on the gravel walk or in the hall, was a token of security; the sight of Mr. Shubrick's upright, alert figure anywhere was good for courage and hope. His resolute, calm face was a light in the house. Dolly's thoughts were much busied with him and with involuntary speculations about him and Christina. It was almost unavoidable. She thought, as indeed she had thought before, that Miss Thayer was a happy woman, to have so much strength and goodness belonging to her. What a shielded life hers would be, by this man's side. He would never neglect her or prefer his interests to hers; he would never give her cause to be ashamed of him; and here Dolly's lips sometimes quivered and a hot tear or two forced their way out from under her eyelids. And how could possibly Christina so play fast and loose with him, do dishonour to so much goodness, and put off her consent to his wishes until all grace was gone out of it? Mr. Shubrick apparently had made up his mind to this treatment and was not cast down by it; or perhaps would he, so self-reliant as he was, be cast down utterly by anything?

I think perhaps Dolly thought too much about Mr. Shubrick. It was difficult to help it. He had brought such a change into her life; he was doing such a work in the house; he was so very pleasant a companion at those breakfasts and suppers in the kitchen. For his dinner Mr. Shubrick persisted in going to the village inn. He said the walk did him good. He had become in these few days quite as one of themselves. And now he would go. Mr. Copley was fast getting well, and his nurse would go. Dolly could not bear to think of it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

UNDER AN OAK TREE.

More than a week passed, and Mr. Copley was steadily convalescent. He had not left his room yet, but he needed no longer the steady attendance of some one bound to minister to his wants. Dolly was expecting now every day to hear Mr. Shubrick say he must bid them good-bye; and she took herself a little to task for caring so much about it. What was Sandie Shubrick to her, that she should feel such a heart-sinking at the prospect of his departure? It was a very wonderful thing that he, Christina Thayer's Mr. Shubrick, should have come to help this little family in its need; it was very astonishing that he should be there even then, waiting on Dolly Copley's sick father; let her be satisfied with this so unexpected good, and bid him farewell as easily as she had bid him welcome. But Dolly could not. How could she? she said to herself. And every time she saw Mr. Shubrick she feared lest the dreaded words would fall from his lips. So when he came to her one afternoon when she was sitting in the porch, her heart gave a throb of anticipation. However, he said nothing of going, but remarked how pretty the sloping ground looked, on the other side of the little river, with its giant trees and the sunlight streaming through the branches upon the greensward.

"It is very pretty," said Dolly. "The park is beautiful. You ought to see it"--*before you go*, she was on the point of saying, but did not say.

"Will you come with me, and show me what I ought to look at?"

"Now?" said Dolly.

"If it is not too warm for you. We might take it easily and keep in the shadow of the trees."

"Oh, it is not too warm," said Dolly; and she ran to fetch her garden hat.

It was not August now; the summer was past, yet the weather was fit for the height of summer. Warm, spicy, dry air, showing misty in the distance like a gossamer veil, and near by a still glow over everything. The two young people wandered over the bridge and slowly mounted the bank among the oaks and beeches, keeping in the shade as much as might be. There was a glorious play of shadow and sunlight all over the woodland; and the two went softly along, hardly disturbing the wild creatures that looked at them now and then. For the woods were full of life. They saw a hare cross an opening, and grey squirrels eyed them from the great oak branches overhead; and there was a soft hum of insects filling all the silence. It was not the time of day for the birds to be merry. Nor perhaps for the human creatures who slowly passed from tree to tree, avoiding the spaces of sunlight and summer glow. They were neither merry nor talked much.

"This is very noble," said Sandie at last.

"Were you ever in England before, Mr. Shubrick?"

"Yes."

"Then you have seen many of these fine places already, perhaps?"

"No, not many. My stay has been mostly in London; though I did run down a little into the country."

"People say we have nothing like this in America."

"True, I suppose," said Sandie. "We are too young a people, and we have had something else to do."

"It is like a dream, that anybody should have such a house and such a place as Brierley," Dolly went on. "There is

nothing wanting that one can imagine, for beauty and dignity and delight of living and luxury of ease. It might be the Arabian Nights, or fairyland. You must see the house, with its lovely old carvings, and pictures, and old, old furniture; and the arms of the family that built it carved and painted everywhere, on doors and chairs and mantelpieces."

"Of the family that built it?" repeated Mr. Shubrick. "Not the family that owns it now?"

"No. You see their arms too, but the others are the oldest. And then it would take you hours to go through the gardens. There are different gardens; one, most exquisite, framed in with trees, and a fountain in the middle, and all the beds filled with rare plants. But I do not like anything about the place better than these trees and greensward."

"It must be a difficult thing," said Sandie meditatively, "to use it all for Christ."

Dolly was silent a while. "I don't see how it *could* be used so," she said.

The other made no answer. They went slowly on and on, getting up to the higher ground and more level going, while the sun's rays coming a little more slant as the afternoon declined, gave an increasing picturesqueness to the scene. Mr. Shubrick had been for some time almost entirely silent, when Dolly proposed to stop and rest.

"One enjoys it better so," she said. "One has better leisure to look. And I wanted to talk to you, besides."

Her companion was very willing, and they took their places under a great oak, on the swell of greensward at the foot of it. Ground and grass and moss were all dry. Dolly sat down and laid off her hat; however, the proposed "talk" did not seem to be ready, and she let Mr. Shubrick wait.

"I wanted to ask you something," said she at last. "I have been wanting to ask you something for a good while."

There she stopped. She was not looking at him; she was taking care not to look at him; she was trying to regard Mr. Shubrick as a foreign abstraction. Seeing which, he began to look at her more persistently than hitherto.

"What is it?" he asked, with not a little curiosity.

"There is nobody else I can ask," Dolly went on; "and if you could give me the help I want, it would be a great thing for me."

"I will if I can."

The young man's eyes did not turn away now. And Dolly was an excessively pretty thing to look at; so taken up with her own thoughts that she was in no danger of finding out that she was an object of attention or perhaps admiration. Her companion perceived this, and indulged his eyes fearlessly. Dolly's fair, flushed face was thin with the work and the care of many weeks past; the traces of that were plain enough; yet it was delicately fair all the same, and perhaps more than ever, with the heightened spirituality of the expression. The writing on her features, of love and purity, habitual self-devotion and self-forgetfulness, patience and sweetness, was so plain and so unconscious, that it made her a very rare subject of contemplation, and, as her companion thought, extremely lovely. Her attitude spoke the same unconsciousness; her dress was of the simplest description; her brown hair was tossed into disorder; but dress and hair and attitude alike were deliciously graceful, with that mingling of characteristics of child and woman which was peculiar to Dolly. Lieutenant Shubrick was familiar with a very diverse type of womanly charms in the shape of his long-betrothed Miss Thayer. The comparison, or contrast, might be interesting; at any rate, any one who had eyes to read this type before him needed no contrast to make it delightful; and probably Mr. Shubrick had such eyes. He was quite silent, leaving Dolly to choose her time and her words at her own pleasure.

"I know you will," she said slowly, taking up his last words;--"you have already; but I am a bad learner. You know what you said, Mr. Shubrick, the day you came, that evening when we were at supper,--about trusting, and not taking care?"

"Yes."

Dolly did not look at him, and went on. "I do not find that I can do it."

"Do what?"

"Lay down care. Quite lay it down."

"It is not easy," Mr. Shubrick admitted.

"Is it possible, always? I find I can trust pretty well when I can see at least a possible way out of difficulties; but when the way seems all shut up, and no opening anywhere,—then—I do not quite lay down care. How can I?"

"There is only one thing that can make it possible."

"I know—you told me; but how then can I get that? I must be very far from the knowledge of Christ—if *that* is what is wanting."

Dolly's eyes filled with tears.

"No," said Mr. Shubrick gently, "but perhaps it does follow, that you have not enough of that knowledge."

"Of course. And how shall I get it? I can trust when I see some light, but when I can see none, I am afraid."

"If I promised to take you home, I mean, to America, by ways known to me but unknown to you, could you trust me and take the steps I bade you."

I am not justifying Mr. Shubrick. This was a kind of tentative speech for his own satisfaction; but he made it, watching for Dolly's answer the while. It came without hesitation.

"Yes," she said. "I should believe you, if you told me so."

"Yet in that case you would follow me blindly."

"Yes."

"Seeing no light."

"Yes. But then I know you enough to know that you would not promise what you would not do."

"Thank you. This is by way of illustration. You would not be afraid?"

"Not a bit. I see what you mean," said Dolly, colouring a little.

"Do you think there is anything friends can give one another, so precious as such trust?"

"No—I suppose not."

"Is it wonderful, if the Lord wants it of His children?"

"No. O Mr. Shubrick, I am ashamed of myself! What is the reason that I can give it to you, for instance, and not to Him? Is it just wickedness?"

"It is rather, distance."

"Distance! Then how shall I get near?"

"Do you know what a question you are asking me? One of the grandest that a creature can ask. It is the question of questions. For, to get near, is to see the Lord's beauty; and to see Him is to love Him, and to love with that absolute confidence. 'Thou wilt keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.' And, 'This is life eternal, to know thee.'"

"Then how, Mr. Shubrick?" said Dolly. "How is one to do?" She was almost tearful in her earnestness. But he spoke, earnestly enough, yet with a smile.

"There are two sides to the question. On your side, you must do what you would do in any case where you wanted to cultivate a friendship. How would that be?"

Dolly pondered. "I never put it so to myself," she said slowly, "and yet I suppose it must be so. Why, in any such case I should try to see a great deal of the person I wanted to make a friend of. I would be in the person's company, hear him talk, or hear her talk, if it was a woman; and talk to her. It would be the only way we could become known to

each other."

"Translate, now."

"Translate?" said Dolly. "You mean,"----

"Apply to the case in hand."

"You mean," said Dolly, "that to study the Bible is to hear the Lord speak; and to pray, is to speak to Him."

"To study the Bible with a heart ready to obey all it finds--*that* is hearing the Lord speak; and if prayer is telling Him your thoughts and wishes in your own language, that is speaking to Him."

"But it is speaking without an answer."

"I beg your pardon. It is speaking without an audible answer; that is all."

"Then how does the answer come?"

"In receiving what you ask for; in finding what you seek."

Dolly brushed away a tear again.

"One needs to take a good deal of time for all that," she said presently.

"Can you cultivate a friendship on any other terms?"

"Perhaps not. This is quite a new view of the whole matter, Mr. Shubrick. To me."

"Common sense. And Bible."

"Does the Bible speak of it?"

"The Bible speaks of the life of religion as contained in our knowing God and in His knowing us."

"But He,--He knows everybody."

"Not in this way. It is the sweet knowledge of intimate friendship and relations of affection. 'I know thee by name,' was one of the reasons given why the Lord would grant Moses' bold prayer. 'I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine,' is the word to His people Israel. 'He calleth His own sheep by name,' you know it is said of the Good Shepherd. And 'they shall all know Me,' is the promise concerning the Church in Christ. While, you remember, the sentence of dismissal to the others will be simply, 'I know you not.' And, 'the Lord knoweth them that are His.'"

There was silence; and then Dolly said, "You said there were two sides to the question."

"Yes. Your part we have talked about; it is to study, and ask, and obey, and believe. The Lord's part is to reveal Himself to you. It is a matter of revelation. You cannot attain it by any efforts of your own, be they never so determinate. Therefore your prayer must be constantly like that of Moses--'I beseech thee, show me Thy glory.' And you see, that makes your part easy, because the other part is sure."

"Mr. Shubrick, you are a very comforting talker!" said Dolly.

"Nay, I am only repeating the Lord's words of comfort."

"So I am to study, and yet study will not do it," said Dolly; "and I am to pray, and yet prayer will not give it."

"Study will not do it, certainly. But when the Lord bestows His light, study becomes illumination. No, prayer does not give it, either; yet you must ask if you would have. And Christ's promise to one who loves Him and keeps His commandments is,--you recollect it,--'I will love him *and will manifest Myself to him.*'"

"That will do, Mr. Shubrick, thank you," said Dolly rising. "You need not say any more. I think I understand. And I am very much obliged to you."

Mr. Shubrick made no answer. They went saunteringly along under the great trees, rather silent both of them after

that. As the sun got lower the beauty of the wooded park ground grew more exceeding. All that a most noble growth of trees could show, scattered and grouped, all that a most lovely undulation of ground surface could give, in slope and vista and broken light and shadow, was gilded here and there with vivid gold, or filled elsewhere with a sunny, misty glow of vapourous rays, as if the air were streaming with gold dust among the trees. All tints and hues of greensward, moss, and fern, under all conditions of illumination, met their wondering eyes; and for a while there was little spoken but exclamations of delight and discussion of beautiful effects that came under review. They went on so, from point to point, by much the same way that Dolly had taken on her first visit to the park; till they came out as she had done from the thinner part of the woodland, and stood at the edge of the wide plain of open greensward which stretched on up to the House. Here they stood still. The low sun was shining over it all; the great groups of oaks and elms stood in full revealed beauty and majesty; and in the distance the House looked superbly down over the whole.

"There is hardly anything about Brierley that I like better than this," said Dolly. "Isn't it lovely? I always delight in this great slope of wavy green ground; and see how it is emphasised and set off by those magnificent trees? And the House looks better from nowhere than from here."

"It is very noble--it is exceeding beautiful," Mr. Shubrick assented.

"Now this, I suppose, one could not see in America," Dolly went on; "nor anything like it."

"America has its own beauties; doubtless nothing like this. There is the dignity of many generations here. But, Miss Dolly, as I said before,--it would be difficult to use all this for Christ."

"I do not see how it could be done," said Dolly. "Mr. Shubrick, I happen to know, it takes seven or eight thousand a year--or more--to keep the place up. Pounds sterling, I mean; not dollars. Merely to keep the establishment up and in order."

"And yet, if I were its owner, I should find it hard to give up these ancestral acres and trees, or to cease to take care of them. I am glad I am a poor man!"

"Give them up?" said Dolly. "Do you think *that* would be duty?"

"I do not know. How could I take seven or eight thousand pounds a year just to keep up all this magnificence, when the money is so wanted for the Lord's work, in so many ways? When it would do such great things, given to Him."

"Then, Mr. Shubrick, the world must be very much mistaken in its calculations. People would not even understand you, if they heard you say that."

"Do *you* understand me?"

"Oh yes. And yet I cannot tell you what delight I take in all this, every time I see it. The feeling of satisfaction seems to go to my very heart. And so when I am in the house,--and the gardens. Oh, you have not seen the gardens, nor the House either; and there is no time to-day. But I do not know that I enjoy anything much more than this view. Though the House is delicious, Mr. Shubrick."

"I can believe it," he said, smiling. "You see what reason I have to rejoice that I am a poor man."

Dolly thought, poor child, as they turned and went homeward, she could hardly go so far as to rejoice that she was a poor woman. Not that she wanted Brierley; but she did dread possible privation which seemed to be before her. She feared the uncertainty which lay over her future in regard to the very necessaries of life; she shrank a little from the difficulty and the struggle of existence, which she knew already by experience. And then, Mr. Shubrick, who had been such a help and had made such a temporary diversion of her troubled thoughts, would be soon far away; she had noticed that he did not speak of some other future opportunity of seeing the house and gardens, when she remarked that it was too late to-day. He would be going soon; this one walk with him was probably the last; and then the old times would set in again. Dolly went along down among the great oaks and beeches, down the bank now getting in shadow, and spoke hardly a word. And Mr. Shubrick was as silent as she, probably as busy with his own thoughts. So they went, until they came again in sight of the bridge and the little river down below them, and a few steps more would have brought the cottage into view.

"We have come home fast," said Mr. Shubrick. "Do you think we need go in and show ourselves quite yet? Suppose we sit down here under this tree for a few minutes again, and enjoy all we can."

Dolly knew it must be approaching the time for her to see about supper; but she could not withstand the proposal. She sat down silently and took off her hat to cool herself.

"I come here very often," she said, "to get a little refreshment. It is so pleasant, and so near home."

"You call Brierley 'home.' Have you accepted it as a permanent home?"

"What can we do?" said Dolly. "Mother and I long to go back to America--we cannot persuade father."

"Miss Dolly, will you excuse me for remarking that you wear a very peculiar watch-chain," Mr. Shubrick said next, somewhat irrelevantly.

"My watch-chain! Oh, yes, I know it is peculiar," said Dolly. "For anything I know, there is only one in the world."

"May I ask, whose manufacture it is?"

"It was made by somebody--a sort of a friend, and yet not a friend either--somebody I shall never see again."

"Ah? How is that?"

"It is a great while ago," said Dolly. "I was a little girl. At that time I was at school in Philadelphia, and staying with my aunt there. O Aunt Hal! how I would like to see her!--The girls were all taken one day to see a man-of-war lying in the river; our schoolmistress took us; it was her way to take us to see things on the holidays; and this time it was a man-of-war; a beautiful ship; the 'Achilles.' My chain is made out of some threads of a cable on board the 'Achilles.'"

"You did not make it?"

"No, indeed. I could not, nor anybody else that I know. The manufacture is exquisite. Look at it," said Dolly, putting chain and watch in Mr. Shubrick's hand.

"But somebody must have made it," said the young officer, examining the chain attentively.

"Yes. It was odd enough. The others were having lunch; I could not get into the little cabin where the table was set, the place was so full; and so I wandered away to look at things. I had not seen them half enough, and then one of the young officers of the ship found me--he was a midshipman, I believe--and he was very good to me. He took me up and down and round and about; and then I was trying to get a little bit of a piece off a cable that lay coiled up on the deck and could not, and he said he would send me a piece; and he sent me that."

"Seems strong," said Mr. Shubrick, still examining the chain.

"Oh, it is very strong."

"This is a nice little watch. Deserves a better thing to carry it."

"Better!" cried Dolly, stretching out her hand for the chain. "You do not appreciate it. I like this better than any other. I always wear this. Father gave me a very handsome gold chain; he was of your opinion; but I have never had it on. This is my cable." She slipped the chain over her neck as she spoke.

"What makes you think you will never see the maker of the cable again?"

"Oh, that is a part of the story I did not tell you. With the chain came a little note, asking me to say that I had received it, and signed 'A. Crowninshield.' I can show you the note. I have it in my work-box at home. Do you know anybody of that name in the navy, Mr. Shubrick?"

"Midshipman?"

"He might not be a midshipman now, you know. That is nine years ago."

"True. I do not know of a Lieutenant Crowninshield in the navy--and I am sure there is no captain of that name."

"That is what I thought," said Dolly. "I do not believe he is alive. Whenever I saw in the papers mention of a ship of the navy in port, I used to go carefully over the lists of her officers; but I never could find the name of Crowninshield."

Mr. Shubrick here produced his pocket-book, and after some opening of inner compartments, took out a small note, which he delivered to Dolly. Dolly handled it at first in blank surprise, turned it over and over, finally opened it.

"Why, this is my note!" she cried, very much confounded. "My own little note to that midshipman. Here is my name. And here is his name. How did you get it, Mr. Shubrick?" she asked, looking at him. But his face told her nothing.

"It was given to me," he said.

"By whom?"

"By the messenger that brought it from you."

"The messenger? But you you--you--are somebody else!"

Mr. Shubrick laughed out.

"Am I?" said he. "Well, perhaps,--though I think not."

"But you are not that midshipman?"

"No. I was he, though."

"Your name,--your name is not Crowninshield?"

"Yes. That is one of my names. Alexander Crowninshield Shubrick, at your service."

Dolly looked at him, like a person awake from a dream, trying to read some of the remembered lineaments of that midshipman in his face. He bore her examination very coolly.

"Why--Oh, is it possible you are he?" cried Dolly with an odd accent of almost disappointment, which struck Mr. Shubrick, but was inexplicable. "Why did you not sign your true name?"

"Excuse me. I signed my true name, as far as it went."

"But not the whole of it. Why didn't you?"

"I had a reason. I did not wish you to trace me."

"But please, why not, Mr. Shubrick?"

"We might say, it was a boy's folly."

"I shall not say so," said Dolly, tendering the note back. "I daresay you had some reason or other. But I cannot somehow get my brain out of a whirl. I thought you were somebody else!--Here is your note, Mr. Shubrick. I cannot imagine what made you keep it so long."

His hand did not move to receive the note.

"I have been keeping it for this time," he answered. "And now, I do not want to keep it any longer, Miss Dolly, unless--unless I may have you too."

Dolly looked at him now with a face of startled inquiry and uneasiness. Whether she were more startled or incredulous of what she heard, it would be impossible to say. The expression in her eyes grew to be almost terror. But Mr. Shubrick smiled a little as he met them.

"I kept the note, for I always knew, from that time, that I should marry that little girl, if ever I could find her,--and if she would let me."

Dolly's face was fairly blanched. "But--you belong to somebody else," she said.

"No," said he,--"I beg your pardon. I belong to nobody in the world, but myself. And you."

"Christina told me"----

"She told you true," said Mr. Shubrick quite composedly. "There was a connection subsisting between us, which, while it lasted, bound us to each other. It happened, as such things happen; years ago we were thrown into each other's company, in the country, when I was home on leave. My home was near hers; we saw a great deal of each other; and fancied that we liked each other more than the fact was, or rather in a different way. So we were engaged; on my part it was one of those boyish engagements which boys frequently form before they know their own minds, or what they want. On the other side you can see how it was from the circumstances of the case. Christina did not care enough about me to want to be married; she always put it off; and I was not deeply enough concerned to find the delay very hard to bear. And then, when I saw you in Rome that Christmas time, I knew immediately that if ever in the world I married anybody, it would be the lady that wore that chain."

"But Christina?" said Dolly, still with a face of terrified trouble. Was then Mr. Shubrick a traitor, false to his engagements, deserting a person to whom, whether willingly or not, he was every way bound? He did not look like a man conscious of dishonourable dealing, of any sort; and he answered in a voice that was both calm and unconcerned.

"Christina and I are good friends, but not engaged friends any more. Will you read that?"

He handed Dolly another letter as he spoke, and Dolly, bewildered, opened it.

"Ischl, *May* 6, 18--.

"DEAR SANDIE,--"You are quite ridiculous to want me to write this letter, for anybody that knows you, knows that whatever you say is the truth, absolutely unmixed and unvarnished. Your word is enough for any statement of facts, without mine to help it. However, since you will have it so, here I am writing.

"But really it is very awkward. What do you wish me to say, and how shall I say it? You want a testimony, I suppose. Well, then, this is to certify, that you and I are the best friends in the world, and mean to remain so, in spite of the fact that we once meant to be more than friends, and have found out that we made a mistake. Yes, it was a mistake. We both know it now. But anybody may be mistaken; it is no shame, either to you or me, especially since we have remedied the error after we discovered it. Really, I am in admiration of our clear-sightedness and bravery, in breaking loose, in despite of the trammels of conventionality. But you never were bound by those trammels, or any other, except what you call 'duty.' So I herewith declare you free,--that is what you want me to say, is it not?--free with all the honours, and with the full preservation of my regards and high consideration. Indeed, I do not believe I ever shall hold anybody else in *quite* such high consideration; but perhaps that very fact made me unfit to be anything but your friend. I am afraid you are too good for me, in stern earnest; but I have a notion that will be no disadvantage to you in certain other sweet eyes that I know; the goodness, I mean, not anything else.

"We are here, at this loveliest of lovely places; but we have got enough of it, and are going to spend some weeks in the Tyrol. I suppose I know where to imagine *you*, at least part of the summer. And you will know where to imagine me next winter, when I tell you that in the fall the probability is that I shall become Mrs. St. Leger. You may tell Dolly. Didn't I remark to her once that she and I had better effect an exchange? Funny, wasn't it? However, for the present I am, as I have long been, your very sincere friend, CHRISTINA THAYER."

Dolly read the letter and stared at it, and finally returned it without raising her eyes. And then she sat looking straight before her, while her face might be likened to the evening sky when the afterglow is catching the clouds. From point to point the flush catches, cloud after cloud is lighted up, until under the whole heaven there is one crimson glow. Dolly was not much given to blushing, she was not at all wont to be a prey to shyness; what had come over her now? When Lawrence St. Leger had talked to her on this very same subject, she had been able to answer him with scarcely a rise of colour in her cheeks; with a calm and cool exercise of her reasoning powers, which left her fully mistress of the situation and of herself. She had not been disturbed then, she had not been excited. What was the matter now? For Dolly was overtaken by an invincible fit of shyness, such as never had visited her in all her life. I do not think now she knew that she was blushing; according to her custom, she was not self-conscious; what she was conscious of, intensely, was Mr. Shubrick's presence, and an overwhelming sense of his identity with the midshipman of the "Achilles." What *that* had to do with Dolly's shyness, it might be hard to tell; but her sweet face flushed till brow and neck caught the tinge, and the eyelids fell over the eyes, and Dolly for the moment was mistress of nothing. Mr. Shubrick looking at her, and seeing those lovely flushes and her absolute gravity and silence, was in doubt what it might mean. He thought that perhaps nobody had ever spoken to her on such a subject before; yet Dolly was no silly girl, to be overcome by the mere strangeness of his words. Did her silence and gravity augur ill for him? or well? And

then, without being in the least a coxcomb, it occurred to him that her excessive blushing told on the hopeful side of the account. He waited. He saw she was as shy as a just caught bird; was she caught? He would not make so much as a movement to startle her further. He waited, with something at his heart which made it easier every moment for him to wait. But in the nature of the case, waiting has its limits.

"What are you going to do about it?" he inquired at length, in a very gentle manner. "Give me my note back again, with the conditions?"

Dolly did nothing of the kind. She held the note, it is true, and looked at it, but without making any movement to restore it to its owner. So decided an action did not seem at the moment possible to her. She looked at the little note, with the prettiest sort of embarrassment, and presently rose to her feet. "I am sure it is time to have supper," she said, "and they cannot do anything at home till I come."

Mr. Shubrick rose too and followed Dolly, who set off unceremoniously down the bank towards the bridge. He followed her, half smiling, and wholly impatient. Yet though a stride or two would have brought him alongside of her, he would not make them. He kept behind, and allowed her to trip on before him, which she did with a light, hasty foot, until they neared the little gate of the courtyard belonging to the house. Then he stepped forward and held the gate open for her to enter, not saying a word. Dolly passed him with the loveliest shy down-casting of her eyelids, and went on straight into the house. He saw the bird was fluttering yet, but he thought he was sure of her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNDER THE SAME OAK.

Dolly threw off her hat and went down to the kitchen premises. Mr. Shubrick repaired to the sick-room and relieved Mrs. Copley. That lady, descending to the lower part of the house, found Dolly very busy with the supper-table, and apparently much flushed with the hot weather.

"Your father's getting well!" she said with a sigh.

"That's good news, I am sure, mother."

"Yes,--it's good news," Mrs. Copley repeated doubtfully; "but it seems as if everything good in this world had a bad side to it."

Dolly stood still. "What's the matter?" she said.

"Oh, he's so uneasy. As restless and fidgetty as a fish out of water. He is contented with nothing except when Mr. Shubrick is near him; he behaves quietly then, at least, however he feels. I believe it takes a man to manage a man. Though I never saw a man before that could manage your father. *He* laughs at it, and says it is the habit of giving orders."

"Who laughs at it?"

"Mr. Shubrick, to be sure. You don't suppose your father owns to minding orders? But he does mind, for all that. What will become of us when that young man goes away?"

"Why, mother?"

"My patience, Dolly! what have you done to heat yourself so! Your face is all flushed. Do keep away from the fire, or you'll certainly spoil your complexion. You're all flushed up, child."

"But father,--what about father?"

"Oh, he's just getting ready to take his own head, as soon as Mr. Shubrick slips the bridle off. He's talking of going up to town already; and he will go, I know, as soon as he *can* go; and then, Dolly, then--I don't know what will become of us!"

Mrs. Copley put her hands over her face, and the last words were spoken with such an accent of forlorn despair, that Dolly saw her mother must have found out or divined much that she had tried to keep from her. She hesitated with her answer. Somehow, the despair and the forlornness had gone out of Dolly's heart.

"I hope--I think--there will be some help, mother."

"Where is it to come from?" said Mrs. Copley sharply. "We are as alone as we can be. We might as well be on a desert island. Now you have sent off Mr. St. Leger--oh, how obstinate children are! and how little they know what is for their good!"

This subject was threadbare. Dolly let it drop. It may be said she did that with every subject that was started that evening. Mr. Shubrick at supper made brave efforts to keep the talk a going; but it would not go. Dolly said nothing; and Mrs. Copley in the best of times was never much help in a conversation. Just now she had rather a preoccupied manner; and I am by no means certain that, with the superhuman keenness of intuition possessed by mothers, she had not begun to discern a subtle danger in the air. The pressure of one fear being removed, there was leisure for any other to come up. However, Mr. Shubrick concerned himself only about Dolly's silence, and watched her to find out what it meant. She attended to all her duties, even to taking care of him, which to be sure was one of her duties; but she never looked at him. The same veil of shy grace which had fallen upon her in the wood, was around her still, and tantalised him.

Nor did he get another chance to speak to her alone through the next two days that passed; carefully as he sought for it. Dolly was not to be found or met with, unless sitting at the table behind her tea-urn and with her mother opposite. Mr. Shubrick bided his time in a mixture of patience and impatience. The latter needs no accounting for; the former was half brought about and maintained by the exquisite manner of Dolly's presentation of herself those days. The delicate, coy grace which invested her, it is difficult to describe it or the effect of it. She was not awkward, she was not even embarrassed, the least bit in the world; she was grave and fair and unapproachable, with the rarest maidenly shyness, which took the form of the rarest womanly dignity. She was grave, at least when Mr. Shubrick saw her; but watching her as he did narrowly and constantly, he could perceive now and then a slight break in the gravity of her looks, which made his heart bound with a great thrill. It was not so much a smile as a light upon her lips; a play of them; which he persuaded himself was not unhappy. The loveliness of the whole manifestation of Dolly during those two days, went a good way towards keeping him quiet; but naturally it worked two ways. And human patience has limits.

The second day, Mr. Shubrick's had given out. He came in from his walk to the village, bringing Mrs. Copley something she had commissioned him to get from thence; and found both ladies sitting at a late dinner. And not the young officer's eyes alone marked the sudden flush which rose in Dolly's cheeks when he appeared, and the lowered eyelids as he stood opposite her.

"We began to review the park, the other day," he said, eyeing her steadily. "Can we have another walk in it this afternoon, Miss Dolly? The first was so pleasant."

"I shouldn't think you'd go pleasuring just now, Dolly, when your father wants you," said Mrs. Copley. "You have seen hardly anything of him lately. I should think you would go and sit with him this afternoon. I know he would like it."

Whether this arrangement was agreeable to the present parties concerned, or either of them, did not appear. Of course the most decorous acquiescence was all that came to light. A little later, Mr. Shubrick himself, being thus relieved from duty, quitted the house and strolled down to the bridge and over it into the park; and Dolly slowly went upstairs to her father's room. It was true, she had been there lately less than usual; but there had been a reason for that. Her conscience was not charged with any neglect.

Mr. Copley seemed sleepily inclined; and after a word or two exchanged with him Dolly began to go round the room, looking to see if anything needed her ordering hand. Truly she found nothing. Coming to the window, she paused a moment in idle wistfulness to see how the summer sunshine lay upon the oaks of the park. And standing there, she saw Mr. Shubrick, slowly going over the bridge. She turned away and went on with her progress round the room.

"What are you about there, Dolly?" Mr. Copley called to her.

"Just seeing if anything wants my attention, father."

"Nothing does, I can tell you. The room is all right, and everything in it. I've been kept in order, since I have had a

naval officer to attend upon me."

"Don't I keep things in order, father?"

"If you do, your mother don't. She thinks that anywhere is a place, and that one place is as good as another."

"Mother seems to think I have neglected you lately. Have you missed me?"

"Missed you! no. I have had care and company. Where did you pick up that young man, Dolly?"

"I, father? I didn't pick him up."

"How came he here, then? What brought him?"

"I don't know," said Dolly. "Would you like to have me read to you?"

"No, child. Shubrick reads to me and talks to me. He's capital company, though he's one of your blue sort."

"Father! He is not blue, nor am I. Do you think I am blue?"

"Sky blue," said her father. "He's navy blue. That's the difference."

"I do not understand the difference," said Dolly, half laughing.

"Never mind. What have you done with Mr. Shubrick?"

"I?" said Dolly, aghast.

"Yes. Where is he?"

"Oh!--I believe, mother sent him into the park."

"Sent him into the park? What for?"

"I do not mean that she sent him," said Dolly, correcting herself in some embarrassment; "I mean, that she sent me up here, and he went into the park."

"I wish he'd come back, then. I want him to finish reading to me that capital article on English and European politics."

"Can I finish it?"

"No, child. You don't understand anything about the subject. Shubrick does. I like to discuss things with him; he's got a clear head of his own; he's a capital talker. When is he going?"

"Going where, father?"

"Going away. He can't stay here for ever, reading politics and putting my room in order. How long is he going to stay?"

"I do not know."

"Well--when he goes I shall go! I shall not be able to hold out here. I shall go back to London. I can't live where there is not a man to speak to some time in the twenty-four hours. Besides, I can do nothing here. I might as well be a cabbage, and a cabbage without a head to it."

"Are we cabbages?" asked Dolly at this. "Mother and I?"

"Cabbage roses, my dear; cabbage roses. Nothing worse than that."

"But even cabbage roses, father, want somebody to take care of them."

"I'll take care of you. But I can do it best in London."

"Then you do not want me to read to you father?" Dolly said after a pause.

"No, my dear, no, my dear. If you could find that fellow Shubrick--I should like him."

And Mr. Copley closed his eyes as if to sleep, finding nothing worthy to occupy his waking faculties. Dolly sat by the window, looking out and meditating. Yes, Mr. Shubrick would be going away, probably soon; his furlough could not last always. Meanwhile, she had given him no answer to his questions and propositions. It was rather hard upon him, Dolly felt; and she had a sort of yearning sympathy towards her suitor. A little impatience seized her at being shut up here in her father's room, where he did not want her, and kept from the walk in the park with Mr. Shubrick, who did want her. He wanted her very much, Dolly knew; he had been waiting patiently, and she had disappointed every effort he made to get speech of her and see her alone, just because she was shy of him and of herself. But it was hardly fair to him, after all, and it could not go on. He had a right to know what she would say to his proposition; and she was keeping him in uneasiness, (to put it mildly), Dolly knew quite well. And now, when could she see him? when would she have a chance to speak to him alone, and to hear all that she yet wanted to hear? but indeed Dolly now was thinking not so much of what she wanted as of what *he* wanted; and her uneasiness grew. He might be obliged to go off suddenly; officers' orders are stubborn things; she might have no chance at all, for aught she knew, after this afternoon. She looked at her father; he had dozed off. She looked out of the window; the afternoon sun, sinking away in the west, was sending a flood of warm light upon and among the trees of the park. It must be wonderfully pretty there! It must be vastly pleasant there! And there, perhaps, Mr. Shubrick was sitting at this moment on the bank, wishing for her, and feeling impatiently that his free time was slipping away. Dolly's heart stirred uneasily. She had been very shy of him; she was yet; but now she felt that he had a right to his answer. Something that took the guise of conscience opposed her shy reserve and fought with it. Mr. Shubrick had a *right* to his answer; and she was not treating him well to let him go without it.

Dolly looked again at her father. Eyes closed, breathing indicative of gentle slumber. She looked again over at the sunlit park. It was delicious over there, among its sunny and shadowy glades. Perhaps Mr. Shubrick had walked on, tempted by the beauty, and was now at a distance; perhaps he had not been tempted, and was still near, up there among the trees, wanting to see her.

Dolly turned away from the window and with a quick step went downstairs. She met nobody. Her straw flat was on the hall table; she took it up and went out; through the garden, down to the bridge, over the bridge, with a step not swift but steady. Mr. Shubrick had a right to his answer, and she was simply doing what was his due, and there might be no time to lose. She went a little more slowly when she found herself in the park; and she trembled a little as her eye searched the grassy openings. She was not quite so confident here. But she went on.

She had not gone very far before she saw him; under the same oak where they had sat together; lying on his elbow on the turf and reading. Dolly started, but then advanced slowly, after that one minute's check and pause. He was reading; he did not see her, and he did not hear her light footstep coming up the bank; until her figure threw a shadow which reached him. Then he looked up and sprang up; and perhaps divining it, met Dolly's hesitation, for, taking her hands he placed her on the bank beside his open book; which book, Dolly saw, was his Bible. But her shyness had all come back. The impression made by the thought of a person, when you do not see him, is something quite different from the living and breathing flesh and blood personality. Mr. Shubrick, on the other hand, was in a widely different mood; which Dolly knew, I suppose, though she could not see.

"This is unlooked-for happiness," said he, throwing himself down on the bank beside her. "What have you done with Mr. Copley?"

"Nothing. He did not want me. He asked me what I had done with Mr. Shubrick? I think you have spoiled him." Dolly spoke without looking at her companion, be it understood, and her breath came a little short.

"And what are you going to do with Mr. Shubrick?" her companion said, not in the tone of a doubtful man, lying there on the bank and watching her.

But Dolly found no words. She could not say anything, well though she recognised Mr. Shubrick's right to have his answer. Her eyes were absolutely cast down; the colour on her cheek varied a little, yet not with the overwhelming flushes of the other day. Dolly was struggling with the sense of duty, the necessity for action, and yet she could not act. She had come to the scene of action, indeed, and there her bravery failed her; and she sat with those delicate lights coming and going on her cheek, and the brown eyes hidden behind the sweep of the lowered eyelashes; most like a shy child. Mr. Shubrick could have smiled, but he kept back the smile.

"You know," he said in calm, matter-of-fact tones, that met Dolly's sense of business, "my action must wait upon

your decision. If you do not let me stay, I must go, and that at once. What do you want me to do?"

"I do not want you to go," Dolly breathed softly.

Silently Mr. Shubrick held out his hand. As silently, though frankly, Dolly put hers into it. Still she did not look at him. And he recognised what sort of a creature he was dealing with, and had sense and delicacy and tact and manliness enough not to startle her by any demonstration whatever. He only held the little hand, still and fast, for a space, during which neither of them said anything; then, however, he bent his head over the hand and kissed it.

"My fingers are not accustomed to such treatment," said Dolly, half laughing, and trying hard to strike into an ordinary tone of conversation, though she left him the hand. "I do not think they ever were kissed before."

"They have got to learn!" said her companion.

Dolly was silent again. It was with a great joy at her heart that she felt her hand so clasped and held, and knew that Mr. Shubrick had got his answer and the thing was done; but she did not show it, unless to a nice observer. And a nice observer was by her side. Yet he kept silence too for a while. It was one of those full, blessed silences that are the very reverse of a blank or a void; when the heart's big treasure is too much to be immediately unpacked, and words when they come are quite likely enough not to touch it and to go to something comparatively indifferent. However, words did not just that on the present occasion.

"Dolly, I am in a sort of amazement at my own happiness," Mr. Shubrick said.

Dolly could have answered, so was she! but she did not. She only dimpled a little, and flushed.

"I have been waiting for you all these years," he went on; "and now I have got you!"

Dolly's dimples came out a little more. "I thought you did not wait," she remarked.

Mr. Shubrick laughed. "My heart waited," he said. "I made a boy's mistake; and I might have paid a man's penalty for it. But I had always known that you and no other would be my wife, if I could find you. That is, if I could persuade you; and somehow I never allowed myself to doubt of that. I did not take such a chance into consideration."

"But I was such a little child," said Dolly.

"Ay," said he; "that was it. You were *such* a little child."

"But you must have been a very extraordinary midshipman, it seems to me."

"By the same rule you must have been a very extraordinary little girl."

They both laughed at that.

"I suppose we were both extraordinary," said Dolly; "but, really, Mr. Shubrick, you know very little about me!"

His answer to that was to kiss again the hand he held.

"What do you know of me?"

"I think I know a great deal about you," said Dolly softly.

"You have a great deal to learn. Wouldn't you like to begin by hearing how Miss Thayer and I came to an understanding?"

"Oh, yes, yes! if you please," said Dolly, extremely glad to get upon a more abstract subject of conversation.

"I owe that to myself, perhaps," Mr. Shubrick went on; "and I certainly owe it to you. I told you how I got into my engagement with her. It was a boyish fancy; but all the same, I was bound by it; and I should have been legally bound before now, only that Christina always put off that whenever I proposed it. I found too that the putting it off did not make me miserable. Dolly, the case is going to be different this time!"

"You mean," said Dolly doubtfully, "it *is* going to make you miserable?"

"No! I mean, you are not going to put me off."

"Oh, but!"----said Dolly flushing, and stopped.

"I have settled that point in my own mind," he said, smiling; "it is as well you should know it at once.--So time went by, until I went to spend that Christmas Day in Rome. After that day I knew nearly all that I know now. Of course it followed, that I could not accept the invitation to Sorrento, when you were expected to be there. I could not venture to see you again while I was bound in honour to another woman. I stayed on board ship, those hot summer days, when all the officers that could went ashore. I stayed and worked at my problem--what I was to do."

He paused and Dolly said nothing. She was listening intently, and entirely forgetting that the sunlight was coming very slant and would soon be gone, and that home and supper were waiting for her managing hand. Dolly's eyes were fixed upon another hand, which held hers, and her ears were strained to catch every word. She rarely dared glance at Mr. Shubrick's face.

"I wonder what counsel you would have given me?" he went on,--"if I could have asked it of you as an indifferent person,--which you were."

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I know what people think"----

"Yes, I knew what people think, too; and it a little embarrassed my considerations. However, Dolly, I made up my mind at last to this;--that to marry Christina would be acting a lie; that I could not do that; and that if I could, a lie to be acted all my life long would be too heavy for me. Negatively, I made up my mind. Positively, I did not know exactly how I should work it. But I must see Christina. And as soon as affairs on board ship permitted, I got a furlough of a few days and went to Sorrento. I got there one lovely afternoon, about three weeks after you had gone. Sea and sky and the world generally were flooded with light and colour, so as I have never seen them anywhere else, it seems to me. You know how it is."

"Yes, I know Sorrento," said Dolly. But just then, an English bank under English oaks seemed as good to the girl as ever an Italian paradise. That, naturally, she did not show. "I know Sorrento," she said quietly.

"And you know the Thayers' villa. I found Christina and Mr. St. Leger sitting on the green near the house, under an orange tree--symbolical; and the air was sweet with a thousand other things. I felt it with a kind of oppression, for the mental prospect was by no means so delicious."

"No," said Dolly. "And sometimes that feeling of contrast makes one very keen to see all the lovely things outside of one."

"Do *you* know that?" said Mr. Shubrick.

"Yes. I know it"

"One can only know it by experience. What experience can you have had, my Dolly, to let you feel it?"

Dolly turned her eyes on him without speaking. She was thinking of Venice at midnight under the moon, and a sail, and a wine-shop. Tell him? No, indeed, never!

"You are not ready to let me know?" said he, smiling. "How long first must it be?"

"It isn't anything you need know," said Dolly, looking away. But with that the question flashed upon her, would he not have to know? had he not a right? "Please go on," she said hurriedly.

"I can go on now easier than I could then," he said with a half laugh. "I sat down with them, and purposely brought the conversation upon the theme of my trouble. It came quite naturally, *apropos* of a case of a broken engagement which was much talked of just then; and I started my question. Suppose one or the other of the parties had discovered that the engagement was a mistake? They gave it dead against me; all of them; Mrs. Thayer had come out by that time. They were unanimous in deciding that pledges made must be kept, at all hazards."

"I think that is the general view," said Dolly.

"It is not yours?"

"I never thought much about it. But I think people ought always and everywhere to be true.--That is nothing to kiss my hand for," Dolly added with the pretty flush which was coming and going so often this afternoon.

"You will let me judge of that."

"I didn't think you were that sort of person."

"What sort of person?"

"One of those that kiss hands."

"Shall I choose something else to kiss, next time?"

But Dolly looked so frightened that Mr. Shubrick, laughing, went back to his story.

"We were at Sorrento," he said. "You can suppose my state of mind. I thought at least I would take disapprobation piecemeal, and I asked Christina to go out on the bay with me. You have been on the bay of Sorrento about sun-setting?"

"Oh yes, many a time."

"I did not enjoy it at first. I hope you did. I think Christina did. It was the fairest evening imaginable; and my oar, every stroke I made, broke and shivered purple and golden waters. It was sailing over the rarest possible mosaic in which the pattern was constantly shifting. I studied it, while I was studying how to begin what I had to do. Then, after a while, when we were well out from shore, I lay on my oars, and asked Miss Thayer whether she were sure that her judgment was according to her words, in the matter we had been discussing at the house? She asked what I meant. I put it to her then, whether she would choose to marry a man who liked another woman better than he did herself?

"Christina's eyes opened a little, and she said 'Not if she knew it.'

"Then you gave a wrong verdict up there,' I said.

"But that was about what the *man* should do,' she replied. 'If he has made a promise, he must fulfil it. Or the woman, if it is the woman.'

"Would not that be doing a wrong to the other party?"

"How a wrong?' said Christina. 'It would be keeping a promise. Every honourable person does that.'

"What if it be a promise which the other side no longer wishes to have kept?"

"You cannot tell that,' said Christina. 'You cannot know. Probably the other side does wish it kept.'

"I reminded her that she had just declared *she*, in the circumstances, would not wish it; but she said, somewhat illogically, 'that it made no difference.'

"I suggested an application of the golden rule."

"Yes," said Dolly; "I think that rule settles it. I should think no woman would let a man marry her who, she knew, liked somebody else better."

"And no man in his senses--no *good* man," said Sandie, "would have a woman for his wife whose heart belonged to another man; or, leaving third parties out of the question, whose heart did not belong to *him*. I said something of this to Christina. She answered me with the consequences of scandal, disgrace, gossip, which she said attend the breaking off of an engagement. In short, she threw over all my arguments. I had to come to the point. I asked her if she would like to marry *me*, if she knew that I liked somebody else better?"

"She opened her eyes at me. 'Do you, Sandie?' she said. And I told her yes.

"Who?' she asked as quick as a flash. And I knew then that *her* heart was safe," Mr. Shubrick added with a smile. "I told her frankly, that ever since Christmas Day, I had known that if I ever married anybody it would be the lady I then saw with her.

"Dolly!" she cried. "But you don't know her, Sandie."

Mr. Shubrick and Dolly both stopped to laugh.

"I am sure that was true. And I should think unanswerable," said Dolly.

"It was not true. Do you think it is true now?"

"Well, you know me a little better, but I should think, not much."

"Shows how little you can tell about it. By the same reasoning, I suppose you do not know *me* much?"

"No," said Dolly. "Yes, I do! I know you a great deal, in some things. If I didn't"---- she flushed up.

"We both know enough to begin with; is that it? Do you remember, that evening, Christmas Eve, how you sat by the corner of the fireplace and kept quiet, while Miss Thayer talked?"

"Yes." Dolly remembered it very well.

"You wore a black dress, and no ornaments, and the firelight shone on a cameo ring on your hand, and on your face, and the curls of your hair, and every now and then caught this," said Mr. Shubrick, touching Dolly's chain. "Christina talked, and I studied you."

"One evening," said Dolly.

"One evening; but I was reading what was not written in an evening. However, I left Christina's objection unanswered--though I do not allow that it is unanswerable; and waited. She needed a little while to come to her breath."

"Poor Christina!" said Dolly.

"Not at all; it was poor Sandie, if anybody. I do not think Christina suffered, more than a little natural and very excusable mortification. She never loved me. I had guessed as much before, and I was relieved now to find that I had been certainly right. But she needed a little while to get her breath, nevertheless. She asked me if I was serious? then, why I did not tell her sooner? I replied that I had had a great fight to fight before I could make up my mind to tell her at all.

"And then, as I judge, *she* had something of a fight to go through. She turned her face away from me, and sat silent. I did not interrupt her; and we floated so a good while on the coloured sea. I do not believe she knew what the colours were; but I did, I confess. I had got a weight off my mind. The bay of Sorrento was very lovely to me that evening. After a good while, Christina turned to me again, and I could see that she was all taut and right now. She began with a compliment to me."

"What was it?" Dolly asked.

"Said I was a brave fellow, I believe."

"I am sure I think that was true."

"Do you? It is harder to be false than true, Dolly."

"All the same, it takes bravery sometimes to be true."

"So Christina seemed to think. I believe I said nothing; and she went on, and added she thought I had done right, and she was much obliged to me."

"That was like Christina," said Dolly.

"But you are bold," she said again, "to tell me!"

"I assured her I had not been bold at all, but very cowardly.

"What do you expect people will say?"

"I told her I had been concerned only and solely with the question of how she herself would take my disclosure; what she would say, and how she would feel.

"She was silent again.

"'But, Sandie,' she began after a minute or two which were not yet pleasant minutes to either of us,--'I think it was very risky. It's all right, or it will be all right, I believe, soon,--but suppose I had been devotedly in love with you? Suppose it had broken my heart? It *hasn't*--but suppose it had?'"

"Yes," said Dolly. "You could not know."

"I think I knew," said Mr. Shubrick. "But at any rate, Dolly, I should have done just the same. 'Fais que dois, adviene que pourra,' is a grand old motto, and always safe. I could not marry one woman while I loved another. The question of breaking hearts does not come in. I had no right to marry Christina, even to save her life, if that had been in danger. But happily it was not in danger. She did shed a few tears, but they were not the tears of a broken heart. I told her something like what I have been saying to you.

"'But Dolly!' she said. 'You do not know her, you do not even *know her*.' That thought seemed to weigh on her mind."

"What could you say to it?" said Dolly.

"I said nothing," Mr. Shubrick answered, smiling. "Then Christina went on to remark that Miss Copley did not know me; and that possibly I had been brave for nothing. I still made no answer; and she declared she saw it in my face, that I was determined it should *not* be for nothing. She wished me success, she added; but 'Dolly had her own way of looking at things.'"

Dolly could not help laughing.

"So that is my story," Mr. Shubrick concluded.

"And, oh, look at the light, look at the light!" said Dolly, jumping up. "Where will mother think I and supper are!"

"She thinks probably that you are in Mr. Copley's room."

"No, she knows I am not; for she is sure to be there herself."

"Then I will go straight to them, while you bring up arrears with supper."

"And Christina will marry Mr. St. Leger!" said Dolly, while she flushed high at this suggestion. "Yet I am not surprised."

"Is it a good match?"

"The world would say so."

"I am not," said Sandie, "according to the same judgment. I am not rich, Dolly. By and by I will tell you all I have. But it is enough for us to live upon comfortably."

Nobody had ever seen Dolly so shy and blushing and timid as she was now, walking down the bank by Mr. Shubrick's side. It was a bit of the same lovely manifestation which he had been enjoying for a day or two with a little alloy. It was without alloy that he enjoyed it now.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WAYS AND MEANS.

As they entered the house, Dolly went downstairs and Mr. Shubrick up; she trembling and in a maze, he with a

glad, free step, and a particularly bright face. Mrs. Copley was with her husband, as Dolly had opined.

"Here's one of them," cried Mr. Copley as Sandie entered. "Where have you been all this while? If you think I'll do to be left alone yet, you're mistaken. Where have you been?"

"In what I believe is the park of Brierley--over there under the oaks."

"And where is Dolly, Mr. Shubrick?" Dolly's mother asked.

"I have just brought her home. She is downstairs."

"I sent her to take care of her father," said Mrs. Copley in a dissatisfied tone.

"She informed me that Mr. Copley did not want her, and preferred me," said Mr. Shubrick.

"But you did not come?" said Mrs. Copley suspiciously.

He stood looking at her half a minute, with a slight smile upon his face, the frank, pleasant smile which belonged to him; then he turned, took a glass from the table and came to Mr. Copley's side to give him a draught which was due. Next he lifted his patient by the shoulders a little, to arrange the pillows behind him, and as he laid him back upon them he said quietly--"Will you give your daughter to me, Mr. Copley?"

Mr. Copley looked, or stared rather, grumly enough at the speaker.

"That means, you have got her already!"

"Not without your consent."

"I thought as much! Does Dolly want to marry you?"

"I do not know," said Sandie with a smile; "but I believe I may say that she will marry nobody else."

"Ay, there it is. I have other views for my daughter."

"And I thought you were engaged to Miss Thayer?" put in Mrs. Copley.

"True; I was; but that was a boyish mistake. We have all other views. Miss Thayer is to marry your friend, Mr. St. Leger."

"Christina!" cried Mrs. Copley. "Didn't I know Mrs. Thayer would do that, if she could! And now she has done it. And Christina has thrown you over?"

"Not at all," said Sandie, again with a smile. "And you have not to blame Mrs. Thayer, so far as I know. Miss Thayer and I are very good friends, but we were never intended to marry each other. We have found that out, and acted accordingly."

"And she has got him!" Mrs. Copley repeated. "I told Dolly she would like to do that. Put their two fortunes together, and they will have enough," said poor Mrs. Copley. "That comes of our going to Sorrento!"

"Look here, young man," said Mr. Copley. "If I give you Dolly, as you say, after she has given herself--the witch!--what are you and she going to live on?"

"We have something to live on," said the young man with quiet independence.

"Not much, I'll be sworn!"

"Not perhaps what you would call much. A lieutenant in the navy is not likely to have more than a very moderate fortune."

"Fortune! What do you call a fortune?"

"Enough to live on."

"Are you ever going to be a captain?"

"I cannot say. But there is some prospect of it."

"Things might be worse, then," grumbled Mr. Copley. "Anyhow, you have tied my tongue, my fine fellow. I can't say a word against you. But look here;--if you don't want a wife that will rule you, I advise you not to marry my Dolly. She's a witch for having her own way. 'My Dolly!'" Mr. Copley half groaned. "I suppose now she's your Dolly. I don't want to give her to any man, that's the truth."

"And I thought all this nursing had been so disinterested!" said Mrs. Copley dolefully.

Sandie's answer to this was conclusive, of the subject and the conversation both. He went up to Mrs. Copley, took her hand, and bent down and kissed her. Just at that moment they were called to supper; and Mrs. Copley, completely conquered, went down with all her reproaches smothered in the bud. Yet I confess her face showed a conflict of feelings as she entered the kitchen. It was cloudy with disappointment, and at the same time her eyes were wet with tears of some sweeter feeling. Dolly, standing behind the supper-table, looked from the one to the other as the two came in.

"It is all settled, Dolly," said Mr. Shubrick.

And I think he would have taken his betrothal kiss, then and there, had not Dolly's glance been so shy and shrinking that she flashed at him. She was standing quietly and upright; there was no awkwardness in her demeanour; it was the look of her eyes that laid bans upon Sandie. He restrained himself; paid her no particular attention during supper; talked a great deal, but on entirely indifferent subjects; and if he played the lover to anybody, certainly it was to Mrs. Copley.

"He is a good young man, I believe," said Mrs. Copley, making so much of an admission as she and Dolly went upstairs.

"O mother," said Dolly, half laughing and half vexed, "you say that just because he has been entertaining you!"

"Well," returned Mrs. Copley. "I like to be entertained. Don't you find him entertaining?"

Mr. Shubrick kept up the same tactics for several days; behaving himself in the house very much as he had done ever since he had come to it. And out of the house, though he and Dolly took long walks and held long talks together, he was very cool and undemonstrative. He would let her get accustomed to him. And certainly in these conversations he was entertaining. Walking, or sitting on the bank under some old beech or oak tree, he had endless things to tell Dolly; things to which she listened as eagerly as ever Desdemona did to Othello; stories out of which, avoid personalities as he would, she could not but gain, step by step, new knowledge of the story-teller. And hour by hour Dolly's respect for him and appreciation of him grew. Little by little she found how thorough his education was, and how fine his accomplishments. Especially as a draughtsman. Easily and often, in telling her of some place or of some naval engagement, Sandie would illustrate for her with any drawing materials that came to hand; making spirited and masterly sketches with a few strokes of his hand, it might be on paper, or on a bit of bark, or on the ground even.

"Ah," said Dolly one day, watching him, "I cannot do that! I can do something, but I cannot do that."

"What can you do?" inquired Sandie.

"I can copy. I can take down the lines of a face, or of a bridge, or a house, when I see it before me; but I cannot put things on paper out of my thoughts. Do you remember how you did this sort of thing for me the very first time I saw you?--in the gun deck of the 'Achilles'?"

He smiled, finishing the sketch he was about.

"I remember. I remember what pleasure it gave me, too. At that time I had a little sister, just your age, of whom I was exceedingly fond."

"At that time--you *had*?" Dolly repeated.

"Yes," he said soberly; "I have not anybody now, of near kin to me."

Dolly's hand with mute sympathy stole into his. It was the first action of approach to him that she had made, unless that coming to him in the park three or four days before might be reckoned in the bargain. He tossed his drawing into her lap and warmly clasped the hand.

"It is time you began to talk to me, Dolly," he said. "I have talked a great deal, but you have said next to nothing. You must have a great many questions to ask me."

"I don't know," said Dolly.

"Why, you know nothing about me," he said with a laughing look of his eyes. "You had better begin. You may ask me anything."

"But knowing a person and knowing *about* him, are very different things."

"Very. And if you have the one sort of knowledge, it seems to me you must want to have the other. Unless, where both are alike uninteresting; which I cannot suppose is my case."

"No," said Dolly, laughing a little, "but I suppose you will tell me things by degrees, without my asking."

"What makes you suppose that?"

"It would be natural, wouldn't it?"

"*Would* it be natural, without your showing any interest?"

"Ah, but now *you* are supposing. Perhaps I should show interest."

Sandie laughed now heartily.

"I will try you," said he. "I will begin and tell you something without questions asked. Dolly, I have a house."

"Have you?"

"You do not care to hear about it?"

"I am glad that you have a house," said Dolly demurely. Sandie was lying on the turf bank, in a convenient position for looking up into her eyes; and she found it not precisely an easy position for her.

"You do not take it as a matter of personal concern?"

"It is a house a long way off," said Dolly. "Just now we are here."

"How much longer do you expect to be here?"

"That I do not know at all. Mother and I have tried and tried to get father to go home again,--and we cannot move him."

"I must try," said Mr. Shubrick.

"Oh, if you could!" said Dolly, clasping her hands unconsciously--"I don't know what I would give. He seems to mind you more than anybody."

"What keeps him here? Business?"

"I suppose it is partly business," said Dolly slowly, not knowing quite how to answer. And then darted into her heart with a pang of doubt and pain, the question: was not Mr. Shubrick entitled to know what kept her father in England, and the whole miserable truth of it? She had been so occupied and so happy these last days, she had never fairly faced the question before. It almost caught her breath away.

"Dolly, when we all go back to America, the house I speak of will not be 'far off.'"

"No," said Dolly faintly.

"Look here," said he, taking one of her hands. "It is a house I hope you will like. *I* like it, though it has no pretension whatever. It is an old house; and the ground belonging to it has been in the possession of my family for a hundred years; the house itself is not quite so old. But the trees about it are. The old house stands shut up and empty. I told you, I have no one very near of kin left to me; so even when I am at home I do not go there. I have never lived

there since my mother left it."

Dolly was silent.

"Now, how soon do you think I may have the house opened and put in order for living in?"

There came up a lovely rose colour in the cheeks he was looking at; however Dolly answered with praiseworthy steadiness----

"That is a matter for you to consider."

"Is it?"

"Certainly."

"But you know it would be no use to open it, until somebody is ready to live there."

"No," said Dolly. "Of course--I suppose not."

"So you see, after all, I have to come to you with questions, seeing you will ask me none."

"Oh," said Dolly, "I will ask you questions, if you will let me. I would rather ask than answer."

"Very well," said he, laughing. "I give place to you. Ask what you like."

Then followed silence. The young officer lay easily on the bank at her feet, holding Dolly's hand; sometimes bringing his eyes to bear upon her face, sometimes letting them rove elsewhere; amused, but waiting.

"I shall have to begin again," said he.

"No, don't," said Dolly. "Mr. Shubrick, where is your house?"

"About fifty miles from Boston, in one of the prettiest New England villages on the coast."

"And how much ground is there round it?"

"About a hundred acres."

"Doesn't it spoil a house to be shut up so?"

"It is not good for it. But there is nobody belonging to me that I would like to see in it; and I could never rent the old place. I am very fond of it, Dolly. It is full of associations to me."

It swept through Dolly, how she would like to put it in order and keep it open for him; and again she was silent, till admonished by a laughing, "Go on."

But Dolly did not know what further to say, and was still silent.

"There is one question you have not asked me," Mr. Shubrick said, "which would be a very pertinent one just now. You have never asked me how long *I* was going to stay in England."

"No," said Dolly, starting. "How soon must you--how long can you stay?"

"My leave expires in two weeks."

"Two weeks! And can you not get it extended?"

"I don't know. Perhaps, for a little. But, Dolly, there is a prospect of the 'Red Chief' being ordered home; and there is a further possibility that I may have to take her home; for Captain Busby is very much out of health and wants to stay the winter over in Naples."

"You may have to take her home. Will that give you the ship, do you mean?"

"No," said he, smiling; "ships are not had at such an easy rate as that. But, Dolly, you perceive that there are

several questions we must ask and answer; and the sooner the better."

"Then," said Dolly a little hurriedly,--she was afraid of the questions that might be coming,--"if you go away in two or three weeks, when shall I see you again?"

There was more of an admission made in these words than Dolly herself knew; and it was made with a tender, shy grace of tone and manner which touched the young officer with more than one feeling. He bent down to kiss Dolly's hand before he said anything.

"That is one of the questions," he said. "Let me tell you what I have thought about it. The 'Red Chief' has been a long time out; she needs overhauling. She will probably be sent home soon, and I am like to be in charge of her. I may expect to get a long furlough when I go home; and--I want to spend every minute of it with you. I do not want to lose a day, Dolly. Do you understand? I want you to be all ready for me, so that we can be married the very day I get to you."

"You mean, in America?" said Dolly, with a great flush.

"I mean, in America, of course. I want to take you straight away from your old home to your new one. I will have the house put in readiness"----

"When do you think you will be there?" Dolly broke in.

"By Christmas, perhaps."

"But I am here," said Dolly.

"So am I here, just at present," said he, smiling. "But you can go over in one ship while I am going over in another, and be there as soon as I, or before."

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I can't tell about father. I don't know when he will be persuaded to leave England."

She looked doubtful and troubled now. Possible difficulties and hindrances began to loom up before her, never looked at until then. What if her father would not go? What if he persisted in staying by the companions who were his comrades in temptation? Could she go away and leave him to them? and leave her mother to him? Here offered itself another sort of self-sacrifice, to which nothing could be objected except its ruinous effect upon her own future. Nay, not *her* own future alone; but what of that? "Fais que dois advienne que pourra." It all swept through Dolly's head with the speed, and something of the gloom, of a whirlwind.

"I don't know anything about his movements," she repeated anxiously. "Only, mother and I cannot get him away."

"In that case, I will come to England for you."

"Oh no!" said Dolly, shaking her head; "*that* would not do. I could not leave him and mother here."

"Why not?"

Dolly was silent. She could not tell him why not.

"Would it be more difficult here, than to leave them in America?" Mr. Shubrick asked, the smile upon his lips checked by the very troubled expression of Dolly's face.

"It would not be 'difficult' here; it would be *impossible*."

"May I ask, why more impossible, or difficult, than in America?"

Dolly was silent. What could she say?

"Suppose Mr. Copley should prefer to stay in England permanently?"

"Yes," said Dolly in a sort of whisper.

"What then?"

"I do not know," she answered faintly.

"In America it would be different?"

"Yes."

"Do you know, my little Dolly, you are speaking what it is very difficult for me to understand?"

"Of course," said Dolly. "You cannot understand it."

"Are you not going to give me the grace of an explanation?"

"I cannot."

"Then I shall go to Mr. Copley for it."

"Oh no!" said Dolly, starting, and laying both her hands upon one of the young officer's, as if in pleading or in hindering. "Oh no, Mr. Shubrick! Please, *please*, do not speak to mother or father about this! Please say nothing about it!"

He kissed and clasped the hands, making, however, no promise. For a moment he paused, seeing that Dolly was very deeply disturbed.

"Do you think father and mother both could not be tempted to go home for your sake?" he then asked.

"Oh, mother, yes; but father--I don't know about father."

"I shall try my powers of persuasion," said Mr. Shubrick lightly.

Dolly made no answer and was evidently in so much troubled confusion of thought that she was not ready, even if he were, to take up again the consideration of plans and prospects, or to enter into any other more indifferent subject of conversation. After a trial or two, seeing this, Mr. Shubrick proposed to get a book and read to her; which he had once or twice done to their great mutual pleasure. And as Dolly eagerly welcomed the proposal, he left her there on the bank and went down to the cottage, which was not very far off, to fetch the book. As soon as he was out of sight, Dolly laid her face in her hands.

It was all rushing upon her now, what she had scarce looked at before in the pre-occupation and happiness of the last days. It was a confusion of difficult questions. Would her father leave the companions and habits to which he had grown so fast, and go back to America for her sake--that is, for the sake of seeing her promptly married? Dolly doubted it much. It was quite possible that her father would regard that consideration as the reverse of an inducement. It was quite possible that no unselfish inducement would have any power at all with him. Then he would stay in England. And so long as he was in England, in the clutches of the temptation that had got so much power, Dolly could not leave him; and if she could leave him, it would be impossible to forsake her mother, whose only stay and comfort on earth she was. In that case, what was she to say to Mr. Shubrick? How could he understand, that for Dolly to leave father and mother was any way different or more difficult than Christina's or any other girl's doing the same thing? He could not understand, unless she told him all; and how was it possible for her to do that? How could she tell her lover her father's shame? And if she simply refused to marry him and refused to give any reason, what was he to think then? Shame and fear and longing took such possession of Dolly that she was thrown into great perturbation. She left her seat on the bank and walked up and down under the great trees. A good burst of tears was near, but she would not give way to that; Sandie would see it. He would be back presently. And he would be putting his question again; and whatever in the world should she say to him? For the hundredth time the bitter apostrophe to her father rose in Dolly's heart. How *could* he have let her be ashamed of him? And then another thought darted into her head. Had not Mr. Shubrick a right to know all about it? Dolly was almost distracted with her confusion of difficulties.

She would not cry, which as she told herself would help nothing. She stood by a great oak branch which, leaving the parent trunk a few feet higher up, swept in lordly fashion, in a delicious curve, down towards the turf, with again a spring upward at its extremity. Dolly stood where it came lowest, and had rested her two arms upon it, looking out vaguely into the green wilderness beyond. She thought she was safe; that was not the side towards the cottage, from which quarter Mr. Shubrick would come; she would hear his steps in time before she turned round. But Mr. Shubrick had seen her standing there, and innocently made a little bend from the straight path so as to come up on one side and catch a stolen view of her sweet face. Coming so, he saw much more than he expected, and much more than Dolly would have let him see. The next moment he had taken the girl in his arms.

Dolly started and would have freed herself, but she found she could not do it without making more effort than she

was willing to use. She stood still, fluttering, trembling, and at the same time not a little abashed.

"What is troubling you, Dolly?"

Dolly dared not look and could not speak. Silence made an admission, she knew; nevertheless, she could find no words to say.

"Don't you love me well enough to tell me?"

"Oh, it isn't that," cried Dolly; "it's *because*"----

Here Dolly's revelations came to an end, and yet she had revealed a good deal. A dark glow came into the young officer's eyes. Truly, she had before never told him so much as that she loved him. But his next words were spoken in the same tone with the foregoing. It was very affectionate, and withal there was a certain accent of authority in it. I think it awed Dolly a little. She had known really very little of authority, as exercised towards herself. This was something very unlike her father's careless acquiescence, or his careless opposition; very unlike the careless way in which he would sometimes throw his arm round her, affectionate though that was. The affection here was different, Dolly felt with an odd sort of astonishment; and the care, and the asserted right of ownership. It gave the girl a thrill of joy; at the same time it had upon her a kind of subduing effect. So came his next question, gently as it was put, and it was put very gently.

"Do you not think I have a right to know?"

"Perhaps," she stammered. "Oh, I don't know but you ought to know,--but how can I tell you! Oh, I don't know how I can tell you!"

Dolly trembled in her doubt and distress; she fought down tears. Both hands went up to cover her face.

"Is it a trouble in which I can help?"

"I don't know."

"If I am to help, you must tell me something more, Dolly."

"Yes, but I cannot. Oh, if you knew, you would know that I cannot. I think perhaps you ought to know,--but I cannot tell you! I don't see how I can tell you!"

"Then do not try to tell me, until we are married," said he soothingly. "It will be easier then."

"But I think you ought to know before," said Dolly, and he felt how she trembled in his arms. "If you don't know, you will not be able to understand"----

"What?" for Dolly paused.

"What I do. You will not understand it."

"What are you going to do?" said Mr. Shubrick, smiling; she knew he was smiling. "You are going home to be ready to meet me; and the day I come, we are going to be married. Then you can tell me what you like. Hey?"

"But you don't know!" cried Dolly. "I can't tell when we shall go home. I don't know whether father will quit England for all I can say. I don't know whether he will ever quit it!"

"Then, as I remarked before, I will have the honour to come to England and fetch you."

"Ah, but I could not go then."

"Why not?"

"I could not leave them alone here."

"Why not here as well as in America?"

"My father needs me here," said Dolly in a low voice and with tears,--what sharp tears of bitterness!--coming into

her eyes.

"Needs you! Do not I need you?" said Mr. Shubrick.

"No," said Dolly. "I am so glad you don't!" And her brown eyes gave one flash of undoubted, albeit inexplicable, pride and rejoicing into his face.

"How do you dare say that, Dolly?" he asked in growing curiosity and mystification.

"You can stand alone," she said, her voice again drooping. Mr. Shubrick was silent a moment, considering what this might mean. They had not altered their relative positions during this little dialogue. Dolly's face was again covered by her hands.

"I don't know if I can stand alone," said Sandie at last slowly; "but I am not going to try."

"Perhaps you must," said Dolly sadly, lifting her face again. "If I can get father to go home, I will; maybe you can do it if I cannot. But I am not sure that anybody can do it. Mr. Shubrick, he did not use to be like this; he was everything different; he was what you would have liked; but now he has got in with some people here in whose company he--oh, how can I tell you!" cried Dolly, bursting into tears; but then she fought them back and struggled for voice and went on with sad bravery. "I have told you so much, I must tell you the whole. He is not just master of himself; temptation takes hold of him and he cannot resist it. They lead him to play and--betting--and he loses money,--and then comes wine." Dolly's voice fell. "I have been trying and trying to get him back; sometimes I almost thought I had done it; but the temptation gets hold of him again, and then everything goes. And so, I cannot be sure," Dolly went on, as Mr. Shubrick remained silent, "what he will do about going home. Once he would have done it for me; but I do not know what he will do now. I cannot tell. And if there is a hope for him, it is in me. I have not been able to do much, yet; but if I cannot, no one can. Unless you, perhaps; but you cannot be with him. And you see, Mr. Shubrick, that even if I can be of no use to him, I could not leave mother all alone. I could not. I am glad you know it all now; but"----

Dolly could say nothing more. In sorrow and shame and agitation of spirits, she broke down and sobbed.

Her lover was very still; but though he spoke not a word, Dolly was feeling all the while the new guardianship she had come into; what strong love and what resolute care it was; feeling it the more because Mr. Shubrick was so quiet about it. It was new to Dolly; it was very delicious; ah, and what if she were but learning that now, to do without it for ever after! Her tears had more sources than one; nevertheless, as soon as she could manage it, Dolly mastered her feelings and checked down the expression of them; lifted her head and wiped her eyes, as if she had done now with tears for the term of her natural life. Even forced a smile, as she said--

"Please, Mr. Shubrick, let me go,--you must be tired of me."

Which Dolly, to be sure, had no reason to think, and had still less reason a minute after; being obliged to learn, somewhat to her astonishment, that there was also a difference in kisses as well as in some other things. Dolly was exceedingly filled with confusion.

"I--didn't--give you leave!" she managed to say, abashed as she was.

"No," said Sandie, laughing. "And yet I think you did, Dolly. I am glad to see your dimples again! Come here and sit down. I think I see the way out of our difficulties."

"You have been quick in finding it," said Dolly, as he placed her on the bank.

"Habit," said Sandie. "Sailors *must* see their way and make their decisions quickly, if at all. At least, that is oftentimes the case. This is one of the cases."

"Can you depend on decisions formed so suddenly?"--Dolly was driven by some unaccountable instinct of shyness to lead off from the subject in hand, nearly as it concerned her. And besides, she was too flushed and abashed to deal coolly with any subject.

"*Must* depend on them," said Sandie, laughing a little at her pretty confusion. "As I told you, there is often no other to be had. And a sailor cannot afford to change his course; he must see to it that he is right at first. Vacillation would be almost worse than anything."

"At that rate, sailors must get a very downright way with them."

"Perhaps. Are you afraid of it?"

"No," said Dolly demurely. "Are you a good sailor?"

Mr. Shubrick laughed out "Do you doubt it?"

"No, not at all," said Dolly, laughing a little herself. "Only you can do so many things--drawing, and speaking so many languages,--I wanted to know if you were good at that too."

"That is one of the necessities of my position, Dolly. A man who cannot sail a ship had better not try to command her."

"I wish you would tell me one thing," said Dolly wistfully.

"I will tell you anything."

"I wish you would tell me how you got your promotion. When I saw you first, you were a midshipman on board the 'Achilles.' Christina told me you had distinguished yourself in the war. How was it?"

Mr. Shubrick gave her a glance of surprise at first, at this very irrelevant propounding of questions; then a gleam came out of his blue eyes, which were not in the least like Mr. St. Leger's blue eyes; but he answered quite gravely.

"You have a right to know, if anybody in the world has; and yet I cannot tell you, Dolly. I did nothing more than hundreds of others; nothing but my duty. Only it happens, that if a man is always doing his duty, now and then there comes a time that draws attention to him, and brings what he does into prominence; and he gets advancement perhaps; but it does not follow that he has done any more than hundreds of others would have done."

"Are there so many men that are 'always doing their duty'?"

"I hope so. I believe so. In naval affairs."

"You have not told me what was the occasion that brought your doings into prominence?"

He glanced at her with a flash in his eyes again.

"Is that pressing just now?"

"Isn't now a good time?" said Dolly, smiling.

"No, for my head is full of something else. I can't tell you how I came to be promoted first. After I was raised to a lieutenancy, I got special credit for disciplining the crew."

"Disciplining?" said Dolly.

"Exercising them in gunnery practice."

"Oh!--I remember how you told me about that in the gun deck of the 'Achilles.'"

"This was on board another ship. Her guns were well served upon an occasion that followed, and honourable mention was made of my services as having led to that result. Now shall I go on?"

"If you have any more to tell."

"I am going no further on that tack. You must come about."

"I suppose," said Dolly quaintly, "I must if you must."

"We were getting too far to leeward. We must come up into the wind a little more, Dolly, and face our difficulties. I think I have found the way out of them. As I understand you, it is quite a matter of uncertainty when, or if ever, Mr. Copley can be induced to leave England."

"Quite uncertain. Even if he promised to-day that he would go next week, I could not be sure but he would change

his mind before the day came."

"And so long as he and your mother are here, they need you. Do you see, Dolly, what prospect that opens to us?"

"Yes."

"The only thing to do, is to give me a right to speak in the matter."

"You have a right to speak," said Dolly. "Only"----

"I have no right to speak with authority. You must give me the authority."

"How?" said Dolly shyly.

"There is but one way. Don't you see, if I have the right to say where you shall be, the rest all follows?"

"How can you?" said Dolly.

He took her hand gently. "You must marry me before I go," said he. "It is the only way, Dolly. Don't be startled; you shall have all the time you want to get accustomed to the thought. I am not going to hurry you. The only difference is, that instead of being married the day I get to you in America, we will have the ceremony performed here, the day I leave you. Not till then, Dolly. But then, of course, you must go to America to meet me; and if I know anything of Mr. and Mrs. Copley, where you must be, they will choose to be also. I think I can get another week or two of leave, so that it will not seem so very sudden."

Dolly had flushed and paled a little. She sat looking on the ground in silence. Mr. Shubrick let her have a while to herself, and then asked her what she thought of his plan?

"I don't know," said Dolly faintly. "I mean," she added,--"perhaps it is the best way. I don't know but it is the only way. I don't believe mother will like it."

"We will talk her over," said the young officer joyfully. "You said *she* wishes to go home?"

"Oh yes. And I think she will come over to our side, when she knows the reasons."

Sandie bent down and reverently kissed the hand he held.

"Then"---- said Dolly, on whose cheek the flushes were coming and going,--but she did not finish her sentence.

"Then, what?"

"I was thinking to ask, how soon or when you expect your ship to go home?"

"I do not know certainly. Probably I shall be ordered home before Christmas; but it may not be till January."

Dolly was silent again.

"If our plan is carried out, *you* will go sooner, will you not?"

"Oh, immediately. As soon as possible."

"In that case you will be there before I shall. I told you, I have nobody very nearly belonging to me; but there is a cousin--a sort of cousin--living in the place; Mrs. Armitage; I will send her word to open the house and get it in some sort of order for us."

Both were silent again for a space, and I think not only one was happy. For Dolly knew the plan would work. But she was struggling besides with a thought which she wanted, and did not want, to speak. It must come out! or Dolly would not have been Dolly.

"Mr. Shubrick"---- she began.

"What?" said he eagerly; for Dolly's tone showed that there was a good deal behind it.

"Would you--I was thinking"----

"About what?"

"The house. Would you--trust *me*? I mean, of course, if we are there before you?"

A flood of colour rushed over Dolly's face.

"Trust you?" he said with a bright light in his eyes. "What am I going to do all my life? Trust you to put your own house in order? I cannot think of anything I should like quite so well. What a delightful thought, Dolly!"

"I should like it," said Dolly shyly.

"Then, instead of writing to Mrs. Armitage to open the house, I will send her an order to deliver the key to Mrs. Shubrick."

He liked to watch how the colour flitted on her face, and the lines of brow and lip varied; how she fluttered like a caught bird, and yet a bird that did not want to fly away. Dolly was frank enough; there was nothing affected, or often even conscious, about this shy play; it was the purest nature in sweetest manifestation. Shyness was something Dolly had never been guilty of with anybody but Mr. Shubrick; it was an involuntary tribute she constantly paid to him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THIS PICTURE AND THAT.

The plan worked, as Dolly had known from the first, that it would. Mrs. Copley came into it, and then Mr. Copley could not resist. It only grieved Mrs. Copley's heart that there should be, as she said, no wedding. "Might as well be married in a barn!" she said.

The barn-like effect was a little taken off by Lord and Lady Brierley's presence at the ceremony, which to be sure was performed in no barn, but the pretty village church; and by the breakfast given to Dolly thereafter at the great house. This was not what Dolly or Mr. Shubrick had desired. It came about on this wise.

Dolly went to pay a farewell visit of thanks to Lady Brierley and to her good friend the housekeeper. Sandie accompanied her. Now, Mr. Shubrick was one of those persons who make their way in all companies. Lady Brierley, talking to Dolly, eyed the while the figure of the young officer, his face, and his fine, quiet, frank manners; watched him talking with her husband, who happened to come in; and also caught with her practised eye a glance or two of Dolly's. Dolly, be it remarked, was not shy here; before her noble friends, she neither flushed nor trembled nor was nervous. But Lady Brierley saw how things were.

"So," said her ladyship at last, when Dolly was about taking leave,--"you have not told me, but I know it,--you are going home to get married!"

"That would seem to be the natural order of things," said Sandie, as Dolly was not immediately ready with her answer; "but we are going to reverse the terms. We are purposing to be married first and then go home."

The lady looked at him with a curious mixture of expressions; it was too early in the century then for an officer of the American navy to be altogether a pleasant sight to the eyes of an Englishwoman; at the same time, she could not wholly withhold her liking from this young officer's fine looks and manly bearing. She turned to Dolly again.

"I hope you are going to ask me to your wedding," she said. "When is it to be, Dolly?"

"My mother thinks it does not deserve to be called a wedding," said Dolly, dimpling and growing rosy. "I should not have ventured to ask your ladyship. But if you are so kind--it is to be on the morning of the 10th--very early in the morning, for Mr. Shubrick has to set off that day to rejoin his ship."

"I'll get up by daybreak," said her ladyship, arching her brows, "if it is necessary. And you will come here from the church and have breakfast with me, will you? It would be a great pleasure to me."

So it had been arranged; and, as I said, Mrs. Copley had been a good deal comforted by the means. Lady Brierley's

breakfast was beautiful; she had caused her rooms to be dressed with flowers in Dolly's honour; the company was small, but the more harmonious; and the presents given to Dolly were very handsome.

And now there is nothing more to do, but to give two pictures; and even for them there is hardly room.

The scene of the first, is a house in Harley Street, London. It is an excellent house, and just new furnished and put in cap-a-pie order from top to bottom. In the drawing-room a group of people taking a general survey. One of them a very handsome young man, in unexceptionable style, waiting upon two ladies; a beauty, and the beauty's mother. Things in the house meet approval.

"I think it is perfect," said Mrs. Thayer. "Just perfect. The man has done his work very well." She was referring to the upholsterer, and at the moment looking at the window curtains.

"Isn't that a lovely tint of French grey?" said Christina, "and the blue fringe is the right thing for it. I think the folds are a little too full--but it is a good fault. It is all right, I believe. I do like a drawing-room with no fault in it, no eye-sore."

"There could hardly be any fault in the work of Hans and Piccalilly," remarked St. Leger.

"Oh, I don't know, Lawrence," said the young lady. "Didn't they do the Fortescues' house? and the drawing-room is in white and gold; very pretty in itself, but just think how it will set off all those florid people. A bunch of peonies on a white ground!"

Lawrence laughed. "*You* can bear anything," he said. "But blue suits you."

"It's just perfect," Mrs. Thayer repeated. "I see nothing to find fault with. Yes, Christina can bear anything and wear anything. It saves a great deal of trouble. When I was a girl I had a different complexion. I wasn't a peony, but I was a rose--not a white rose; and anything shading on red I could not wear; not purple, nor claret, nor even ashes of roses. It was a regular perplexity, to get variety enough with the small number of shades at my disposal; for orange did not become me, either. Well, I can wear anything now, too," she added with a half laugh. "And it is nothing to anybody."

"Mamma, you know better than that," said Christina.

"Now," said Lawrence, "the question is, when shall we take possession? The house is all ready for us."

"There is no use in taking possession till we are ready to keep it; and it would be dull to stay in town all winter, wouldn't it?" said Christina. "Whatever should we do?"

"Very dull," said Mrs. Thayer. "It is a long while yet before the season begins. Better be anywhere else."

"I was thinking of Brighton," said Christina. "I think I should like that."

"After the Peacocks," said Lawrence. "We are due there, you know, for a visit."

"Oh, after the Peacocks, of course. But then,--do you think, Lawrence, we could do anything better than go to Brighton? Till the season opens?"

Brighton quite met Mr. St. Leger's views of what was desirable.

It was a month or two later, as it happened, that another house was undergoing inspection, a house at a very great distance from Harley Street, geographically and otherwise; but let the reader judge. This was a country house in a fair New England village; where there was land enough for everybody, and everybody had land, and in consequence the habitations of men were individually, as the habitations of men should be, surrounded with grass and trees and fields; the very external arrangements of the place giving thereby a type of the free and independent life and wide space for mental and characteristic development enjoyed by the inhabitants. The particular house in question was not outwardly remarkable above many others; it stood in a fair level piece of ground, shaded and surrounded with beautiful old American elms. The inspectors of the same were two ladies.

Dolly had come to the village a week or two before. Mr. Copley was not just then in condition to be left alone; so as her mother could not be with her, she had summoned her dear Aunt Hal, from Philadelphia; and Mr. Eberstein would not be left behind. All three they had come to this place, found quarters at the inn, and since then Dolly and Mrs.

Eberstein had been very busy getting the house cleaned and put in order. The outside, as I said, gave promise of nothing remarkable; Dolly had been the more surprised and pleased to find the interior extremely pleasant and not commonplace. Rooms were large and airy; picturesquely arranged; and furnished, at least in part, in a style for which she had not been at all prepared. The house had been for a long stretch of years in the possession of a family, not wealthy, but well to do, and cultivated; and furthermore, several of the members of it at different times had been seafaring; and, as happens in such cases, there had been brought home from foreign parts a small multitude of objects of art or convenience which bore witness to distant industries and fashions. India mats of fine quality were on some of the floors; India hangings at some of the windows; beautiful china was found to be in quantity, both of useful and ornamental kinds. Little lacquered tables; others of curious inlaid work; bamboo chairs; Chinese screens and fans; and I know not what all besides. Dolly and Mrs. Eberstein reviewed these articles with great interest and admiration; they gave the house, simple as it was, an air of elegance which its exterior quite forbade one to look for. At the same time, some other necessary things were wanting, or worn. The carpet in what Dolly called the drawing-room was one of these instances. It was very much the worse for wear. Dolly and her aunt went carefully over everything; adjusting, supplying, arranging, here and there; Dolly getting a number of small presents by the way, and a few that were not small. At last Mr. Eberstein sent in a fine carpet for the drawing-room; and Dolly would not have it put down.

"Not till Mr. Shubrick comes," she said.

"Why not, my dear? this is threadbare," her aunt pleaded.

"Aunt Hal, I should not like to give the room a strange look. He may have associations with this old carpet, for anything I know."

"Men do not have 'associations' with things," said Mrs. Eberstein.

"Some men do, and perhaps he is one of them. At any rate, I want the house to look like home to him when he comes. I'll put down the carpet afterwards, if he likes it."

"I am afraid you are going to spoil him, Dolly," said Mrs. Eberstein, shaking her head. "I hope he is worthy of it all. But don't spoil him!"

"He is much more likely to spoil me, Aunt Hal."

"Spoil *you*!" exclaimed her aunt indignantly. "What do you know about it? O Dolly, Dolly! I hope you have got the right man!"

At which, however, Dolly showed all her dimples, and laughed so comically that Mrs. Eberstein, right or wrong, was obliged to laugh with her.

Mr. Copley had once said a true thing about his daughter; that if she married Mr. St. Leger she would be devoted to him. "If"--yes, so she would. And being now married to somebody else, Dolly was a very incarnation of loyalty to her husband. Alas, many another woman has trusted so, on less grounds, and made shipwreck; but Dolly's faith was well founded, and there was no shipwreck in store for her.

So the day came when all was in readiness, and the two ladies took a satisfied review of their work. It was the day when Mr. Shubrick was looked for home. The "Red Chief" had arrived in port; and Sandie had written that by the evening of this day he hoped to be at home. Everything was in order; fires were lighted; a servant installed below stairs; supper prepared; nothing left to be done anywhere. Dolly had seen to the supper carefully herself; indeed, for a day or two there had been some very thoughtful cooking and baking going on; which Mrs. Eberstein had watched with great interest, some amusement, and ever so little a bit of jealousy.

"Is Mr. Shubrick a difficult man to please?" she demanded.

"How can I tell?" said Dolly. "I have only seen him in our house, not in his own. He did not scold there; but how do I know what he may do here?"

"Scold!" repeated Mrs. Eberstein. "Dolly, I believe it would rouse all the wickedness there is in me, if anybody should scold *you*!"

Dolly flushed rosily, and then she fairly laughed out.

"I will tell you a secret, Aunt Hal," she said. "I don't mean that in this matter, at least, he shall find any occasion."

So the supper was ready, and the table was set, and fires were bright. Mrs. Eberstein stayed with Dolly till the evening began to fall, and then went back to the inn; averring that she would not for the universe be found in Mr. Shubrick's house when he came. Dolly stood at the window and watched her aunt's dark figure moving down to the gate, and then still stood at the window watching. It was all snow stillness outside.

There was a faint moonlight, which glistened on the white ground and bare elm branches. A few inches of snow had fallen the day before; the sun had thawed the surface slightly, and then it had frozen in a glittering smooth crust. It was still outside as only leafless winter can be, when there are no wings to flutter, or streams to trickle, or chirrup of insects to break the calm. Not a footfall, not a sleigh bell; not another light in sight, but only the moon. Anybody in the road might have seen another light,—that which came from Dolly's windows. She had been hard to suit about her arrangements; she would not have candles lit, for she did not wish an illumination that might make the interior visible to a chance passer-by; and yet she would not have the shutters shut, for the master of the house coming home must read his welcome from afar in rays of greeting from the windows. So she made up the fires and left the curtains open; and ruddy firelight streamed out upon the snow. It was bright enough to have revealed Dolly herself, only that the house stood back some distance from the road. Dolly watched and listened a while; then crossed the hall to the room on the other side, from the windows of which a like glow shone out. The fire was in order; the table stood ready. Dolly went back again. It was so still outside, as if Sandie never would come. She listened with her heart beating hard and fast.

For an hour and a half, perhaps; and then she heard the tinkle of sleigh bells. They might be somebody else's. But they came nearer, and very near, and stopped; only Dolly heard a mixed jangle of the bells, as if the horse had thrown his head up and given a confused shake to them all. The next thing was the gate falling to, and a step crunching the crisp snow. Then the house door opened with no preliminary knock; and somebody was throwing off wraps in the hall.

Dolly had made a step or two forward, and stopped; and when Sandie appeared on the threshold, she was standing in the middle of the room, as pretty a picture of shy joy as a man need wish to see in his heart or his house. If Mrs. Eberstein could have been there and watched his greeting of her, the lady's doubts respecting his being "the right man" would perhaps have been solved.

But after the first hasty word or two, it was very silent.

"Dolly," Mr. Shubrick said at last. And there he stopped; nothing followed.

"What were you going to say?" Dolly whispered.

"So much, that I do not know how to begin. I cannot get hold of the end of anything. Are you not going to let me see your eyes? I do not know where I am, till I get a look into them."

He smiled a moment after; for, although shyly and fleetingly, the brown eyes were lifted for a brief glance to his. What a sweet, tender simpleness was in them, and yet what a womanly, thoughtful brow was above them; and, yes, Sandie read somewhat else that a man likes to read; a fealty of love to him that would never fail. It went to his heart. But he saw too that Dolly's colour had left her cheeks, though at first they were rosy enough; and in the lines of her face generally and the quiver of her lip he could see that the nervous tension was somewhat too much. He must lead off to commoner subjects.

"Who is here with you?"

"Nobody."

"You do not mean that you are *alone* here, Dolly?"

"No. Oh no. I mean, nobody in the house. Aunt Harry and Uncle Ned are at Baxter's. Aunt Harry only left me an hour or two ago, when it was time to expect you."

"It was very kind of her to leave you!" said Sandie frankly.

"We have been here a fortnight. When I found I could not have mother, I wrote to Aunt Hal; and she came."

"What was the matter with your mother?"

Dolly half unwound herself from the arms that held her, and turned her face away. She was trying to choke something down that threatened to stop her speech.

"Father"----

"What of him?" said Sandie with a grave change of tone.

"I am not sorry," said Dolly. "But, oh! to think that I should not be sorry!" She covered her face.

Sandie was silent, waiting and wondering. It could not be Mr. Copley's death that was in question; but what then could it be? He waited, to let Dolly take her own time. Neither did he have to wait long.

"You remember," she began, still with her face turned away,--"you remember what I told you one day in Brierley Park--about father?"

"Certainly I remember."

"You understood me?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Then you knew that I was--very anxious"--Dolly caught her breath--"about what might come? Oh, it is not treason for me to talk to you about it--now!" cried Dolly.

"It is not treason for you to tell me anything," said Mr. Shubrick, drawing her again closer, though Dolly kept her face bent down out of his sight. "Treason and you have nothing in common. What is it?"

"I told you, I knew there was no safety," she said, making a quick motion of her hand over her eyes. "I hoped things would be better over here, away from those people that led him the wrong way; and they *were* better; it was like old times; still I knew there was no safety. And now--he is taken care of," she said with a tremble of her lip which spoke of strong pain, strongly kept down. "He went to see some new fine machinery in somebody's mill. Somehow, by some carelessness, his coat got caught in the machinery; and before the works could be stopped his leg was--fearfully broken." Dolly spoke with difficulty and making great effort to master her agitation. The arms that held her felt how she was quivering all over.

"When, Dolly? When did this happen?"

"Soon after we came home. It is six weeks ago now."

"How is your father now?"

"Doing very well; getting cured slowly. But he will never walk again without--support. Oh, do you see how I am so sorry and glad together? Isn't it dreadful, that I should be glad?"

She looked up now, for she would not distress Mr. Shubrick by giving way to the tears which would have been a relief to herself. She looked up with such a face! the eyes shining through tears, the mouth trembling with a smile; sunshine and rain all in one glitter. "And *that* is the way he has been taken care of!" she said.

Mr. Shubrick stooped his face gently to hers with a mute, caressing motion, leaving her time to get rid of those encumbering tears or to shed more of them; waiting till the tremor subsided a little. Soon Dolly spoke again.

"It has been such a weight on me--oh, such a weight! I could hardly bear it sometimes. And now--this is better."

"Yes," he said.

"You had to know of it. I was very sorry!"

"Sorry that I should know?"

"Oh yes, yes! Sorry and ashamed. Sorry for you, too." Dolly's trembling was excessive.

"Hush!" said Sandie softly. "What is yours is mine; sorrow and joy together. I think I had better go and take up my old office of nurse again."

"Oh," said Dolly, starting, and a glad tone coming into her voice, "would you? How he would like that!"

"It must have been a little hard for them both to have you come away just now. I think we will go and comfort them up, Dolly."

"You are very, very good!" said Dolly, with her eyes glistening, and speaking from hearty conviction.

"Whom are you talking to? I have not heard my name yet."

"I have not got accustomed to you yet, you know," Dolly said with a little nervous laugh. "Besides,--I never did."

"Never did what?"

"I never called you anything but--Mr. Shubrick."

"Christina did."

"Poor Christina!" said Dolly.

"Why?" said the other merrily. "She is the rich Mrs. St. Leger; why do you say 'Poor Christina'?"

"I am afraid I have come between her and happiness," Dolly said, blushing frankly.

"You have no occasion to say that," Sandie said, laughing. "She has got what she wanted. There was a terrible danger that she might have come between *me* and happiness. But for her--I am not at all sure that she would have been happy with me."

"I remember," said Dolly, "she told me one time, she knew she would not '*have her head*' so much, if she were once married to you."

"She would not have approved my old house, either," said Sandie contentedly, letting Dolly go that he might put up the fire, which had tumbled down, after the fashion of wood fires.

"She might have liked it," Dolly answered.

"You do?"

"Oh, very much! Aunt Hal and I think it is charming. And it is full of lovely things."

"Wants a new carpet, I should say," said Sandie, eyeing the threadbare one under his feet, which Mrs. Eberstein had objected to.

"There!" said Dolly. "Aunt Hal said you would never know what was on the floor. I told her she was mistaken."

"What gave her such a poor opinion of my eyesight?"

"Oh, nothing, it was not of your *eyesight*, I don't know, unless she thinks that is the way with men in general. Uncle Ned had brought me a present of a beautiful new carpet for this room, and Aunt Harry wanted me to have it put down; but I wouldn't until I knew whether you would like it."

"Whether I would like it!" Sandie repeated, rather opening his eyes. "I should think the question was, whether *you* would like it. I like new carpets."

"I did not know but you might have some affection for this old one," said Dolly. "I did not want to change the look of the room before you came, so that it would not seem like home. Aunt Harry said I would spoil you."

"What did you answer to that?"

"I said it was more likely you would spoil me," said Dolly, dimpling up and flushing.

"Do you think I will?" said Sandie, taking her hand and drawing her up to him.

Dolly hesitated, flushed and dimpled more, and answered, however, a frank "No."

"Why?" was the quick next question.

"You ask too many things," said Dolly. "Don't you want something to eat?"

"No, not at all!--Yes."

"I thought so," said Dolly, laughing. "Come, then."

She put her hand in his and led him across the broad hall to the dining-room. And during the next hour Sandie might have recurred with reason to his late remark; that Christina had been near coming between him and happiness. The careless luxury of her way of entertaining him, was in strongest contrast to the sweet, thoughtful, delicate housewifery of his wife. It was a constant pleasure to watch her. Tea-making, in her hands, was a nice art; her fingers were deft to cut bread; and whenever the hands approached him, whether it were to give a cup of tea or to render some other ministry, it was with an indescribable shyness and carefulness at once, which was wholly bewitching. Sandie was hungry, no doubt; but his feast was mental that night, and exquisite.

Meanwhile, he talked. He gave Dolly details of his voyage home, which had been stormy; got from her a full account of the weeks since she had set foot on American ground; and finally informed her that his having a ship was certain, and in the near future.

"Poor Christina!" said Dolly.

"Hush!" said he, laughing and drawing her with him back into the other room; "you shall not say that again. Would you like to go to Washington? The probability is that you will have to go."

"Anywhere," said Dolly.

They stood silently before the fire for a few minutes; then Mr. Shubrick turned to her with a change of tone.

"Why did you think I would not spoil you?"

She was held fast, she could not run away; he was bending down to look in her face, she could not hide it. Dolly's breath came short. There was so much in the tone of his words that stirred her. Besides, the answer--what came at last was--

"Sandie, you know you wouldn't!"

"Reasons?"

"Oh!--reasons."

"Yes. I want to know the reasons, Dolly."

In her desperation Dolly looked up, one good glance of her brown eyes; then she hid her face. I think Sandie was satisfied, for he asked no more.

"Yes," he said presently. "I love you too well, and you love me too well. We will try to help each other up; not down. Dolly, I would not spoil you for the whole world! and I do not believe I could if I tried."

The lady from whom this story comes, remembers having seen Mrs. Shubrick when she was a beautiful old lady. Then and all her life she wore her cable watch-chain.

THE END.

Typographical errors silently corrected:

Chapter 1: =if they don't know Him= replaced by =if they don't know him=

Chapter 3: ='The sails are said= replaced by =The sails are said=

Chapter 4: =what strange shapes:= replaced by =what strange shapes;=

Chapter 4: =unschoolgirl-like;= replaced by =unschoolgirl-like,=

Chapter 6: =for calculation,= replaced by =for calculation;=

Chapter 10: =all her beauty she= replaced by =all her beauty, she=

Chapter 10: =pay my gardener.= replaced by =pay my gardener."=

Chapter 11: =old-fashioned flowers showed= replaced by =old-fashioned flowers, showed=

Chapter 18: =with it. I should= replaced by =with it, I should=

Chapter 18: =No" said Rupert= replaced by =No," said Rupert=

Chapter 20: =If Lawrence, had= replaced by =If Lawrence had=

Chapter 22: =there by interpreting= replaced by =there, by interpreting=

Chapter 22: =to him, Dolly= replaced by =to Him, Dolly=

Chapter 23: =in thee.--I am= replaced by =in thee.'--I am=

Chapter 25: =and he cometh.= replaced by =and he cometh.'=

Chapter 25: ="Though people do= replaced by ="though people do=

Chapter 26: =ways, of private= replaced by =ways of private=

Chapter 28: =hateth you."= replaced by =hateth you.'"=