

THE
FIRESIDE

BY
PERCY B. ST. JOHN

The Fireside.

(The fireside)

A Domestic Tale.

By

Percy Bolingbroke Saint John.

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TO
W. A. MACKINNON, ESQ., F.R.S., M.P., ETC.,
Author of »History of civilization!“, etc.

DEAR SIR,

The accompanying tale is a very small contribution to the cause of social civilization ; and, as such, I venture to dedicate it to the author of a work which must prove in valuable to posterity, and be the foundation of many speculations on this important subject.

Allow me to add, that as no greater evidence can be given of a high and elevated order of mind than not hesitating, for the public good, to be the advocate of things which do not entail ready popularity, I am quite sure that posterity will likewise have to thank you for having, by unwearied diligence and unthanked perseverance, brought about reforms of crying necessity.

Food, and enough of it, employment, and health to enjoy what they earn, are the first things needed by a working population ; in town, health is often denied them by the unwise apathy of legislation, which forgets that sanitary regulations should take precedence of all others. First provide for life, and then governments can make all other laws which are necessary for the use of society.

In your exertions for the health of towns, we see the commencement of an era, when the masses are to be considered in legislation, when the middle classes—of which you have ever been the enlightened defender—are to have their wants attended to instead of being sacrificed—humble and middle classes both—to the mere advancement of an aristocracy.

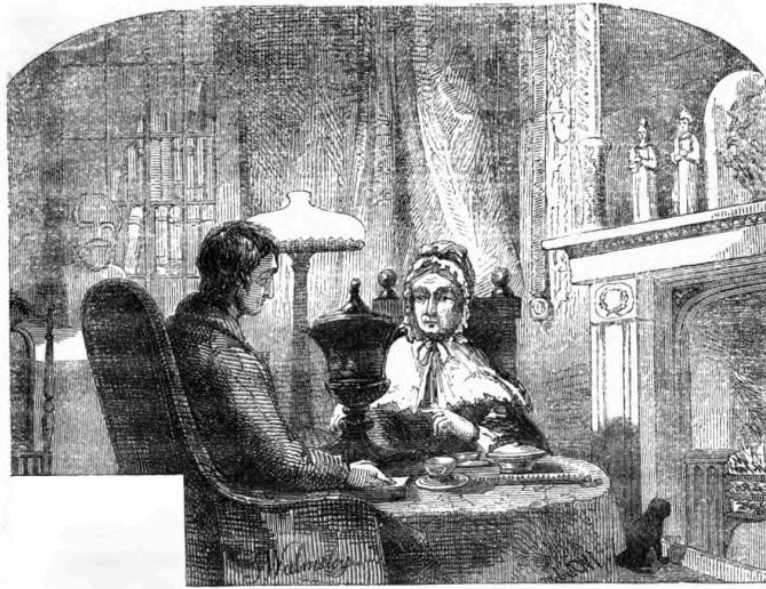
Coming from one who is a member of the pen-craft, of course such an advocacy is doubly grateful to my feelings ; and I therefore have

*sincere satisfaction in subscribing myself, as I wish you many years
to continue your exertions,*

Ever faithfully yours,

PERCY B. ST. JOHN.

Chapter I.



ALFRID SOMERS was the only son of Dr. Somers, of the city of New York. Left the support of a mother at an early period of life, he acquired from his position, habits of perseverance, thought, and that untiring energy which makes a man far more, oft-times, than great talent, or even genius. His manners, though grave, were full of suavity, and his demeanour was that of an agreeable and pleasant young man, sobered by his own thoughts and the necessities of a profession. At seven-and-twenty he enjoyed almost as large a practice as his father had laboriously gained at forty, and his mother speedily found herself in a much more enviable position, in a mere monied sense, than ever she had enjoyed during the lifetime of her husband.

Mary Somers was a strange being. The loss she had sustained, while it did not sour her temperament, yet sickened her of the world and its ways, and made her seek in retirement, in the management of her son's household, in the contemplation of his future, and in reflection on the world beyond the grave, that employment and amusement before found in society and the ordinary routine of middle-class life. She loved her

son, she doted on him, as perhaps a widowed heart only can, when but one child is left to sun the path of life. Grief had made her stern withal, and her affection did not always prevent her being severe in her judgments, and wayward in her wishes. But Alfred, though' awake to these defects, avoided their manifestation by succumbing in all things to her will ; a habit which had at length so grown upon him that to have rebelled against her desires would have appeared sacrilege.

In this way did they live, this mother and this son. He, hard-working at his profession, out day and night ; when at home, wrapped in study, never going into society. She, superintending his household, overlooking his expenses, examining with care into every homely detail, and then, knowing how much need he had, after the turmoil of visiting patients, of rest and serenity of mind—found most delicious in the wilderness of sweets which literature affords—would quietly sink into an arm-chair before him, and with a volume of sermons, a stocking which needed heeling or what not, and a premature pair of spectacles, would remain silent, raising her eyes now and then to see if his countenance were in repose, or if he seemed to require anything.

Thus passed some two years or more of their calm and quiet existence, in the sacred enjoyment of that happiness, known perhaps to none more deeply than to a fatherless son and widowed mother, when parent and child seek in each other companionship and joy, a joy unspeckled by one selfish aspiration or egotistic hope.

Patients grew sick, ailed, sent for the doctor, and he went ; fever, catarrhs, cholera, and the whole terrific list of ills which are the inheritance of pampered civilization—mankind losing in force what they gain in delicacy—went their daily round ; Alfred stood by the bedside of the dying Christian, of the careless worldling; he saw, what all his calling are bound in their stern duty to see, the only beloved child fade from the grasp of agonized parents, left, Crusoe-like, upon the bank of time, gazing for the friendly vessel which is to waft them to that continent whither has fled the cherished object of their love; he saw the father and the mother die, surrounded by little weeping things ; all this and more, the hourly picture which this world presents to the physician, met his eye ; but he came home, dashing from him the memory of his duty, and

was by his fireside ever the same quiet, thoughtful being which he has been already represented.

One evening—it was to tea, a meal in which his mother most specially delighted, because, we suppose, of its tendency to soothe and calm—Alfred returned home in somewhat of a more hasty manner than he was wont. His step was more rapid, and as he entered the room, and his eye met the face of his mother, his countenance slightly fell, and he heaved a gentle sigh, which seemed to announce a discovery which all our young doctor's previous researches had failed to make him arrive at. He, however, speedily rallied, and as his ever thoughtful parent hastened to dispense the refreshing beverage, rewarded her with a smile, which, though often given, came ever fresh to his mother's heart.

A smile is as the dew: whence it riseth, and how it cometh, must be known, ere its value be appreciated. As the dew of the bituminous swamps of the Amazons, pregnant with rank vegetation, is infectious and destructive to life, so is the smile of the seared heart and guilty soul poison to all around ; but as the dew rising from healthy soils is surcharged with qualities favourable to life, so is the smile of the pure and good delightful to the observer.

Alfred seated himself and took the proffered cup, praised as usual the delicate tea cake, the Indian muffins—some only of the excellent articles of American cookery which we wilfully deny ourselves—and ate of them too, which was higher praise than words, but there his conversation ceased, he that was always wont to enliven the evening meal by his cheerful sayings and remarks.

»Alfred ! »said his mother, after this silence had endured some time.

The young doctor looked up, and saw that Mrs. Somers had assumed that teasing expression of countenance which appertains to middle-aged ladies, when they believe their sagacity has been hard at work.

»You spoke, mother !«

»When you get married, I hope I am to live with you.«

»Married, mother!«he replied, »I never—«

He would have denied the imputation, but as the reflection—of how delightful a young and joyous face to welcome his return would have

been— had formed his discovery on his entry, he paused, while his cheek became slightly crimsoned.

»Yes, son, I say married. The fact is, and it is very natural, you begin to find your poor old mother but dull company.«

»Mother«, said the young man, »I hope the day will never come when I shall think so.«

»Alfred, you are, I know, a good boy«, replied Mrs. Somers, with a sweet smile, »but I must not expect too much. You will not always wish to be a bachelor, and though I should have never sought to have you wed, as you have at last found out the want, I must join in providing you with the wife.«

»But«, said Alfred, with a sigh, half unconscious that he spoke aloud, »I am afraid she will never have me.«

»Son!«

»Mother !«

»Surely you have never chosen a wife without consulting me«, exclaimed the matron sternly, and with some little of alarm upon her countenance.

»I have not chosen, mother, because I have had no opportunity. I never saw Miss Lawrence until this afternoon.«

»Miss Lawrence ! «half shrieked his mother, taking off her spectacles, and using them in her abstraction as a pair of sugar tongs, »she will never do.«

»Why, mother?«

»Her father was a speculator, who made his money like water flows in the sea, and scattered it like rain. His family were brought up in habits of the most expensive luxury and extravagance, and he died, leaving them these habits and a few thousand dollars as a marriage portion. My dear boy, she would ruin you in a year.«

»My dear mother«, replied Alfred, somewhat more firmly than he was wont, »they live now in quiet elegance ; there is no pretension about them. Their house is neatness itself, but nothing betrays an attempt to go beyond their means.«

»Because their means are comparatively narrow, and Miss Lawrence is tied down not to touch her money until she be married.«

»Mother«, said Alfred calmly, but with dignity, »I have attended her parent, as you are aware, some time ; I know that she is wayward, that she misses the luxuries she once enjoyed, that she is apt to boast of her former position, and despises much those who have never been as fortunate ; but Eugenia—«

»Eugenia ! «sighed his mother, as if the name itself were pestiferous, »Eugenia Constantia?«

»I believe her name is so«, continued the son, »but that is not her fault. I was saying, that she appears to me the very contrary of her parent. I saw her but for half an hour, but in that time I saw enough to know that she is gentle, retiring, lovely.«

»Enough, Alfred«, interrupted the mother, sadly ; »if you discover no impediment, in three months she will be your wife, and I should be but a jealous, unkind being, if I tried to mar your dream of happiness. All I can do is to pray heaven I be wrong.«

»But, mother«, exclaimed the young man, noticing not her forebodings, a gleam of rapture crossing his usually pale and passive countenance, »my wife in three months ! Can I hope for it?«

»I am afraid, Alfred«, smiled Mrs Somers, »there are few young ladies in New York, not engaged, who would refuse you.«

»Mother«, replied the son, rousing himself, and laughing loudly, »you see with fond eyes.«

»No«, she said, »not with fond eyes. It is your position to which I allude, not your person.«

»Because I am in good practice ?«

»Yes!«

»There may be such mercenary girls«, exclaimed the son, »but surely not Eugenia !«

»Constantia«, sighed his mother again, almost inaudibly.

»My dear mother«, said Alfred Somers, firmly, »rely on it, if your fancies be correct, that I will never wed this girl ; but let not her name prejudice her.«

»I am wrong, Alfred, very wrong ; but forgive a fond mother's fears.
Let us, however, talk of it no more. Tea is finished, and you have letters
to write.«

Chapter II.



PRECISELY at the same hour, in another apartment, was presented a somewhat different scene—like, and yet unlike.

In a rocking chair, pale with long illness—somewhat fancied and affected, but which, by dint of nursing, had grown from infancy to strength—reclined a lady, who had seen at least fifty summers, but who rarely owned to more than two-thirds of that amount of time. Her costume, though inexpensive, was elaborate, and arranged with a studied eye to effect. We could not say in what consisted the exact features which made it so noticeable, being ourselves no conjurors in female costume, but we know that the impression conveyed was, that Mrs. Lawrence made the most of her interesting features. Her aim being to look languid and languishing, she fully succeeded.

Near at hand, with a book before her, which she was certainly not reading, but which served to make her seem employed, sat a young girl, whose youth was manifest in every turn and contour. Beautiful, of such beauty as the West affords ; sprightly, gay, and with sparkling eyes, there was a tenderness about her, which was peculiarly fascinating ; a fact which half the male population of the town had long since been compelled to avow.

»Eugenia, my dear«, said Mrs. Lawrence, with an affected drawl, that appeared to require all her strength to enunciate, »charming young man, that Doctor Somers.«

»Solemn as an undertaker, I thought, mamma«, replied the young lady, turning over three leaves of the book at once.

»Wonderful young man«, continued Mrs. Lawrence, rather pursuing the train of her own reflections than noticing her daughter; »the largest

practice in New York; will retire with a million dollars before he is forty.«

»Indeed, mamma«, said Eugenia, quietly going back and retracing the ground which she had lost.

»A splendid chance for you, Eugè«, replied the mother.

»Is he unmarried?«asked the daughter, with a slight flutter of the spirits, which caused her to close the book.

»And unengaged, my dear«, said Mrs. Lawrence, triumphantly; »only imagine yourself his wife! The first equip ages in the country would be yours, the finest house in the land ; and all your poor dear father's speculations of putting you out would be realized.«

»Well, I did think him agreeable, but of course thought he was married, so took no notice.«

»Then, my dear Eugenia«, said her mother, »take my word for it, you may win him.«

»La, mother, with my few paltry thousands.«

»Believe me, Eugè, love, if he likes you he will not ask your dowry, though, for that matter, everybody will tell him you have not got much. He is somewhat eccentric, and will marry for love and that sort of thing. He has no idea of mere match-making.«

»Then«, said Eugenia, earnestly, »he is a noble match.«

»I do not know what your ideas may be, my dear, but he is the richest chance any girl ever had in this country, I am sure. But I think I could eat something—ring for Jane.«

Jane duly obeyed the summons. She was a sharp London girl, recently imported, with hair as red and warm as her heart, eyes blacker than her own coals, and a nose, which appeared everlastingly engaged in aspiring to reach the proximity of her forehead, which was low and unintellectual.

»What have you in the larder, Jenny?«

»Precious little, ma'am. A bit of that goose, two of them fowls, the ham—«

»Don't allude to them«, said the invalid, with a grimace of disgust ; »I must have something very nice, and very hot. I think I could eat a little

fish and a stewed steak, could you, Eugène?»

»Yes, ma, with a few oysters stewed, and a couple of Indian slap-jacks.«

»Slap what, Miss?» exclaimed Jenny, staring, as if she had an innate dislike to slap any Jack or John either.

»Oh! you English are such heathens; pancakes I mean; but tell Norah, she will understand.«

»And them geese and fowls ?«

»Oh, don't mention them, Jenny. I really did think, yesterday«, said Mrs. Lawrence, »that they were very nice, but now, Jenny, throw them away !«

Jenny opened her eyes even wider than she was wont, at the bare conception of throwing away so large an amount of wholesome food, and retreated, inwardly vowing to do no »sich heathen thing, when her dear mammy, as washed for the fam'ly, wud be precious glad of sich luxuries.«

Thus was it ever with the Lawrences. Bred in wealth and splendour, when the most reckless expenditure was ever before their eyes, they, now that their means were circumscribed, could never tune their rebellious hearts to live according to their resources. Their income came quarterly, and they were now in the beginning of the quarter. While money lasted, therefore, old habits of waste and extravagance acted with full force upon them. They lived as they were wont to live, having everything which momentary fancy dictated, and casting it away, almost as soon as tasted, to the »swine—to the poor, they cared not which, because they thought not; and to those who do not think one is of as much worth as the other. Mrs. Lawrence, like most thoughtless, mindless, mere animal women, was a gourmande, and her habits and tastes had slightly affected her daughter. It could scarcely be otherwise. Her daily tuition was, that to dress well, give grand parties, have grand carriages and fine horses; that to eat and drink of the best—these were the objects, the joy of existence.

But rude lessons taught her often that these joys were not always within her reach ; for the middle of the quarter would come, and with it, the narrowing of their means—shifts to pay their way, to eat and drink

at all—a struggle for very existence. Mrs. Lawrence, during this period, was always ill, and, like most selfish people, sullen and morose ; bewailing from morning till night her hard fate, and reproaching Eugenia with extravagance, and the whole catalogue of faults which lay justly at her own door.

And now shone out the virtues of the daughter. Never retorting on her foolish parent, but ever ready to bear the blame, she would soothe and comfort her, would talk of the coming day when the idolized money would be again due, and would do her best to make their utter want of means be as little felt as possible.

»Ah, Eugè«, would her mother- cry, »if ever I again be so stupid—it will serve me right, that 's all.«

But this was said towards the end of every quarter, and, like the sick demon's vow, was forgotten when the day came round.

»Eugè, my dear«, said Mrs. Lawrence, when Jenny had left the room, »you must have a new dress. You can never be seen out of doors in that old blue.«

»Thank you, mamma«, replied the young beauty, with sparkling eyes, for her secret wishes had been just anticipated. »I will have that beautiful silk I told you of. It is lovely.«

»You shall have it, my dear; but in a few months from this you will no longer buy one, but twenty at a time.«

»That will be delicious. But you are reckoning too fast, mamma«, said the daughter, somewhat seriously; »for when I come to have to act in so important a matter as marriage, I must be first quite sure I love the man, not the fortune.«

»Love the fortune first, my dear, you will be sure to like the man. A woman's first duty, Eugè, is to marry well.«

»Nay, mother«, said Eugenia, a gleam of her native good heart and sense—darkened only by false education and position—coming athwart the calculations which habit made her join in, »rather say wisely and happily.«

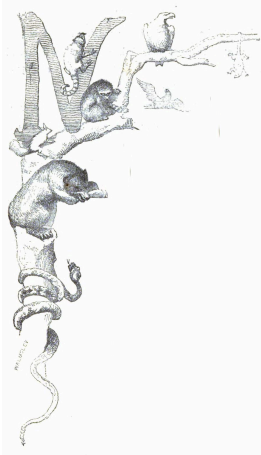
»La, girl ! «exclaimed the mother, in surprise ; »and what other happiness does a woman require than a splendid establishment, the

envy of all her neighbours. I am sure that was what I married your father for, and as long as he kept up the establishment, I was in heaven. Oh, Eugène, poverty alone is unhappiness.«

»I sometimes think not, mother. I sometimes dream of the joy of the heart, of union with one of kindred tastes and feelings.«

»My dear«, cried Mrs. Lawrence, in real or affected horror, »do not talk that Minerva press nonsense ; I cannot think where you picked it up, I am quite sure it was not from me. But here is the supper, so let us talk no more ; you must get the dress, and then we will ask the doctor and his mother to spend an evening.«

Chapter III.



No little persuasion was required, on the part of Alfred, to induce his mother to accept the invitation alluded to above, which came in due season, in the shape of an elegant and scented note. His reasoning, however, proved unanswerable, as the argument he used was, that she would be most unjust to condemn the pride of his heart without a trial;—and that she would sit that evening as judge and jury both he was quite satisfied.

His mother, shaking her head, at once acquiesced, though not disguising her conviction that little good would come of the connection.

In the mean time he had paid many visits, which gradually lost the formality of medical calls, and the young people began to take gradual and greater interest in each other. With Alfred, it was but adding to the feeling which had arisen on the occasion of his first visit, while with Eugenia, after one or two interviews, there began to awaken in her bosom a sensation which to her was perfectly novel, but which was not the less exquisite and powerful. She certainly was a little timid at the thought of her lover's grave and somewhat solemn carriage, but this girlish terror soon gave way before the suavity and gentleness of his manner, the irresistible charm of his conversation, the fire of intellect which emanated from his eyes, and the consciousness that she had gained the affections of one so gifted.

In ten days the passion—born of an hour—was mutual.

And now Mrs. Lawrence triumphed ; for their love, or at all events, all that she understood by love, their evident determination to »get married«, was to her the realization of her proudest hopes. She saw a prospect of living over again the career of dazzling splendour which she had once enjoyed ; and the speculating spirit of her husband spoke within her, as she thought that, assisted by her wealthy son-in-law, she might woo fortune again, and by a lucky stroke regain her personal rank and position. Nor was there much doubt that, did opportunity offer,

Mrs. Lawrence would avail herself of it to scheme and push the chance of the die again.

The evening came, and after many councils held, by mother, and daughter, and servant, all was ready. Mrs. Lawrence had actually, so vivifying was her enthusiasm, dressed and gone out to make purchases, and, on the strength of her daughter's engagement to the rich doctor—for so she spoke of a probability—obtained on a credit—long since exploded—an amount of luxuries which astonished the nerves of her English domestic, and awoke within her the eloquence of a Londoner.

»Well I never! not in all my born days!«exclaimed she, as negro after negro made his appearance, bringing some fresh accession to the common stock. »Why I 'ave heard of Sard's pales, but never expected for to see his feast, no, never ! Wont I jist—« but what she meant by this expression we have no means of ascertaining, as she was interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Lawrence herself in a glass coach, with sundry other necessities, of such varied nature, that Minerva, in her dragon-chariot, with owl, and cock, and olive leaf, was but a dwarf goddess to her.

»Is Eugenia dressing ?«she inquired as she entered, after herself superintending the unloading of her hired vehicle. »Ye-es, ma'am !«

»Eugè, dear«, cried the mother, whose face was flushed, and whose whole manner betrayed considerable excitement. »Yes, ma ! »Come down, dear.«

In a moment the daughter came tripping down, in a charming state of dishabille.

»Write me some notes, girl«, said her mother, hurriedly. »I must have the Parkeses and the Winters here this evening.«

»Why, mother, where have you been ? The place is crowded with eatables and drinkables.«

»Obtained on the strength of your marriage, my dear«, said the triumphant mother.

»My marriage ! «said Eugenia, much shocked, the more that she really loved the young doctor; »surely you have not spoken of it ?«

»Silly thing«, laughed Mrs. Lawrence ; »but write the notes, or they will be too late, and then Norah can take them. We'll show them we are

not quite buried alive.«

Eugenia, with a somewhat serious expression of countenance, wrote the necessary epistles, and then retired once more to her apartment, to take that pardonable and natural trouble in dressing herself which a woman who is about to greet a lover in the young days of Love's dream will ever take, if she be a genuine scion of her sex.

When Alfred, accompanied by his mother, who was perhaps a trifle more stern and serious than usual, was announced, she was standing at the drawing-room mirror, arranging the last curl, and turning round to greet the arrival, presented a countenance so charming, naive, and even angelic,—angelic in the expression of happiness, of innocence, of joy,—that Mrs. Somers involuntarily started, and met her son's look of pride and triumph with a smile.

»Most proud to see you, Mrs. S.«, said the mother of Eugenia, with much of the pompous ceremony of long ago. »I hope now you have found your way you will remember it.«

»Come up to the fire, and take this arm-chair«, cried Eugenia, a little paler than before ; for something told her—she had seen the glance exchanged between mother and son, and knew the former's influence—she was addressing one on whose opinion that evening depended her weal or woe—so tightly already had Alfred wound her round his heart, that to live or perish was, to be with or apart from him.

»Thanks, Miss Lawrence : Mrs. Lawrence, I am happy to make acquaintance with any of my son's friends«, replied Mary Somers, the first tenderly, the latter sentence stiffly enough.

»Before you take tea will you have anything, Mrs. S. ?—a glass of wine—port or sherry, or Madeira, perhaps? Eugè will hand you one from the sideboard.«

»None, I thank you«, replied Mrs. Somers, stiffly ; while her son, who uneasily saw many signs of display, felt his cheeks crimson.

»Ah, now«, said Eugenia, gaily,—she had seen her future mother-in-law's character at a glance,—»Mrs. Somers will have a cup of tea ; I know she won't refuse my offer.«

Alfred's face brightened, and Eugenia saw much in this simple act.

»Indeed I will not«, replied Mrs. Somers with a smile, turning affectionately to the young girl, whose sweet voice stole to her very heart.

»Or coffee, or chocolate, perhaps«, continued Mrs. Lawrence, pompously.

»I will take tea«, said Mary Somers; again, like the truant snail, retreating within her shell of reserve.

»We expect a few friends«, remarked Mrs. Lawrence. »As soon as they come we will order it up.«

»Pray do not let me disturb any of your arrangements.«

»I promised my mother a quiet evening in your society«, said Alfred, in a low voice, to Eugenia, for already they had learned to converse apart.

»The fact is we seldom have visitors, Dr. Somers«, replied the daughter, with a smile, »and we availed ourselves of a rare opportunity.«

And thus the evening passed in a great measure. Eugenia gaining upon Alfred's mother at a rapid rate, and as rapidly falling, through the disgust she felt at the pomposity, display, and worldly-mindedness of Mrs. Lawrence. The other visitors came—out of curiosity at first, and then when they found Dr. and Mrs. Somers, staying out of still greater. They were rich people, friends of the speculator in his wealthy days, and their astonishment at the prospect which evidently seemed again opening for the Lawrences was unbounded. They at once promised themselves the pleasure of keeping up the acquaintance, as likely to lead to the much coveted entrée to that of the Somers's.

When rolling home in their plain but neat carriage, which Alfred, with pardonable nationality, had of home manufacture, the young man, anxious to know his mother's sentiments, spoke.

»Well, and what think you of Mrs. Lawrence?«

»Vain, conceited, and pompous; the very last woman I would have wished you for a mother-in-law.«

»And Eugenia?«

»You may save her; with her mother she would be spoiled.«

»You think better of her than you expected?«

»My son, though not without her faults, and faults which will at first cost you many an heartache, she is a good girl, and you may be very happy, if—«

»If what, mother?«said the son, anxiously and quickly.

»If you are prepared to be firm in your resolutions, and let no love for her induce you to humour the extravagant tastes and habits she must have acquired.«

»Then, on the whole, you approve of our union?«

»My son, I shall, to-morrow, go ask for you the hand of Eugenia Lawrence from that frivolous, foolish woman.«

»Thanks ! thanks ! my mother ; you anticipate my wishes ; for this very evening, while you and the rest were busy talking, we were affianced.«

»I know it, Alfred, replied his mother with a smile, »I heard all !«

»Heard all?«

»Yes, my boy, because my anxious ears were awake. But look not so confused, none other heard a word. After all, she is a sweet girl.«

Alfred pressed his mother's hand kindly, and fell back in the carriage to muse on his happiness.

Chapter IV.

POETS may succeed, by dint of the power of the heavenly art, in painting the rapture of two young and fond hearts about to be united in the bonds of wedlock; in plain unvarnished prose 'tis better left to the imagination of the reader, who doubtless knows sufficient about love himself to be able to portray the satisfaction experienced by Alfred and Eugenia when, after the usual days and weeks of delicious hesitation had taken place, their union was finally determined on. Perhaps never, in the history of the happiest life, rich with the fruition of hope, is there such another moment as this. The shadow is even more delicious than the substance.

Dark night has faded, and the western sky speaks loudly of morn. A pale salmon tint on the verge of the heavens, gently shading into blue ethereally soft, and streaked by lovely clouds, extends up to the very arch of the heavens, there met by a crescent of denser clouds, which, deepening as they go, stretches towards the sad and solitary east, bleak and dark, while below, from the mind's eye as 'twere, a mild faint light, struggling into existence, proclaims with gushing effulgence the morn. »lis daylight, and, rich as is the flood of light, it is less lovely than the break of day.

So with our lovers, who—and wisely is it so—were in anticipation of their speedy union in a tumultuous state of happiness, which were it long existent would speedily destroy the energy and life-duty of man, for whose success in this world, quiet, sober, unimpassioned but deep affection, founded on respect and love, is best adapted. How true this is may be seen in the fact that no man, in the heyday of young passion, is fit for any of the sterner duties of life.

Mrs. Somers proved quite right in her conjecture. In , three months from the date of the conversation recorded in our opening pages the young people were married. It was a peculiar wedding. On the part of bride and bridegroom all was sunshine and hope, not a speck dotted the fair surface of their day dream ; Mrs. Lawrence, too, was full of joyousness, but with Mrs. Somers the case was different. Her grievances may be gathered from a conversation which took place between her and

Alfred the day before the wedding. They were at tea in their common parlour, alone—for the last time. The mother was awhile silent, a tear, sacred to the tie which bound her to her child, bedewed her cheek, for she felt that though not parted from her son, her undivided reign over his affections was at an end. She repined not selfishly, but nature had its sway for awhile.

»You are silent and sad, mother«, said Alfred kindly, laying aside his book, which, student-like, he kept even at meals.

»Not sad, my boy, but, ungracious as it may seem at this hour, I have my misgivings.«

»Misgivings, mother!«exclaimed the happy lover, the swift current of his affections violently hurt.

»Yes, my son. I said, three months back, prophetically, that you would be married. I fear me in three years you may be ruined.«

»Mother!«cried Alfred, almost passionately, but still kindly.

»Alfred, you must overcome the influence of Eugenia's mother, or it will be so. I was there this morning, and I saw what convinced me' a year's income will not repay what she has spent on her daughter's bridal array.«

But that is, in her, but excess of affection.«

»Excess of vanity, my son. Think you that scheming woman will be at the loss ? No ! once the wedding over, and Eugenia's fortune is unlocked, she will take good care to be repaid.«

»I should insist upon it«, said young Somers, somewhat proudly.

»Certainly ; but is it right that a girl with a few thousand dollars, wedding into the family of a hard-working professional man, should at the very outset be thus profuse of money?«

»It is not Eugenia's doing«, replied Alfred, warmly.

»Doubtless ; but her habits are being formed, and you will find some difficulty in restraining her.«

»I am sure she will not want restraining.«

The mother shook her head, and a pause ensued, during which each was occupied in thought, thought too so different.

»You have seen Eugenia's new barouche, of course«, at length said Mrs. Somers, fixing her quiet grey eyes upon her son's face. It sounded a little malicious, this speech, but it was not thus meant.

»Eugenia's barouche ! »exclaimed Alfred, his cheeks crimsoned; »mother, you are joking.«

»It will take her and Mrs. Lawrence to church to-morrow morning«, replied Mary Somers, calmly, for she seemed prepared for the worst.

»But my chaise, and gig?«

»Are too professional, Mrs. Lawrence seems to think.«

Alfred bit his lip, for despite his brilliant prospects, rarely excelled even in the United States, he knew that as yet he was not in a position to keep a carriage as a mere luxury.

»This certainly is very unwise, mother; I must speak to Mrs. Lawrence about it.«

»No, Alfred, when you return from Saratossa ask your wife to part with it, and you will at once discover if she has been spoilt or not by her lessons.«

»You are right, mother, I will do so, and I do not fear the result.«

»At the same time, then, let her dismiss her English lady's-maid and coachman.«

Alfred turned pale. He saw clearly that his young wife expected to rank beside the first fashionables of New York city, and though he had little doubt that his ultimate destiny was to be great, yet he knew well that to take a high stand before his time, was to give excuse for a fall, and cause that fall, if it came, to be unpitied by a censorious world.

»Mother, you alarm me seriously. If I had thought this—«

»It is not yet too late, my son«, said Mrs. Somers, almost eagerly.

»What is not too late?«he replied.

»To break off this marriage, my dear Alfred.«

»Mother, it cannot be«, said the young man, vehemently ; »I love her from my soul, she loves me, and affection will surely induce her to yield to reason.«

»I hope so ; and now, Alfred, forgive my raven propensities, and let us talk of gayer topics. I but do my duty, which is to watch over the welfare

of my only child.«

»I know it, mother«, replied the son affectionately, and he spoke sincerely.

»But the honeymoon, child«, said Mrs. Somers, gaily; »come, tell me, for how long are we to lose you?«

»But for one week. I can gain no more time. My patients even exclaim against that.«

»And you are reasonable enough to give way to them? Come, this looks well indeed. But what says Eugenia?«

»That she cannot think of militating against my success in life.«

»Good girl«, said Mrs. Somers, with a sigh, »she would have been an angel with better education; that, after all, is everything.«

»Do you, mother, grant nothing to nature ?«

»Much ! but rely on it, Alfred, it is easier in this world to spoil a good nature by bad education, than to reform a bad one by good.«

»And may it not, mother, be easier still to restore a good one simply warped by bad example ?«

»It may, my son, but the trial will be painful—may be too great.«

Chapter V.

SUNNY was the morning, and bright, which ushered in the wedding day of Alfred and Eugenia. All nature seemed to smile beneficently upon them, and they in turn smiled radiantly back upon—heaven, sun, and all. Even Mrs. Somers, despite the gay and dashing barouche, and the still gayer lady's-maid from London, all ribands and satin apron and courtesy, curbed her forebodings, and was merry and glad with the youngest heart of them all. There were moments when she could scarce refrain a gush of bitter, yet sweet tears, but they were not now for her son, but for him who, thirty years before, in the pride and gladness of his heart, had led her a blushing bride to that same altar before which she now saw her son standing. But Mary Somers chased away the tears, or, as often has been done before, shed them inwards, and remained, though the gushing remembrance was bursting her very heartstrings, serene and calm.

And now the wedding ceremony, breakfast and all, was over, and the mothers, united only in their mutual solitude, were alone together. Mrs. Lawrence ventured a few common-place phrases with regard to the occasion, which the other scarcely answered, and then these two women, alike only as widows, and as the mothers of children now united, parted; Mrs. Lawrence to calculate the expense she had been at, and to make out her bill against her daughter's portion, Mrs. Somers to make all those necessary changes in her son's establishment which the presence of a young wife rendered requisite.

And Alfred and Eugenia, happy as two fond hearts could be, with youth, hope, and fortune at their call, and bright sunny prospects, sped on their way to a little retired and unfashionable watering-place in the new state of Quisconsin. It was a picturesque and delicious spot, and one eminently calculated for the occasion.

The village was situated in the centre of a bend of hillocks, covered with forest, brush, and thicket, where wild heathy fells, a flowing stream, and mellow groves invited the spirit of repose to dwell. It was evening ere they reached it, and when about a few hundred yards from their destination, the road winding along the river, where the luxuriant

foliage of sycamore and beech crested the bluffs, Eugenia suddenly exclaimed—»Alfred, what a delicious hut ! would that one could have it instead of staying at an inn all the week.«

Young Somers followed the direction of the fair speaker's hand, and there, on the summit of the opposite bank, was a log hut, of apparently rude and fantastic appearance, but which in many particulars betrayed that it was superior to that class of buildings in general. Surrounded by dense green foliage, and covered in part by parasitical creepers, it was a tempting locality indeed, especially for lovers in the honeymoon.

»If we could only have that to live in we need have no servant, we could take all our meals at the hotel, and live like hermits in our cell.«

»If it be to be had«, said Alfred, delighted with the picture she drew, and glad of an excuse to be away from the publicity of an hotel, »I will take it. But here we are.«

With these words they reached the inn, which almost constituted the watering-place in itself, when Alfred at once proposed to take the hut, and to breakfast, dine, etc., at the hotel.

»I expect that are easy«, replied the landlord, who wore a blue braided frock coat—he was a major. »If so, you don't mind the—« but enough, in a sketch which we hope may be read by young and sensitive minds, of American slang. With many an expletive, and many a vigorous puff at his unlighted cigar, the worthy major proceeded to state that the plan proposed was quite agreeable to him, that he would send over breakfast, and Dib the negro would ferry them across whenever they liked, while his dinner hour was two.

»But the price, major«, said Alfred Somers, with a smile, »for all this accommodation? I fear it will be something very extravagant.«

The major here began to curse and swear, and to send himself to all manner of regions, which, to say the least, were of doubtful geographical existence, while he brought into familiar contact sundry great native names, using them in an objurgatory sense, and concluded by assuring the new married pair, that under a hundred dollars a week he should certainly be on the high road to that state of commercial death which is the horror of every fair dealer.

»It is too much«, said Alfred Somers, in a tone which seemed to close all attempt at reopening the subject; and then he added in the same breath, »but still I take it ; let our things be sent across.«

Now when Alfred said »It is too much«, it was with the firm determination not to be guilty of any such act of extravagance as to pay twenty pounds a week for the rent of a log hut; but a glance at his young wife's face, on which a sad and even slightly vexed expression appeared, determined him as rapidly to depart at once from his usual cautious and careful course of proceeding. And who can blame him, at such a time and for such a purpose? But it was the beginning of the end, and had the young physician at that moment refused to comply with his beloved Eugenia's whim, and calmly and affectionately given his reason for so doing, much that followed might have been avoided.

»How kind of you, Alfred«, said his blooming, blushing bride ; »I can scarcely thank you too much, for how different will be the comfort of that little cot, and of this huge and dreary frame-house.«

»It will indeed«, replied her husband, who, sooth to say, was in love with the picture, though a lingering memory of his mother's warning brought unpleasant reflections to his aid.

»I reckon you will go over now«, said the major, who was preceding them into the hotel.

»No, major«, exclaimed Alfred; »send over and light us a fire, while we take our evening meal here.«

As the bridal pair had travelled, for the sake of being more thoroughly alone, without a servant, they further required the hire of a juvenile specimen of black humanity, to come over to their log hut and put all to rights, light their fire, and do other domestic service. This necessary appendage was also found by the accommodating major, and this time he only charged twelve dollars, or something like three pounds, for the week's duty.

The apartment into which they were shown, and where Alfred remained alone, while Eugenia went upwards to higher regions to alter her travelling for a walking costume, was of that usually sombre character found in American up-country inns—which are centuries behind those of Europe, however showy and splendid may be certain

late erections in the great commercial marts of the republic. A couple of sickly candles diffused a grim light, and Alfred felt a relief when Eugenia returned, followed by a black girl bearing two fresh ones.

»Certainly this place is dreary, my love«, said the young husband, for the first time seating himself, as it were by the domestic hearth, with his lovely wife. Not the real fireside—which burns brightest ever in the one little nook of earth called home—but an imaginary one, a shadow of the reality, which, though feebly representing the true, yet ever flits around and follows in the path of an affectionate couple. Though habit and custom, and sacred memories, and holy ties, bind us and fasten us to the real, yet can love every where find in the ideal home—the home where one is seated by the blazing hearth, in company with the cherished one of our heart—some compensation.

The room, therefore, which had been bleak ere Eugenia entered, and was dreary even before Alfred spoke, appeared to give him, as he spoke, a flat and solemn contradiction; for an inner consciousness of the dear right to use the words »my love«, now first used by him—diffused into his heart a lively joy ; and then Eugenia, smiling and radiant in her beauty, was by his side—and then, scattering welcome odour of tea and its American accompaniments, came the evening meal—and then the wood-logs in the fire-place burst forth in cheerful blaze, and all was sunny.

»I scarcely think it dreary now«, said Eugenia, as she took her unaccustomed place at the tea table.

»Because, dear, our hearts are happy. I am proud and joyous to know that you are now mistress of my home, and I would fain hope that you are glad to be there.«

»Never, Alfred, would I have been there, had it not given me gladness. No ! I could no more marry a man I did not esteem—«

She paused.

»Esteem !« cried Alfred, gaily, »only esteem !

»Well, exacting man, then love, if you -will have me speak plain.«

»I am, Eugenia, ten thousand times happier than I can tell. A little time back, not three months, and I had never dreamt of marriage,—now I seem to have been blind for years.«

»The more fortunate for me, for had you possessed clear vision, some other fair would have gained your affection.«

Thus, in the happy gossip of love, most pleasant to those who speak it, but perhaps somewhat like a twice-told tale to those who read, they passed an hour or more. It was therefore quite night ere they reached the hut which Eugenia had so much coveted to possess, and to which the whole of their luggage had been taken by the superhuman exertions of half-a-dozen negroes—a job which a London porter would have done of himself in half an hour.

Leaving the hotel, and walking down a rude path to the water's edge, they were ferried over by Dib, and stood presently alone on the edge of the forest.

It was a lovely night ; the moon rode low but bright in the heavens, hanging but a few yards, as it were, above the summits of some distant trees, and its rays dancing merrily upon the tiny waves of the river ; there was a gentle wind fanning their cheeks, and all else was silence as they walked alone along the river's banks on their way to their little home. They were silent, for a talismanic charm seemed to brood over nature, calling for universal stillness. At length, however, they came in front of the picturesquely situated hut, which presented a glad and welcome appearance.

»This is a delicious evening«, half whispered Alfred ; »there is joy in my heart, and nature appears to herald that joy in her quiet beauty. One could live and die in such a place.«

»Hermit of Saratossa«, said Eugenia, gaily, »would you be alone?«

»Not for the world«, cried the husband earnestly ; »but if ever I did require a hermitage, if ever life had no further charm for me, here would be my shelter ; but for the happy heart the world is the place. Duty and inclination summon us there. But come, dearest, the evening is chill, let us enter.«

Chapter VI.



n the following morning Alfred and Eugenia arose betimes, and, long before the breakfast hour, were rambling in the forest that skirted the river. The dew still sparkled on every tree, the matin chorus of the birds was not over ; and though they ventured not too far, as with out arms it was scarcely safe, the timber abounding in wolves and panthers, they still entered sufficiently beneath the foliage to be apart from all but themselves.

It was a happy hour, for now shone forth—in the presence of nature, a point at which her mother's influence ceased—the true character of Eugenia Somers. Gentle and affectionate, listening with pride and satisfaction to the conversation of her husband, and throwing in her keen and sensible remarks, there appeared nothing in her of the spoiled child of fortune. No selfish thought, no egotistical aspiration was manifest in any one of her words ; and Alfred was proud of his choice.

»But Eugenia, dear«, said he, after an hour of sweet converse had passed, »let us return to our bower. I should conclude breakfast had been waiting some time.«

»Perhaps you have been waiting for breakfast? I have«, answered Eugenia, laughingly ; »and I assure you it is the first time I have done so for many months.«

»The country agrees with you, then?«continued Alfred, half seriously.

»I fancy it does, but still the town has its charms.«

»Want of appetite, late hours, later rising, and the doctor.«

»But I am fortunate—I have my own physician.«

»And I my patient«, said Somers; »but I would rather this fresh and rosy morn would do duty for me, than I be called in with my pills and drugs.«

»Agreed, then«, replied his wife ; »whenever I want the doctor, these flowery meads and vernal shades are to be my medicaments.«

»Gladly«, said the young physician, as they reached the hut.

The interior of the small building which had been hired at so extravagant a price was neatly furnished, as things go in the upper regions of the American republic. There was no carpet, but there was a smooth and hard mud floor ; the walls were the logs well squared, while a rude sofa, a few chairs, with a small room for sleeping, and a rack covered with plates, jugs and dishes, which served the purpose of kitchen, were the whole appurtenances of the interior.

Their negro help, or domestic, was busily engaged, when they returned, in laying out the substantial and delicious breakfast—which is certainly as superior to the ordinary insipid apology for a meal in use in this country as a turbot to a red herring—her ebony visage dilating under the genial employment, a dilation which appeared all the greater when the pair appeared upon the threshold.

»Well, you are git back, dat mor dan Diana 'spec«, said the negro girl, with a grin.

»Not get back, Di?«replied Alfred, »why not?«

»Him wood rader ascertain.«

»How uncertain ?«

»Hab you nebber hearn tell o' Gulley Moss?«exclaimed the girl, with much surprise.

»Never—you know, Di, we are strangers in these parts.«

»'Pen 'pon it, massa, den. you loss a good ting. It first rate story I know.«

»Well then, Di, serve the breakfast, and you shall tell it while we are eating. There is often much amusement in a genuine negro anecdote«, he added, addressing his wife, »and I dare say Di's will prove of this character, and we shall have a good laugh.«

»Laf«, cried Diana, seriously, »spose it ant laffing matter? Spose it, massa, bad um tragedy like Tello?«

»If it be as tragic as Othello«, said Somers, laughing, »we will certainly be serious over it.«

Having handed up the coffee and the other ingredients of the breakfast, Diana seated herself by the fire, and after many efforts, and with a vast amount of unnecessary detail, told her story, which, divested of her almost unintelligible language and verbosity, was as follows : —

The Story of Gulley Moss.

In the village of Troy, in the township of Attica, there dwelt in the days of Martin Van Buren a negro couple, by name Gulley and Juno Moss. Gulley was a tall, good-humoured, hard-working black, by trade a wood-cutter, while his wife, a pretty, merry, fair-spoken creature, took in washing, and was considered to be the best laundress in Troy. This Paris and Helen were therefore well mated, but that in the same degree that Gulley was hard-working and industrious, was Juno listless, and even idle. They had a family of six children, who all by the exertions of the wood-cutter were well fed ; but it was an universal remark, that they were the raggedest and dirtiest boys and girls in all the village, while Juno herself was the best dressed negress for many miles around that neighbourhood.

This lasted for some years, and Gulley Moss would often reason with his wife, and tell how he was sure all this would end badly ; for it was as much as he could do to provide rent, food, and clothing for his children, without finding gaudy finery for his wife, who was quite able to earn these things for herself. But Gulley Moss was a good and a kind husband, and all his anger vanished in words, while he would rise perhaps an hour earlier the next morning, and remain an hour later in the woods, where the echoing sound of his hatchet might be heard without intermission all day.

This lasted ten years, when one fine morning Gulley Moss received notice that there was a long bill owing for his wife's dress, which must be paid within a week, or he would have to go to prison. Gulley Moss did not get into a passion, because he was quite aware that such a course of proceeding was quite useless ; but he resolved at once to pay the debt, if he could possibly earn the money. To do this in the ordinary way was hopeless; but he knew that deep in the forest, at the mouth of a glen, and conveniently situated for being floated down a river, were some trees, which Colonel Meyer, the owner, offered a high price to have felled.

Now, no man had hitherto been tempted to accept the offer—though the reward was great—because the neighbourhood was so infested with

wolves, catamounts, panthers, and such vermin, that the attempt was not unattended with danger. But Gulley Moss was placed in a peculiar position. He was in debt, and the reward offered, if obtained, would release him from his perplexing predicament ; and he, therefore, at once and without hesitation determined to perform the task.

Late at night, with axe on shoulder and gun at back, did Gulley Moss leave the side of his now disconsolate spouse, who appeared at length somewhat aroused to a sense of her own folly, and who earnestly begged that Gulley would wait until she herself had an opportunity, by hard work, of paying the debt she had so thoughtlessly contracted.

But Gulley Moss had been inexorable.

»Him Juno ought to hab tink of dat afore she ris' a life of mossa a bes nigger in a parish«, he had said, and departed.

It was a moonlight night as Gulley entered the forest, and he had four hours' good walking before him to reach the spot he wished to gain, so the stout-hearted negro pulled forth an old clay pipe, as black and almost as shining as his own honest face, which he lit, and the vapoury clouds of which he fancied assisted his progress. Nor did he stint the merry song and lay, which the sable population of America delight in, for all that he was in debt and difficulty. The debt was none of his own doing, and he had, too, confidence in his ability to pay it.

Still and solemn were the woods, where Gulley's steps were the only sound, for the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field slept soundly in their nests and lairs, gaining strength for the roaming and wanderings of the day, marked to them, as perhaps it might well be to man, by sunset and sunrise.

On walked the negro, hour after hour, now whistling, now singing, now smoking, until suddenly there burst upon his ear a confused series of sounds, of chirruping, of screeching,—and the forest was alive, here with harmony and there with discord.

It was morning.

And with the morning the feathered chorister, the shrill jay, the hooting owl, the solitary cry of sand-hill crane, the cackling—unmelodious harmony—of canvass back and goose, were heard on all sides.

At the same time Gulley Moss had reached his destination. It was a small—a very small open prairie, surrounded on all sides by huge forest trees. On one side was a deep glen, the abode of ferocious beasts of prey, according to all tradition, while on the other could be heard the rush and flow of a volume of waters.

To open up the space between the prairie and the river, and to fell the trees, so as to be easiest borne to the stream, was now the duty of the adventurous black, who had penetrated the thicket and braved the dangers of Wolf Glen to pay his wife's linendraper's bill.

»A gran' place this for trees«, said the wood-cutter with professional gusto ; »so I 'spect I'll jis eat a mossal and go to work, ral jam.«

With these words the husband of the extravagant Juno disencumbered himself of his trappings, and placing them in proper order, drew from his wallet his supply of Indian corn bread, cold pork and molasses, and seating himself, ate with an appetite which all feel in the woods, but which, when we seek to state in clear terms, has often obtained for our humble selves the honourable title of Baron Munchausen Secundus^[1].

His meal concluded, and having been washed down by a sufficient quantity of what is usually denominated the raw extract, up rose the negro, and having approached several trees, and made selection, and examined with keen and practised eye how best to contrive their fall in the proper direction, he at once set to work, and beneath the weight of his vigorous arms and bright western axe the chips flew about in a fashion that certainly did look, if not like wood-work, like earnest labour.

Until twelve o'clock—and the sun had not dipped an inch ere the dweller in the forest knew the hour—Gulley Moss continued his earnest and laborious task. The groves and hills resounded with the measured strokes of his sledge hammer axe, and with the hearty species of groans which the negro in the full conviction of their assisting his work emitted. But no sooner had the hour of mid-day proclaimed itself than down sat the panting and somewhat wearied labourer, to seek in eating and sleep new strength for the pursuance of his task.

In about an hour he was again at work ; and thus for three days did he pursue his labours, unremitted, arduous, but rewarded with the sweet conviction, that in less than a week he should have earned the necessary amount of money to save himself from incarceration, a punishment which is equally abhorrent to a negro as to a white man.

It was the evening of the third day, and Gulley Moss felt that the hour for relaxation was approaching, when suddenly upon his startled ear came the famished howl of wolves at no great distance in the forest, chasing a deer or some such animal with infuriate haste. They were rapidly approaching the spot where Gulley usually passed the evening—he slept in the branches of a huge tree—and to this the negro, without giving himself time for thought, ran, and just as the howling pack came bursting from the wood upon the prairie, reached the upper branches.

Gulley Moss at once saw that he had done a very foolish thing, for in the first moment of alarm he had abandoned his trusty gun, which it was now too late to regain, as the pack of caiotæ were in a moment yelping and yelling at the foot of the very tree he occupied. But they were neither bears, monkeys, catamounts, nor painters, and therefore their ascending the tree was out of the question ; a reflection which afforded Gulley much satisfaction, considerably damped, however, by seeing the whole of his provisions for the week made free with and devoured in the most free and unceremonious manner possible. What was to have lasted him four more days disappeared in as many minutes, and poor Gulley began to fear that he should starve to death.

»Golly ! Golly ! massa Moss«, he muttered, »here's a pretty start. I wonder if I ebber see Juno«, and the honest- hearted negro added with a sigh, »and the picaninnies.«

Visions of a certain little ebony image of himself, about as high as his boot, and which was in the habit of using up all his old hats and pipes for playthings, in preference to all other articles, as being to him something intimately connected with his papa, flitted before his eyes, and made him, certainly he knew not why, nor ever owned the fact—but he did see the raging beasts below less clearly.

»Golly ! what dat ?«he anxiously asked himself, as a low hissing sound was heard at no great distance above his head.

He raised his eyes, and with difficulty prevented himself from falling headlong among the pack of wolves.

A panther, young, but huge and ferocious, had just swung itself from the next tree on to a branch above that occupied by the unhappy negro, who now commended himself to God, and prepared in thought for instant death.

The beast was glaring full upon him, and appeared inclined to prolong the moment of action from mere youth, skittishness, and wantonness.

Gulley Moss saw this, and determined to risk the fall to the ground, and a rush to his gun, in preference to the deadly struggle on the tree.

He moved his right leg from off the branch on which he sat.

A furious and angry growl stayed his progress.

Gulley Moss saw that all was over.

»God help Juno !« he cried, and closed his eyes.

The panther hissed furiously, and the unhappy man seemed to feel the brute's claws sticking into his reeking limbs, when the report of a gun, loud and near, awoke the echoes of the forest, and the panther, with a fearful howl, fell dead to the ground.

»Oh! oh! hi! hi!« sobbed and half laughed a wellknown voice, while the wolves scampered off in the utmost alarm.

It was Juno, who, uneasy at her husband's protracted stay in the forest, had determined to seek him out, and see that all was well. She had tracked his steps with ease, and reached the clearing just as the panther was making up its mind for a spring. Though paralysed with terror her eye caught sight of the negro's gun, an arm which she had never used before, but which, nerved by affection and despair, she had used with deadly accuracy, or rather desperate luck.

The meeting of husband and wife was affectionate in the extreme, and it was determined that Juno should remain with him until his task was completed. Aided by his faithful wife the negro soon finished his labours, and returning to Troy, received the reward of his toil. From that time Juno was a changed woman. The peril into which her extravagance had dragged her husband, at once roused her energies and opened her eyes, and it was universally known in all Attica that there

was not a more happy and industrious couple ever after than the Mosses .

Both Alfred and Eugenia were silent at the conclusion of this narrative.

The young physician was singularly struck with the spirit of the legend, which coincided so exactly with what his mother had pictured as his future prospects, that he could not refrain from much and serious thought, while Eugenia was engaged in speculating as to whether her mother's views of happiness were not likely ultimately to place her in the position of Juno Moss.

The impression of both, however, was merely transitory, for they were in the full rich tide of happiness which knows no let or hindrance.

^[1]A hearty man, living in the open air, deprived wholly of vegetables, will eat, in the American woods, ten pounds of fresh meat in the twenty-four hours.

Chapter VII.

THE bridal pair were received on their return from their one week of honeymoon—which, after all, was not the happiest hour of their lives—by Mary Somers with tender and affectionate interest, and Eugenia felt pride and pleasure in bowing low for the blessing of such a mother-in-law. It was the afternoon when Alfred re-entered his home, and perhaps that evening, spent in the joint society of his wife and mother, was one of the times to be marked indeed with a white stone, for hours more delicious he never knew. There was in the elder lady's deportment a solicitude so generous and kind, a pride in her son's happiness, which diffused itself around all ; while the more timid affection of the wife, combined with the manly joy of the husband to make the place a perfect Eden.

Eugenia, separated a whole week from her mother, in the constant habit of hearing the loftiest and noblest sentiments, dropping pearl-like from her husband's lips, and environed by an atmosphere of joy and bliss, had grown out of the habit of thinking on the more ephemeral and worldly sources of happiness. She had never once missed her barouche, or wished that her English lady's-maid had followed in her train; shopping had never once in tempting excitement passed before her eyes, and the ball and party had not even in vision affected her thoughts.

»And so, my little hermits«, said Mrs. Somers, »you were satisfied with the poor accommodation of a log hut ?«

»Satisfied !«cried Eugenia, enthusiastically, »why never was any thing so delicious. It was rural, picturesque, and«, she added more timidly, »solitary.«

»Which to a happy couple was of course a consideration.«

»And then the woods and forests, and the negro Diana, and her story of Gulley Moss.«

»Story of Gulley Moss«, said Mrs. Somers, smiling; »worse and worse. Why you were actually simple and unsophisticated enough to be pleased with a negro tale.«

»You would say more, mother, if you heard it«, said Alfred, with a meaning look.

»Do tell it, Alfred. It was admirable, and the moral so excellent.«

A gleam of triumph flashed in the eyes of the young physician, as, after these words of his wife, he told with in finite humour the story alluded to.

Mrs. Somers heard it with rapt attention, and not a little surprise.

»Eugenia«, said she gravely, when her son had finished, »a woman who takes that story as a model for life, will have made one sure step on the road to happiness.«

The young wife was silent, while a rosy blush mantled on her cheek ; for the first time she had seen its possible application to herself, and earnestly and honestly did she resolve to be guided by its moral.

»And now, Alfred«, said his mother, »do you know that half your patients have grown very impatient. You must be out betimes to-morrow, and pay a large number of visits.«

»I suppose I must«, replied Alfred, half sadly—for his happy week, devoted to his beloved wife, made him wish for many more—"and, what is more, I will, for all our sakes.«

»True, Alfred ; now is your time for work, for exertion, for energy, and in this country forty may see you independent.«

This is true. Unless a professional man be desirous of living only to make money—and then he is a mere miser—if he wish simply to gain a competence, and that no mean one, he will often—nearly always in the United States—where talent and industry are combined, be able to retire much earlier than in the old world, and enjoy the fruits of his labours. This arises in part from the comparatively youthful age at which men enter upon the active pursuit of a profession, and from the distribution of wealth,—all can afford to pay the doctor, lawyer, etc., well.

It may sound a paradox, but from the same cause arises the vast number of poor lawyers, doctors, etc. The path is a golden and easy one for those who do succeed, and all, however little qualified, would follow.

After a few words of further conversation the married couple retired to their own chamber, when Alfred drew from his pocket a number of

documents, which smelt of law a yard off.

»Why, my dear Alfred, what have you got there ?«

»Your fortune, my love«, replied Alfred, with a smile.

»My fortune!«cried Eugenia, »and what are you going to do with it?«

»Give it back to its right owner.«

»Alfred!«

»Yes, my dear. It was paid by your late father's solcitor into my banker's hands, the very day of our marriage. Here is the deed which makes it your husband's. This I burn.«

»My dear Alfred, why this to-night ? In your keeping—«

»To-morrow, my dear, I become the hard-worked phy sician, who cannot call even time his own—for his time is often the life of others—and I take this opportunity—«

»But why take it at all?«

»My dear Eugenia, be assured you will want much of it to-morrow. Your mother must be repaid ; her heavy expenses for the wedding—«

Eugenia blushed.

»But, my dear Alfred«, she said eagerly, and yet with some degree of shame, »I must have no secrets from you; none of my things are paid for, — my mother has been at no expense.«

»But she will have to pay for them, and you must pay her«, replied Alfred, turning slightly pale.

»Ye-es«, stammered Eugenia, who would have but dared not say, »but I would rather have done it myself;«for she knew, unfortunately, how unlikely it was that her mother would pay anything until the very last moment.

»And then, my love, there is your carriage, which, while I have two, was scarcely necessary«, said Alfred, looking down with some confusion.

»Not necessary, dearest«, replied Eugenia, sweetly ; »but then, you know, you will always want yours, and I and your mother will be so very comfortable in a barouche instead of a gig.«

Alfred smiled, the reason was so conclusive.

»As you will, my love ; but excuse me when I say I must tell you, that though making my way fast, I am not a rich man.«

»Too rich for me«, said Eugenia, kindly.

»But your fortune, dear ; here is a cheque for the amount ; it is your own, and when gone you must come to me for more.«

»Generous Alfred,—but why not have kept it for me?«

»Because it will save the trouble of my giving you smaller cheques, and besides I am so little at home.«

We have often heard it made a criterion of a happy couple, that the wife kept the purse. This is supremely ridiculous. There are instances where it is wise and fortunate that the woman receives and lays out the income earned by the husband, because she is careful and prudent. But are all women careful, prudent, and wise ? We would not say anything at all derogatory to the sex, willingly ; but we are afraid extravagant, thoughtless wives are unfortunately as common as husbands who come under the same category.

Certainly, with the poor, with men of moderate incomes, nothing can be wiser than to have his wife—if he have full confidence in her— as cashier, banker, and paymaster. His income goes a third further than he would make it go himself. But imagine the criterion applied to the world generally ; imagine a rich man, one with thousands and tens of thousands, dispensing with Lombard Street and Coutts', doing without drafts and cheques, knowing nothing of bills and promissory notes, and drawing orders on his wife,—and we shall at once see the absurdity of applying any test of this kind universally. We make these remarks because we have often heard it said, that a good husband will always make his wife the purse-bearer. Say a poor husband will always make a prudent wife the purse-bearer, and we coincide emphatically, but in no other case. It is impossible with the rich, it would be folly with the thoughtless partner.

But we digress.

It was, then, after some further debate agreed, that the amount of Eugenia's fortune, about £1,000, should be paid in to her account at her husband's banker's, for her to draw upon, for her own sole use, the first thing on the following day.

»Well, I hope I shall not be like Juno Moss, with all this money, and bring you into danger, my dear«, said Eugenia.

»I hope not. It only wants a little strength of mind to resist any temptation.«

»With you men, my dear, it may be so, but remember we are daughters of Eve who plucked the apple.«

»And we of Adam who ate it«, replied Alfred, laughing; »and it is a maxim in law that the receiver is as bad as the thief.«

Eugenia smiled, and turned the conversation into another channel.

»I love your mother already«, she said warmly, »were it only for her devotion to yourself.«

»She is, Eugenia, a woman with one idea, my temporal and eternal welfare ; such is the burden of her thoughts, now and for ever.«

»And she would hate any one who injured you«, said Eugenia, shuddering inwardly.

»She could not hate, but she would shun them as plague spots.«

»Yes ! she gives me the idea of one who could forgive any thing but an injury to you.«

»And that, dearest, she would forgive in the end.«

»I hope I may never have to try.«

»You?«

»Yes ! I speak of myself.«

»Eugenia, you can do me no injury she and I both would not forgive, except ceasing to love me.«

»That«, said his young wife, with genuine and heartfelt enthusiasm,« I will never do.«

Chapter VIII.



rs. SOMERS had taken care, during the absence of her son and daughter, to so arrange the house, that a suite of rooms, the drawing-room floor, were wholly at the disposition of Eugenia, and here we must now transport the reader in the morning. Young Mrs. Somers had breakfasted alone, for she had risen late, and Alfred had been called away early by a pressing case, while his mother, an early riser, had taken her morning repast also early.

The room was tastefully and elaborately decorated ; rich carpets covered the floor, while a piano, harp, and other instruments—with books both grave and gay, and every peculiar species of female kill-time—amongst which that most silly of all fancy work, which can be bought much better, and do good by buying, was conspicuous, with its frames and wool—showed that the presiding genius of the place made it no hermitage.

Eugenia, who knew her mother-in-law's own tastes, felt all this kindness and attention most keenly, in nothing, too, more clearly shown, than in the comfortable apartment assigned the English lady's maid ; and as she sat, almost bewildered in the silent contemplation of her new position and new duties, could not refrain from giving her a silent and heartfelt blessing.

She was in a meditative mood; thinking with fresh, naive, and innocent heart, of how to deserve her husband's and his mother's affection ; she was wreathing mental garlands—rich with odorous sweets, and honey, and bloom—for the Fireside ; garlands which seemed to rise and encircle not only the sacred domestic hearth, but to entwine all nature in their pleasant chains, and to bind hearts, and souls, and hands, in flowery bondage—when the iron world burst upon her, and the fetters that bound her were for the moment broken.

Mrs. Lawrence was announced.

»Well, my dear Eugène«, said that hard, selfish, egotistical mother, »how well you look. But, really, that costume does not become you. That morning dress, though new, has grown out of fashion already.«

»Why, mother dear, it is but a month since it was the rage.«

»A month, my dear, why that is an age ! «exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence, sinking into a cosy, comfortable rocking chair.

»Have you breakfasted ?« said Eugenia with a smile, for it had been an age of happiness to her.

»Yes, my dear, but really these English servants are abominable.«

»I think Jenny a good creature enough.«

»But so vulgar, and with no sense. I dined off roast chicken yesterday, and she had the impudence to put one on my breakfast table this morning. It certainly was untouched, but I have told that girl fifty times, I will never see anything twice on my table. Is it not provoking ?«

»Very«, replied Eugenia, but in a tone which belied her words, for in one week she had learned not only to lose all sympathy with such thoughts, but her right feeling, unchained, had shown her their folly, littleness, and in her firmer position, their crime.

»I have come this morning, my dear«, continued her mother, »to take you a regular round of shopping—so order the carriage.«

Eugenia obeyed with some reluctance. A link of the Fireside garland yet entwined her hands.

»And now, my dear«, still continued Mrs. Lawrence, »for we must speak of these vulgar things—the tradespeople are all getting rather impatient, and I must pay them something.«

»What is the sum, mother?«

»Why it is rather heavy, dear, but I have no doubt Dr. Somers will let you have the amount, when he knows it was to keep up your position in society, and to prepare you fittingly to appear as his bride,«

»How much is it, mother, then?«said Eugenia, quietly.

»Eight hundred dollars—it is really, and then I shall have some small things to pay.«

»I will write you a cheque, mother, for eight hundred and fifty.«

»A what?«exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence, quite thunderstruck.

»A cheque, mother.«

»Why, Eugè«, continued her amazed parent, a flush both of pleasure and astonishment diffusing itself over her usually pale countenance ; »you do not mean to say he allows you to write cheques ?«

»This is the first I draw«, replied Eugenia, sitting down to an elegant desk; »but my account is already five thousand dollars.«

»Your whole fortune? Surely the man is mad! Why, in all the years we were married, poor dear Lawrence never allowed such a thing.«

If he had, he would never have left even a remnant for his child.

»But Alfred, mother, is generosity itself. His is a noble soul. He has married me, mother, to put faith in, and trust me. What is his is mine, and mine his.«

Mrs. Lawrence was for awhile silent, lost in a maze of surprise and bewilderment. She had hoped much for herself from her daughter's marriage, but all this was beyond, far beyond her hopes. Her ambitious schemes flashed like lightning through her head. She was, however, silent, resolved to be cautious, and to lay out her plans well, before she acted. Her daughter, she saw at once, was her capital.

»But, dear«, she said, still unrecovered from her astonishment, »you surprise me. Really he is a jewel of a man. By the way, I have an invitation for you to a ball, this very evening.«

»I really cannot go, mother.«

»Not go !«

»Why«, said Eugenia, blushing, »though we have returned to town, we are not yet at home.«

»Nonsense, my dear, everybody in New York knows you are back, and you must go.«

»But where to?«

»To the Olivier's.«

»But Alfred may not know them, and really, mother, I cannot think of saying anything about it until he comes home.«

»Surely, child«, said her mother, looking keenly at her, »you are not going to ask him where you are to go ^to every evening ? I never thought of such a thing.«

»But«, half stammered Eugenia, »I meant to stay at home, except when we could go out together.«

»Good heavens«, cried Mrs. Lawrence, in real surprise, »where did you learn all these heathen notions from. He is to be always out, and you always at home !«

»Business takes him out, and I would have him find me ever when he returned.«

The Fireside garland was still at work. The rude hand of the world was tugging at it again, but it as yet had not prevailed.

»Eugè, my dear«, said Mrs. Lawrence solemnly, »what did you marry for?«

»To be happy, mother.«

Glorious answer ; the Fireside garland was close to her heart this time.

»Happy, of course. But is happiness to be found in a hermit's life. What is the use of being rich, if it will not give you fine clothes, and a carriage, and jewels; and of what use are these but to outshine all other young wives, and let the world see your proud happiness ?«

»Society is very pleasant, certainly; and I do dearly love a dance«, said Eugenia, sadly.

Down at her feet, trampled under foot, this time, were the flowers of the domestic hearth, withered, forgotten, dead !

»Spoken like a sensible girl. Order your carriage and take your cheque-book; I have, as I said before, fifty charming things to show you.«

The carriage was ordered, and out they went, this mother and daughter. The child good, innocent, bound by mysterious and holy ties—the laws of God, man and the heart—ready to fulfil her every duty, and full of love and the wish to spread a halo of tender happiness around her home ^[1]; the mother, a cold, spoiled worldling, who saw in her daughter's union with Dr. Somers but his position and fortune; and who, with all the world's heartlessness, was ready to plunge a dagger into his bosom, so that her own ends were answered. Herself without mind or heart, she could credit the existence of no such thing in any one else,

and really believed that in tempting her daughter into a round of pleasures she was promoting her happiness.

Their first visit was to a silk mercer's, where the eager mother, with pride and pleasure in her eye, once more experienced the satisfaction of receiving that obsequious homage which the tradesman doles out in exact ratio to the deserts—that is, the hundreds—of his customer. Endless and splendid were the objects offered for Eugenia's acceptance, and many were the purchases made both by mother and daughter ; the latter of whom, certainly, required not one inch of all she was buying, having already more clothes than she could possibly wear, in reason, during the season. Once or twice, as dress after dress was placed artfully before her fascinated eyes, this thought would occur to her mind, but the counsels of the parent triumphed, and woman tempted woman—not as Eve did man—to her fall.

It would be idle to follow the footsteps of Mrs. Lawrence and Eugenia during the whole day. It will suffice to declare, that on their return to the house of the latter, after paying her mother's bill, the daughter summed up the whole of her expenses of the morning, and found a sad deficit.

»Mother«, she exclaimed, turning rather pale, »I have not two thousand dollars left of the money which my husband gave me this morning.«

»La! child, you don't say so«, said Mrs. Lawrence, admiring with sparkling eyes a magnificent velvet which was to make a costume for herself, a present from her daughter ; »but really everything is so expensive. One almost has to wear gold.«

»But Alfred will think me very extravagant«, murmured the young wife, gravely.

»If you are foolish enough to tell him.«

»Not tell him !«exclaimed Eugenia, with a look of genuine and heartfelt astonishment.

»Of course not, Eugè—what for? Has he any business with your wardrobe?«replied Mrs. Lawrence, insidiously.

»No, but with paying for it he has.«

»Child, you are incorrigible«, said the mother, rather impatiently.
»This is your own money.«

»But then it is more than half gone. I shall soon have to ask him for more.«

»Do no such thing at present, child. Take my advice. When your father gave me a ten thousand dollar note to spend—ah! those were days«, and the foolish woman sighed deeply—»I never asked him for more until I owed as much again.«

»What mean you, mother?«

»Keep the two thousand dollars for casual expenses, to be sure«, replied Mrs. Lawrence, turning over the velvet, and deliberately examining the texture as she thus instilled poison into her child's mind ; »and run a bill with your tradespeople—that is the way I always did—and rely upon it, your having set out so well will give you unlimited credit.«

»But in the end I must pay«, said Eugenia, unconvinced by this reasoning.

»Some day or other; and recollect that every day your husband will rise in the world, and be the better able to afford to pay.«

»That is true.«

»Of course it is.«

»But I should not deceive him.«

»Deceive him, certainly not«, said Mrs. Lawrence, petulantly; »I would advise you to be as candid as possible with him, when he asks you any question. Never tell your husband a direct falsehood, it will excuse him in every harshness ; but why run and explain every domestic detail ?«

»Certainly not«, replied Eugenia ; »but money and debt are things he ought to know of.«

»If you had only your husband to deal with, I would recommend every frankness. But his mother—a very worthy woman, you know, I think her—is past all youthful feeling; and really has such odd notions, such peculiar ideas, that she might set him against you.«

»Never«, said Eugenia warmly, the blood mantling richly to her cheek ; »never—she is goodness itself.«

»Well, have it your own way—but about this ball ; it is an early affair, and you had better dress before dinner.«

»Really, I think—«

»You must go, Eugène«, exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence; »really you did not use to be so obstinate.«

»Mother dear, if Alfred consents I will go«, replied the young wife ; »but only to oblige you.«

»Well, then, it is now four— you dine at five—call Mrs. Emery, and commence at once.«

[1] According to the favourite theory of fashionable novelists, and especially of certain female romancists of the present day, who, we are grieved to say, write more dangerous and bad books than can be found from the pen of the other sex—the mere fact that Alfred was taken away from home constantly and continually, would excuse any dereliction from duty in his wife. In novels published within two or three years, we find being an M.P., having public business, attending to the great and crying duties that call men into the world, having an irritable temper, etc, made the excuse of every fault in the woman, who is only to be virtuous and good and faithful, as a reward for her husband's abandonment of every social duty, of everything which gives charms to life for a man of mind, to tie himself to his wife's boudoir. Even the necessary, forced absence of a military man, causing crime in the wife, is made an excuse. Such writers, of course, believe in no innate virtue, in no high and noble feeling in woman—happy in her husband's glory, joyous in his proud public position she cannot share—sacrificing her own wish for his society to see him honoured among his fellows. But these writers are read, and do more harm than Eugène Sue, or Paul de Kock, because their insidious immorality speaks in the name of virtue.

Chapter IX.

ALFRED returned just as dinner was laid on the table, and was not a little surprised to find his wife so splendidly dressed. His first impulse was admiration of her resplendent beauty, which shone out doubly bright when thus adorned. It is so with most women, who require the heightening power of costume, as the picture does a frame, and who are never half so lovely as when arrayed for the ball or party, because, dear creatures, they dearly love society; and pleasure sparkling in their eyes, and bubbling from their hearts, adds greatly to their native charms.

»Why, Eugenia, love«, said the husband curiously, »what have you been doing ? Are you going to receive company this evening ?«

Eugenia looked slightly confused, and appealed to her mother by a glance to speak.

»The fact is«, said Mrs. Lawrence superciliously, »I am going to steal her from you this evening.«

»Oh certainly«, replied the husband warmly, though with a slight shade of regret ; »Eugenia will, I hope, never be less your daughter because she is my wife.«

»Thanks! thanks!«cried Mrs. Lawrence, who saw that she need give no explanation.

»But—«said Eugenia.

Mrs. Lawrence coughed violently, and looked meaningly at her daughter, as if begging her to say nothing.

»But«, continued Eugenia quietly, »dear Alfred, though I am going with mother, I am not going to her house.«

Mrs. Somers glanced angrily at Mrs. Lawrence, for she saw the intended deceit.

»Where then ? «replied Alfred, gravely, for he also saw through the artifice of Mrs. Lawrence.

»The Oliviers«, replied the mother, her annoyance at this explanation clearly visible.

»I do not know them.«

»It would be very indelicate«, said Mrs. Somers, who had hitherto preserved a cold silence.

»But surely, madam«, exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence, »their being friends, old friends of mine, is sufficient introduction.«

»Quite; my dear madam«, said Alfred, quietly, »if Eugenia wishes to go.«

This was said appealingly.

»But I do not«, eagerly answered Eugenia, with a sweet smile which went to Alfred's heart.

»Certainly not«, said Mrs. Lawrence, coldly, and with something like a sneer ; »but for all that you promised to go to oblige your mother.«

»Go, dearest, then, by all means«, the husband kindly added ; »but do not be very late.«

»Twelve?« said Eugenia, with an inquiring smile, as much as to say, »111 come as soon as I can.«

»Nonsense, my love«, cried Mrs. Lawrence, with a toss of the head; »it is a party which begins and ends late.«

»I thought you said it was an early affair, mother«, replied Eugenia, reproachfully.

»That is, rather so«, said Mrs. Lawrence, in some confusion; »but I wanted to get you away in time.«

»Then suppose you make it one, love«, said Alfred, quietly.

»One it shall be, dear, and no later.«

»Let us dine, then«, said Mrs. Somers, who had listened to the conversation without speaking, except to offer the remark which we have recorded above. Her opinion of the matter, however, could be easily gathered from the severity of her aspect, which, towards Mrs. Lawrence, was more freezing even than usual.

The dinner was served, and was eaten nearly in silence. Mrs. Somers was inwardly catechising the conduct of both mother and daughter ; Mrs. Lawrence was dwelling with rapture on the envy, hatred, and uncharitableness which her child's splendid appearance would excite in the bosoms of her dear friends, the Oliviers ; while both Eugenia and Alfred were thinking on the discomfort of an evening spent far from one

another, and in this feeling both were equally sincere and truthful. The wife, indeed, wanted no good quality which a woman could possess, except firmness to resist temptation, when that temptation proceeded from one she loved and was attached to by spontaneous affection as well as duty.

»Alfred«, said Eugenia, suddenly, »why not come with me ? It would give me so much pleasure.«

»Thanks«, replied the husband, with an affectionate and gratified smile—for little attentions are great to the sincere—»but duty calls me hence. I have many calls to make this evening, and must snatch a few hours for reading.

This compelled denial and absence from home would, in the eyes of certain fashionable and popular romancists, doubtless excuse any amount of legerete and abandonment of domestic duties in the woman. But is it a sure truth that man has no duties but those of home ? Is man to be nothing but a pivot around which a narrow sphere of occupations are to turn? We think that the world, society, and the good of our fellows, demand much of our time ; and that woman—when her character is noble and elevated, as it should ever be—looks with delight and pride on him, who, a tender and affectionate husband and father, is also a good citizen. The stern calls of a profession, be that profession that of a states man—even a popular member—or a mere money-compelling one, such as law or physic, are of course without appeal, and yet have we seen them unsparingly satirized by the hands either of ignorance or malevolence^[1] #.

Mrs. Lawrence had looked rather alarmed at the question, or rather request, of her daughter, but the husband's answer was to her mind perfectly satisfactory ; and as soon, therefore, as the dinner was concluded she rose, and intimated her readiness to depart.

»I have to dress, Eugè dear, you know«, she said.

»But cannot you call for me ? «replied the young wife.

»It will be all Broadway out of the way«, exclaimed the mother ; »and, besides, I really must have your assistance to select an appropriate costume for the evening. I am not myself at all equal to the task.«

»Very well, I will be ready in a moment«, said Eugenia, with a sigh ; »I will just throw on a shawl.«

With these words she left the room, and Alfred followed on his way to the library, but of course to have a minute alone with his wife, who presently made her appearance, now buoyant with youth and beauty, for Alfred had in confidence assured her he was by no means vexed, and had sealed the ratification of the treaty in the most approved manner ; and her doubts on this point removed, Eugenia's love of society and a dance—natural to a young girl—at once made her look upon the excursion as delightful.

The carriage was called, and the mother and daughter departed.

Alfred and Mrs. Somers met again at tea-time; between which meal and dinner the son had made two calls.

»That woman will be the ruin of our peace and happiness«, said Mrs. Somers, gravely.

»Which woman ?«

»Surely you do not think I spoke of your wife?«

»True«, replied Alfred ; »I am very much afraid of her myself. But what can I do ?«

»What would you do, my son, with an insidious serpent, which, creeping within your home, threatened death in your very fireside ?«

»I would kill it«, replied Alfred, sternly.

»You must do as much with this woman. You must kill her influence.«

»How ?«

»By closing your doors against her.«Against Eugenia's mother?«

»Against your own mother, did she bring desolation and misery with her«, replied Mary Somers, firmly.

»Desolation and misery!«murmured the young physician, sadly, »but why forebode ?«

»I do not forebode more than circumstances warrant me in believing«, she said.

»She is no fit adviser, certainly.«

»And will you risk the ruin of Eugenia's mind, from a motive of false delicacy. How old is your wife ?«You know, mother.«

»I do, but still I ask—«

»Eighteen.«

»Eighteen ! The very age when she can be moulded as you will ; when led by your counsels she might become the guardian angel of your hearth, the presiding spirit of joy and happiness over all.«

»As she is ?«

»Surely ! But what I fear is, that this worldly-minded woman will lead her astray. She took her shopping to-day, and the door has been besieged with messengers bringing home parcels, and parcels of great value too«

»It is her own money.«

»True. But her money will go, if not already gone.«You joke, mother.«

»Not at all,—I should say half was gone already.«She has had her mother to pay.«

»She has, and always will. For, mark my words, that restless, scheming woman will speculate,—to speculate she will want money, — and where can she come but to her daughter ?«

»There is truth in all you say, mother. I am aware that Mrs. Lawrence is a dangerous counsellor for a young girl, but hope you and I may be able fully to counteract her evil influence.«

»With the blessing of God, Alfred«, exclaimed Mary Somers, fervently, »we will try. And now suppose I make tea for you, for once.«

»Old times come round again«, said Alfred, gaily, »and somewhat soon too.«

»Too soon«, thought his mother, but she allowed the words to die away on her lips.

[1] We wonder no romance has yet been written, to show that the wives of parliamentary reporters would be justified in any amount of folly, because their husbands are compelled to stay out all night. We have already had the late hours of an M.P. made the excuse for flirtation, and something more.

Chapter X.



THE ball was such a ball as is to be found perhaps nowhere else but in New York, where, whatever may be the faults existent in society,—and society has faults enough everywhere imputed to it, as if civilization were a horrid monster, spreading misery and sorrow,—there is more of that cordiality, and determination for enjoyment, than is found in the drawing-rooms of the old world. There is much of the same love of display, of shining beyond the rest— of idle, foolish gossip, about nothing— which is wicked waste of one of God's greatest gifts, time—but still there is more of heartiness. Refinement is of course, however local writers may propitiate and flatter the Broadway belles, not expected to have reached, in a new country, that pinnacle which it has in the old ; and when we know what refinement often hides—the courts of the Louis were in one sense refined—we may be pardoned if we wish that America may retain its juvenility.

And is not this juvenility, this rough, hearty, sometimes coarse state of being, a thing rather to be envied and admired, than to be made the subject of satire and burlesque by flippant travellers, who see as much of the country as did he, who, passing through Alsace, and only catching a glimpse of a being of each sex, reported thereupon that all the men were red-haired, and all the women squint-eyed—or something equally veracious.

But we are neglecting Eugenia, and young ladies are not personages to be neglected with impunity.

In accordance with her mother's tactics she arrived late, the view being for her to make a sensation, in which she fully succeeded,—for there could be but one opinion on her entrance, that she eclipsed all the beauty in the circle, even where beauty is so general— alas! how quickly fading—as in an American ball-room.

»Who is she?»passed from lip to lip, and ear to ear, and none could give an answer, for not one person present save the hostess knew.

As soon as Eugenia, therefore, had taken her seat, Mrs. Olivier was surrounded by a group of young men anxious to have their curiosity gratified.

»Who is that beautiful girl ?»said one.

»Who is that angel?»exclaimed a very young gentleman, who wore high-heeled shoes, and lisped.

»Mrs. Olivier, who is that exquisite creature ?»added, in a positive and confident tone, a man who, though not in the early heyday of youth, was still young.

The speaker was dressed simply, elegantly, and with taste, but still with the most studied eye to effect ; and the most casual glance told that he was one who had tasted of all life's sweets—and bitters.

»Colonel Devereux«, replied Mrs. Olivier, blandly, »as I must answer some one in particular, she is Mrs. Alfred Somers.«

»Mrs. Alfred Somers ! »said the first speaker, faintly, for he was in love already.

»Oh ! Mrs. Alfred Somers«, remarked the high-heeled shoes, or rather their owner ; »lucky fellow, that Somers, egad.«

This was said in a tone which conveyed an acute perception that the husband of such an angel was a very lucky fellow, in that he, the high-heeled shoes— really this was the only marked feature about the man— had not before him chanced upon the prize, when that the said high-heeled shoes would have walked the course was a notion about which he did not think it worth while to entertain a second opinion.

»You marry very early in this country, as indeed I may see by your daughter yonder«, said Colonel Devereux, with a graceful inclination ; »but really it seems a pity that anything so exquisite as that lady yonder should be so soon invested with duties and cares.«

»Duties, but not cares«, replied Mrs. Olivier, with a smile at the compliment to her own youthful appearance—she was not thirty, with a child of twelve;—"for though marriage ever entails duties, it does not always bring cares.«

»You speak for yourself«, said the Colonel, moodily—he had parted from a wife he had loved, from incapacity to abandon a dissipated course of life; »but introduce me. I see there is to be a dance.«

»With pleasure«, and gracefully bowing to the annoyed group—for all had the same request on their lips—she moved towards Eugenia.

»The Britisher is impertinent«, said the high heeled shoes, almost rising on tip-toe—standing on end, hair like, with indignation.

»Say, rather, self-possessed«, remarked the first speaker, quietly ; »because he is an older man than any of us.«

»The monkey who has seen the world«, continued the high-heeled shoes, still indignantly.

»Perhaps so; shall I ask him?«said the other, severely, for he was as sensible as the other was foolish

»O no!«exclaimed the other, colouring highly; »good evening«, and he turned away in manifest confusion.

Meanwhile Colonel Devereux and Mrs. Olivier had made their way to where Eugenia sat beside her mother, not a little confused at the manifest attention she excited, and the interest which her presence had caused. The little maidenly confusion, which sat upon her blushing cheeks, but added to her beauty, casting around it, as it did, the winning grace of modesty and retiring loveliness.

»I am glad, indeed, to see you«, said Mrs. Olivier, addressing Mrs. Lawrence, »and hope your charming daughter will often do us the inestimable favour of paying us a visit.«

»When we can spare an evening from our really over whelming engagements«, replied Mrs. Lawrence, consequentially, »we shall never more willingly spend it than here.«

»Thanks—but let me introduce Colonel Devereux from England«, said Mrs. Olivier; »he will be happy to claim Mrs. Somers' hand for the quadrille.«

»With pleasure«, said Eugenia, as soon as the introduction had taken place, and she spoke true, for a dance was to her a luxury.

»One of the first families in Europe, I assure you«, added Mrs. Olivier, confidentially.

»Indeed !»replied the other, with manifest interest. »I thought there was something very aristocratic about him—something so superior.«

Alas ! for American republican simplicity, for this sad feeling is too general.

»Exactly«, said Mrs. Olivier, unconscious of any satire upon her own country ; »and I wish all our young people could be finished in Europe.«

»To come back, my dear Mrs. Olivier, with, every old country vice, and not one of its virtues— for Paris is the favourite resort of our young men—with a disposition to revile and despise everything homely—our institutions, our manners, the very soil we tread on.«

This was said quietly but firmly by an old gentleman, a friend of the family, who sat next to Mrs. Lawrence.

»La ! Mr. Barford, you go too far. I believe Paris is a very naughty place, but then the French are so polite.«

»Very«, said the other drily ; »so is my tailor, but he will not spare my cloth any the more, if it suits him.«

Mrs. Olivier did not reply, but shaking her pretty head, and smiling disagreement, moved away to greet some new arrivals.

Meanwhile Eugenia and her companion had taken up their appropriate position, and the Colonel, charmed by the vivacity, grace, and ingenuousness of his fair partner, had at once, whenever an opportunity offered, poured forth the whole power of his fascinating conversation, which at once impressed Eugenia with the conviction that he was really the most delightful man she had ever met with.

Thus is it often in this world. A man of high and sublime thoughts, one whose mind is engaged in the constant examination of questions of lofty import, whose eye grasps the whole expanse between heaven and earth, and who can, perhaps, by the aid of divine philosophy, pierce into the mysteries beyond, will in society be considered a dullard, because he has thought more than acted, and words come not at will except on paper; while a fluent flippant wit, a mere smatterer in knowledge, a picker up of unconsidered trifles, is the charming man of a circle, and will set you the table in a roar, or amuse a whole roomfull with his impudence and conceit.

But Colonel Devereux came within neither of these categories ; he was a well-informed, well-read, travelled man of the world, who spoke sometimes of the mere floatings on the surface, but who could at will descend beneath. His greatest fascination, and the only thing which made his society dangerous, was his profound knowledge of the female heart in all its workings, a knowledge which he was not sparing of using to serve his own purposes.

But with Eugenia, so young, so innocent, so happy, he was somewhat at fault, and despite the most ingenious soundings he failed to discover any weak point at which to assail her ; for it was the Colonel's maxim, however idle was the cause, ever, if possible, to entwine woman's heart around his memory.

»And you like America ?«said Eugenia Somers, at the conclusion of the dance, when he had led her to a chair near her mother.

»I like its men much, its women more«, replied the Colonel, with much gallantry.

»But not the country«, exclaimed his companion, much surprised.

»I have seen nothing of it as yet«, he continued; »for my part, I always find the inhabitants the most worthy of study in every land, and therefore I have never yet moved from New York.«

»And you admire it?«

»Certainly, as a wonderful exhibition of what has arisen from nothing in a single century.«Nothing more ?«

»Nothing more, lady. The meanest old town in Europe, that has a church, is more picturesque.«Then what do you admire?«

»The busy industry, the energy, the prosperity of the people, the hospitality of society, and the charming evenings I everywhere spend.«

»But at home you have much superior society ?«

»In rank, yes ; in rigidity and formality, yes ; but for enjoyment, no«, replied the Colonel.

»You are very flattering to our land«, said Mrs. Lawrence, with a supercilious smile ; »but will change your opinion when you see more.«

The whole evening, without being marked or particular—though many others danced with her—the Colonel was assiduous in his

attentions to the fair young wife, and when supper time came round, took care to secure her arm, and her undivided attention to his converse. The hours flew rapidly for Eugenia; the bustle, the excitement, the adulation—which though silent was seen—that followed her footstep, all combined to make her forget all save the present.

»What is the time ?«she suddenly exclaimed, when, after the second dance which succeeded the supper, she was led to her seat.

»Not more than three«, replied the Colonel, who was at the moment addressing her mother.

»Three!«exclaimed Eugenia, turning pale and sick at heart, »and I promised to be home at one.«

»Promised !«cried Mrs. Lawrence, »but of course you never meant it, —why one is a most absurd hour.«

»But I did mean it«, said the young wife, anxiously, »and must go this minute.«

»Nonsense, child, you have promised your hand for this waltz«, said the mother, half angrily.

»The colonel will readily excuse me«, replied Eugenia, firmly, »when aware that I have promised my husband, and have already overstepped the time by two hours.«

»Certainly, but allow me to call your carriage ; «and away sped the gallant officer, while Eugenia and Mrs. Lawrence—the latter far from pleased—arrayed themselves to meet the night air.

In a few minutes more they were in their carriage, which Eugenia ordered to be driven home with rapidity, her heart sinking within her as she thought how ill both Alfred and Mrs. Somers would think of her promise. The vehicle was to take Mrs. Lawrence further ; and, wishing her mother a hasty adieu, Eugenia entered the house, and hearing from the sleepy maid that her master was in his library, hurried thither, with a far more fluttering heart than she had felt in any of the numerous dances of the evening.

Alfred was seated near a lamp reading, and as she entered, raised his head with a pleased and sweet smile.

»One o'clock, you dissipated creature«, he said with pretended severity of mien.

»Nay, half-past three, Alfred«, exclaimed Eugenia, with a gush of joy which went to her very heart ; »but how kind of you not to scold me ;« and she hurriedly related the events of the evening, and told him how, amused and gratified, she had taken no note of time.

Alfred heard her explanation with a happy smile, for he could not find it in his nature to quarrel with a delay which had arisen, he could see, so innocently. From that day, when Eugenia went to a ball, she took care to have a watch by her side, and to leave to a minute ; for the gentle manner of her husband on that evening so won her confidence, that she would not for the world have had him again blame her, even so sweetly.

Chapter XI.

WE have now to Pass over the events of several months, during which time, Eugenia, goaded by the pernicious counsels of her mother, and following too rapid a career of pleasure to allow herself much time to think, became deeply involved in debt, while she also drew largely upon her husband's resources, more largely than he could well afford, but at which he complained not,—because he believed the money went to pay for all that he saw daily added to his wife's ward robe, jewellery, and other luxuries.

He was mistaken.

Mrs. Lawrence, who had commenced speculations in stocks, town lots, and other shares, took care, on one pretence or another, to borrow every farthing of ready money which came into her daughter's hands, except when Eugenia would insist on paying some portion of a very heavy account. None of the speculations succeeded ; and soured, as well as rendered more callous by failure, the scheming parent drew, without compunction, the very last dollar from her child's hands, who, ever used to love and respect her parent, could scarcely think that which she advised or did wrong.

One morning early Mrs. Lawrence in haste entered her daughter's chamber. She was pale, and her face exhibited the keenest despair. Without speaking, she threw herself upon an ottoman, and sobbed aloud.

»Mother, dear, what is the matter?«cried Eugenia, in much alarm.

»I am ruined, child.«

»Ruined?«

»Yes, I have accepted a bill for three thousand dollars. It is due. Process will issue to take all I have, if I do not pay it, or obtain security.«

»What can I do ? Heavens, mother ! this is dreadful.«

»What money have you at your banker's ?«

»Not ten dollars.«

»But cannot you ask Alfred ?«

»Mother, I could not for that sum.«

»But to be security.«

»I am afraid.«

»Eugenia, unless you aid me, I am lost. I must have the money, or the security.«

»What security ?«

»Your husband's acceptance for the amount, which in a month I will pay.«How, mother ?«

»Never mind how. I pledge you my word, I can pay. That is enough for you, I hope.«

»Quite, mother«, and Eugenia rang her bell. A servant came.

»Beg Mr. Somers to step this way«, said the young wife, with some little of anxiety.

»Thanks, Eugè ; I knew you would save your mother, and therefore brought the stamp, ready.«

Alfred entered.

»What is it, dear? »he said, affectionately, after saluting Mrs. Lawrence.

Eugenia at once explained the position in which her mother was placed.

Alfred listened with gravity, and spoke only when the whole case had been stated.

»Are you sure, my dear madam«, he then said, addressing Mrs. Lawrence, »that you can pay the amount within a month?«

»With ease. In fact Mr. Downing, now in Boston, owes it me for three town lots.«

»If Mr. Downing owes you the amount, that is quite sufficient. I only spoke because I should not be able just then to meet it, having already rather overdrawn my account.«

Eugenia became uneasy, for in the calm and quiet tone which her husband assumed, she thought she felt a reproach.

»I have the stamp with me«, replied Mrs. Lawrence, who was still paler than before, and who even trembled with agitation.

»My dear madam, compose yourself«, said Alfred kindly; »anything I can do for my wife's mother, in reason, pray be assured, I always will

do.«

And he at once wrote his name as required.

»Now then, to business«, he said gaily to his wife ; »I have a hundred calls to make, amuse your mother in the mean time, and detain her to dinner.«

Next minute he was gone, for his modest vehicle was waiting at the door.

»And now, mother dear, you will stay to dinner of course«, said her daughter, kindly; »you heard what Alfred said, ere he left.«

»No child«, replied Mrs. Lawrence, whose extraordinary pallor had rather increased than diminished ; »I cannot have a moment's rest until this matter be settled.«

»Then come to tea.«

»Perhaps I will ; but in the mean time can I have your carriage ?
»Certainly.«

»Thanks ! »and with a hurried step the mother left the room ; while Eugenia, not at all at her ease—she knew not in part why—remained alone in her chamber.

The carriage came back in an hour, but, for two days, the mother came not.

The third day, Mrs. Somers, her son, and daughter-in-law were at breakfast together, when Eugenia remarked somewhat anxiously on the subject.

»Very singular, indeed«, said Mrs. Somers; »you had better go over and see her. Perhaps excitement has made her ill.«

»I will, for indeed I am anxious to the last degree«, replied Eugenia.

At this moment a servant entered with letters.

»Give them to me«, said Alfred carelessly, and then he added, »a large one from my banker.«

It was opened, and the young physician turned pale.

»What is it, son?«exclaimed Mrs. Somers eagerly, for she was alarmed at his look.

»Listen«, replied Alfred with a groan.

Eugenia felt a deadly sickness, which made her almost feint. She feared some evil.

»Dear Sir,—Your account has been overdrawn some days. We are sorry to trouble you, but think it right, for our own security, as you are raising money from Jew discounters, on bills, to request that you will at once pay in the balance due, or we must at once close your book.

»Your obedient servants,

»Biddle & Co.«

»Raising money on bills!« cried Mrs. Somers wildly, »what is the meaning of this ?«

»Great God !« murmured Eugenia, »my mother.«

»I know not«, replied Alfred, in answer to the first question. »I cannot conceive. But these other letters.«

They were opened. The first was from an old friend, regretting deeply that he should have thought it necessary, for the purpose of meeting any contingency, to raise money on an acceptance. It said, »Why, I would have lent you any amount you required, and saved all this annoyance. Now it is the talk of all New York, that Isaac Williams has your note for 30,000 dollars.«

»Thirty thousand dollars !« shrieked Eugenia in agony, and fainted.

Alfred ran to her assistance, while Mrs. Somers rang the bell, when her maid came, and as she soon revived and was borne to her chamber, the mother and son were left alone.

»My son, no reproaches will you have from me ; but the evil day has come. In addition to those you have already read, here are nine thousand dollars and more of unpaid bills, sent in by your wife's tradespeople.«

»Ruined ! lost !« cried Alfred.

»No, not unless this about the thirty thousand dollars bill were true, which of course it cannot be.«

»I do not know«, exclaimed Alfred wildly ; »when I gave my name, I did not think it necessary to look at the stamp.«

»Wretched woman !«cried his mother, »worse than wretched, she has betrayed you.«

»I much fear it, but will at once to Isaac Williams, and learn all. Meanwhile, mother, do you sell out for me 50,000 dollars of stock.«

»Which leaves you 9,000.«

»No matter, it leaves me free.«

»I will do it; but delay not.«

»Here is your authority, mother, for my solicitor. He will at once do it. Pay it into Biddle's to my account,—or stay, I will meet you there in two hours.«

And Alfred Somers went out for the first time in his life overwhelmed with debt and shame.

In two hours, pale and haggard, he was at the bank, before the door of which was his mother in his chaise. He had walked.

»Well«, she said.

»All is true«, he replied; »she has raised the money to meet some dreadful involvements, and it is all paid away.«"Infamous«, cried his mother.

»I have given cheques for the whole«, he continued, »so must pay in quickly. Here is the bill«, and he tore it to atoms, and cast it on the pavement.

»Let us go in«, said his mother, calmly.

They entered the bank together.

»Mr. Smith«, said the young Doctor, severely, »tell Messrs. Biddle that they will please, after to-day, to clear our account. Tell them, I never raise money on bills.«

»But, Sir«, said the clerk, coldly.

»I have nothing to add on the point. I want to pay in.«

»The balance due is—a—a—let me see, nine hundred dollars.«

»I wish to pay in fifty-three thousand dollars«, said Alfred, quietly.

»Really, Sir, excuse me—« the clerk could say no more, for that such a customer should for a moment have been in their black book was inconceivable.

The money paid in, they left the bank.

Chapter XII.



ACRED indeed is the marriage tie in my eyes», said Alfred Somers, in a letter to his wife the next day, »or I should have been tempted, in the first impulse of my anger, to have sued out a divorce—such as the wisdom of our law has provided. But I love you, Eugenia, and I hope the hour will come, when you will yet be the cherished hope and joy of my fireside.

»You have ruined me.

»Not that, had the thirty thou sand dollar bill, so unkindly put into circulation by your mother, been the only act which had felled me to the ground, I should for one instant have blamed you. But, while receiving from me, in money, far more than half of my income, you have run deeply, and I must say it, recklessly, in debt. You forgot that every dollar unwisely and unnecessarily spent, was adding to my toil, and retarding the day when we were to enjoy that blissful state of retirement, which both have so often dilated on.

»You have deceived me—I do believe solely at your mother's suggestion—from the first day of our union—or at all events, from our return from Saratossa, of which I may yet be the solitary hermit.

»But I will not reproach you. Your own native goodness will tell you that you have done wrong.

»Then why do I firmly resolve upon our parting—for ever, if you will it—for a while, if God grant it ?

»Because I can no longer remain in New York. I have no longer the establishment I had. Everything has been sold to meet the claims of my creditors, and my pride will not allow me to begin again here. I cannot think of taking you into the wilderness of the West, away from all that society which is so dear to you.

»And because I think it but justice that both you and your mother should receive a lesson—however rude—which alone may be expected to effect a solid and permanent cure.

»Eugenia, my heart is ever yours, and ever will be. I leave you half my income. Do not ask to follow me now ; but if in six months, you can truly in your heart say that you wish to be reunited, that you are prepared to be my own open, candid, dear wife, write to Mr. Caines : he will forward your letter, and our reunion may yet be happier than our first marriage.«

Eugenia's deep, lasting, and burning sorrow, when she read the letter, of which this is but a part, may not be painted in words. She knew that there was much justice, much that was true ; and yet, what was it that sustained her beneath the acute and severe trial ? what was it that made her hope all, hope ever, and even after hours of weeping, smile faintly?

It was the inward knowledge that much was not true ; that, in fact, she had done nothing to justify her husband's desertion. That he believed her cognizant of all her mother's folly and wickedness, she was aware ; and how sweet was the consolation, that in truth it was not Eugenia who had ruined her husband !

But it was a time for action, rather than thought, and accordingly, Eugenia, brushing away her tears, determined to overcome the weakness which had been her destruction, and to learn to think and act for herself.

Her first movement was to pack up her wardrobe; that done, a hack carriage was sent for, entering which she was driven to her mother's. Mrs. Lawrence was at home, and engaged ; but Eugenia felt that the present was no time for ceremony, and she entered her mother's parlour without hesitation.

»Eugenia ! »exclaimed the mother in much surprise, »but you must excuse me one moment.«

»Nay mother, I cannot«, said Eugenia, firmly, »and I see, indeed, that I come in good time, for you are at this moment engaged in the pursuit of that which has ruined my husband, and sent me here a deserted, homeless wife.«

»What is that you say ? »exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence's companion, a little wiry, keen, sharp-faced money and land-lot broker; his face, which could not turn pale, becoming more pinched up and screwy than ever.

»The girl is mad«, cried Mrs. Lawrence, her ghastly look belying her words.

»I have been, mother«, replied Eugenia, quietly, »hi deceiving my husband, and allowing him to rush blindfold to destruction. But I am mad no longer.«

»Mrs. Lawrence, I wish you a very good morning«, said the broker, sneeringly ; »I presume our account is closed ; I should be glad if you would send in the balance to-day.«

»How much?«

This was said faintly and despairingly.

»Seven thousand dollars, ma'am.«

»My mother cannot, and will not pay it.«

Eugenia, by this answer, delivered in a firm and commanding tone, obtained the victory she came with the intention of gaining, and the position of child and parent was reversed.

»We shall see«, said the broker bitterly, and he left the room.

»Oh ! my«, cried Mrs. Lawrence, balancing herself wildly in her chair, »what is to be done ?«

»Everything, mother«, replied Eugenia; »in the first place, we must leave New York to-night.«

»To-night !«

»Yes, to-night; do you wish to be arrested, mother?«

»No ! no ! do as you like.«

Mrs. Lawrence was utterly cast down, for her spirit had received a shock from which it never recovered.

»Where is Jane?« continued Eugenia.

»Down stairs.«

The bell was rung, and the hard-working domestic appeared—her face shining with good humour and grease.

»Jane«, said Eugenia, »pack up all your things, and assist me in packing up mother's. We go away from here in two hours.«

»Lauk, Miss, Mrs. I mean«, replied Jane, »yer don't say so !«

»Be quick, there's a good girl, for I want you to go out.«

The quick-witted Londoner—and they are the most quick-witted people on earth—vanished at once ; before evening every necessary preparation was made, and an hour»after dusk the whole party were on their road to Saratossa.

Yes ! to this spot, the holiest spot on earth to Eugenia, for there her happiest hours had sped—hours which she with confidence looked forward to again—did the deserted wife flee, to arrange in that solitude her future plans.

A few hours had made an awful change in Mrs. Lawrence. Her mind, ever weak, had given way beneath the shock of a second fall in the scale of society. Remorse, rage, despair, shame at her own folly, had acted with violent effect, and she sank beneath the struggle into almost bewildered imbecility. Again outshone the innate and native loveliness of Eugenia's mind. Gently, affectionately, and with the tenderness of a mother to her child, did she tend, console, and endeavour to draw her to more pleasing reflections,—but in vain ; and they arrived in Saratossa without her having uttered a word, save idle lamentations and invocations for pardon.

Eugenia's first inquiry was for the hut in which her early days of wedded love had run its course, in gentle and sweet harmony. The major luckily was about to leave, and it was to be sold. As the season was far advanced it was not dear, and Eugenia at once became the purchaser. The same evening they took possession, Mrs. Lawrence apparently wholly unconscious of where she was going, while Jane was delighted at the novelty and quiet comfort of the situation.

»Well, Mrs. Somers«, said she, when Mrs. Lawrence had been assisted to bed, »this is a place. I never see sich a place in all my life. No stairs, no carpets, no harf-stones, no windys to clean. Well, I never'! Ain't it jist a 'ousemaid's 'eaven ?«

»It was once my heaven, Jane«, replied Eugenia ; »but now to arrange our plans more fully. My first duty is to write to my husband's solicitor,—this I will do to night, with several other letters, and the major will take them on to New York.«

»Jist what I was goin' to observe. But I never, what a place !«

»It must appear very strange to you, Jane. But give me my desk«, said Eugenia.

Jane obeyed, and the requisite letters were written. That to her husband's solicitor was merely to facilitate the forwarding of her income, and to request that he would give her news without fail should Alfred's health be affected; it was all she asked. This written, she sent others to arrange the sale of her mother's furniture and her own, which had been left behind ; and to direct that the proceeds be appropriated to the payment of Mrs. Lawrence's minor debts.

It was late when this task was completed, and Eugenia was alone by her solitary Fireside^[1].

The hour was midnight, an hour from time immemorial of gloom and thoughtfulness ; but one at which, if dead silence prevail, and we hear not the huge breath of the living world, we think, despite ourselves, of God, of the world beyond the grave, of Him—denied only by fools and knaves—who died for our manifold sins, and whose sacred character—too pure and unselfish for taint of humanity to have defiled— enwraps us round, as by a shroud of light, and casts sorrow and sadness into shade.

Ambition may fire our hearts, love may warm our bosoms, benevolence may soothe our soul, power may yield delight, fame and renown may bring intoxicating sweets ; but let the young know it, let it resound in their ears—and it is one young who speaks—that the light of religion alone spreads radiant delight and pleasure to the soul, that it alone can comfort us in affliction, can bear us up against sorrow, can make evil itself a good, and buoy up the aching and trembling soul, which in this world has known not happiness—to the hope of eternal joy in the bosom of the great, the good, the blessed God of heaven.

In youth, we often fancy that there is time enough to think of such things. But in this matter it is always now or never ; and it bespeaks either a bad heart, or one warped by cruel education, which can, in the untrammelled and unhardened young days of life, deny the pure doctrines of religion—of Christianity. Rely on it, it will never deaden any other feelings; on the contrary, every pleasure which heaven has

provided for us will be the more enjoyed, from the possession of right views on such an essential point.

Eugenia felt at this hour most deeply the truth of this. She had never forgotten the lessons of her youth, when a worthy governess had tended her education ; but under the guidance of her utterly worldly mother she had neglected the very first principles, and now in sorrow and tribulation did she feel the gushing delight of seeking comfort above, which was denied on earth.

The next day Eugenia commenced the pursuit of that mode of life which she intended to follow out. A round of simple duties occupied her time; but the one, by which she set most store, was a complete journal of her life—with explanations of the past—for her husband's ultimate perusal. This was written the first thing after breakfast, while Jane concluded her morning household duties. Eugenia then would take her mother for a walk into the woods, seeking always those spots which reminded her of her strolls beside him upon whom still all her thoughts were spent.

Thus passed the autumn, and winter was heralded in with its chill and searching blasts, and yet was no change seen,—no news reached the solitude of Eugenia.

January came round, and the journal was still incomplete ; but a few weeks more, and it was to be forwarded to Alfred for perusal.

^[1]We dare not here give full vent to our Fireside feelings, because staring us in the face is Charles Dickens' exquisite picture of the Cricket on the Hearth. To tread on the brink of anything from the pen of the greatest of living painters of domestic life, is to provoke comparisons, which would be far from pleasant.

Chapter XIII.



It was spring time. Eugenia—her spirit and soul chastened by reflection,—her mind purified, elevated, raised in the scale of humanity, by earnest thought—was beginning to feel that the punishment of her folly, and her mother's crime, had lasted long enough, and that Alfred's silence was too firmly preserved ; for winter had passed, summer, and the voice of the nightingale was heard in the land, and her woman's heart sighed for communion with him to whom every tie bound

her.

With the spring came crowds of visitors, and the solitude of the woods was gone. They became alive with laughter, and re-echoed with the sound of the rifle, the fowling-piece, and pistol ; and man's love of society, native to every human heart, made the young wife, scarce nineteen, sigh again.

It was May when a large party from New York took up their quarters at the hotel, which was as dreary and solemn a building as ever,—but which shook with the weight and bustle of its guests. This caused Eugenia to be more circumscribed in her rambles, not wishing to have her retirement broken in upon by any of those whom she had known in her more prosperous days. She therefore kept to the wilder portions of the woods—every nook, every corner, every dell of which was as well-known to her as to the nut-hunting squirrel, that alone often divided the leafy arches with her.

One morning she ventured farther than usual, and without companion, for Mrs. Lawrence was too feeble to accompany her, and it was mid-day ere she discovered that she had strayed far indeed from home. Guided only by the sun, she sought to return; and, without being at all alarmed—for she knew she could not very well lose herself—made as much haste as possible to prevent alarm in others.

For some time no evidence appeared of any path ; but at length, emerging from a thicket, she came upon an old Indian trail which she knew well. It led through many a winding way, along caney brake and by thicket, over more than one rippling stream, and where

»The green mantle of the standing pool«

sent up unwholesome exhalation. As Eugenia reached the spot she started, for methought she heard behind the crackling of boughs, as if some one were following in her foot steps.

Away she sped, and still the tramp came on behind, steady, firm, unshaken, neither advancing nor receding—keeping near at hand like a shadowy sound that travelled incessantly beside her. Much alarmed—for the wood was deep and the distance far— away again she walked, her mind in a state of horrible agitation.

What could it be?

It was not the tread of her own footsteps awakening the sleeping echoes ; it was no wild beast ; it was something at times more ruthless, more savage; it was a man. Eugenia still, however, kept on her way, and reached within a quarter of a mile of home when suddenly the sound ceased.

Much relieved, and beginning to think that perhaps her imagination had played her false, she entered a dense and shady grove of sycamore, cedar, and pine, beyond which she knew was an open glade. Her mind bent on the subject which had engaged her thoughts in so unpleasant a manner, Eugenia heard not the noise of voices in front ; and in her eagerness to advance, burst suddenly upon a group of ladies and gentlemen who were luxuriating in a pic-nic party under the greenwood tree, and upon the grassy turf of the wood-surrounded prairie.

Eugenia would fain have retreated, but it was too late. She was discovered.

»Mrs. Somers«, cried half a dozen voices.

»Mrs. Somers«, repeated one voice—the voice of a man who viewed her with silent admiration.

And neatly dressed, in rustic guise, but chaste, her cheek glowing with the excitement of her run, she looked something lovely indeed.

»I am really astonished !»said Mrs. Olivier, for it was her party, »who would have thought of seeing you ?«

»It is quite natural«, replied the bewildered Eugenia, »I live here.«

»A wood-naiad !«cried Colonel Devereux gallantly, »an American naiad too.«

»Well, then, an you be queen here«, said an old gentleman who sat at the head of the cloth, »honour our feast, and sanction our invasion by your presence.«

»Many thanks!« replied Eugenia, »but my mother is almost alone. I will run home and prepare her for the visit, which of course you will pay us. I offer you at least tea.«

»Where? where?«was the ready and delighted response, »where dwelleth your majesty ?«

»In a fairy palace, which to all appearance is a log hut, on the banks of the stream«, said Eugenia in the same spirit.

All had noticed it, and a merry cheer rang beneath the leafy arches, and awoke main echoes all around, amid which Eugenia moved to go, but not alone, for the Colonel insisted, much against her will, upon accompanying her within sight of her residence.

Eugenia, when she found that her old acquaintance was firm in his determination, laughingly led the way, and the colonel followed, but his mien was serious and silent. He said not a word for some minutes, as if rapt in deep thought, and then suddenly, with an abruptness which made Eugenia involuntarily stand still, spoke.

»Mrs. Somers !«

»Colonel !«

»I must have a word with you. I may never have another opportunity. I must speak now«, exclaimed he, impetuously, while Eugenia, without replying, stood in perfect amazement before him, unable to articulate.

»You are abandoned by your husband !«

»Sir«, said Eugenia, with cold and freezing disdain, that sat proudly on her lips, and in her smile.

»I know you are, and am glad of it«, he continued, almost fiercely ; »for, abandoned by him, you may listen to my passion, so long, so

hopelessly nursed. I love you, Eugenia, yes I adore you. The laws of your country make you free. You can obtain a divorce within a few months on proof of your husband's desertion,—see, I ask not but what is just, legal, and right. Obtain your freedom, have your hand at your own disposal; and at your feet I lay rank, wealth, position, all ; I will wed you in the face of the whole world, and as Mrs. Devereux, you will learn to forget that you were ever Mrs. Somers.«

All this was said with the accents of sincere passion. The colonel knew not exactly the reasons of the separation between the young couple ; indeed, cared not. All he knew was, that a divorce might make her his.

»Sir«, said Eugenia, who trembled in every limb, but who spoke firmly and distinctly, »I love and adore my husband—for such he is, and such he ever will be—he is to me ever at my side. I live on the memory of the happy hours we once spent together, and in the hope that when he knows how little really I was to blame, how I was led away into extravagance, how I was innocent and ignorant of his ruin, that his mother and he will forgive me, and receive me again to their loved and honoured arms.«

Pale as ashes, his brow contracted fiercely, his eyes flashing fire, stood the amazed colonel.

»You love this man !«

»I do.«

»I hate him, and—«

»Colonel !« said Eugenia, »say nothing to lower my opinion of you. I can excuse all, but ill speaking of him.«

»Eugenia! Eugenia!« cried the passionate Englishman, »hear me. You blast my every hope—«

»This is idle—«

»Nay, hear me.«

»I cannot.«

»You must.«

»I will not ; dare not. It is sacrilege ; him I—«

»Say not that again«, exclaimed Devereux, »or I shall be wild.«

»Colonel«, said Eugenia, mildly, »your offer was one which I know that law and society would sanction me in accepting in this country, and therefore I cannot but answer you. I, however, think that coming from an Englishman where laws sanction no such act, it sounds somewhat as an insult.«

»God of heaven ! «cried Devereux, with heartfelt sincerity, »bear me witness that I meant it not as such. No ! I loved you, I saw you abandoned, I knew that the law of divorce gave me hope, and I did think—so delusive is love—that a few months might make you a free woman, when my offer would be honourable to both, for I am free as you«, and the colonel paused.

»I will treat your offer, then«, said Eugenia, »as one which law and society, and even morality, may sanction—because I may be a divorcee when I please;«this was said in bitter emphasis, »for he has left me—«

»Eugenia«, cried the colonel, falling on his knees, »re collect that you are abandoned.«

»Not abandoned, but left awhile«, said Eugenia, now coldly and severely.

»Abandoned no longer!« thundered a voice, which made the colonel start to his feet, and stand back on the defensive, while Eugenia stood rooted to the ground, pale and trembling, in another moment to be clasped in the arms of her husband.

The group was one of striking interest.

Alfred Somers, thin, haggard, in the costume of a woods man and hunter, with all the accoutrements of his assumed craft, supported with arms that scarce could hold their burden, his lovely wife, who—delight, surprise, ecstasy in her very eyes—gazed on his, drank in his looks, and seemed to see only that it was him ; she asked not more.

The colonel, with lowering brow, and compressed lip, looked on this picture with a heart seared and disappointed ; for, fed by hope, he had loved her, oh, how well !

»Colonel«, said Alfred, after a brief pause, »I have not one word to say against you. You have acted as most would have acted. You saw this innocent child cruelly deserted.«

»Nay, Alfred !«

»Yes, cruelly deserted«, continued the husband, »by one who had vowed to cherish and protect her ; who should have inquired more deeply, and have learned to separate the wickedness of the mother from the pardonable weakness of her daughter. You saw this, and aware of our laws, offered your name, your fortune,—and I wonder that I was not thus punished for my folly. But, Colonel Devereux, you see I am here to redeem my rights ; just now we were equal, now you have no claim. You and we must part.«

»Dr. Somers«, said Devereux, sadly, but frankly, »had your parting have ended in a divorce and marriage with myself, no power on earth should have taken her from me. But I love her, not myself, and that she is happy will console me for the loss of all my hopes.«

»You are a man«, replied the husband, holding out his hand, »with whom I can now speak as a friend, defeated in the struggle for a much coveted prize, but still my friend. However, after what has passed—«

»Say no more«, exclaimed the colonel, clasping both their hands, and uniting them in one another, »I know my duty. This day I leave here, in a week I leave America for ever. To the latest hour of my life I will remember you both, and both shall be equally dear to memory.«

The deep feeling with which these words were said, moved both ; and after a few more words, they parted—the colonel to guide the picnic party to the hut, Eugenia and Alfred to hasten in joy to their home—the scene of their early days of love.

Colonel Devereux, he knew not why, felt relieved ; there was a buoyancy in his thoughts he had not known for years, while from his heart upsprang feelings which were new as tenants in his breast. A smile of triumph presently illumined his countenance, and then he stood in the presence of the party the same man of the world as ever.

His first act was one which showed his sincere desire to serve the reunited pair.

»So you have left her in her fairy court«, said Mrs. Olivier, with a smile.

»I have«, said the colonel, with a bow.

»Beautiful woman ! »sighed high-heeled shoes, who was one of the party.

»Pity she is not as good as beautiful ! »said a very plain married lady, whose husband had also expressed his high opinion of her loveliness, though, in truth, the good man had scarcely noticed her.

»Madam ! »exclaimed the colonel quietly, »I scarcely comprehend your meaning.«

»Oh ! ladies are not generally separated from their husbands for nothing«, said the married lady, with a most virtuously indignant toss of the head.

»Separated from their husbands!«cried the colonel warmly, »surely this is some mistake !«

»Oh no !«

»But, madam, I assure you.»Sir, I am quite sure of it !»Allow me—«

»But it is the talk of New York—«

»Then«, said the colonel firmly, »New York is in error, for I have just seen Mr. Somers, and he has joined cordially in his wife's invitation to us all.«

Amazement, surprise, and all the feelings natural to such a discovery were manifested, and the colonel was assailed with questions.

»All I know is, that by the acts of a third party they were ruined, and compelled to seek retirement«, was the evasive reply.

Chapter XIV.

THE Fireside had triumphed, and Alfred and Eugenia, full of heart and hope, though comparatively poor, poured forth in one short half hour the feelings of their souls. Alfred told how, having nerved himself to the trial, he had found himself unequal to the task ; how he had followed with his mother in her track, and taken up a dwelling even more rural and retired than hers ; where, having solemnly pledged himself to his mother that the lesson of adversity should last six months, he would issue, at all hours, to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing her even afar off. This very day he had happened on her foot steps, and, following them more incautiously than usual, had made himself heard. The time was not up, but no pledge could resist her words of love, and innocence, and truth.

»Do you remember the story of Gulley Moss, told in this very room ?
»said Eugenia, hanging fondly to his side, while Jane made all manner of delighted contortions—Mrs. Lawrence looking on in stolid silence—"you see it came home to me.«

»But the end is good.«

»Nay, Alfred«, said the young wife sadly, »I cannot forget that you are ruined.«

»Not at all. I have health, and hope, and the will«, replied Alfred warmly ; »besides, my mother has a little snug income for us yet.«

»But your practice ?«

»I will make another.«

»Where?«

»In New York.«

»In New York?«

»Yes.«

»But I could never show myself !«

»Hush ! dear,—and proudly will you show yourself. I owe no man anything ; and have no doubt things will go as ever in a year, particularly now that I have got two housekeepers.«

»Son ! »cried a sepulchral voice, low, feeble, and broken ; »and am I not forgiven ?«

»Forgiven ! oh yes ! »said Alfred, who saw death in her look ; »long since. We are all now united, and the past is but an idle dream.«

»A dream. Yes! I once had a dream. I think I was a little child, and my mother used to teach me how to pray ; it is a long time ago, and I have forgotten how.«

»Eugenia«, whispered Alfred, »be firm; her time has come. Your mother is dying.«

»Who spoke of dying?«said the invalid, »chase him away. Go, Jane, call my carriage ; I will go see my child, she is the rich doctor's wife, and she will lend me money.«

Alfred and Eugenia, clasping each other's hands, stood in speechless agony before the departing sinner; whose faults were all wiped out, and who was but a common parent about for ever to depart.

»Pray«, said Alfred in a thick voice ; »she will know your tones, and listen.«

At this moment the merry group of wood-revellers reached the hut, the door of which the colonel opened—to start back and impose silence by a look, which all involuntarily obeyed.

And then uprose the voices of the husband and wife in prayer for their dying mother, to whose system the shock of Alfred's return had given the last blow.

There was something so awful and solemn in the scene—these children praying for their dying parent sounded so sublime in their ecstasy of sorrow and hope—that all were deeply affected; and down knelt the whole party by one involuntary, holy impulse—for death and prayer are joint appeals few hearts can answer.

»Hush!« said Mrs. Lawrence suddenly, »was that you, mother ? It is a long time since I heard your voice, mother, and yet 'tis sweet and fresh as when I heard it first. ›Our Father,‹ what were the next words ?«

She was an innocent child again; as innocent, in God's name, as when she knelt fifty years before at her mother's knee, and lisped, in tiny and cherub accents, the sacred words of prayer.

»Where have you been, mother?»she continued; »and that song that sent me so sweetly to sleep ?«

»Sing it«, said Alfred in a choked voice.

And the child, with bursting heart, sang the song—which, as a child, her mother had heard—and a radiant beam of light, a smile of inexpressible infantine joy, illumined the visage of the dying.

Eugenia, though duty compelled her to sing, could scarcely make herself heard ; but faintly, chokingly, gave forth the words.

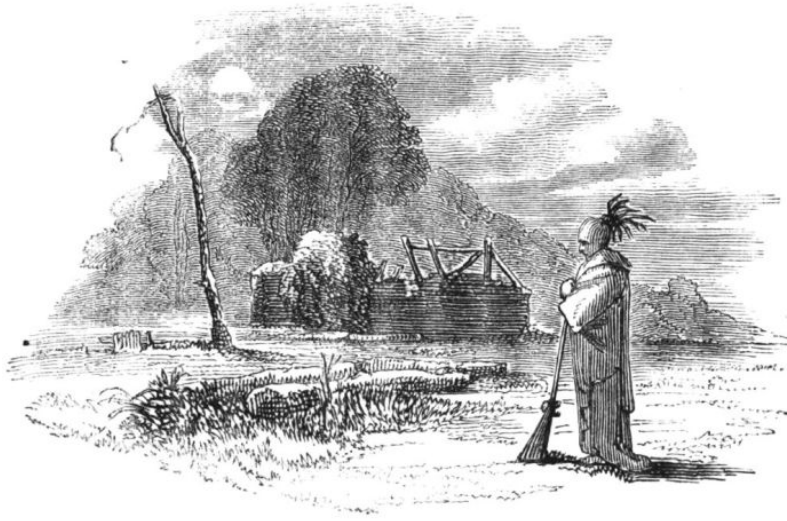
»I am going, mother, so quietly to sleep«, whispered Mrs. Lawrence faintly, »Bye ! Bye !«

She was dead.

Bitter was the anguish of Eugenia; and all the efforts made by friends, who crowded round, each and every one, (including the plain married woman,) served but to add to it. Seeing this the colonel drew off the whole party to the inn, whither Eugenia was carried; and a messenger despatched for Mrs. Somers, who came and proved a ready and devoted nurse for her son's anguish-stricken wife.

Next day a mournful procession advanced to the hitherto untenanted burial-ground of Saratossa, and the body of Mrs. Lawrence was committed to the grave in the presence of more sympathy than had ever been awarded her living; but the whole party had seen her die, and death is a solemn thing to be witnessed, and clings to the heart with fibrous energy.

Another twenty-four hours and Saratossa was almost deserted, save by her, who in body lies there until that day when all shall stand in the presence of Him who made us, and fashioned our form at will.



The log hut.

Chapter XV.

ALFRED was right when he said that he should experience no difficulty in once more establishing a thriving practice in the city of New York. His return was hailed with universal delight, because all knew his genius and talent, and all loved his gentle and unassuming manners, qualities invaluable in a medical man. The same house received him—for he had saved more than he knew, while Mrs. Lawrence's principal was now Eugenia's—and he at once returned to his business, as if not a day had intervened.

For many months the sad scene we have just recorded remained fixed in Eugenia's memory; at first in bitter and sore anguish, then more gently, and at the last with holy and serene satisfaction, for her mother's death-bed had been far more peaceable and happy than she had ever expected it would have been.

Mrs. Mary Somers was now a parent indeed to both; and never were parent and child more united, more one than they, for they now were bound by sympathy and community of feeling.

They had something to struggle against, especially at first, for it was necessary not to show too great a falling off from former times ; but none bore sacrifices now better than Eugenia. She never would purchase

the value of a cent of anything she needed not ; and required as much gentle teasing from her husband to be induced to have a new dress, as if it had been a crime.

And their wants increased—for singular enough to relate there came one fine morning a sound to Alfred's ear, to which he had previously been somewhat of a stranger, and the name of that to which the sound belonged was Devereux Somers, for so did the young physician call his first-born boy, in memory of the Englishman who had loved his wife, but without evil thought or dishonour.

Proud indeed was Eugenia of the little stranger that had so unceremoniously added to the family party.

»He has your eye, your nose, your mouth, indeed he has«, said she, at breakfast one morning, laughingly heartily with him in her arms ; »I declare he is not a bit like me.«

»He has your chin«, said the grandmother, simply ; but with that keen interest which grandmothers ever feel in all that concerns infantine history.

»He is like us both«, cried Alfred, laughing.

»Ah ! that is the way to solve the difficulty«, said Mrs. Somers ; »it is the true matrimonial touchstone.«

»Not more than when we agree to differ«, replied Alfred, »for ever not to know a difference of opinion makes life dull.«

». A very good sort of dullness«, said his mother, shaking her head wisely.

At this moment a servant entered and placed a letter from England in Alfred Somers' hand.

»This is not Devereux's hand«, he said, in some alarm ; »and yet it is his seal.«

»Good God !« replied Eugenia— for they both liked the man—»I hope he is not ill.«

There was a pause, during which Alfred read with brow knit and sad.

»Devereux is dead—noble, generous man«, continued Alfred, sadly ; »and has left me his fortune.«

»Dead!« said Eugenia, pressing her child close to her breast at the very sound of death, and tears bursting from her eyes.

»Yes ! he is dead. This letter is from his agent in London, who informs me it was sudden. I could have better heard of men I have known longer, for I liked him much.«

»He was unhappy, Alfred«, said his wife, kindly ; »and hence you liked him.«

»He was generous and noble also«, exclaimed the husband, with much and deep emotion, »or he would never have left two thousand pounds sterling yearly to me above all men.«

»Ten thousand dollars yearly income ! «said Mary Somers, with surprise and gratitude ; »why we have you again in a prouder position than ever. See, my children, the reward of prudence and of virtue. Be assured the hand of Providence is in all this.«

»Dead!«repeated Alfred, after another pause; »how glad am I that we have named our child after him. He was a man, who, had he commenced life better, would have taught society to be proud of his memory.«

»As we must be«, said Eugenia, sadly.

»I have seen much«, continued her husband, gravely, »of self-denial in man, but this is unequalled.«

Had he known the truth ?

»It is«, replied Eugenia; and for that evening they sat in sad converse of the strange and wayward Englishman.

The fortune was such as to induce a total change in all the arrangements of the happy couple. Dr. Somers was far more ambitious for eminence and reputation than for money; and besides felt that, as an independent man, he was not justified in holding in his hands a connection which struggling men needed far more than he did.

He accordingly retired from practice, bought an estate at Saratossa, where he built a handsome house, but failed not to preserve in existence the log hut, which was bound up with so many fond and sacred memories. It was never, however, repaired, and in time became a picturesque ruin, on which the hunter and Indian, happening by chance, would gaze with reverence, as on perhaps the scene of some tragedy

which made it holy ground. When told that there a mother died, with a praying group, within and without the hut, they would solemnly retire, as if they thought the spirit might be hovering round it still, and that their intrusion might be punished.

And, my dear reader, yet does it shed its genial influence upon the principal personages in this eventful episode of life. Mary Somers, somewhat older, it is true, is still the same worthy but precise old lady as ever; while Eugenia and Alfred, with half a dozen at least of juvenile miniatures, are still within the glow and warmth and joy of the Fireside ; and within what better influence could they be ?

Spirit of heaven, spirit of earth, with all the charms of both, is the genius of the Fireside—one, however, which is far too often neglected and despised in this world, which clasps at the tinsel joys found away from where the garland of home twines sweetly round the heart.

Not so, however, with our happy couple. They had passed along the best road to happiness, that of adversity,—which, applied to the souls of the good, gives but greater relish for the joy and delight of brighter days.

— — — — —

Fourteen years after the receipt of the letter from Devereux's solicitor, there died, in a quiet, comfortable, but obscure lodging in London, a prematurely old man. He had during the whole of that time been a great student, and never moved abroad, except at night. Being a stranger to all, a coroner's inquest sat upon his body. They found no papers, no letters, no name by which they could discover who he was ; and who he was, no man ever knew.

Previous to his funeral, his books, &c, were carefully packed up, and set aside, in case of a claimant, and in all they looked to trace some clue to his history ; none was found, but in a bible, much thumbed and read, they discovered a pencil sketch ; it was, they thought, a fanciful portrait, for beneath it was the word »Eugenia.«

[THE END.]

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