

LETHE.

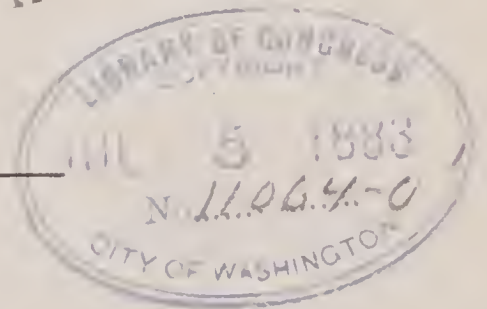
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A NOVEL.

BY

MAY WRIGHT.

L. C. Fur Gravel



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P R E F A C E .

Encouraged by the fact that there is not a star in the vast firmament of God which does not have its seasons of rise and fall, not a flower whose existence is not hemmed in by the boundaries of life and death, the author sends forth this little book to serve its mission, complete its destiny, and then, if fate has so decreed, to sink beneath the horizon of popular recognition.

The book, however, was not written for those who hunger and thirst after novelty, romance and adventure, but for the happy few who love to contemplate life in all its chilling realities, cold certainties and ever changing seasons of cloud and sunshine. The author holds that the story is one long drift of natural emotion and thought, which throbs in the hearts of all mankind, especially in the young to whom the occurrences of every day-life and the high peaks of possible attainment, have a strange mystery and enduring charm.

The hero of the story is the representative of that peculiar age and type of human nature, that persists to feast at the table of hope, regardless of all outward opposing agencies. Throwing away the penny he oftentimes runs after the shadow of a dollar. Thinking of the future he sometimes forgets the demands of the living present. He longs for the Utopia of social life but yet never condemns rashly the modern systems of educational and moral discipline. The fact is thought to be clearly brought forth and emphasized, that virtue is not measured by our individual acts, but by our motives as displayed in our acts; that seeds of good and evil are in all hearts, but yet, only manifest a life as they are encouraged and developed.

The author has, therefore, chosen a certain Lethe Reynolds whose purpose is to proclaim, through her own thoughts and acts, the fact that virtue does not depend upon circumstances or conditions, but adjusts itself to them, and that circumstances or conditions do not, in the least, make or destroy virtue. And so, in order to bring out the full and more perfect idea of virtue and womanhood in Lethe, the author has thrown about her, the tinsel and lace of pomp, vanity and affectation.

With one word of hope, and that is, that Lethe, Herbert, Pansy, Frier and John Mackelsalt, may give the readers of this book a purchased measure of sorrow and joy, the author closes with Goethe, that, "It is not in figures of arithmetic alone that gain presents itself before us; fortune is the goddess of breathing men; to feel her favors truly, we must live and be men who toil with living minds and bodies, and enjoy with them also,"

MAY WRIGHT.

“But whate’er you are,

* * * * *

If ever you have looked on better days,

If ever been where bells have knoll’d to church ;

If ever sat at any good man’s feast !

If ever from your eyelid wiped a tear,

And know what ’tis to pity, and be pitied,

Let gentleness my strong enforcement be.”

SHAKESPEARE.

LETHE.

CHAPTER I.

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, it might have been."

WHITTIER.

THERE is not a day in the week that is looked forward to with so much of earnest hope and expectation, bringing as it does, a beaker full of ease and happiness, as the day which all people in all civilized lands commonly recognize as Sunday. To Herbert Snowdown it was of unusual interest, during the busy week he was confined in close quarters and hedged in from active life. And hence he saw very little of the changing varieties of every day experience. At times, it is true, he would step out of his solitary castle into the noisy thoroughfares of the city, and often suffer himself to drift with the surging mass of human life. But on Sunday, the slow and measured bound of steed, the languid ringing of church bells, the sky, the tree, the flower, and the faces of mankind generally, all brought to his heart sensations of an eternal hope, in the prosperity of peace, love and truth. Sunday invariably unfolded to him the gay panorama of life and drew him nearer and nearer to the heart of Nature and humanity.

It was on one of these bright and pleasant days, when, not only Nature but the world seemed to be silent, that Herbert chanced to be sitting in the park, now known as the Garfield Place. Very few people were astir. It was a time that carried his mind back to days of

pleasant dreams, when romance was the only leaven in the priceless measure of hope and aspiration; when reality had not tinged his life, but when, in a calm and child-like innocence he looked upon all things as a part of the great and glorious paradise in which God had placed him. His memory was afloat in an atmosphere filled only with the zephyrs of Spring and the perfumes of morning. And he thought again and again, how, when a mere school-boy, he sat, musing over book and slate, deeply absorbed in the great possibilities of his little being. His aspirations took wing for golden skies and purple clouds, and all his most fleeting hopes became tangible realities.

But alas! like all unsubstantial things they were soon gone, and he mused with much sorrow upon opportunities now gone forever.

He was in this state of meditation when he thought he heard a voice saying, "She was always honest," and he turned suddenly and eagerly around to see the being who could thus intrude upon his reveries.

But no one was near.

The sun was now gilding the topmost branches of the trees and the birds were making melody among the Autumn leaves. The park was now comparatively full. Some were relaxing their limbs upon the hard benches, some were whiling away their hours in quiet conversation while still others were enjoying the exhilarating effect of a sweet scented havana. Herbert was now meandering up and down the walks, almost, it might be said, without a purpose, in every sense and faculty invigorated by the fresh cool air.

"Good morning, Herbert," and a sweet voice fell upon his ear.

"Ah! Good morning," said Herbert, as he turned around to address the personage. She was a girl of sixteen summers. Her brown hair, clasped in a ribbon of blue, clustered richly about her neck, and furnished an artistic relief for her face animated with intellectual beauty and characterized by modesty and resignation. Of such a face we often think, but more often dream. But it is rarely found in the

gay drawing rooms, the noisy coupe, or among the frivolous circles of fashionable society. Not where Nature's pets ply their tiny dimpled fingers at ric-rack, embroidery and personal decoration. Not where languid mortals squander with complete satisfaction, the precious hours in a pretentious study of the ceramic art. Not where idle maidens loll drowsily on carved sofas, piping Italian sonatas or reading Parisian novels, but in the busy kitchen, behind the counter, or, wherever humanity cries for help, there is found that face, that life, whose influences renovate society, build up a substantial, human prosperity and promote the universal happiness of mankind.

"Ah! Lethe, is that you?" asked Herbert. "You are up with the sun and as happy, I suppose, as the birds. Pardon me, but whither are you going?"

"I am just returning home. To the old home—"

"Of Mackelsalt?" returned Herbert.

"Yes," replied Lethe, as a shade of sadness stole over her calm face.

"But —"

She hesitated. A pain rushed through her young heart. That old familiar pain which is common to all mankind. It has come to the first born and has supped at the table of his endless progeny. And so will continue to come and sup, until mortality is sent to his narrow home forever to be laid at rest. Yet Herbert did not hesitate to divine her inward strife. He said,

"Come, Lethe, you are not concealing anything from me? I am rather suspicious—"

"Suspicious, Herbert? Suspicious of what, pray tell me? I have said —"

"Lethe", said Herbert, "why all this sadness? Weeks have passed and your face still wears the changing seasons of cloud and sunshine. You are not concealing anything from me—"

"No, nothing, Herbert, nothing at all," interrupted Lethe.

"Perhaps not, Lethe. But yet this all seems strange. Your

sadness surely has a cause. Perhaps Mr. Mackelsalt mistreats you. Perhaps he has stripped you of your liberties. Ah! Lethe, peace may be at your heart, but tell me is he not cruel to you?"

"Herbert?"

"Will you not reply?"

"There may be some truth in the statement, Herbert," said Lethe, as she looked curiously into his face.

"Truth? I know there is. Lethe, I know a little of human nature. For, as an artist, I glean up a few sheaves of trickery and deceit from off the human face, and I soon become acquainted with the symptoms of villainy?"

"Villainy, Herbert? You amaze me!"

"That may be true Lethe. But pardon me if I speak disrespectfully of him. I try to tell the truth. I would not dissimulate I had rather—"

"Ah! Herbert!" said Lethe, "I could not believe that he would wilfully do a wrong to a poor girl. True, I endure his severity, and often it is a disciplinary yoke my young heart would fain throw off. But yet I endure it. I am but a poor girl, an orphan, Herbert, as you well know. His home is my home, and under his roof have I found a reasonable shelter. I can not think for a moment that he shelters me from the storm, only to strip me forever of the warm sunshine, my hope and joy. No! I can not think this, Herbert, indeed, I can not."

"But yet," continued Lethe in quite a whisper, and looking at times cautiously about her, "I have often seen Mr. and Mrs. Mackelsalt, after talking together, wringing their hands, whispering with finger on their lip and shaking their heads, look suddenly and surprisingly around, and then, with a 'hush be still,' resume their several duties. This I have seen. But what it all betokens I know not. Of late all my letters from you have been intercepted, and—"

"What! Lethe, my letters," said Herbert, rather startled.

"Yes, and I sometimes think how desolate this world would be, could I not hear your cheering words."

And tears fell from her soft blue eyes. Herbert felt like caressing her, but the circumstances of the situation would not permit of such demonstration.

"O well!" she continued, wiping the tears from her eyes, "I am resigned to duty and I will do the best I can under all circumstances, let come what may. 'He that fears not the future, may enjoy the present,' Herbert, and if any proverb has spoken the truth this one, indeed, has."

"Yet, I sometimes think," and her eyes moist with tears looked away toward the east, as if she were divining a new horizon, over whose boundary all is serene and joyful, "I sometimes think that the pension will come. Some day, at least, it will come, God knows." Grandmother's last words to Lethe were that she will yet be truly happy.

Here she broke down, for her inward grief was too much. Herbert bade her be patient, saying that he would try his best to adjust all things. And lest she might arouse the vain curiosities of the mere park loungers and idlers, he asked her no further questions. Lethe betrayed in all her grief an inward strife of which Herbert knew not. That secret which may nestle like the pinion of a dove close to the breast and oftentimes warm the hearts, may, sometimes, conceal a death wound. But life will inevitably tell the tale. Care is a poison whose bites and stings eat into the very soul. Yet, how well we love to fondle it! And so Herbert wondered why a thing so vile should seem to her so dear. It was growing late and both in close conversation passed slowly out of the park.

"Ah! Herbert," said Lethe in a sad voice "it is vain, I know, to hope for the reward of another's toil? But when grandfather died in the Mexican war, a pension was bequeathed to grandmother. But grandmother did not wish to share the pension herself, but willed it

to her daughter and grandchildren. Yet while poor grandmother lived she toiled night and day to obtain it, but without effect. For she had very little influence among our executive authorities. The poor seldom have. And so, since her death, nothing has been said or done. I have the will and papers. But yet the hope of receiving the pension now, is to me but the memory of a dream or fancy. Yet I often indulge in fancies, for they sometimes make me feel very happy, indeed."

But nine o'clock was now sounding out upon the clear air and Lethe after bidding Herbert farewell, walked slowly to the old Mackelsalt home.



CHAPTER II.

"I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk white thorn that scents the evening vale."

It was a local holiday. The year, unprecedented for warmth and beauty, lay reposing in the bosom of Indian Summer. The merry birds jubilant among the trees were, even at sunrise, flooding the air with their delicious melody. The autumn flowers still lingered in the wood and glen almost reluctant to die. Everything had life. The trees, the stones, the running brooks, all seemed to speak a language.

At the early hour of eight the children who on this day were given a season for physical as well as soul enjoyment, and who were permitted to throw aside the dogeared geography or the grammar full of picturesque ink pictures and monograms, and who, far away from their teacher's loving care, could wander wherever their buoyant spirits called them, were pouring out into the vales and hills, eager to pluck up the few remaining wild flowers, give chase to the straggling butterflies, roll over the green grass, climb trees and do other novel things. And even the aged whose limbs were bent with time, were wending their sad way, somewhere, anywhere, from the smoke and noise of the city.

Holidays have a two-fold significance. They furnish a calm and quiet rest to mankind from the daily necessities or requirements of

life, and give him those opportunities for healthful recreation which, when rightly utilized, better fit him for the struggle of life. They also lend a brighter smile to the laughing face of childhood. They banish the shades of grief and sorrow from heavy laden hearts. They tinge the deep wrinkles of care and remorse with the silver lining of peace and bring to all men a lap full of elixirs and healing balms.

The greater part of business was laid aside and the mass of mankind forgetting, for a few brief moments, the perplexities of toil and competition, arranged for pleasure visits in the suburbs.

Early in the day Mr. Frier left his office and stepping aboard a train was borne rapidly out of the smoke of the city into the delightful atmosphere of the country. When the train reached Vernemus, a beautiful suburban place, just about an half-hour ride from the city, it slackened its speed and Frier together with other town folks, stepped off. After making a few casual observations of the surrounding landscape he sauntered off toward the knoll of a hill. He came to Vernemus for no other purpose than to while away his time in capricious pleasure, and, like a bee, to seek sweets in every possible rural confectionary. Indeed, to do anything that would refresh his mind and buoy up his depressed spirits. When he reached the top of the hill, he saw at a distance, wrapped in a purple film of mist, the villiage lawn, as it was called, where he, in his boyhood, had spent many precious hours. Toward this place he now bent his steps.

While he was walking across the several roads, he came upon the rather modest type of a country girl, usually called by the appropriate name of Maud. She did not have a rake in her hand, nor a pail of milk, be it understood, for she was of the higher class. At first sight one would say that she was beautiful, but, as the eye lingered upon her face and form, the combined features lost their charm and flowing lines. For her statue was made by those treacherous, deceiving, most vain artists, Self, Mirror and Co. As she approached Frier

smiled. She smiled. Frier spoke. She spoke—not. And Mand thinking that she had played a “legal rub” on Frier tripped away laughing merrily at his disappointment. But Frier overpowered by her audacity turned automatically around and to his complete satisfaction gazed at her until she had banished from his sight. He resumed his march but not before he dotted down that bit of conquest in his pocket memorandum.

He moved on, and at length, reached the familiar lawn. Everything was beautiful and natural. The tall trees, the gravel walks, the waters and the flowers kissing their foaming lips, brought to his mind the associations of his childhood. All things were arranged for the comfort and pleasure of man, of which pleasure Frier took advantage. He threw himself lazily upon the grass beside the clear water and Narcissus-like toyed with his own reflected image. Finally he grew tired of that vanity and indulged in a far greater one. He began to stare at the sun and would have, no doubt, eyed old Phoebus out of countenance had not the merry ring of voices awakened him to the realities of life and reminded him that, after all, he was but a foolish Clytia. Perhaps, he might have been less.

He looked aside and there to his surprise, seated in a phaeton were his two friends, his cousin Jennie Frier and her companion Pansy Sky. Miss Frier drew up the phaeton close to the road side, and after both stepping out and throwing back their clusters into the vehicle, and, after adjusting their external appearances to please the imaginative eye of Frier, or perhaps their own, they shook hands.

“Why Jennie that is a nose-gay for Venus,” said Frier as he gazed upon a choice combination of hot-house flowers which were adjusted artistically to her bosom. “May I smell them?” continued Frier.

“Certainly, Harry,” said Miss Frier, little aware of the trick he was about to perform. He went to smell the flowers and as Jennie bent down her face to look upon him, Frier gently kissed her cheek instead.

"But truly Jennie I *am* glad to see you, and Pansy, you look well. You are out early this morning, are you not?"

"Yes, cousin," replied Miss Frier, "the morning air is so refreshing, so fragrant and all that, so filled with the music of the birds, that, for the last two years, I have fallen insensibly into the custom of early driving. I start from home, drive over Clifton and Mt. Auburn, thread my way through the most interesting parts of the suburbs, view the familiar landscape, inhale the sweet air and then return home, feeling, indeed, strengthened and enlivened for the duties of the day."

"I presume" said Frier, "that this is the cause of your unusual height?"

"O, you are always talking about my height. I guess I had better—"

"No! I guess you had better not," returned Frier, as he struck her gently on the cheek with his hand and smiled at her.

"But pardon me, Harry, I believe I forgot something," said Miss Frier, somewhat amazed.

"Why, what is that?" interrogated Frier.

"My good manners, Harry. But it is never too late to mend, they say. So come, Pansy, allow me to acquaint you with my cousin, Mr. Harry Frier."

"Thanks! Jennie," replied Frier, "but I have met her before. In fact, we are old friends."

"Indeed," replied Jennie, as she gazed doubtfully, at Pansy and Mr. Frier. "Indeed!"

"Why, certainly!" said Frier. "Surely it is not a crime to be acquainted? Nor even a cause for surprise. Yes, Jennie, we are old friends, old, you know. Our friendship has moss all over it. Has it not Pansy?"

Pansy blushed and amused herself counting the buttons on her tiny shoe. Pansy was a young lady of just eighteen summers. Fair

as the roses which hung blushing from her bosom. A little mischievous sort of girl she seemed, with her face hid under a large straw hat. She was very plump in her physical appearance, and, as for her walk, it was characterized by a peculiar bend, which, by the way, was all the fashion. But she gave to him no reply.

The three then busied themselves in the usual vanities of fashionable conversation, such as dinners spent here, socials there, *soirees* here and tea parties there, candy-pullings here and surprises there, nonsense here and nonsense there, until, at last, growing tired of rehearsing a song that has five hundred odd verses, but all of the same nature, they took advantage of the waiting horse and drove quickly out of the village lawn. The steed trotted away amid a cloud of dust, and at a rate perfectly satisfactory to Mr. Frier and the ladies. And thus they spent the greater part of the morning until dinner time grew near, when Twilight, for that was the horse's name, entered into the portals of the dark stable, where the hostler received him with remarkable attention.

Before we journey on any further, it will be well for us to describe the Frier Mansion, as it was called. It stood on a gently sloping hill looking upon all the four points of the compass. The house was conspicuous for miles around, and the traveler who journeyed that way would often pause to wonder at its singular appearance, and inquire of the owner. It was not, however, a miracle of architecture. But it was odd, and oddities, to a greater or less degree, charm the observing eye. True, it was prepossessing and beautiful, yet it was retired and simple. Adorned with no extravagant waste of art material, or prodigal display of talent or genius. Yet it was marked by some lines and curves of beauty. But nowhere could be seen any traces of the Gothic or Corinthian schools. Skirting the foot of the hill was a drive which led, after branching off into quite a number of ramifications, to the mansion itself. These ramifications had the effect to give beauty to the hill, and to furnish certain convenient as well as

interesting places for flowers, shrubs and trees. Toward the east, and gently curving toward the small lake, where the frogs, notwithstanding the gardener's "Take Notice, No Frogs Admitted," were accustomed to congregate, was a lawn. Here the numerous friends of the Friars were wont to gather and indulge in the general games of rural sport. The Friar property covered about twenty acres. It was, indeed, beautifully surrounded. Way off toward the north were the purple woods. Toward the east and south lay the slumbering village. Toward the west were large fields of waving corn, oats and fruit trees filled with mellowed leaves. Such were the characteristics of the place.



CHAPTER III.

Frier, after leaving the ladies, and after talking a few moments with Mrs. Frier and her neice, retired into the private room of his cousin, Frank Frier. Frank was a highly educated man and skilled in the leading questions of science. Prosperity had not blessed him with her abundance without his proper reciprocation, for he so utilized his means and time that he soon became the model of an unfailing integrity and noble character. They were soon busied in philosophic reveries. After reviewing the questions of evil and good as mere relations, and passing over the fact that man's adjustment to cause and effect is the real and only end of existence, Mr. Frank Frier said—

“Characters, like civilization, are the creatures of an evolving intelligence, depending not only upon the adjustment of cause and effect to being, but also upon the great principles of destiny. We all know that in the prehistoric ages man was closely akin to the lower animals. He had a spiritual nature, but all its powers and forces of development were dormant in consciousness. His aspirations were impeded by passion and appetite, and his intelligence was even on par with his spiritual qualities. It was a perpetual struggle with man to emancipate himself from self, and submit to the noblest ideals of life. And so, all along the line of history we see how man was, of his own accord, compelled to endure the pangs from broken laws and violated principles.

“There is a knowable and an unknowable. The one is built on

science, the other on faith. We may know only that which comes within the grasp of consciousness. We may hope for the knowledge of the unknowable."

"But are we satisfied?" queried Frier.

"No! Mankind is, has been, and always will be adventurous. He will push investigation even beyond the regions of possibility. And doubting reports, records and philosophies, he will plunge blindly into the mysteries of God. But yet wisdom has a charm, precious and lasting. Her cheeks are always flushed with immortal beauty. Her proportions are enchanting. Her eyes have the fulness of loveliness and coquetry, and we shall listen to her teachings when care is a forgotten thing, and when time has broken all crucibles, destroyed all art, and rolled up the heavens like a scroll.

Yet there is a revelation of which we can boast with some degree of certainty, and that is the revelation of Nature. Now, whether man evolved from an animal very low in regard to being, or, whether he was created out of the dust of the earth, in the twinkle of an eye, are questions which are still coupled with much unexplained mystery. We know, however, that—

"To every form of being is assigned,
An active principle, how'er removed,
From sense and observation: it subsists
In all things, in all nature, in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds
That pave the brook."

"Indeed, we are privileged to say more. We know that every effect has some antecedent cause. That back of every phenomenon there is an active principle of life and purpose. So it is just as impossible for us to conceive of the universe and of its laws, without thinking equally of a primal everlasting cause, as it is to think of space without length, and matter without form. Because Newton placed the universe into the hands of law, it does not follow that law is independent. Were we forced to believe this, man would justly ask the question

who or what fashioned the law. Electricity may produce heat, heat affinity, affinity light, and light in turn electricity. All this is true. But back of all these kinships and relations of forces there is a cause still unknown. There is a relativity of forces, as of ideas, and however round and perfect the circle may be, still we must admit that all their phenomena depend alike upon that invisible power, which escapes the chemist as well as the philosopher in all his experiments and deductions. There is a principle behind the flower, and in all the changing varieties of the vegetable life, there is prevalent a vitality which is the organizing element of their infinite forms and relations. So the body of the universe moves on, and so the intelligent spirit is manifested day by day."

"Do you believe," said his cousin, "that evolution is for the betterment of mankind?"

"Certainly I do. Each age has its decay. Each decay has its new growths and civilizations. The powerful eras of the centuries may pass away with all their institutions, but not without leaving in their decaying elements some germs whose destinies point to the higher and grander development. Along the line of natural growth is seen the ruins of governments, dynasties and people. The strong has ever subdued the weak, while the impartial force of love is working her beauties in the fabric of evolving civilizations. Right, the protection to the weak and misfortunate is overcoming the destructive element of might. Barbarism is rapidly emerging into the light of the common safety. Fire, scourge, pestilence, earthquakes, finally all natural phenomena are no longer the signs of God's wrath, but the disciplinary means for man's growth and culture. All customs and habits are fringed with the sunlight of reformation. The good has always outlived the evil, and justice is transplanting cruelty and anarchy. The better times are coming to all governments, and Greek as well as Barbarian will soon have the like privilege of enjoying the liberty and peace of the larger and grander life."

"It has taken man a long time," interrupted Frier, "to know himself."

"Ah! that is a fact too true. And when Byron exclaims, in his *Childe Harold*,

"Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,"

We must remember that she was only such in reality to those who obeyed her laws. Law is her established order, and when you put your finger between Nature's cogs she will crush it, whether you are a Pagan or a Christian. Habitual sacrifices to Nature, for open violations of her laws, did not bring reconciliation or peace to the mind of the savage. Nature offers no apologies or terms of compromise. Her penny for penny is an undeniable fact. She gives proper compensation for all levies on her worth and dignity. Nor does she ever counterfeit. There is one grand fact about nature, and that is she never bears false witness. Her records are always reliable, and her laws are for the benefit of the obedient and wise, as well as for the instruction of the ignorant and unfortunate.

"Indeed, it took a long time. It took years and ages for the popular mind to frame that state of intellectual organization which permitted them, without any remorse of conscience, to tear down the blue Olympus of tradition and establish the true religion where Greek is equal to Barbarian, and where all men are proportionately endowed with the liberty of law. We must not cruelly break the idols of the savage nor destroy the books of superstition, for they are the historic links which unite the old with the new, and chain the changing circle of development to one fundamental principle of progress and association. The good and evil are always with us, for they are of matter and life. To do wrong is just as possible now as it was in years gone by. Civilization is an old quality of body and spirit. Like the earth, it has its transits, eclipses and geographic changes. Progress disseminates the light and scatters the forces of darkness. Each age is an upward

step although its component parts are oftentimes retrograding. Every passion mastered is a spiritual gain. Conditions are changing, human natures are changing, everything is changing, yet the results seem proportioned. Our only hope of happiness is, finally, in this channel, to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good; and the issues of our life will, inevitably, be among green pastures and beside still waters."

"But, do you believe," said Harry Frier, who had been as patient in his listening as his cousin had been in talking, "that all animals are possessed of an *Ego*?"

"Certainly I do. But they possess it only in a limited sense. Intelligence is but a *nom de plume* for knowledge. And what we call instinct, in the lower animal, is but another name for nascent power that enables the animal to judge of the relations about him. But I was going to conclude, in my present remarks upon man's evolution from a lower life, that it was only as he cast off his barbarism, laid down the physical and acquired the spiritual, subdued inordinate passion and appetite, that he became more intimately acquainted with Nature, himself and his destiny. I could have enlarged on the subject, and have told how man has really emerged from the chrysalis of weakness and ignorance into the better forms of life. I could have quoted history to vindicate the fact, that the New Jerusalem is not to come down out of heaven, but that we as individual mechanics are to build up that glorious, ideal city, that Utopia, whose power, strength and beauty will reach up into heaven. The city then will be built up into heaven, let us say."

CHAPTER IV.

Frier fell into a meditation. He thought how time was a "beautifier of the dead and adorning of the ruin." How wisdom brings about the right adjustments of cause and effect. And he said to himself, "I cannot overleap the property of my being, although I am a free moral agent. I am hemmed in by reasonable impossibilities. I must think and labor within the license of existence, and walk patiently along the line of law. To overstep the boundary on either side is to bring upon my own head condemnation and pain."

But he was relieved from any further soliloquy by an interruption from his cousin.

"Harry, is it not a cause of much wonder to you how some men do succeed in life? I have often wondered how future actions could ever compensate for a past spent in riotous living, and full of stumbling error and failure. I have marveled at sluggish youth in all his aims and purposes, but yet my face was soon colored with surprise when I found him successful in old age, having finally wrested from fate his wished for prize. I have looked down with much pity upon those who were, in their wild days, reckless, indifferent and ignorant; but my eyes soon brightened with joy, when I found that, by a turn of life, a determination to conquer themselves and opposing agencies, they at last won the admiration and well done, which is the fruit only of a diligent, sacrificing and careful life."

"Yes, Frank, it is a surprising thing to me how some men do succeed in life. Their youth is spent in idleness, and their age of severe responsibility is filled with trifles and error. Yet to some individuals the question of success is of no great moment. Their whole being is pervaded by a consciousness that they will succeed, and that suffices. They seldom look to superficial gains, to letters of recommendation or degrees of honor, but they plod on in the common path of life, in the pilgrimage of common humanity, growing daily in purpose and energy, by a diligent application, until they tower above the level of their fellows. Life to them is not a mathematical problem, made up of proportioned results and evenly balanced accounts, but it is a Thy will be done, strong and perpetual. Yes, we may build our houses upon the earth, but if the earth is sand our houses will soon fall. So with character, our principles must be rooted in virtue and integrity."

Here the call for dinner rang through the hall, and Frier, in company with his cousin Frank, walked leisurely down the velvet staircase toward the dining room. When they had passed the first flight of the stairs Frank Frier paused.

"By the bye, Harry, your little dove is out here?"

"Yes," replied Frier, "she met me at Vernemus. She is staying here for a short time, is she not?"

"Well, yes, Harry. She came here last Sunday, and has been here ever since. She will be in the city this coming Sunday night, I presume. At all events, Harry, don't miss your opportunity. She is passing fair and rich too, and —"

"Were she as rich as Croesus and as beautiful as Helen I could love her no more than I now do."

"So, you really love her, Harry? Well! But mark my word, you will not be with her a very long time. You are young, twenty

years? Well! That love is transitory and unsubstantial in most cases. And she Harry—she is as fickle as an April day!”

“Enough, Frank! That is for me to discover, and until I do, I shall never change my present feeling.”

“So persist, Harry, but the road will soon bend. You have her ring, too? Nay, do not deceive me. Come, Harry, I wish to be just to you. I know that that very ring has been on the finger of two before you. Nay, do not frown at me, for I tell you the truth.”

The dinner call was again sounding out upon the quiet air, and both, in order to avoid further demonstration of the same, proceeded into the dining room.

After dinner several of the ladies of the village made their appearance. The various games were brought forth, including croquet, lawn tennis and archery. And so at these various games of amusement they busied themselves until twilight set in, when the ladies retired to their respective homes, amid merry laughter, cheerful words, songs and good-byes.

But Frier and Pansy, locking arms, sauntered off to the little meadow and the little brook (which seldom have a real existence), in search of wild flowers and anything but—love. They passed quietly under the fragrant arbor, the fruit trees, crossed the road, plucked a few leaves from the roadside shrubs, threw them carelessly into the air, and sat down at the roots of a large walnut tree amid all the sweet associations of the occasion. The soft zephyrs stealing out upon the air were rustling among the leaves. The indistinct murmurs of the babbling brook could just be heard. The old fashioned crickets were chirping their love ditties among the rocks and grasses, and the fireflies who mimic the light of heaven were sparkling here and there in the air. The rosy tints of the setting sun were now tipping the tree tops with gold and purple, and all objects losing their distinctive individualities, were one with the somber tints of night.

"There is a beauty in twilight," said Frier, as he looked dreamingly at the setting sun, "that I never can explain. The night blending imperceptibly with the day, remind me often of life and death. These flowers at our feet, yes, these tiny blades of grass, are all passing elements, Pansy."

"Yes, and this is a passing element," said Pansy, as she laid her head upon his shoulder. "But I was going to say, Harry," continued Pansy, "I was going to say —"

"Well, what is it, Pansy," inquired Frier.

"I was going to say, that the best seasons of our life are passed in just such moments as these."

And as she said this she placed her hands about his neck and looked languidly into his face. Frier drew his arm about her and pressed her to himself.

They fain would have remained in this place forever. But there must be a cessation of happiness. And the silver cord must be broken, alas, too soon. The night had rushed down from the sky, and the dew was now kissing the animate as well as inanimate objects as a token of her impartiality. Pansy and Frier remained there for a long time, but at length arose and went slowly away to the mansion singing softly in united voices a ditty to the primrose,

"The stars are sweet at eventide,
But cold, and far away;
The clouds are soft in summer time,
But all unstable they:
The rose is rich—but pride of place
Is far too high for me—
God's simple common things I love—
My primrose, such as thee."

They retired that night, but not without a kiss at parting, to their respective rooms. And when the sun proclaimed the birth of a new day, Frier took breakfast, bade good-bye to Pansy and to his relatives, and went to town on the six-thirty train.

CHAPTER V.

It will be proper here to describe the house wherein Herbert Snowdown found his temporary home. It was a large three-story brick, the front portion being beautifully decorated and embellished. It was situated on one of the out of the way thoroughfares of the city, and in consequence of two large trees which stood in the front, there was always around the house numerous birds, to make the gloomy hours of the inmates, if gloomy hours they had, full of sunshine and life. The house, however, was quite old and dilapidated ; yet it wore very well, and on its face still lingered some traces of its youthful beauty. No ivy grew on its sides, nor was there any sign of a statue to grace the garden walk. Everything in and about the place was adjusted to the modern principles of economy and usefulness. The only ornaments, if ornaments they may be called, were groups of little dirty faced boys, emblems of ragged humanity, who made the territory about this house their headquarters and local temple. And, sitting in groups about the curbstones, they would relate of "Jack the Giant Killer," "Jack and the Bean Stalk" and "Cinderella," and each one, with untold delight, would spin out some new and interesting story they had recently heard, and thus while away their precious time far from their mother's fond caresses.

The inner apartments bore some traces of refinement. But the walls, even though they were newly papered, were moldy and damp, while the ceilings were quite dusty, and the woodwork unvarnished.

All the rooms were to let save those occupied by Miss Jennings, a dress-maker, Mr. Quintus, a lawyer, and Harry Frier, his coequal, Mr. Randall, Mr. Herbert Snowdown, the artist, and the landlord, a very easy going man, who occupied, with his family, three rooms on the lower floor. Mr. Quintus had his office on the second floor, directly opposite to that of Miss Jennings, and, owing to Miss Jennings's mild disposition and the principles of female liberty that she advocated, he had nailed a sign upon his door bearing the following laughable inscription, "All Information upon questions of Woman's Suffrage and the Genesis of a better Female Existence can be had within, Free of Cost." And every one who entered Miss Jennings's door would pause to read the contents of that so-called "Second Declaration of Independence," and it gave them vim to plead their cause and work their end, to demand a tighter fit or a narrower waist from Miss Jennings.

But the apartment of Mr. Snowdown is particularly interesting. His studio was situated on the third floor, and, from any of the windows of his room one could get a fine view of the neighboring landscape. His room resembled a studio in all respects. The dressing room was separated from the studio proper by a large drooping curtain made of fine green cashmere. The studio was embellished with paintings of his own hand. The walls were hung with some remnants of mediæval armor, crayons and bas-reliefs. Here hung the full size drawing of Venus de Medici, there, the huge form of the Gladiator and Discobus, and in the corners, where the shadows found a reasonable shelter, Herbert had placed a brazen armor and huge vases, the gifts of his old art companions. On the windowsill were a few scraps of bric-a-brac, and in them were growing those flowers that he treasured so dearly. He had two curiously carved pallets, emblems of genius, hanging on the wall near the window. And close to the same window, where the sun poured in his yellow gold, he had placed his easel.

"A moth it is to trouble the mind's eye," said Herbert, as he

entered the studio. Could that Mr. Mackelsalt be the possessor of her fortune, and could he be wilfully keeping her in social degradation, was a question that he could not answer. And he pondered seriously upon the conversation of last week, looking through every circumstance in search of the cause of Lethe's grief, but he came to no definite result. The more he studied her condition, however, the deeper grew his interest, and he longed for another conference.

It may be a false saying that misery loves company, but Herbert, who had never known a day flooded with sunshine since he was cast upon his own responsibilities, fully sympathized with Lethe. Herbert was not a stranger to sorrow. His life long ago was moored in its harbor. Only at times would he catch a stray glimpse of happiness, and that would be at twilight. Then, indeed, his affections, like weary birds eager for a home of rest and quietude, would wing their ideal flight up the path of floating sunshine toward a fairer shore.

In the city Herbert was not patronized; yet he labored with brush and pallet, among the best and cultured of society, and yet he was surprisingly neglected. His neglect, however, cannot be attributed to any lack of real merit in his oil and water colors, for, at the Academy, and among foreign exhibitors, and wherever his name was mentioned, he was spoken of as an artist equal to any of his time. Besides, he found among art loving people, generally, a genial soul, among whose influences he loved to be. At the Academy he had carried off the first of her prizes, and had thus gained a local reputation. His prizes he would fain have coined into much usefulness, but he could not. Like Jean Francois Millet, and yet so unlike him, he never painted for public taste, nor sacrificed natural enthusiasm, or nascent genius for popular applause. Perhaps, this was one of the main causes for his frequent suffering, deprivation and casual despair.

"Yet, let it be so," he would say, "for nobility to me is a common

heritage, equally endowed by the Creator upon all his children." And so he would not draw the line in society between rich and poor, learned and unlearned. But philosophy is worth, seemingly, very little in an age of business prowess, dollar and cents, and mercantile advancement. And poetry, as well as art are good only to be studied in deserted Alhambras, ruined mosques, back, way back among times immemorial and wrinkled ages.



CHAPTER VI.

So thought Herbert. At least his countenance seemed to have an expression which betokened that thought, as he gazed out of an open window upon the half deserted street.

It was midday, and the sun was boiling away in the azure sky.

Just as he was about to resume his work, Mr. Frier, his satellite Mr. Quintus, and Mr. Randall opened the door, and after exchanging hearty shakes of the hand, seated themselves here and there about the room.

"I say, Herb," said Mr. Randall, "you had better remove that painting from the easel or you will freeze us out."

Mr. Randall was referring to a snowstorm which Mr. Snowdown had but recently painted, and one in which he brought out the effect of cold and chilliness almost to a reality.

"Yes," returned Herbert, "there *is* something cold about that picture. I had to use my overcoat and hat while I was painting it."

Hereupon Mr. Randall smiled, and asked Herbert how he got along with hunger and poverty.

Whereupon Herbert said, that, "whenever he wished a rich apple or a luscious pear, or any other article of food, all he had to do was to paint the article desired, and then set table and have the banquet."

Here Mr. Randall and Quintus enjoyed a hearty laugh, while Mr. Snowdown, stepping aside, began to explain the philosophy of his new oil, called "The prodigality of beauty," to Mr. Randall.

"By the bye, Herb," said Frier, interrupting them, "how about the portrait of Miss Adelaide Sky?"

As he said this, he ejected from his upper vest pocket an old silver time piece and was deeply absorbed in its chronological history.

"It is almost finished, Mr. Frier; just a few more touches and you may have it."

"About what time, Herb?"

"Well—say—about three days," returned Herbert.

"Very well," returned Frier. "I am perfectly satisfied. But the more so since I shall not disappoint the sister of my affection. Humph, pardon me, gentlemen, I mean—"

"Oh, we know what you mean," returned the trio, almost spontaneously. "Why, certainly, Frier, we know what you mean," repeated Herbert. "But don't let the Pansy wilt in your hands. Pansies are very frail flowers, you know, fond of the shade. Don't give them too much sunlight; but, gentlemen," continued Herbert, placing his hands upon the shoulders of Mr. Quintus and Randall, "if he plays the troubadour he will come out all right."

Saying this Herbert smiled, and the rest followed in laughter. But Frier was not to be defeated with a trifle, for hopping around the studio with an old tambourine, which he had taken down from its place on the wall, and adjusting his shape to some self-pleasing attitude, and cocking his hat on one side and assimilating a very defiant look, he burst out:

"Oh, ho! I'll be a very nice a-la-de-troubadour. But I'll make the Montagues fly. I'll be the Capulet and all the suitors put together."

"That's enough, Frier," said Quintus, "on that statute, so *gether* it up and put it in your pocket."

"Very well, Mr. Quintus," said Frier, "it shall be as you say."

So saying, the three lawyers taking up their hats stepped out of the door into the hall.

"A moment, Herb," said Frier, looking about him.

"Well, Mr. Frier?"

"Did I leave anything behind?"

"Not that I know of," returned Herbert.

"Why, certainly I did, certainly I did," urged Frier.

"Well, what is it?" said Herbert, growing somewhat impatient.

"My—my—best wishes," said Frier, as he hastily withdrew.

Here they smiled, and Herbert, lighting a match, in order that they might see their way down the stairs safely (for it was very dark there even at midday), bade them good-night.

It was but four o'clock, and Herbert, seating himself at an open window where the soft zephyrs, laden with the perfumes of the garden flowers, floated into the room, began to sleep.

The weary hours wore on, and still he slept. The twilight set in, and night, pouring down her dark shades from distant realms, spread a soft cloak of sable darkness over all the world and still he slept. The planets came out, as heralds of the night, and then the stars, and then Charles Wane peeped above the northern horizon. And still he slept! What cared he now for the trials of the day, for the bread of the future, for the perplexing problems of life.

Sleep brings to some life a glorious calm. It drives away the gnawing tooth of torture. It breaks the bonds of self. It sets the captive soul at liberty and peace. Perhaps, even now, he was loitering with Lethe along some shady nook, or, in close embrace, was talking of a home which the hopes and joys of many years had been building. Perhaps, he was among the dear companions of his learned art, with the first patrons and founders of the Italian school, with Cimabue and Giotto and their illustrious retinue. Perhaps he was in pleasant chat with Parhasius, or

Apelles, or even Protogenes? Who could tell, or who dared to hope or think otherwise.

But hush! his hands grow restless; the calm has left his face and troubled clouds seem to flit over every feature. Large drops of perspiration fall from his face. What can all this mean? How sudden the change. Thank God! the restless spirit has left him, and his face is again calm, serene, happy.

But no! the angry demon has come again. Fate wrestles with his joy. The vulture is at his vitals. He rises. He grapples with the shadows. He speaks.

“Take my hand from your throat? No! Give me the girl; tell me the truth. The money, give them to me, or by heaven, I’ll throw you, feeble as you are, with all your weakness, dead upon the floor.”

Just then he awoke. The room was very dark. He looked wildly about him. He hastily lit a candle, and taking it in one hand moved toward the door. It was closed. He went to the window. It was open, and the bric-a-bras along its sill were undisturbed. He scanned each separate object, but all was safe, and displayed no signs of removal or commotion. He then brushed his hands through his hair, rubbed his eyes, and could scarcely force himself to believe that he was conscious. At last, sinking in the same chair from which he arose, he muttered to himself, “thank God, it was but a dream.”



CHAPTER VII.

After a night spent in restless sleep Herbert arose, dressed himself, and ate a few slices of bread. He then seated himself at his easel, and was about to work on a sketch for the Academy, when he heard a queer sort of noise on the stair-case. Herbert's door was open and he could distinctly hear all that was spoken.

"Ha! Say? Ah! hic-H'rb. Pshaw—h—what am I say-y-g."

"What does this mean," said Herbert to himself, "somebody calling my name!"

Half startled, he ventured toward the door, but the voice still continued.

"Hello, 'ere—say—a—Her—ya—a—wher's Har'y——yerb—eh?"

Hereupon Herbert came to a front to front encounter with the gentleman. He had a very fashionable carry, but its strength was marred by a little dissipation.

"Mr. Randall, I suppose?" said Herbert.

He did not recognize him. And to his easy rolled out interrogatory — "Hello, there—eh--wher's Fr-i-r-boy—la-hic-hic-ic—eh?"

Herbert responded, "Why, right over there."

"Right over 'ere—eh?"

"Yes; one whirl down the stairs, sir, one whirl down the stairs, then turn to your right, sir, turn to your right; name is on the door, name is on the door, sir."

Herbert thought he had better repeat the facts once or twice in order that the impression might be more lasting.

"Frier, eh?" reiterated Mr. Randall.

"The same, sir," said Herbert.

"Thank—a—sir—yes—t'right, eh—ah?"

"Yes; turn to your right," Herbert repeated, as Randall moved down the stairs.

Herbert returned to his studio, scarcely influenced by this untimely and rude intrusion. Seating himself at his accustomed place he pored thoughtfully over his canvas. He was remarkably struck by the effect of Chiaroscuro, the beauty of the distant hills and the purple clouds, the soft velvety grass, the waving trees and the passing birds, until he thought that the painted landscape was Nature itself, although it was but the fiction of thought and the product of a vivid imagination. The grass began to wave, the birds began to sing, the clouds began to move, and Herbert felt upon his flushed cheek the fanning breezes of Springtime, and he saw walking on the roadside the images of two well known personages, and one indeed was Lethe Reynolds.

"Ah!" thought Herbert, "such is the beauty of an imagination. It gives to death the stamp of life and to inanimate objects the motion of being. Creating out of color the medium of happiness and joy, and giving to every fond, lingering hope a blessed habitation."

And thus he mused, and thus he felt, as he laid on the canvas each separate color. At last, weary and tired, he arose and moved toward the door. He did not intend to replenish his pallet with new color, nor fill the oil vessel with fresh oil, but he laid aside his implements, his brushes, mahl stick and rule, and was about to read some late art journal, when he was startled by seeing on the floor near the closed door two letters. No envelopes were about them. Hastily reseating himself he opened the folded paper. Both letters were written in a lady's hand. The first read thus:

“MY DEAREST!—

“I have been working very hard to-day endeavoring to finish my dress. I succeeded in finishing the skirt, but the rest remains still undone. My dear boy, you mentioned in your note the thought of individual remembrance; please believe me that never a moment or second passes but what you are with me. Do you fully realize what you have said to me? I almost feel confident that you are too hasty in your judgment; I am *unworthy* of all you confess. You now ask for a letter full of life. No words, paper or pencil can express my feelings. But I beg you, as an act of personal favor, that you earnestly reconsider what you have said in the past, and see if you will not, some day, perhaps in the near and approaching future, regret of all you have so openly confessed. Now this may seem foolish to you, but I would have you do just as I say, and perhaps you may thank me. You spoke, in your last letter, of the College of Music, of the grand opportunities afforded for musical enjoyment and the like. You further said that we were watched very closely. This is not strange; I fully expected it. Oh, well, what care I? Let the people wonder, let them say all they may, I will remain as ever your frail but ever constant,

PANSY.”

“P. S.—O that to-morrow would be to-day! But I shall wait, and long and watch until that precious hour comes.

PANSY.”

Herbert continued to read the second letter:

* “MY DEAREST!—

“What a strange being I am. How fickle and how changeable. Surely I was misnamed when they called me Pansy, I ought to have been called chameleon. What kind of an opinion must you have of me, by this time? Adelaide is in a great hurry and flurry, and—well, I won’t say anymore—to get her dresses finished, since the wedding is coming off so very, very soon. So I have been sewing and busying myself about the house all day, finding scarcely any time at all to even think of you. But, my dear, dear boy, come down this coming Sunday eve, will you? And yet, how long that time does indeed seem. But I will wait. So my dear Bob

“Au revoir.

Yours forever,

PANSY.”

“P. S.—Write soon.”

“Bob! Bob! Pansy! And so you are in love with Mr. Randall,” said Herbert, as he refolded the letters. “Well, well, I am sorry indeed. How hearts do change and drift! Now they are

touched by the fire of beauty, now enhanced by the grandeur and character of the soul. Now they are led away by the mere phantom of sight. Now, wedded to the pillar of monumental friendship, they are slaves to true love and faithfulness. But yet," thought Herbert, "the flowers change, natures change, minds change, and why should not the heart? Ah! too true! But yet, only as the heart is purified of the alloy of sin, as it becomes firmly rooted in the soil of eternal truth, virtue and character, does it become less fickle and vacillating."

Herbert thought of rereading them, when he heard a scuffle on the second floor. Soon the cry of help was borne through the air. The sound was gone, and all was again quiet. Herbert listened intensely.

"What's that—and you say this to me Bob? By heaven I'll not stand it. She vowed herself to me. I'll barter every thing. Yes, by heaven, and life, if it must needs be."

These words sounded very much like the words of Mr. Frier. Again Herbert listened.

"Take that, and—" but the sentence was lost in the din of noise from the sewing girls. Herbert put on his hat and hastened to the office of Mr. Frier. He rushed in the room amid the screams and confusion of the women, and there met his eyes a picture which his memory will never efface from his consciousness. There was Mr. Randall and Mr. Frier in close contest, grappling with each other. Nor did they desist when Herbert entered, for they seemed in dead earnest, and their countenances were fixed steadily upon each other.

Herbert, without a word, rushed in between them, and exerting the fulness of his strength, tore them asunder. Mr. Randall reeled to the floor seemingly unconscious.

"What does this mean, gentlemen, come, tell me the cause?"

A dead silence ensued. But Mr. Frier, urged on by the fiery

demon of his present condition, rushed again at his opponent, and was about to repeat his former conduct, had not Mr. Snowdown intercepted him.

"I'll tell you, Herb, I'll not endure his conduct. The devil take him. Drunk too. Humph! A nice fellow to come here and intrude on my business hours. Besides, who pays for this office?"

When he had ended this he rushed at Mr. Randall, and picking him up, bore him down the stairs and laid him on the pavement below, where God only knew, who would take care of him or pity his infirmities.

The sewing girls had by this time retired into their respective room, and were resuming their special duties. But Miss Jennings, immediately upon entering the room, opened a discussion among her disciples upon the questions of social reform, in which she declared that not only the best circles of society were becoming contaminated with the filth and lucre of earth, but also our learned professors who hold the most prominent positions in the schools of learning were forgetting their principles of reform and were losing their wits in love and connubial friendship. She maintained that the rising race of Eve was too good for the falling race of Adam. And she boldly affirmed that she would remain at her machine, and stitch, stitch, stitch, before she would give any man the occasion for quarrel in her behalf. In all these sentiments the disciples fully concurred, nor did they venture a suggestion or remark by way of variety or contradiction.

"I can't stand it, Herb," said Frier to Mr. Snowdown, as he returned from the street, "my nature rebels against such actions."

"What actions, Frier?" asked Herbert.

"Why, the man must be mad. Coming to my room, and in my very presence insulting a virtuous girl! I love Pansy Sky! And no one, Herb, shall mar her character or sully her name."

“No one should undermine a good character, or even speak evil of it,” said Herbert, in sympathy and love. “But are you sure she loves you?”

“Am I sure?” returned Frier, without a moment’s hesitation, “am I sure? Do the rivers flow into the ocean, do the springs feed the rivers, do the dews feed the spring. So, the dews, springs, rivers of her affection terminate in my soul.”

“But has she confessed all this?” argued Herbert.

“Ay! and more,” replied Frier; “and, as a proof, you need but read this letter.”

And he gave to Herbert one of the letters of her own confession. But Herbert kindly refused to read it, saying that it was not proper, nor did he deem it right for him to peruse her letters. But yet Mr. Frier insisted, and so Mr. Snowdown read the following:

“MR. FRIER,

“My Dear Friend—

“Many thanks for that kind letter that I received from you this morning. Harry, have you not a faint recollection of the conversation we had not long since. From that day my heart, my very life has been with you. I remember the old walnut tree and all its happy associations. I call to mind the babbling brook, the setting sun. I love to remember the old mansion itself, the casement arched with the green ivy, the old gate, that familiar scene of so many a girlish sport. I can see the stable and the martin’s old hereditary nest. It is at Vernemus where memory loves to linger and abide. Here our love was matched, and in the tower, when, with startled step we scaled the ladder, we first imprinted the mutual kiss and sealed our affections. But, Harry, do not think me rash for confessing all this. For within is that feeling and fountain from which issues all that I now confess.

I would like you, provided you have abundant leisure, to attend with me a recital at the College. I refer to Thursday eve. How I love to further explain my feelings to you, but never mind, good-bye.

“I am yours,

PANSY.”

“P. S.—Think of me.”

“Well,” said Herbert, after some calm reflection, “it seems rather suspicious.”

“Suspicious?” returned Frier.

“Yes; but there is no need of alarm, never mind. That she loves you is evident. But her gray eye is a very troublesome article, Frier.”

“But what of it?”

“A good deal of it! You know what our mutual friend Byron says—

‘Tis an old lesson: time approves it true,
And those who know it best, deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost;
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honor lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.’

“This is the old hobby, Frier. How do you like it?”

But Frier did not speak, and, while he was deeply absorbed in reflection and self-examination, Herbert continued:

“Not much he kens, I ween, of woman’s breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs,
What careth she for hearts when once possess’d?
Do proper homage to thine idol’s eyes!
But not too humbly, or she will despise
Thee and thy suit though told in moving tropes;
Disguise even tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon passion crowns thy hopes.”

“Herbert,” said Frier, “why tease me like a demon, why feed me with stones, why heap upon my shoulders the weight of Atlas or Olympus. Nature is my mother, not Art. I have but one star, one heaven, one haven: they are Pansy, happiness, rest. Take these from me, and I am adrift upon an angry sea, without a star to guide me, a heaven to feed me, a haven to enter. Away! teach me no corrupted art nor wile of Saturn. I’ll act as a man, and if that is worth its current stamp, it will be well. And we, in bonds of eternal friendship, like Juno’s swans, shall, indeed, move coupled and inseparable.”

“Very well, Frier,” replied Herbert, you are a man. As such I give you my hand. Keep your eye upon virtue and the end of all your purposes will indeed be glorious.

So saying they shook hands and parted.



CHAPTER VIII.

While Herbert was ascending the stairs, returning to his room, a messenger arrayed in a suit of blue, spangled with brass buttons, bade him stop. He received from him a telegram. He tore open the letter and read with trembling hands,

“Mr. Herbert Snowdown.

Your friend Clerk Roy is dead. The circumstances of his death are as yet unknown. It is thought he perished of hunger.

FRIENDS.”

“And is he dead? Poor Roy, you have had a hard road to travel,” said Herbert, as he entered his studio and seated himself upon the couch. “And died of hunger? Where were the muses, Roy? Where was that fire which stimulated your heart in former trials? Were they not sufficient to warm and feed you?”

But the answer to it all was never a word. And a deeper silence crept over the spirit of Herbert Snowdown, and wrapt his nature in its cruel shades. It will be beneficial to the friends of Herbert Snowdown, to give a short biography of this said Clerk Roy, and show, by sad anticipation, how the fate of Roy was but the finished shadow, in all its weary, sable and tremendous darkness of the living element which was rapidly consuming the life of Herbert Snowdown.

Clerk Roy was of English birth, of resolute will and undaunting purpose. He, in company with his family relations, early emigrated to the United States in search of wealth and fame. He settled down

in Cincinnati, took out his papers of naturalization, and became, in a short time, a citizen of the United States. In 1861 he put up at "Traveller's Rest," better known as "Traveller's Home," and immediately gave his services to Mr. Milan, a competent portrait painter. He, on account of Roy's startling genius and immense abilities, opened his generous heart in response to any of Roy's needs, and also, gratified him by liquidating all his incurring expenses. Roy read extensively of the best current art literature, gave his close attention to the study of antique statuary, and grew fast in the profession he had adopted. In the year 1868 he put out a composition which evinced high credit, both in respect to its handling, technique and color, and was highly exalted both by the press, connoisseur and critic as one of the best productions Cincinnati had ever seen. Even the students, who had spent their lives at the Academy, could not vie with or excel him. And although but a comparatively young man, he yet realized his wide spread and ever growing reputation. But reputation is a bubble which, however beautiful and pretty it may become, is yet filled with naught but mere emptiness, that mocks the outer brilliancy. Yet the field that Roy had chosen was not one decked with beautiful and rare flowers, fertilized by sparkling and transparent waters, nor idealized by the wand of the poet or novelist. It was, as Da Vinci, Palissat, Giotto, Turner, Millet, Blake and countless others had demonstrated before him, a path rough and thorny. This, however, he had discovered. "The path to the grave may be the same," said he to Herbert one day, "but the path to inglorious fame, to a remarkable celebrity, must and can only be attained by the truly brave."

In the year 1874 he was independent. He opened a studio of his own, took up a private course of artistic anatomy and endeavored, by a sacrifice of individual happiness, to maintain his standing, both in art circles and in society. But yet he had a hard road to travel, up many calvaries, stumbling over many sharp stones, enduring

partialism, fatigue and deprivation, suffering much from a lack of due patronage, until, driven by extremity, he sought a new home in Pennsylvania. Here his genius again spread out her quivering pinions, and fixing her eye forever on things distant and sublime, she rose, circle on circle, to the eyrie of a remarkable fame. And thus, he was amusing himself, not as a child with toys it loves to handle but understands not, but was in every respect master of the situation.

“And was it with him,” said Herbert, “I sat day after day, drawing from the same model, molding the same clay, nursing the same fond and envied ideals, trying on the imaginary laurels of fame, and searching after the never dying sunsets? And he is dead; while I still remain near the bosom of my mother city, a child to all her interests!”

While Herbert weighs in one hand his little mite of knowledge and practical experience, and, in the other, the huge possibilities of his being, he stands quivering and amazed as he looks out into the mists of the future.

“O life, of what use am I? O fate where wilt thou lead me? O give me back my childhood. Place me amid the real associations of my infancy and boyhood! Tear from my view the awful picture of torture, trial and deprivation that await me! Pluck from my burning heart the pangs of immediate torture! And yet—I should endure it all. I am a coward. I endeavor to shuffle off these scenes from my stage of action. Oh God! to thee I appeal! O days of joyfulness, of pleasant association, of sunshine, of happiness, of heaven itself! will they ever again return?”

In the depth of this meditation, he threw himself helplessly on his couch and wept bitterly. There he remained for a long time; but he arose at length and again sat upright. But when night came on he drowned his sorrow and care in sweet sleep and pleasant dreams.

CHAPTER IX.

The scenes shift. The shadows are dissipated, and the afternoon sun pours down his yellow liquid upon the mansion of Robert Sky.

"Clara, do come up stairs, I need your help!"

These words were uttered by Miss Pansy Sky, who was in the dressing room on the upper floor, busying herself with her toilet.

"I'll be up, my dear," rang out the voice of Miss Clara Love, as she bounded up the velveted staircase chanting an Italian sonata.

Miss Love was a second cousin to Miss Pansy Sky. Like all young ladies of a fashionable tenor, she was anxious to study music, and she came to Cincinnati for no other purpose than to study its theory and practice at the Cincinnati College of Music. It was in these latter years, when industry began to thrive, and the high arts, notwithstanding all the opposing agencies, began anew to lift their gray heads above the horizon of clay and sensual amusements.

Cincinnati was a great market. The paths reaching out into the four points of the compass were frequented by busy merchants and men eager for gain and profit. The four doors were thrown open, and the North, East, South and the West were shipping their choicest merchandise and richest products into the Queen City. All the wheels were in motion, and the hum of learning, the melody of music, and the noise and bustle of business mingled their notes in an untold version of the song of progress.

The School of Design was an old novelty. The University idea was, although recently new, laid upon the shelves of the past. Music was the one rumor which grew as it advanced through street and by-way. Mozart and Gounod were pantomimed, and the portraits of Beethoven, Kreuzer and Wagner were hung upon every wall, the kitchen inclusive. The superstitious housewife had knocked down the old reliable horseshoe from above the threshold and had placed there some modern harp or lyre. So the tale ran along, and so the history of the city grew.

But the College of Music was a novelty. It had been founded by the generous spirit of the citizens, and the plan was duly and justly laid out for the better education of the masses in the elements of classic and, it might be said with impunity, antique music. It furnished a partial medium for the display of the city's musical talent, and gave a stimulus to those whose genius pointed to a musical goal. It also was the means of awakening in the public breast some noble and exalting aspirations, the influences of which awoke the public taste, and these in due turn, elevated the high art of music so far above the masses, that only the fashionable classes of society whose sufficient means permitted, were able to climb up to the educated point of proper musical appreciation.

Now, to this College of Music Miss Clara Love spent the most of her precious time. The insignificant portions were spent in personal decorations, and at her silks and laces. Here, she endeavored to acquire a musical talent, and in her subsequent recitals to strive to gain the envied popularity of our national Jennie Lind. For she said herself, and everybody realized it, that nature had showered upon her a prodigal measure of genius and talent, of which she would have us to understand she was exceedingly proud. But on the other hand, if Nature was selfish in the distribution of her gifts, fortune was indeed prodigal. For she was very wealthy, and that was indeed a satisfactory compromise.

"Well, Pansy, my child," said Miss Love, as she approached her.

"Pshaw, I've a good mind to tear this skirt asunder. I've been working at it all afternoon, and still it won't set right. It won't, it won't."

And as she said this she stamped her foot on the floor and gave the skirt a flutter with pure Satanic indignation.

"I've got a good mind not to appear to-night, at all. I suppose fate has destined this. But I'll *not* be an old maid if I have to die standing up."

Here both enjoyed quite a hearty laugh. But Pansy continued.

"I don't care, I'll—"

"Come, my dear," said Miss Love, approaching her, "let me have the skirt; I'll adjust it to your waist."

She did so, and to the complete satisfaction of Pansy Sky.

"Now then, my dear," said Miss Love, arising from the position she assumed to adjust the dress, "you may appear at the dance, and show your pretty feet to the admiration of *Mr. Randall*."

But Pansy continued to look in the mirror, nor did she heed the words of her second cousin. She was not a coquette for nothing and for her to display that weakness of her nature which she herself loved to caress to Miss Love, was to give her a picture of her own fickleness and vanity. Nor had she studied the character of Juno in vain. So, after a reasonable gratification of her own vanities she lowered her eyes and with a girlish turn of the head began to toy with her own auburn tresses. She remained in that position for some minutes and then, calling to Miss Love she skipped through the hall singing,

"Know'st thou the land where citrons bloom, and where
The golden orange breaths its fragrant air?
Where winds are ever soft, and blue the skies,
Where myrtles spring and groves of laurel rise?
Know'st thou that land, my love? Away, away,
Oh might I with thee 'mid its beauty stray!"

And as she entered the upper drawing-room the sweet voice faded off into a quivering whisper and died away into a floating wave of air.



CHAPTER X.

“In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
Than man’s presumption on to-morrow’s dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain; the reverse
Is sure to none, and yet on this perhaps,
This peradventure, infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant we build
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes,
And, big with life’s futurities, expire.”

The day had now entered the portals of vesper and the starry sentinels one by one came out to watch along the wastes of night. Pansy stood at an open window and looking out into the canopy of heaven, wondered at the beauty of a perfect night. Not a cloud was in the deep sky. The trees rustled as the air swept sluggishly through the branches. The face of Nature seemed hushed in sweet repose, save where a bird slipped unheedingly from its bough, or, where the busy insect buzzed through the air, or, where the children, in answer to their mothers call, came stumbling drowsily through the shadowy by-ways.

“And, to-night, Adelaide is to be married. Blessed night, thou wer’t not made for slumber. The eyes must never lose their brightness, the feet must never grow weary on such a night as this. But let the eyes grow brighter and brighter, let the feet grow strong, let no one complain of *ennui* until the morning sun tips the distant spires and the merry ringing of church bells proclaim abroad the dawn of another day.”

So prayed Pansy, and, throwing a kiss at the starry vigils, went joyfully into the parlor.

Here indeed was much splendor and brilliancy. The chandelier was ablaze and the light, striking the hexagonal crystals spread prismatic colors over all the room. The six windows were hung with the rarest and choicest quality of lace and were neatly tied with fabrics of yellow and purple. The vases on the mantelpiece were carved of the best marble and were filled with fragrant flowers. In one corner stood the statue of Mercury made of solid bronze, and in the others, there was placed a small statue of Venus di Medici or Milo. The paintings, etchings and engravings beggared all poetic or practical description.

It seems needless to say that Mr. Sky and his wife had treasured up, in the course of thirty years, many rare paintings, vases and rugs, and in their recent travels on the Continent, they had canvassed all the great picture galleries, and had purchased from many competent merchants and dealers, a great portfolio of fine etchings and picturesque engravings. It is also needless to say that their money was expended for a good cause, when we remember that there are millions of starving people in the world, and those too, to whom the laying in of food and fuel is a serious item of expenditure.

At an early hour the parlor was comparatively full, and the happy couple, who on this night were to be united in the bonds of wedlock, were awaiting the call of the divine in the upper drawing room. At last the friends and relatives had all gathered and were seated here and there, in groups about the room, enjoying themselves in merry laughter and pleasant conversation. The time arrived; the minister read the letter of the law, and then proclaimed the envied couple man and wife. Then followed the usual season of handshaking and kissing, then the supper and then the dance.

But where was Pansy all this time? After all the guests had

repaired to the dining room, where loving hands had spread an ample repast and had loaded the table with the choicest viands, and where the atmosphere was pregnant with oyster fumes and the perfumes of salad, pineapple and other tropical fruits. Pansy, in company with Mr. Frier, stole quietly into the drawing room, and seating themselves on the embroidered sofa, began to chat upon the topic of the evening. One thought introduced another. The occasion itself added a charming tribute to the chain of ideas. The sound of merry music came floating into the room. At last, Pansy gently entwined her hands about Frier's neck, and carelessly throwing her head upon his shoulder, said,

"Harry, I'm so tired!"

"Tired of what, dear?" said Harry, as he kissed her cheek.

"Tired of thinking of—of everything, except—"

"Except what or who Pansy?" interrogated Frier, impatient to know the sequel.

"Except you, Harry," she said.

Frier pressed her closer to himself. It was a joyful season. The music became louder and louder, and the voices of the gay company could now be distinctly heard. Both in loving embrace listened to the soft notes as they floated from the lips, and, as Pansy imprinted a kiss upon Frier's flushed cheek, she heard the words:

"We come all free from sorrow,
With lightsome hearts and gay,
And we shall taste to-morrow,
What we enjoy to-day."

"Won't our life be full of melody and sunshine, Harry?"

"Yes, dear," returned Harry, "and we shall be happy forever, to-morrow as well as to-day."

They fain would have remained there amid all these pleasing associations and been contented; but happiness is like the flash of lightning—it is but for the moment. It is a nectar of the gods, too sweet for mortals to endure. It steals upon the languid senses,

ofttimes unawares, and transports us into realms of bliss. It tips the dark cloud of care that so often lowers upon the heart, with a silver star of hope. It touches the heart of resignation and of fear, and drives away all lingering pain. It comes upon us in our very dreams, and we forget that we are mortals while we stray along the cooling waters of life among the green pastures of the better land. But the flash of lightning passes away and we see and feel the bitter contrast of light and shade.

So Pansy was called from the realms of bliss and was made to feel anew the burdens of life. In order to avoid the servant, who had summoned her, and fearing lest she might betray her position, she slipped quietly and unnoticed into the hall. The servant met her as she was tripping through the dining room and bade her hasten upstairs to bid her sister farewell. While Frier, in the meantime, repairing to the dining room, amused himself with the sweet viands and rich dishes, and, in company with several of the porters, drank to the health of the bride and groom.

But when it was very late, or to be quite rather scientific, early, and the stars had passed their several meridians, and the breezes of morn were just beginning to float over the city, Mr. Frier after, bidding Pansy and the merry company farewell, went sauntering to his home.



CHAPTER XI.

"But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor seek
To wear it; who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?"

BYRON.

If human nature is universal in one quality, it is worship. The wild Arab and the American lift their eyes in worship of something higher, nobler and purer than themselves. Nor is it vain. Mind cannot be without matter, neither can love, the real incentive to worship be without its object. Human nature will and must entwine its affections upon something, and upon the monuments of art and nature will the tender affections entwine their sweetest and purest aspirations. And Narcissus, enhanced by the reflected image of his own beautiful face in a clear fountain, and Antony, who neglected Rome for Cleopatra and her beauty, represent the extreme limit of this universal quality of the human heart.

Worship among the Greeks was nothing other than the appreciation of physical action and beauty. And this idea, although greatly prevalent among modern circles of society, is gradually widening out into a grander and nobler one. It is the worship of mind and heart. As was intimated above, man cannot worship anything which is inferior to himself. And Socrates, the Greek philosopher, who not only admired the roundness and symmetry of the human form, but also the godlike capabilities of mind and heart,

grasped in one sweep of his mighty intellect, the universal and eternal tendencies of modern hero worship. Looking through the medium of virtue and beauty up to the God who made all things for the best of his children, we may discern a truth of enduring vitality, a worship that is, in all respects, for every age, clime and time. The story is told of a king, who at one time kicked some fodder to a starving animal, and when he died, the god of Nirviana cutting off the foot of the king, took it triumphantly up into heaven and worshiped it. It was a grander act, indeed, than the killing of Hypatia, the Alexandrian philosopher, who, in spite of the reproaches and calumnies of a barbarous and corrupt people, dared to be virtuous and true to her principles. Yet, only as the horizon of man's intellect lifts, as the boundaries of his heart widens, will he approach that grand and happy experience which enables him to see life as one who honors and feels for it. In this our own age, the spirit of the Hindoo god is becoming rooted and fixed in our human natures. We are becoming idolators. But our idolatry, let it be said emphatically, has its genesis in the deep spiritual demands of our human nature. It makes the Vulcan, who can forge out of trial, responsibility and sorrow, a character of strength and beauty; a Hercules, who can crush beneath his feet the passions and appetites of his nature; a Theseus, who can free the young hearts of the snares of the modern Minotaur, the sublime heroes of life, and worthy not only of universal praise but of universal worship. And an Orpheus, who can, by his music, sweeten the murderer's heart, thrill the prodigal's soul with new energy and life, temper the iron will of the tyrant, ought to be recognized as a moral Titian of the age. And so it should be, for the results of his labors are shown in the uplifting of humanity into the larger sunlight and grander field of experience.

There are men who have so loved the man, so loved Islam and Mohammed, that for them they would endure all pain, and sometime the most ignominious deaths, so great was their measure of love

and worship for character. Fire, scourge or pestilence cannot stay the flight of love. Death alone may droop her mortal wings and clasp them forever firm on the human heart. We therefore applaud the action of a people who left their homes and deserted their wares to see the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Who ran forth amid the shouts of gladness to place at his feet their best treasures, their rarest tapestries and their finest cloaks. But we object to that worship, which is prompted only by fauey, gain and selfishness, for the inevitable issue of that worship will be degradation to individual, corruption to state and suicide to religion. Religion should not be cold indifference. Nay, it should be reconciled to enthusiasm and feeling. The moral and intellectual sternness should be done away with and it should be made living and productive.

So thought Herbert, for he was a lover of the qualities and substances of mind and spirit in all their varieties and changing relations. And, as he left his studio and moved down the street to the Mackelsalt home, he thought how the lives of all mankind would flow forth in sweet, ripe passion, in a power that would renovate society, and establish all over the broad land, the reign of peace, love and justice would mankind only appropriate to his daily experiences, all the beauties of life and reasonably worship the great and beautiful. And so, while he journeyed on, his mind lingered upon the beauties of nature and the grand deeds of life, upon Lethe, whose relations to him had now become almost vital necessities. For their natures were, by an almost unconscious unity, linked in harmony and love, thought to thought, feeling to feeling and aspiration to aspiration.

The day was far spent and the sun lay rich in its purple folds of gilded clouds. The house to which Herbert was going was an old-fashioned frame. Three trees which graced its front brought, in the spring and summer time, a refreshing air to its inmates, who seemed to live, notwithstanding their poverty, in all the splendor of domestic luxuriance.

It will be well, perhaps, to state that the inmates of the house were Mr. and Mrs. Mackelsalt, their son John, who was blind and an adopted girl by the name of Lethe. John was, notwithstanding his father's eccentricities, a rather goodnatured boy, of fixed and determined purpose. As a basketmaker, he was endeavoring to amass a fortune which, in turn, might put a period to his sole aim and ambition. But to labor against poverty and blindness in the support of a father and mother, did not suffer him to gain much. And his granaries were always emptied of their contents by the severe winters of dull times. Yet he was not discouraged by any of his domestic embarrassments, and he ever consoled himself with the thought that, although blind and but sixteen years of age, and with a very limited education, yet he was young when he compared his age to eternities, and there was still more than one chance for him to fulfill his ambitions.

Mrs. Mackelsalt was just too queer to be natural. Yet she was very frugal. Frugality being the one virtue which was inscribed above every door in their old cottage. Besides, she was the possessor of a piece of property on the Southern road, a short ride from the city of Lexington. It was on the brow of a hill, overlooking far stretching meadows and gently undulating hills. For some reason she had never built up on the property, but put it in the care of a neighboring farmer, who by his toil and industry kept the weeds from eating it up. And it was upon this same piece of property that John hoped to be able, through his own individual exertions and economy, some day, to erect a dwelling. And further, to take thither an intended bride and spend his gray old age in connubial felicity. But Providence up to this time had been adverse to all his most sanguine expectations. Yet it was these very hopes and joyful anticipations of things that were to come, that gave to his every trial and difficulty a silver lining, and to his own will the calm spirit of patience and resignation.

Herbert Snowdown was very early initiated into this family, and soon became a confidant in all their local schemes and purposes. It is certainly true that there were many things connected with their private life of which Herbert knew nothing. This is not strange, for every individual and every family have their own private closets, wherein they store all their corruptions, vanities and weaknesses. But, concerning the main issues of their affairs, he was indeed a social thermometer.

Lethe, the adopted girl, was their faithful slave, and upon her back was heaped the full burden of home duties. It may seem strange indeed, that she did not rebel. Yet submission is oftentimes sweeter than rebellion. Still Herbert could not, however much he studied her condition, satisfy himself that she was really happy. A girl so young and so beautiful, so gentle and so innocent, so resigned to duty, so willing to bear the responsibilities that were imposed upon her, and without murmur or complaint, endure the harsh words, scornful looks, and, perhaps, chastisements of Mr. Mackelsalt, deserves a home where purity of character are not only recognized but cheerfully merited.

Yet why Mr. Mackelsalt kept her thus, or why she endured it, was an enigma to Herbert. It was but a short time ago that her long pent up sorrow burst forth for the first time, and she unconsciously betrayed to Herbert the sad inward workings of the heart.

"Could I but free her from this serfdom," said Herbert to himself, "and place her among congenial friends, where bright faces and sweet words would cheer and comfort her, I would feel that my life was after all of some value, and that my searching after beauty love and happiness, in forest, stream, flower, sky and human faces had been amply repaid by the rescue of an innocent and pure heart from the bondage of white slavery.

Herbert stepped into the house, and unnoticed by any one save Lethe, who threw to him her usual kiss, took a seat. While he was sitting

in the chair, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Mackelsalt, and speculating oftentimes upon the character of the gentleman himself, he heard a murmuring noise. He listened intently, eager to catch each whisper. At times the voices would grow louder and then again they would be softened down to an inarticulate sound.

It may be beneficial to the readers, in the study of Mr. Mackelsalt's character, to give the substance of their conversation, of which Herbert heard but that part which related to his letters.

"Just wait," said Mr. Mackelsalt, to his wife, "I'll fix it. 'Think'st thou that I'm a fool? She'll marry John, or if she don't—"

"Silence," broke in the voice of a woman, "think of no violence. John intends to marry Lethe and the money won't be lost."

"Ha! but that is well to talk about," said the demon in a low cracked voice, "well to talk about. Very well," and as he said this the sound of money dropping on the floor, made him remark, "pick 'em up! Ha! Be still! I've got the money, eh, eh, I've got the money and I'll put it where the moths won't corrupt it, eh. It's a good sum," he continued, as he patted the bag, "none of the relatives livin', eh? I've got the papers too. The game's mine. Ha! Ha! Ha! I've thrown the six's, eh?"

"Not so loud," interrupted the same woman, "suppose the girl should discover that you have the money, or the uncle turn up—"

"Eh, eh?" returned the old fiend. "Eh, eh, she can know nothing about it, and suppose she does. John is going to marry 'er. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

His words now grew louder, and Herbert heard distinctly.

"I've kept them letters of Snowdown from her, and I'll use my means to make the ends meet. She can't know anything about it."

As he said this, Herbert, aroused with indignation and yet trembling with fear, was about to rise and break in upon their secret conference. But while he was just about to move he heard the cracked voice again.

"Scatter, scatter, silently, softly," and straightway Mr. Mackelsalt hastened toward the door near which Herbert was sitting. Herbert quickly withdrew into the hall, and piping "Naney Lee," came running into the room, as if he had just ended a long journey. And pulling from his coat a handkerchief, began to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"So, so, its you, is it?" said Mr. Mackelsalt, as he gazed on him out of the corner of his eye.

"Yes," returned Herbert, "and I am sorry it is I."

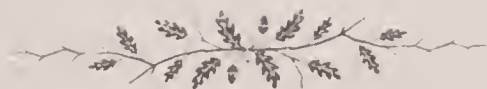
"So, so; what's the matter? Have you heard anything?"

"Have I heard anything? Yes! enough to make my hair stand on end. Where are my letters? Give them to me, or by heaven I'll put you where the shades will eat away your life!"

"Yes, Mr. Herbert, here they are, here they are. I didn't mean to keep them."

"No: nor any other letters, I suppose," said Herbert, as he snatched his letters from the long bony fingers. "But good-bye, old fellow, the game is not yet ended."

And Herbert, with his heart fired with indignation, left the old fiend in a fearful bewilderment and wondering many things.



CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Mackelsalt was perfectly wild with excitement. His old head fairly shook with rage, and his body was warm with agitation. Herbert had taken advantage of his weakness, had placed before his mind a mirror, wherein he saw the reflection of his cruelty, villainy, vice. He had shown him that the friendship of the past had been but a name, and that the confidence which Herbert had continually placed in him was at last exchanged for the counterfeit coin of treachery and deceit. In fact, all that he had said or done for him were but opportunities too freely given for unfair ends and foul advantages. That the good will, which had always been the bond of union between them, was now broken forever.

Poverty is no disgrace. Riches gained by unfair means is a crime. Character in a hovel is the diamond which king or priest cannot purchase with gold or prayer. Cowardice is weakness, but fortitude, urged on by the demon of a will steeped in lust and crime, is worse than weakness, and worse than cowardice. He who dies in defence of truth is a martyr. But he who, robed in the garments of ambition and villainy, boldly denies pain and defies death, even at the cannon's mouth, is not a hero. Every act we do, whether good or evil, is embalmed in memory, and its effect will alas, too often hover in consciousness. We may wash the evil from our natures by repentance, but the stain remains as the *souvenir* of its birth and life. And

to forget the past, were such a thing possible, is to have no memory of the present. We may be so iron hearted as to defy remorse and blindly plunge into the greater indulgence of sin and crime, yet there is no escape from our evil deeds. The North, the South, the East and the West have no refuge or asylum. Wherever we go our crime will overtake us, and we can never compromise with it or reconcile conscience to ourselves until we receive penny for penny for our every vicious act. It may not be in a day or week or months installment, but we shall receive pay, and every penny, too.

Virtue is its own reward, and the pure in heart are always happy and blessed. So crime has its compensations of pain, regret and remorse. Mortality is not the end of being. And mind and spirit, with all their combined impurities, move upward toward the pool of Bethesda, where they are cleansed of all unrighteousness. It may be that,

In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself,
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In its true nature; and we ourselves compell'd
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence."

Mr. Mackelsalt could not remain silent. He raged through the house like a wild beast, retired into the kitchen, picked up whatever his evil eyes fell upon, in his eagerness to escape from the haunts of his evil demon. But alas! to no effect.

Lethie, who had just finished her domestic duties, was in the kitchen sitting at the open latched window, where the air, laden with the rich and delicious fragrance of shrub and flower, poured in upon her. It was twilight and the evening star had already proclaimed the night near at hand. Her hopes, freighted with care and disappointment, were stealing sadly through her eyelids. Twilight was indeed the emblem of her existence. Everything in her life

seemed indistinct and visionary. Her happiness itself, her every joy, yes, all her hopes were but the compositions of unharmonious elements. And day in and day out her old, old story was repeated with the same sad strain, often unbroken, but seldom sweetened by any new intervals of melody. Her past and present were indeed realities, but her future was like a dream. And who would rob her of the thought?

She had neither heard or seen anything of the quarrel between Herbert and Mrs. Mackelsalt, nor of his angry disposition, until Mr. Mackelsalt rushed frantic into the kitchen, close to where she was sitting. Then she knew that something was wrong, for never had she seen him so agitated. True she had told Herbert about the interruption of correspondence, about—no, she had not even dared to mention his cruelties to her. But now, why does Mr. Mackelsalt act so strangely? Why does he cast at her such cruel and fiendish glances? He will not kill her. The thought itself put toys of desperation into her mind, until, almost overcome with fear, she was about to rush from his sight. But he stayed her.

“Lethe?”

“Well, Father?”

“Have you seen Mr. Snowdown, lately?”

“Have I seen Mr. Snowdown lately?” said Lethe, unconscious of the bitter pain that his name would bring to her.

“Come, no nonsense, answer me; or if you will not, I’ll put you in the cellar, and feed you on bread and water until you do!”

Lethe shuddered at the thought. Too often had she suffered from cold, hunger and thirst, in that foul place; too often had she been dragged into its filth; too often there had she been beaten with the lash, until overcome with fatigue and pain, she would sink fainting to the earth. Her life was worse than servitude, for servitude admits of some liberty; and the mere hope of liberty gives to the slave, even in the darkest hour of sorrow, some peace

and comfort. But Lethe had, it seemed, no chance of escape—the very thought was death itself, but still, that would be, indeed, a boon worthy of worship, for it might end the cares of this life. But thank God she had a hope in the resurrection of her former self, when (it was years and years ago) although but a mere child, and clad in the ragged skirt of poverty and denial, still she lived happy amid untold misery and pain. Her hopes, however, seemed but the shadow of a past impossibility, a resurrection whose glory would be all the more beautiful and embracing for its postponed delay. But this hope was the romance which she cherished continually, the thought that she ever loved to repeat. To look backward instead of forward was a license lawfully permitted to Lethe, because it gave her a fresh and vigorous consolation; and so, into her every unceasing thought, feeling and aspiration she weaved this tiny, golden thread of hope. Nor was it vain. Ah! is not the story of Pandora a reality? Care, disease and sorrow come upon us all, and oftentimes blast our life yet hope, the only gift left in the box, cheers us on, with all her encouraging omens, to live and endure.

So Lethe longed to see the soft sunlight, not through a glass darkly, not with eyes suffused with tears, but face to face in the full liberty of being. Perhaps hope is the best school in which to discipline the heart. For chasten life with despair, and that flower whose fragrance should sweeten every avenue of our life, will soon die and leave the body a desolate and gloomy mansion.

But she must give an answer. Her voice choked in its utterance, yet she said.

“Yes, I have seen him. To-morrow I hope to see him again.”

“You do, do you,” returned Mr. Mackelsalt, rushing at her, and about so strike her with his hard bony hands. “You will see him to-morrow! By heaven, he shall not come to this house again, and as for you, essence of all meanness and impudence, I’ll put you

where you are most at home—where not even the sun will look upon you. Come!”

“And as he said this, he was about to fasten his hands about her neck and drag her violently down the steps, into the cold damp cellar.

“Stand back!” said Lethe, as a strength of character almost supernatural seemed to seize her. “You shall not touch me. Too long have I been a slave to you, I have obeyed you without a murmur or complaint, I have endured your cruelties and reproaches, but now, I dare you to touch me! I demand my rights! I claim my liberties! And should you dare to touch me ’twill not be long before you will be where I have never been,”

Mr. Mackelsalt retreated. He paused; he eyed her from head to foot, and then reversed the operation, but he said never a word. Perhaps he was surprised at her unusual courage. Now he might see how soon the calm breast of ocean heaves when agitated by the winds of fortitude. He saw how weakness may become strength, and his own villainy a poor supporter of cowardice in time of severe trial.

“Assert your rights?” he at last bellowed forth. “Claim your liberties? What rights, what liberties? Poverty and shame! Fie! Sit at the window, hope, hope, hope, ha! ha! ha! look at the beautiful sky, the singing birds, at the dog basking in the sunshine, the waving trees, ha, ha, ha! They’ll clothe you, eh? They’ll give you a place to sleep? They’ll feed you, eh? Go starve, slave, beg, steal, disgrace yourself and your good mother, who once loved and cared for you; Go seek your end in a —”

“Stop,” cried Lethe, “do not dare to speak disrespectfully of me, do not dare to take my name or my mother’s name in vain. Would that she were present now, perhaps then, you would not dare to say this. But no! I should not call her back to life. I wrong the dead to think it. But you should be dead. You, who told my poor

mother on her dying bed that you would be a father to me, but now, that she is dead, torment and ruin me. Oh God! have mercy on me! Requite my sufferings and bring him who now wishes to torture me— ”

But Lethe could not say another word. She burst out in tears before she had ended the sentence. She wept as if her young heart would break, while he who made her weep retired into the next room. Lethe continued to weep for a long time, but at last yielded to the consolations of that ministering angel, who regards the sorrowful and wipes away all tears from their eyes. She resumed her seat and remained at the window looking out upon the dark sky, until the hours grew very late, when she sought rest in her own room, where the same kind angel attended her in pleasant dreams.



CHAPTER XIII.

When the morning sun arose and the world was again awakened for another day's toil, Lethe was sent out upon her usual errands, but, with this special restriction that she talk to no one and be back as soon as possible. Yet Lethe did not observe the restriction, but hastened with all possible speed to the studio of Herbert Snowdown. Herbert was already up and doing, and was sitting at the eastern window, where the sun poured in upon his canvas. Lethe knocked at the door. It was opened by Herbert, who received his beloved in a warm embrace.

"I have something to tell you, Herbert," said Lethe, as she looked into his eyes.

"Nothing sad, Lethe?" inquired Herbert, as he took her soft hand.

"No, Herbert, I should rather say it was joy. But you are not interested in dreams, Herbert, are you?"

"Ah! Lethe, nothing gives an artist greater pleasure than the picture of a beautiful dream. Its qualities are so very soft and fleeting, so much better than life, that I have often preferred the dream to the reality it may evolve. You know that an artist seldom finds the models for his compositions on earth, and dreams, which are the messengers of heaven, bring to the artist all his beloved forms. Yes, Lethe, I love to hear a dream."

"I thought you did," said Lethe, as her eyes fell from his face, "but you will not laugh at me when I tell it?"

“No, Lethe, I could not laugh at her I love.”

“But it was a beautiful sight. When I went to sleep my eyes were filled with tears and my heart was weighed down with care; but I soon forgot these, as the dream stole in upon my sleep. I dreamed that we were both surrounded by difficulties. Care and deprivation was on every hand, but at last a light broke through the clouds, and a hand reaching down even to our very feet, it seemed, from heaven, lifted us up to a place flooded with perpetual sunshine. You were with me as I arose, but when the elevation was reached you were not there. And I wept bitterly—for I was alone. But we shall yet be truly happy, Herbert. Is it not possible?”

“Yes, Lethe, for possibilities are but the fulfillment of hopes. Our prosperity is awaiting us in the future and our Eden is yet to come. Let us hope on, and build up day by day, that ladder wheron at last we may climb to the grand summits of liberty and peace. But, Lethe—”

“What, Herbert?”

You must live no longer at the home of Mr. Mackelsalt. Prepare for the worst. I am poor but yet I have a heart and hand to, feel and work. I will accomplish something in my art, and when the hours are dark and dreary, I know that the same God who comforted the son of man in all his sadness and deprivations, will likewise provide for me.”

“But, Herbert, if I leave, where can I go in safety?”

“Where can you go, my child? Where would you go, Lethe?”

“Few love me, Herbert. I am but a poor orphan. I—”

“Lethe, do you love me?”

“Herbert?”

“Won’t you answer me, Lethe?”

He took her hand; he pressed it to himself. He gazed into her eyes and entreated her to speak. She faltered, but her silence was

not through any cause of doubt. Herbert's heart was, indeed, too full for utterance.

There is in some moments of love a beautiful and enduring charm, more precious and more vital than life itself, but in those hours, when the heart recognizes its affinity, sees in its own clear depths the reflected image of the heart it loves, there is a feeling that thrills the senses and transports the soul into heaven itself. Happiness is then but a weak name, and definitions cannot embrace the infinity of joy. Lethe's heart swelled with an indefinite emotion; she must utter one word—will it bring misery or joy? The welfare of future years seemed pending upon the issues of the moment.

Tears of joy fell upon Herbert's flushed cheeks, as Lethe, gazing into his tearful eyes, said:

"Yes, Herbert, I do love you."

"Then we shall be married to—" quickly and unthoughtfully, replied Herbert.

"No, not to-morrow. I must receive the consent of my guardian, and if he refuses—"

"What then, Lethe? You would not forsake me, then?"

"No, Herbert. I—I shall be true to you, and the consent of five hundred guardians could not separate me from you!"

"That is a noble and a good reply, Lethe. And may I prove faithful and loyal to your sacrificing heart."

"But I must be going now, Herbert, so good-bye. But one question, Herbert?"

"And what is that, my child?"

"You will not come to the old home to-morrow. Promise me you will not?"

"I promise you, Lethe. So—good-bye."

Lethe departed, and left him with thousands of future hopes, rushing into his soul. No icebergs loomed up before his mind; no

thorny paths nor rugged hills, but all was one level path, reaching out among green pastures and beside still waters, into the eternities beyond. And a happiness unruffled, tranquil, divine, possessed his heart. He took up the burden of life with new strength, with cheerfulness and patience, thinking only of the Eden that was to come.



CHAPTER XIV.

“No—dread, unlook’d for, like a visitant
From th’ other world, he comes as if to haunt
Thy guilty soul with dreams of lost delight;
Long lost to all but memory’s aching sight—
Sad dreams! as when the spirit of our youth
Returns in sleep, sparkling with all the truth
And innocence once ours, and leads us back.
In mournful mockery, o’er the shining track,
Of our young life, and points out every ray
Of hope and peace we’ve lost upon the way!”

MOORE.

Six months have passed away, with all their joys and sorrows, the winter winds have mellowed into the warm zephyrs of spring, the month of May has opened the envelope of another beautiful resurrection. Nature’s pulse beats happily and the flower, the waving grass and the clear blue sky call forth the sons of men to enjoy a new and holy life. The drawing room, lately ablaze with the bright light of the chandelier, and noisy with the sound of laughter and conversation, has lost its charm, and society courts with winning favor the hill, lawn, wood and glen as their beloved Pantheon. Mankind generally, laying aside their woolens, velvets, laces, satins and plushes, sport their pretty shades of luster, cotton, silk, gauze, lawn and even checkered calicoes.

It was again Sunday, and Herbert leaving his studio, went forth to enjoy the morning air. The generality of mankind were up and

arrayed in those garments, which on Sunday more than on any other day, suggest on especial neatness, taste and beauty. Herbert gazed at the prodigal as well as the eccentric display of taste, both in the learned and unlearned, the rich and the poor. He tarried very often to linger on those faces, where care or tranquil happiness abided. He marvelled oftentimes at the extravagant efforts put forth by the poor to veil their poverty in the pantomime of dress. He smiled at the rich, who suffered their better selves to drift in the current of popular vanities, and who tried very hard to display their social superiority and *higher ethics* by affected manners. He pitied the deformed, the lame, and the blind. He hoped for the better time, when all social inequalties, mental frailties and bodily deformities would be adjusted to an eternal principle of right; and when this haughty monster, which we rightly call self, would be the last dish served on the common board of life; when mankind, universally, would awaken to the golden opportunities about them, for mental as well as spiritual growth, in order that they might not need a death to call them to the sober duties of life, or a springtime to the seasons for sowing and planting.

“Be careful, John,” said Herbert, as he took the hand of the blind basket-maker and led him across the street.

“Is that you, Mr. Herbert,” asked the poor blind boy, when he reached the other side.

“Yes, John.”

“I knew it was; for there are few, yes very few who are as kind as you are to the blind.”

“Kind, my dear boy?” said Herbert, somewhat surprised.

“Yes, Mr. Herbert; for I tread these streets many and many a day, but very seldom do I meet with a willing hand. I have stood for almost an hour, waiting for a hand to be offered to me, or a voice to say kindly ‘Sir, this is the way.’ But the willing hand is seldom offered and the voice—it is like the voice of an angel when I hear it.”

Ah! what a dreary life the blind do lead. How sad it is to be a stranger to the beauties of this external world. To merely hear the mention of a flower, a tree, a beautiful sky, a pretty face and only know a mother, a father or a friend through the voice of sympathy and love, and be divorced from the smile, and expression of love, sympathy and joy. Oh, how painful it is to be shut out from those blessed associations which so often exert the most praiseworthy power upon our young lives. Think for a moment of what we lose, when we are blind! How we wander forth day after day along the clear water, the sunny hill, the green pastures and the shady grove and return home with the same old-fashioned picture before our eyes—darkness. And not only day after day, but year in and year out to never see the approach of morning or evening, to never see a cloud or a bird; but isolated from Nature's works, to live on and on in the hope that some day the light may arise above your mental horizon—but alas, only hoping! Yet sometimes when I think of those countless millions, whose eyes are bright and healthy, who use their sight for naught but lustful purposes, for gazing at nothing, but that which is low and mean, who never appreciate one single thing in the great garden of Nature's beauties and glories, when I think of this, I often suffer myself, to doubt whether the gifts of God are always justly and rightly apportioned. But yet they say the blind have a boon, a spiritual world wherein the atmosphere is eternally pure, where never a cloud drops a tear, where never a sun brings ravage or disease, where the flowers endure forever and the waters are always sweet. We hope this may be so, but while they live among us may we lend them a helping hand, give them freely out of our measure of kindness and virtue, for they need it, and until God has adjusted every seeming wrong, bound together the severed threads of human experience, straightened the crooked sticks, may we contribute our mite to the happiness of the blind and receive, if we wish, our merited reward.

After a short silence the blind boy, (for boy he was), asked Herbert whether he thought he *would* ever again see the flowers, the green grass and the birds? He implored Herbert to tell him whether or no he thought he ever would.

"My dear boy," said Herbert, "the same God who cares for the robin and the sparrow, and who clothes the lilies of the field will surely open your eyes!"

"But the night has been a long and dreary one, Mr. Herbert," sobbed the child, "and I feel certain that when the day does come, it will be all the more glorious for its long delay."

"Yes, John, the night may be dark, indeed, it may be *very* dark, but joy will come with the morrow, and we shall, as you say, appreciate the blessed time all the more when it really does come; the roses must be crushed before they emit the sweetest fragrance, the eyes of the bullfinch must be pierced out before it sings its sweetest notes. Yes, John, misfortune will make us appreciate prosperity when it comes, and your dark and dreary night, when it is awakened by the song of morning, will bring you increasing joy."

"Yes, Mr. Herbert, when it comes—when it comes, alas!"

He continued to speak, telling about his own business, how he was working very hard at the bench and waiting patiently for the better times. In his conversation he grew rather philosophic. He spoke of hope and purpose; how aim, urged on by a steady zeal and ambition accomplish whatever we may undertake in this world; how every man is great who finishes his purpose. He went on to say that the future generally compensates for all of our past sorrows and tribulations with an abundance of good things. Often he spoke of a future settlement, and how he then hoped to be happy forever. But says he,

"What's the use of hoping, Mr. Herbert? I've had my plans fixed a thousand times, but they have all been broken!"

"Broken?"

"Yes, Mr. Herbert; but not by me. I toil on day after day. I work hard at the bench. I get a little money and try to save it; and 'twas but the other day that I found it had all been stolen. Then besides father has driven Grace from me, and now, without a guide save this stick, I wander forth alone."

"Indeed, John, these things are very sad. But why was Grace driven from you? She was a good and honest girl. I have known her for years."

"Ah! Mr. Herbert, she was as you say. I'd sooner have her guide my steps than my own father. Why, Mr. Herbert, we grew up as boy and girl, and then—as lovers. But now—"

"Well, my dear boy?"

"But now that she is gone, life is indeed a burden. Why, Mr. Herbert, what is the use of living? I get no sympathy at home. Father beats me, and mother, who should care for me, laughs at my blindness and deformity. Grace and Lethe were my only friends, and now, since Grace is gone and I am left alone, why I had as lief be dead as living."

Miss Grace was a good girl, poor, it is true, but endowed with those charms and virtues, which cannot be obtained with the wealth of Rome or the power of Cæsar. She was of a sweet and cheerful disposition and of passing intelligence—not a skilled student in the Greek or Latin grammar but an angel, nevertheless, among her friends, and wherever she went her society was sought after, and courted for the sweet lessons of encouragement and good cheer she would unselfishly and freely give. Her soft gray eyes had that gentleness and beauty about them, which so often wean the human heart from the more fascinating idols of dress, and her eyes spoke a deeper language than could be read by the mere figured beauty on their surface. And there was something in the composition of the girl that had, in some manner or other, early attracted John, when but a mere boy and she a playful child. But why Mr. Mackelsalt had

placed his long bony fingers between their two hearts, and endeavored to sever those relations which had bound their affections together from childhood, was a mystery to him. Herbert had seen a little of the world. And to merely look in upon the world through an open crack, or a half inviting window, and thus see the vices of society, gives, oftentimes, a far better knowledge than to be a participant in the vices and vanities themselves. Herbert had seen the fair face of virtue cast aside for the fickle, vain and inconstant heart of the syren. He had seen character, the very capstone of womanhood and manhood, sold in the market of the world for a small piece of silver, or for the hope of hugging vanity and corruption. In his studies of ancient history he had particularly noted the Helens, Cleopatras, Didos and Francescas; but yet he could see no trace of evil in the character of Grace Lucerne. The scheming villain, Mr. Mackelsalt was, again shuffling his cards, thought Herbert, and whether Lethe was destined to receive the unlucky lot he was unable to divine.

“But, Herbert,” said John, as he drew nearer to him, “I know the reason of it all; I have not eyes to see, but I have ears to hear and I heart to divine. He want’s me to marry Lethe?”

“Marry Lethe? You are too young, and besides—”

“Yes, Mr. Herbert, I know I am too young. I love Lethe, but I cannot marry her. I love her, did I say? Tell me, Mr. Herbert, who does not love her?”

“I cannot answer you, John,” returned Herbert, as his voice faltered.

“Ah! Mr. Herbert, I have been good to her in all her sorrows—I have been as a brother to her. I have thrown myself between her and father when he would try to beat her, and I have received the bitter blows. But I wish to make *her* happy, Mr. Herbert, for her life is so dismal, dark and sad. Oh, could I but see her face! If the sun

would only be bright enough to take away my darkness. But I am determined Mr. Herbert, not to marry her. She loves—”

“Who, John; tell me if you know?” earnestly begged Herbert.

“Why you, Mr. Herbert. You are the sun to her—she has whispered that to me again and again. Ah! she was not made for a poor, sad, blind boy! She needs some noble heart, some bright and earnest eye; some pleasant face, some one who can look into her soul and say ‘she is beautiful,’ she is Lethe Reynolds, a true noble hearted girl. She needs some heart that can appreciate her, Mr. Herbert?”

“Why, I should not tell you of the suffering I receive from father and mother—but I am blind. I have nowhere to go; I must obey or rebel and if I rebel, then I’ve nowhere to go in God’s great world. Father beats and starves me, takes oftentimes from me the little money I make, and never thanks me. I don’t see the world; but yet if you only knew the care and sorrow that broods on my heart—yet I’ll endure it all. I’ll place myself between him and Lethe, though he kill me—and let him kill me. ‘Twill end my miseries here.”

“John, you should not think thus?”

“*It was he to, who made me blind.*”

“He made you blind? I thought that you were born blind?”

“Ah! no! Mr. Herbert, he did it when I was quite young; but tell me, Mr. Herbert, won’t I again see the blue sky and the waving trees—tell me, won’t I,”

Herbert could scarcely restrain his tears, but yet he said,

“Yes, John, God will some day give you back your eyesight; but, be patient and all your good deeds will receive their proper acknowledgment. Be kind to Lethe, and tell her that I will soon make her happy. Be good to her and God will repay you, though blind, with that happiness which the world cannot give nor take away. I am poor, John, but here, take this piece of silver,

use it for your own happiness, and may you never want that which the wise men of all ages have sought for in vain.”

“God bless you, Mr. Herbert,” he said, as he stretched out his soft tender hand to receive the money, “God bless you!”

At last, after shaking hands, Herbert bade him good-bye, and went slowly away to his studio.

“Ah!” thought Herbert, “there must be a remedy for the blind, among the prodigality and abundance of God’s mercies and healing ointments. Why is immortality given to mankind, if not for the purpose of adjusting all wrong, strengthening the weak, healing the diseased, the blind, and the illproportioned brains? If it be not so why are they given the *boon* of immortality, which brings upon their soul naught but the continuation of pain and remorse. Ah! he spoke truly who said, ‘they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!’ ”



CHAPTER XV.

Five months have almost passed away, and it is a morning in late October. The winds rather brisk, were rocking the tree tops too and fro and were stripping them of all their bright and golden foliage, as the sign of the approach of a severe and bitter winter. Herbert was at home in his studio. His mind was saddened with the many tales of sorrow and disappointment he was continually hearing of Lethe's deplorable condition—but what could be done?

He had seated himself at his easel and was about to finish a sketch for the Academy, when a letter was brought to him.

"Do you wish an answer, sir?" he said to the gentleman who carried the letter.

"No, sir?"

"Good-day!"

"Good-day, sir," returned Herbert, with laconic brevity.

Herbert was struck with fear. Could it be a letter from Mr. Mackelsalt—could Lethe be dead? He quickly tore open the envelope and read the contents. It was written in a lady's hand, and bore a lady's superscription. It read thus,

"Dear Herbert!

Mr. Mackelsalt is dead; come and see me. I can say no more."
LETHE."

"What," said Herbert to himself, "Mr. Mackelsalt dead! How can it be possible? Is it really so? Who killed him? Did he die a natural death? At all events can it be true?"

Such questions rushed into his mind; but the occasion did not furnish any time for question or debate. Lethe bade him hasten, and so, putting on his coat and hat, he went down the street to the Mackelsalt home. Everybody seemed to be in his way, and he often stumbled over the most trivial things in his eagerness to reach Lethe.

When he arrived he met John at the door sobbing bitterly. Herbert bade him be quiet, saying that no one could call him back to life, and if they could, who would vouchsafe to do so since where he is, might be perhaps, his better home.

Mrs. Mackelsalt then appeared. She was much subdued, now, and displayed characteristics of a higher quality of religious composition. She explained to Herbert the suddenness of his death; how, before he had retired, he counted all his pieces of gold and silver, received all his papers, bade her good-night and then told her to call him early; how, when the morning came, she tried to awake him, but he would not; how she continued to call him and shake him, but alas! in vain, for he was dead! Here she burst out into a convulsion of grief.

But Herbert, in all of Mrs. Mackelsalt's sorrow, did not shed a tear.

The house, during the time the body remained in it, was filled with frequent groups of relatives, friends and neighboring acquaintances. Now some old friend, who had more pity than love, would give a short biography of the deceased; now, he would extol his virtues, now his noble character, but never for a moment would he linger upon his vices and frailties. Some would speak among themselves and tell how he had planned to live happy, and how he was, even in the maturity of his hopes, cut off from their most ardent realizations. Sometimes a stranger to sympathy and love would approach Lethe and ask the poor child what she would do *now*, (putting particular and select emphasis upon the word *now*), and when, after telling her what she had already discovered to a limited

degree, that the world was a great and rugged mountain, filled with sharp stones and tangled briars and thorns, she would bring the tears into Lethe's eyes, the cold hearted wretch would look toward the window and smile with a perfect satanic satisfaction.

But the days wore on until Thursday came. Then the family took their parting glance of the great artificer of meanness and pronounced the last farewell. As he lay in the coffin his face looked troubled and condemned; no calm, resigned, sweet smile lay like the soft, tender light of morning upon his countenance. There was no feeling of rest or silent composure about the body, but the lifeless form gave to all minds the idea of an internal disturbance.

But he was taken from his 'wayside inn' to the cemetery, where his evil clay was forever laid at rest; his hands free of mischief, and, his soul, that centre of all meanness, cruelty and cowardice, mounted upward on spiritual wings, with all its imperfection and unrighteousness, to the higher life.

By this death Mrs. Mackelsalt was in reality none the worse off, but Lethe and John were made the victims of a somewhat milder cruelty.



CHAPTER XVI.

But what could now be done for Lethe? Fate made the breach. Before Herbert left the Mackelsalt home he told Lethe to prepare for the worst. He told her further that he had resolved to come this very night and receive her to himself; he begged her, therefore, to leave the door that led into the yard unlocked, to be up late, and when all had retired, to escape into the yard, where he would be ready to take her to "Travellers Home." He also said that he would be at the cottage about ten o'clock, and that the sign of escape would be a pebble thrown at her window. He also said that he had procured a license for their marriage, and that they would dispense with the necessary ceremonies. Besides, he added, that he would keep a watchful eye upon the actions of Mrs. Mackelsalt, and as for John, he would do all that he could to make him happy. So saying, he left her almost hesitating, oftentimes doubting--but with her consent.

It was evening. The air was full of moisture and very cold. The dark clouds in the distance were giving tokens of an approaching storm.

Herbert left his studio and moved down toward the Mackelsalt home. The old frame, tipped with the mellow light of the full moon, stood forth like a spectre. The shadows along the street, which marked the diminished perspectives of the several dwellings, were full and heavy. As he neared the premises everything seemed dark, save

where the soft glimmering light of a candle fell upon the hollow air from a window hard by. Ten o'clock was now ringing out its remorseful lay upon the icy air. The streets were almost deserted. The wind was whistling up the byways. The clouds were now enveloping the canopy of heaven—not a star was visible. The eager air, rustling among the branches of the trees, sent chills of terror through Herbert's limbs, and yet he feared nothing, for his cause was a sacred and holy one, and gave to him no remorse of conscience. He approached the house, and gazed up at the window. He saw her reflected image on the green curtain. Moving on tip toe, he drew nearer and gave the sign. She heard—she came. They were one. They were gone.

As the night stole on the snow fell in thick flakes. Yet the happy couple, heeding not the cold or storm, moved on amid the falling snow. Lethe had gathered together her portion of clothes and sundry articles, and having tied them neatly in a bundle, had given them to Herbert, who was carrying them under his arm. They moved on and on through the dark streets, almost orphans. Voices blending in a sweet evening hymn of prayer came floating out upon the air. They paused to listen—

“Sweet is the prayer, whose holy stream,
In earnest pleading flows,
Devotion dwells upon the theme,
And warm and warmer glows.

“Faith grasps the blessing, she desires,
Hope points the upward gaze;
And Love, celestial Love, inspires
The eloquence of praise.

“But sweeter far the still small voice,
Unheard by human ear,
When God has made the heart rejoice,
And dried the bitter tear.

“No accents flow, no words ascend;
All utterance faileth there;
But sainted spirits comprehend,
And God accepts the prayer.”

They both listened until the music stole away to live among the clouds. On they moved, the sad yet happy children of a seemingly cruel destiny. As they journeyed on Lethe repeated,

“But sweeter far the still small voice,
Unheard by human ear,
When God has made the heart rejoice,
And dried the bitter tear.”

“Lethe, my dear child,” said Herbert, “you must be very cold.”

“No, Herbert, I am not cold, for in all my veins flows a new life and spirit.”

“Lethe, my child, you are now at liberty, but alas! only to be made the more wretched and miserable.”

“Come, Herbert, you have taught me in the past many lessons of hope, courage, perseverance and self-denial. And I am prepared now to endure the worst. But why talk of trials, Herbert, when we are one. Trials have come when you were far from me, but now that you are present, this snow at our feet changes into flowers and the cold icy winds, into warm zephyrs fragrant with the perfumes of spring. Do not fear, Herbert; I will do my part to make your life one long summer day.—But you do not doubt me, Herbert?”

“Doubt you, Lethe? No, I do not doubt you, I had rather doubt myself, but yet. Lethe, you cannot think of the awful fate that is upon you. The toils, the anxieties, the deprivations, the despair, all crowd in upon my mind. Oh it makes my spirit faint within me when I do but think of it. Before my eyes the terror and danger of your greater captivity seems to appear. Your face is pale and wan, your body has lost its vitality, your eyes, which are now so soft seem without expression. You long for some unknown isle. You crave for anything that may release you from your bondage—but, believe me, Lethe, Herbert toils on patiently, enduring it all with you. He labors night and day. Nor does he often seek repose. His rest, his strength, his health, his time, all, are sacrificed for Lethe. His love

—I must not mention love. Forgive me, Lethe, for what I have said? They are all idle fancies! Yes, freedom is dearer to me than any other gift and Lethe must enjoy that gift.”

“Ah! Herbert,” said Lethe, “from a child I have been taught the ways of poverty. Why should I now fear to walk in them? Can luxury and wealth buy happiness. No, Herbert; and although we live and move in abject poverty, let us submit our wills to Providence and avoid shame and disgrace. Let us have hope and patience and then let come what may; for the eyes of wealth as well as the eyes of poverty have their equal share of tears.”

“Yes, Lethe, you are right. Hope and patience will give us peace, even in the deepest and darkest hours.”

Closely united they moved on. The street loungers looked upon them with a sad surprise as they passed by.

“See, Lethe, at a distance are the lights of ‘Travellers Home.’ We shall stay here for a time and rest. To-morrow, Mrs. Mackelsalt will, no doubt, be out in the search of you. But remain in your room, Lethe, and all will be well.”

They arrived at the hotel. They mounted the stairs, shook off the snow, entered, enrolled their names at the desk and retired into the room assigned them.



CHAPTER XVII.

That same night the cold became very intense, and when the dawn, with her dappled rose and white, tinged the eastern horizon, she smiled upon the white shroud that covered the great city.

As soon as it was day and the city was wide awake for struggle and gain, no expected search was made. Yet in the humble home of the Mackelsalts there was great surprise and seeming sorrow. Mrs. Mackelsalt and John were nodding their heads together as the bearded wheat, when agitated by the gentle winds, and touching upon every conceivable subject, they were endeavoring to probe into the mystery of her unexpected disappearance—but to no avail.

But when Mrs. Mackelsalt, in a gossip with some of her neighbors suggested an evil opinion, such as an elopement the neighbors shook their heads and speedily extolled the character of Lethe, bringing in, by the way of argument or personal vindication, Lethe's repeated acts of kindness to them, her deeds of charity and love, all of which they claimed were indeed sufficient proofs of her noble and unfailing character; but Mrs. Mackelsalt would only nod her head and, with an air of indifference, retreat into her chamber.

But John could neither work nor be at heart's ease. Nothing was left to him now, for Grace had been snatched from him, and Lethe, who had of late become the very lamp to his feet and guide to his

hand, was no more. Again and again did he stop in his work to think of Lethe. More than once laying aside his apron did he take up his hat and guiding stick, and, threading his way out into the street, lose himself among busy humanity.

The afternoon passed away and Lethe was still in her room awaiting the arrival of Herbert.

Toward evening Herbert left his studio and was sauntering down the street toward "Traveller's Rest." He was whistling a tune when John, the blind boy, recognizing the air and attaching to the individual who was whistling it a familiar name, said,

"Mr. Herbert, is that you?"

"Yes, John," said Herbert.

"I've sad news to tell you?"

"And what can that be," inquired Herbert.

"Lethe has left us. I'm searching for her now. But I can't find her. I'm blind—I can't see. Have you seen her?"

Herbert pondered seriously before he gave an answer. Should he say yes, Lethe would be betrayed. Should he say no, then he was purjuring his soul. But he was willing to perjure his soul if he could retain Lethe and keep her happy. So Herbert resolved to give him no satisfaction, thinking that, perhaps he had been sent out as a spy by Mrs. Mackelsalt. And so he said,

"And you are out searching for her?"

"Yes, Mr. Herbert, but she is not lost or ruined. I'm lost. I'm ruined."

"But she was a pure and good girl, John, the quintessence of affection."

"I don't know the meaning of that word, Mr. Herbert, but she was pure as this snow; but, Herbert, if you should ever see her tell her that I shall make her rich and happy some day. Let people come by the window of my shop and laugh at me, because I am so busy; but I am working for Lethe. Let them laugh at my deformity, let them

say 'come out into the open grove and see the birds.' But why should I care for their laughter or jeers. Yet it is sad, indeed, that she has left me, Mr. Herbert, I can't get over it!"

"On with him, march him—hush you——"

These words were uttered by a policeman, who was dragging a little boy violently off to prison."

"Please sir"—plead the boy, "I had to do it—my mother sir?"

"Yes I know your mother. That is always your plea."

Herbert watched them until they faded out of sight, when John again said.

"But I'll work all the harder now. And if you should ever see her tell her the gain will come in the end."

"My dear boy," said Herbert, as he took his hand and tried to cheer him, "toil and frugality will make us all happy, some day. And a persistent and unfaltering aim will bring us all to good fortune. Yes, John, the end will justify the means, and the gain will compensate for all of the toil of yesterday and to-day. Fruition is the flower of industry, and happiness is, after all, the end of all labor and suffering. Toil on, John, hold fast to the right and it will not be very long before you will have relief from all your temporal ills and embarrassments."

They then shook hands and John felt somewhat relieved and encouraged. Herbert would have tarried longer, but he told him that it was growing quite late and cold, and so, after bidding each other good-night, they hastened to their respective homes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Herbert neared the hotel he saw Lethe sitting at the window. A dim light was burning in the room. Herbert mounted the stairs and entered the room where Lethe received him with the same sweet smile and kiss.

"I am so glad you have come, Herbert, I have been waiting for you, I might say, all day. You told me in the morning that you were not feeling well. Are you better now, Herbert?"

"A little better, Lethe, in fact much better. It was but a passing cloud. But come, Lethe, sit beside me and now that we are both sheltered within this ark of safety, tell me love, how you came under the guardianship of Mr. Mackelsalt."

"Ah! Herbert, the story is a long one and I am afraid—"

"Never mind the length Lethe, I will make all amends for that."

"It was in the year 1866 when father died and mother and our little family were thrown upon their own responsibilities. Mother took to sewing, while I—"

"Well, Lethe?"

"You will forgive me if I mention it, Herbert," continued Lethe.

"Speak out my love and fear me not. Poverty is no disgrace."

"While I, Herbert, begged; and, with basket under my arm, went from door to door, friend to friend, enemy to enemy."

Here she burst out into tears. The experiences of by-gone years came to her consciousness with all their chilling realities. The

memory of the past was again before her, and she saw her former self as she had always seen it from the standpoint of pain and bitter recollection.

“Our family board was a precious one, Herbert, although it was scantily provided with the necessities of life, and there our little family grew and became strongly united in the bonds of unity and love. We each labored hard together, but grandmother who was old and feeble, could not do much. I did not beg long, for grandmother although old and feeble, took my place, and I was again sent to school. I begged her earnestly to remain where she was and be happy, but she said she never could be happy if Lethe were left to grow up without an education, and so I suffered her and, unwillingly, yielded. I remained at school several years, until mother died, when I was again compelled to follow my former occupation. Thus I became acquainted with human nature and the many kinds of character. Even now I can see my girlish form as it was in years ago, clad in a ragged skirt, cloak, blue hood and torn shoes, going up and down the wide streets of this large city, motherless and fatherless, a stranger to almost everything except pain and poverty. But grandmother, who had reached the age of seventy-two, grew weaker and weaker in strength and courage, and at last, on an evening of September, 1876, just when the leaves were turning into gold and vermillion, she died. Thus I was indeed left alone to battle with the hostile world.”

“But how about Mr. Mackelsalt,” inquired Herbert.

“But Mr. Mackelsalt, who had been my mother’s most intimate friend, took me under his care, and there I have been until you, who proved my second mother, redeemed me and gave me my former liberties.”

“But, Lethe,” said Herbert, “you often spoke to me about a younger sister—I think her name was Constance! She was a sweet and loving girl, was she not? When did she die?”

“She died thirteen years ago, Herbert, after a sickness of two weeks. Everybody that knew her loved her; but poverty was too hard a master for her, and the fated discipline, alas! produced her death. While she was sick she suffered greatly, but her many friends, who came to see her, bringing warm toast, fruit, milk and other things, cheered and comforted her. Nor did they ever tire in asking how she was. Some, indeed, who understood the depth of a child’s nature, would say that little Constance will soon be up and doing and that we should never fear. And so, we were comforted. Her Sabbath School teacher would come and visit her, and, sitting near the bedside, would sing the hymn that Constance loved so dearly, and it did all who heard it much good. Then, folding her arm about her neck, she would tell her of Christmas that was near at hand. and of the songs and verses they were learning to recite and sing for that blessed time. She would also tell her of the many children who begged their teachers to mention their names to her; and then, as Constance would weep, she would sing to her the song again that she had sung so often, and Constance would feel indeed blest. Often, yes very often, she would ask for grandfather, for she dearly loved him.”

“Where was he, Lethe; was he not near her?”

“No: Herbert, he was in the tavern drinking away his life. And so she lingered through until Christmas eve. At nine o’clock she asked me if grandfather had not returned yet. ‘No, dear,’ said I, ‘but he will soon be home. I will put the candle at the window and perhaps he may see it and come the faster.’ But little knew she that he was dead.”

“Dead, Lethe?”

“Yes, Herbert, dead. He had gone to the tavern, and having failed to pay for his liquor, he was thrown out into the snow, where he perished of cold.”

“Ah! what a sad fate, Lethe.”

“Yes, Herbert, it is, indeed, a very sad fate. Later in the night she grew very restless. At times, she would hold up both her hands, and in her sleep try to speak, and then again she would lay so calm and motionless. As the night wore on the winds without grew very strong and the snow fell fast and thick. At eleven o’clock an angel smiled upon her and God took her silently away. I blew out the candle at the window, for little Constance met her father where there shall be no night—nor need of a candle. It was strange, Herbert, for one to die on the cold lap of Nature and the other amid the warm affections of home, both to die asleep—but to awake, thank God, in clasped arms, mortality being swallowed up in life everlasting. Not unclothed, Herbert, but clothed upon.

“But, Henry, my uncle, who came home the very same night Constance died, and threw himself drunk upon the bed where she lay cold and motionless, has never been heard of since, for the disgrace and pain occasioned by such action drove him far away from his dear home. Perhaps he too is dead. God only knows.”

Herbert listened to her tale of sorrow like Dido of old to the woes of A Eneas. He thought what a beautiful thing it must be for one to die who lives not for this world nor of this world. It is far better, thought he, to go to the final resting place, wrapped in the garments of poverty and virtue than to enter the “Gates ajar” naked to all love and virtue.

As we live so will we be paid, and we reap only what we sow: Corruption reaps corruption, and virtue, with all her retinue of graces, reaps incorruption, life everlasting, immortality. There need not be a contest in this world for the high places in the world that is to come. God is no respecter of persons. As we live here so will we be merited in that world, but not with a crown, as many expect, not with a prize, as many hope, not with a special seat, but with that consciousness of a life well spent, while a sojourner on earth,

which will give us no remorse of conscience or shadow of regret. Like the small measure and the bushel, we enjoy life only to our capacity, and he who is an alien to virtue in this life will, even though he repent by the modern processes of orthodox redemption at the eleventh hour, be a stranger in the city whose streets are paved with gold. So he who denies the world for the sake of a spiritual position in the local spiritual world, will miss his aim and be, indeed, mournfully disappointed. There are no reserved seats in the spiritual church of God. Selfishness is a coin of no value in the sight of God. We should be men and noble men, because the ways of manhood are peaceful, the paths are pleasant and full of sunshine; and he who beggars his spirit in this world will, indeed, have a task to feed it in the new world. God is revengeful in as much as he will deal justly with every man, nor suffer himself to be mocked. We must build a noble character, and the sooner we commence the better and wiser we will be for it. The way back to virtue from sin is longer and rougher than from virtue to sin. It pays in the end to be virtuous. So thought Herbert, as he gazed thoughtfully into the falling embers.

But it was growing late. The lamp was burning low, and both, with thoughts lingering at the threshold of heaven, gave themselves into the arms of sleep.



CHAPTER XIX

The sun is beginning to set, and our little world, whose progress the reader has watched so closely, is now nearing the portals of night.

"Hallo, Charles," said Herbert to Mr. Frier, as he entered his studio; "take a seat. By the bye, Frier, how is law."

"Oh, law is all right, but it is very hard, I assure you, to pick up a livelihood. No place for young aspirants."

"Why, how so?" queried Herbert.

"The place is overrun. Our colleges are yearly emptying out their new stock, the old seem to live forever; and so, by the aggregation of the alpha and omega, there is scarcely any room for those countless multitudes who hold the middle ground. Now, if we could force a few divorce cases and the like, we might, at the risk of our own characters and fortunes, and, at the expense of suffering humanity, gain a reasonable patronage."

"Yet it seems to me, Frier, that the demand for *good* lawyers is as great as it always has been? There is surely no falling off in the demand for good, sound and healthy heads?"

"You are right, Herb; and, in our present civilization, the demand for sound heads is always inadequate to the supply, and I am glad it is so. It arouses greater competition and legitimate struggle. It is an incentive to the Freshman and Junior as well as an encouragement to the Senior. In fact, it gives us all courage and hope. It

does more than this, it places before our minds the possibilities of our profession, and those honors which the lawyer can only claim by hard work and a life-long application.

It makes the early impression upon the mind of the aspirant that the arena in which he contemplates moving, is filled with huge obstacles that he must encounter and push aside; besides, it demonstrates the fact that frugality and economy never compromise with laziness and prodigality. That the Bethlehems as well as the Romes of this life are two diametrically opposite levels, from which man may rise to the grand summit of popular praise and honor. And so we find in the study of an individual life, that he only approaches the paramount distinction in character, progress and success, who admits of no such word as ease, self-satisfaction and indigence in his vocabulary of actions. Frugality and sacrifice should be the characteristic qualities in all we do, and the propelling force to all we undertake. And so, I have come to this conclusion, after a few years of careful study, that the only way for a man to gain popular and envied favor is to live and die for the people. The incentive that urges man to the highest and grandest undertakings must be pure and holy, not selfish or base. Gracchus, who fell a victim at the altar of popular honor and good, may have been unappreciated and despised by the leaders of his time—so with Brutus and countless others; but that, indeed, should by no means impede our ambitious or exalted purposes. For the path to honor and distinction is just as broad, if not broader, in our times as it was in the times of Cæsar and Napoleon; but it takes a man to run the race and reach the goal.

“After all, the idea of Socrates and Plato, of *nullus in singulis aliquis in omnibus* is false and unreasonable. “Nothing in a single thing and something in everything” does not pay in this business world; it may in the other, but I’ll study up on that before I decide.”

“I think it was Whipple,” broke in Herbert, “who said that the one prudence in life is concentration, the one evil, dissipation.”

“True, Herbert, and it is but the echo of the old story. Success is within the grasp of every man, and it is just as possible to be great in this age of gain and competition as it was in any previous time. Yet it takes and has taken a long time for mankind to learn this lesson, that *fixity* of purpose is more available in the end than volubility of aim. We all know that scattered energy is not as forcible in its results as concentrated energy, nor a vacillating and undetermined aim, as decisive in its results, as a determined purpose. After all, Herb, it is the proper adjustment of our faculties to the needs and requirements of our natures, upon which depends largely our success; and hence it is that I object to the discipline of modern education. It puts in but does not draw out, in other words, it fails to teach man how to apply himself to the best advantage in life. The aim and wish may be right and just, but yet the ends do not justify the means. It endeavors to fill man with practical principles, but yet ends in deadening all aspiration and nascent purpose. The principles read well in the book, look well on the black-board, sound well to the ear, but yet fail to be useful; and the virtue of any law or principle is always estimated, in a mathematical sense, by its usefulness. The school system must be revolutionized, the plans of discipline thoroughly ventilated, and the “plane board” reality done away with before the orthodox schoolmaster will receive the sympathy of practical men.

“Feeding the mind and filling the stomach do not give proper strength or nourishment to faculties and vital tissues, said Herbert, as he moved his chair nearer to Frier.”

“No, indeed; and so N. P. Willis has well said that ‘all knowledge is not nourishment.’ ”

“And so, in training the mind, school discipline oftentimes leaves the faculties and heart undisciplined. Filling the mind with intellectual baggage it leaves the engines of the mind unschooled. But mark! I do not say that modern education

contributes nothing at all to the usefulness of mankind. It does a great deal. It may give man wisdom and worthy subjects for thought and observation. It may strengthen his attentive powers; but I doubt much whether it calls forth man's noblest aspiration, or aids him, in the least, in finding his place in the world. Now, this seems to me, should be the end of all education and unless it does this, it fails in its true mission and enterprise.

"You don't mean to say that the basis of modern education, is properly laid, but the superstructure poorly adjusted?"

"That is just what I mean exactly!"

"But should you destroy the superstructure, what would you build on the basis instead?"

"Why just follow out the base lines and the superstructure will adjust itself."

"But the fundamental principle of education gives liberty to man to eat only what is digestable and beneficial?"

"Exactly."

"If so, do you believe that the education or discipline for the masses is good for the few, or vice versa, or, what is applicable to the ignorant is likewise applicable to the wise?"

"To a certain extent I believe that that principle holds good. But yet, I never could see why the few should suffer for the masses, save as a benefit to mankind. It may not be just to arrest a starving man for stealing a loaf of bread from one who has a superabundance, but the law steps in as a protection for the masses. And so individual happiness, as well as welfare, are oftentimes jeopardized for the good of the multitude. In law, whatever applies to the one applies with equal force to the other, independent of principle or justice. Wealth and power may at times tamper with the law and thus gain reconciliation or compromise. The fact is the same in every branch of business. Yet, in respect to educational matters, it is a very hard question to answer. I believe that theory should

always yield to practice, and that the study of Probable reasoning should be more enforced than that of Demonstrative. I believe that the classics should be even more subservient to the utilities of life than they are; that a literary mind should receive his proper nourishment as well as a mathematical mind his. Mathematics, as well as the classics, are not dishes for all palates. Among students, there should be allowed some privilege of discrimination. To reason well is not the result of mathematics or logic, nor to write well the result of the study of Greek and Latin.

“I know that a very few people are masters of themselves. The same God who made the firm beach, made yet the ever tossing wave. We may decide upon one thing to-day, we may decide upon another to-morrow. Evolution is a quality of the mind as well as of the earth. Circumstances are congenial to growth and decay, permanency and transition. Still, it seems to me that the schools of learning should not monopolize all principle, law and license. They should grant some liberty to the students, especially to those who feel their conscious powers, they should grant a wider margin and a more bounteous freedom, independent of discipline or system. As the spirit cannot be hemmed in by creeds, so the mind cannot be confined to systems. And, until our institutions grant a proportioned liberty to mind and spirit, we cannot look for the higher advance of mankind.”

“But yet, Frier,” said Herbert, “it matters very little to a true man, whether he has these liberties for proper growth and development or not. He will inevitably appropriate to himself only what he can utilize, and, if schools trample on his sacred dignity and rights, yet they are never backward in claiming the selfsame individual, when he has arisen to fame and distinction. Why should he look to superficial gains, who claims to be a philosopher? Whose very life is an open declaration and disregard for mere seemings and show. He sees the goal of his

life? He needs no incentive, he requires no bone to be held up to him as a compensation for his sorrows, deprivations and neglects, or as an encouragement to persevere in the good cause; for his nature is not impelled to noble deeds by that which is attractive without, but by that which is sacred and charming within."

"True, Herb; your words are freighted with wisdom, but in order to gain our end we must be self-sacrificing, we must suffer, we must endure many minia ture Gethsemanes, we must toil up many Calvaries, before we may even see our goal clearly; but we should never be discouraged, but rather hopeful, never yielding to procrastination or slothfulness, and finally we will, in the autumn of our purpose and actions, have the satisfaction that we have done our best and we may then gather in the sheaves."

So saying, Frier bade Herbert good-morning, feeling as he journeyed forth, that his time was indeed very profitably spent.



CHAPTER XX.

It may be well for us to linger a moment, and recall all the fond recollections of Mr. Frier and Pansy Sky. Their friendship did flower into love, and as lovers, they had walked happily together for quite a time, but at length there came a season of doubt, yes, even of change over their united affections. The summer air grew chill and cold, the flowers lost their beauty, the sky grew dull and leaden and all things wore a melancholy and a sad aspect.

Alas! how light a cause may sever kindred association and companionship! How easily, how soon may two hearts dissent, and those, too, that sorrow, care and storm have more closely united. But the time does come when separations bring eclipses upon our nature, and such eclipses, which seldom know a transit, for they endure forever and ever. A look, an unkind word, an action wrongly taken, a broken promise, will transform the heart into a fiery and cruel monster and the eyes, which were at one time so full of beauty, love and tenderness, into horrible spectres, that follow us all through the journey of life.

“O you that have the charge of love,
Keep him in rosy bondage bound,
As in the fields of bliss above
He sits, with flowerets fettered round ;—
Loose not a tie that round him elings,
Nor ever let him use his wings.
For even an hour, a minute’s flight
Will rob the plumes of half their light.
Like that celestial bird, whose nest
Is found below far Eastern skies—
Whose wings, though radiant when at rest,
Lose all their glory when he flies.”

But Frier would not be baffled, for he was in earnest. He had, however, gone too far, *they* were engaged.

It was an evening in August, when he journeyed to her home. His heart was filled with pain and anguish, but she greeted him with that same cold smile and said, "I am so tired." Again and again he would visit her, and again and again would he be greeted in the old familiar way.

Again, it was evening, but a beautiful night in September. Frier and Pansy were alone in the drawing room. They were sitting at the western window, where the soft light of the autumn moon, just sinking below the horizon, fell upon the floor; and where the zephyrs, in soft rustling murmurs, toyed with Pansy's flowing tresses. It was a time as Virgil would say, when quiet peace steals upon the minds of languid mortals and creeps upon them as a gift of the gods, most sweet. For a long time they would not speak. At length Frier looked into her face—she dropped her eyes. He begged her to call his name—she struggled to obey. He implored her to tell him the cause of her silence, still her fickle nature did not betray itself. She hesitated and then said—"nothing."

And so their love ripened; but not in rich mellowed perfection and beauty, as Frier had expected, but in doubt and chilling uncertainty.

Days rolled on, bringing but the continuance of hope and despair—but at last Frier was convinced. Her unfaithfulness became manifest. How? No one will dare to say. He took his letters, and again with much effort toiled to her home. He met Pansy in the hall, she did not greet him as usual, but, laughingly, imprinted a kiss upon his face, burning with an internal heat. He would have given to her the letters and demanded his own, but a strange feeling stole over his senses, such as when we linger on the threshold of our dear home, before we journey forth alone, in a new and foreign world, or, when we take the last smile of a parting

friend, whose form, perchance, we may never see again. Frier now thought that *he* was in the wrong, and as she smiled, the clouds of doubt and pain were driven from his heart and the emblem of purity again appeared—but yet he chided her. She then looked disdainfully into his eyes. He chided her again. She feigned sadness and regret. He continued to chide, but not in anger. Nay! his chiding wore the stamp of sympathy, love and redemption. She fell at his feet and begged forgiveness. They arose, and all was again like a summer day—calm, tranquil, happy. Is it not strange how the green ivy throws its tender arms in loving embrace and reverence about the seemingly dead trunk of a tree, when there are so many stately laurels, myrtles, poplars and elms it could woo.

But the hour stole on, and darkness dropped her sable cloak over all their love. The joys of the past were hid in the sorrows and tears of the present. The day of separation came—that cold, damp, uninvited, cloudy day, which chills the existence of nearly every human heart. It came, it has come, and so will continue to come. Their novel was ended, and each heart was given the sober chance for calm retrospection. He returned to her her love, he received his own. Pansy reached out her hand to bid him farewell. Frier paused, but he gave her his hand, and thus put the final seal upon that friendship, whose birth may have been doubtful, but whose death seemed real and certain.

Frier returned to his office and had a dream. He fancied he saw her as she lived in years that were to come. She loved, but not another; her future was one long winter full of rain and darkness, her life, one long tale of regret and disappointment; and as for himself, he was with her in all her journey, but, like Christ, when he walked toward Emmaus, with two of his beloved disciples, she could not see him. He was with her as one ever present and never absent. He loved—but only her who had made him so miserable.

CHAPTER XXI.

“There, thou—whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain—
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy memory flashes on my brain?
Well—I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity’s behest.
For me ’twere bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!”

“A moment, sir; I wish to ask a question.”

These words were uttered by a man dressed in a suit of black, of middle stature, and of sad countenance, and were addressed to Mr. Robert Randall, who had just left the court-house and was returning to his office.

“I say, sir, do you remember a young lady in this city by the name of Lethe Reynolds—Lethe Reynolds?”

“Lethe Reynolds!” said Randall, as he put his hand on his chin and looked the man in the eye.

“That is her name, sir,” quickly responded the stranger.

“Lethe Reynolds,” said Randall, as he continued to gaze at the man; “I think I know her. She is some kin to the Mackelsalts, eh?”

“Well, no,” said the stranger, “no kin—but mere friends.”

“O, yes!” said Randall, as he doubled up the two words into a reasonable circumference. “Yes, sir, I can tell you where she is; but, before I impart the fact, may I ask your purpose, sir. Does it involve any serious matter in respect to legal manipulation?”

“How is that, sir?” asked the stranger, unable to see the drift of the thought.

“I mean, sir, does your purpose involve any legal business?”

“A little, sir.”

“For self, or individual?”

“For both, sir.”

“Money or poverty?”

“Money, sir!”

“Then step this way, sir: to the next corner, and I will gratify your curiosity.”

They both walked down the street until they arrived at a certain corner, when Mr. Randall pointed out with perfect satisfaction, the building which bore the name of “Traveller’s Rest.”

“By the bye, sir, where is your office?”

“Here is my card,” said Mr. Randall, as he gave him his name in black and white, “and if you need any legal help, why—”

“I’ll give you a call,” replied the stranger.

“Thanks, thanks: good-day,” said Randall, all in one breath, while the stranger hastened down the street toward “Traveller’s Rest.”

When the stranger arrived at the hotel he opened the door, entered into the small hall and asked for the proprietor. In a short time an ill-natured looking woman, with no prepossessing qualities save ugliness and disgust, made her appearance and inquired of the gentleman’s business.

“Madam,” said he, “I have journeyed over two thousand miles, and spent quite a respectable fortune in search of a young lady by the name of Lethe Reynolds: and I found, by inquiry, that she is here. Now—”

“Lethe Reynolds! humph; yes—I suppose you are some kin to the Mackelsalts, eh?”

“No, madam. I once knew them; but—”

“But, sir, may I ask your name—if you don’t think me too impartial. I mean—”

"Inquisitive, I suppose," said the stranger. "Well, madam, my name is Henry Reynolds—the lost uncle to Lethe!"

"Henry Reynolds?"

"Yes."

"Why he is the man who deserted her, his home, his—"

"Yes."

"And has never been heard of since?"

"Yes."

"Who was a drunkard, a spendthrift, a—"

"Madam, the time does not permit of such actions; so do not throw invectives at my character. I was once as you say; but now, thank God, I am a changed man."

"Well then, sir," said the woman, hardly recovering from the excitement into which she had needlessly thrown herself, "may I ask your purpose?"

"I wish, madam, to make Lethe happy."

"Make her happy, eh?"

"Yes."

"You had better make me happy first, sir—she owes me for half a year's rent."

"Madam," said the stranger, after a pause, "you will receive your money before I leave this house. Will you lead me up to her room, or may I see her here?"

The old lady, who was now overwhelmed with delight at the thought of receiving her money, could scarcely contain herself—she could not be too kind. In her endeavors to take the stranger to Lethe she came in violent collision with several of the boarders, who escaped with no little injury to their feet and ankles.

"Lethe! Lethe!" she cried out so loud, when she neared her room, that every one on the same floor opened their doors with wonder and astonishment, to know the cause of the unusual proceedings.

"Yes, Mrs. Coddle," said Lethe, in answer to her call.

"Here is a gentleman who wishes to see you. There you are, sir, step in, step in, sir—there."

And, while the door was being closed, Mrs. Coddle went hurriedly to the clerk's desk.

"Lethe, my dear!" said the stranger, "don't you remember me?"

"Sir!" answered Lethe, somewhat surprised at the intimacy he assumed.

"Don't you remember your uncle; he who wandered away when your sister died—don't you remember—"

"Henry?"

"Yes; Henry, your uncle. He is a new man now, and brings to you good news."

They recalled one another's former selves, and for a long time were unable to speak on account of joy and grief; but at last Mr. Reynolds told her how her grandmother's words had been realized, and Lethe, whom she had always said would be truly happy, had at last received the pension. Lethe could scarcely believe it, until he made everything so clear and conducive to belief, that she was compelled to throw aside every shadow of a doubt; she then wept for joy. The past now became a dream—the last round of the ladder was reached, and she stepped off into the realm of earthly bliss and happiness. She thought of Herbert.

But Lethe soon began to question her uncle as to how she might obtain the money. He thought of Mr. Randall, and bade her go with him to his office; but she kindly refused, saying that she preferred rather to remain. And so he suffered her; and, after a mutual kiss, hastened to the office of Mr. Randall, and spoke to him about the pension.

"You can only receive a pension, sir, when you can produce sufficient evidence for your claim," said Randall, as he ran over the pages of the latest work on that subject.

"All evidence is in our favor, sir. The pension was registered and

given out by the Government some time ago, and I presume it is now in the hands of the agent, awaiting the arrival of a claimant."

"Let us see," said Randall, as he adjusted his hat to his head and picked up his cane, "let us step up to the agent's office."

They did so: Randall went to the desk and made the cause known, and received for the encouraging answer that it had already been drawn.

"By whom, sir!" asked Mr. Reynolds, in a fever of excitement.

"By one, sir, who claimed to be the child's guardian."

"The child's guardian?" said Mr. Randall.

"Yes, sir: and his name is—is—you can read this, sir;" and he gave Mr. Reynolds the book, wherein was enrolled the name of Mr. Mackelsalt, guardian.

"Mr. Mackelsalt?"

"That is his name; yes, sir," said the clerk, as he resumed his work.

"But, sir, he is an imposter—a fraud, a—"

"The Government has nothing to do with that, sir."

"But it—"

Here Mr. Randall restrained him; and, to avoid a quarrel, he bade him be quiet, saying that the Government always gets the best of a quarrel, and that it were best for him to go immediately to the home of Mr. Mackelsalt and claim the money.

"But," said he, "have you the papers?"

"Papers! Why, no: they were given to Lethe."

"But, come: let us go to the Mackelsalts', and, if villainy is strength or weakness, we shall soon know by their actions."

"They went and found Mrs. Mackelsalt alone in the house, and made known their cause. They offered vehement threats: they made Mrs. Mackelsalt fairly quiver; they produced a paper, which Mr. Randall claimed was a warrant for her arrest, if she did not immediately hand over the money. Mrs. Mackelsalt, like her husband, was a coward at heart, and the least mention of law would put terror in

her soul—they urged no further. Mrs. Mackelsalt recognized Mr. Henry Reynolds as the lost uncle. The money and papers were handed over to the rightful parties, who left the premises, thinking what a game they had played at the expense of mere chicanery. They counted the money and conferred with the papers. There was lacking a difference of fifty dollars; but, saying nothing about this, they took the net proceeds, which was quite a fortune in itself, to the orphan child, Lethe Reynolds.

Lethe was still in her room. They told her of all that had happened, and then gave her the money, asking her whether it was not heavy? To which she could only laughingly reply, yes.

But Lethe was not satisfied. She begged Mr. Randall to run with all possible speed to Herbert's studio and tell him that she had, at last, received her fortune.

He went and found Herbert reclining on a bed. His face was pale and wan. Mr. Randall was surprised. He hastened toward him, and asked whether he was ill? Mr. Randall would have gone for a physician, but Herbert bade him be patient and stay, saying that he was now beyond the reach of cure; and as he spoke his voice grew quivering and low. Mr. Randall knew not what to do, whether to run to Lethe and tell her all, or to go for a physician, contrary to his wishes. But Herbert, holding up his arms, motioned him to be composed. At one time he was about to speak, but his voice failed him. Mr. Randall now took hold of his hand—it was very cold. Again he tried to speak.

“See—see that painting—there? Give it to Lethe. Say that I painted it. Tell her I'll be home to-night, never fear; I'll be home.”

He endeavored to rise, but his strength failed him and he fell upon the couch exhausted. Herbert's hour had come. Overwhelmed with grief and anguish he sought no more the delights of this world, but that gentle spirit which had so often administered to his wants

was, though absent, ever near him, and Herbert could see her sweet and honest face, her soft blue eyes, her angelic form; he could hear her musical words now, even more distinctly than ever. Lethe was, indeed, a vision to him—perhaps her real and true nature.

But Hérbert had now lost his consciousness, and he wandered from the realms of possibility and reality. Again he tried to speak, but only whispered softly.

“ ’Tis twilight? Move my couch to the window, please; I wish to see the last rays of the setting sun.”

He grew paler and paler, and his voice softer and softer. Mr. Randall looked upon his face. It had the look of heaven, not earth, and that same, sweet smile which he had so often seen upon his lips, weaved its heavenly beauty, there anew. He moved him to the window.

“Look—look—that is Lethe—”

“Yes, Herbert; and she is happy. She has received her fortune. She—”

“Don’t *you* see her—I see her sweet face—Oh, how beautiful.”

Here Mr. Randall burst out in tears; but he held Herbert’s almost lifeless hand, while he continued, his voice growing weaker and weaker,

“She beckons me to her—her face is bright with joy. We will be happy, Lethe!”

“Yes, Herbert; you *will* be happy now—you will think no more of misfortunes.”

“We *will* be happy, Lethe—we will be happy—”

He ceased—and his sweet spirit left its mansion forever. Randall tried to lift him, but death had done its work; and that life which was a blessing to all, while it breathed upon earth, sought its new and welcome home above, among brighter and fairer scenes.

The sun set, and the purple clouds, tinged with a beautiful gold, cast their soft light upon his lifeless form.

He died of a broken heart, although his dearest friend, like a ministering angel, was ever at his side—the end all may divine. So has it pleased fate that some should suffer; but the Easter morning will arise when God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes, and when the former things will indeed pass away.

