MARK HURDLESTONE.

MARK HURDLESTONE,

THE GOLD WORSHIPPER.

BY

MRS. MOODIE,

AUTHOR OF "ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH; OR, LIFE IN CANADA;"
"ENTHUSIASM."

The fire burns low, these winter nights are cold
I'd fain to bed, and take my usual rest.
But duty cries, "There's work for thee to do;
Stir up the embers, fetch another log,
To cheer the empty hearth. This is the hour
When fancy calls to life her busy train;
And thou must note the vision ere it flies."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

JOHN BRUCE, ESQ.

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

BELLEVILLE, UPPER CANADA,
Nov. 1852.

INTRODUCTION.

THE story of Mark Hurdlestone, the Gold Worshipper, which I here present to the British public, forms the first of a series, that employed my pen during the long, cold, winter nights of 1838—9; when the protracted absence of my husband on the frontier rendered the privations and solitude of my forest home more hard to bear.

In the fall of 1837 a magazine was started by Messrs. Lovell and Gibson in Montreal. In the December of that year Mr. Lovell wrote to me to obtain contributions from my pen, both in prose and verse, for the new-born periodical. With a generosity unusual in this country he requested me to name my own terms.

An offer so unexpected and so liberal from a perfect stranger appeared like a message sent to me from heaven; and, poor as I then was, I felt tempted to contribute what I could gratis. But my infant family of four small children, the eldest not quite six years old, put an effectual check upon my impulsive generosity. I found upon reflection that this was entirely out of my power. Time to me was money—it belonged by right to my family, and was too valuable a commodity to give away. I therefore named five pounds per sheet, as the price required for articles from my pen, which had to be written after the labours of the day were over, and the children were asleep in their beds. The magazine was of large size, with double columns, and in very small type. It required a great deal of writing to fill a sheet.

Strange as it may appear to the reader, these literary labours were a great refreshment to me, instead of an additional fatigue. They helped to fill up the hungry void at my heart, occasioned by the long absence of my husband; and I

forgot the hardships and privations of my lot, whilst rousing into action, after long disuse, the powers and energies of my mind. And then the reward was so great, so unhoped-for; it seemed an answer to my earnest prayers, that I might be able to do something to help us out of our difficulties, and supply my family with the common necessaries of life. It was a joy to me that I was writing for bread, and with the prospect of winning it; and I was amply rewarded by the delight of the children, when the labours of these winter nights purchased shoes for their little bare feet, and procured them warm and comfortable clothing.

Dear children! their love and devotion was our greatest consolation. It sweetened all our toils, hushed all regretful murmurs, and reconciled us to a stern destiny—for independently of the fond partiality of parents, they were as charming a little flock as ever mother gathered nightly into the domestic fold. They were patient, industrious, and affectionate, and true to the best and holiest instincts of childhood.

Poverty! thou despised but glorious angel of God. Thou, with the bare feet, coarse garments, and sad earnest face. How many useful lessons we learned in thy heaven-taught school! How did thy stern teachings soften the asperity of our nature, and foster all that was good and noble in heart and character; showing us how mind can triumph over matter, and the soul be thankful to the great Father for His magnificent gift of life, in spite of hard toil and coarse clothing!

When I look back upon those years of trial, softened by distance from my "tranquil and happy home," I rejoice exceedingly that they were mine, for they taught me the real value of the lower classes; taught me to recognise the majesty of God's image in the peasant; and to hold it as sacred, and as worthy of admiration and respect, as in the prince. It is almost impossible for any one who has never earned his own bread by manual labour to feel an affectionate interest in the every-day workers of the world, or regard them really as brethren. Having experienced in my own person somewhat of their

trials and sufferings, I never feel the least degraded by honourable poverty, or ashamed of owning that I have worked for daily bread, and would do so cheerfully again did occasion require.

Twenty years ago Canada was not in a condition to foster a literature of her own, and the upper province had not given to the world a native-born author of any distinction. Peopled almost entirely by U. E. loyalists, or poor emigrants from the mother country, who were forced by necessity to devote all their time and energies to obtain food for their families, they had no leisure for the study of books, and no money to spare for the purchase of them. Besides, the greater portion of such emigrants were perfectly uneducated; many of them unable either to read or write. Their occupation was to handle the axe and the handspike, to guide the plough, and kindle the lagging fire; not to drive the pen. Learning would have been of little use to the first pioneers of the great wilderness: it would only have impeded their progress, and filled their minds

with disgust while contemplating the difficulties which hard and unremitting labour could alone surmount.

The industry of the first settlers, who were the original founders of towns and villages, enabled them to place their children in more easy circumstances; and their descendants, born in the country, and brought up to the liberal professions, form the aristocracy of Canada. From this class her legislators and local officers are generally chosen; and they are exceedingly jealous of foreigners interfering, in any way, with what they consider *their rights* as *Canadians born.*

Illiberal as this view of things may appear to strangers of education who come to settle among them, it is not without its advantages; as it fosters a love of country, from which all true patriotism must naturally spring.

Since 1832 the Colony has made rapid strides in moral and intellectual improvement. It is really wonderful to remark the great change which a few years under a more liberal government has effected in the condition of the people. Education was

then confined to a very few; it is now diffused through the whole length and breadth of the land. Every large town has its college and grammar-school, and free schools abound in every district. The poorest child may be taught to read and write at the public expense. His parents have only to wash his hands and face, and send him to school; and the eagerness with which the poorer class seize every opportunity of improving their mental powers, in the hope of raising themselves to an equality with their wealthier neighbours, will soon place this great and rising country on an equal footing with the mighty republic, whose gigantic strides to political and commercial importance may perhaps be traced to the education of her people.

There is now no lack of books in Canada, of money to purchase them, and persons to read and understand them. The reading class is no longer confined to the independent and wealthy: mechanics and artisans are all readers when they have time to spare; and the cheap American reprints of the best European works enable them

to gratify their taste, without drawing very largely upon their purse.

The traffic in books from the United States employs a great many young men, who travel through the country, selling and taking up subscriptions for new works; and the astonishingly low price at which they can be obtained is an incalculable benefit to the colony, however it may interfere with the rights of European publishers.

Of books published in the Colony, we have very few indeed; and those which have been issued from a Canadian press have generally been got out, either by subscription, or at the expense of the author. It is almost impossible for any work published in Canada to remunerate the bookseller, while the United States can produce reprints of the works of the first writers in the world, at a quarter the expense. The same may be said of the different magazines which have been published in the Colony.

Shortly after we came to Canada, a magazine was started in Toronto, called the "Canadian Literary Magazine," edited by Mr. Kent, a

gentleman of considerable talent; and his list of contributors embraced some of the cleverest men in the Colony. This periodical, though a very fair specimen of that species of literature, and under the immediate patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Colborne, only reached its third number, and died for want of support.

Another monthly, bearing the same title, minus the *Literary*, was issued the same year; but being inferior in every respect to its predecessor, it never reached a third number.

A long time elapsed between the disappearance of these unfortunate attempts at a national periodical and the appearance of the "Montreal Literary Garland," which was published at the most exciting period of Canadian history, on the eve of her memorable rebellion, which proved so fatal to its instigators, and of such incalculable benefit to the Colony.

For twelve years the "Literary Garland" obtained a wide circulation in the Colony, and might still have continued to support its character as a popular monthly periodical, had it not been

done to death by "Harper's Magazine" and the "International."

These American monthlies, got up in the first style, handsomely illustrated, and composed of the best articles, selected from European and American magazines, are sold at such a low rate, that one or the other is to be found in almost every decent house in the province. It was utterly impossible for a colonial magazine to compete with them; for, like the boy mentioned by St. Pierre, they enjoyed the advantage of *stealing the brooms ready made.*

It is greatly to the credit of the country that for so many years she supported a publication like the "Garland," and much to be regretted that a truly Canadian publication should be put to silence by a host of foreign magazines, which were by no means superior in literary merit. The "Literary Garland" languished during the years 1850 and 1851, and finally expired in the December of the latter.

From the period of its outset, until its close, I was a constant contributor to the "Garland," in

which I earned from twenty to forty pounds per annum, as time or inclination tempted me to contribute to its pages. The flattering manner in which all my articles were received by the Canadian public was highly gratifying to my feelings; and as human nature, with very few modifications, is the same everywhere, it induced in me a hope, that what had won for me respect in the land of my adoption, would not be received unfavourably by my own country; for though my writings must pass through a more severe ordeal, and stand the test of more learned criticism in England, I feel certain, that whatever is worthy of notice will not fail to command a generous acknowledgment from her truthful people.

In the January of 1841 a Canadian monthly review was published in Toronto, conducted by John Waudby, Esq., and devoted to the civil government of Canada. This magazine was strictly political. It contained many admirable, well-written articles, but its existence did not extend beyond a few months.

In the May of 1846, Barker's "Canadian

Monthly Magazine" was published in Kingston, and though decidedly a *party* magazine, contained many excellent papers; and as far as *literary merit* was concerned, was entitled to long life and popularity. But it insured neither of these advantages, and its brief career terminated at the expiration of twelve months. This was decidedly the best magazine that had appeared in the Upper Province.

In 1848, Mr. Moodie and myself undertook the joint editorship of a cheap monthly magazine published in Belleville, under the title of the "Victoria Magazine." This periodical was issued at the low price of five shillings per annum, and was chiefly intended as a periodical for the people. It had a good circulation, for the brief period of its existence, which only lasted until the end of the year, when the failure of its proprietor, who was engaged in several literary speculations, put a stop to its further progress. Our subscription list contained eight hundred names: all of these subscribers had paid their twelvemonth's subscriptions in advance, and Mr.

W—— must have been a considerable gainer by the publication, although we received nothing for our trouble. The greater portion of the articles, and all the reviews and notices of new works, were written by us. Had we been able to purchase the magazine, and carry it on as our own property, I feel very little doubt of its success.

Whilst conducting this periodical, we had many opportunities of judging of the literary taste and capacity of the public, from the articles that we were constantly receiving for insertion. We had some clever contributions offered to us for the magazine, but they were all, with a very few exceptions, from persons born and educated in the mother country, and could scarcely be ranked under the head of Canadian talent. It was our earnest desire to encourage as much as possible native-born authors, and to make our magazine a medium through which they might gain the attention of the public; and we were not a little disappointed, that the few articles we received from Canadian writers, were not of a character to interest our readers. The Canadian people are

more practical than imaginative. Romantic tales and poetry would meet with less favour in their eyes, than a good political article from their newspapers. The former they scarcely understand, the latter is a matter of general interest to the community. Yet there are few countries in the world which possess so many natural advantages, and present more striking subjects to fire the genius of the poet, and guide the pencil of the painter.

Beautiful — most beautiful in her rugged grandeur is this vast country. How awful is the sublime solitude of her pathless woods! what eloquent thoughts flow out of the deep silence that broods over them! We feel as if we stood alone in the presence of God, and nature lay at His feet in speechless adoration.

Has Canada no poet to describe the glories of his parent land—no painter, that can delineate her matchless scenery of land and wave? Are her children dumb and blind, that they leave to strangers the task of singing her praise?

The standard literature of Canada must be

looked for in her newspapers. Yet the most gifted editors of these numerous journals are chiefly Old Country men. The editor of a clever Canadian paper is on the high road to office and preferment; but he must be a party man, and go the whole hog, or he cannot long enjoy the patronage and favour of the public.

Every small town in the Province has its rival newspapers: and many possess three or four, that pay their own way, and afford a comfortable living to their proprietors. These papers vary in price from seven shillings and sixpence per annum to twenty shillings, and the postage to the most distant town in the Colony does not exceed a halfpenny. A really good newspaper enjoys a wide circulation, not only in its own district, but all over the Colony.

A Canadian newspaper is a strange *mélange* of politics, religion, abuse, and general information. It contains, in a condensed form, all the news of the Old and the New World, and informs its readers of what is passing on the great globe, from the North Pole to the gold mines of Australia and

California. So much matter has to be contained in so small a space, that no room remains for dulness, and should a spare column occur, it is always filled up by the droll sayings and doings of brother Jonathan, or clever extracts and reviews of new works just issued from the ever-teeming American press. There is no restraint upon the freedom of the press in Canada. Men speak their thoughts boldly and freely. Ay, and print them too, and often run mad in the exuberance of their liberty, if you may judge of their sanity by the intemperate language used in these local journals.

The Canadian cannot get on without his newspaper any more than an American could without his tobacco. The "New York Albion," and the "Tribune," edited by Horace Greeley, have likewise a wide circulation in Canada, and there is a host of temperance papers and religious magazines published in the Province.

Every large town has its Mechanics' Institute and debating societies, which tend generally to foster a love of literature, and draw out the

mental resources of the community. Men of education deliver lectures gratis at these Institutes, and are sure to obtain a good audience.

There is no lack of talent in Canada; but as I have before stated, it is chiefly derived from the mother country, and is often to be found in situations where we should least expect it. As an instance of the truth of this observation, I will conclude these remarks upon the literature of Canada with a slight sketch of a poor Irishman, called Michael Ryan, who inhabits a miserable log shanty in the township of Tyendenaga, in this county.

The following letter was handed to me one day by my Irish servant girl, who told me—"That there was a quare man in the kitchen, who was a'waitin my answer." The reader may imagine the surprise I felt while perusing this truly original composition.

"Arrah, Misthress Moodie, alanna, as the Irishman would say, and does—an' sure 'tisn't going to let the high shariff hammer off the little that I have got, sich times as these, when the

pewther is chisted up so close, that one glimpse can't be catched of a yorker, moreover for sich a mere thrifle, two pound five o' debt, and the rest one pile o' costs, to say nothing about the shariff's fees. Heavens an' airth, Misthress Moodie, dear, sure you'll thry to soften his sowl a bit; an', I'm tould, 'tant hard to do it. Do, an' the Lord love you! Tell him the man is poor; has to chop his way through the wild woods, an' a heavy family at his tail to dhrag along. A wee bit of a brother bard, too, you'll say: an' though he's now no more nor a humble axeman, was part of his life a student of ould Trinity, larnin' to be a lawyer,—an' 'tant much he need be sorry that he missed his mark, for the ould Beelzebub has a hand in 'em. 'Do, acushla, let him go. Let the poor man go this hitch; but if ever agin you cotch him, squeeze him.' 'Well, love, since you say so—' 'Ah! thank ye, Captain. I'm much obliged to you, very much, indeed! That's a dear!'

"Yes, madam, I am certain of your interference, when you shall be made acquainted with my story.

The debt for which I have been sued, was contracted for a yoke of oxen. Five pounds of the sum I paid the day my note of promise became due, leaving a balance of thirteen pounds against me still. Three months afterwards I proffered my creditor ten pounds; but instead of accepting it, as any man of any sort of principle would have done, when not crowded himself, he turned upon his heel, and left my note with a limb of the law. The lawyer I paid up with the exception of two pounds five shillings, and the costs. The devil take the law, I say. It was my first time to get into its clutches, and it will be the last; for, henceforward, I will go without before I go in debt. It would be far better for a body, were he stark naked, to wear the hide than to cover it on tick.

"I remain, Madam,

"With all due respect,

"Your Ladyship's most obedient,

"Humble Servant,

"MICHAEL RYAN."

Here follow two of the many sweet poems enclosed in this odd letter :—

THE EXILE.

The bark that's to bear me
  From home and its sweets,
But waits for the land-breeze
  To breathe on her sheets;
And here wings the wanton,
  Upon them to play,
'Tis blowing—she's going—
  O, there she's away!

All hope, then, has vanish'd,
  That dash seal'd my doom,
It quench'd the last glimmer
  That peep'd through my gloom;
As wild as the woe was
  That darken'd my brow,
The shafts of affliction
  I felt not till now.

Some say 'tis unseemly
  The tear to let flow,
That the man's but a woman
  Who weeps at his woe.
They say—but they know not
  The anguish that lies
In parting for ever
  From all that we prize.

Roll on, ye dark gushes,
  Why should I restrain?
Ye but lighten a bosom
  That's bursting in twain.

Roll on, while I murmur
  Farewell to yon shore,
To the land of my birth,
  Which I ne'er shall see more!

Now, far in the distance,
  That land do I leave,
To eye it but seemeth
  A spot on the wave;
But while I can ken it,
  On it are mine eyes;
When 'tis lost in the ocean,
  I'll look where it lies.

These mariners round me
  Are merry, they may—
They brave not the billows,
  Beyond them to stay.
To steer his course backward
  Each fellow is free,
He's doom'd not to wander
  An outcast like me.

Again to the harbour
  They've left they'll arrive,
While to me 'tis forbidden
  As long as I live.
'Mid regions far distant
  I'm destined to roam,
Till the hand of the stranger
  Shall dig my last home.

When death shall close mine eye,
  And still the beatings of my breast;
Where is it I would lie,
  And take my long, long dreamless rest?

Is it beside the proud?
  I covet not such company.
A monarch in his shroud
  Mute as his meanest slave must be.

And where then would I rest?
  Is it beside the abbey wall,
Where priests in sacred vest
  Pour forth a requiem for all?
'Tis good to tarry there,
  Within the influence divine
Of hymn and holy prayer—
  Elsewhere to sleep, though, would be mine.

Well, is't upon the plain?
  Or is't beneath the briny wave?
What, slumber with the slain?
  I never liked a gory grave.
Nor would I like to sleep
  Amongst the monsters of the sea—
The waters of the deep—
  I'm wild, but they're too wild for me.

In my own native land,
  And to my lowly birth-cot close
A little hill doth stand,
  On which a single hawthorn grows.
A thousand times have I
  Beneath its boughs in boyhood play'd,—
When dead, 'tis there I'd lie,
  I'd rest more calmly in its shade.

"Such, madam, is the employment of my winter nights, when my shanty is half-buried in

the snow; and wearying as this thing of rhyming is, it relieves me from more corroding thoughts—the cares of the world. I was just in the middle of a little Irish story, after the Carleton fashion, and which accounts to you for the manner I at first addressed you, when the deputy roused me from my reveries, and broke the thread of my story.* 'Tis little you know what it is to begin the world in Canada's wilderness empty-handed; and I hope to Heaven you never may. The only quadruped of mine worth anything, and the only thing on earth that I had to convert into a payment for my land, which I am in danger of losing, after all my labour, is now in the hands of one of the harpies—a lawyer's grasp."

This letter was shortly followed by one to Mr. Moodie, which, like its predecessor, contained many beautiful little poems. I need hardly say that Mr. Moodie gave up his fees upon the suit against him; and induced the lawyer to do the same.

* Little did poor Ryan imagine that the high sheriff's wife, to whom he so pathetically appealed in his hour of distress, had practically experienced all the sorrows he so feelingly laments.

Ryan was extremely grateful for this act of kindness, but his letter is rather severe upon the Canadians, and contains more truth than poetry:—

"CAPTAIN,—Mrs. Moodie says, 'That there is no standard here to measure the gentleman by.' The devil a one is there. In this section of the globe common honesty, to say nothing of honour and its high notions, is an article seldom or never to be met with. There is nothing among us but *the Bite*,—and, the more dexterous the knave, the more he is looked—not down upon—but up to. When a person is outwitted in a bargain, or outsworn in a suit of law, he is reckoned a mere fool, and laughed at for his simplicity; while the sharper that shaves him is held up as an object deserving imitation. 'A smart turn that, wasn't it?' 'Ho! that's the boy to get along! He'd live and grow fat where others starve to death!' Just so. Travellers may talk of the tricksy tribes of Africa; but they are no more than one-day old chickens, when compared

to the swindlers of Canada. She can produce chaps by the churchful, who would not scruple to stick the leak into Saint Peter's herring scow. Still, you would think, from their lugubrious mugs, that they were angels upon earth, you would. Yes, you would. Bad luck to such hypocrisy I say.

"MICHAEL RYAN."

One more extract from the writings of this man of genius, and I have done. Should what I have said respecting him create in the breast of some liberal publisher an interest in his fate, and be the means of improving his condition, and drawing him from obscurity, it would give me real and heartfelt pleasure, while it rescued from oblivion a fine collection of intellectual gems too good to be lost :—

Oh, why should I my brother hate?
  From Heaven his soul debar?
Am I to sit a Jove in state,
And deal him out a fiend's fate,
  Because in creeds we jar?

Why should I? No: it's nought to me
  How he may serve his shrine,
All but believe, and all are free,
As they think best, to bend the knee
  Before the Lord divine.

Ev'n were I sure his faith was blind,
  And that his works would burn,
Say, should I show myself less kind?
'Twould more become a Christian mind
  To pity, than to spurn.

To models old, or fashions new,
  Let him adhere or flee,
'Tis God's to count him false or true,
And mine, in all respects to do
  As I'd he do to me.

'Tis mine, unless I mean to prove
  As lawless as an elf;
By Him, who rules the realms above,
I'm bidden to live with all in love—
  To love them as myself.

Still persecution o'er the land
  Is wont her sword to show;
As if the Almighty's own right hand
Requires the aid of mortal's brand
  To crush a traitor foe.

Tyendenaga. MICHAEL RYAN.

MARK HURDLESTONE.

CHAPTER I.

Say, who art thou—thou lean and haggard wretch!
Thou living satire on the name of man!
Thou, that hast made a god of sordid gold,
And to thine idol offered up thy soul.
Oh, how I pity thee, thy wasted years:
Age without comfort—youth that had no prime.
To thy dull gaze, the earth was never green;
The face of nature wore no cheering smile,
For ever groping, groping in the dark;
Making the soulless object of thy search
The grave of all enjoyment.—S. M.

TOWARDS the close of the last century, there lived in the extensive parish of Ashton, in the county of ——, a hard-hearted eccentric old man, called Mark Hurdlestone, the lord of the manor, the wealthy owner of Oak Hall and its

wide demesne, the richest commoner in England, the celebrated miser.

Mark Hurdlestone was the wonder of the place; people were never tired of talking about him; of describing his strange appearance, his odd ways and penurious habits. He formed a lasting theme of conversation to the gossips of the village, with whom the great man at the Hall enjoyed no enviable notoriety. That Mark Hurdlestone was an object of curiosity, fear, and hatred, to his humble dependents, created no feeling of surprise in those who were acquainted with him, and had studied the repulsive features of his singular character.

There was not a drop of the milk of human kindness in his composition. Regardless of his own physical wants, he despised the same wants in others. Charity sued to him in vain, and the tear of sorrow made no impression on his stony heart. Passion he had felt—cruel, ungovernable passion. Tenderness was foreign to his nature—the sweet influences of the social virtues he had never known.

Mark Hurdlestone hated society, and never mingled in festive scenes. To his neighbours he was a stranger; and he had no friends. With power to command, and wealth to purchase enjoyment, he had never travelled a hundred miles beyond the smoke of his own chimneys; and was as much a stranger to the world and its usages as a savage, born and brought up in the wilderness. There were very few persons in his native place with whom he had exchanged a friendly greeting; and though his person was as well known as the village spire or the town pump, no one could boast that he had shaken hands with him.

One passion, for the last fifty years of his unhonoured life, had absorbed every faculty of his mind, and, like Aaron's serpent, had swallowed all the rest. His money-chest was his world; there the gold he worshipped so devoutly was enshrined; and his heart, if ever he possessed one, was buried with it: waking or sleeping, his spirit for ever hovered around this mysterious spot. There nightly he knelt, but

not to pray: prayer had never enlightened the darkened soul of the gold-worshipper. Favoured by the solitude and silence of the night, he stole hither, to gloat over his hidden treasure. There, during the day, he sat for hours entranced, gazing upon the enormous mass of useless metal, which he had accumulated through a long worthless life; to wish it more, and to lay fresh schemes for its increase. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," saith the preacher; but this hoarding of money is the very madness of vanity.

Mark Hurdlestone's remarkable person would have formed a good subject for a painter—it was both singular and striking.

His features in youth had been handsome, but of that peculiar Jewish cast which age renders harsh and prominent. The high narrow wrinkled forehead, the small deep-set jet-black eyes gleaming like living coals from beneath straight shaggy eyebrows, the thin aquiline nose, the long upper lip, the small fleshless mouth and projecting chin, the expression of habitual

cunning and mental reservation mingled with sullen pride and morose ill-humour, gave to his marked countenance a repulsive and sinister character. Those who looked upon him once involuntarily turned to look upon him again, and marvelled and speculated upon the disposition and calling of the stranger.

His dress, composed of the coarsest materials, generally hung in tatters about his tall spare figure, and he had been known to wear the cast-off shoes of a beggar; yet, in spite of such absurd acts, he maintained a proud and upright carriage, and never, by his speech or manners, seemed to forget for one moment that he held the rank of a gentleman. His hands and face were always scrupulously clean, for water costs nothing, and time, to him, was an object of little value. The frequency of these ablutions he considered conducive to health. Cold water was his only beverage—the only medicine he ever condescended to use.

The stranger who encountered Mark Hurdlestone, wandering barefooted on the heath or

along the dusty road, marvelled that a creature so wretched did not stop him to solicit charity; and, struck with the haughty bearing which his squalid dress could not wholly disguise, naturally imagined that he had seen better days, and was too proud to beg; influenced by this supposition, he had offered the lord of many manors the relief which his miserable condition seemed to demand; and such was the powerful effect of the ruling passion, that the man of gold, the possessor of millions, the sordid wretch who, in after years, wept at having to pay four thousand a year to the property tax, calmly pocketed the affront.

The history of Mark Hurdlestone, up to the present period, had been marked by few, but they were striking incidents. Those bright links, interwoven in the rusty chain of his existence, which might have rendered him a wiser and a better man, had conduced very little to his own happiness, but they had influenced, in a remarkable degree, the happiness and misery of others; and form another melancholy proof of the

mysterious manner in which the crimes of some men act, like fate, upon the destinies of others.

Avarice palsies mental exertion. The tide of generous feeling, the holy sympathies, still common to our fallen nature, freeze beneath its torpid influence. The heart becomes stone—the eyes blinded to all that once awakened the soul to admiration and delight. He that has placed the idol of gold upon the pure altar of nature has debased his own, and sinks below the brute, whose actions are guided by a higher instinct, the simple law of necessity.

The love of accumulating had been a prominent feature of Mark's character from his earliest years; but there was a time when it had not been his ruling passion. Love, hatred, and revenge, had alternately swayed his breast, and formed the main-spring of his actions. He had loved and mistrusted, had betrayed and destroyed, the victim of his jealous regard; yet his hatred remained unextinguished—his revenge ungratified. The malice of envy and the gnawings of disappointed vanity were now concealed beneath

the sullen apathy of age; but the spark slumbered in the grey ashes, although the heart had outlived its fires. To make his character more intelligible it will be necessary to trace his history from the first page of his life.

Born to heir a vast inheritance, Mark Hurdlestone had not a solitary excuse to offer for his avarice. His father had improved the old paternal estate, and trebled its original value; and shared, in no common degree, the parsimonious disposition of his son. From the time of the Norman Conquest his ancestors had inherited this tract of country; and as they were not famous for any particular talents or virtues, had passed into dust and oblivion in the vault of the old gothic church, which lifted its ivy-covered tower above the venerable oaks and yews that were coeval with its existence.

In proportion to their valueless existence was the pride of the Hurdlestone family. Their wealth gained for them the respect of the world; their ancient name the respect of those who place an undue importance on such things; and their

own vanity and self-importance maintained the rank and consequence which they derived from these adventitious claims.

Squire Hurdlestone the elder was a shrewd worldly-minded man, whose natural *hauteur* concealed from common observers the paucity of his intellect. His good qualities were confined to his love of Church and State; and to do him justice, in this respect he was a loyal man and true—the dread of every hapless Jacobite in the country. In his early days he had fought under the banners of the Duke of Cumberland as a gentleman volunteer; and had received the public thanks of that worthy for the courage he displayed at the memorable battle of Culloden, and for the activity and zeal with which he afterwards assisted in apprehending certain gentlemen in his own neighbourhood, who were suspected of secretly befriending the unfortunate cause. At every public meeting the Squire was eloquent in his own praise.

"Who can doubt *my* patriotism, *my* loyalty?" he would exclaim. "I did not confine my

sentiments upon the subject to mere words. I showed by my deeds, gentlemen, what those sentiments were. I took an active part in suppressing the rebellion, and restoring peace to these realms. And what did I obtain, gentlemen? —the thanks—yes, gentlemen, the public thanks of the noble Duke!" He would then resume his seat, amidst the plaudits of his time-serving friends, who, judging the rich man by his own standard of excellence, declared that there was not his equal in the county.

Not content with an income far beyond his sordid powers of enjoyment, Squire Hurdlestone the elder married, without any particular preference, the daughter of a rich London merchant, whose fortune nearly doubled his own. The fruits of this union were two sons, who happened in the economy of nature to be twins. This double blessing rather alarmed the parsimonious Squire; but as the act of maternal extravagance was never again repeated on the part of Mrs. Hurdlestone, he used to rub his hands and tell as a good joke, whenever his heart was warmed

by an extra glass of wine, that his wife was the best manager in the world, as the same trouble and expense did for both.

A greater difference did not exist between the celebrated sons of Isaac than was discernible in these modern twins. Unlike in person, talents, heart, and disposition, from their very birth, they formed a striking contrast to each other. Mark, the elder by half-an-hour, was an exaggeration of his father, inheriting in a stronger degree all his narrow notions and chilling parsimony; but, unlike his progenitor in one respect, he was a young man of excellent natural capacity. He possessed strong passions, linked to a dogged obstinacy of purpose, which rendered him at all times a dangerous and implacable enemy; while the stern unyielding nature of his temper, and the habitual selfishness which characterised all his dealings with others, excluded him from the friendship and companionship of his kind.

Tall and slightly made, with a proud and gentlemanly carriage, he looked well though dressed in the most homely and unfashionable

garb. Beyond scrupulous cleanliness he paid little attention to the mysteries of the toilet, for even in the bloom of youth, "Gallio cared for none of those things." In spite of the disadvantages of dress, his bright brown complexion, straight features, dark glancing eyes, and rich curling hair, gave him a striking appearance. By many he was considered eminently handsome; to those accustomed to read the mind in the face, Mark Hurdlestone's countenance was everything but prepossessing.

The sunshine of a smiling heart never illumined the dark depth of those deep-seated cunning eyes; and those of his own kin, who most wished to entertain a favourable opinion of the young heir of Oak Hall, agreed in pronouncing him a very disagreeable selfish young man.

He hated society, was shy and reserved in his manners, and never spoke on any subject without his opinion was solicited. This extraordinary taciturnity, in one who possessed no ordinary powers of mind, gave double weight to all that he advanced, till what he said became a law in the

family. Even his mother, with whom he was no favourite, listened with profound attention to his shrewd biting remarks. From his father, Mark early imbibed a love of hoarding; and his favourite studies, those in which he most excelled, and which appeared almost intuitive to him, were those connected with figures. The old Squire, who idolised his handsome sullen boy, was never weary of boasting of his abilities, and his great knowledge in mathematics and algebra.

"Aye," he would exclaim, "that lad was born to make a fortune; not merely to keep one ready made. 'Tis a thousand pities that he is not a poor man's son; I would bet half my estate, that if he lives to my age he will be the richest man in England."

Having settled this matter in his own way, the old Squire took much pains to impress upon the boy's mind that *poverty* was the most dreadful of all evils—that, if he wished to stand well with the world, riches alone could effect that object, and ensure the respect and homage of his fellow-men. "Wealth," he was wont

jocosely to say, "would do all but carry him to heaven,"—and how the journey thither was to be accomplished, never disturbed the thoughts of the rich man.

Courted and flattered by those beneath him, Mark found his father's precepts borne out by experience, and he quickly adopted his advice, and entered with alacrity into all his money-getting speculations.

The handsome income allowed him by the Squire was never expended in the pursuit of pleasures natural to his rank and age, but carefully invested in the funds, whilst the young miser relied upon the generosity of his mother to find him in clothes and pocket-money. When Mrs. Hurdlestone remonstrated with him on his meanness, his father would laugh and bid her hold her tongue.

"Let him alone, Lucy; the lad cannot help it; 'tis born in him. The Hurdlestones are a money-making, money-loving race.—Besides, what does it matter? If he is saving a fortune at our expense, 'tis all in the family. He knows how to

take care of it better than we do. There will be more for Algernon, you know!"

And this saying quieted the fond mother. "Yes," she repeated, there will be more for Algernon,—my handsome generous Algernon. Let his sordid brother go on saving,—there will be more for Algernon."

These words, injudiciously spoken within the hearing of Mark Hurdlestone, converted the small share of brotherly love, which hitherto had existed between the brothers, into bitter hatred; and he secretly settled in his own mind the distribution of his father's property.

And Algernon, the gay thoughtless favourite of his kind but imprudent mother, was perfectly indifferent to the love or hatred of his elder brother. He did not himself regard him with affection, and he expected nothing from him, beyond the passive acquiescence in his welfare which the ties of consanguinity generally give. If he did not seek in his twin brother a friend and bosom-counsellor, he never imagined it possible that he could act the part of an enemy.

Possessing less talent than Mark, he was generous, frank, and confiding. He loved society, in which he was formed by nature to shine and become a general favourite. His passion for amusement led him into extravagance and dissipation; and it was apparent to all who knew him, and even to those who loved him best, that he was more likely to spend a fortune than acquire one.

Algernon had received, with his brother, a good classical education from his uncle, a younger brother of his father's, who had been brought up for the Church, and taken several degrees at Oxford, but had reduced himself to comparative indigence by his imprudence and extravagance. Alfred Hurdlestone would have made a good soldier, but, unfortunately for him, there were several valuable church-livings in the family; and his father refused to provide for him in any other way. The young man's habits and inclinations being at war with the sacred profession chosen for him, he declined entering upon holy orders, which so enraged his father, that he forbade him the house; and at his death, left him a

small life-annuity, sufficient with economy to keep him from starvation, but not enough to maintain him respectably without some profession.

For several years, Alfred Hurdlestone depended upon the generosity of a rich maternal uncle, who gave him the run of the house, and who left him at his death a good legacy. This the ne'er-do-well soon ran through, and finding himself in middle life, and destitute of funds and friends, he consented for a trifling salary to superintend the education of his brother's children.

It was impossible for the Squire to have chosen a more injudicious instructor for his sons:—a man, who in not one instance of his life had ever regulated his actions by the common rules of prudence. He possessed talents without judgment, and was kind-hearted without principle; and though a general favourite with all classes, was respected by none. Having passed much of his time on the continent of Europe, he had acquired an ease and courtesy of manner, which rendered him quite an acquisition to the country drawing-

room, where he settled all matters of fashion and etiquette, to the general satisfaction of the ladies; and in spite of his reduced circumstances and dependent situation, he was warmly welcomed by all the mammas in the parish. They knew him to be a confirmed old bachelor, and they trusted their daughters with him without a thought that any mis-alliance could take place. Mr. Alfred was such a dear, good, obliging creature! He talked French with the girls, and examined the Latin exercises of the boys, and arranged all the parties and pic-nics in the neighbourhood; and showed such a willingness to oblige, that he led people to imagine that he was receiving, instead of conferring a favour. His cheerful temper, agreeable person, and well-cultivated mind, rendered him the life and soul of the Hall; nothing went on well without him. His occupations were various—his tasks never ended; he read prayers—instructed the young gentlemen—shot game for the larder, and supplied the cook with fish—had the charge of the gardens and poultry-yard, and was inspector-general of the

stables and kennels; he carved at dinner—decanted the wine—mixed the punch, and manufactured puns and jokes to amuse his saturnine brother. When the dessert was removed he read the newspapers to the old Squire, until he dosed in his easy chair; and when the sleepy fit was over, he played with him at cribbage or backgammon, until the tea equipage appeared.

Then, he was an admirable cook, and helped his sister-in-law, with whom he was an especial favourite, to put up pickles and preserves, and prided himself upon catsup and elderberry-wine. He had always some useful receipt for the old ladies; some pretty pattern for embroidery, or copy of amatory verses for the young, who never purchased a new dress without duly consulting Mr. Alfred as to the fashion of the material, and the becomingness of the colour. Besides all these useful accomplishments, he visited the poor when they were sick, occasionally acting as their medical and ghostly adviser; and would take infinite pains in carrying about subscriptions for distressed individuals, whom he was unable to assist out of

his own scanty funds. He sang Italian and French songs with great taste and execution, and was a fine performer on the violin. Such was the careless being to whom Mr. Hurdlestone, for the sake of saving a few pounds per annum, entrusted the education of his sons.

As far as the mere technicalities of education went, they could not have had a more conscientious or efficient teacher; but his morality and theology were alike defective, and, instead of endeavouring to make them good men, Uncle Alfred's grand aim was to make them fine gentlemen. With Algernon, he succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations; for there was a strong family likeness between that young gentleman and his uncle, and a great similarity in their tastes and pursuits. Mark, however, proved a most dogged and refractory pupil; and though he certainly owed the fine upright carriage, by which he was distinguished, to Uncle Alfred's indefatigable drilling, yet, like Lord Chesterfield's son, he profited very little by his lessons in politeness.

When the time arrived for him to finish his studies, by going to college and travelling abroad, the young heir of the Hurdlestones obstinately refused to avail himself of these advantages. He declared that the money, so uselessly bestowed, would add nothing to his present stock of knowledge, but only serve to decrease his patrimony. That all the learning that books could convey, could be better acquired in the quiet and solitude of home. That he knew already as much of the dead languages as he ever would have occasion for, as he did not mean to enter the church or to plead at the bar; and there was no character he held in greater abhorrence than a fashionable beau or a learned pedant. His uncle had earned a right to both these characters; and, though a clever man, he was dependent in his old age on the charity of his rich relations. For his part, he was contented with his country and his home, and had already seen as much of the world as he wished to see, without travelling beyond the precincts of his native village.

Mr. Hurdlestone greatly applauded his son's resolution, which, he declared, displayed a degree of prudence and sagacity remarkable at his age. But his mother, who still retained a vivid recollection of the pleasures and gaiety of a town life, from which she had long been banished by her avaricious lord, listened to the sordid sentiments expressed by her first-born with contempt, and transferred all her maternal regard to his brother, whom she secretly determined should be the gentleman of the family.

In her schemes for the aggrandisement of Algernon she was greatly assisted by Uncle Alfred, who loved the handsome free-spirited boy for his own sake, as well as for a certain degree of resemblance, which he fancied existed between them in mental as well as personal endowments. In this he was not mistaken; for Algernon was but an improvement on his uncle, with less selfishness and more activity of mind. He early imbibed all his notions, and entered with avidity into all his pursuits and pleasures. In spite of the hard usage that Uncle Alfred had

received from the world, he panted to mingle once more in its busy scenes, which he described to his attentive pupil in the most glowing terms.

Eager to secure for her darling Algernon those advantages which his brother Mark had so uncourteously declined, Mrs. Hurdlestone laid close siege to the heart of the old Squire, over whom she possessed an influence only second to that of her eldest son. In this daring assault upon the old man's purse and prejudices, she was vigorously assisted by Uncle Alfred, who had a double object to attain in carrying his point. Many were the desperate battles they had to fight with the old Squire's love of money, and his misanthropic disposition, before their object was accomplished, or he would deign to pay the least attention to their proposition. Defeated a thousand times, they returned with unwearied perseverance to the charge, often laughing in secret over their defeat, or exulting in the least advantage they fancied that they had gained.

Time, which levels mountains, and overthrows man's proudest structures, at length sapped the

resolutions of the old man, although they appeared at first to have been written upon his heart in adamant. The truth is, that he was a man of few words, and, next to talking himself, he hated to be talked to, and still more to be talked at; and Mrs. Hurdlestone and brother Alfred had never ceased to talk to him, and at him, for the last three months, and always upon the one eternal theme,—Algernon's removal to college, and his travels abroad.

His patience was exhausted; human endurance could stand it no longer; and he felt that if Ear-gate was to be stormed much longer on the same subject, he should go mad, and be driven from the field. A magic word had been whispered in his ear by his eldest son. "Father, let him go: think how happy and quiet we shall be at home, when this hopeful uncle and nephew are away."

This hint was enough: the old man capitulated without another opposing argument, and consented to what he termed the ruin of his youngest son. How Mrs. Hurdlestone and Uncle Alfred

triumphed in the victory they thought that they had obtained!—yet it was all owing to that one sentence from the crafty lips of Mark muttered into the ear of the old man. Algernon was to go to Oxford, and after the completion of his studies there, make the tour of the Continent, accompanied by his uncle. This was the extent of Mrs. Hurdlestone's ambition; and many were her private instructions to her gay thoughtless son to be merry and wise, and not draw too frequently upon his father's purse. The poor lady might as well have lectured to the winds as preached on prudence to Uncle Alfred's accomplished pupil; for both had determined to fling off all restraint the moment they left the shade of the Oak Hall groves behind them.

Algernon was so elated with his unexpected emancipation from the tyrannical control of his father and brother, that he left the stately old house with as little regret as a prisoner would do, who had been confined for years in some magnificent castle, which had been converted

into a county goal, and, from the force of melancholy associations, had lost all its original beauty in his eyes. The world was now within his grasp—its busy scenes all before him: these he expected to find replete with happiness and decked with flowers.

We will not follow our young adventurer to the academic halls, or trace his path through foreign lands. It is enough for our purpose that he acquired little knowledge at college, save the knowledge of evil; and that he met with many misadventures, and suffered much inconvenience and mortification, during his journey through the Continent. He soon discovered that the world was not a paradise; that his uncle was not a wise man; and that human nature, with some trifling variations, which were generally more the result of circumstances and education than of any peculiar virtue in the individual, was much the same at home and abroad. That men, in order to conform to the usages of society, were often obliged to appear what they were not, and sacrifice their best feelings

to secure the approbation of persons whom in secret they despised. That he who would fight the battle of life and come off victorious, must do it with other weapons than those with which fashion and pleasure supply their champions.

Years of reckless folly fled away, before these wholesome lessons of experience were forced upon Algernon's unguarded heart. Fearful of falling into his brother's error, he ran into the contrary extreme, and never suspected himself a dupe, until he found himself the victim of some designing adventurer, who had served a longer apprenticeship to the world, and had gained a more perfect knowledge of the fallibility of its children.

His father groaned over his extravagant bills; yet not one-third of the money remitted to Algernon was expended by him. His uncle was the principal aggressor; for he felt no remorse while introducing his nephew to scenes which, in his early days, had effected his own ruin. Their immoral tendency, and the sorrow and trouble they were likely to entail upon the young

man by arousing the anger of his father, never gave him the least uneasiness. He had squandered such large sums of money at the gambling-houses in Paris, that he dared not show his face at the Hall until the storm was blown over; and to such a thoughtless extravagant being as Alfred Hurdlestone, "sufficient to the day was the evil thereof."

Without any strikingly vicious propensities, it was impossible for Algernon Hurdlestone to escape from the contaminating influence of his uncle, to whom he was strongly attached, without pollution. He imbibed from him a relish for trifling amusements and extravagant expenditure, which clung to him through life. The sudden death of his misjudging instructor recalled him to a painful sense of past indiscretions. He determined to amend his ways, and make choice of some profession, and employ his time in a more honourable manner for the future. These serious impressions scarcely survived the funeral of the thoughtless man whose death he sincerely lamented; but the many debts his uncle had

contracted, and the exhausted state of his purse, urged upon him the imperative necessity of returning to England; and the voyage was undertaken accordingly.

CHAPTER II.

The steel strikes fire from the unyielding flint:
So, love has struck from out that flinty heart
The electric spark, which all but deifies
The human clay.—S. M.

About two years after Algernon Hurdlestone left the Hall, a widow lady and her daughter came to reside at Ashton, and hired a small cottage, pleasantly situated at the back of the park.

Mrs. Wildegrave's husband had been engaged in the rebellion of 1745; and his estates, in consequence, were confiscated, and he paid with his life the forfeit of his rashness. His widow and child, after many years of sorrow and destitution, and living as dependents upon the charity of poor relatives, were enabled to break through this painful bondage, and procure a home for themselves.

An uncle of Mrs. Wildegrave's, who had been more than suspected of favouring the cause of the unhappy prince, died, and settled upon his niece all the property he had to bestow, which barely afforded her an income of fifty pounds a year. This was but a scanty pittance, it is true; but it was better than the hard-earned bread of dependence, and sufficient for the wants of two females.

Mrs. Wildegrave, whose health had been for some years in a declining state, thought that the air of her native place might have a beneficial effect upon her shattered constitution; and as years had fled away since the wreck of all her hopes, she no longer felt the painful degradation of returning to the place in which she had once held a distinguished situation, and had been regarded as its chief ornament and pride.

Her people, save a younger brother of her husband's, who held a lucrative situation in India, had all been gathered to their fathers. The familiar faces that had smiled upon her in youth and prosperity, in poverty and disgrace,

remembered her no more. The mind of the poor forsaken widow had risen superior to the praise or contempt of the world, and she now valued its regard at the price which it deserved. But she had an intense longing to behold once more the woods and fields where she had rambled in her happy childhood;—to wander by the pleasant streams, and sit under the favourite trees;—to see the primrose and violet gemming the mossy banks of the dear hedge-rows;—to hear the birds sing among the hawthorn blossoms; and surrounded by the fondly-remembered sights and sounds of beauty, to recall the sweet dreams of youth.

Did no warning voice whisper to her that she had made a rash choice?—that the bitterness of party-hatred outlives all other hate?—that the man who had persecuted her young enthusiastic husband to the death was not likely to prove a kind neighbour to his widow? Mrs. Wildegrave forgot all this, and only hoped that Squire Hurdlestone had outlived his hostility to her family. Sixteen years had elapsed since Captain

Wildegrave had perished on the scaffold. The world had forgotten his name, and the nature of his offence. It was not possible for a mere political opponent to retain his animosity to the dead. But she had formed a very incorrect estimate of Squire Hurdlestone's powers of hating.

The arrival of Captain Wildegrave's widow in his immediate vicinity greatly enraged the old Squire; but as he possessed no power of denouncing women as traitors, he was obliged to content himself by pouring forth, on every occasion, the most ill-natured invectives against his poor unprotected neighbours.

He wondered at the impudence of the traitor Wildegrave's widow and daughter daring to lift up their heads among a loyal community, where her husband's conduct and his shameful death were but too well known. Alas! he knew not how the lonely heart will pine for the old familiar haunts,—how the sight of inanimate objects which have been loved in childhood will freshen into living greenness its desolate wastes. The

sordid lover of gold, the eager aspirant for this world's trifling distinctions, feels nothing, knows nothing, of this.

Elinor Wildegrave, the only child of these unhappy parents, had just completed her seventeenth year, and might have formed a perfect model of youthful innocence and beauty. Her personal endowments were so remarkable, that they soon became the subject of conversation, alike in the halls of the wealthy and in the humble abodes of the poor. The village-gossips were not backward in mating the young heiress of sorrow with the richest and noblest in the land. Elinor was not unconscious of her personal attractions, but a natural delicacy of mind made her shrink from general admiration. Her mother's scanty income did not enable them to hire servants; and the work of the house devolved upon Elinor, who was too dutiful a child to suffer her ailing mother to assist her in these domestic labours. The lighter employments of sewing and knitting, her mother shared; and they were glad to increase their slender means by taking in plain

work; which so completely occupied the young girl's time, that she was rarely seen abroad, excepting on Sundays, when she accompanied her mother to the parish church; and then, the loveliness which attracted such attention was always partially concealed by a large veil. Mark Hurdlestone's valet happened to meet the young lady returning home through the park without this envious appendage, and was so struck with her beauty, that he gave his young master an eloquent description of the angel he had seen.

"Believe me, sir, she is a mate for the King. If I were but a gentleman of fortune like you, I should feel proud to lay it at her feet."

Mark heard him with indifference. He had never felt the least tender emotion towards woman, whom he regarded as an inferior being, only formed to administer to the wants, and contribute to the pleasures, of man.

"Miss Wildegrave," he said, "might be a fine girl. But he could see no beauty in a woman whose father had died upon the scaffold, and who had no fortune. She and her mother were

outcasts, who could no longer be received into genteel society."

The valet, with more taste than his master, shrugged up his shoulders, and answered with a significant smile: "Ah, sir! if we could but exchange situations."

A few days after this conversation, Mark Hurdlestone met Elinor Wildegrave by accident, and became deeply enamoured with the lovely orphan.

In spite of his blunt speech and misanthropic manners, the young heir of Oak Hall, at that period, was not wholly destitute of the art of pleasing. He was sensible and well-read. His figure was commanding, and his carriage good. His stern features were set off by the ruddy glow of health; and the brilliancy of his lip and eye, the dazzling whiteness of his small even teeth, and the rich masses of raven hair that curled in profusion round his high forehead, atoned in some measure for the disagreeable expression which at all times pervaded his remarkable countenance.

"The young Squire is certainly very handsome," said Elinor Wildegrave to her mother, the

morning after their first meeting. "But there is something about him which I cannot like. His face is as stern and as cold as a marble statue's. I should think it would be impossible for that man to shed a tear, or be capable of feeling the least tender emotion."

"My dear Elinor, you judge too much by externals. These taciturn people are often possessed of the keenest sensibility."

"Ah! dearest mother, believe it not. 'From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' I love not these silent people. The heart that is worn on the sleeve is better, and more to be trusted, than the heart that is concealed in a marble shell."

The human countenance never lies. If read aright, it always presents the real index of the mind. The first impression it makes upon a stranger is always the correct one. Pleasing manners and affable smiles may tend to weaken, nay, even to efface these first impressions, but they will invariably return, and experience will attest their truth.

In her first estimate of the Squire's character, formed from his physiognomy, Elinor was correct, for it was some time before she could reconcile herself to his harsh countenance; but her dislike gradually wore away, and she received his passing civilities with the pleasure which a young girl of her age invariably feels, when regarded with admiration by one so much her superior in rank and fortune.

His retired habits, which at the age of twenty-four his neighbours attributed more to pride than avarice, though in truth they arose from a mixture of both, invested him with a sort of mysterious interest. Elinor felt her vanity flattered by the belief that her charms had touched a heart hitherto invulnerable to female beauty. She was, indeed, his first love, and his last.

Elinor was too romantic to think of uniting herself to a man whom she could not love, for the sake of his wealth; and she prudently and honourably shunned the advances of her taciturn admirer. She knew that his father had been her father's implacable enemy; that all intimacy

between the families had been strictly prohibited at the Hall; and when the heir of that noble demesne made their cottage a resting-place after the fatigues of hunting, and requested a draught of milk from her hands to allay his thirst, or a bunch of roses from her little flower-plot to adorn his waistcoat, Elinor answered his demands with secret mistrust and terror; although, with the coquetry so natural to her sex, she could not hate him for the amiable weakness of regarding her with admiration.

Alas, poor Elinor! why sacrifice to this heartless vanity the peace and integrity of your mind; and for the sake of winning a smile, to which you attach no real value, unseal for ever the fountain of tears?

Avarice, for a long time, struggled with Mark Hurdlestone's growing passion for Elinor Wildegrave; nor could he prevail upon himself to ask the penniless daughter of an executed traitor to become his wife. He was too proud to brave the sneers of the world; too prudent to combat with his father's disappointed hopes and fierce anger.

His fortune he knew would be large—but when is avarice satisfied? and he abandoned the first generous impulse he had ever felt, with the first sigh he had ever breathed.

He contented himself with wandering, day after day, around the widow's dwelling, in the hope of catching a passing glance of the object of his idolatry, without incurring the danger of a personal interview, which might lead to an indiscreet avowal of the passion which consumed him, and place him in the power of his fair enslaver. He hovered around her path, and at church disturbed her devotions by never removing his eyes from her face; but the tale of his love remained untold, and was scarcely acknowledged even to himself.

This was the happiest period of Mark Hurdlestone's life. His passion for Elinor Wildegrave, though selfish and unrefined, was deep and sincere. He contemplated the beautiful and friendless girl, as in after years he viewed the gold in his coffers, as a secret treasure hid from the world, and only known to him.

From this dream he was at length aroused, by the sudden and unexpected appearance of his brother Algernon at the Hall. With quivering lips he congratulated him upon his return to his native land; exchanging with cold and nerveless grasp the warm pressure of his brother's hand, while he contemplated with envy and alarm the elegant person of the returned prodigal. From a boy, he had never loved Algernon; coveting with unnatural greed the property which would accrue to him, should it please Heaven to provide for his twin brother by taking him to itself. But when that brother stood before him in the pride and glory of manhood; with health glowing on his cheek, and beauty on his brow, he could scarcely conceal his envy; for he beheld in him a formidable, and, if seen by Elinor, in all probability a successful rival. Hatred took possession of his breast, and while he pronounced with his lips a chilling welcome, his mind, active in malice, had already planned his ruin. In the first joyous moments of return, and while describing to his delighted mother the lands he had visited, and

his adventures at Paris and Rome, Algernon scarcely noticed his brother's unkind reception. He knew that little sympathy existed between them; but he never suspected that Mark bore him any ill-will, still less that he was likely to act the part of an enemy, and endeavour to supplant him in his father's affections.

Before many days had elapsed, the decided hostility of his brother's manner could no longer escape his attention. Candid himself, and expecting Mark to be the same, he demanded the reason of his singular conduct. Mark turned upon his heel, and answered with a scornful laugh,—"That if the bluntness of his speech displeased him, he knew his remedy, and might quit the Hall. For his part, he had been brought up in the country, and could not adapt his manners to suit the delicate taste of a fine gentleman." Then, muttering something about a travelled monkey, left the room.

During the first burst of honest indignation, Algernon determined to follow him, and demand a more satisfactory explanation of his conduct;

but he was deterred by the grief which he knew a quarrel between them would occasion his mother; and for her sake he put up with the insult. His wrath, like summer dew, quickly evaporated, and the only effect which his short-lived passion produced was to increase the urgency with which he entreated his father to allow him to make choice of a profession, which would remove him from the vicinity of one whose sole study was to torment and annoy him.

His father, who wished to make him feel the effects of his extravagance abroad, calmly listened to his proposals, and asked time for deliberation, and this interval had to be passed by Algernon at the Hall. For his mother's sake, whom he fondly loved, he forbore to complain; and he hailed the approaching shooting season as a relief from the dulness and monotony of home. Used to the lively conversation of foreigners, and passionately fond of the society of the other sex, the seclusion of Oak Hall was not very congenial to his taste. He soon ceased to take an interest in the domestic arrangements of the family, and the violin and

guitar, on which he performed with great taste and skill, were alike discarded, and he imprudently afforded his brother daily opportunities of poisoning his father's mind against him, while he was lounging away his time in the houses of the neighbouring gentry.

To his father, Mark affected to commiserate the weakness of his brother's intellect, and the frivolity of his pursuits. He commented without mercy on his idle extravagant habits—his foreign air and Frenchified manners, invidiously adding up the large sums he had already squandered, and the expense which his father must still be at to maintain him genteely, either in the army or at the bar. He always ended his remarks with an observation, which he knew to be the most galling to the pride of the old man.

"He will be just such a useless despicable fellow as his uncle Alfred, and will be the same burden to me that that accomplished unprincipled fool was to you."

The Squire only lent too ready an ear to the base insinuations of his eldest son; and when

Algernon returned from the field, he found his father's manners yet more repulsive than his brother's. As Mr. Hurdlestone's affection for his youngest born diminished, Mark's appeared miraculously to increase. He even condescended to give Algernon various friendly hints to lose no opportunity of re-establishing himself in his father's favour. But such conduct was too specious even to deceive the unsuspicious kind-hearted Algernon. He detected the artifice, and scorned the hypocrite. Instead of absenting himself from the family circle for a few hours, he was now abroad all day, and sometimes for a whole week, without leaving any clue to discover his favourite haunts.

Mark at length took the alarm. A jealous fear shot through his brain, and he employed spies to dog his path. His suspicions were confirmed when he was at length informed by Grenard Pike, the gardener's son, that Mr. Algernon seldom went a mile beyond the precincts of the park. His hours, consequently, must be loitered away in some dwelling near at hand. Algernon was not a

young man of sentimental habits. He was neither poet nor book-worm, and it was very improbable that he would fast all day under the shade of forest boughs, watching, like the melancholy Jacques, the deer come down to the stream to drink.

Where were his walks so likely to terminate as at the widow's cottage? What companion could the home-tired child of pleasure find so congenial to his tastes as the young and beautiful Elinor Wildegrave? There was madness in the thought! The passion so carefully concealed, no longer restrained by the cautious maxims of prudence, like the turbulent overflowing of some mighty stream, bore down all before it in its headlong course. Several days he passed in this state of jealous excitement. On the evening of the fourth, his mental agony reached a climax; unable to restrain his feelings, he determined to brave the anger of his father, the sneers of the world, and the upbraidings of his own conscience, declare his attachment to Elinor, and ask her to become his wife.

He never for a moment suspected that the orphan girl could refuse the magnificent proposal he was about to make, or contemplate with indifference the rank and fortune he had in his power to bestow.

Mark Hurdlestone was not a man to waver or turn back when his mind was once fixed upon an object. His will was like fate, inflexible in the accomplishment of his purpose. He thought long and deeply on a subject, and pondered over it for days and months, and even for years; but when he said,—"I will do it," the hand of God alone could hinder him from performing that which he had resolutely sworn to do.

Having finally resolved to make Elinor Wildegrave his wife, (for in spite of all the revolting traits in his character, he had never for a moment entertained the idea of possessing her on less honourable terms, rightly concluding that a man's mistress is always a more expensive appendage than a man's wife,) he snatched up his hat, and walked with rapid strides to the cottage.

He neither slackened his pace, nor paused to

reflect on the step that he was about to take until he unclosed the little wicket-gate that divided the cottage from the park. Here at length he stopped to gain breath, and the embarrassment of his situation arose in formidable array against him. He was a man of few words, naturally diffident of his colloquial powers, and easily confused and abashed. In what manner was he to address her? To him the language of flattery and compliment was unknown. He had never said a polite thing to a woman in his life. Unaccustomed to the society of ladies, he was still more unaccustomed to woo; how then was he to unfold the state of his heart to the object of his love? The longer he pondered over the subject, the more awkward and irresolute he felt. His usual fortitude forsook him, and he determined to relinquish a project so ridiculous, or to postpone it to some more favourable moment.

His hand still rested upon the latch of the gate, when his meditations were dispelled by a soft strain of music, which floated forth upon the balmy air, harmonising with the quiet beauty of

the landscape which was illumined by the last rays of a gorgeous summer sunset.

Then came a pause in the music, and the silence was filled with the melodious voice of Elinor Wildegrave. She sang a sweet plaintive ditty, and the tones of her voice had power to soften and subdue the rugged nature of Mark Hurdlestone. His knees trembled, his heart beat faintly, and tears, for the first time since his querulous infancy, moistened his eyes. He softly unclosed the gate, and traversed the little garden with noiseless steps, carefully avoiding the path that led directly to the house.

A screen of filberts concealed his tall figure from observation; and stepping behind the mossy trunk of an excavated oak that fronted the casement, he sent an eager glance towards the spot from whence the sounds issued. The sight that met his eager gaze called into action all the demoniacal passions which the tones of that sweet voice had lulled to rest.

Seated on a rude bench, fronting the lawn, he beheld the only human creature he had ever

loved encircled in the arms of his brother Algernon. The guitar, on which he had been playing, now lay neglected at his feet, and the head of the beautiful girl was fondly nestled in his bosom. As the delighted Algernon bent caressingly over her, to catch the low sweet words that murmured from her lips, his bright auburn curls mingled with the glossy raven tresses that shaded the transparent cheek of his lovely mistress, and he pressed a fond kiss upon her snowy brow.

Oh, sight of hell! Mark Hurdlestone suppressed the yell of agony that convulsed his throat, while he gazed with flashing eyes upon the pair before him;—yes, with such a glance as Satan regarded our first parents ere sin had exiled them from Paradise, and destroyed the holy beauty of innocence. He attempted to quit his place of concealment, but a strange fascination, a horrible curiosity, rooted him to the spot.

Elinor looked up with a smile into her lover's face. Algernon seemed perfectly to understand the meaning of that playful glance, and replied to

it in lively tones, "Yes, dear Nell, sing my favourite song!" and Elinor instantly complied, with a blush and another sweet smile. Mark was no lover of music, but that song thrilled to his soul, and the words never afterwards departed from his memory. A fiend might have pitied the crushed heart of that humbled and most unhappy man.

Mark Hurdlestone rushed from the garden, and sought the loneliest spot in the park, to give utterance to his despair. With a heavy groan he dashed himself upon the earth, tearing up the grass with his hands, and defacing the flowers and shrubs that grew near him as he clutched at them in his strong agony. The heavens darkened above him, the landscape swam round and round him in endless circles, and the evening breeze, that gently stirred the massy foliage, seemed to laugh at his mental sufferings.

He clenched his teeth, the big drops of perspiration gathered thick and fast upon his brow, and tossing his hands frantically aloft, he cursed his brother, and swore to pursue him with his vengeance to the grave. Yes, that twin brother,

who had been fed at the same breast—had been rocked in the same cradle—had shared in the same childish sports—it was on his thoughtless but affectionate and manly heart he bade the dark shadow of his spirit fall. "And, think not," he cried, "that you, Algernon Hurdlestone, shall triumph in my despair. That woman shall be mine, yet. Mine, though her brow has been polluted by your lips, and your profligate love has contaminated her for ever in my eyes. But I will bind you both with a chain, which shall render you my slaves for ever." Then, rising from the ground, he left the spot which had witnessed the only tender emotion he had ever felt, with a spirit full of bitterness, and burning for revenge.

CHAPTER III.

Oh life! vain life! how many thorny cares
Lie thickly strewn in all thy crooked paths.—S. M.

THERE is no sight on earth so revolting as the smile with which hypocrisy covers guilt, without it be revenge laughing at its victim.

When Algernon returned at night to the Hall, his brother greeted him with a composed and smiling aspect. He had communicated to his father the scene he had witnessed at the cottage, and the old man's anger exceeded his most sanguine expectations. With secret satisfaction he saw Algernon enter the drawing-room, which the indignant Squire was pacing with rapid steps; and when he caught the irritated glance of the old man's eye, Mark felt that his work had been well and surely done; that nothing could

avert from his brother the storm that was gathering over him.

"So, sir, you are come at last!" said Mr. Hurdlestone, suddenly stopping and confronting the unsuspecting culprit.

"Was my presence required at home, sir?" asked Algernon in a tone of surprise, at the same time pulling out his watch. "It is not late. Just ten o'clock."

"Late or not late, that is not now the question. I have to ask you—I insist upon your telling me—at what house in this neighbourhood you spend your time?"

There was an ominous pause. Mark smiled sarcastically, but seemed to watch intently for his brother's reply; while the old man's fierce eye glared with tiger-like ferocity upon his younger son.

Algernon at last spoke, and as he did so he raised his head proudly, and firmly encountered his father's keen gaze.

"I see how it is, sir; my actions have been watched, and my motives misrepresented. But I

shall not attempt to deny the truth. My visits have been to the house of Mrs. Wildegrave. She has a beautiful and virtuous daughter, whom I mean to make my wife."

"The traitor Wildegrave!—his child?"

"The same."

"And you dare tell me this to my face?"

"I never do that behind your back, that I would be ashamed to own to your face."

"Impudent scoundrel! Do you know in what manner the father of this *beautiful* and virtuous young lady met his death?"

"As many brave and unfortunate gentlemen did; who, had their cause been successful, would have been praised for their gallantry by the very persons who now condemn them."

"And you expect me to give my consent to this accursed marriage?"

"I neither expect, nor ask it from you."

"By heaven, you shall never have it! nor one farthing of mine, without you promise to relinquish all idea of this disgraceful connexion."

"I must leave that to your own sense of

justice. I have pledged my solemn word to Miss Wildegrave to make her my wife. I cannot break my word without forfeiting my own self-respect."

"Then it appears to me that my approbation to a measure, which so deeply concerns the honour and respectability of my family, was a matter of no consequence to my son."

"Indeed, my dear father, I would cheerfully have consulted you upon the subject had I not been aware of the strong prejudice with which you regard all those who were in any way connected with that unfortunate rebellion. In Miss Wildegrave's case, I knew my application would be worse than fruitless."

"And you knew this, and yet dared to persist in your folly?"

"I did. Because I loved the young lady; and felt that I never could be happy without her."

"And with her I am determined that you never shall be happy. It was my intention, at my decease, to have bequeathed to you the manor of Worden, with its fine old hall, and the noble

woods by which it is surrounded; but as you mean to please yourself in the choice of a wife, I shall take the same privilege in the choice of my heirs. Here you have no longer a home. You may leave the Hall to-morrow, and earn a fortune for yourself and your bride. You have ceased to be my son. I never wish to see your face again."

Mark Hurdlestone, who had listened most attentively to the conversation, now advanced from the recess of the window, and, pretending to take his brother's part, began to expostulate with his father on the violence of his proceedings; begging him to check his indignation, and allow his brother time to perceive his error. "He could not," he said, "excuse his brother's conduct. His want of duty and respect to such an excellent parent he considered perfectly inexcusable, and most ungrateful, after the many bills he had paid for him, and the great expense he had been to the family during his continental tour. But then he hoped that his father would have compassion upon his youth, and take into

account the natural weakness of his intellect, which latter defect made him an easy dupe to artful people."

Algernon's mind was too much overwhelmed with his misfortune to notice the implied insult. He did not even hear it,—while his artful brother, under the pretext of striving to effect a reconciliation, was heaping fresh fuel on the fire, and doing all in his power to widen the breach.

The old man's wrath was at length exhausted; and Algernon, fearing to lose all command over his temper, and exasperated by unmerited abuse, abruptly left the room, and retired with a heavy heart to his own chamber.

His determination to make Elinor his wife was not in the least shaken by his father's threats; although he knew that years must now intervene before such an union could take place. After he had a little calmed his agitated feelings, he sat down and wrote a long letter to Elinor, briefly stating what had taken place, and the necessity he was under of leaving the Hall. He again repeated his vows of unshaken constancy; assuring

her that he was ready to make any sacrifice for her sake. He begged her not to take the present trouble too deeply to heart, as he felt certain that from the violence of the storm the danger would soon be over.

The next morning he took a tender leave of his mother, and accepting the invitation of a friend to spend some time with him in a distant county, he bade, as he thought, a long farewell to the Hall.

From this visit he was recalled in a few weeks to attend the funeral of his father, who died suddenly of gout in the stomach. After the remains of the old Squire had been consigned to the family vault, Algernon accompanied his mother and brother to the library to hear the reading of the will. No suspicion that his father would realise his threat had ever crossed his mind; and he was literally stunned when he found that his unnatural parent had left all to his elder brother, and cut him off with a shilling.

In a moment he comprehended the full extent of his misfortune. He had been brought up a

gentleman; he was now penniless, — without money or interest to secure a respectable situation, in which he might hope by industry and perseverance to obtain a competency. Homeless and friendless, whither could he go? How could he learn to forget what he had been, what he might still be, and all that he had lost? He took up his hat from the table on which his father's unjust testament lay, tore from it the crape that surrounded it—that outward semblance of woe, which in his case was a bitter mockery—and trampled it beneath his feet. His mother raised her weeping eyes silently and imploringly to his face. He returned to her side, pressed her hand affectionately between his own, and casting a contemptuous glance upon his brother, quitted the apartment, and, a few minutes after, the Hall.

When at a distance from the base wretch who had robbed him of his patrimony, by poisoning his father's mind against him, Algernon gave free vent to the anguish that oppressed him. Instead of seeking the widow's cottage, and pouring into

the bosom of Elinor the history of his wrongs, he hurried to that very dell in the park which had witnessed his brother's jealous agonies, and throwing himself at his full length upon the grass, he buried his face in his hands and wept.

Could he have guessed his brother's passion for Elinor Wildegrave, or had he witnessed his despair on that memorable night that had made him the happiest of men, he would frankly have forgiven him the ruin he had wrought.

A strong mind, when it comprehends the worst, rouses up all its latent energies to combat with, and triumph over, its misfortunes. Algernon was an amiable man, a man of warm passions and generous impulses, but he was a weak man. His indignation found vent in sighs and tears, when he should have been up and doing.

A light step rustled among the underwood,—ashamed of his weakness he sprang to his feet, and saw before him, not the slight form of Elinor Wildegrave, into which belief busy fancy had cheated him, but the drooping figure and mild face of his mother, shrouded in the gloomy

garments of her recent widowhood. With pale cheeks and eyelids swollen with tears, she had followed her injured son to his lonely hiding-place.

"Mother!" he cried, holding out his arms to receive the poor weeper, "dear mother! what have I done to be thus treated?"

A convulsive spasm choked his utterance; and as she seated herself beside him on the grass, his head sunk upon her lap, as in other years, and the proud man's spirit was humbled and subdued like that of a little child.

"Your father, Algernon, has died, committing an act of injustice, but for your mother's sake you must forgive him."

Algernon tore up several tufts of grass, and flung them with violence from him, — but he remained silent.

"Your brother, too, my Algernon, though harsh and unkind in his general deportment, feels for your present situation. He is anxious to make some amends to you for the injustice of his father. He sent me to tell you that any

sum you may think fit to name, and which you consider sufficient to settle you in life, shall be yours."

"He sent you——he—the hypocrite! Was it not he who robbed me of my father's love—he, who has robbed me of my natural claims to a portion of my father's property? What! does the incendiary think that I am blind to his treachery—that I am ignorant of the hand that struck me this blow—that I will stoop to receive as a liberal donation, an act of special favour, a modicum of that which ought to be my own? Mother, I will starve before I can receive one farthing from him!"

"Do not be rash, my son"—

"Mother, I cannot be mean. It grieves me, dearest mother, that you should undertake to be the bearer of this message to me."

"Are you not both my children?—though, God knows, not equally dear; and ought not the welfare of both to be precious to the heart of a mother? It is not so: Mark never had an equal share of my affections, and God has punished me

for my undue partiality, by making him the heir of all."

"But, mother, this was no fault of mine."

"True; but he has regarded it as a crime. You have robbed him of my love, and he in revenge has robbed you of your fortune. Had I been a kinder mother to him, he might have prized the gold less, and my affection more. My conscience reproaches me as the author of your present sufferings. Do not make my self-upbraidings more acute, by refusing the assistance which your brother offers you."

"Esau sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, mother: I will not sell my honour for a sum of money, however acceptable that sum might be. It would never prosper with me, if it came from him."

"Well, Algernon, if you will not be persuaded, you must have it your own way. Your father, though he received from me a noble fortune, has left me dependent upon your brother. I cannot, if I would, aid you with money; but this case of jewels is valuable; I am old, I have no further

occasion for such baubles; I have no daughters to wear them after me. Take them, you can raise upon them several thousand pounds,—and may the proceeds arising from their sale be blessed to your use."

"Dearest mother, I accept your generous present;" and Algernon's countenance brightened as hope once more dawned in his breast. "If I should be fortunate I will return to you in hard gold the value of these gems."

He took the casket from his mother's hand, and caught her to his heart in a long and last embrace. "Should Heaven bless my honest endeavours to obtain a respectable independence, my heart and my home, beloved one, shall ever be open to you."

And so they parted—the good mother and the disinherited son, to meet no more on this side the grave.

"Poor mother!" sighed Algernon, as he turned his steps to the widow's cottage, "how I pity you, having to live upon the charity of that churl! It would seem that my father was deter-

mined to punish you, for your devoted love to me."

Before Algernon reached the humble abode that contained his earthly treasure, his buoyant mind had decided upon the best course to pursue. The sale of his mother's jewels would purchase a commission in the East India Company's service. To India therefore he determined to go; and he flattered himself, that, before the expiration of ten years, he would return with an independent fortune to claim his bride. It was a long period in perspective, but Elinor was in the early bloom of youth, and her charms would scarcely have reached maturity when he hoped again to revisit his native land. The bitterest pang was yet to come. He must inform her of his father's unjust bequeathment of all his property to his brother, and of his own determination to seek his fortune in the East. He must bid the idol of his soul adieu, for a period which, to the imagination of a lover, almost involved eternity. Alas! for the fond hearts and the warm hopes of youth. How could they bear the annihilation of all the delightful

anticipations which they had formed of future enjoyment?

Elinor had not seen Algernon since his return to the Hall. She ran down the little path which led to the road to meet him, and the next moment was in his arms. Algernon could not restrain his feelings as he clasped her to his heart; he burst into tears.

"You have had a great loss, my Algernon; I will not chide these tears. The death of a kind parent leaves an awful blank in our existence, a wound which time alone can heal."

"His death, Elinor, has not cost me a single tear."

"Then why this grief?"

"We must part."

"Algernon!" Elinor stepped back, and looked at her lover with death-pale cheeks, and expanded eyes.—"Part!"

"Yes, but not for ever, I hope. But for a long, long period of time; so long, that hope dies in my heart while naming it."

"But why is this, Algernon? Your father's

death, you always told me, would remove the only obstacle to—to—" Her voice failed her. She buried her face in her apron, and wept.

"Yes, dearest; that was, provided he left me the means to support a wife. He has not done so. He has left all to my brother—and I am destitute."

"Good Heaven! And this is my doing. Oh, Algernon. What have you not lost on my account!"

"We will not think of that now, love," said Algernon, growing calmer now the worst had been told; "I came to pour into your faithful heart all my sorrows, and to tell you my plans for the future."

"Algernon," said Elinor, gravely, after remaining for some time in deep thought, "your attachment to me has overwhelmed you with misfortunes. Comply with your father's wishes—resign your engagement to me, and your brother will, in all probability, restore to you the property you have lost."

"And would you wish me to be under obliga-

tions to him? Is not this his work? Elinor, I would rather enlist as a common soldier, than live in affluence, and he my benefactor. But I am poor now, and my love may have become valueless in your eyes;" and he turned his fine eyes, moist with tears, reproachfully on his beautiful mistress.

"I spoke not for myself," said Elinor, gently. "Is not the love that has sacrificed a fortune for my sake beyond all price? But the thought of ruining the man I love overwhelms me with despair."

"Patience, my dear girl—time will remedy the evil. I am going to work hard to win a fortune. In a few years I shall return from India, a rich man."

"India!"

"It is the only spot on the earth where fortunes can be made in a few years."

"But the dreadful climate—the many chances against you—"

"I will brave all for your dear sake. Only promise to be true to me, Elinor; never whilst I live, to wed another."

The promise was given, and sealed upon her lips, and the lovers parted with many sighs and tears; promising, by everything most holy and dear to them, to remain constant to each other. Such vows are too often traced in sand, to be washed out by the returning tide of passion or interest: sometimes by an unfortunate combination of untoward circumstances, over which the poor lover cannot exercise the least control. We shall see how Algernon and his Elinor kept their vows of eternal fidelity.

Mark Hurdlestone heard of his brother's departure and safe arrival in India with unspeakable satisfaction. With cautious steps he pursued the path suggested to him by the implacable spirit of revenge. Before many months had elapsed, the death of Mrs. Hurdlestone afforded him an opportunity of obtaining a fresh introduction to Miss Wildegrave. At his mother's particular request, Mrs. Wildegrave and her daughter had visited her frequently during her dying illness; and as it exactly suited his own purpose, Mark offered no objection, but did all in his power

to meet his mother's wishes. The dying woman felt an intense desire to see the person for whom her favourite son had sacrificed so much, and she was so much pleased with his choice, that she forgave her all the trouble she had occasioned, kept her constantly near her person during her last illness, and finally expired in her arms.

To Elinor she owed much of the attention she received at that time from her stern unloving son. He treated her with a degree of tenderness quite unusual to him, anticipated all her comforts, and seldom left her apartment. "They may call the Squire a harsh cruel man," said Elinor to her mother, "but I must say, that I never saw a kinder or a better son."

After the funeral, Mark called upon Mrs. Wildegrave, to deliver into her hands a few memorials of his mother's regard, to which he added some handsome ornaments for Elinor out of his own purse, and he expressed in the warmest terms his grateful thanks for their attention and kindness to the deceased. He

displayed so much feeling on this melancholy occasion, and spoke with such affection and respect of his departed parent, that it made a deep impression upon Mrs. Wildegrave and her daughter.

Encouraged by this favourable reception, the Squire soon repeated his visit, and by adroitly flattering the elder lady, he continued to ingratiate himself into her favour. Mrs. Wildegrave was a kind well-meaning woman, but she had struggled so long with poverty, that wealth had acquired, as a natural consequence, too great an ascendancy over her mind. The possession of these coveted riches gave to Mark Hurdlestone an importance in her eyes, which made her blind to the defects of his character, and she secretly wished that her daughter had not entered into a rash engagement with his brother, which must unavoidably extend over an indefinite number of years, but could transfer her affections to the handsome owner of Oak Hall. Alas! how often are mothers, and fond mothers too, induced to sacrifice the earthly and eternal peace of a

beloved child to the demon of this world, the selfish soul-destroying power of wealth, that daily slays its thousands and tens of thousands, yet never finds one worshipper the less.

About this period, Mr. Hurdlestone purchased the cottage rented by the widow, and appeared in a new character, that of a landlord. The old lady was fond of planning improvements, which gave him an opportunity of gratifying her taste; and he took no small pains in accommodating himself to her wishes. "He was a fine generous man," she said, "one whom the world had greatly misrepresented. All his father's faults had been heaped upon his innocent head. She had had sore reason to hate the illiberal narrow-minded father, but she admired and esteemed the son."

"I do not think that Algernon did his brother justice," said Elinor; "but members of the same family are often blind to each other's merits. Certainly the Squire is not the bad selfish man I took him for."

"He has behaved like an angel to us," re-

turned the mother; "and I, for my part, prefer him to Algernon."

Elinor rejected this preference with disdain; but the old lady persisted in maintaining her own opinion. Her daughter at last relinquished the argument, by saying, "That the Squire, with his grave serious face, and stiff polite manners, might suit the taste of a middle-aged woman; but he never would win the regard of a young girl."

At first, Elinor had shunned the company of Mr. Hurdlestone, for his presence recalled painful thoughts, and she was prejudiced against him on his brother's account; but his attentions were so kind and considerate, that, stern as he was, she began to entertain a better opinion of him, and to think that perhaps Algernon, who was very passionate, might have given him some provocation for the unjust distribution of his father's property. His manners were austere, and somewhat misanthropic, but his book-knowledge was extensive, and, though naturally taciturn, he could, when he pleased,

converse well upon any subject. Free from the influence of malignant passions, he was a sensible and interesting companion.

Elinor knew that the brothers had not parted friends, nor was she ignorant of the cause of the quarrel; but she was willing to believe, from what she heard and saw of Mark Hurdlestone, that he was less in fault than he had been represented to her by Algernon; and the hope of bringing about a reconciliation, and, by so doing, shorten her lover's period of exile, took a lively hold of her imagination.

The Squire was so plausible, that he found it an easy task to deceive a girl as unsophisticated as Elinor Wildegrave, who was a perfect novice in the ways of the world. She could not believe it possible that Mr. Hurdlestone could stoop from his dignity to act a despicable part; that deception could lurk beneath such a grave demeanour. Elinor was not the first human being whose faith has been built on reeds.

When alone with Miss Wildegrave, Mark never failed to make his brother the theme of

conversation. He lamented, most feelingly, the unfortunate difference which existed between them, which appeared the more unnatural, considering that they were twins. He laid the fault of their disunion entirely to their parents—his father adopting him as a pet, and his mother lavishing all her affections upon Algernon.

This partiality, he said, had destroyed all confidence between them, and produced a rivalry and misunderstanding of each other's character from their earliest years,—substituting envy for generous emulation, and hatred for love. In all their quarrels, whether right or wrong, his mother defended Algernon, and his father sided with him; so that well-doing was never rewarded, and ill-doing never met with an adequate punishment. Was it to be wondered at that they had grown up perfectly indifferent to each other?

There was much truth in this statement; but Mark Hurdlestone made the best of it, in order to justify himself.

As they became more intimate, Elinor ventured to inquire why his father had been induced to

act so unjustly to Algernon on his death-bed; that she could hardly believe that Algernon's attachment to her could have drawn down upon him such a heavy punishment.

"My father was a man of headstrong prejudices," said the Squire. "If he once took a notion into his head, it was impossible to knock it out of him. To dislike a person, and to hate them, were with him the same thing. Such were the feelings he entertained towards your father, whom he regarded as having been his bitterest enemy. The idea of a son of his uniting himself to a daughter of Captain Wildegrave's seemed to impugn his own loyalty. It was with him a personal insult, an unforgivable offence. Algernon has accused me of fomenting my father's displeasure, for the base purpose of robbing him of his share of the property. You have been told this."

"I have."

"And you believe it?"

"I did believe it; but it was before I knew you."

"Dismiss such an unworthy idea of me from your breast for ever. I did all in my power to restore Algernon to my father's favour. I earnestly entreated him, when upon his death-bed, to make a more equitable will. On this point the old man was inflexible. He died muttering curses on his head."

Elinor shuddered.

"It was my determination to have rendered Algernon justice, and shared the property equally between us; but in this Algernon prevented me. He left the Hall in a tempest of rage; and when I made the proposal through my mother, my offer was rejected with scorn. I wrote to him before he left for India on the same subject, and my letters were returned unopened. You see, my dear Miss Wildegrave, I have done all in my power to conciliate my brother; but, like my poor father, his enmity is stronger than his love, and will not be entreated."

This statement of Mr. Hurdlestone's was not only very plausible, but it was partly true. He had indeed begged the dying man to forgive

Algernon, and consent to his marriage with Miss Wildegrave; but then, he well knew that his father would neither do the one nor the other; while his own hypocritical interference only aggravated the old man's anger in a tenfold degree, and would be the sure way of producing the result which he so ardently desired. He had offered to settle a handsome sum upon his injured brother, but he well knew that it would be rejected with scorn by the high-spirited young man. Elinor could not contradict these statements. She knew the impetuous disposition of her lover, and she more readily admitted their probability. Mark had been represented to her by him as a sullen, morose, avaricious young man,—selfish, unfeeling, and cruel,—suspicious of his friends, and implacable to his enemies. She had found him the reverse of all this; and she began to entertain doubts of Algernon's veracity, and to conclude that it was for some more cogent reason than for any with which she was yet acquainted that his father had struck him out of his will, so anxious was she

to acquit herself of being the cause of her lover's exile, and the unfortunate circumstances in which he was placed. This, too, was selfish; but Elinor had been an only child, and very much indulged by her mother. She was a good, gentle, beautiful girl; but not exactly the stuff of which angels are made.

After this explanation had taken place, Mr. Hurdlestone became a daily visitor at the cottage; and his society and friendship contributed greatly to the comfort and amusement of its inhabitants. He never, to Elinor, made the least allusion to his passion. The passion, indeed, had long ceased to exist; he sought her not for love, but for revenge.

Time glided on. Algernon had been three years away; but his letters still continued to breathe the same ardent attachment, and Elinor was happy in the consciousness of being the sole possessor of his heart.

Her mother, who had more ambitious views for her daughter, often lamented her long engagement, which might never be completed.

"She would rather," she said, "have the rich Squire for her son-in-law; and she would not be at all surprised if Elinor herself was to change her mind before the ten years expired."

Six years of the allotted period had expired. Algernon had been promoted to the rank of major; and his letters were full of happy anticipations. Elinor, herself, began to look forward to their union as a thing likely to take place; and she spoke of her lover's perseverance and constancy with proud delight.

"He has done better than I expected of him," said the Squire. "There is nothing like adversity for trying what metal a man's made of. But who can wonder at his exerting himself to obtain such a reward?" And he bowed to the blushing Elinor, as she sat with Algernon's letter in her hand, radiant with joy.

"He talks of returning in less than two years: I wish it were now. I am already three-and-twenty: by that time I shall begin to look old."

Mark thought that she never looked younger,

or more beautiful, than at that moment, and he told her so.

"Ah, but you are my friend—are partial. Will not Algernon see a change?"

"Yes—for the better."

"I wish I could believe you. But I feel older. My heart is not so fresh as it was: I no longer live in a dream: I see things as they really are."

"And do you expect to find no change in your lover? The burning climate of India is not a great beautifier."

"I can only see him as he was. If his heart remains unchanged, no alteration in his personal appearance could shake my regard, particularly when those changes have been incurred for my sake."

"Oh, woman, great is your faith!" said Mark, with a sigh. "Gladly would I give my fortune to be Algernon."

Elinor started, and looked anxiously at her companion. It was the first time he had ever alluded to his secret passion. Did he love her? The question made Elinor tremble. She folded

her letter, and turned the conversation into another channel. But the words haunted her, "I would give my fortune to be Algernon." Could he be in earnest? Perhaps it was only a passing compliment—men were fond of paying such. But the Squire was no flatterer: he seldom said what he did not mean. She re-read Algernon's letter, and thought no more about the words that his brother had let fall.

That letter was the last she ever received from her lover. After enduring the most torturing suspense for eighteen months, and writing frequently to demand the cause of his unusual silence, Elinor gave herself up to the most gloomy forebodings. Mr. Hurdlestone endeavoured to soothe her fears, and win her to the belief that his brother's letters must have miscarried, through the negligence of private hands, to whom they might have been entrusted. But, when these suggestions failed in arousing her from the stupor of grief into which she had fallen, he offered the most tender consolations which could be administered to a wounded mind

—an appearance of heartfelt sympathy in its sufferings.

While musing one morning over the cause of Algernon's silence, the Squire's groom approached the open window at which she was seated, and placed a letter in her hands; it was edged and sealed with black; and Elinor hastily broke the seal, and opened it. Her eye glanced hurriedly over the first few words. She uttered a loud cry, and sank down, weeping, at her mother's feet.

Mrs. Wildegrave lifted her to the sofa, and taking the letter from her cold and nerveless grasp, read its contents. They were written by Mark Hurdlestone.

"Oak Hall, *June 16th*, 17—.

"My Dear Miss Wildegrave,—

"It is with the utmost reluctance that I take up my pen to communicate tidings which, I well know, will occasion you great distress. This morning's post brought me the mournful intelligence of my brother Algernon's death,

which melancholy event took place on the morning of the 4th of August last, at the house of a friend in Calcutta. Mr. Richardson's letter I will transmit to you as soon as you are able to bear its contents. My poor brother was on his way to England; and his death was so sudden, that he made no arrangement of his affairs previous to his dissolution. That Heaven may comfort and sustain you under this severe trial, is the earnest prayer of your sincere friend,

"MARCUS HURDLESTONE."

"Oh, mother! mother! My heart—my poor heart! How shall I learn to bear this great sorrow?" was all that the forlorn girl could utter, as she pressed her hands tightly over the agitated bosom that concealed her convulsed and bursting heart. No sound was heard within that peaceful home for many days and nights but the sobs and groans of the unhappy Elinor. She mourned for the love of her youth, as one without hope. She resisted every attempt at consolation, and

refused to be comforted. When the first frantic outbreak of sorrow had stagnated into a hopeless and tearless gloom, which threatened the reason of the sufferer, the Squire visited the cottage, and brought with him the merchant's letter, that fully corroborated his former statement, and the wretched heart-broken girl could no longer cherish the most remote probability to which hope could cling.

Twelve months passed away. The name of Algernon was never mentioned in her presence; and she still continued to wear the deepest mourning. A strange apathy had succeeded her once gay flow of spirits, and she seemed alike indifferent to herself and all the world. To the lover-like attentions of Mark Hurdlestone she paid no regard, and appeared wholly unconscious of his admiration. Mortified by her coldness, even his patience was nearly exhausted; when the death of her mother, who had been a long time in declining health, cast Elinor, friendless and unprotected, on the world. This circumstance, hailed with unspeakable joy by Mr. Hurdle-

stone, plunged the poor girl, now doubly an orphan, into despair.

A lady in the neighbourhood, pitying her distress, received her into her family, until she could adopt some plan for her future maintenance; but all her attempts to console Elinor for her loss proved abortive. Her tears flowed unceasingly; her health and spirits were impaired; and she felt, with bitterness, that she no longer possessed strength or fortitude to combat with poverty and the many ills of life.

At this critical juncture, Mark Hurdlestone, generously, as all the world thought, came forward, and offered her his hand; inviting her, in the most delicate manner, to share his splendid home and fortunes.

His disinterested offer, at such a time, filled Elinor with respect and gratitude; but she did not love him; and, trembling and irresolute, she knew not how to act. She had but one relative —an uncle, in India—who had never written to her mother since her father died upon the scaffold. Whether this uncle was still living,

was married, or single, she could not ascertain. To him, therefore, it was useless to apply. She had no home—she was at present dependent upon the bounty of a stranger, who could ill afford to be burdened with an additional member to her already large family. What could she do? She consulted that friend; and the worthy woman strongly advised her to accept the Squire's offer, wondering, all the while, how she could, for one moment, think of a refusal. So it was all settled; and Elinor reluctantly consented to become Mark Hurdlestone's wife.

Thousands in her situation would have done the same. But we must blame her, or any other woman, whatever her circumstances may be, who consents to become the bosom-partner of a man she cannot love. Miserable are such unions; from them flow, as from a polluted stream, all the bitterest sorrows and ills of life.

Young maiden, whosoever you may be, whose eyes glance at this moment on my page, take the advice of one who has been both a happy

wife and mother: never sacrifice the best and holiest affections of your heart on the sordid shrine of wealth or worldly ambition. Without reciprocal love, the heart becomes a moral desert. How can you reasonably expect to receive that from another, of which you are destitute yourself? Will the field that never was sown yield to the possessor a plentiful harvest? I do most firmly believe, that to this want of affection in parents to each other may be traced the want of the same feeling in children towards their parents. If a woman hates her husband, her offspring are not very likely to feel a strong attachment to their father; for children inherit, in a strong degree, not only the disposition of their parents, but their mental and physical peculiarities.

A virtuous woman will rarely place her affections upon an unworthy object if she be true to herself and the education she has received; and if she cannot consent to encounter a few trials and privations for the sake of the man she loves, she is not worthy to be his wife.

The loving and beloved partner of a good man

may be called upon to endure many temporal sorrows, but her respect and admiration for his character will enable her to surmount them all, and she will exclaim with pious exultation,—"Thank God! I have been happy in my choice. His love is better to me than gold, yea, than much fine gold!"

CHAPTER IV.

O Lord! thou hast enlarged the grief
  Of this poor stricken heart,
That only finds in tears relief,
  Which all unbidden start:
Long have I borne the cruel scorn
  Of one I could nor love nor hate;
My soul, with secret anguish torn,
  Yields unresisting to its fate.—S. M.

MARK HURDLESTONE'S triumph was complete; his revenge fully gratified, when he led his beautiful bride from the altar to the carriage, which was in readiness to convey her to her future home. She was his, and Algernon might return as soon as he pleased. Elinor Wildegrave was beyond his reach. She could never be his wife.

Tranquil, but not happy, Elinor viewed the change in her circumstances as an intervention of Providence to save her from a life of poverty and

suffering; and she fancied that, if she did not love her benefactor, feelings of gratitude and a sense of duty would always prevent him from becoming to her an object of dislike or indifference.

How little had she studied human nature; how ignorant was she of the mysterious movements of the human heart; and when, after much painful experience, she acquired the fatal knowledge, how bitter were the effects it produced upon her own!

When once his victim was in his toils, Mr. Hurdlestone did not attempt to conceal from her his real disposition.

He laughed at her credulity in believing that love alone had actuated him in making her his wife. He related to her, with terrible fidelity, the scene he had witnessed between her and Algernon in the garden, and the agonies of jealousy that he endured when he discovered that she loved another; and he repulsed with cold and sarcastic neglect every attempt made by Elinor to render their union more tolerable, and his home more comfortable.

To Elinor his conduct was perfectly unaccountable. She could not believe that he did not love her, and she was not a little mortified at what she considered his unnatural coldness and neglect.

"Marcus," she said to him one evening, as she sat on a cushion at his feet, after making many vain attempts to attract his notice, or win from him one kind look or word, "you did not always treat me with indifference; there was a time when I thought you loved me."

"There was a time, madam, when I adored you!—when I would have given all I possessed in the world to obtain from you one smile."

"Then why this coldness? What have I done to merit your dislike?"

"You loved Algernon. You love him still. Aye, that blush! Your face tells no falsehood. You cannot conceal it from me."

"I do not deny my love. But he is dead. Why should you be jealous of the dead?"

Mark smiled a grim bitter smile. "But if he were alive?"

"Ah!" and she pressed her small white hand

tightly on her heart. "But then, Marcus, I should not be your wife. It would no longer be my duty to love another."

"You think it, then, your duty to love me?"

"Yes. You are my husband. My heart is lonely and sad. It must be filled by some object. Dear Marcus, suffer me to love you."

She laid her fair cheek meekly upon his knee, but he did not answer her touching appeal to his sympathy with a single caress.

"I cannot make you happy, Elinor. Algernon alone can do that."

"Algernon! Why Algernon?" said Elinor, bursting into tears. "Is it to make me more miserable that you constantly remind me of my loss?"

"How do you know that he is dead?"

"I have your word for it; the evidence of your friend's letter; his long silence. What frightful images you conjure up! You seem determined to make me wretched to-night."

She sprang from her lowly seat, and left the room in an agony of tears. Mark looked after

her for a moment:—"Aye, he still keeps your heart. But I have had my revenge."

The agony which he had endured in the garden on that memorable night, when he first discovered that Elinor loved his brother, was light in comparison to the pangs which shook the inmost soul of his unhappy wife, when time at last revealed the full extent of her misery, and of her husband's deep-laid treachery—and Algernon returned from India with an independent fortune to claim his bride, and found her the wife of his brother.

The monster who had supplanted him in his father's affections had now robbed him of his wife. Algernon did not seek an explanation from Mrs. Hurdlestone, either personally or by letter. He supposed that her present position was one of her own choosing, and he was too proud to utter a complaint. The hey-day of youth was past, and he had seen too much of the world to be surprised at the inconstancy of a poor girl, who had been offered, during her lover's absence, a splendid alliance. He considered that Elinor was sufficiently punished for her broken vows in being

forced to spend her life in the society of such a sordid wretch as Mark Hurdlestone.

"God forgive her," he said; "she has nearly broken my heart, but I pity her from my very soul."

When the dreadful truth flashed upon the mind of Mrs. Hurdlestone, she bitterly accused her husband of the deception he had practised. Mr. Hurdlestone, instead of denying or palliating the charge, boasted of his guilt, and entered into a minute detail of each revolting circumstance—the diabolical means that he had employed to destroy her peace.

This fiend, to whom in an evil hour she had united her destiny, had carefully intercepted the correspondence between herself and Algernon, and employed a friend in India to forge the plausible account he had received of her lover's death—and finally, as the finishing stroke to all this deep-laid villany, he had overcome his avaricious propensities, and made Elinor his wife, not to gratify a sensual passion, but the terrible spirit of revenge.

Poor Elinor! For a long time her reason bowed before the knowledge of these horrible facts, and when she did at last recover her senses, her beauty had faded beneath the blight of sorrow like the brilliant but evanescent glow of the evening cloud, which vanishes at the approach of night. Weary of life, she did not regret the loss of those fatal charms which had been to her a source of such misery.

The last time the rose tint ever visited her once blooming cheeks was when suddenly informed by Mr. Hurdlestone of his brother's marriage with a young lady of large fortune. "May he be happy," she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, whilst the deepest crimson suffused her face. "I was not worthy to be his wife!" Ere the sentence was concluded the colour had faded from her cheek, which no after emotion recalled.

His brother's marriage produced a strange effect upon the mind of Mark Hurdlestone. It cheated him of a part of his revenge. He had expected that the loss of Elinor would have stung Algernon to madness; that his existence would

have become insupportable without the woman he loved. How great was his mortification when, neither by word nor letter, nor in conversation with his friends, did his injured brother ever revert to the subject! That Algernon did not feel the blow, could scarcely be inferred from his silence. The grief he felt was too acute for words, and Algernon was still too faithful to the object of his first ardent attachment to upbraid her conduct to others. Mark, who could not understand this delicacy of sentiment, concluded that Elinor was no longer regarded with affection by her lover. Elinor comprehended his silence better, and she loved him more intensely for his forbearance.

Algernon the world reputed rich and happy, and the Squire despised Elinor when her person was no longer coveted by his rival. His temper, constitutionally bad, became intolerable, and he treated his uncomplaining wife with such unkindness, that it would have broken her heart, if the remembrance of a deeper sorrow had not rendered her indifferent to his praise or censure. She considered his kindest mercy was neglect.

Having now no other passion to gratify but avarice, Mark Hurdlestone's hoarding propensities returned with double force. He gradually retrenched his domestic expenses; laid down his carriage; sold his horses; discharged his liveried servants; and, to the astonishment of his wondering neighbours, let the noble park to a rich farmer in the parish, with permission to break it up with the plough. He no longer suffered the produce of his extensive gardens to be consumed in the house, or given to the poor; but sold the fruit and vegetables to any petty greengrocer in the village, who thought it worth his while to walk up to the Hall, and drive a bargain with the stingy Squire. He not only assisted in gathering the fruit, for fear he should be robbed, but often acted as scarecrow to the birds, whom he reviled as noisy useless nuisances, vexatiously sent to destroy the fruits of the earth.

Elinor gently remonstrated with him on the meanness and absurdity of such conduct; but he silenced what he termed her impertinent

interference in matters which did not concern her. He bade her to remember that she brought him no fortune, and he was forced to make these retrenchments in order to support her. After this confession, there was no end to his savings. He discharged his remaining domestics, sold most of the splendid furniture by public auction; and, finally, shut up the Hall to avoid paying the window-tax, only allowing the kitchen, one parlour, and two bed-rooms to be visited by the light of day. The only person whom he allowed to approach the house was the gardener, Grenard Pike, who rented a small cottage at the end of the avenue that led to the back premises of the once noble mansion.

This favoured individual was the Squire in low life; and the gossip dealers in the village did not scruple to affirm that the likeness was not *merely* accidental; that Grenard Pike was brother to the Squire in a natural way; but whether this report were true or false, he and his master, if unrelated by blood, possessed kindred spirits, and perfectly understood and appreciated each other. This

man had neither wife nor child, and the whole business of his life was how to get money, and, when got, how to turn it to the best advantage. If the Squire was attached to anything in the world, it was to this faithful satellite, this humble transcript of himself.

The wretched Elinor, shut out from all society, and denied every domestic comfort, was limited by her stingy partner to the awkward attendance of a parish girl, who, together with her mistress, he contrived to half starve; as he insisted on keeping the key of the pantry, and only allowed them a scanty meal twice during the twenty-four hours, which, he said, was sufficient to keep them in health; more was hurtful both to the mind and body.

Elinor had dragged on this miserable existence for twelve years, when, to her unspeakable grief, she found that she was likely to become a mother, for the prospect of this event served rather to increase, than diminish her sorrows. It was some time before she dared to communicate this unwelcome intelligence to her sordid lord. Still, she

hoped, in spite of his parsimony, that he might wish for a son to heir his immense wealth. Not he! He only thought of a spendthrift, who would recklessly squander all that he toiled and starved himself to save; and he received the promise of his paternal honours with a very bad grace.

"All the world!" he exclaimed, "are conspiring together to ruin me. I shall be ate out of house and home by doctors and nurses, and my rest will be constantly disturbed by squalling brats; for I suppose, madam, that like my worthy mother you will entail upon me two at a time. But my mother was a strong healthy woman, not delicate and puling like you. It is more than probable that the child may die."

"And the mother," sighed Elinor.

"Well, if He who sends is pleased to take away, He will find me perfectly resigned to His will. You need not weep, madam. If my conduct appears unnatural, let me tell you that I consider those human beings alone fortunate who perish in their infancy. They are in no fear of coming

to the gallows. They are saved from the threatened torments of hell!"

Elinor shrank from the wild flash of his keen dark eyes, and drew back with an involuntary shudder. "Happy had it been for me if I had died an infant on my mother's breast."

"Aye, if you had never seen the light. You were born to be the bane of my house. But since you have confided to me this precious secret, let me ask you what you think will be the probable expense of your confinement."

"I really cannot tell. I must have a doctor—a nurse—and some few necessaries for the poor babe. I think, with great economy, ten pounds would be enough."

"Ten pounds!"

"It may cost more, certainly not less."

"You will never get that sum from me."

"But, Marcus, what am I to do?"

"The best way you can."

"You would not have your wife solicit charity?"

"An excellent thought. Ha! ha! you would make a first-rate beggar, with that pale sad face

of yours. But, no, madam, you shall not beg. Poor as I am, I will find means to support both you and the child. But, mark me—it must not resemble Algernon."

"How is that possible? I have not seen Algernon for eighteen years."

"But he is ever in your thoughts. Let me not trace this adultery of the heart in the features of my child."

"But you are like Algernon. Not a striking likeness, but still you might be known for brothers."

"So, you are trying to find excuses in case of the worst. But, I again repeat to you, that I will not own the boy if he is like Algernon."

This whim of the miser's was a new cause of terror to Elinor; from that moment an indescribable dread lest the child should be like Algernon took possession of her breast. She perceived that her husband already calculated with selfish horror the expense of the unborn infant's food and raiment; and she began to entertain some not unreasonable fears lest the young child, if it should

survive its birth, would be starved to death, as Mark barely supplied his household with the common necessaries of life; and, though Elinor bore the system of starvation with the indifference which springs from a long and hopeless continuation of suffering, the parish girl was loud in her complaints, and she was constantly annoyed with her discontented murmurings, without having it in her power to silence them in the only effective way.

The Squire told Ruth, that she consumed more food at one meal than would support him and her mistress for a week; and he thought that what was enough for them might satisfy a cormorant like her. But the poor girl could not measure the cravings of her healthy appetite by the scanty wants of a heart-broken invalid and a miser. Her hunger remained unappeased, and she continued to complain.

At this period, Mark Hurdlestone was attacked for the first time in his life with a dangerous illness. Elinor nursed him with the greatest care, and prescribed for him as well as she

could; for he would not suffer a doctor to enter the house. But finding that the disorder did not yield to her remedies, but rather that he grew daily worse, she privately sent for the doctor. When he arrived, Mr. Hurdlestone ordered him out of his room, and nearly exhausted what little strength he still possessed, in accusing Elinor of entering into a conspiracy with Mr. Moore to kill him, and, as the doctor happened to be a widower, to marry him after his death, and share the spoils between them.

"Your husband, madam, is mad—as mad as a March hare," said Mr. Moore, as he descended the stairs. "He is, however, in a very dangerous state. It is doubtful if he ever recovers."

"And what can be done for him?"

"Nothing in his present humour, without you have him treated as a maniac, which, if I were in your case, and in your situation, I most certainly would do."

"Oh, no, no! there is something dreadful in such a charge coming from a wife, though he often appears to me scarcely accountable for his

actions; but what can I give him to allay this dreadful fever?"

"I will write you a prescription." This the doctor did on the back of a letter with his pencil, for Elinor could not furnish him with a scrap of paper.

"You must send this to the apothecary. He will make it up."

"What will it cost?"

The doctor smiled. "A mere trifle; perhaps three shillings."

"I have not had such a sum in my possession for the last three years. He will die before he will give it to me."

"Mad, mad, mad," said the doctor, shaking his head. "Well, my dear lady, if he will not give it to save his worthless life, you must steal it from him. If you fail, why let Nature take her course. His death would certainly be your gain."

Returning to the sick room, she found the patient in a better temper, evidently highly gratified at having expelled the doctor. Elinor thought this a good opportunity to urge her

request for a small sum of money to procure medicines and other necessaries; but on this subject she found him inexorable.

"Give you money to buy poison!" he exclaimed. "Do you take me for a fool, or mad?"

"You are very ill, Marcus; you will die, without you follow Dr. Moore's advice."

"Don't flatter yourselves. I don't mean to die to please you. There is a great deal of vitality in me yet. Don't say another word. I will take nothing but cold water; I feel better already."

"Pray God that you may be right," said Elinor. But after this fit of rage, he fell into a stupor, and before night he was considerably worse. His unfortunate wife, worn down with watching and want of food and rest, now determined to have a regular search for the key of his strong-box, that she might procure him the medicines prescribed by the doctor, and purchase oatmeal and bread for the use of the parish girl and herself.

She carefully examined his pockets, his writing-

desk, and bureau, but to no purpose; looking carefully into every drawer and chest that had not been sold by public auction or private contract. Not a corner of the chamber was left unexplored—not a closet or shelf escaped her strict examination, until giving up the search as perfectly hopeless she resumed her station at his bed-side, to watch through the long winter night—without a fire, and by the wan gleam that a miserable rush-light shed through the spacious and lofty room—the restless slumbers of the miser. She was ill, out of spirits, fatigued with her fruitless exertion, and deeply disappointed at her want of success.

The solitary light threw a ghastly livid hue on the strongly-marked features of the sleeper, rendered sharp and haggard by disease and his penurious habits; she could just distinguish through the gloom the spectre-like form of the invalid, and the long bony attenuated hands which grasped, from time to time, the curtains and bed-clothes, as he tossed from side to side in his feverish unrest. Elinor continued to

watch the dark and perturbed countenance of the sleeper, until he became an object of fear, and she fancied that it was some demon who had for a time usurped the human shape, and not the brother of Algernon,—the man whom she had voluntarily attended to the altar, and in the presence of Almighty God had sworn to love, honour, and obey, and to cherish in sickness and in health.

A crushing sense of all the deception that had been practised upon her, of her past wrongs and present misery, made her heart die within her, and her whole soul overflow with bitterness. She wrung her hands, and smote her breast in an agony of despair; but in that dark hour no tear relieved her burning brain, or moistened her eyes. She had once been under the dominion of insanity; she felt that her reason in that moment hung upon a thread; that, if she pursued much longer her present thoughts, they would drive her mad; that, if she continued to gaze much longer on the face of her husband, she would be tempted

to plunge a knife, which lay on the table near her, into his breast. With a desperate effort she drew her eyes from the sleeper, and turned from the bed. Her gaze fell upon a large full-length picture in oils, which hung opposite. It was the portrait of one of Mark's ancestors, a young man who had fallen in his first battle, on the memorable field of Flodden. It bore a strong resemblance to Algernon, and Elinor prized it on that account, and would sit for hours with her head resting upon her hand, and her eyes riveted on this picture. This night it seemed to regard her with a sad and mournful aspect; and the large blue eyes appeared to return her fixed gaze with the sorrowful earnestness of life.

"My head is strangely confused," she murmured, half aloud. "Into what new extravagance will my treacherous fancy hurry me to-night? Ah me! physical wants and mental suffering, added to this long watching, will turn my brain."

She buried her face in her hands, and endeavoured to shut out the grotesque and phantom-

like forms that seemed to dance before her. A deathlike stillness reigned through the house, the silence alone broken by the ticking of the great dial at the head of the staircase. There is something inexpressibly awful in the ticking of a clock, when heard at midnight by the lonely and anxious watcher beside the bed of death. It is the voice of time marking its slow but certain progress towards eternity, and warning us in solemn tones that it will soon cease to number the hours for the sufferer for ever. Elinor trembled as she listened to the low monotonous measured sounds; and she felt at that moment a presentiment that her own weary pilgrimage on earth was drawing to a close.

"Oh, Algernon!" she thought; "it may be a crime, but I sometimes think that if I could see you once more—only once more—I could forget all my wrongs and sufferings, and die in peace."

The unuttered thought was scarcely formed, when a slight rustling noise shook the curtains of the bed, and the next moment a tall figure in white glided across the room. It drew nearer,

and Elinor, in spite of the wish she had just dared to whisper to herself, struggled with the vision, as a sleeper does with the night-mare, when the suffocating grasp of the fiend is upon his throat. Her presence of mind forsook her, and, with a shriek of uncontrollable terror, she flung herself across the bed, and endeavoured to awaken her husband. The place he had occupied a few minutes before was vacant; and, raising her fear-stricken head, she perceived, with feelings scarcely less allied to fear, that the figure she had mistaken for the ghost of Algernon was the corporeal form of the miser.

He was asleep, but his mind appeared to be actively employed. He drew near the table with a cautious step, and took from beneath a broad leathern belt, which he always wore next his skin, a small key. Elinor sat up on the bed, and watched his movements with intense interest. He next took up the candle, and glided out of the room. Slipping off her shoes she followed him with noiseless steps. He descended the great staircase, and suddenly stopped in the

centre of the entrance hall. Here he put down the light on the last step of the broad oak stairs, and proceeded to remove one of the stone flags that formed the pavement of the hall. With some difficulty he accomplished his task: then kneeling down, and holding the light over the chasm, he said in hollow and unearthly tones that echoed mournfully through the empty building:

"Look! here is money: my father's savings and my own. Will this save my soul?"

Elinor leaned over the sordid wretch, and discovered with no small astonishment that the aperture contained a great quantity of gold and silver coins; and the most valuable articles of the family plate and jewels.

"Unhappy man!" she mentally cried; "dost thou imagine that these glittering heaps of metal will purchase the redemption of a soul like thine, or avert the certainty of future punishment?—for never was the parable of the servant who buried his talent in the dust more fully exemplified than in thee."

"What, not enough?" growled forth the miser. "By heavens! thou hast a human conscience. But wait patiently, and I will show you more—aye, more—my brother's portion, and my own. Ha, ha! I tricked him there. The old man's heart failed him at the last. He was afraid of you. Yes, yes, he was afraid of the devil! It was I formed the plan. It was I guided the dead hand. Shall I burn for that?"

Then, as if suddenly struck with a violent pain, he shrieked out, "Ah, ah! my brain is cloven with a bolt of fire. I cannot bear this! Algernon mocks my agonies—laughs at my cries—and tells me that he has a fair wife and plenty of gold, in spite of my malice. How did he get it? Did he rob me?"

Elinor shrunk back aghast from this wild burst of delirium; and the miser, rising from his knees, began re-ascending the stairs. This task he performed with difficulty, and often reeled forward with extreme pain and weakness. After traversing several empty chambers, he entered what had once been the state apartment, and

stooping down, he drew from beneath the faded furniture of the bed a strong mahogany brass-bound chest, which he cautiously opened, and displayed to his wondering companion a richer store of wealth than that on which she had so lately gazed.

"How! not satisfied yet?" he cried in the same harsh tones: "then may I perish to all eternity if I give you one fraction more!"

As he was about to close the chest, Elinor, who knew that without a necessary supply of money both her unborn infant and its avaricious father would perish for want, slid her hand into the box, and dextrously abstracted some of the broad gold pieces it contained. The coins, in coming in contact with each other, emitted a slight ringing sound, which arrested, trifling as it was, the ear of the sleeper.

"What! fingering the gold already?" he exclaimed, hastily slapping down the lid of the strong box. "Could you not wait till I am dead?"

Then staggering back to his apartment, he was

soon awake, and raving under a fresh paroxysm of the fever. In his delirium he fancied himself confined to the dreary gulf of eternal woe, and from this place of torment he imagined that his brother could alone release him, and he proffered to him, while under the influence of that strong agony, all his hidden treasures if he would but intercede with Christ to save his soul.

These visions of his diseased brain were so frequent and appalling, and the near approach of death so dreadful to the guilty and despairing wretch, that they produced at last a strong desire to see his brother, that he might ask his forgiveness, and make some restitution of his property to him before he died.

"Elinor," he said, "I must see Algernon. I cannot die until I have seen him. But mark me, Elinor, you must not be present at our conference. You must not see him!"

With quivering lips, and a face paler than usual, his wife promised obedience, and Grenard Pike was despatched to Norgood Hall to make known to Algernon Hurdlestone his dying

brother's request, and to call in, once more, the aid of the village doctor.

As Elinor watched the grim messenger depart, she pressed her hands tightly over her breast to hide from the quick eye of the miser the violent agitation that convulsed her frame, as the recollection of former days flashed back upon her too retentive memory.

"Surely, surely," she thought, "he will never come. He has been too deeply injured to attend to a verbal summons from his unnatural brother."

Although strongly impressed that this would be the case, the desire of once more beholding the love of her youth, though forbidden to speak to him, or even to hear the sound of his voice, produced a state of feverish excitement in her mind, which kept alive her fears, without totally annihilating hope.

The misty grey dawn was slowly breaking along the distant hills, when Grenard Pike, mounted upon a cart-horse, which he had borrowed for the occasion, leisurely paced down

the broad avenue of oaks that led through the park to the high road. Methodical in all his movements, though life and death depended upon his journey, for no earthly inducement but a handsome donation in money would Grenard Pike have condescended to quicken his pace. This, Elinor had it not in her power to bestow; and she calculated with impatience the many hours which must elapse before such a tardy messenger could reach Norgood Hall. Noon was the earliest period within the range of possibility; yet the sound of the horse's hoofs, striking against the frosty ground, still vibrated upon her ear when she took her station at the chamber window, to watch for the arrival of the man whose image a separation of nearly twenty years had not been able to obliterate from her heart. Such is the weakness of human nature, that we suffer imagination to outspeed time, and compress into one little moment the hopes, the fears, the anticipations, and the events of years; but when the spoiler again overtakes us, we look back, and, forgetful of our former

impatience to accelerate his pace, we are astonished at the rapidity of his flight.

Elinor thought that the long day would never come to a close; yet it was as dark and as short as a bleak gloomy day in November could be. Evening at length came, but brought no Algernon. Mr. Moore had paid his visit, and was gone. He expected nothing less than the death of his patient, after giving his consent to such an extraordinary event; and he had even condescended to take a draught and some pills from the doctor's hands. It is true that the sight of him, and the effects of the nauseous medicines he had administered, had put the miser into a fever of ill-temper; and he sullenly watched his wife, as she lingered hour after hour at the window, till, in no very gentle accents, he called her to his bed-side.

At that moment, Elinor fancied that she heard the sound of approaching wheels, and she strained her eyes to discern, through the deepening gloom, some object that might realise her hopes. "No," she sighed, "it was

but the wind raving through the leafless oaks,—the ticking of the old dial,—the throbbing of my own heart. He will not—he cannot come."

"Woman! what ails you?" cried the invalid. "Reach me the drink."

Elinor mechanically obeyed; but her head was turned the other way, and her eyes still fixed upon the window. A light flashed along the dark avenue, now lost, and now again revealed through the trees. The cup fell from her nerveless grasp, and faintly articulating, "Yes—'tis he!" she sank senseless across the foot of the bed, as a carriage and four drove rapidly into the court-yard.

The miser, with difficulty, reached the bell-rope that was suspended from the bed's head, and, after ringing violently for some minutes, the unusual summons was answered by the appearance of Ruth, who, thrusting her brown curly head in at the door, said, in breathless haste:

"The company's come, ma'arm! Such a grand coach! Four beautiful hosses, and two

real gemmen in black a' standing behind—and two on hossback a' riding afore. What are we to do for supper? Doubtless they maun be mortal hungry arter their long ride this cold night, and will 'spect summat to eat, and we have not a morsel of food in the house fit to set afore a cat."

"Pshaw!" muttered the sick man. "Silence your senseless prate! They will neither eat nor drink here. Tell the coachman that there are excellent accommodations at the Hurdlestone Arms for himself and his horses. But first see to your mistress—she is in a swoon. Carry her into the next room. And mark me, Ruth—lock the door, and bring me the key."

The girl obeyed the first part of the miser's orders, but was too eager to catch another sight of the grand carriage, and the real gentlemen behind it, to remember the latter part of his injunction.

CHAPTER V.

Is this the man I loved, to whom I gave
The deep devotion of my early youth?—S. M.

ALGERNON HURDLESTONE in his forty-second, and Algernon Hurdlestone in his twenty-fourth year, were very different men. In mind, person, and manners, the greatest dissimilarity existed between them. The tall graceful figure for which he had once been so much admired, a life of indolence, and the pleasures of the table, had rendered far too corpulent for manly beauty. His features were still good, and there was an air of fashion about him which bespoke the man of the world and the gentleman; but he was no longer handsome or interesting. An expression of careless good-humour, in spite of the deep mourning he wore for the recent death of his

wife, pervaded his countenance; and he seemed determined to repay Fortune for the many ill turns he had received from her in his youth, by enjoying, to their full extent, the good things that she had latterly showered upon him.

He had been a kind manageable husband to a woman whom he married more for convenience than affection; and was a fatally indulgent father to the only son, the sole survivor of a large family that he had consigned to the tomb during the engaging period of infancy. Godfrey, a beautiful little boy of two years old, was his youngest and his best beloved, on whom he lavished the concentrated affections of his warm and generous heart.

Since his marriage with the rich and beautiful Miss Maitland, he had scarcely given Elinor Wildegrave a second thought. He had loved her passionately, as the portionless orphan of the unfortunate Captain Wildegrave; but he could not regard with affection or esteem the wife of the rich Mark Hurdlestone—the man from whom he had received so many injuries. How she

could have condescended to share his splendid misery, was a question which filled his mind with too many painful and disgusting images to answer. When he received his brother's hasty message, entreating him to come and make up their old quarrel before he died, he obeyed the extraordinary summons with his usual kindness of heart, without reflecting on the pain that such a meeting might occasion, when he beheld again the object of his early affections as the wife of his unnatural brother.

When he crossed the well-known threshold, and his shadow once more darkened his father's hall, those feelings which had been deadened by his long intercourse with the world resumed their old sway, and he paused, and looked around the dilapidated mansion with eyes dimmed with regretful tears.

"And it was to become the mistress of such a home as this, that Elinor Wildegrave — my beautiful Elinor—sold herself to such a man as Mark Hurdlestone, and forgot her love — her plighted troth to me!"

So thought Algernon Hurdlestone, as he followed the parish girl up the broad uncarpeted oak stairs to his brother's apartment, shocked and astonished at the indications of misery and decay which on every side met his gaze. He had heard much of Mark's penurious habits, but he had deemed the reports exaggerated or incorrect; he was now fully convinced that they were but too true. Surprised that Mrs. Hurdlestone did not appear to receive him, he inquired of Ruth, "if her mistress were at home?"

"At home!—why yes, sir; it's more than her life's worth to leave home. She durst not go to church without master's leave."

"And is she well?"

"She be'ant never well; and the sooner she goes the better it will be for her, depend upon that. She do lead a wretched life, the more's the pity; for she is a dear kind lady, a thousand times too good for the like o' him."

Algernon sighed deeply, while the girl, delighted to get an opportunity of abusing her tyrannical master, continued:

"My poor mistress has been looking out for you all day, sir; but when your coach drove into the court-yard she died right away. The Squire got into a terrible passion, and told me to carry her up into her own room, and lock her in until company be gone. Howsumever I was too much flurried to do that; for I am sure my dear missus is too ill to be seen by strangers. He do keep her so shabby, that she have not a gownd fit to wear; and she do look as pale as a ghost; and I am sure she is nearer to her end than the stingy old Squire is to his."

Algernon possessed too much delicacy to ask the girl if Mark treated Mrs. Hurdlestone ill; but whilst groping his way in the dark to his brother's room, he was strongly tempted to question her more closely on the subject. The account she had already given him of the unfortunate lady filled his mind with indignation and regret. At the end of a long gallery the girl suddenly stopped, and pointing to a half-open door, told him that "that was the Squire's room," and suddenly disappeared. The next

moment, Algernon was by the sick-bed of his brother.

Not without a slight degree of perturbation he put aside the curtain; Mark had sunk into a kind of stupor; he was not asleep, although his eyes were closed, and his features so rigid and immovable, that at the first glance Algernon drew back, under the impression that he was already dead.

The sound of his brother's footsteps not only roused the miser to animation, but to an acute sense of suffering. For some minutes he writhed in dreadful pain, and Algernon had time to examine his ghastly face, and thin attenuated figure.

They had parted in the prime of youthful manhood—they met in the autumn of life; and the snows of winter had prematurely descended upon the head of the miser. The wear and tear of evil passions had made such fearful ravages in his once handsome and stern exterior, that his twin brother would have passed him in the streets without recognition.

The spasms at length subsided, and after several ineffectual efforts, Algernon at length spoke.

"Mark, I am here, in compliance with your request; I am sorry to find you in this sad state; I hope that you may yet recover."

The sick man rose slowly up in his bed, and shading his eyes with his hand, surveyed his brother with a long and careful gaze, as though he scarcely recognised in the portly figure before him the elegant fashionable young man of former days. "Algernon! can that be you?"

"Am I so much altered that you do not know me?"

"Humph! The voice is the voice of Algernon —but as for the rest, time has paid as little respect to your fine exterior as it has done to mine; but if it has diminished your graces, it has added greatly to your bulk. One thing, however, it has not taught you, with all its hard teachings."

"What is that?" said Algernon, with some curiosity.

"To speak the truth!" muttered the miser, falling back upon his pillow. "You wish for my

recovery!—ha! ha! that is rich—is good. Do you think, Algernon, I am such a fool as to believe that?"

"Indeed, I was sincere."

"You deceive yourself—the thing is impossible. Human nature is not so far removed from its original guilt. *You* wish my life to be prolonged, when you hope to be a *gainer* by my death. The thought is really amusing—so originally philanthropic,—but I forgive you, I should do just the same in your place. Now, sit down if you can find a chair, I have a few words to say to you—a few painful words."

Algernon took his seat on the bed without speaking. He perceived that time had only increased the bitterness of his brother's caustic temper.

"Algernon," said the miser, "I will not enter into a detail of the past. I robbed you of your share of my father's property to gratify my love of money; and I married your mistress out of revenge. Both of these deeds have proved a curse to me—I cannot enjoy the one, and I

loathe the other. I am dying; I cannot close my eyes in peace with these crimes upon my conscience. Give me your hand, brother, and say that you forgive me; and I will make a just restitution of the money, and leave you in the undisturbed possession of the wife."

He laughed, — that horrid fiendish laugh. Algernon shrunk back with strong disgust, and relinquished the hand which no longer sought his grasp.

"Well, I see how it is. There are some natures that cannot amalgamate. You cannot overcome the old hate; but say that you forgive me; it is all I ask."

"If you can forgive yourself, Mark, I forgive you; and I pray that God may do the same."

"That leaves the case doubtful; however, it is of no use forcing nature. We never loved each other. The soil of the heart has been too much corrupted by the leaven of the world, to nourish a new growth of affection. We have lived enemies—we cannot part friends; but take this in payment of the debt I owe you."

He drew from beneath his pillow a paper, which he placed in his brother's hand. It was a draft upon his banker for ten thousand pounds, payable at sight. "Will that satisfy you for all you lost by me?"

"Money cannot do that."

"You allude to my wife. I saved you from a curse by entailing it upon myself; for which service I at least deserve your thanks."

"What has proved a curse to you would have been to me the greatest earthly blessing. I freely forgive you for wronging me out of my share of the inheritance,—but for robbing me of Elinor, I cannot."

He turned from the bed with the tears in his eyes, and was about to quit the room. The miser called him back. "Do not be such a fool as to refuse the money, Algernon; the lady I will bequeath to you as a legacy when I am gone."

"He is mad!" muttered Algernon, "no sane man could act this diabolical part. It is useless to resent his words. He must soon answer for

them at a higher tribunal. Yes,—I will forgive him,—I will not add to his future misery."

He came back to the bed, and taking the burning hand of the miser, said in a broken voice, "Brother, I wronged you when I believed that you were an accountable being; I no longer consider you answerable for your actions, and may God view your unnatural conduct to me in the same light; by the mercy which He ever shows to His erring creatures. I forgive you for the past." The stony heart of the miser seemed touched, but his pride was wounded. "Mad—mad," he said; "so you look upon me as mad. The world is full of maniacs; I do not differ from my kind. But take the paper, and let there be peace between you and me."

Twenty years ago, and the high-spirited Algernon Hurdlestone would have rejected the miser's offer with contempt, but his long intercourse with the world had taught him the value of money, and his extravagant habits generally exceeded his fine income. Besides, what Mark offered him was, after all, but a small

portion of what ought to have been his own. With an air of cheerful good-nature he thanked his brother, and carefully deposited the draft in his pocket-book.

After having absolved his conscience by what he considered not only a good action, but one of sufficient magnitude to save his soul, Mark intimated to his brother that he might now leave him—he had nothing further to say; a permission which Algernon was not slow to accept.

As he groped his way through the dark gallery that led from the miser's chamber, a door was opened cautiously at the far end of the passage, and a female figure, holding a dim light in her hand, beckoned to him to approach.

Not without reluctance Algernon obeyed the summons, and found himself in the centre of a large empty apartment, which had once been the saloon, and face to face with Mrs. Hurdlestone.

Elinor carefully locked the door, and placing the light on the mantel-shelf, stood before the astonished Algernon, like some memory-haunting phantom of the past.

Yes. It was Elinor—his Elinor; but not a vestige remained of the grace and beauty that had won his youthful heart. So great was the change produced by years of hopeless misery, that Algernon, in the haggard and care-worn being before him, did not at first recognise the object of his early love. Painfully conscious of this humiliating fact, Elinor at length said—"I do not wonder that Mr. Algernon Hurdlestone has forgotten me; I once was Elinor Wildegrave."

A gush of tears—of bitter, heart-felt, agonizing tears—followed this avowal, and her whole frame trembled with the overpowering emotions which filled her mind.

Too much overcome by surprise to speak, Algernon took her hand, and for a few minutes looked earnestly in her altered face. What a mournful history of mental and physical suffering was written there! That look of tender regard recalled the blighted hopes and wasted affections of other years; and the wretched Elinor, unable to control her grief, bowed her head upon her hands, and groaned aloud.

"Oh, Elinor!—and is it thus we meet? You might have been happy with me. How could you, for the paltry love of gain, become the wife of Mark Hurdlestone."

"Alas, Algernon! necessity left me no alternative in my unhappy choice. I was deceived—cruelly deceived. Yet would to God that I had begged my bread, and dared every hardship—been spurned from the presence of the rich, and endured the contempt of the poor, before I consented to become his wife."

"But what strange infatuation induced you to throw away your own happiness, and ruin mine? Did not my letters constantly breathe the most ardent affection? Were not the sums of money constantly remitted in them more than sufficient to supply all your wants?"

"Algernon, I never received the sums you name, not even a letter from you after the third year of our separation."

"Can this be true?" exclaimed Algernon, grasping her arm. "Is it possible that this statement can be true?"

"As true as that I now stand before you a betrayed, forsaken, heart-broken woman."

"Poor Elinor; how can I look into that sad face, and believe you false?"

"God bless you, my once dear friend, for these kind words. You know not the peace they convey to my aching heart. Oh, Algernon, my sufferings have been dreadful; and there were times when I ceased to know those sufferings. They called me mad, but I was happy then. My dreams were of you. I thought myself your wife, and my misery as Mark's helpmate was forgotten. When sanity returned, the horrible consciousness that you believed me a heartless, ungrateful, avaricious woman, was the worst pang of all. Oh, how I longed to throw myself at your feet, and tell you the whole dreadful truth. I would not have insulted you to-night with my presence, or wounded your peace with a recapitulation of my wrongs, but I could no longer live and bear the imputation of such guilt. When you have heard my sad story, you will, I am sure, not only pity, but forgive me."

With feelings of unalloyed indignation, Algernon listened to the iniquitous manner in which Elinor had been deceived and betrayed, and when she concluded her sad relation, he fiercely declared that he would return to the sick man's chamber, —reproach him with his crimes, and revoke his forgiveness.

"Leave the sinner to his God!" exclaimed the terrified Elinor, placing herself before the door. "For my sake—for your own sake, pity and forgive him. Remember that, monster though he be, he is my husband and your brother, the father of the unfortunate child whose birth I anticipate with such sad forebodings."

"Before that period arrives," said Algernon, with deep commiseration, "Mark will have paid the forfeit of his crimes, and your child will be the heir of immense wealth."

"You believe him to be a dying man," said Elinor. "He will live. A change has come over him for the better; the surgeon, this morning, gave strong hopes of his recovery. Sinner that I am, if he could but have looked into my heart,

he would have been shocked at the pain that this communication conveyed. Algernon, I wished his death. God has reversed the awful sentence; it is the mother, not the father, of the unhappy infant that will be called hence. Heaven knows that I am weary of life—that I would willingly die, could I but take the poor babe with me; should it, however, survive its unfortunate mother, promise me, Algernon, by the love of our early years, to be a guardian and protector to my child."

She endeavoured to sink at his feet, but Algernon prevented her.

"Your request is granted, Elinor, and for the dear mother's sake, I promise to cherish the infant as my own."

"It is enough. I thank my God for this great mercy; and now that I have been permitted to clear my character, leave me, Algernon, and take my blessing with you. Only remember in your prayers that such a miserable wretch as Elinor Wildegrave still lives."

The violent ringing of the miser's bell hurried her away. Algernon remained for some minutes

rooted to the spot, his heart still heaving with the sense of intolerable wrong. Elinor did not again appear; and descending to what was once the Servants' Hall, he bade Ruth summon his attendants, and slipping a guinea into that delighted damsel's hand, he bade a long adieu to the home of his ancestors.

CHAPTER VI.

Oh, what a change—a goodly change—is here!
I, too, am changed. I feel my heart expand;
My spirit, long bowed down with misery,
Grow light and buoyant 'mid these blessed scenes.—S.M.

As Elinor predicted, the miser slowly recovered, and for a few months his severe illness had a salutary effect upon his mind and temper. He was even inclined to treat his wife with more respect; and, when informed by Dr. Moore of the birth of his son, he received the intelligence with less impatience than she had anticipated. But this gleam of sunshine did not last long. With returning strength, his old monomania returned; and he began loudly to complain of the expense which his long illness had incurred, and to rave at the extortion of doctors and nurses; declaring the necessity of making every

possible retrenchment, in order to replace the money so lost. Elinor did not live long enough to endure these fresh privations. She sunk into a lingering decline, and, before her little boy could lisp her name, the friendly turf had closed over his heart-broken mother.

Small was the grief expressed by the miser for the death of his gentle partner. To avoid all unnecessary expense, she was buried in the churchyard, instead of occupying a place in the family vault; and no stone was erected, during the life of the Squire, to her memory.

It was a matter of surprise to the whole neighbourhood that the young child survived his mother. His father left Nature to supply her place, and, but for the doting affection of Ruth, who came every night and morning to wash and feed him, out of pure affection to her dear mistress, the little Anthony would soon have occupied a place by his ill-fated mother.

The Squire never cast a thought upon his half-clad half-famished babe without bitterly cursing him as an additional and useless expense.

Anthony was a quiet and sweet-tempered little fellow: the school in which he was educated taught him to endure with patience trials that would have broken the spirit of a less neglected child.

Except the kindness which he received from Ruth, who was now married to a labourer, and the mother of children of her own, he was a stranger to sympathy and affection; and he did not expect to receive from strangers the tenderness which he never experienced at home.

The mind of a child, like the mind of a grown person, requires excitement; and, as Anthony could neither read nor write, and his father seldom deigned to notice him, he was forced to seek abroad for those amusements which he could not obtain at home. By the time he had completed his eighth year, he was to be seen daily mingling with the poor boys in the village, with face unwashed and hair uncombed, and clothes more ragged and dirty than those of his indigent associates.

One fine summer afternoon, while engaged in

the exciting game of pitch-and-toss, a handsome elderly gentleman rode up to the group of boys, and asked the rosy ragged Anthony if he would run before him and open the gate that led to the Hall.

"Wait awhile!" cried the little fellow, adroitly poising the halfpenny, that he was about to throw, on the tip of his finger. "If I win by this toss, I will show you the way to my father's."

"Your father!" said the gentleman, surveying attentively the ragged child. "Are you the gardener's son?"

"No, no," replied the boy, laughing and winking to his companions; "not quite so bad as that. My father is a rich man, though he acts like a poor one, and lets me, his only son, run about the streets without shoes. But, did I belong to skin-flint Pike, instead of one slice of bread to my milk and water, I might chance to get none. My father is the old Squire, and my name is Anthony Marcus Hurdlestone."

"His father and grandfather's names combined —names of evil omen have they been to me,"

sighed the stranger, who was, indeed, no other than Algernon Hurdlestone, who for eight long years had forgotten the solemn promise given to Elinor, that he would be a friend and guardian to her child. Nor would he now have remembered the circumstance, had not his own spoilt Godfrey been earnestly teasing him for a playmate. "Be a good boy, Godfrey, and I will bring you home a cousin to be a brother and play-fellow," he said, as his conscience smote him for this long-neglected duty; and, ordering the groom to saddle his horse, he rode over to Oak Hall to treat with the miser for his son.

"Alas!" he thought, "can this neglected child be the son of my beautiful Elinor, and heir to the richest commoner in England? But the boy resembles my own dear Godfrey, and, for Elinor's sake, I will try and rescue him from the barbarous indifference of such a father."

Then, telling the bare-footed urchin that he was his uncle Algernon, and that he should come to Norgood Hall, and live with him, and have plenty to eat and drink, and pretty clothes to

wear, and a nice pony of his own to ride, and a sweet little fellow of his own age to play with, he lifted the astonished and delighted child before him on the saddle, and was about to proceed to the Hall.

"The Squire does not live at the Hall," said the child, pulling at the rein, in order to give the horse another direction. "Oh, no; he is *too poor* (and he laughed outright) to live there."

"What do you mean, Anthony? and why do you call Mr. Hurdlestone the Squire, instead of papa?"

"He never tells me to call him papa; he never calls me his son, or 'little boy,' or even 'Anthony,' or speaks to me as other fathers speak to their children. He calls me chit and brat, and rude noisy fellow; and it's 'Get out of my way, you little wretch! Don't come here to annoy me.' And how can I call him father or papa, when he treats me as if I did not belong to him?"

"My dear child, I much fear that you do not love your father."

"How can I, when he does not love me? If he would be kind to me, I would love him very much; for I have nothing in the world to love but old Shock, and he's half-starved. But he does love me, and I give him all I can spare from my meals, and that's little enough. I often wish for more, for poor Shock's sake; for they say that he was mamma's dog, and Ruth Candler told me that when mamma died, he used to go every day for months and lie upon her grave. Now was not that kind of Shock? I wish papa loved me only half as well as old Shock loved my mother, and I would not mind being starved, and going about the streets without shoes."

Thus the child prattled on, revealing to his new companion the secrets of the prison-house. Had he looked up at that moment into his uncle's face, he would have seen the tear upon his cheeks. He pressed the poor child silently against him as they rode on.

"We will take Shock with us, Anthony, and he shall have plenty to eat as well as you."

"Oh, dear uncle, how we shall love you, both Shock and I!"

"But tell me, Anthony, has your father really left the Hall?"

"Long, long ago; as far back as I can remember. It is the first thing I can remember, since I awoke in this world and found myself alive, the removing to old Pike's cottage. The Squire said that he was too poor to live at the Hall, and there was plenty of room in the gardener's cottage for us three, and there we have lived ever since. See, uncle, we are now coming to it."

Algernon looked up, and saw that they had entered a long avenue of lofty trees, which he recognised as a back way to the extensive gardens, at the extremity of which, and near the garden gate, stood a small cottage, once neat and comfortable, but now fast falling to decay. He had often played there with his brother and Grenard Pike in their childhood. The plastered walls of the tenement in many places had given way, and the broken windows were filled with pieces of board, which, if they kept out the wind

and rain, dismally diminished the small portion of light which found its way through the dusty panes.

Fastening his horse to the moss-grown paling, Algernon proceeded to knock at the door.

"Who's there?" growled a deep voice from within.

"A gentleman wishes to speak to Mr. Hurdlestone."

"He's not at home to strangers," responded the former growl, without unclosing the door.

"That's Grenard Pike," whispered the boy. "You may be sure that the Squire is not far off."

"I *must* see Mr. Hurdlestone. I cannot wait until he returns," said Algernon, walking into the house. "I ought, I think, to be no stranger here."

A small spare man, with sharp features, a brown leather face, thin lank black hair, and eyes like a snake, drew back from the door, as Algernon thus unceremoniously effected an entrance. His partner in penury, the miser, was

seated at an old oak table making arithmetical calculations upon a bit of broken slate.

The tall stately figure of Mark Hurdlestone was, at this period, still unbent with age, and he rose from his seat, his face flushed with anger at being detected in sanctioning an untruth. His quick eye recognised his brother, and he motioned to him to take a seat on the bench near him.

It was not in the nature of the miser to consider Algernon a welcome visitor. He was continually haunted by the recollection of the ten thousand pounds that remorse had extorted from him, in the evil hour when death stared him in the face, and the fear of future punishment, for a brief season, triumphed over the besetting sin. He could not forgive Algernon for this dreadful sacrifice; and but for very shame would have asked him to return the money, giving him a bond to restore it at his death.

"Well, brother," he began, in his usual ungracious tones, "what business brings you here?"

"I came to ask of you a favour," said Algernon, seating himself, and drawing the little Anthony between his knees; "one which I hope that you will not refuse to grant."

"Humph!" said Mark. "I must tell you, without mincing the matter, brother Algernon, that I never grant favours in any shape. That I never ask favours of any one. That I never lend money, or borrow money. That I never require security for myself of others, or give my name as security to them. If such is your errand to me you may expect, what you will find—disappointment."

"Fortunately my visit to you has nothing to do with money. Nor do I think that the favour I am about to ask will cause you to make the least sacrifice. Will you give me this boy?"

The novel request created some surprise, it was so different from the one the miser expected. He looked from the ragged child to his fashionably-dressed brother, then to the child again, as if doubtful what answer to return. The living brown skeleton, Pike, slipped softly across the

room to his side; and a glance of peculiar meaning shot from his rat-like eyes, into the dark, deep-set, searching orbs of the miser.

"What do you think of it, Pike? Hey!"

"It is too good an offer to be refused," whispered the avaricious satellite, who always looked upon himself as the miser's heir. "Take him at his word."

"What do you want with the child?" said Mark, turning to his brother. "Have you not a son of your own?"

"I have — a handsome clever little fellow. This nephew of mine greatly resembles him."

"He cannot be more like you than this child is, whom his mother dared to call mine. For my own part I never have, nor ever shall, consider him as such."

"Brother! brother! you cannot, dare not, insinuate aught against the honour of your wife!" and Algernon sprang from his seat, his cheeks burning with anger.

"Sit down, sit down," said the miser coldly; "I do not mean to quarrel with you on that score.

In one sense of the word she was faithful. I gave her no opportunity of being otherwise. But her heart" — and his dark eye emitted an unnatural blaze of light—" her heart was false to me, or that boy could not have resembled you in every feature."

"These things happen every day," said Algernon. "Children often resemble their grandfathers and uncles more than they do their own parents. It is hard to blame poor Elinor for having a child like me. Let me look at you, boy," he continued, turning the child's head towards him as he spoke. "Are you so very, very like your uncle Algernon?" The extraordinary likeness could not fail to strike him. It filled the heart of the miser with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Still, the expression of the child's face was the only point of real resemblance; his features and complexion belonged to his father. "Your jealous fancy, Mark, has conjured up a phantom to annoy you. Where did this boy get his black eyes from, if not from you? his dark complexion? I am fair, my eyes are blue."

"He has his mother's eyes," sullenly returned the miser.

"I might as well accuse you of being the father of Godfrey, because he has your eyes."

"You cannot reason me out of my senses. This Anthony is as like you, Algernon, as two peas. He is your own son, and you are welcome to him. His absence will give me no pain, nor will his adoption by you extort from me one farthing for his future maintenance. If you persist in taking him it will be at your own risk."

"I am contented to accept the poor orphan on these terms," said the generous Algernon. "May God soften your iron heart towards your neglected child. While I have wealth he shall not want; and were I deprived of it to-morrow, he should share my bread whilst I had a crust."

"Fools and their money are soon parted," muttered the ungracious Mark; though in reality he was glad to embrace his brother's offer. No ties of parental love bound him to the motherless child he had so cruelly neglected; and the father and son parted with mutual satisfaction, secretly

hoping that they never might behold each other again.

"We have got rid of that pest, Grenard!" exclaimed the hard-hearted man, as he watched his brother lift the little Anthony into his saddle, and carefully dispose the folds of his cloak around the child to hide his rags from public observation. "If the child were not his own, would he take such care of him?"

"You cannot believe that," said the gaunt Cerberus. "You know that it is impossible."

"You may think so—perhaps you are right—but, Grenard, you were never married; never had any experience of the subtlety of woman. I have my own thoughts on the subject—I hate women—I have had cause to hate them—and I detest that boy for the likeness which he bears to my brother."

"Tush!" said the living skeleton, with more feeling of humanity than his niggardly patron. "Whose fault is it, that you rob a woman of her love, and then accuse her of inconstancy because your son resembles the man that was the object

of her thoughts? Is that reasonable, or like your good sense?"

How delightful was that first journey to the young pilgrim of hope; and he so lately the child of want and sorrow, whose eyes were ever bent to earth, his cheeks ever wet with tears!—he now laughed and carolled aloud in the redundant joy of his heart. "Oh, he was so happy, so happy." He had never been a mile from home before—had never ridden on a horse; and now he was told, he was to have a horse of his own—a home of his own—a dear little cousin to play with, and a nice bed to sleep upon at night, not a bundle of filthy straw.

This was too much for his full heart to bear; it ran over, it was brimful of gladness and expectation, and the excited child sobbed himself to sleep in his good uncle's arms.

Poor old Shock was trotting beside the horse, and Anthony had been too much engrossed with his own marvellous change of fortune to notice Shock; but Shock did not forget him, and though he could not see—for the animal was blind—he

often pricked up his ears, and raised his head to the horse and its double burden, to be sure that his young master was there.

It was a spaniel that Algernon had left a pup with Elinor when he went to India. The sight of the poor blind worn-out creature brought back to his mind so many painful recollections that his own eyes were wet with tears. The wife who had supplanted Elinor in his affections was dead. The grass grew rank upon Elinor's nameless grave; and her poor boy was sleeping within his sheltering arms, as if he had never known so soft a pillow.

Algernon looked down upon his beautiful but squalid face, and pressing his lips upon his pale brow, swore to love and cherish him as his own; and well did that careless but faithful heart keep its solemn covenant. The very reverse of the miser, Algernon was reckless of the future; he only lived for the present, which, after his disappointment in regard to Elinor, was all, he said, that a man in truth could call his own. Acting up to this principle, he was as much censured for

his extravagance, as his brother was for his parsimony, by those persons who, like Timon's friends, daily shared his hospitality, and were too often the recipients of his lavish expenditure. In adopting the little Anthony he had followed the generous impulse of his heart, without reflecting that the separation of father and son, under their peculiar circumstances, might injure without ultimately benefiting the child.

He meant to love and take care of him; to be a father to him in the fullest sense of the word; his intentions doubtless were good, but his method of bringing him up was very likely to be followed by bad consequences. Algernon had no misgivings on the subject. He felt certain that the boy would not only inherit his father's immense wealth, (a large portion of which the law secured to him, independent of the caprice of his father,) but ever continue prosperous and happy. While musing upon these things, his horse turned into the noble park that surrounded his own fine mansion; and a beautiful boy bounded down the broad stone steps that led to

the hall-door, and came running along the moonlit path to meet him,

"Health on his cheek, and gladness in his eye."

"Well, dear papa! Have you brought me my cousin?"

"What will you give for him, Godfrey?" and the delighted father bent down to receive the clasp of the white arms, and the kiss of the impatient child.

"That's all I can afford. Perhaps he's not worth having after all;" and the spoilt child turned pettishly away.

"Casting his eyes upon old Shock, he exclaimed, "Mercy! what an ugly dog. A perfect brute!"

"He was once a very handsome dog," said his father, as the groom assisted him to alight.

"It must be a long time ago. I hope my cousin is better-looking than his dog."

"Why, what in the world have we got here?" said Mrs. Paisley, the housekeeper, who came to the door to welcome her master home; and into

whose capacious arms the footman placed the sleeping Anthony, enveloped in his uncle's cloak.

"A present for you, Mrs. Paisley," said Algernon, "and one that I hope you will regard with peculiar care."

"A child!" screamed the good woman. "Why, la, sir; how did you come by it?"

"Honestly," returned Algernon, laughing.

"Let *me* look at him," cried the eager Godfrey, as soon as they entered the room where supper was prepared for his father; and pulling the cloak away from his cousin's face,—"Is this dirty shabby boy the playfellow you promised me, papa?"

"The same."

"And he in rags!"

"That's no fault of his, my child."

"And has a torn cap, and no shoes!"

"Mrs. Paisley will soon wash, and dress, and make him quite smart; and then you will be proud of him."

"Well, we shall see," replied the boy, doubtingly. "But I never was fond of playing with

dirty ragged children. But why is he dirty and ragged? I thought you told me, papa, that he was the son of my rich, rich uncle, and that he would have twice as much money as I?"

"And so he will."

"Then why is he in this condition?"

"His father is a miser."

"What is that?"

"A man that loves money better than his son; who would rather see him ragged and dirty, nay even dead, than expend upon his comfort a part of his useless riches. Are you not glad that your father is not a miser?"

"I don't know," said Godfrey; "he would save money to make me rich, and when he died all his wealth would be mine. Anthony is not so badly off after all, and I think I will try to love him, that he may give me a part of his great fortune by-and-by."

"Your love springing from a selfish motive would not be worth having. Besides, Godfrey, you will have a fortune of your own."

"I'm not so clear of that," said the boy, with

a sly glance at his father. "People say that you will spend all your money on yourself, and leave none for me when *you* die."

There was much—too much truth in this remark; and though Algernon laughed at what he termed his dear boy's wit, it stung him deeply. "Where can he have learned that?" he thought; "such an idea could never have entered into the heart of a child." Then turning to Mrs. Paisley, who had just entered the room, he said,—

"Take and wash and clothe that little boy; and when he is nicely dressed, bring him in to speak to his cousin."

"Come, my little man," said the old lady, gently shaking the juvenile stranger. "Come, wake up. You have slept long enough. Come this way with me."

"Whose clothes are you going to put upon him?" demanded Godfrey.

"Why in course, Master Godfrey, you will lend him some of yours?"

"Well, if I do, remember, Paisley, you are not to take my best."

During this colloquy, Anthony had gradually woke up, and turning from one strange face to another, he lost all his former confidence, and began to cry. Paisley, who was really interested in the child, kindly wiped away his tears with the corner of her white apron, and gently led the weeper from the room.

While performing for him the long and painful ablutions which his condition required, Mrs. Paisley was astonished at his patience. "Why Master Godfrey would have roared and kicked, like a mad thing that he is, if I had taken half the liberty with him," said the dame to herself. "Well, well, the little fellow seems to have a good temper of his own. Now you have got a clean face, my little man, let me look at you, and see what you are like."

She turned him round and round,—took off her spectacles, carefully wiped them, and re-adjusting them upon her nose, looked at the child with as much astonishment as if he had been some rare creature that had never before been exhibited in a Christian land.

"Mercy on me! but the likeness is truly wonderful — his very image; all but the dark eye; and that he may have got from the mother, as Master Godfrey got his. I don't like to form hard thoughts of my master; but this is strange. —Mr. Glen!" and she rose hastily and opened a door that led from her own little sanctuary into the servants' hall—"please to step in here for a moment."

"What's your pleasure, Mistress Paisley?" said the butler, a rosy, portly, good-natured man, of the regular John Bull breed, who, in snow-white trowsers, and blue-striped linen jacket, and a shirt adorned with a large frill (frills were then in fashion), strutted into the room. "Mistress Paisley, ma'arm, vot are your commands?"

"Oh, Mr. Glen," said the housekeeper, simpering, "I never command my equals—I leave my betters to do that. I wanted you just to look at this child."

"Look at him—vhy, vot's the matter vith un', Mrs. Paisley? He's generally a werry

naughty boy; but he looks better-tempered than usual to-day."

"Why, who do you take him for?" said Mrs. Paisley, evidently delighted at the butler's mistake.

"Vhy, for Master Godfrey—is it not? Hey—vot—vhy—no—it is—and it isn't. Vot comical demonstration is this?"

"Well, I don't wonder, Jacob, at your mistake—it is, and it is not. Had they been twins, they could not have been more alike. Godfrey, to be sure, has a haughty uppish look, which this child has not. But what do you think of our master now?"

"It must be his son."

The good woman nodded. "Such likenesses cannot come by accident. It is a good thing that my poor dear mistress did not live to see this day—and she so jealous of him—it would have broken her heart."

"Aye, you may vell say that, Mrs. Paisley. And some men are cruel, deceitful, partic'lar them there frank sort of men, like the Kurnel. They

are so pleasant like, that people never thinks they can be as bad as other volk. They have sich han hinnocent vay vith them. I vonder maister vos not ashamed of his old servants seeing him bring home a child so like himself."

"Well, my dear, and what is your name?" said Mrs. Paisley, addressing her wondering charge.

"Anthony Hurdlestone."

"Do you hear that, Mrs. Paisley?"

"Anthony Hurdlestone! Oh, shame, shame," said the good woman. "It would have been only decent, Mr. Glen, for the Colonel to have called him by some other name. Who's your father, my little man?"

"Squire Hurdlestone."

"Humph!" responded the interrogator. "And your mother?"

"She's in the churchyard."

"How long has she been dead?"

"I don't know; but Ruth does. She died when I was a baby."

"And who took care of you, my poor little

fellow?" asked Mrs. Paisley, whose maternal feelings were greatly interested in the child.

"God, and Ruth Candler. If it had not been for her, the folks said that I should have been starved long ago."

"That has been the 'oman, doubtless, that the Kurnel left him with," said the butler. "Vell, my young squire, you'll be in no danger of starvation in this house. Your papa is rich enough to keep you."

"He may be rich," said Anthony; "but, for all that, the poorest man in the parish of Ashton is richer than he."

"Come, come, my little gentleman, you are talking of what you know nothing about," said Mrs. Paisley. "I must now take you into the parlor, to see your papa and your little brother."

"He's not my papa," said Anthony: "I wish he were. Oh, if you could see my papa—ha! ha! —you would not forget him in a hurry; and if he chanced to box your ears, or pinch your cheek, or rap your head with his knuckles, you would not forget that in a hurry."

"You have got a new papa, now; so you may forget the old one. Now, hold your head up like a man, and follow me."

Colonel Hurdlestone was lounging over his wine; his little son was sitting over against him, imitating his air and manner, and playing with, rather than drinking from, the full glass of port before him.

"Mrs. Paisley!" he cried, with the authority of an old man of fifty. "Tell Glen to send up some sweet madeira—I hate port.—Ha, little miser, is that you?" springing from his chair. "Why, I thought it was myself. Now, mind, don't soil those clothes, for they don't belong to you."

"Never mind, Anthony," said his uncle. "To-morrow I will have some made for you.—Mrs. Paisley, are not these children strikingly alike?"

"Why, yes, your honour, they are too much alike to be lucky. Master Godfrey may lay all his mischievous pranks upon this young one, and you will never find out the mistake."

"Thank you, Paisley, for the hint. Come and sit by me, double, and let us be friends."

"I am sure you look like brothers—ay, and twin brothers, too," said Mrs. Paisley.

"They are first cousins," said Algernon, gravely. "This child is the only son and heir of my rich brother, Mrs. Paisley. I beg that he may be treated accordingly."

"Oh, certainly, sir. I never had a child so like my husband as this boy is like you."

"Very likely, Mrs. Paisley," said the Colonel. "I have seen many children that did not resemble their fathers. Perhaps yours were in the same predicament?"

"Whether they were or no, they are all in Heaven with their poor dear father," whimpered Mrs. Paisley, "and have left me a lone widow, with no one to love or take care of me."

"Jacob Glen says that you are a good hand at taking care of yourself, Paisley," said Godfrey. "But I dare say Master Jacob would be glad of taking care of you himself. Here's your good

health, Mrs. P——;" and down went the bumper of Madeira.

"Ah, Master Godfrey, you are just like your pa—you will have your joke.—Lord bless the child! he has swallowed the whole glass of wine. He will be 'toxicated."

Godfrey and the Colonel laughed, while Anthony slid from his chair, and taking the housekeeper by the hand, said, in a gentle tone, "You have no one to love you, Mrs. Paisley. If you will be kind to me, I will love you."

"Who could help being kind to you, sweet child?" said the good woman, patting his curly head, and kissing the rosy mouth he held up to her. "You are a good boy, and don't make fun of people, like some folks."

"That's me," said Godfrey. "Tony, you are quite welcome to my share of Mrs. Paisley; and instead of Benjamin's, you may chance to get Jacob's portion also."

"Will you have some wine, Anthony?" said his uncle, handing him a glass, as he spoke.

The child took the liquid, tasted it, and put it

back on the table, with a very wry face. "I don't like it, uncle—it is medicine."

"You will like it well enough by and by," said Godfrey. "I suppose the stingy one at home only drinks Adam's ale?"

"What is that?"

"Water. A mess only fit for dogs and felons. Gentlemen, Anthony, rich gentlemen, like you and me, always drink wine."

"I shall never like it," said the child. "I love milk."

"Milk! What a baby! Papa, he says that he never means to like wine. Is not that a shabby notion?"

"You, you young dog, are too fond of it already."

"I like everything that you like, pa!" said the spoilt youth. "If wine is good for you, it must be good for me. Remember, you told me yesterday that I must obey you in all things."

"Imitation is not obedience, Godfrey. I did not tell you to imitate me in all things. Wine in moderation may be good for a man, and help

to beguile a weary hour, and yet may be very hurtful to boys."

"Well, I never can understand your philosophy, pa. A boy is a half-grown man; therefore a boy may take half as much wine as a man, and it will do him good. And as to imitation, I think that is a sort of practical obedience. Jacob Glen says, 'As the old cock crows, so crows the young one.'"

"You had better not quote my servant's sayings to me, Godfrey," said his father, frowning, and pushing the wine from him. "I have treated you with too much indulgence, and am now reaping the fruit of my folly."

"Surely you are not angry with your Freddy, pa," said the beautiful boy, hanging upon Algernon's arm, and looking imploringly into his face. "It is all fun."

This was enough to calm the short-lived passion of the Colonel. One glance into that sparkling animated face, and all the faults of the boy were forgotten. He was, however, severely mortified by his impertinent remarks, and he determined

to be more strict with him for the future, and broke his resolution the next minute.

Algernon Hurdlestone's life had been spent in making and breaking good resolutions. No wonder that he felt such a difficulty in keeping this. If we would remedy a fault, the reformation must be commenced on the instant. We must not give ourselves time to think over the matter, for if we do, nine chances out of ten, that we never carry our intentions into practice. Algernon often drank to excess, and too often suffered his young son to be a spectator of his criminal weakness. Godfrey was his constant companion, both in hunting-parties and at the table; and the boy greatly enjoyed the coarse jokes and vulgar hilarity of the roystering uproarious country squires, who, to please the rich father, never failed to praise the witticisms of the son.

Thus the disposition of the child was corrupted, his tastes vitiated, his feelings blunted, and the fine affections of the heart destroyed at the age of ten years.

Algernon was so fond of him, so vain of his

fine person and quick parts, that it blinded him to his many faults. He seldom noticed his habitual want of respect to himself, or the unfeeling and sarcastic remarks of the audacious lad on his own peculiar failings. To a stranger, Godfrey Hurdlestone presented the painful anomaly of the address and cunning of the man animating the breast of a child.

He inherited nothing in common with his father, but his profusion and love of company; and was utterly destitute of that kindliness of disposition, and real warmth of heart, that so strongly characterised his too indulgent parent, and pleaded an excuse for many of his failings. He was still more unlike his cousin Anthony, although personally they could scarcely be known apart. The latter was serious and thoughtful beyond his years; was fond of quiet and retirement, preferring a book or a solitary walk to romping with Godfrey and his boisterous companions. He had been a child of sorrow, and acquainted with grief; and though he was happy now—too happy, he was wont to say—the cloud

which ushered in his dawn of life still cast its dark shadow over the natural gaiety and sunshine of his heart.

His mind was like a rich landscape seen through a soft summer mist, which revealed just enough of the beautiful as to make the observer wish to behold more.

Gentle, truthful, and most winningly affectionate, Anthony had to be known to be loved; and those who enjoyed his confidence never wished to transfer their good will to his dashing cousin. He loved a few dear friends, but he shrunk from a crowd, and never cared to make many acquaintances. He soon formed a strong attachment to his uncle; the love which nature meant for his father was lavished with prodigality on this beloved relative, who cherished for his adopted son the most tender regard.

He loved the mocking, laughter-loving, mischievous Godfrey, who delighted to lay all his naughty tricks and devilries upon his quiet cousin; while he considered himself as his patron and protector, and often gave himself great airs

of superiority. For the sake of peace, Anthony often yielded a disputed point to his impetuous companion, rather than awaken his turbulent temper into active operation. Yet he was no coward—on the contrary, he possessed twice the moral courage of his restless playmate; but a deep sense of gratitude to his good uncle, for the blessed change he had effected in his situation, pervaded his heart, and influenced all his actions.

CHAPTER VII.

The weary heart may mourn
  O'er the wither'd hopes of youth,
But the flowers so rudely shorn
  Still leave the seeds of truth.
J. W. D. Moodie.

And years glided on. The trials of school, and all its joyous pastimes and short-lived sorrows, were over, and the cousins returned to spend the long-looked for and happy vacation at home. The curly-headed rosy-cheeked boys had expanded into fine tall lads of sixteen; blithe of heart, and strong of limb, full of the eager hopes and never-to-be-realised dreams of youth. With what delight they were welcomed by the Colonel! With what pride he turned them round and round, and examined the improvement in form and stature of the noble boys—wondering at first

which was Anthony, and which his own dear mischievous rogue! They were so marvellously alike, that, seen at a distance, he scarcely knew which to call his son. And then how delightedly he listened to their laughing details of tricks and hoaxes, served off upon cross masters and tyrannical ushers, laughing more loudly than they, and suggesting improvements in mischievous pranks already too mischievous! Poor Algernon! in spite of the increasing infirmities of age, and the pressure of cares which his reckless extravagance could not fail to produce, he was perfectly happy in the company of these dear boys, and once more a boy himself.

He never inquired what progress they had made in their studies. He had put them to school, and paid for their schooling, and if they had not profited by their opportunities, it was no fault of his. Had he examined them upon this important subject, he would, indeed, have been surprised at the difference between them. Anthony, naturally studious, had made the most of his time, while master Godfrey had wasted

his, and brought home with him a small stock of literary acquirements, and many vices.

"What will my uncle say, when he finds how little you have learned during the last half year?" said Anthony to his cousin, while they were dressing for dinner.

"He'll never trouble his head about it, without you, Mr. Anthony, put him up to it, to show off your superior powers of drudgery. But mark me, Tony, if you dare to say one word about it, you and I shall quarrel."

"But what are we to do about Mr. Cunningham's letter? You know he gave me one to give to your father; and I much fear that it contains some remarks not very creditable to you."

"Did you give it to papa?"

"Not yet. Here it is."

"Let me look at the old fellow's autograph. What a bad hand for a schoolmaster! I will spare my dear lazy father the trouble of deciphering these villainous pot-hooks. Ha! ha! my good, industrious, quiet, plodding cousin Anthony, heir of Oak Hall, in the county of Wilts, there

lies your amiable despatch;" and he spurned the torn document with his foot. "That's the way that I mean to serve all those who dare to criticise my actions."

"But, dear Godfrey, it is yourself that you injure by this awful waste of your time and talents."

"Talents!—Fiddlesticks! What care I for talents, without it were those shining substantial talents spoken of in the Scriptures—talents of gold and silver. Give me these talents, my boy, and you may profit by all the rest. Wasting of time! How can we waste that which we can neither overtake, nor detain when ours, and which when past is lost for ever? Miser of moments! in another school than thine, Godfrey Hurdlestone will learn to improve the present."

"But those wasted moments, Godfrey, how will the recollection of them embitter the future! Remember, my dear cousin, what our good chaplain often told us—'Time is but the antechamber to Eternity!'"

"What, turned preacher! A prudent move

that, Tony. I've heard that old Ironsides has no less than five rich livings in his gift. Now, by Jove! I'd turn parson to-morrow, if I thought my uncle would be dutiful enough to bestow one or two of them upon me. How would the 'Rev. Godfrey Hurdlestone' look upon a visiting card?"

He wrote upon a card, and held it up to Anthony. "See the address of the Right Worshipful Rector of Ashton. Behold him riding upon a fine cob—living in a fine house—surrounded by sleek, well-fed, obsequious servants—his table served like a prince—his wine the best in the country—his parties the most brilliant—his friends the most obliging in the world—his curate does all the work for some paltry sixty pounds a-year, and the rich incumbent lives at his ease. Ah, Tony, what a prospect! What rare times we would have of it! To-morrow, when my father asks me to make choice of a profession, hang me if I do not say the Church."

"You are not fit for so sacred a calling, Godfrey; indeed you are not," said Anthony, fearful

that his burlesquing cousin for once in his life was in earnest.

"I know that better than you can tell me, Tony, but 'tis such an easy way to get a living; I could enjoy such glorious indolence; could fish, and hunt, and shoot, and play the fiddle, and attend feasts and merry-makings, with such a happy consciousness of being found in the path of duty, that it would give a double zest to enjoyment. Now don't be envious, my dear demure cousin, and forestall me in my project. I am sure to gain my father's consent. It will save him so much trouble for the future."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Algernon.

"Come, boys, dinner is waiting. My dear Anthony, after that important business is dispatched, I want to talk to you in the library upon a matter of serious importance, which I have, I fear, neglected too long. Nay, don't look alarmed; it is not to administer a scolding, or to question you in Greek or Latin; or to ask you how you have improved your time at school,

for I take it for granted that you have both done your best, or I should have heard from Mr. Cunningham, who, they say, is the strictest disciplinarian in the kingdom."

Now, Anthony could not eat his dinner for thinking what his uncle had to say to him; but he had to wait patiently until that gentleman had discussed his bottle of wine; and it was not without a certain sinking of the heart that he rose to follow him to the library. Godfrey's curiosity was aroused; he fancied that it was to make some private inquiries as to his conduct at school, that his father wanted to speak alone with his cousin.

"May I come?"

"No, my boy. What I have to say to Anthony is for him alone."

"Humph!" said Godfrey; then whispering to Anthony as he passed, "No tales out of school, Tony," he sauntered into the garden.

"What ails you, Anthony?" said the good-natured uncle, as he took a seat by the table.

"I don't know," returned the lad; "I felt afraid"—he hesitated—

"Afraid of what?"

"That you were tired of me—wished me to leave you."

"I should much sooner be tired of myself. Don't you know, perverse boy, how dearly I love you;" and he put his arm round the stripling and drew him to his breast. "Godfrey himself is not more dear, son of my murdered Elinor—son of my heart."

There was a long pause; at length the Colonel said, "It was of your father that I wished to speak. We have let eight years pass away without holding the least intercourse with him: in this, I think we have been to blame. The first year you came to me I wrote to him twice, informing him how you were, and suggesting your future mode of education. To my first letter I received the following answer:—

'*To Algernon Hurdlestone, Esq.*

'In adopting my son, you pleased yourself. Had he remained with me I should have provided for him. As matters at present stand, I neither wish to be troubled with letters from him nor you. When you next write I would thank you to pay the *post*.

'Yours, &c.,

'MARCUS HURDLESTONE.'

"Now, Tony, I was somewhat discouraged by this ungracious answer; however, as I knew the man, I wrote to him again and did pay the post; I took no notice of the tenour of his letter, but merely informed him that I had put you to school, and that you were growing a fine clever lad. Here is his reply:—

'*To Algernon Hurdlestone, Esq.*

'Next to receiving impertinent letters, I detest the trouble of answering them. I have no money to fling away upon fools and foolscap.

'MARCUS HURDLESTONE.'

"Now, my dear boy, although so far my applications to him on your behalf have been unsuccessful, I think it only right and prudent in you to write to him yourself, and remind this affectionate father that you are still in the land of the living."

"And that you wish him," said Godfrey, popping his head in at the door, where he had been an attentive listener for the last five minutes, "well out of it."

Without heeding his cousin's nonsense, Anthony answered his uncle with great simplicity, "Dear uncle, what can I say to him?"

"Faith, my dear boy, that's more than I can tell you; just anything, the best you can. Tell him that you wish to see him, that you are grown nearly into a man; that you wish him to name what profession he wishes you to pursue, as you are about to go to college. But mark me, Tony, say not one word about love, filial affection, and so forth; he'll not believe you. The more you attempt to court or conciliate such spirits as his — spirits, did I say? the man's all

earth, hard unyielding clay—the more they suspect you of sinister motives. The honest bluntness of indignant truth is more likely to succeed."

"I believe you, uncle, and without exercising any great mental ingenuity, my letter, I fear, will be a sad hypocritical affair."

"Doubtless," said Godfrey, roaring with laughter, "I wish, Tony, we could exchange fathers."

A reproachful look from Algernon, and a flash from the calm dark eyes of Anthony, checked the immoral levity of his cousin, who, stepping briskly up to the table, continued—

"Give me a pen, and I will give you a few hints on the subject."

"This is too serious a business for mirth, Godfrey," said Anthony, gravely. "I did not love him once—I was a child. He was harsh and cold, and I was ignorant of the sacred nature of those ties that bound us together. Time has wrought a great change in me; perhaps it may have done the same in him. I am anxious to feel

for him a deeper interest—to pity his unfortunate malady, and cherish in my heart the duty and affection of a son."

"Ah! Tony, Tony, you begin to know the value of the shiners, to tremble lest old skinflint Pike should cut you out of daddy's will. But come, let me write the dutiful letter that is to reinstate you in the miser's good graces. Shall it be in verse or prose? What, silent yet? Well then, here goes." And with an air of mock gravity he took up a pen, and commenced reading every line aloud as he went on:—

"Dear stingy dad, I long to share
  The keeping of your hoarded treasure;
You, I know, have lots to spare,
And I, your hopeful son and heir,
  Would spend it with the greatest pleasure.

Oh, thou most devoted father,
  Fill your chest—hide well the key;
Countless wealth for me you gather,
And I selfishly would rather
  You should starve and save than me.

Must I—must I, still dependent,
On another's bounty live—"

"What do you mean by that, sir"? cried

Algernon in sudden anger, although hitherto much amused by his son's rattling nonsense. He saw the blush of shame burn on the cheeks of Anthony, and the tears of wounded pride fill his eyes.

"I meant no offence," said Godfrey, abashed by the unusual severity of the Colonel's look and tone. "What I said was only intended to make you both laugh."

"I forgive him," murmured the indignant heart-humbled lad. "He has given me another motive to write to my father."

"My dear Tony, never mind his folly." But Anthony was already in the solitude of his own chamber.

How often had he borne that taunt from Godfrey! How often had he been told before boys whom he esteemed and loved at school, and whose good opinion he was desirous to retain, that he was dependent upon the bounty of Colonel Hurdlestone, though the only son and heir of the rich miser; and that he was as selfish and mean-spirited as his father to submit to such degradation!

And he had marked the sarcastic smile, the lifted shoulder, and the meaning glance that passed from boy to boy, and the galling chain of dependence had entered into his soul.

He became thoughtful and reserved, and applied more intensely to his studies, to shut out what he considered the ungracious ungrateful conviction that he was a beggar in the house of his good uncle. Godfrey had already calculated the expense of his board and education, for he had more than once hinted to him, that, when he came in for his miserly father's wealth, in common justice he ought to repay to him what his romantically generous uncle had expended upon him. Anthony had solemnly averred that such should indeed be the case, and again had been tauntingly answered—"Wait until it is yours; you will then tell a different tale." But now he had dared to reproach him in his uncle's presence; and it was more than the high-spirited youth could bear.

"Father, cruel, unnatural father!" he exclaimed, as he raised his head from between his hands;

"why have you subjected your unfortunate son to insults like these?"

"Who insults you, my dear Anthony?" said the Colonel, who had followed him unobserved, and who now stood beside him. "A rash, impetuous, thoughtless boy, who never reflects upon what he says; and who, in spite of all his faults, loves you."

"When you speak, uncle, I am silent. I am sorry that you witnessed this burst of discontent. When I think upon all that I owe to you, my heart is bankrupt in thanks; I never can repay your kindness, and the thought—the consciousness of such overwhelming obligations makes me unhappy."

"I read your heart, Anthony," said the Colonel, seating himself beside him. "I know all that you would say, and cannot utter; and I, instead of you, become the debtor."

"Your goodness, uncle, makes me feel ashamed of being angry with my cousin. I wish I could forget the unfortunate circumstances in which I am placed; that you were my father instead of

him who has disowned me—that my whole heart and soul could cling to you."

He rose hastily and flung himself into the Colonel's arms. His head was buried in his bosom, and by the convulsive heaving of the young heart against his own, Algernon knew that the lad was weeping. His own eyes became moist,—he pressed him warmly against his manly breast.

"You are my son, Anthony—the son of her who received my early vows—of her who ought to have been my wife. Her heart was mine; and though another claims your earthly part, you are the son of my soul—of my adoption. Henceforth, let no sense of obligation exist between us."

"I take you at your word, beloved father, and if love can repay love, in my poor heart you have no rival."

"I know it, Anthony; but since you talk of wishing to be out of my debt, there is a way in which you can more than repay me."

He paused; Anthony raised his earnest eyes to his face. "Not only by forgiving my dear

petulant Godfrey, but by continuing his friend. I know that I have spoilt him—that he has many faults, but I think his heart is sound. As he grows older, he will know better how to value your character. Promise me, Anthony, that, when I am dust, your love for me may survive for my son."

"Uncle!" said the lad, dropping upon his knees by his side, and holding up his clasped hands, "I swear by the God who made us,—by the Saviour who bled for us—by our common hopes of salvation through His blood, that, whatever fortune I inherit from my father, Godfrey shall have an equal part."

"This is too much to ask of you, Anthony,—all I wish you to promise is, simply to continue his friend, under every provocation to become otherwise."

Anthony pressed his uncle's hand reverentially to his lips, as he said, in a low voice, "I will endeavour to comply with your request."

They parted: Algernon to counsel his wayward boy, and Anthony to write to his father.

"FATHER,"

(He began,) "How gladly would I call you dear. Oh, that you would allow me to love you—to feel for you the duty and respect which the poorest child feels for his parent. What have I done, my father, that you deny me your presence, and hold no communion with me? Will you not permit me to see you? You are growing old and need some friend to be near you, to soothe the growing infirmities of age. Who could better fill this place than your son? Who could feel such an interest in your welfare, or be so firm a friend to you, as your son—your only son? You will perhaps tell me that it is your wealth, and not your love, I seek. I care not for your money. It has never conduced to your own happiness; how do I know that it will ever conduce to mine? I hate it, for it has shut up your heart against me, and made me an orphan and an outcast.

"Father, pity me! Pity the circumstances in which I am placed: dependent upon the charity of my good uncle, I feel, kind though he be to me,

that I am a burden—that it is not just that I should live upon him. I have finished my school education, and can show you the most honourable testimonials from my master. I have acquired some knowledge, but I long for more. My uncle talks of sending me to college with his son. For what profession do you wish me to study? Let me know your wishes in this respect, and they shall be strictly obeyed. I shall feel greatly honoured by your answer, and remain,

"Your dutiful son,

"ANTHONY MARCUS HURDLESTONE."

Anthony did not show his uncle this letter. He knew that he would object to the part relative to himself. He duly sealed it and paid the post, and for several days he awaited the reply in a state of feverish excitement. At length it came, and ran thus:—

"SON ANTHONY,

"Your letter pleased me. I believe it to be sincere. You have been so long a stranger,

that I do not feel any wish to see you; but, hereafter, if you wait with patience, you will not be forgotten. You are a Hurdlestone. I respect the old family and the old name too much to leave it without an heir.

"I am glad that you have had sense enough to improve your time. Time is money. As to a profession, the uncle who took you from my protection had best choose one for his adopted son. There are several livings in my gift. If you should make choice of the Church, they shall be yours. This would make property which has hitherto been of little value pay a good interest. As to being dependent upon your uncle, the thought amused me. If he feels you a burden, it is self-inflicted, and he must be content to bear it. You need not look to me for pecuniary assistance; I shall yield you none. An industrious young man can always free himself from a galling yoke.

"Your father and friend,

"MARCUS HURDLESTONE."

Upon the whole, Anthony was pleased with

his father's letter. It displayed more of human feeling than he expected. Besides, he had not rejected his claims as a son. He had acknowledged him to be his heir. It is true, he had forbidden him his presence, and flung back his proffered affection; but he had spoken of him with respect, and his son was grateful even for this stinted courtesy. He would one day be able to repay his uncle's kindness in a more substantial manner than words; and he flew to Algernon's study with a beating heart and flushed cheeks.

"What news, my boy?" said the Colonel, looking up from the artificial fly he was making. "Have you caught a trout or a salmon?"

"Better still. I have got a letter from my father!"

"No!" said the Colonel, letting go his fishing-tackle. "Is that possible?"

"Here it is; read for yourself." And he put the letter into Algernon's hand.

"Well, Tony, lad, this is indeed better than I expected," he said, grasping his nephew warmly by the hand. "But stay; what does this

paragraph mean? Have you found my love, Anthony, such a galling yoke?"

"My father has misunderstood me," replied the lad, his cheeks glowing with crimson. "I told him that it was not just for me to be dependent on your bounty."

"'Tis a crabbed old sinner," said the Colonel, laughing. "I am more astonished at his letter than anything that has happened to me since he robbed me of your mother."

Anthony looked inquiringly at his uncle.

"Come, nephew, sit down by me, and I will relate to you a page out of my own history, which will not only show you what manner of man this father of yours is, but explain to you the position in which we are both placed regarding him; clearing up what must have appeared to you very mysterious."

With intense interest the amiable son of this most execrable father listened to the tale already told of his mother's wrongs. How often did the crimes of the parent dye the cheeks of the child with honest indignation, or pale them

with fear! How did his love for his generous uncle increase in a tenfold degree, when he revealed the treachery that had been practised against him! How often did he ask himself—"Is it possible that he can love the son of this cruel brother? But then he was also the son of the woman he had loved so tenderly for years, whose memory he held in the deepest veneration; was like him in person, and, with sounder judgment and better abilities, resembled him in mind also."

Satisfied that his father would do him justice, in spite of his cold unfeeling neglect, and bequeath to him the wealth, to obtain which he had sacrificed every human feeling and domestic comfort, Anthony no longer suffered the humiliating sense of obligation to weigh upon his heart and depress his spirits; and he cheerfully accepted his uncle's offer to send him to college to study for the Church.

"Five livings," Godfrey declared, were four too many for any incumbent; and he would charitably relieve Anthony from some of them, and study

for the same profession. His cousin was grieved at this choice, so unfitted to the tastes and pursuits of his gay companion; but finding all remonstrance vain, he ceased to importune him on the subject, hoping that, as time advanced, he would, of his own accord, abandon the idea.

To college, therefore, the lads went; and here the same dissimilarity marked their conduct as at school. Anthony applied intensely to his studies, and made rapid progress in mental and moral improvement. Serious without affectation, and pious without cant, he daily became more attached to the profession he had chosen, hoping to find through it a medium by which he could one day restore to the world the talents that for more than half a century his father had buried in the dust. Godfrey's career, on the other hand, was one of folly, dissipation, and crime. He wasted his father's property in the most lavish expenditure, and lost at the gaming-table sums that would have settled him well in life.

Anthony remonstrated with him on his want of principle, and pointed out the ruin which must

follow such profligacy. This Godfrey took in very bad part, and tauntingly accused his cousin of being a spy. He told him that it sounded well from a dependent on his father's bounty to preach up abstinence to him. These circumstances threw Anthony into a deep melancholy. He did not like to write to his uncle to inform him in what a disgraceful manner his son was spending his time and money; and he constantly reproached himself with a want of faithfulness, in keeping such an important matter a secret.

Disgusted with his cousin and his dissipated associates, Anthony withdrew entirely from their society, and shut himself up in his own apartment, rarely leaving his books to mingle in scenes in which he could not sympathise, and in which, from his secluded habits, he was not formed to shine. He became a dreamer. He formed a world for himself, and peopled it with beings whose imaginary perfections had no counterpart on earth. He went forth to mingle with his kind, and found them so unlike the

creatures in his moral Utopia, that he determined to relinquish society and spiritualise his own nature, the better to fit him for his high calling as a minister of the gospel of Christ.

"How much better it would be to die young," he would exclaim, "than live to be old and wicked, or to watch over the decay of the warm affections and enthusiastic feelings of youth; to see the beautiful fade from the heart, and the worldly and commonplace fill up the blighting void! Oh! Godfrey, Godfrey! how can you enjoy the miserable and sensual pleasures for which you are forfeiting self-respect and peace of mind for ever!"

"But Godfrey is happier than you, with all your refined feelings and cultivated tastes," whispered the tempter to his soul.

"It cannot be," returned the youth, as he communed with his own heart. "The pleasures of sin may blind the mental vision, and blunt the senses, for a while; but when the terrible truth makes all things plain, and the reaction comes—and come it assuredly will—and the mind, like a

polluted stream, can no longer flow back to its own bright source, and renovate its poisoned waters; who shall then say that the madness of the sensualist can satisfy the heart?"

Thus did these two young men live together: one endeavouring by the aid of religion, and by studying the wisdom of the past, to exalt and purify his fallen nature; the other by grovelling in the dust, and mingling with beings yet more sinful and degraded, rapidly debased his mind to a more degenerate and fallen state.

Godfrey Hurdlestone had always been covetous of his cousin's anticipated wealth; but now he envied his good name, and the respect which his talents and good conduct entitled him to receive from his superiors, and he hated him accordingly. He could not bear to see him courted and caressed by his worldly companions because he was the son of the rich miser, and himself thrown into the background, although in personal endowments he far surpassed his studious and retiring companion. His own father, though reputed to be rich, was known to be in embarrassed circum-

stances, which the extravagance of his son was not likely to decrease. Godfrey had no mental resource but in the society of persons whom Anthony despised; and he was daily annoyed by disparaging comparisons which the very worldlings he courted were constantly drawing between them. "Oh envy!" well has it been said by the wisest of mankind, "who can stand before envy?"

Of all human passions, the meanest in its operations, the most fatal in its results, foul parent of the most revolting crimes. If the heart is guarded against this passion, the path to heaven becomes easy of access, and the broad and dangerous way loses half its attractions.

Godfrey had forfeited his own self-respect, and he hated his cousin for possessing a jewel which he had cast away. This aversion was strengthened by the anxious solicitude that Anthony expressed for his welfare, and the earnest appeals which he daily made to his conscience, to induce him to renounce his present destructive course, if not for his own, for his father's sake.

Their studies were nearly completed, when the immense sums that Godfrey had squandered in dissipation and gambling obliged the Colonel to recall them home.

Algernon, although not a little displeased with his heartless selfish son, received the young men with his usual kindness, but there was a shade of care upon his broad open brow, which told to Anthony a tale of anxiety and suffering, that caused him the deepest pain. As two whole years must necessarily elapse before Anthony could enter into holy orders, he determined to prosecute his studies in the country with their worthy curate, Mr. Grant, a gentleman of great learning, piety, and worth.

This arrangement was greatly to the satisfaction of his uncle, though Godfrey shook his shoulders, and muttered that it would be "Confounded dull work."

"I must introduce you, boys, to our new neighbours," said the Colonel, next morning, at breakfast. "But mind that you don't pull caps for Miss Whitmore, our charming young heiress."

"Who the deuce is she?" asked Godfrey.

"You knew that our poor old friend Henderson, of Hazelwood Lodge, was dead?"

"Dead! Why when did he die?" said Godfrey. "You never wrote us a word about it."

"Well, I thought I had. He died two months ago, and his property fell to a very distant relation. A captain in the navy. A man of small family and substantial means, who keeps a fine stud, a capital table, and a cross old maid, his sister, to superintend his household and take care of his daughter."

"And the young lady?"

"Is a beautiful simple-hearted girl; rather romantic, and the very reverse of the old maid. Aunt Dorothy is all ginger and vinegar. Niece Juliet, like fine Burgundy, sparkling with life and animation."

"By Jove! Anthony, good news for us. I give you warning, mister parson, that I mean to pass away the time in this dull place by making love to Miss Whitmore. So don't attempt to poach on my manor."

"That's hardly fair, Godfrey. You ought to allow your cousin an equal chance."

"The young lady will herself make the chances equal," said Anthony, with a quiet smile. "For my own part, I feel little interest in the subject, and never yet saw the woman with whom I would wish to pass my life. To me the passion of love is unknown. Godfrey, on the contrary, professes to be in love with every pretty girl he sees."

"There's no doubt that I shall win the lady," cried Godfrey. "Women are not fond of quiet, sentimental, learned young gentlemen, like Anthony; his heart partakes too much of the cold tough nature of his father's to make a good lover. While he talks sense to the maiden aunt, I shall be pouring nonsense into the young lady's ears—nursing her lap-dog, caressing her pony, writing amatory verses in her scrap-book," (albums were not then in fashion,) "and losing no opportunity of insinuating myself into her good graces."

CHAPTER VIII.

I see no beauty in this wealthy dame;
'Neath the dark lashes of her downcast eyes
A weeping spirit lurks. And when she smiles,
'Tis but the sunbeams of an April day,
Piercing a watery cloud.—S. M.

"So Colonel Hurdlestone's son and nephew arrived at the Hall last night. Reach me down Juliet's portfolio, Dorothy; I must write the good Colonel a congratulatory note," said Captain Whitmore to his solemn-faced sister.

The Captain was a weather-beaten stout old gentleman, who had seen some hard service during the war, and what with wounds, hard drinking, and the gout, had been forced to relinquish the sea, and anchor for life in the pretty village of Norgood, where he held property, through the death of the rich Mr. Henderson, to a considerable

amount. His wife had been dead for some years, and his only daughter, whom he scarcely suffered out of his sight, was educated at home, under the superintendence of her aunt, who professed to be the most accomplished, as she certainly was the most disagreeable, woman in the world.

"I think, Captain Whitmore, you had better defer your congratulations until you see what sort of persons these young men are. Mrs. Grant assured me yesterday that one of these gentlemen is very wild. Quite a profligate."

"Fiddlesticks!" said the jolly Captain, snapping his fingers. "I know what young men are. A gay dashing lad, I suppose, whose hot blood and youthful frolics old maiden ladies construe into the most awful crimes."

"Old maiden ladies, sir! Pray whom do you mean to insult by that gross appellation?"

"Gross! I always thought that maiden was a term that implied virgin innocence and purity, whether addressed to the blithe lass of sixteen, or the antiquated spinster of forty," returned the provoking sailor, with a knowing glance.

"I hate your vulgar insinuations," said Miss Dorothy, her sharp nose flushing to a deep red. "But how can one expect politeness from a sea monster?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the Captain. "Never mind, Dolly, don't give way to temper, and curl up that bowsprit of yours with such a confounded ugly twist. There may be a chance yet. Let me see. I don't think that you are fifty-four. My nurse, Betty Holt, was called an old maid for thirty years, and married at last."

"I wonder, brother, that you are not ashamed of naming me and that low-born person in the same breath. As to matrimony, I despise the male sex too much to degrade myself by entering upon it."

"It would have sweetened your temper amazingly," said the Captain, re-filling his pipe. "I believe, Dorothy, you were never put to the trial?"

"You know that I refused at least a dozen offers."

"Whew! I never heard a word about them before."

Miss Dorothy knew that she was telling a great fib; and she drew herself up with increased dignity. "You were at sea, sir."

"So, I suppose," drawing a long whiff from his pipe, "I must have been a great way off; and these same offers must have been made a long time ago."

"I could marry yet, if I pleased!" screamed the indignant spinster.

"Doubtful. And pray who is the happy man?"

"I have too much delicacy to reveal secrets, or to subject myself or him to your vulgar ridicule."

"I wish him luck!" said the Captain, turning over the leaves of Juliet's portfolio. "What the deuce does the girl mean? She has scribbled over all the paper. I hope she don't amuse herself by writing love-letters?"

"Do you think that I would suffer my niece to spend her time in such an improper manner?

But, indeed, brother, I wish you would speak to Juliet (for she does not mind me) on this subject."

"On what subject—writing love-letters?"

"No, sir: something almost as bad."

"Well—out with it."

"She has the folly to write verses."

"Is that all?"

"All! Only consider the scandal that it will bring upon me. I shall be called a blue-stocking."

"You! I thought it was the author to whom persons gave that appellation."

"True, Captain Whitmore; but, as I help to instruct the young lady, ill-natured people will say that I taught her to write."

"Don't fret yourself on that score, Dolly; it will not spoil your fortune, if they do. But Juliet—I am sorry that the child has taken such whimsies into her head; it may hinder her from getting a good husband."

"Fie, Captain Whitmore! Is that your only objection?"

"Be quiet, Dolly, there's a good woman, and let me examine these papers. If there is anything wrong about them I will burn them, and forbid my pretty Julee to write such nonsense again. I know that the dear girl loves her old dad, and will mind what I say. How!—what's this? God bless the darling!"

'*Lines addressed to my father during his absence at sea.*'

The old man put on his spectacles, and read these outpourings of an affectionate heart with the tears in his eyes. They possessed very little merit, as a poem; but the Captain thought them the sweetest lines he had ever read.

"Well, now, Dolly, is not that a pretty poem? Who could have the heart to find fault with that, or criticise the dear child for her dutiful love to me? I'll not burn that." And the old tar slipped the precious document into his pocket, to be hoarded next his heart, and to be worn until death bade them part, within the enamelled case which contained the miniature of his Julee's very pretty mother.

"It's well enough," said Miss Dorothy. "But I hate such romantic stuff. It could have been written with more propriety in prose." And she added, in a malicious aside, loud enough to reach the ears of the fond father:

"Now his vanity's pleased with this nonsense, there will be no end to his admiration of Miss Juliet's verses."

"Dorothy, don't be envious of that of which you are incapable."

"Me envious! Of whom, pray? A whining half-grown chit, who, if she have anything worthy of commendation about her, first received it from me. Envious, indeed! Captain Whitmore, I am astonished at your impudence!"

What answer the Captain would have given to this was very doubtful, for his brow clouded up with the disrespectful manner in which Aunt Dorothy spoke of his child, had not that child herself appeared, and all the sunshine of the father's heart burst forth at her presence.

"Dear papa, what are you about?" she cried, flinging her arms about the old veteran's neck,

and trying, at the same moment, to twitch the paper out of his hand.

"Avast, even! my girl. The old commodore is not to be robbed so easily of his prize."

"Indeed, indeed, you must give the portfolio to me!" said Juliet, her eyes full of tears at finding her secret discovered.

"Indeed, indeed, I shall do no such thing, you saucy little minx! So, sit still whilst the father reads."

"But that—that is not worth reading."

"I dare say you are right, Miss Juliet," said the old maid, sarcastically. "The rhymes of young ladies are seldom worth reading. You had better mend your stockings, and mind your embroidery, than waste your time in such useless trash."

"It does not take up much of my time, aunt."

"How do you make it up out of your little head, Julee?" said the Captain. "Come and sit upon my knee, and tell the father all about it. I am sure I could sooner board a French man-of-war than tack two rhymes together."

"I don't know, papa," said Juliet, laughing, and accepting the proffered seat. "It comes into my head when it likes, and passes through my brain with the rapidity of lightning. I find it without seeking, and often, when I seek it, I cannot find it. The thing is a great mystery to myself; but the possession of it makes me very happy."

"Weak minds, I have often been told, are amused by trifles," sneered Aunt Dorothy.

"Then I must be very weak, aunt, for I am easily amused. Dear papa, give me that paper."

"I must read it."

"'Tis silly stuff."

"Let me be the best judge of that. Perhaps it contains something that I ought not to see?"

"Perhaps it does. Oh, no," she whispered in his ear. "But Aunt Dorothy will sneer so at it."

The old man was too much pleased with his child to care for Aunt Dorothy. He knew, of old, that her bark was worse than her bite; that she really loved both him and his daughter; but

she had a queer way of showing it. And unfolding the paper, he read aloud, to the great annoyance of the fair writer, the fragment of a ballad, of which, to do him justice, he understood not a single word; and had he called upon her to explain its meaning, she would, in all probability, have found it no easy task.

LADY LILIAN.

Alone in her tower, at the midnight hour,
The lady Lilian sat;
Like a spirit pale,
In her silken veil,
She watches the white clouds above her sail,
And the flight of the drowsy bat.

Is love the theme of her waking dream?
Her heart is gay and free;
She loves the night,
When the stars shine bright,
And the moon falls in showers of silver light
Through the stately forest tree.

And all around, on the dewy ground,
The quivering moonbeams stray;
And the light and shade,
By the branches made,
Give motion and life to the silent glade,
Like fairy elves at play.

And far o'er the meads, through its fringe of reeds,
Flashes the slender rill;
Like a silver thread,
By some spirit led,
From an urn of light by the moonbeams fed,
It winds round the distant hill.

When sleep's soft thrall falls light on all,
That lady's eyes unclose;
To all that is fair
In earth and air,
When none are awake her thoughts to share,
Or her spirit discompose.

And tones more dear, to her fine-tuned ear,
On the midnight breezes float;
Than the sounds that ring
From the minstrel's string,
When the mighty deeds of some warrior king
Inspire each thrilling note.

* * * * * *

"So there's a hole in the ballad," said the old tar, looking up in his daughter's blushing face. "Julee, my dear, what does all this mean?"

"It would be a difficult matter for Miss Julee to explain," said Aunt Dorothy.

Further remarks on either side were stopped by the announcement of Colonel Hurdlestone, and his son and nephew. Juliet seized the

portfolio from her father, and, with one bound, cleared the opposite doorway, and disappeared.

"We have frightened your daughter away, Captain Whitmore," said the Colonel, glancing after the retreating figure of Juliet. "What made my young friend run from us?"

"Oh, I have just found out the saucy jade is scribbling verses all over my paper; and she is afraid that I should tell you about it; and that Aunt Dorothy would quiz her before these gentlemen."

"I should like much to see a specimen of her poetry," said the Colonel.

"Here are a few lines addressed to myself," said the proud father, handing them to his friend. "I was going to scold Julee for her folly; but, by Jove, Colonel, I could not bring my heart to do it after reading that!"

The paper went round. It lingered longest in the hand of Anthony Hurdlestone. The lines possessed no particular merit. They were tender and affectionate, true to nature and nature's simplicity, and as he read, and re-read them, it

seemed as if the spirit of the author was in unison with his own. "Happy girl!" he thought, "who can thus feel towards and write of a father. How I envy you this blessed, holy affection!" He raised his eyes, and rose up in confusion, to be presented to Miss Whitmore.

Juliet could scarcely be termed beautiful; but her person was very attractive. Her features were small, but belonged to none of the favoured orders of female beauty; and her complexion was pallid, rendered more conspicuously so by the raven hair, that fell in long silken ringlets down her slender white throat, and spread like a dark veil round her elegant bust and shoulders. Her lofty brow was pure as marble, and marked by that high look of moral and intellectual power, before which mere physical beauty shrinks into insignificance. Soft pencilled eyebrows gave additional depth and lustre to a pair of the most lovely deep blue eyes that ever flashed from beneath a fringe of jet. There was an expression of tenderness, almost amounting to sadness, in those sweet eyes; and when they

were timidly raised to meet those of the young Anthony, a light broke upon his heart, which the storms and clouds of after-life could never again extinguish.

"Miss Juliet, your father has been giving us a treat," said the Colonel.

Poor Juliet turned first very red, and then very pale, and glanced reproachfully at the old man.

"Nay, Miss Whitmore, you need not be ashamed of that which does you so much credit," said the Colonel, pitying her confusion.

"Dear papa, it was cruel to betray me," said Juliet, the tears of mortified sensibility filling her fine eyes. "Colonel Hurdlestone, you will do me a great favour by never alluding to this subject again."

"You are a great admirer of nature, Miss Whitmore, or you could not write poetry," said Godfrey, heedless of the distress of the poor girl. But he was tired of sitting silent, and longed for an opportunity of addressing her.

"Poetry is the language in which nature speaks to the heart of the young," said Juliet.

"Do you think that there ever was a young person indifferent to the beauties of poetry?"

"All young people have not your taste and fine feeling," said Godfrey. "There are some persons who can walk in a garden without distinguishing the flowers from the weeds. You have of course read Shakspeare?"

"It formed the first epoch in my life," returned Juliet with animation. "I never shall forget the happy day when I first revelled through the fairy isle with Ariel and his dainty spirits. My father was from home, and had left the key in the library door. It was forbidden ground. My aunt was engaged with an old friend in the parlour, so I ventured in, and snatched at the first book that came to hand. It was a volume of Shakspeare, and contained, among other plays, the Tempest and the Midsummer Night's Dream. Afraid of detection, I stole away into the park, and beneath the shadow of the greenwood tree, I devoured with rapture the inspired page of the great magician. What a world of wonders it opened to my view! Since that

eventful hour, poetry has become to me the language of nature—the voice in which creation lifts up its myriad anthems to the throne of God."

An enthusiastic country girl could alone have addressed this rhapsody to a stranger. A woman of the world, with half her talent and moral worth, would have blushed at her imprudence in betraying the romance of her nature. Juliet was a novice in the world, and she spoke with the simplicity and earnestness of truth. Godfrey smiled in his heart at her want of tact; yet there was one near him, in whose breast Juliet Whitmore would have found an echo to her own words.

The gentlemen rose to depart, and promised to dine at the Lodge the next day.

"Two fine young men," said the Captain, turning to his daughter, as the door closed upon his guests. "Which of them took your fancy most, Julee?"

"They are so much alike—I should scarcely know them apart. I liked him the best who most resembled the dear old Colonel."

"Old! Miss Juliet. I hope you don't mean to call Colonel Hurdlestone an old man! You will be calling me old next."

"And not far from the truth if she did," muttered the old sailor. "That was the Colonel's nephew, Julee, Mr. Anthony Hurdlestone."

"The son of that horrible old miser? I saw him once, and took him for a beggar. Is it possible that that elegant young man can be his son?"

"I think the case somewhat doubtful," observed Miss Dorothy. "I wonder that Colonel Hurdlestone has the effrontery to introduce that young man as his nephew. Nature herself contradicts the assertion."

"Dolly, don't be censorious. I thought the Colonel was a great friend of yours!"

"He was; but I am not blind," said Miss Dorothy, with dignity. "I have altered my mind with regard to that gentleman, and would not become his wife if he were to ask me on his bended knees."

"I wish he would pop the question," said the

Captain. "I'd bet my life on't, that he would not have to ask twice!"

"Sir," replied the lady, casting upon her brother a withering glance, "I never mean to marry a widower—an uncle—who brings with him nephews so like himself." Miss Dorothy swept from the room; leaving her brother convulsed with laughter.

"Miss Whitmore is not so handsome as I expected to find her, after the fuss that George Braconberry made about her the other night at Wymar's," said Godfrey, suddenly pulling up his horse, as they rode home, and addressing his cousin. "Her figure is delightful, symmetry itself; but her face, she has scarcely one good feature in it. There is nothing gay or joyous in her expression. There is an indescribable sadness about those blue eyes which makes one feel grave in a moment. I wanted to pay her a few compliments by way of ingratiating myself into her good graces; but, by Jove! I could not look her in the face and do it. A man must have more confidence than I possess to attempt to

deceive her. I never felt afraid of a woman before."

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned Anthony. "To me she is beautiful, exceedingly beautiful. I would not exchange that noble expression of hers for the most faultless features and blooming complexion in the world. The dignity of her countenance is the mirror in which I see reflected the beauty of the soul; as the stars picture on the face of the placid stream the heaven in which they dwell."

"Are you turned poet too, Master Anthony? Mary Mathews, down at the farm, has a prettier face, or I am no judge of female beauty."

"We all know your *penchant* for Mary Mathews. But seriously, Godfrey, if you do not mean to marry the poor girl, it is very cruel to pay her such lover-like attentions."

"One must do something, Tony, to pass away the time in this dull place. As to marrying the girl, you surely do not take me for a fool?"

"I should be sorry to take you for something worse. Last night you went too far, when you

took the sweet-briar rose from her bosom and placed it in your own; and said that you preferred it to all the flowers in the garden; that your highest ambition was to win and wear the wild rose. The poor girl believed you. Did you not see how she looked down and blushed, and then up in your face with the tears in her eyes, and a sweet smile on her severed lips. Surely, my dear cousin, it is wrong to give birth to hopes which you never mean to realise."

A crimson flush passed over Godfrey's brow as he answered haughtily, "Nonsense, Anthony! you take up this matter too seriously. Women love flattery, and if we are bound in honour to marry all the women we compliment, the law must be abolished that forbids polygamy."

"I know one who would not fail to take advantage of such an act," said Anthony. "But really, matters that concern the happiness and misery of our fellow creatures are too serious for a joke. I hope poor Mary's light heart will never be rendered heavy by your gallantry."

Again the colour flushed the cheek of Godfrey.

He looked down, slashed his well-polished boot with his riding-whip, and endeavoured to hum a tune, and appear indifferent to his cousin's lecture, but it would not do; and telling Anthony that he was in no need of a Mentor, he whistled to a favourite spaniel, and dashing his spurs into his horse, was soon out of sight.

Mary Mathews, the young girl who formed the subject of this conversation, was a strange eccentric creature, more remarkable for the beauty of her person, and her masculine habits, than for any good qualities she possessed. Her father rented a small farm, the property of Colonel Hurdlestone; her mother died while she was yet a child, and her only brother ran away from following the plough and went to sea.

Mathews was a rude, clownish, matter-of-fact man; he wanted some person to assist him in looking after the farm, and taking care of the stock; and he brought up Mary to fill the place of the son he had lost, early inuring her to bear the vicissitudes of the weather, and to take an active part in those manual labours which were

peculiar to his vocation. Mary was a man in everything but her face and figure, which were exceedingly soft and feminine; and if her complexion had not been a little injured by constant exposure to the atmosphere she would have been a perfect beauty; and in spite of these disadvantages she was considered the *belle* of the village.

Alas! for Mary. Her masculine employments, and constantly associating with her father's work-people, had destroyed the woman in her heart. She thought like a man—spoke like a man—acted like a man. The loud clear voice, and clearer louder laugh, the coarse jest and rude song, grated painfully on the ear, and appeared unnatural in the highest degrée, when issuing from coral lips, whose perfect contoûr might have formed a model for the Venus.

Mary knew that she was handsome, and never attempted to conceal from others her consciousness of the fact; and, as long as her exterior elicited applause and admiration from the rude clowns who surrounded her, she cared not for those

minor graces of voice and manner which render beauty so captivating to the refined and well-educated of the other sex.

In the harvest-field she was always the foremost in the band of reapers; dressed in her tight green-cloth boddice, clean white apron, red stuff petticoat, and neatly blacked shoes; her beautiful features shaded by her large, coarse, flat, straw hat, put knowingly to one side, more fully to display the luxuriant auburn tresses, of the sunniest hue, that waved profusely in rich natural curls round her face and neck. In the hay-field you passed her, with the rake across her shoulder, and turned in surprise to look at the fair creature, who whistled to her dog, sang snatches of profane songs, and hallooed to the men in the same breath. In the evening you met her bringing home her cows from the marshes, mounted upon her father's grey riding horse; keeping her seat with as much ease and spirit, although destitute of a side-saddle, as the most accomplished female equestrian in St. James's Park; and when his services were no longer required by our young Amazon, she rubbed

down her horse, and turned him adrift with her own hands into the paddock.

To see Mary Mathews to advantage, when the better nature of her womanhood triumphed over the coarse rude habits to which her peculiar education had given birth, was when surrounded by her weanling calves and cosset lambs, or working in her pretty garden that skirted the road. There, among her flowers, with her splendid locks waving round her sunny brow, and singing, as blithe as any bird, some rural ditty or ballad of the days gone by, she looked the simple, unaffected, lovely country girl. The traveller paused at the gate to listen to her song, to watch her at her work, and to beg a flower from her hand. Even the proud aristocratic country gentleman, as he rode past, doffed his hat, and saluted courteously the young Flora whose smiling face floated before him during his homeward ride.

Uncontrolled by the usages of the world, and heedless of its good or bad opinion, Mary became a law to herself—a headstrong, wayward, passionate creature; shunned by her own sex,

who regarded her as their common enemy, and constantly thrown into contact with the worst and most ignorant of the other, it was not to be wondered at that she became an object of suspicion to all.

With a mind capable of much good, but constantly exposed to much evil, Mary felt with bitterness that she had no friend among her village associates who could share her feelings, or enjoy her unfeminine pursuits. With energy of purpose to form and execute the most daring projects, her mental powers were confined to the servile drudgery of the kitchen and the field until the sudden return of her long-lost brother gave a new colouring to her life, and influenced all her future actions.

The bold audacious William Mathews, of whom she felt so proud, and whom she loved so fiercely, carried on the double profession of a poacher on shore and a smuggler at sea. Twice Mary had exposed her life to imminent danger to save him from detection; and so strongly was she attached to him, that there was no peril that she would not

have dared for his sake. Fear was a stranger to her breast. Often had she been known to ride at the dead hour of night, through lonely cross-roads, to a distant parish, to bring home her father from some low hedge-ale-house, in which she suspected him to be wasting his substance with a set of worthless profligates.

Twice during the short period of her life, for she had only just entered upon her eighteenth year, she had suffered from temporary fits of insanity; and the neighbours, when speaking of her exploits, always prefaced them with, "Oh, poor thing! There is something wrong about that girl. There is no account to be taken of her deeds."

From a child Mary had been an object of deep interest to the young Hurdlestones. Residing on the same estate, she had been a stolen acquaintance and playfellow from infancy. She always knew the best pools in the river for fishing, could point out the best covers for game, knew where to find the first bird's-nest, and could climb the loftiest forest-tree to obtain

the young of the hawk or crow with more certainty of success than her gay companions. Their sports were dull and spiritless without Mary Mathews.

As they advanced towards manhood they took more notice of her peculiarities, and laughed at her boyish ways; but when she grew up into a beautiful girl, they became more respectful in their turn, and seldom passed her in the grounds without paying her some of those light compliments and petty attentions always acceptable to a pretty vain girl of her class. Both would officiously help her to catch and bridle her horse, carry her pail, or assist her in the hay-field. And this was as often done to hear the smart answers that pretty Poll would return to their gallant speeches, for the girl possessed no small share of wit, and her natural talents were in no way inferior to their own.

Godfrey had of late addressed her in less bantering tones; for he had played, like the moth, around the taper until he had burnt his wings, and was fairly scorched by the flame of love. In

spite of the remonstrances of his more conscientious cousin, he daily spent hours in leaning over her garden-gate, enacting the lover to this rustic Flora. It was to such a scene as this that Anthony had alluded, and respecting which Godfrey had given such an indefinite answer.

Capricious in his pursuits, Godfrey was not less inconstant in his affections; and the graceful person and pleasing manners of Juliet Whitmore had made a deeper impression upon his fickle mind than he thought it prudent to avow; nor was he at all insensible to the pecuniary advantages that would arise from such a union.

CHAPTER IX.

Come, tell me something of this wayward girl.
Oh, she is changed—and such a woful change,
It breaks my heart to think on't. The bright eye
Has lost its fire, the red rose on her cheek
Is washed to whiteness by her frequent tears;
And with the smile has fled the ruby glow
From the twin lips, so tempting, and so ripe;
That wooed to love with their ambrosial breath,
That, issuing through those dewy portals, showed
The pearly teeth within, like gems enshrined.—S. M.

WHAT aileth thee this morning, young daughter, that thou lingerest so long before the mirror, adjusting and re-adjusting the delicately-tinted Provence rose-buds in thy dark flowing tresses? Art thou doubtful of thy charms, or have the calm bright eyes of the young stranger made thee diffident of the power of thy own surpassing loveliness? Those eyes have caught thy young fancy, and made thee blind to all

other objects around thee. They have haunted thee through the long night; thou couldst not sleep; those dark eyes looked into thy soul; they have kindled upon the hidden altar of life the sad and beautiful light of love. Thou no longer livest for thyself; another image possesses thy heart, and thou hast wonderingly discovered a new page in the poetry of thy nature.

Yes, love—first love—is a sad and holy thing; a pleasure born out of pain, welcomed with smiles, nourished by tears, and worshipped by the young and enthusiastic as the only real and abiding good in a world of shadow. Alas! for the young heart, why should it ever awake to find the most perfect of its creatures like the rest—a dream!

And poor Juliet's love-dream was banished very abruptly by the harsh voice of Aunt Dorothy.

"Miss Whitmore, the dinner waits for *you*. Quick! you have been an hour dressing yourself to-day. Will you never have done arranging your hair? Now, do pray take out those nasty

flowers. They do not become you. They look romantic and theatrical."

"Ah, aunt, you must not rob me of my flowers, God's most precious gift to man."

"I hate them! They always make a room look in a litter."

"Hate flowers!" exclaimed Juliet, in unaffected surprise. "God's beautiful flowers! I pity your want of taste, my good aunt."

"Nay, spare your commiseration for those who need it, Miss Whitmore. My judgment is certainly not inferior to *yours;* and I never could discover the use or beauty of flowers. What! not satisfied yet?" as Juliet cast another hurried glance at the mirror. "The vanity of girls in our days is quite disgusting to a woman of sense."

"I look so ill to-day, aunt, I am ashamed of being seen."

"It is a matter of little consequence, I dare say; no one will notice how you look. A few years *hence,* and there would be some excuse for spending so much time before a looking-glass."

The ladies entered the drawing-room as dinner was announced. If Juliet was dissatisfied with her appearance, Anthony thought that she looked most beautiful, and was delighted to find himself seated beside her. How gladly would he have improved this opportunity of conversing with her, but the natural shyness of his disposition became doubly distressing when he most wished to surmount it; and, with a thousand thoughts in his heart and words upon his tongue, he remained silent. Juliet was the first to speak.

"You were out fishing last night, Mr. Anthony. Were you successful?"

"I am always successful, Miss Whitmore. But, after all, it is a cruel and treacherous sport. I feel ashamed of myself for entering into it with such zest. Destruction appears to be a principle inherent in our nature. Man shows his tyrannical disposition in finding so great a pleasure in taking away from the inferior animals the life which he cannot restore."

"You are too severe," returned Juliet. "We

are apt to forget during the excitement of the moment the cruelty we inflict. I read old Isaac Walton when a child. He made me mistress of the whole art of angling. It is such a quiet contemplative amusement. The clear stream, the balmy air, the warbling of happy birds, the fragrant hedge-rows and flowery banks, by which you are surrounded, make you alive to the most pleasing impressions: and amidst sights and sounds of beauty, you never reflect that you are acting the part of the destroyer. I have given up the gentle craft; but I still think it a strangely-fascinating sport."

"I should be sorry to see you so engaged," said Anthony. "I never could bear to witness so soft a hand employed in taking away life."

"You, too, have learned the art of flattery," said Juliet, reproachfully. "When will your sex, in speaking to ours, learn to confine themselves to simple truth?"

"When the education of woman is conducted with less art, and they rise superior to the meanness of being pleased with falsehood. What I

said just now was but the simple truth. I admit that it was said to please; and I should, indeed, be grieved, if I thought that I could possibly have given offence."

He looked so serious and anxious, that Juliet burst into a merry laugh.

"A very heinous crime, indeed, and deserving a very severe punishment! What shall it be?"

"Another lecture from those lips. Remember, I did not say, *sweet* lips."

"Worse and worse. I will abandon the lectures for the future; for, I perceive, that to complain to a gentleman of his using compliments, only induces him to make a dozen more, in order to atone for his first offence."

The young people's *tête à tête* was interrupted by Miss Dorothea, who hated to hear any one talk but herself, asking Mr. Anthony "If it were true that he was studying for the Church?" On his replying in the affirmative, she continued: "Your father, Mr. Anthony, is determined to let nothing go out of the family. One would have thought that you could have

afforded to have lived like an independent gentleman."

Anthony, who was unfortunately very sensitive on this subject, coloured deeply, as he replied:

"My choice of a profession, madam, was not so much in accordance with my father's wishes as with my own."

"Well, I must say, that I think it a strange choice for a young man of fortune."

"I made choice of that mode of life, in which I hoped to be of most use to my fellow-creatures. The fortune to which you allude, Miss Whitmore, may never be mine."

"Yes, yes; I see you are determined to look out for the main chance," continued his ill-natured tormentor. "But, to do you justice, young man, I think nature made you for a parson."

This speech was greatly relished by Godfrey, who burst into a loud laugh. He secretly enjoyed poor Anthony's mortification; and, though he detested the old maid himself, he had successfully wormed himself into her good graces, by paying her some judicious compliments, in which the

graces of her person and her youthful appearance had been the theme of praise.

"By the by, Tony," he said, turning suddenly to his cousin, "you have received a letter from your father, and never told me one word about it. Was it a kind epistle?"

"Better than I expected," returned Anthony coldly. "But I never discuss family matters in public."

"Public! Are we not among friends?" said Godfrey, persisting in his impertinent interrogatories.

"But you inherit a good deal of the suspicious cautious character of your father. When you grow old, I believe that you will be just as fond of money as he is. Did he offer to advance a sufficient sum to settle you in life?"

"No, he did not."

"Astonishing! What excuse can he give for such unreasonable conduct?"

"The old one, I suppose," said Colonel Hurdlestone, laughing—"poverty."

"Ha! ha! ha!" reiterated Godfrey.

"Godfrey!" said Anthony, with much severity of look and tone: "how can such a lamentable instance of human weakness (madness, I might say) awaken your mirth?"

"Is it not enough to make one laugh, when an old fellow, rich enough to pay the National Debt, refuses to provide for his only son, and suffers him to live upon the *charity* of a brother."

This unexpected though oft-repeated insult was too much for Anthony to bear at such a moment, and in the presence of the woman he loved. The proud flash of his dark eye told how deeply his gentle nature was moved. His indignation did not escape the watchful eye of Juliet; but he mastered his passion, and answered his consin in a calm low voice—

"Godfrey, I understand you. You need say no more on that subject. You know how painfully alive I am to the obligations I owe to my uncle, and it is ungenerous to take such an opportunity of reminding me of it. The debt, I hope, will one day be repaid."

He rose to take leave. A pleading look from Juliet made him abandon his intention. "Sit down," said Juliet, in a persuasive voice, "I am sure your cousin meant no offence. Delicacy of mind," she added, in a very low tone, meant only for his ear, "is not always an inherent quality; we should pity and forgive those who are destitute of it."

"I will do any thing to please you," returned Anthony; and Godfrey, pale with disappointed malice, saw him resume his seat.

"I have provided a little treat of strawberries and cream," continued Juliet; "they are the first of the season, and were presented to me this morning by that strangely-interesting girl, Mary Mathews. How I regret that her father's injudicious method of bringing her up should so completely have spoiled a girl whom Nature formed to be an ornament to her humble station."

"Mary is a beautiful girl," said Anthony, "and has a mind of no ordinary cast. Her failings are the result of the peculiar circum-

stances in which she has been placed. With such a kind monitress as Miss Whitmore to counsel her, I feel assured that she might soon be persuaded to forsake her masculine employments, and feel a relish for more feminine pursuits."

He spoke with much earnestness, until perceiving that Juliet regarded him with a peculiarly searching glance, he coloured, hesitated, became embarrassed, and, finally, stopped speaking.

"When I first saw Mary Mathews, some months ago," said Juliet, "she was very pretty, and as blithe as a bird; I used to envy the exuberance of her animal spirits, whenever I passed her little garden, and heard her singing. For the last few weeks, a melancholy change has taken place in the poor girl's appearance, which gives me pain to witness. Her cheek has lost its bloom; her step its elasticity; her dress is neglected; and the garden in which she worked and sang so merrily, and in which she took so much delight, is overrun with weeds. Her whole appearance indicates the most poignant

grief. When I questioned her to-day upon the subject, she answered me with a burst of tears —tears, which seem so unnatural for one of her disposition to shed. Perhaps, Mr. Anthony," she continued, with an air of increasing interest, "you can tell me something of the history of this young girl—as she is one of your uncle's tenants —which may lead me to discover the cause of her grief?"

Before Anthony could reply to this somewhat embarrassing question, he was called upon by his uncle, who was playing chess with the old Captain, to decide some important problem in the game; and Godfrey, who had been a painfully observant listener to their conversation, glided into his vacant seat.

"I wish, Miss Whitmore, that I could satisfactorily answer all your generous inquiries with regard to Mary Mathews. But I know and hear so little of the gossip of the village, and with the poor girl's private history I am totally unacquainted—nay, the girl herself is to me a perfect stranger. No person is better able to give you

the information you require than my cousin Anthony; he knows Mary well. In spite of my father's prohibitions, she was always a chosen playfellow of his. He professes a great admiration for this beautiful peasant, and takes a deep interest in all that concerns her."

Why did Juliet's cheek at that moment grow so very pale? Why did she sigh so deeply, and suddenly drop a conversation which she had commenced with such an apparent concern for the person who had formed the subject of it? Love may have its joys, but oh, how painfully are they contrasted with its doubts and fears! She had suffered the serpent of jealousy to coil around her heart, and for the first time felt its envenomed sting. When Anthony returned to his seat he found his fair companion unusually cold and reserved. A few minutes after, she complained of sudden indisposition, and left the room, and she did not return that evening.

That night, Juliet wept herself to sleep. "Is it not evident," she said to herself, "that this poor Mary is in love with Anthony Hurdlestone

and can I be base enough to add another pang to a heart already deeply wounded, by endeavouring to gain his affections? No. I will from this hour banish him from my thoughts, and never make him the subject of these waking dreams again."

But alas! for good resolutions. She found the task more difficult than she had imagined. She could not obliterate the image stamped by the power of love upon her heart. Like the lion, she struggled in the net, without the aid of the friendly mouse to set her free. She wished that she had never seen him—had never heard the rich tones of his mellow voice, or suffered the glance of his dark serious eyes to penetrate to her soul. Ah! Juliet, well mayst thou toss to and fro in thy troubled slumbers; thy lover is more miserable than thou, for he *cannot sleep*. Indignant at the insult he had received in so unprovoked a manner from his ungenerous cousin, and at war with himself, Anthony Hurdlestone paced his chamber during the greater part of the night—striking his breast against the fetters that bound him, and striving in vain to be free. The very idea, that he

was the son of the miser—that he must blush for his father whenever his name was mentioned, was not the least of his annoyances.

Was it possible that a girl of Juliet Whitmore's poetic temperament could love the son of such a man? and as he pressed his hands against his aching brow, and asked himself the question, he wished that he had been the son of the poorest peasant upon the rich man's vast estates. Anthony did not appear at the breakfast-table, and when he did leave his chamber and joined the family party at dinner, he met Godfrey, who had just returned from Captain Whitmore's, his handsome countenance glowing with health and pleasure.

"Why, Godfrey, my boy!" cried the Colonel, regarding him with parental pride. "What have you been doing with yourself all the morning?

"Gardening with the jolly old tar, Captain Whitmore; quizzing the old witch, his sister; and making love to his charming daughter. Upon my word, sir, she is a delightful creature, and sings and plays divinely! Her personal charms I might have withstood, but her voice has taken

me by surprise. You know that I was always a worshipper of sweet sounds; and this little girl kept her divine gift so entirely to herself, that it was by mere chance that I found out that she could sing. She was a little annoyed too by the discovery. I came in upon her unawares, and surprised her in the very act. She gave herself no affected airs, but when I requested it, not only concluded the song she was singing, but sang many others, in which I was able to accompany her. The old Captain has insisted upon my bringing my flute over, that I may accompany his Juliet upon the piano. He could not have done me a greater kindness, and I have no doubt that we shall get on delightfully together."

"This is hardly right, Godfrey," said his father; "you promised Anthony to start fair in attempting to win the good opinion of Miss Whitmore, and now you are trying to throw him altogether into the back-ground."

"Ah, my dear sir, that was all very well in theory, but I found myself unable to reduce it to practice. I tell you, Anthony, that I am over

head and ears in love with Miss Whitmore, and if you wish to die a natural death, you must not attempt to rival me with the lady."

"And poor Mary—what will become of her?"

Godfrey flashed an angry glance at his cousin.

"How can you name that *peasant* in the same breath with Miss Whitmore?"

"A few days ago, Godfrey, you preferred the simple graces of the country girl to the refined lady."

"My taste is improving, you see," said Godfrey, filling his glass to the brim. "And here—in the sparkling juice of the grape, let all remembrance of my boyish love be drowned."

Anthony sighed, and sank into a fit of abstraction, while Colonel Hurdlestone joined his son in a bumper to the health of the lady.

In spite of Godfrey's avowal, Anthony could not bring himself to regard Juliet Whitmore with indifference; nor did he consider it any breach of honour endeavouring to make himself agreeable in her eyes. His attentions, though less marked than his cousin's, were of a more delicate and

tender nature, appealing less to female vanity, and more directly to her heart and understanding; and there were moments when the young lover fancied that he was not an object of indifference. The more he saw of the enthusiastic girl, with all her romantic propensities, the more strongly he became attached to her. Her sins of authorship were undictated by ambition, or the mere love of fame; but were the joyous outpourings of an artless mind delighted in having discovered a method of conveying her thoughts to paper, and retaining, in a tangible form, those delightful visions that so often engrossed her fancy.

She laid no claim to the title of a *Blue*—she had not the most remote idea of being considered a literary lady. She sang as the birds do in the bushes, for the mere pleasure of singing, and she was perfectly unconscious that others listened and admired her songs.

Independent of her love of music and poetry, she had many valuable mental and moral qualities. Not among the least of these was a deep sympathy in the wants and sufferings of the poor,

which she always endeavoured to alleviate to the utmost of her power. The selfish fear of infection never deterred her from visiting the abodes of her poor neighbours—administering to their comfort when sick, and not unfrequently watching beside the pillow of the dying. In the performance of these acts of charity, she was greatly encouraged and assisted by her worthy father.

When Aunt Dorothy, in her cold egotism, raved about her niece endangering her life, and the lives of those around her, by going to infected houses, the Captain's general answer was—"Let the child alone, Dorothy: a good angel watches over her—God will take care of his own."

"So you said of her mother, Captain Whitmore, yet she lost her life by obstinately persisting in what she was pleased to call *her duty*."

"If the good ship sunk while endeavouring to save the drowning crew of another," said the poor Captain, wiping the dew from his spectacles, "she went down in a good cause, and a blessing has descended from above upon her child."

One day, when Anthony had been remonstrating

with Juliet, for incurring so much danger while visiting the poor during a period of epidemic sickness, she replied, with her usual frankness,—

"This from you, Mr. Anthony, who have devoted yourself to be an instructor of the poor, a friend of the friendless, a minister of Christ!—how can I better employ my time than in striving to alleviate the sorrows that I cannot cure? To tell you the truth, I cannot yield more to pleasure without spoiling my heart. It is not that I am averse to innocent amusements, for no person enjoys them more. But were I constantly to gratify my own selfish inclinations, I should soon lose my peace of mind, that dew of the soul, which is so soon absorbed in the heated atmosphere of the world."

"If such devotion is what the worldly term enthusiasm, may its blessed inspiration ever continue to influence your actions!"

"Enthusiasm!" repeated the girl. "Oh that I could convey to you in words what I feel to be the true definition of that much abused term. Enthusiasm is the eternal struggling of our

immortal against our mortal nature, which expands the wings of the soul towards its native heaven. Enthusiasm! Can anything great or good be achieved without it? Can a man become a poet, painter, orator, patriot, warrior, or lover, without enthusiasm? Can he become a Christian without it? In man's struggles to obtain fame, enthusiasm is a virtue. In a holy cause it is termed madness. Oh, thou divine Author of the human soul, evermore grant me the inspiration of this immortal spirit!"

They were standing together in the balcony. The beams of the summer moon rested upon the upturned brow of the young enthusiast, and filled her eyes with a holy fire, and the words of love that had trembled upon Anthony's lips were dismissed from his thoughts, as light and vain. She looked too pure to address to her, at such a moment, the wild outpourings of human passion.

Godfrey's flute sounded beneath the balcony. He played one of Juliet's favourite songs. She turned to her lover, and said, with a lively air,—"Is not the musician an enthusiast—is not the

language in which he breathes his soul the poetry of sound?"

"Then what is love?" and Anthony tried to detain the small white hand she had placed upon his arm.

"I dare not attempt to analyse it," and Juliet blushed deeply, as she spoke. "Beautiful, when worshipped at a distance, it becomes too much the necessity of our nature when brought too near. Oh, if it would never bend its wings to earth, and ever speak in the language of music and poetry, this world would be too dark for so heavenly a visitant, and we should long for death to unclose the portal of the skies."

"Still, dearest Juliet, much quiet happiness may be realised on earth."

"But think of its duration—how short—what sorrows are crowded into the shortest life! To love, and to lose the beloved—how dreadful! My mother—my angel mother—at her death, my heart became a funeral urn, in which all sad and holy memories were enshrined. Oh, 'tis a fearful thing to love and lose! Better far to keep the

heart fancy-free, than to find it the grave of hope."

"And will you never consent to love, Juliet?"

"Can you teach me how to resist its power?" said Juliet, with simplicity. "We love against our own will; we call reason to our aid, and reason laughs at us. We strive to forget; but memory like hope, though it cheats us, will not in turn be cheated; one holds the keys of the future, the other unlocks the treasures of the past. When we cease to hope, memory may cease to recall what were once the offsprings of hope. Both accompany us through life, and will, I believe, survive the grave."

"And will you allow me, Juliet, to entertain the blessed hope?"

At this moment, the lovers were interrupted by the eternal old pest, as Godfrey very unceremoniously called Miss Dorothy.

"Really, Miss Whitmore, I wonder at your standing out here, in the damp night air, without your shawl and bonnet, and the dew falling so fast. I wish you would learn a little more

prudence, it would save me a great deal of trouble."

"Alas," whispered Juliet, as Anthony led her back into the drawing-room, "how quickly the vulgarity of common-place banishes the beauty of the ideal!"

The intimacy of the two families now became a matter of daily occurrence. Captain Whitmore who had always coveted a son of his own, was delighted with the society of the handsome intelligent young men. They were fine lads! very fine lads! He really did not know which to prefer. Juliet's choice would decide his, for the old man soon discovered that his daughter was the great attraction that drew the young men to the Lodge. Perhaps, had he been questioned closely on the subject, the old veteran would have acknowledged that he preferred Godfrey. He possessed more life and spirit than his quiet cousin; had more wit; was more lively and amusing. He loved hunting and fishing; played well at chess and draughts; and sang a good song. His face was always smiling

and joyous; his brow never wore the cloud of care, the pensive earnest expression of refined thought which was so apparent in his cousin. Godfrey made the room glad with his gay hearty laugh. He was the life and soul of the convivial board, the prince of good fellows. A woman must be happy with such a handsome good-natured husband, and the Captain hoped that his dear Julee would be the wife of his favourite.

Hearts understood hearts better. Godfrey Hurdlestone was not the man who could make Juliet Whitmore happy. There existed no sympathy between them. The one was all soul, the other a mere animal in the fullest sense of the word; living but for animal enjoyment, and unable to comprehend the refined taste and exquisite sensibilities that belong to higher natures. Yet he loved music, had a fine ear and a fine voice, and exercised both with considerable skill. Here Juliet met him on equal terms; they played and sang together, and whilst so employed, and only drinking in sweet sounds, rendered doubly delicious when accompanied by harmonious words,

Juliet forgot the something, she could not tell what, that made her feel such a deep aversion to the handsome musician.

"If my flute could but speak the language of my heart, how quickly, Miss Whitmore, would it breathe into your ear the tender tale which the musician wants courage to declare!"

"Ah," returned Juliet quickly, "such notes would only produce discord. Perfect harmony must exist before we can form a union of sweet sounds. Similarity of mind can alone produce reciprocity of affection. Godfrey Hurdlestone, there is no real sympathy between us—nature never formed us for each other."

"These are cruel words. I will not destroy hope by believing them true. We both love music passionately; here is at least one sympathy in common. To love you has become so essential to my happiness that I cannot think that you can be wholly insensible to my passion."

"You deceive yourself, Godfrey Hurdlestone. The moth is attracted to the candle, but the union produces misery and death to the unfor-

tunate insect. Mere admiration is not love. The novelty wears off; the soul is sated with the idol it worshipped, and its former homage sinks into contempt. You seek the outward and palpable. I, that which is unseen and true. But let us go to my father; he is fishing, and the evening is growing cold. If he stays out much longer in the damp meadow, he will be raving with the rheumatism."

"Your worthy father would not frown upon my suit."

"Perhaps not. But he would never urge me to encourage a suitor whom I could not love. I am very young, Mr. Godfrey, too young to enter into any serious engagements. I esteem you and your cousin, but if you persist in talking to me in this strain, it will destroy our friendship. If you really feel any regard for me, never wound my feelings by speaking to me on this subject again."

As Juliet ran forward to meet her father, she felt like a bird escaped out of the snare of the fowler, while Godfrey, humbled and mortified,

muttered to himself, "The deuce take these very clever girls; they lecture us like parsons, and talk like books."

"Why Julee, love, how you have painted your cheeks," cried the delighted old man, catching her in his arms, and imprinting a very audible kiss upon her white forehead. "What has Mr. Godfrey been saying to you?"

"Miss Juliet will not listen to anything that I can say to her," said Godfrey gloomily.

"Pshaw!" returned the old man. "A lover must look out for squalls; his bark is seldom destined to sail upon a smooth sea. If she will not go ahead against wind and tide, you must try her upon another tack."

He turned to Juliet, and found her in tears.

CHAPTER X.

Would that the dewy turf were spread
O'er this frail form and aching head;
That this torn heart and tortured brain
Would never wake to grief again.—S. M.

WHEN Anthony entered the study next morning, he found his cousin traversing the floor in great agitation.

"Anthony, you are just the person I wanted to see. My father is, I fear, a ruined man."

Anthony recoiled some steps.

"It is but too true. I have been talking to Johnstone, the steward. The account that he gives of our affairs is most discouraging. My father, it seems, has been living beyond his income for some years. The estates have all been heavily mortgaged to supply the wants of the passing hour; while no provision has been

made for the future by their improvident possessor. Creditors are clamorous for their money, and there is no money to answer their demands. Mr. Haydin, the principal mortgagee, threatens to foreclose with my father, if the interest, which has been due upon the mortgage for some years, is not instantly forthcoming. In this desperate exigency I can only think of two expedients, both of which depend entirely upon you."

Anthony had never questioned the state of his uncle's affairs. He had deemed him rich, and this distressing intelligence fell upon him with stunning violence. He begged Godfrey to explain in what manner he could render his uncle the least assistance.

"It is not merely of my father I speak; the service is to us both, but it needs some prefacing."

Then stepping up to the astonished Anthony, he said in a quick abrupt manner:

"Do you love Miss Whitmore?"

"You have taken me by surprise, Godfrey. It is a question which, at this moment, I can scarcely answer."

"If your feelings towards her are of such an indefinite character, it will require no great mental effort to resign her. To me she is an object of passionate regard. A marriage with Miss Whitmore would render me the happiest of men, and retrieve the fallen fortunes of my house. Nor do I think, if you were absent, that she would long remain indifferent to my suit. But if you continue to persevere in trying to win her affections, you will drive me mad."

Godfrey spoke with vehemence. Anthony remained silent, lost in profound thought. Godfrey went up to him and grasped him firmly by the hand. "Prove your love and gratitude to my father, Anthony, by an act of friendship to his son."

"God knows that I am painfully alive to the many obligations I owe to him, Godfrey; but you require of me a sacrifice I am unable to grant."

"Have you made an offer to Miss Whitmore? and has she accepted you?"

"Neither the one nor the other. Have you?"

"I spoke to her on the subject yesterday."

"Well," said Anthony, turning very pale. "Did she reject your suit?"

"She did not. She talked of her youth, and made some excuse to go to her father. But she showed no indications of displeasure. From her manner, I had all to hope, and little to fear. Few women, especially a young girl of seventeen, can be won without a little wooing. I have no doubt of ultimately winning her regard."

"Can you really be in earnest?"

"Do you doubt my word? Do you think the *miser's heir* more likely to win the affections of the romantic child of genius than the last scion of a ruined man?"

"How have I suffered myself to be cheated and betrayed by my own vanity!" said Anthony, thoughtfully. "Alas, for poor human nature, if this statement be true!"

"You still question my words, Anthony! Upon my honour, what I have said is strictly true; nor would it be honourable in you, after what I have advanced, to press your suit upon the lady."

"If you asked me to resign the wealth you

prize so highly, Godfrey, I could do it. Nay, even my life itself would be a far less sacrifice than the idea of giving up the only woman I ever loved. Ask anything of me but that, for I cannot do it!"

"Then you will compel me to do this," said Godfrey, taking from his breast a loaded pistol, and aiming it at his own head.

"Madman!" cried Anthony, striking the weapon from his hand; "what would you do?"

"Prove your gratitude to me and mine," said Godfrey with a bitter laugh. "Your father is rich, mine is poor, and has been made so by his generosity to others!"

That horrid taunt! ah, how it stung his proud sensitive cousin to the heart! Startled and alarmed at Godfrey's demeanour, he was yet very doubtful of the truth of his statements, feared that he was but acting a part until he saw the bright cheek of his companion turn pale, and the tears tremble in his eyes. Then all the kindness he had received from his uncle, all the love he had cherished for him from his earliest years, all

the affection which he had lavished upon his hot-headed cousin, united to subdue the flame of passion which for a few moments had burnt so fiercely in his breast. He recalled the solemn promise he had made to Algernon never to forsake his son, and, dreadful as the sacrifice was, which Godfrey now called upon him to make, the struggle was over, the victory over self already won.

"You shall never say, cousin Godfrey, that Anthony Hurdlestone knowingly destroyed your peace. I love Juliet Whitmore. I believe that she loves me. But, for my uncle's sake, I renounce my claim."

Joy brightened up the handsome face of Godfrey. He was not wholly insensible to his cousin's generous self-denial. He embraced him with warmth, and the idea that he had rendered Godfrey happy partly reconciled the martyr of gratitude to the sacrifice he had made.

"You spoke of two expedients which might avert the ruin which threatened my uncle. Your marriage with Juliet Whitmore rests upon no

broader basis than a mere possibility. Name the second."

"In case of the worst, to apply to your father for the loan of two thousand pounds."

Anthony shook his head, and without thinking a reply to such a wild proposition necessary, took up his hat, and tried to still the agitation of his mind by a stroll in the park.

Anthony tried to reason himself into the belief that, in giving up the object of his affections, he had achieved a very great and good action; but there was a painful void in his heart, which all his boasted philosophy failed to fill.

Unconsciously he took the path that led to the humble dwelling of Mary Mathews. As he drew near the hawthorn hedge that separated the little garden from the road, his attention was arrested by some one weeping passionately behind its almost impervious screen. He instantly recognised Mary in the mourner; and from a conversation that followed, he found that she was not alone.

'I could bear your reproaches," she said to

her companion, "if he loved me—but he has ceased to think of me—to care for me—I never loved but him—I gave him all that I had in my power to bestow—and he has left me thus."

"Did he ever promise you marriage?" asked the deep voice of William Mathews.

"Oh yes! a thousand and a thousand times."

"Then," and he uttered a dreadful oath, "he shall keep his word, or my name is not William Mathews."

"Ah! if he did but love me as he once loved me, I would not care. The shame would be joy, the disgrace happiness. The world is nothing to me—it may say what it likes—I would rather be his mistress than another man's wife. But to be forsaken and trampled upon; to know that another with half my beauty, and with none of my love, is preferred before me; is more than my heart can bear."

"Does my father know your situation?"

"No, no, I would not have him know it for worlds. I dare not tell him; and you have promised me, William, not to reveal my secret.

Though father constantly transgresses himself, men are so unjust about women, that he would never forgive me. I would rather fling myself into that pond," and she laughed hysterically, "than that he should know anything about it. Sometimes I think, brother, that it would be the best place for me to hide my shame."

"Live, girl—live for revenge. Leave your gay paramour to me. I have been the ruin of many a better man."

"I would rather die," returned the girl, "than suffer any injury to befall him. He is my husband in the sight of Heaven, and I will cling to him to the last!"

"You are a fool, Mary! Till this moment I always thought you a clever girl, above such paltry weakness. When your name is coupled with infamy, and you find yourself an object of contempt to the villain who has betrayed you, I tell you that you will alter your opinion."

"Alas! he despises me already," sighed the unhappy girl, "and it is that which makes me feel so bad. When I think of it there comes over

me just such a scorching heat as used to sear up my brain in the bad fever. The people said I was crazed, but I was not half so mad then as I am now."

"Keep up your spirits, girl! I will compel him to make you his wife."

"What good would that do? You could not make him love me. We should only be more miserable than we are at present. I wish—oh! how I wish I were dead!"

Here the conversation between the brother and sister was abruptly terminated by Godfrey's spaniel, which had followed Anthony through the park, springing over the stile into the garden, and leaping into Mary's lap. The poor girl was sitting on the bank, beneath the shade of a large elm tree. She bent her head down, and returned with interest the affectionate caresses of the dog.

"It is Mr. Hurdlestone's dog, William. Poor Fido, you love me still."

"His master cannot be far off," growled Mathews, jumping over the stile, and confronting Anthony.

The cousins were only partially known to him, and their great personal likeness made him mistake the one for the other.

A little ashamed of being caught in the act of listening to a conversation never meant for his ear, Anthony would have left the spot; but the menacing audacious air of the smuggler aroused his pride, and he turned upon him with a haughty and enquiring glance.

"I would speak a few words with you, mister!"

"As many as you please. But let me first inform you that I am not the person whom you seek."

"Humph!" said the ruffian, with a sarcastic sneer, "that dodge won't do. You might as well attempt to cheat the devil as deceive Bill Mathews. I know you too well. You and I have a heavy account to settle, and you shall know me better before we part. Take that—and that—and that—as an earnest of our further acquaintance."

And he struck Anthony several heavy blows with an oak cudgel he held in his hand.

Forced to retaliate in self-defence, Anthony closed with his gigantic opponent, and several blows had been given and received on either side, when the combatants were separated by a third person—this was no other than Captain Whitmore, who, with his daughter, accidentally rode up to the spot.

"Mr. Anthony Hurdlestone, engaged in such a disgraceful fray! Can I believe the evidence of my senses?"

"Not if you would judge truly, Captain Whitmore," said Anthony, striving to keep a calm exterior, but still trembling with passion, while the most bitter and humiliating feelings agitated his breast.

"I was striving to revenge the wrongs done to an injured sister by a villain!" cried the enraged Mathews. "I appeal to you, sir, as a man, a father, a brave British officer, if you would suffer a sister or a daughter to be trampled upon and betrayed without resenting the injury?"

"I am incapable of the crime laid to my charge by this man," said Anthony, indignantly,

when he saw the father and daughter exchange glances of astonishment and contempt. "Miss Whitmore, I entreat you not to give the least credit to this ruffian's accusation. He has uttered a base falsehood!"

The only answer the tortured lover received was an indignant flash from the hitherto dove-like eyes of Juliet Whitmore. She reined back her horse, and turned her face proudly away from the imploring gaze of the distracted Anthony.

"I must—I will be heard!" he cried, seizing the reins of her horse, and forcibly detaining her. "I see, Miss Whitmore, that this foul calumny is believed by you and your father. I demand an explanation before you leave this spot. William Mathews has accused me of being a villain—the seducer of his sister: and I here tell him to his face that his accusation is a hideous slander! Call hither your sister, Mr. Mathews—let her determine the question: she knows that I am innocent. I shrink not from the most rigid investigation of my conduct."

"Do as he bids you, Mr. Mathews," said the

Captain. "Call here your sister. I consider myself bound, in justice, to listen to Mr. Anthony Hurdlestone's proposal."

Juliet's eyes involuntarily turned towards the garden-gate; but her pale cheek flushed to crimson as it unclosed, and the unfortunate umpire, half led, half dragged forward by her brother, presented herself before them. Even Anthony's presence of mind well nigh forsook him, as, with a start, he recognised his cousin's unfortunate victim.

A few weeks had wrought a fearful change in the blooming and healthful appearance of the poor girl. She looked like a young sapling tree, on whose verdant head had fallen an incurable blight; an utter disregard of the opinions of others, or what the world would say of her, was manifested in her squalid appearance and total neglect of personal neatness. The pride of the girl's heart had vanished with her self-respect, and she stood before the strange group with a bold front and unbending brow; yet her eye wandered vacantly from face to face, as if

perfectly unconscious of the real meaning of the scene.

Anthony had appealed to Mary to vindicate his character from the foul aspersion cast upon him; but when she came, he was so shocked by her appearance that he was unable to speak to her.

"Mary," said her brother, peremptorily, "is not this man your lover?"

Mary gazed upon Anthony sullenly, but returned no answer.

"Speak, Mary," said Anthony, addressing her with a degree of compassionate tenderness. "Did you ever receive wrong or injury from me? Did I ever address you as a lover, betray, or leave you to shame. Your brother has accused me of all these crimes. Speak out, and tell the truth."

Instead of answering his question in direct terms, the girl, who for the first time comprehended the degrading situation in which she was placed, and subdued by the kindness of Anthony's look and manner, sprang towards him, and, following the reckless disposition which had led

to her ruin, seized his hand, and pressing it to her lips, exclaimed—

"Oh, Mr. Hurdlestone! This from you?"

"It is enough," said Juliet, who had witnessed this extraordinary scene with an intensity of interest too great to be described; and, turning the head of her horse homewards, she rode off at full speed, murmuring through her fast-flowing tears, "What need have I of further evidence? Yes, he is guilty."

"She is gone!" exclaimed Anthony, in an agony of despair. "She is gone, and believes me to be a villain!"

Whilst he stood rooted to the spot, Mathew approached, and whispered in his ear—"Your mean subterfuge has not saved you. We shall meet again."

"I care not how soon," returned Anthony fiercely; "but why," he continued, in a softer voice, "should I be angry with you? Man, you have mistaken your quarry,—a matter of little moment to you, but a matter of life and death to me."

"Death and hell!" exclaimed the ruffian, who at last began to suspect his error. "If you are not Godfrey Hurdlestone, you must be his ghost!"

"I am his cousin; I never wronged either you or yours; but you have done me an injury which you can never repair."

"Well, hang me if that is not a good joke!" cried the smuggler, bursting into a coarse laugh, which quickened the steps of his retreating foe. "The devil had some mischief in store when he made those chaps so much alike. I would not wish my own brother to resemble me so closely as all that, lest mayhap he should murder or steal, and the halter should fall upon my neck instead of his."

END OF VOL. I.

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