

A Face Illumined

(Volume I)

by Edward Payson Roe

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Chapter 1. A Face.

Although the sun was approaching the horizon, its slanting rays found a young artist still bending over his easel. That his shoulders are broad is apparent at a glance; that upon them is placed a shapely head, well thatched with crisp black hair, is also seen at once; that the head is not an empty one is proved by the picture on the easel, which is sufficiently advanced to show correct and spirited drawing. A brain that can direct the hand how to do one thing well, is like a general who has occupied a strategic point which will give him the victory if he follows up his advantage.

A knock at the door is not answered at once by the intent and preoccupied artist, but its sharp and impatient repetition secures the rather reluctant invitation,

"Come in," and even as he spoke he bent forward to give another stroke.

"Six o'clock, and working still!" cried the intruder.

"You will keep the paint market active, if you achieve nothing else as an artist."

"Heigho! Ik, is that you?" said he of the palette, good naturedly; and rising slowly he gave a lingering look at his work, then turned and greeted his friend with the quiet cordiality of long and familiar acquaintance. "What a marplot you are with your idle ways!" he added. "Sit down here and make yourself useful for once by doing nothing for ten minutes. I am in just the mood and have just the light for a bit of work which perhaps I can never do as well again," and the artist returned promptly to his picture.

In greeting his friend he had revealed that he was above middle height, that he had full black eyes that were not only good for seeing, but could also, if he chose, give great emphasis to his words, and at times be even more expressive. A thick mustache covered his lip, but the rest of his face was cleanly shaven, and was strong and decided in its outlines rather than handsome.

"They say a woman's work is never done," remarked Ik Stanton, dropping into the easiest chair in the studio, "and for this reason, were there no other, your muse is evidently of the feminine persuasion. I also admit that she is a lady of great antiquity. Indeed I would place her nearer to the time when 'Adam delved and Eve span' than to the classic age."

"My dear Ik," responded the artist, "I am often at a loss to know whether I love or despise you most. If a little of the whirr of our great grandam's spinning wheel would only get into your brain the world might hear from you. You are a man of unbounded stomach and unbounded heart, and so you have won all there is of me except my head, and that disapproves of you."

"A fig for the world! what good will it do me or it to have it hear from me? you ambitious fellows are already making such a din that the poor old world is half ready for Bedlam; and would go stark mad were it not for us quiet, easy going people, who have time for a good dinner and a

snack between meals. You've got a genius that's like a windmill in a trade wind, always in motion; you are worth more money than I shall ever have, but you are the greatest drudge in the studio building, and work as many hours as a house painter."

"When your brain once gets in motion, Ik, fiction will be its natural product. You must admit that I have not painted many pictures."

"That is one of the things I complain of; I, your bosom friend and familiar, your, I might add, guardian angel I, who have so often saved your life by quenching the flame of your consuming genius with a hearty dinner, have been able to obtain one picture only from you, and as one might draw a tooth. Your pictures are like old maid's children they must be so perfect that they can't exist at all. But come, the ten minutes are up. Here's the programme for the evening a drive in the Park and a little dinner at a cool restaurant near Thomas's Garden, and then the concert. That prince of musical caterers has made a fine selection for tonight,

and, with the cigar stand on one side of us and the orchestra on the other, we are certain to kill a couple of hours that will die like swans."

"You mention the cigar stand first."

"Why not? Smoke is more real than empty sound."

"Are you not equally empty, Ik, save after dinner? How have the preceding hours of this long day been killed?"

"Like boas. They have enfolded me with a weary weight."

"The snakes in your comparison are larger than your pun, and the pun, rather than yourself, suggests a constrictor's squeeze."

"Come, you are only abusing me to gain time, and you may gain too much. My horses have more mettle than their master, and may carry off my trap and groom to parts unknown, while you are wasting paint and words. You are like the animals at the Park, that are good natured only after they are fed. So shut up your old paint shop, and come

along; we will shorten our ride and lengthen our dinner."

With mutual chaffing and laughter the young men at last went down to where a liveried coachman and a pair of handsome bays were in waiting. Taking the high front seat and gathering up the reins, Ik Stanton, with his friend Harold Van Berg at his side, bowled away towards the Park at a rapid pace.

Harold Van Berg was, in truth, something of a paradox. He was an artist, and yet was rich; he had inherited large wealth, and yet had formed habits of careful industry. The majority of his young acquaintances, who had been launched from homes like his own, were known only as sons of their fathers, and degenerate sons at that. Van Berg was already winning a place among men on the ground of what he was and could do himself.

It were hard to say which was the stronger motive, his ambition or the love of his art; but it seemed certain that between the two,

such talent as he had been endowed with would be

developed quite thoroughly. And he did possess decided talent, if not genius. But his artistic gift accorded with his character, and was controlled by judgement, correct taste, and intellectuality rather than by strong and erratic impulses. His aims were definite and decided rather than vague and diffusive; but his standards were so high that, thus far, he had scarcely attempted more than studies that were like the musician's scales by which he seeks to acquire a skill in touch that shall enable him to render justly the works of the great composers.

His family had praised his work unstintedly, and honestly thought it wonderful; he had also been deluged with that kind of flattery which relaxes the rules of criticism in favor of the wealthy. Thus it was not strange that the young fellow, at one time, believed that he was born to greatness by a kindly decree of fate. But as his horizon widened he was taught better. His mind, fortunately, grew faster than his vanity, and as he compared his crude but promising work with that of mature genius, he

was not stricken with that most helpless phase of blindness the inability to see the superiority of others to one's self. Every day, therefore, of study and observation was now chastening Harold Van Berg and preparing him to build his future success on the solid ground of positive merit as compared with that of other and gifted artists.

Van Berg's taste and talent led him to select, as his specialty, the human form and countenance, and he chiefly delighted in those faces which were expressive of some striking or subtle characteristic of the indwelling mind. He would never be content to paint surfaces correctly, giving to features merely their exact proportions. Whether the face were historical, ideal, or a portrait, the controlling trait or traits of the spirit within must shine through, or else he regarded the picture as scarcely half finished.

A more sincere idolator than Van Berg, in his worship of beauty, never existed; but it was the beauty of a complete man or a complete woman. Even in his early youth he had not been so sensuous as to be captivated by that opaque

fragment of a woman an attractive form devoid of a mind. Indeed with the exception of a few boyish follies, his art had been his mistress thus far, and it was beginning to absorb both heart and brain.

With what a quiet pulse with what a complacent sense of security we often meet those seemingly trivial events which may change the whole character of our lives! The ride had been taken, the dinner enjoyed, and the two friends were seated in the large cool hallway off the concert garden, where they could smoke without offence. The unrivalled leader, Thomas, had just lifted his baton that magic wand whose graceful yet mysterious motion evokes with equal ease, seemingly, the thunder of a storm, the song of a bird, the horrid din of an inferno, or a harmony so pure and lofty as to suggest heavenly strains. One of Beethoven's exquisite symphonies was to be rendered, and Van Berg threw away his half burned cigar, settled himself in his chair and glanced around with a congratulatory air, as if to say, "Now we are to have one of those pleasures which fills

the cup of life to overflowing."

Oh, that casual glance! It was one of those things that we might justly call "little." Could anything have been more trivial, slight, and apparently inconsequential than this half involuntary act? Indeed it was too aimless even to have been prompted by a conscious effort of the will. But this book is one of the least results of that momentary sweep of the eye. Another was, that Van Berg did not enjoy the symphony at all, and was soon in a very bad humor. That casual glance had revealed, not far away, a face that with his passion for beauty, at once riveted his attention. His slight start and faint exclamation, caused Ik Stanton to look around also, and then, with a mischievous and observant twinkle in his eyes, the bon vivant resumed his cigar, which no symphony could exorcise from his mouth.

At a table just within the main audience room, there sat a young lady and gentleman. Even Van berg, who made it his business to discover and study beauty, was soon

compelled to admit to himself that he had never seen finer features than were possessed by this

fair young stranger. Her nose was straight, her upper lip was short, and might have been modelled from Cupid's bow; her chin did not form a perfect oval after the cold and severe Grecian type, but was slightly firm and prominent, receding with decided yet exquisite curves to the full white throat. Her cheeks had a transparent fairness, in which the color came and went instead of lingering in any conventional place and manner; her hair was too light to be called brown and too dark to be golden, but was shaded like that on which the sunlight falls in one of Bougereau's pictures of "Mother and Child;" and it rippled away from a broad low brow in natural waves, half hiding the small, shell like ears.

Van Berg at first thought her eyes to be her finest feature, but he soon regarded them as the worst, and for the same reason, as he speedily discovered, that the face, each feature of which seemed perfect, became, after brief study,

so unsatisfactory as to cause positive annoyance. To a passing glance they were large, dark, beautiful eyes, but they lost steadily under thoughtful scrutiny. A flashing gem may seem real at first, but as its meretricious rays are analyzed, they lose their charm because revealing a stone not only worthless worse than worthless, since it mocks us with a false resemblance, thus raising hopes only to disappoint them. The other features remained beautiful and satisfactory to Van Berg's furtive observation because further removed from the informing mind, and therefore more justly capable of admiration upon their own merits; but the eyes are too near akin to the animating spirit not to suffer from the relationship, should the spirit be essentially defective.

That the beautiful face was but a transparent mask of a deformed, dwarfed, contemptible little soul was speedily made evident. The cream and a silly flirtation with her empty headed attendant a pallid youth who parted his hair like a girl and had not other parts worth naming absorbed

her wholly, and the exquisite symphony was no more to her than an annoying din which made it difficult to hear her companion's compliments that were as sweet, heavy, and stale as Mailard's chocolates, left a year on the shelves. Their mutual giggle and chatter at last became so obtrusive that an old and music loving German turned his broad face towards them, and hissed out the word "Hist!" with such vindictive force as to suggest that all the winds had suddenly broken loose from the cave of Aeolus.

Ik Stanton, who had been watching Van Berg's perturbed, lowering face, and the weak comedy at the adjacent table, was obviously much amused, although he took pains to appear blind to it all and kept his back, as far as possible, towards the young lady.

The German's "hist" had been so fierce as to be almost like a rap from a policeman's club, and there was an enforced and temporary suspension of the inane chatter. The attendant youth tried to assume the incensed and threatening look with which an ancient gallant would have

laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. But some animals and men only become absurd when they try to appear formidable. It was ludicrous to see him weakly frowning at the sturdy Teuton who had already forgotten his existence as completely as he might that of a buzzing mosquito he had exterminated with a slap.

They young girl's face grew even less satisfactory as it became more quiet. A muddy pool, rippled by a breeze, will sparkle quite brilliantly while in motion; but when quiet it is seen the more plainly to be only a shallow pool. At first the beautiful features expressed only petty resentment at the public rebuke. As this faintly lurid light faded out and left the countenance in its normal state it became more heavy and earthy in its expression than Van Berg would have deemed possible, and it ever remained a mystery to him how features so delicate, beautiful, and essentially feminine could combine to show so clearly that the indwelling nature was largely alloyed with clay. there was not that dewy freshness in the fair young face which one

might expect to see in the early morning of existence. The Lord from heaven breathed the breath of life into the first fair woman; but this girl might seem to have been the natural product of evolution, and her soul to be as truly of the earth as her body.

It was evident that she had been made familiar too early and thoroughly with conventional and fashionable society, and, although this fraction of the world is seldom without its gloves, its touch nevertheless had soiled her nature. Her face did not express any active or malignant principle of evil; but a close observer, like Van Berg, in whom the man was in the ascendant over the animal, could detect the absence of the serene, maidenly purity of expression, characteristic of those girls who have obtained their ideas of life from good mothers, rather than from French novels, French plays, and a phase of society that borrows its inspiration from fashionable Paris.

With the ending of the symphony the chatting and flirting at the table began again, to Van Berg's increased

disgust. Indeed, he was so irritated that he could no longer control himself, and rose abruptly, saying to his companion:

"Come, let us walk outside."

His sudden movement drew the young lady's attention, but by this time he had only his broad shoulders turned towards her. She saw Ik Stanton looking at her, however, with a face full of mischief, and she recognized him with a nod and a smile.

He, with the familiarity that indicated relationship, but with a motion too slight to be noticed by others, threw her a kiss from the tips of his fingers, as one might toss a sugar plum to a child, and then followed his friend.

Chapter II. Ida Mayhew.

What is the matter, Van? You remind me of a certain horned beast that has seen a red flag," said Ik Stanton, linking his arm in that of Van Berg's.

"An apt illustration. I have been baited and irritated for the last twenty minutes."

"I thought you enjoyed Beethoven's music, and surely Thomas rendered it divinely tonight."

"That is one of the chief of my grievances. I haven't been able to hear a note," was the wrathful response.

"That's strange," said Stanton with mock gravity. "Were I not afraid you would take it amiss I would hint that your ears are of goodly size. How comes it that they have so suddenly failed you?"

"Having seen your dinner you have no eyes for anything else. If you had, you would have seen a face near us."

"I saw a score of faces near us. A German had one

with the area of an acre."

"Was he the one who said, 'hist,' like a blast from the North?"

"From a porpoise rather."

"Did you observe the girl towards whom his gusty rebuke was directed?"

"Yes, an inoffensive young lady."

"Inoffensive, indeed!" interrupted Van Berg. "She has put me into purgatory."

"You do seem quite ablaze. Well, you are not the first one that she has put there. But really, Van, I did not know that you were so inflammable."

"If you had any of the instincts of an artist you would know that I am inflamed with no gentler feeling than anger."

"Why! what has the poor child done to you?"

"She is not a child. She knows too much about some things."

"I've no doubt she is better than either you or I," said

Stanton, sharply.

"That fact would be far from proving her a saint."

"What the dickens makes you so vindictive against the girl?"

"Because she has the features of an angel and the face of a fool. What business has a woman to mock and disappoint one so! When I first saw her I thought I had discovered a prize a new revelation of beauty; but a moment later she looked so ineffably silly that I felt as if I had bitten into an apple of Sodom. Of course the girl is nothing to me. I never saw her before and hope I may never see her again; but her features were so perfect that I could not help looking at them, and the more I looked the more annoyed I became to find that, instead of being blended together into a divine face by the mind within, they were the reluctant slaves of as picayune a soul as ever maintained its microscopic existence in a human body. It is exasperating to think what that face might be, and to see what it is. How can nature make such absurd blunders?"

The idea of building so fair a temple for such an ugly little divinity!"

"I thought you artists were satisfied with flesh and blood women, if only put together in a way pleasing to your fastidious eyes."

"If nature had designed that women should consist only of flesh and blood women, if only put together in a way pleasing to your fastidious eyes."

"If nature had designed that women should consist only of flesh and blood, one would have to be content; but no one save the 'unspeakable Turk,' believes in such a woman, or wants her. Who admires such a fragment of a woman save the man that is as yet undeveloped beyond the animal? My mother is my friend, my companion, my inspiration. The idea of yonder silly creature being the companion of a MAN."

"Good evening, Coz," said a voice that was a trifle shrill and loud for a public place, and looking up, the friends saw the subject of their conversation, who, with her

spindling attendant was also taking a promenade.

Stanton raised his hat with a smile, while Van Berg touched his but coldly.

"I wish to speak with you," she said in passing.

"I will join you soon," Stanton answered.

"So this lady is your cousin?" remarked Van Berg.

"She is," said Stanton laughing.

"You will do me the justice to remember that I spoke in ignorance of the fact. If I were you I would give her some cousinly advice."

"Bless you! I have, but it's like pouring water on a duck's back. For one sensible word I can say to her she gets a thousand compliments from rich and empty headed young fools, like the one now with her, who will eventually be worth half a million in his own name. I was interested to see how her face would strike you, and I imagine that your estimate has hit pretty close upon the truth, for in my judgment she is the prettiest and silliest girl in New York. She has recently returned from a year's absence abroad, and

I was in hopes that she would find something to remember besides her own handsome face, but I imagine she has seen little else than it and the admiring glances which everywhere follow her. Take us as we average, Van, Mr. Darwin has not got us very far along yet, and if the face of a woman suits us we are apt to stare at it as far as such politeness as we possess permits, without giving much thought to her intellectual endowments. When it comes to companionship, however, I agree with you. Heaven help the man who is tied to such a woman for life. Still, in the fashionable crowd my cousin trains with, this makes little difference. The husband goes his way and the wife hers, and they are not long in getting a good ways apart. But come, let me introduce you, I have always thought the little fool had some fine gold mingled with her dross, and you are such a skilful analyst that perhaps you will discover it."

"No, I thank you," said Van Berg, with a slight expression of disgust. "I could not speak civilly to a lady that I had just seen giggling and flirting through one of

Beethoven's finest symphonies."

"Well well," said Stanton laughing, "I am rather glad to find one man who is not drawn to her pretty face like a moth to a candle. I will join you again by and by."

Van Berg sat down in one of the little stalls that stood open to the main promenade, and saw his friend thread his way among the moving figures, and address his cousin. As she turned to speak with Stanton, the artist received again that vivid impression of beauty, which her face ever caused before time was given for closer scrutiny. Indeed from his somewhat distant point of observation, and in the less searching light, the fatal flaw could scarcely be detected. Her affected tones and silly words could not be heard, and he saw only dark lustrous eyes lighting up features that were almost a revelation even to him with his artistic familiarity with beauty.

"If I could always keep her at about that distance," he muttered, "and arrange the lights and shadows in which to view her face, I could not ask for a better study, for she

would give me a basis of perfect beauty, and I could add any expression of characteristic that I desired." And now he feasted his eyes as a compensation, in part, for the annoyance she had caused him in the glare of the audience room.

He soon saw a frown lower upon her hitherto laughing face like the shadow of a passing cloud, and it was evident that something had been said that was not agreeable to her vanity.

A moment or two after Stanton had joined the young lady her escort for the evening had excused himself for a brief time, and had left the cousins together. She had then asked, "I say, Ik, who was that gentleman you were talking with?"

"He's an old friend of mine."

"He's not an OLD friend of any one. He is young and quite good looking, or rather he has a certain 'distingue' air that makes one look at him twice. Who is he?"

"He is an artist, and if he lives and works as he is now

doing, through an ordinary lifetime, he will indeed by distinguished. In fact, he stands high already."

"How nice," she exclaimed.

"He has another characteristic, which you will appreciate far more than anything he will ever accomplish with his brush he is very rich."

"Why! he's perfectly splendid. Whoever heard of such a strange, rare creature! I've flirted with lots of poor artists, but never with a rich one. Bring him to me, and introduce him at once."

"He is not one that you can flirt with, like the attenuated youth who has just meandered to the barroom."

"Why not?"

"If you had eyes for anything save your own pretty face, and the public stare, you would have seen that my friend is not a 'creature,' but a man."

"Come, Cousin Ik," she replied in more natural tones, "too much of your house is made of glass for you to throw stones. Flirting and frolicking are as good any day as eating,

smoking, and dawdling."

Stanton bit his lip, but retorted, "I don't profess to be a bit better than you are, Coz; but I at least have the sense to appreciate those who are my superiors."

"So have I, when I find them; I am beginning to think, however, that you men are very much alike. All you ask is a pretty face, for you all think that you have brains enough for two. But bring your paragon and introduce him, that I may share in your gaping admiration."

"You would, indeed, my dear Coz, yawn over his conversation, for you couldn't understand half of it. I think we had better remain where we are till your shadow returns with his eyes and nose slightly inflamed. He is aware of at least one method of becoming a spirited youth, it seems."

"A man who is worth half a million is usually regarded as rather substantial," she retorted.

"Yes, but in this case the money bags outweigh the man too ridiculously. For heaven's sake, Coz, do not make a spectacle of yourself by marrying this attenuation, or

society will assert there was a regularly drawn bill of sale."

"I assure you that I do not intend to put myself under any man's thumb for a long time to come. I am having too good a time; and that reminds me that I would enjoy meeting your friend much more than listening to your cynical speeches. Did I not know that you were like my little King Charles all bark rather than bite I wouldn't stand them; and I won't any longer, tonight. So go and bring your great embryo artist, or he will become one of the old masters before I see him."

"I fear I must give you a wee bit of bite this time. I have offered to introduce him and he declines the honor."

"How is that?" she asked, flushing with anger.

"I will quote his words exactly, and then you can interpret them as you think best. He said, 'I could not speak civilly to a lady that I had just seen giggling and flirting through one of Beethoven's finest symphonies.'"

The young girl's face looked anything but amiable in

response to this speech; but, after a moment, she tossed her head, and replied:

"'N'importe' there are plenty who can use not only civil words but complimentary ones."

"Yes, and the mischief of it is that you will listen to them and to no others. What sort of muscle can one make who lives only on sugar plums?"

"They agree with me better than the vinegar drops you and your unmannerly friend delight in. I don't believe he ever painted anything better than a wooden squaw for one of your beloved cigar shops welcome back Mr. Minty. You have been away an unconscionably long time."

"Thanks for the compliment of being missed. I have tried to make amends by ordering a 'petit souper' for three, for I was sure your cousin would join us. It will be brought to one of yonder stalls, where, while we enjoy it, we can both see and hear."

Surmising that the viands would consist of the choicest delicacies of the season, Stanton readily accepted

the invitation, and it so happened that the cloth was laid for the party in the stall next to that in which Van Berg was quietly enjoying a cigar and a frugal glass of lager. They took their places quite unaware of his proximity, and he listened with considerable interest to the tones and words of the fair stranger who had so unexpectedly taken possession of his thoughts. Were it not for a slight shrillness and loudness at times, and the fashionable affectation of the day, her voice would have been sweet and girlish enough. As it was, it suggested an instrument tuned to a false key and consequently discordant with all true and womanly harmonies. Her conversation with young Minty was as insipid as himself, but occasionally Stanton's cynical banter evoked something like repartee and wit.

In the course of her talk she said: "By the way, Ik, mother and I start for the country next week. We are to spend the summer at the Lake House, which is up the Hudson somewhere you know where better than I. If you will bring your bays and a light wagon I shall be very glad

to see you there; otherwise I shall welcome you well as my cousin."

"If I come I will surely bring my bays, and possibly may invite you to drive with me."

"Oh, I will save you all trouble in that respect by inviting myself, when so inclined."

The orchestra was now about to give a selection that Van Berg wished to hear to better advantage than he could in his present position; therefore, unobserved by the party on the other side of the thin partition, he returned to his old seat in the main hallway. Not very long after, Stanton, with his cousin and Mr. Minty, entered from the promenade, and again Van Berg received the same vivid impression of beauty, and, with many others, could not withdraw his eyes from the exquisite features that were slightly flushed with champagne and excitement. But, as before, this impression passed quickly, and the face again became as exasperating to the artist as the visage of the Venus of Milo would be should some vandal hand pencil upon it a leer or

a smirk. A heavy frown was gathering upon his brow when the young lady, happening to turn suddenly, caught and fully recognized his lowering expression. It accorded only too well with her cousin's words in regard to Van Berg's estimate of herself, and greatly increased her resentment towards the one who had already wounded her vanity the most vulnerable and sensitive trait in her character. The flush that deepened so suddenly upon her face was unmistakably that of anger. She promptly turned her back upon her critic, nor did she look towards him again until the close of the evening. That his words and manner rankled in her memory, however, was proved by a slightly preoccupied manner, followed by fits of gayety not altogether natural, and chiefly by the fact that she could not leave the place without a swift glance at the disturbing cause of her wonted self approval. But Van Berg took pains to manifest his indifference by standing with his back towards her when she knew that he must be aware of her departure, from her slightly ostentatious leave taking of

her cousin, in which, of course, the spoiled beauty had no other object than to attract attention to herself.

As Van Berg, with his friend, was passing out a few minutes later, he asked rather abruptly, showing that he also was not so indifferent as he had pretended to be:

"What is your cousin's name, Stanton?"

"Her name is as pretty as herself Ida Mayhew, and it is worse than a disquieting ghost in a good many heads and hearts that I know of. Indeed its owner has robbed men that I thought sensible, not only of their peace, but, I should say, of their wits also. I had one friend of whom I thought a great deal, and it was pitiable to see the abject state to which the heartless little minx reduced him. I am glad to find that her witchery has no spell for you, and that you detect just what she is through her disguise of beauty. 'Entre nous,' Van, I will tell you a secret. I was once over ears in love with her myself, but my cousinly relationship enabled me to see her so often and intimately that she cured me of my folly on homeopathic principles. 'Similia similibus

curantur.' Even the blindness of love could not fail to discover that when one subtracted vanity, coquetry, and her striking external beauty from Ida Mayhew, but little was left, and that little not a heavenly compound. Those who know her least, and who add to her beauty many ideal perfections, are the ones that rave about her most. I doubt whether she ever had a heart; if so, it was frittered away long ago in her numberless flirtations. But with all her folly she has ever had the sense to keep within the conventionalities of her own fashionable 'coterie,' which is the only world she knows anything about, and whose unwritten laws are her only creed and religion. Her disappointed suitors can justly charge her with cruelty, silliness, ignorance, and immeasurable vanity, but never with indiscretion. She has to perfection the American girl's ability to take care of herself, and no man will see twice to take a liberty beyond that which etiquette permits. I have now given you in brief the true character of Ida Mayhew. It is no secret, for all who come to know her well,

arrive at the same opinion. When I saw you had observed her this evening for the first time, I was quite interested in watching the impression she would make upon you, and I am very glad that your judgment has been both good and prompt; for I slightly feared that your love of beauty might make you blind to everything else."

Stanton's concluding words were as incense to Van Berg, for he prided himself in no slight degree on his even pulse and sensible heart, that, thus far, had given him so little trouble; and he therefore replied, with a certain tinge of complacency and consciousness of security:

"You know me well enough, Ik, to be aware that I am becoming almost a monomaniac in my art. A woman's face is to me little more than a picture which I analyze from an artistic stand point. A MERELY PRETTY face is like a line of verse of musical rhythm, but without sense or meaning. This is bad and provoking enough; but when the most exquisite features give expression only to some of the meanest and unworthiest qualities that can infest a

woman's soul, one is exasperated almost beyond endurance. At least I am, for I am offended in my strongest instincts. Think of employing stately Homeric words and measure in describing a belle's toilet table with its rouge pots, false hair, and other abominations! Much worse is it, in my estimation, that the features of a goddess should tell us only of such moral vermin as vanity, silliness, and the egotism of a poor little self that thinks of nothing, and knows nothing save its own small cravings. Pardon me, Ik; I am not speaking of your cousin but in the abstract. In regard to that young lady, as you saw, I was very much struck with the face. Indeed, to tell the honest truth, I never saw so much beauty spoiled before, and the fact has put me in so bad a humor that you, no doubt, are glad I have reached my corner and so must say good night."

"Ida Mayhew can realize all such abstractions," muttered Ik Stanton, as he walked on alone.

The reader will be apt to surmise, however, that some resentment, resulting from his former and unrequited

sentiment towards the girl, gave an unjust bias to his judgement.

Chapter III. An Artist's Freak.

Van Berg's night key admitted him to a beautiful home, which he now had wholly to himself, since his parents and sister had sailed for Europe early in the spring, intending to spend the summer abroad. The young man had already travelled and studied for years in the lands naturally attractive to an artist, and it was now his purpose to familiarize himself more thoroughly with the scenery of his own country.

On reaching his own apartment he took down a prosy book, that he might read himself into that condition of drowsiness which would render sleep possible; but sleep would not come, and the sentences were like the passers by in the street, whom we see but do not note, and for whose coming and going we know not the reasons.

Between himself and the page he saw continually the exquisite features and the exasperating face of Ida Mayhew. At last he threw aside the book, lighted a cigar, and gave himself up to the reveries to which this beautiful, but discordant visage so strongly predisposed him. Its perfection in one respect, its strongly marked imperfection in another, both appealed equally to his artistic and thoughtful mind. At one moment it would appear before him with an ideal loveliness such as had never blessed the eye of his fancy even; but while he yet looked the features would distort themselves into the vivid expression of some contemptible trait, so like what he had seen in reality, during the evening, that, in uncontrollable irritation, he would start up and pace the floor.

His uncurbed imagination conjured up all kinds of weird and grotesque imagery. He found himself commiserating the girl's features as if they were high toned captives held in degrading bondage by a spiteful little

monster, that delighted to put them to low and menial uses. To one of his temperament such beauty as he had just witnessed, controlled by, and ministering to, some of the meanest and pettiest of human vices, was like Mary Magdalene when held in thralldom by seven devils.

A cool and matter of fact person could scarcely understand Van Berg's annoyance and perturbation. If a true artist were compelled to see before him a portrait that required only a few skillful touches in order to become a perfect likeness, and yet could not give those touches, the picture would become a constant vexation; and the better the picture, the nearer it approached the truth, the deeper would be the irritation that all should be spoiled through defects for which there was no necessity.

In the face that persistently haunted him Van Berg saw a beauty that might fulfil his best ideal; and he also saw just why it did not and never could, until its defects were remedied. He felt a sense of personal loss that he should have discovered a gem so nearly perfect and yet marred by

so fatal a flaw.

The next day it was still the same. The face of Ida Mayhew interposed itself before everything that he sought to do or see. Whether it were true or not, it appeared to him that in all his wanderings and observations he had never seen features so capable of fulfilling his highest conception of beauty did they but express the higher qualities and emotions of the soul. He also felt that never before had he seen a face that would seem to him so hideous in its perversion.

He threw down his brush and palette in despair and again gave himself up to his fancies. He then sketched in outline the beautiful face as expressing joy, hope, courage, thought or love, but was provoked to find that he ever obtained the best likeness when portraying the vanity, silliness, or petulance which had been the only characteristics he had seen.

He now grew metaphysical and tried to analyze the girl's mind. He sought to grope mentally his way back into

the recesses of the soul, which had looked, acted, and spoken the previous evening. A strange little place he imagined it, and oddly furnished. It occurred to him that it bore a resemblance to her dressing room, and was full of queer feminine mysteries and artificial ideas that had been created by conventional society rather than inspired by nature.

He asked himself, "Can it be that here is a character in which the elements of a true and good woman do not exist? Has she no heart, no mind, no conscience worthy of the name? At her age she cannot have lost these qualities. Have they never been awakened? Do they exist to that degree that they can be aroused into controlling activity? I suppose there can be pretty idiots. As people are born blind or scrofulous, so I suppose others can be born devoid of heart or conscience, inheriting from a degenerate ancestry sundry mean and vile propensities in their places. Human nature is a scale that runs both up and down, and it is astonishing how far the extremes can be apart."

"How high is it possible for the same individual to rise in this scale? I imagine we are all prone to judge of people as if they were finished pictures, and to think that the defects our first scrutiny discovers will remain for all time. It is in real life much as in fiction. From first to last a villain is a villain, as if he had been created one. The heroine is a moss rose bud by equal and unchanging necessity. Is this girl a fool, and will she remain one by any innate compulsion? By Jove! I would like to see her again in the searching light of day. I would like to follow her career sufficiently long, to discover whether nature has been guilty of the grotesque crime of associating inseparably with that fine form and those exquisite features, a hideous little mind that must go on intensifying its dwarfed deformity, until death snuffs it out. If this be true, the beautiful little monster that is bothering me so suggests a knotty problem to wiser heads than mine."

Somewhat later his musings led him to indulge in a broad laugh.

"Possibly," he said aloud, "she is a modern and fashionable Undine, and has never yet received a woman's soul. The good Lord deliver me from trying to awaken it, as did the knight of old in the story, by swelling the long list of her victims. I can scarcely imagine a more pitiable and abject creature than a man (once sane and sensible) in thralldom to such a tantalizing semblance of a woman. She would no more appreciate his devotion than the jackdaw the pearl necklace it pecked at.

"I fear my Undine theory won't answer. Stanton says she has no heart, and her face and manner confirm his words. But now I think of it, the original Undine lived a long time ago in the age of primeval simplicity, when even cool blooded water nymphs had hearts. One is induced to think, in our age, that this organ will eventually disappear with the other characteristics of ancient and undeveloped man, and that the brain, or what stands for it, will become all in all. In the first instance the woman's soul came in through the heart; but I suppose that in the case of

a modern Undine it could enter most readily through the head. I wonder if there is something like an unawakened mind, sleeping under that broad low brow that mocks one with its fair intellectual outline. I wonder if it would be possible to set her thinking, and so eventually render her capable of receiving a woman's soul. As it is now she seems to possess only certain disagreeable feminine propensities. One might engage in such an experiment as a philosopher rather than a lover; or, what is more to my purpose, as an artist.

"By Jove! I would half like to make the attempt; it would give zest to one's summer vacation. Well, what is to hinder? Now I think of it she remarked that she was to spend the season at the Lake House, not far from the Hudson, a place well suited to my purposes. There are the wild highlands on one side, and a soft pastoral country on the other. I could there find abundant opportunity for varied studies in scenery, and at the same time beguile my idle hours at the hotel with this face of marvellous

capabilities and possibilities. The features already exist, and would be beautiful if the girl were dead, and they could be no longer distorted by the small vices of the spirit back of them. They might become transcendently beautiful, could she in very truth receive the soul of a true and thoughtful woman a soul such as makes my mother beautiful in her plain old age.

"I'm inclined to follow this odd fancy. That girl is a 'rara avis' such as has never flown across my path before. I shall have a quarrel with nature all my life if I must believe she can fashion a face capable of meaning so much and yet actually meaning so little, and that little disgusting."

After a few moments of deep thought, he again started to his feet and commenced pacing his studio.

"Suppose," he soliloquized, "I attempt a novel bit of artistic work as my summer recreation. Suppose I take the face of this stranger instead of a piece of canvas and try to illumine it with thought, with womanly character and intelligence. If I fail, as I probably shall, no harm will be

done. If her silliness and vanity are ingrained and essential parts of her nature, she shall learn that there is at least one man who can see her as she is, and whose heart is not wax on which to stamp her pretty and senseless image. If I only partially succeed, if I discern she has a mind, but so feeble that it can only half reclaim her from her weakness and folly, still something will be accomplished. Her features are so beautiful, that should they come to express even the glimmerings of that which is admirable, the face will be in part redeemed. But if by some happy miracle, as in the instance of the original Undine, a mind can be awakened that will gradually prepare a place for the soul of a true woman, I shall accomplish the best work of my life, even estimated from an artistic point of view. Possibly, for my reward, she will permit me to paint her portrait as a souvenir of our summer's acquaintance."

It did not take Van Berg long to complete his arrangements for leaving town. He wrote a line to his friend Stanton, saying that he proposed spending a few weeks in

the vicinity of the Highlands on the Hudson, and that he could not say when he would be at his rooms or at home again. The afternoon of the following day found him a passenger on a fleet steamboat, and fully bent upon carrying out his odd artistic freak.

Chapter IV. A Parthian Arrow.

As, in the quiet June evening, Harold Van Berg glided through the shadows of the Highlands, there came a slight change over his spirit of philosophical and artistic experiment. The season comported with his early manhood, and the witching hour and the scenery were not conducive to cold philosophy. He who prided himself on his steady pulse and a devotion to art so absorbing that it even prompted his impulses and gave character to his recreation, was led to feel, on this occasion, that his mistress was vague and shadowy, and to half wish for that companionship which the most self reliant natures have

craved at times, ever since man first felt, and God knew, that it was "not good for him to be alone." If he could turn from the beauty of the sun tipped hills and rocks and the gloaming shadows to an appreciative and sympathetic face, such as he could at least imagine the visage of Ida Mayhew might become, would not his enjoyment of the beauty he saw be doubly enhanced? In his deepest consciousness he was compelled to admit that it would. He caught a glimpse of the truth that he would never attain in his highest manhood until he had allied himself to a womanhood which he should come to believe supremely true and beautiful.

The ringing of the bell announced his landing, and in the hurry and bustle of looking after his luggage and obtaining a ticket which he had forgotten to procure, he speedily became again, in the world's estimation, and perhaps in his own, a practical, sensible man. An hour or two's ride among the hills brought him at last to the Lake House, where he selected a room that had a fine

prospect of the mountains, the far distant river, and the adjacent open country, engaging it only for a brief time so that he might depart when he chose, in case the object of his pursuit should not appear, or he should weary of the effort, or despair of its success.

A few days passed, but the face which had so haunted his fancy presented no actual appearance. The scenery, however, was beautiful, the weather so perfect, and he enjoyed his rambles among the hills and his excursions on the water so thoroughly that he was already growing slightly forgetful of his purpose and satisfied that he could enjoy himself a few weeks without the zest of artistically redeeming the face of Ida Mayhew. But one day, while at dinner, he overheard some gossip concerning a "great belle" who was to come that evening, and he at once surmised that it was the fair stranger he had seen at the concert.

At the time, therefore, of the arrival of the evening stage he observantly puffed his cigar in a corner of the

piazza, and was soon rewarded by seeing the object of his contemplated experiment step out of the vehicle, with the airy grace and confidence of one who regards each new abiding place as a scene of coming pleasures and conquests, and who feels sure every glance toward her is one of admiration. There were eyes, however, that noted disapprovingly her jaunty self assurance and self assertion, and when she met those eyes her complacency seemed disturbed at once, for she flushed and promptly turned her back upon them. In fact, from the time she had first seen Van Berg's frowning face it had been a disagreeable memory, and now here it was again and frowning still. Although he sat at a distance from the landing place, her eyes seemed drawn towards his as if by some fascination, and she already had the feeling that whenever he was present she would be conscious of his cool, critical observation.

Van Berg had scarcely time to note a rather stout and overdressed person emerge from the stage, how was

evidently the young lady's mother, when Ik Stanton, with his bays and a light country wagon, dashed up to the main entrance. Stanton was an element in the artistic problem that Van Berg had not bargained for, and what influence he would have, friendly or adverse, only time could show.

While Stanton was accompanying his aunt and cousin to the register, as the gentleman of the party, the young lady said to him:

"That horrid artist friend of yours is here. I wish he hadn't come. Did you tell him we were coming here?"

"No, 'pon my honor."

"I have believe you did. If so I'll never forgive you, for the very sight of him spoils everything."

"Come now, Coz, be reasonable. From all the indications I have seen, Van Berg is the last man to follow you here or anywhere else, even though he knew of your prospective movements. He is here, as scores of others are, for his own pleasure. So follow your mother to your room, smooth your ruffled plumage and come down to supper."

Even Miss Mayhew's egotism could find no fault with so reasonable an explanation, and she went pouting up the stairway in anything but a complacent mood.

Stanton stepped out upon the piazza to greet his friend, saying:

"Why, Van, it is an unexpected pleasure to find you here."

"I was equally and quite as agreeably surprised to see you drive to the door. If you cousin had not come I might have helped you exercise your bays. I am doing some sketching in the vicinity."

"My cousin shall not keep you from many an idle hour behind the bays that is, if you will not carry your antipathy so far as to cut me on account of my relationship."

"I'm not conscious of any antipathy for Miss Mayhew," replied Van Berg, with a slight shrug.

"Oh, only indifference! Well, if you will both maintain that attitude there will be no trouble about the bays or anything else. I'll smoke with you after supper."

"She evidently has an antipathy for me," mused Van Berg. "Stanton, no doubt, has told her of my uncomplimentary remarks, and possibly of the fact that I declined an introduction. That's awkward, for if I should now ask to be presented to her, she would very naturally decline, and so we might drift into something as closely resembling a quarrel as is possible in the case of two people who have never spoken to each other."

He concluded that it would be best to leave to chance the occasion which should place them on speaking terms, and tried to persuade himself that her unpromising attitude towards him was not wholly unfavorable to his purpose. He never could hope to accomplish anything without at first piquing her pride and wounding her vanity. His only fear was that this had been done too effectually, and that from first to last she would simply detest him.

In his preoccupation he forgot that the supper hour was passing, but at last started hastily for his room. As he rapidly turned a sharp corner he nearly ran into two ladies

who were coming from an opposite direction, and looking up saw Mrs. Mayhew and the flushed, resentful face of her daughter. In spite of himself our even pulsed philosopher flushed also, but instantly removing his hat he ejaculated:

"I beg your pardon," and passed on.

As Ida joined her cousin at the supper table she whispered exultantly:

"He has spoken to me."

"Who has spoken to you?"

"Your artist bear."

"How did that happen?"

"Well, he nearly ran over me horrid thing! I suppose that's another of his peculiar ways."

"Did he embrace you?"

"Embrace me! Good heavens, what an escape I have had! So this too is characteristic of your friend?"

"You said he was a bear. If so, he should have given you a hug on the first opportunity."

"He didn't have an opportunity, and he never will."

"Poor fellow! It will make him sick if I tell him so. Well, since it is another case of beauty and the beast, what did the beast say?"

"He said that it was very proper he should say to me after all his hatefulness. He said, 'I beg your pardon.'"

"And then I suppose you kissed and made up."

"Hush, you horrid thing. I noticed him no more than I would a chair that I might have stumbled over."

"Thus displaying that sweet trait of yours Charity. But I thought it was he that stumbled over you?"

"A musty, miserable pun! It was he, and I'm delighted it so happened, that the first time he ever spoke to me he had to ask my pardon."

"Well, well! I'm glad it so happened, too, and that the ice is broken between you, for Van Berg is a good friend of mine, and it would be confoundedly disagreeable to have you two lowering at each other across a bloody chasm of dark, revengeful thoughts."

"The ice isn't broken at all. He has begged my pardon

as he ought to do a hundred times; but I haven't granted it, and I never will. What's more, I'll never speak to him in all my life; never, never!"

"Swear it by the 'inconstant moon'!"

"Hush, here he comes. Ah, 'peste!' his table is right opposite ours."

"Who is that tall and rather distinguished looking gentleman that just entered?" asked Mrs. Mayhew, suddenly emerging from a pre occupation with her supper which a good appetite had induced.

"He IS distinguished, or will be. He's a particular friend of Ida's, and is as rich as Croesus."

"Three items in his favor," said Mrs. Mayhew complacently; "but Ida has so many friends, or beaux, rather, that I can't keep track of them. Her friends speedily become furnace like lovers, or else escape for their lives into the dim and remote region of mere bowing acquaintanceship. I once tried to keep a list of the various and variegated gentlemen with red whiskers and

black whiskers, with whiskers sandy, brown, and occasionally almost white, but borrowing a golden hue from their purses, that appeared and disappeared so rapidly, as to almost make me dizzy. I was about as bewildered as the poor Indian who sought to take the census of London by notching a stick forevery passer by he met. And now before we are through supper on the first evening of our arrival, another appears, who is evidently an eligible 'parti' and twice as good as the minx deserves; but in a few days he, too, will vanish into thin air, and another and different style of man will take his place. Mark my words, Ida, you will be through the woods before long, and I expect you will take up with the crookedest of crooked sticks on the farther side," and the voluble Mrs. Mayhew resumed her supper with a zest which this dismal prospect did not by any means impair.

"If I were in search of a crabbed, crooked stick, I would not have to look farther than yonder table," said the young lady, petulantly. "What you suppose about that

dabbler in paint is about as far from the truth as your sketch of those who are my friends. That man never was my friend, and never shall be. I don't want you to get acquainted with him or speak to him. You must not introduce him to me, for if you do, I shall be rude to him."

"Hoity toity! what's the matter?"

"I don't like him. Only Ik thinks he's wonderful. He has probably blinded our cousin to his faults by painting a flattering likeness of the vain youth here."

"But in suggesting another portrait that was not altogether pleasing, he sinned beyond hope," whispered Stanton.

Ida bit her lip and frowned, recalling the obnoxious artist's portrait of herself as giggling and flirting through one of Beethoven's symphonies; and she said spitefully:

"He can never hope for anything from me."

"Poor, hopeless wretch!" groaned Stanton. "How can he sip his tea yonder so complacently oblivious of his doom?"

"Mother, I'm in earnest," resumed the daughter. "I have reasons for disliking that man, and I do not wish the annoyance of his acquaintance."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Mayhew; "as long as the wind blows from that cool quarter, we can keep cool till it changes. If I mistake not, he is the same gentleman who met us in the corridor. I'm sure he has fine manners."

"If it is fine manners in a man to nearly run over two ladies, he is perfect. But I am sick of hearing about him, and especially of seeing him. I insist, Ik, that you have our table changed to yonder corner, and then arrange it so that I can sit with my back towards him."

"I am your Caliban, but would hint, my amiable Coz, that you should not bite off your own pretty nose in spite. Must all your kin join in this bitter feud? May I not smoke with my ancient familiar?"

"Oh, be off, and if you and your friend disappear like your cigars, the world will survive."

"I fear it is because my friend will never dissolve in

sighs that you are so willing he should end in smoke."

Having winged this Parthian arrow over his shoulder, Stanton strolled out on the piazza whither Van Berg had preceded him.

Chapter V. Spite.

Miss Mayhew apparently had not given a single glance to the artist, as he sat opposite to her and but a little out of earshot. Indeed, so well did she simulate unconsciousness of his presence, that were it not for an occasional glance from Mrs. Mayhew he might have thought himself unnoticed; but something in that lady's manner, as caught by occasional glances, led him to suspect that he was the subject of their conversation.

But Ida's indifference was, in truth, only seeming; for although she never looked directly at him, she subjected his image, which was constantly flitting across the retina of her eye, to the closest scrutiny, and no act or expression of his

escaped her. She was piqued by the fact that he showed no disturbed consciousness of her presence, and that his glance was occasionally as free and natural towards her as towards any other guest of the house. His bearing annoyed her excessively, for it seemed an easy and quiet assertion of indifference and superiority two manifestations that were to her as objectionable as unusual. Neither in looks nor manner did she appear very agreeable during the brief time she spent in the public parlors. The guests of the house, even to the ladies who foresaw an eclipse of their own charms, were compelled to admit that she was very pretty; but it was a general remark that her face did not make or leave a pleasant impression.

Van Berg surmised that Stanton's disposition to tease and banter would lead him to repeat and, perhaps, distort, anything he might say concerning the young lady, so he made no reference whatever to the Mayhews, but took pains to give the impression that he was deeply interested in the scenery.

"I shall probably be off with my sketch book before you are up," he said; "for if I remember correctly, you are up with the lark only when you have been up over night."

"You are the greater sinner of the two," yawned Stanton; "for if I occasionally keep unseasonable hours at night, you do so habitually in the morning. Either you are not as brilliant as usual this evening, or else the country air makes me drowsy. Good night. We will take a ride tomorrow, and you can sketch five miles of fence if you find that you cannot resist your mania for work."

Perhaps Stanton HAD found his friend slightly preoccupied, for, in spite of the constraint he had put upon himself to appear as usual, this second and closer view of the face which had taken so strong a hold upon his fancy did not dissipate his first impressions. Indeed, they were deepened rather, for he saw again and more clearly the same marvellous capabilities in the features, and also their exasperating failure to make a beautiful face.

He dreamed over his project some little time after his

friend had retired, and the conclusion of his reverie was:

"I must soon make some progress in my experiment or else decamp, for that girl's contradictory face is a constant incentive to profanity."

After seeing Mrs. Mayhew, however, he felt that justice required him to admit that the daughter was a natural and logical sequence; and in the mother he saw an element more hopelessly inartistic and disheartening than anything in the girl herself; for even if the latter could be changed, would not the shadow of the stout and dressy mother ever fall athwart the picture?

Van Berg retired with the feeling that his project of illuminating a face by awakening a mind that, as yet, had slept, did not promise very brilliantly.

Miss Mayhew tried to persuade herself that it was a relief not to see the critical artist at breakfast, nor to meet him as she strolled from the parlors to the piazza and thence to the croquet ground, where she listlessly declined to take part in a game.

There was, in truth, great need that her mind should be awakened and her whole nature radically changed, if it were a possible thing, a need shown by the fact the fair June morning, with its fragrance and beauty, could not light up her face with its own freshness and gladness. The various notes of the birds were only sounds; the landscape, seen for the first time, was like the map of Switzerland, that, in the days of her geography lessons, gave her as vivid an idea of the country as a dry sermon does of heaven. Although her ears and eyes were so pretty, she was, in the deepest and truest sense of the word, deaf and blind. The lack of some petty and congenial excitement made time hang heavily on her hands and clouded her face with 'ennui.'"

Even her cousin had failed her, for he was down at the stables, making arrangements for the care of his bays and his carriage. Thus from very idleness she fell to nursing her small spite against the man whose voice had made such harsh discord with the honeyed chorus of flattery to which

she was accustomed. She wished that he would appear, and that in some way she might show how little she cared for him or his opinion; but as he did not, she at last lounged to her room and sought to kill a few hours with a novel.

Her wounded pride, however, induced her to dress quite elaborately for dinner; for she had faith in no better way of asserting her personality than that afforded by the toilet. She would teach him, by the admiration she excited in others, how mistaken he had been in his estimate, and her vanity whispered that even he could not look upon her beauty for any length of time without being won by it as so many others had been.

The change of seats having been effected, she scarcely thought it necessary to turn her back upon him while sitting at such a dim distance. Indeed she was inclined to regret the change, for now her toilet and little airs, which she imagined to be so pretty, would be lost upon him.

It would seem that they were, for Van Berg ate his dinner as quietly, and chatted as unconcernedly to those

about him as if she had no existence. Never had a man ignored her so completely before, and she felt that she could never forgive him.

After the event of the day was over, and the guests were circling and eddying through the halls and parlors and out on the piazza, Ida still had the annoyance of observing that Van Berg was utterly oblivious of her as far as she could perceive. He spoke here and there with the ease and freedom of one familiar with society, and she saw more eyes following his tall form approvingly than were turned towards herself. Few gentlemen remained at the house during the week, and Miss Mayhew was not a favorite with her own sex. Those who most closely resembled her in character envied rather than admired her, and those who were better endowed and developed found fault even with her beauty from a moral point of view, as Van Berg had on artistic grounds. She consoled herself, however, with the thought that it was Saturday, and that the evening boat and trains would bring a number of gentlemen, among whom

she told Stanton, exultantly, that she had "some friends" moths rather whose wings were in danger of being singed.

As the afternoon was not sultry, Stanton had said to his friend that they could enjoy their cigars and a ride at the same time, and that he would drive around for him in a few minutes. Ida overheard the remark, and, quietly slipping off to her room, returned with her hat and shawl. As her cousin approached she hastened down the steps, past Van Berg, exclaiming:

"Oh, thank you, Ik! How good of you! I was dying for a ride. Don't trouble yourself. I can get in without aid," and she sprang lightly into the buggy before her cousin could utter a word.

He turned with a look of comic dismay and deprecation to his friend, who stood laughing on the steps. Ida, also, could not resist her inclination to catch a glimpse of the artist's chagrin and disappointment, but she was provoked beyond measure to find him acting as if Stanton were the victim rather than himself. As the sweep of the

road again brought them in view of the piazza, this impression was confirmed by seeing Van Berg stroll carelessly away, complacently puffing his cigar as if he had already dismissed her from his mind.

"Really," grumbled Stanton, "I never had beauty and happiness thrust upon me so unexpectedly before."

"Very well then," retorted Ida; "stop your horses and thrust me out into the road. I'd rather go back, even if I have to walk."

"Oh, no! there is to be no going back for two hours or more. I once cured a horse of running away by making him run long after he wanted to stop."

"You seem to be learning your friend's hateful manners."

"I asked you this morning if you would take a drive, and you declined."

"I changed my mind."

"Very abruptly, indeed, it seemed. Since you took so much trouble to annoy my friend, it's a pity you failed."

"I don't believe I failed. He's probably as cross as you are about it, only he can keep it to himself."

"Dove like creatiah! thanks. Will you please drive while I light a cigar?"

"I don't like any one to smoke as near me as you are."

"If your theory in regard to Van Berg is correct, none of us will enjoy what we like this afternoon. Of course I never smoke without a lady's permission, but unless quieted by a cigar, I am a very reckless driver," and he enforced his words by a sharp crack of the whip, which sent the horses off like the wind.

"Oh, stop them; smoke; do anything hateful you wish, so you don't break my neck. I will never ride with you again, and I wish I had never come to this horrid place; and if your sneering painter does not leave soon, I will."

"I'm afraid Van would survive, and you only suffer from your spite. But come, since you have so sweetly permitted me to smoke, I'll make your penance as light as possible, and then we will consider matters even between

us," and away they bowled up breezy hills and down into shady valleys, Stanton stolidly smoking, and Ida nursing her petty wrath. Two flitting ghosts hastening to escape from the light of day, could not have seen less, or have felt less sympathy with the warm beautiful scenes through which they were passing. There is no insulation so perfect as that of small, selfish natures preoccupied with a pique.

When, late in the afternoon, her cousin, with mock politeness, assisted her to alight at the entrance of the hotel, Ida was compelled to feel that she had indeed been the chief victim of her own spite. but, with the usual logic of human nature, she never thought of blaming herself, and her resentment was chiefly directed against the man whose every word and glance, although he was but a stranger, had seemed to possess a power to annoy and wound from the first. She felt an almost venomous desire to retaliate; but he appeared invulnerable in his quiet and easy superiority, while she, who expected, as a matter of course, that all

masculine thoughts should follow her admiringly, had been compelled to see that his critical eyes had detected that in her which had awakened his contempt.

"I'll teach him this evening, when my gentlemen friends arrive, how ridiculous are his airs," she muttered, as she went to her room and sought to enhance her beauty by all the arts of which she was the mistress. "I'll show him that there are plenty who can see what he cannot, or will not. Because he is an artist, he need not think he can face me out of the knowledge of my beauty, the existence of which I have been assured of by so many eyes and tongues ever since I can remember."

When she came down to await the arrival of the stages and carriages, she was indeed radiant with all the beauty of which she was then capable. Her neck and shoulders, with their exquisite lines and curves, were more suggestively revealed than hidden by a slight drapery of gauze like illusion, and her white rounded arms were bare. She trod with the light airy grace of youth, and yet with the assured

manner of one who is looking forward to the familiar experiences of a reigning belle.

Van Berg, from his quiet corner of observation, was compelled to admit that, seen at her present distance, she almost embodied his best dreams, and might do so wholly were there less of the fashionable art of the hour, and more of nature in her appearance. But he knew well that if she came nearer, and spoke so as to reveal herself, the fatal defect in her beauty would be as apparent as a black line running athwart the sculptured face of a Greek goddess. The only question with him was, did the ominous deformity lie so near the surface that it could be refined away, or was it ingrained into the very material of her nature, thus forming an essential part of herself? He feared that the latter might be true, or that the remedy was far beyond his skill or power; but every glance he caught of the girl, as with her mother she paced the farther end of the piazza, deepened his regret, as an artist, that so much beauty should be in degrading bondage to a seeming fool.

Chapter VI. Reckless Words and Deeds.

Light carriages now began to wheel rapidly up to the entrance, and were followed soon by the lumbering and heavily laden stages. Joyous greetings and merry repartee made the scene pleasant to witness even by one who, like Van Berg, had no part in it. Stanton, who at this moment joined him, drew his special attention to a thin and under sized gentleman somewhat past middle age, who mounted the steps with a tread that was as inelastic as his face was devoid of animation.

"There is poor Uncle Mayhew," remarked the young man indifferently. "I suppose I must go and speak to him."

"Mr. Mayhew?" said Van Berg, in some surprise. "You have not spoken of him before. I was not aware that there was any such person in existence."

"You are not to blame for that," replied Stanton with a shrug. "You might have been one of the friends of the family and scarcely have learned the fact. Indeed, poor man,

he only about half exists, for he has been so long overshadowed by his fashionable wife and daughter, that he is but a sickly plant of a man."

Van Berg saw that the greeting received by Mr. Mayhew from his wife and daughter was very undemonstrative to say the least, and that then the gentleman quickly disappeared, as if fearing that he might be in the way.

"From my very limited means of judging," Van Berg remarked, "I cannot see anything more objectionable in the head of the family than in the other members."

"Your phrase, 'head of the family,' as applied to Mr. Mayhew, makes me smile. His name figures at the head of the large family bills, but scarcely elsewhere with much prominence. You will soon learn, if you remain here, that Mr. Mayhew imbibes rather more than is good for him, so I may as well mention the disagreeable fact at once. But to do the poor man justice, I suppose he drinks to keep his spirits up to the ordinary level, rather than from any hope of

becoming a little jolly occasionally. Why my aunt married him I scarcely know; and yet I have often thought that he might be a very different did she not so quench him by a manner all her own. As it is, his life seems to consist of toiling and moiling all the week, and of stolidly and joylessly soaking himself into semi stupidity on Sunday. If this wretched state of affairs could be kept secret I would not mention it even to you, my intimate friend; but, since it continues no secret wherever they happen to remain for any length of time, I would rather tell you the exact truth at once, than permit you to guess at it through distorted rumors. As you artists occasionally express yourselves concerning pictures, so I suppose you will think that this family, with all its wealth is quite lacking in tone."

"Well, Stanton, I must admit that I find myself chiefly inclined towards the subdued and neutral tinted Mr. Mayhew. If you have a chance I wish you would introduce me to him."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly."

"Then I'll ask him to smoke with us after supper. Well, Van, I congratulate you again that your correct and cultivated taste enabled you to see the fatal flaw in my cousin's beauty. If you had been bewitched by her, and had insisted on imagining (as so many others have done) that her faultless features were the reflex

of what she is or could become in mind and character, I might have had a good deal of trouble with you; for you are a mulish fellow when you get a purpose in your head. I don't care how badly singed the average run of moths become. You may see two or three fluttering around tonight, if you care to look on, but I wish no friend of mine to make sport, at serious cost to himself, for yonder incorrigible coquette, if she is my cousin. But after what you have seen and now know, you would be safe enough, even if predisposed to folly. The little minx! but I punished her well for her spite this afternoon."

"O most prudent Ulysses! you have indeed filled my

ears with wax. I thank you all the same as if my danger were greater."

"Well, view them all with such charity as you can. I hope you were not very much annoyed by the loss of your ride. The young lady will not be in a hurry to play such a trick again. I'll join you after supper in this your favorite and out of the way corner."

"Was beauty ever envired within and without by such desperately prosaic and inartistic surroundings?" mused Van Berg. "It glistens like a lost jewel in an ash barrel; or, more correctly, it is like an exquisite flower that nature has perversely made the outcome of a rank and poisonous vine. Of course the flower is poisonous also, and as soon as its first delicate bloom is over, will grow as rank and repulsive as the vine that bears it. Like produces like; and with such parentage, what hope is there for her? I am glad no one suspects my absurd project; foreverly hour convinces me of its impracticability. The ancient Undine was a myth, and my modern Undine might be called a

white lie, but one that will grow darker every day. At a distance she presents the semblance of a very fair woman, but I have been unable to detect a single element yet that will prevent her from developing into an old and ugly hag, in spite of all that art and costume can do for her."

After supper Stanton brought Mr. Mayhew to Van Berg's retired nook, and the artist gave the hand of the weary, listless man such a cordial pressure as to cause him a slight surprise, but after satisfying his faint interest by a brief glance, he turned the back of his chair towards all the gay company, although it contained his wife and daughter, puffed mechanically at his cigar, and looked vacantly into space. Before the evening was over, however, Van berg had drawn from him several quite animated remarks, and secured the promise that he would join him and Stanton in a ramble immediately after breakfast the following morning.

Nor had the young man been oblivious of the daughter who now seemed

in her native element. From his dusky point of observation he caught frequent glimpses of her, now whirling through a waltz in the parlor, now talking and laughing in a rather pronounced way from the midst of a group of gentlemen, and again coquettishly stealing off with one of them through the moonlit walks. Her manner, whether assumed or real, was that of extravagant gaiety. Occasionally she seemed to glance towards their obscure corner, but neither she nor her mother came to seek the man who had been toiling all the week to maintain their idle luxury.

As Mrs. Mayhew and her daughter were preparing for dinner on the following day, Mr. Mayhew entered with a brisker step than usual.

"Why, father, where have you been?" Ida asked, surprised by the fact that he had not been drinking and dozing in his room all the morning.

"I have been shown a glimpse of something that I have not seen for many years."

"Indeed, and what is that?"

"Beauty that seemed beautiful."

"That's a compliment to us," remarked Mrs. Mayhew, acidly.

"I mean the kind of beauty which does one good and makes a man wish that he were a man."

"Do you mean an unmarried man?" said his wife with a discordant laugh.

"Probably your own wishes suggested that speech, madam," replied the husband, bitterly.

"And pray, where did you find so much beauty?" said Mrs. Mayhew, ignoring his last remark.

"On a breezy hill side. It's a kind of beauty, too, that one can enjoy without paying numberless bills for its enhancement. I refer to that of the scenery."

"Oh," remarked Mrs. Mayhew, indifferently; "it would have been more to your credit if you had gone to church instead of tramping around the fields."

"I think the fields have done more for me than church for you."

"Why so?" was the sharp response.

"They have at least kept me from indulging in one bad habit. I am sober."

"They do not keep you from making ill natured remarks," said Mrs. Mayhew, sailing out of the room fully bedizened for the solemnity of dinner.

"You say you were 'shown' all this beauty," remarked Ida, who was giving the finishing touches to her toilet before a large mirror, and by whom the frequent bickerings of her parents were scarcely noted. "Who officiated as showman?"

"A man who understands the beauties of a landscape so well that he could make them visible even to my dim eyes, and attractive to my deadened and besotted nature. I'd give all the world if I could be young, strong, and hopeful like him, again. It was good of him yes, good of him, to try to cheer a stranger with pleasant thoughts and sights. I suppose you are acquainted with Mr. Van Berg, since he is a friend of Ik's?"

"No, I'm not," was the sharp reply; "nor do I wish to be."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Mayhew in some surprise.

"It's sufficient that I don't like him."

"He's not your style, I suppose you mean to say?"

"Indeed he is not."

"So much worse for your style, Ida."

She was sweeping petulantly from the room when her father added with a depth of feeling very unlike his wonted apathy: "O, Ida, it were better that all three of us had never been born than to live as we do! Your life and your mother's is froth, and mine is mud. How I hated it all this bright June morning, as Mr. Van Berg gave me a glimpse into another and better world!"

"Do you mean to say that Mr. Van Berg presumed to criticise my mode of life?" Ida asked with a darkening face.

"Oh, no, no! How small and egotistical all your ideas are! He never mentioned you, and probably never thought

of you. He only took a little pains that a tired and dispirited man might see and feel the eternal beauty and freshness of nature, as one might give, in passing, a cup of water to a traveller."

"I don't see what reason you have for feeling and appearing so forlornly, thus asking for sympathy from strangers, as it were, and causing it to seem as if we were making a martyr of you. As for this artist, with his superior airs, I detest him. He never loses a chance to annoy and mortify me. I've no doubt he hoped you would come home and tell us, as you have, how much better he was than "

"There, there, quit that kind of talk or I'll be drunk in half an hour." said her father, harshly. "If you had the heart of a woman, let alone that of a daughter, you would thank the man who had unwittingly kept me from making a beast of myself for one day at least. Go down to your dinner, I'm in no mood for eating."

She went without a word, but with a more severe compunction of conscience than she had ever felt before in

her life. Her father's face and words smote her with a keen reproach, piercing the thick armor of her vanity and selfishness. She saw, for a moment, how unnatural and unlovely she must appear to him, in spite of her beauty, and the thought crossed her mind:

"Mr. Van Berg despises me because he sees me in the same light. How I hate his cold, critical eyes!"

Even at his far remove Van Berg could see that she was ill at ease during the dinner hour. There would be times of forced and unnatural gayety, followed by a sudden cloud upon the brow and an abstracted air, as if her thoughts had naught to do with the chattering group around her. It would also appear that her appetite was flagging unusually, and once or twice he thought she darted an angry look towards him.

As if something were burdening her mind, she at last left the table hastily, before the others were through with their dessert.

As may be surmised, she sought her father's room.

Receiving no response to her knock, she entered and saw at a glance the confirmation of her fears. Her father sat in an arm chair with his head upon his breast. A brandy bottle stood on the table beside him. At the sound of her step he looked up for a moment with heavy eyes, and mumbled:

"He ain't of your style, is he? Nor of mine, either. Froth and mud!"

Ida gave a sudden stamp of rage and disgust, and whirled from the room.

Van Berg happened to see her as she descended to the main hall way, and her face was so repulsive as to suggest to him the lines from Shakespeare:

"In nature there's no blemish, but the mind; None can be called deformed, but the unkind; Virtue is beauty; but the beauteous evil Are empty trunks, over flourished by the devil."

That afternoon and evening her reckless levity and open coquetry secured unfavorable comment not only from the artist, but from others far more indifferent, whose

attention she half compelled by a manner that did not suggest spring violets.

Van Berg was disgusted. He was less versed in human nature than art, and did not recognize in the forced and obtrusive gayety the effort to stifle the voice of an aroused conscience. Even to her blunted sense of right it seemed a hateful and disgraceful truth that a stranger had helped her father towards manhood, and that she had destroyed the transient and salutary influence. Her complacency had been disturbed from the time her cousin had repeated Van Berg's remark, "I could not speak civilly to a lady that I had just seen giggling and flirting through one of Beethoven's finest symphonies;" and now, through an unexpected chain of circumstances, she had, for the first time in her life, reached a point of self disgust and self loathing. Such a moral condition is evil's opportunity when a disposition towards penitence or reform is either absent or resisted. The thought, therefore, of her father's drunkenness that day, and of herself as the immediate cause, made her so wretched

and reckless that she tried to forget her miserable self in excitement, as he had in lethargy. Even her mother chided her, asking if she did not "remember the day."

"Indeed, I shall have occasion to remember it," was her ambiguous answer; "but Mondays in the country are always blue, and I'll do my repenting then. If I were a good Catholic I'd hunt up a priest tomorrow."

"I'll be your father confessor today," said a black eyed young man, twirling his mustache.

"You, Mr. Sibely? You would lead me into more naughtiness than you would help me out of, twice over. For my confessor I would choose an ancient man who had had his dinner. What a comfortable belief it is, to be sure! All one has to do is to buzz one's sins through a grating (that is like an indefinite number of key holes) to a dozing old gentleman inside, and then away with a heart like a feather, to load up again. I'd bless the man who could convert me to a Papist."

But she hated the man who had made her feel the need

of absolution, and who seemed an inseparable part of all her disagreeable experiences. Although he appeared to avoid any locality in which she remained, she observed his eyes turned towards her more than once before the day closed, and it exasperated her almost beyond all endurance to believe that their expression was only that of contempt.

She might have been a little better pleased, perhaps, if she had known that she made the artist almost as uncomfortable as herself. Never before had there seemed to him so great a contrast between her beauty and herself, her features and her face. The latter could not fail to excite his increased disgust, while the former was so great that he found himself becoming resolutely bent on redeeming them from what seemed a horrid profanation. In accordance with one of his characteristics, the more difficult the project seemed, the more obstinately fixed became his purpose to discover whether she had a mind of sufficient calibre to transform her into what she might be, in contrast with what she was. The more he saw of her the more his interest as an

artist, and, indirectly, as a student of character, was deepened. If she had no mind worth naming he would give the problem up to the solution of time, which, however, promised nothing but a gradual fading away of all beauty, and the intensifying of inward deformity until fully reproduced in outward ugliness.

Chapter VII. Another Feminine Problem.

Early on Monday morning, Mr. Mayhew hastened from the breakfast table to the stage. His wife and daughter were not down to see him off, and he seemed desirous of shunning all recognition. With the exception that that his eyes were heavy and bloodshot from his debauch, his face had the same dreary, apathetic expression which Van Berg had noted on his arrival. And so he went back to his city office, where, fortunately for him, mechanical routine brought golden rewards, since he was in no state for business enterprise.

From his appearance, Van Berg could not help surmising what had been his condition the previous day. Indeed Stanton, with a contemptuous shrug, had the same as said on Sabbath evening, that his uncle had "dropped into the old slough." Although neither of the young men knew how great an impetus Ida had given her father towards such degradation, they both felt that if his wife and daughter had had the tact to detect and appreciate his better mood, produced by the morning ramble, they might have sustained him, and given him at least one day that he could remember without shame and discouragement.

Van Berg found something pathetic in Mr. Mayhew's weary and disheartened manner. It was like that of a soldier who has suffered defeat, but who goes on with his routine in a mechanical, spiritless manner, because there is nothing else to do. He seemed to have no hope, nor even a thought of retrieving the past and of reasserting his own manhood. Accustomed as the young artist had ever been to a household in which affection, allied to high bred courtesy

and mutual respect, made even homely daily life noble and beautiful, he could not look on the discordant Mayhew family with the charity, or the indifference, of those who have seen more of the wrong side of life. Had there been only poor, besmirched Mr. Mayhew, and stout, dressy, voluble Mrs. Mayhew, he would never have glanced towards them the second time; but his artist's eyes had fallen on the contradictory being that linked them together. Morally and mentally she seemed one with her parent stock; but her beauty, in some of its aspects, was so marvellous, that the desire to redeem it from its hateful and grotesque associations grew stronger every hour.

Instead, therefore, of going off upon solitary rambles, as he had done hitherto, he mingled more frequently in the amusements of the guests of the house, with the hope he would thus be brought so often in contact with the subject of his experiment, that her pique would wear away sufficiently to permit them to meet on something like friendly terms.

As far as the other guests were concerned, he had not trouble. They welcomed him to croquet, to walking and boating excursions, and to their evening games and promenades. Such of the ladies as danced were pleased to secure him as a partner. Indeed, from the dearth of gentlemen during the week, he soon found himself more in demand than he cared to be, and saw that even the landlord was beginning to rely upon him to keep up a state of pleasurable effervescence among his patrons. His languid friend, Stanton, was not a little surprised, and at last remarked:

"Why, Van, what has come over you? I never saw you in the role of a society fellow before!"

But his unwonted courtesies seemed wholly in vain. He propitiated and won all save one, and that one was the sole object of his effort. While all others smiled, her face remained cold and averted. Indeed she took such pains to ignore and avoid him, that it was generally recognized that there was a difference between them, and of course there

was an endless amount of gossiping surmise. As the hostility seemed wholly on the lady's side, Van Berg appeared to the better advantage, and Ida was all the more provoked as she recognized the fact.

She now began to wish that she had taken a different course. As Van Berg pursued his present tactics, her feminine intuition was not so dull but that she was led to believe he wished to make her acquaintance. Of course there was, to her mind, but one explanation of this fact he was becoming fascinated, like so many others.

"If I were only on speaking and flirting terms," she thought (the two relations were about synonymous in her estimation), "I might draw him on to a point which would give me a chance of punishing him far more than is now possible by sullenly keeping aloof. As it is, it looks to these people here as if he had jilted me instead of I him, and that I am sulking over it."

But she had entangled herself in the snarl of her own previous words and manner. She had charged her mother

and cousin to permit no overtures of peace; and once or twice, when mine host, in his good natured, off hand manner, had sought to introduce them, she had been so blind and deaf to his purpose as to appear positively rude. Her repugnance to the artist had become a generally recognized fact; and she had built up such a barrier that she could not break it down without asking for more help than was agreeable to her pride. But she chafed inwardly at her false position, and at the increasing popularity of the object of her spite.

Even her mother at last formed his acquaintance; and, as the artist listened to the garrulous lady for half an hour with scarcely an interruption, she pronounced him one of the most entertaining of men.

As Mrs. Mayhew was chanting his praises that evening, Ida broke out petulantly:

"Was there ever such a gad fly as this artist! He pesters me from morning till night."

"Pesters you! I never saw a lady so severely let alone

as you are by him. Whatever is the cause of your spite it seems to harm only yourself, and I should judge from your remark that it disturbs you much more than you would have it appear certainly far more than it does him."

There was no soothing balm in these words, as may well be supposed;

and yet the impression grew upon Ida that the artist would be friendly if he could; and the belief strengthened with him also that she took far too much pains to manifest what she would have others think to be mere indifference and dislike, and he intercepted besides, with increasing frequency, furtive glances towards himself. So much ice had accumulated between them, however that neither knew how it was to be broken.

One day, about the middle of the week, Van Berg found a stranger seated opposite to him at the dinner table. His first impression was, that the lady was not very young and that her features were quite plain; but before the meal was over he concluded that her face was decidedly

interesting, and that the suggestion of age had been made by maturity of character and the impress which some real and deep experience gives to the countenance, rather than by the trace of years.

While yet a stranger, the expression of her blue eyes, as she glanced around, was so kindly that she at once won the good will of all who encountered them. This genial, friendly light in her eyes seemed a marked characteristic. It was so different from the obtrusive, forward manner with which some seek to make acquaintances, that it would not have suggested a departure from modest reserve, even to the most cynical. It rather indicated a heart aglow with gentle feeling and genial good will, like a maple wood fire on a hospitality hearth, that warms all who come within the sphere of its influence.

Van Berg was naturally reserved, and slow to make new acquaintances. But before he had stolen many glances of the face opposite him he began to wish for the privilege of speaking to her a wish that was increased by the fact that

they were alone at the table, the other guests who usually occupied the chairs not having returned from their morning drive. she did not look at him in particular, nor appear to be in the least struck by his "distingue" air, as Ida had been before she was blinded by prejudice; but she looked out upon the world at large with such a friendly aspect that he was sure she had something pleasant to say. He was therefore well pleased when at last the landlord bustled up in his brusque way and said:

"Mr. Van Berg, permit me to make you acquainted with Miss Burton. She has had the faith to put herself under my charge for a few weeks, and I shall reward her by sharing the responsibility with you, who seem blessed with the benevolent desire of giving us all a good time," and then he bustled off to look after some other matter which required his attention during the critical hour of dinner.

Miss Burton acknowledged the young man's bow without a trace of affectation or reserve.

"I shall try not to prove a burden to either of you," she

said, with a smile.

"I have already discovered that you will not be," said Van Berg, "and was wishing for an introduction."

"I hope your wishes may always find so ready a fulfillment."

"That's a kindly wish, Miss Burton, but a vain one."

"Were we misanthropical people, Mr. Van Berg, we might sigh, 'and such are human wishes generally.'"

"One is often tempted to do that anyway, even when not especially prone to look askance at fortune."

"There is an easy way of escaping that temptation."

"How?"

"Do not form many wishes."

"Have you very few wishes?"

With a slight and piquant motion of her head she replied, "I was only giving a bit of trite advice. It's asking a great deal to require that one should both preach and practice."

"I think you are possessed by one wish which

swallows up most others," said Van Berg, a little abruptly.

A visible pallor overspread her face, and she drew back perceptibly as one might shrink from a blow.

"You know how strong first impressions are," resumed Van Berg hastily, "and the thought has passed through my mind that you might be so preoccupied in wishing good things for others as to quite forget yourself."

"If one could be completely occupied in that way," she said, with a faint smile which suggested rather than revealed a vista of her past experience, "one might have little occasion to wish for anything for self. But, Mr. Van Berg, only we poor unreasoning women put much faith in first impressions; and you know how often they mislead even us, who are supposed to have safe instincts."

"Do they often mislead you?"

"Indeed, sir," she replied, with a merry twinkle in her eye, "I think you must have learned the questions in the catechism, if not the answers."

Van Berg bit his lip. Here was a suggestion of a thorn

in the sweetbrier he believed he had discovered.

"Now see how far I am astray," she resumed with a frankness which had in it no trace of familiarity. "It is my impression you are a lawyer."

At this Van Berg laughed outright and said: "You are indeed mistaken. I have no connection with the influential class whose business it is to make and evade the laws. I am only one among the humble masses who aim to obey them. But perhaps you think your intuition goes deeper than surface facts and that I OUGHT to have been a cross questioner."

"I am quite sure my intuition is correct in thinking that you would not be very cross about it."

"Perhaps not, if disarmed by so smiling a face as yours."

The others, who had been delayed by a longer ride than usual, now entered and took the vacant chairs around the table. Van Berg felt sufficiently acquainted with them to

introduce Miss Burton, for he was curious to observe whether she would make the same impression on them as he had been conscious of himself.

They bowed with the quiet, well bred manner of society people, but were at first inclined to pay little heed to the plainly dressed and rather plain appearing young stranger. As one and another, however, glanced towards her, something about her seemed to linger in their memories and cause them to look again. The lady next to her offered a commonplace remark, chiefly out of politeness, and received so pleasant a reply in return that she turned her thoughts as well as her eyes to see who it really was that had made it. Then another spoke, and the response led her to speak again and again; and soon the entire party were describing their drive and living over its pleasantest features; and before the meal ended they were all gathered, metaphorically, around the mystical, maple wood fire that burned on the hearth of a nature that seemed so hospitable and kindly as to have no other mission than to

cheer and entertain.

"Who is that little brown thrush of a woman that you were so taken with at dinner?" asked Stanton, as they were enjoying a quiet smoke in their favorite corner of the piazza.

"Good for you, Stanton. I never knew you to be so appreciative before. Your term quite accurately describes her. She is both shy and reserved, but not diffident or awkward in the least. Indeed her manner might strike some as being peculiarly frank. But there is something back of it all; for young as she undoubtedly is, her face suggests to me some deep and unusual experience."

"Jupiter Ammon! What an abyss of mystery, surmise, and metaphysics you fell into while I was eating my dinner! I used the phrase 'brown thrush,' only in reference to her dress and general homeliness."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I take all back about your nice appreciation of character. I now grasp the whole truth your attention wandered sufficiently from your dinner to observe

that she wore a brown dress, and the one fact about the thrush that has impressed you is that it is brown. 'Here be truths' which leave nothing more to be said."

"You imaginative fellows are often ridiculously astray on the other tack, and see a thousand fold more than exists. But it's a pity you could not read all there was in this young woman's face, for it was certainly PLAIN enough. At this rate you will be asking our burly landlord to unbosom himself, insisting that he has a 'silent sorrow' tucked away somewhere under his ample waistcoat."

"His troubles, like yours, are banished by the dinner hour. I recognize your feeble witticism about her plain face, and forgive you because I thought it plain also at first, but when she came to speak and smile it ceased to be plain. I do not say she has had trouble, but she has had some experience in her past history which neither you nor I could understand."

"Quite likely; the measles, for instance, which I never had to my knowledge. Possibly she has had a lover who

was not long in finding a prettier face, and so left her, but not so disconsolate that she could not smile bewilderingly upon you."

"Come now, Stanton, I'll forewarn and forearm you. I confidently predict that the voice of this brown thrush will lure you out of a life which, to put it mildly, is a trifle matter of fact and material. You have glanced at her, but you have not seen her yet. Mark my words; your appetite will flag before many weeks pass."

"I wish I could pin you down to a large wager on this absurdity."

"I agree to paint you a picture if my prediction fails."

"And to finish it within a natural lifetime?" said Stanton, with much animation.

"To finish as promptly as good work can be done."

"Pardon me, Van. You had too much wine for dinner; I don't want to take advantage of you."

"I did not have any."

"In order to carry out this transaction honestly, am I

expected to make conscious and patient effort to come under the influence of this maiden in brown, who has had some mysterious complaint in the past, about which 'neither you, nor I, nor anybody knows,' as the poet saith: or, like the ancient mariner, will she 'hold me with her glittering eye?'"

"You have only to jog on in your old ways until she wakes you up and makes a man of you."

"I surely am dreaming; for never did the level headed Van Berg talk such arrant nonsense before. If she seems to you such a marvel, why don't you open your own mouth and let the ripe cherry drop into it."

"One reason will answer, were there no others she wouldn't drop. If you ever win her, my boy, you will have to bestir yourself."

"I'd rather win the picture. Let me see I know the very place in my room where I shall hang it."

"You are a little premature. That chicken is not yet hatched, and you may feel like hanging yourself in the

place of the picture before the summer is over."

"Let me wrap your head in ice water, Van. There's mine host O, Mr. Burleigh!" he cried to the landlord, who at that moment happened to cross the piazza; "please step here. My friend Mr. Van Berg has been strangely fascinated by the stranger in brown whom you, with some deep and malicious design, placed opposite to him at the table. What are her antecedents, and who are her uncles? I take a friendly interest in this young man. Indeed, I'm sort of a guardian angel to him, having saved his life many a time."

"Saved his life!" ejaculated the landlord. "How?"

"By quenching his consuming genius with good dinners. But come solve for me this riddle in brown. My friend usually gives but little heed to the feminine conundrums that smilingly ask to be answered, but for some occult reason he is in a state of sleepless interest over this one, and I know that his waistcoat is selling with gratitude to me for having the courage to ask these

questions."

"He is speaking several words for himself to one for me," said Van Berg; "and yet I admit that her face and manner struck me very pleasantly."

"Well, she has a pleasant little phiz, now hasn't she, Mr. Van Berg? I don't wonder Mr. Stanton was taken by her, for I was myself. It's but little I can tell you, save that she is a teacher in one of the New England female colleges, and that she brings letters to me from the most respectable parties, who introduce her as a lady in the best sense of the word. Further than that nothing was written, nor do I know anything concerning her. But any one who can't see that she's a perfect lady is no judge of the article."

"I will stake any amount on that, basing my belief only on the first impression of one interview," added Van Berg, decidedly.

"You now see how deeply my friend is impressed," said Stanton, with a satirical smile. "Thanks, Mr. Burleigh; we will not detain you any longer."

When alone again, he resumed, with an expression of disgust:

"A 'New England FEMALE college!' How aptly he words it. If there's any region on the face of the earth that I detest, it's New England; and if there is one type of women that I'd shun as I would 'ever angry bears,' it's a New England school ma'am."

"'But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea' of a restless, all absorbing passion, 'Thou'dst meet the bear I' the mouth,' as you will try to in this case. You will be ready to barter your ears for a kiss before very long."

"It will be after they have grown prodigiously long and hairy in some transformation scene like that in which the immortal Bottom was the victim."

"Your illustration tells against you, for it was only after his appropriate transformation that Bottom saw the fairy queen; but in your case the desire to 'munch' will be banned."

"Come, Van, we have had enough chaff on this topic,

already worn threadbare. I now know all about the mysterious complaint, the impress of which on the face of the school ma'am has so dazed you. It's a New England female college a place where they give a razor like edge to the wits of Yankee women, already too sharp, and develop in attenuated maidens the hatchet faces of their sires. You may as well set about that picture at once, whenever you feel in the mood for work."

"I admit that I have been speaking nonsense, and yet you may find many grains of truth in my chaff, nevertheless."

"But is my picture to end in chaff?"

"I will stand by my promise. If I lose, perhaps I'll paint you the school ma'am's portrait."

"Then we would both lose, for I would have no earthly use for that."

"Well, I will paint what you wish, within reason."

"I'm content, and with good reason, for never did I have such absurd good luck before."

"Ha! look yonder quick!"

Both the young men started to their feet, but before they could spring forward, the event, which had so suddenly aroused them, was an accomplished fact.

Both drew a long breath of relief as they looked at each other, and Van Berg remarked, with some emphasis:

"Act first, scene first, and it does not open like a comedy either."

Chapter VIII. Glimpses of Tragedy.

Stanton threw away his half burned cigar an act which proved him strongly moved and strode rapidly towards the main entrance near which a little group had already gathered, and among the others, Ida Mayhew. Not a hair of anybody's head was hurt, but an event had almost occurred which would have more than satisfied Stanton's spite against 'Yankee school ma'ams,' and would also have made him very miserable for months to come.

He had ordered his bays to the farther end of the piazza where they were smoking, as he proposed to take Van Berg out for a drive. His coachmen liked to wheel around the corner of the hotel and past the main entrance in a dashing showy style, and thus far had suffered no rebuke from his master for this habit. But on this occasion a careless nursery maid, neglectful of her charge, had left a little child to toddle to the centre of the carriage drive and there it had stood, balancing itself with the uncertain footing characteristic of first steps. Even if it could have seen the rapidly approaching carriage that was hidden by the angle of the building, its baby feet could not have carried it out of harm's way in time, and it is more than probable that its inexperience would have prevented any sense of danger.

But help was at hand in the person of one who never seemed so preoccupied with self as to lose an opportunity to serve others.

Two of the ladies, who had casually formed Miss

Burton's acquaintance at dinner, still lingered in the doorway to talk with her, wondering in the mean time why they remained so long, and meaning to break away every moment, but the expression of the young lady's eyes was so pleasant, and her manner, more than anything she said, so like spring sunshine that they were still standing in the doorway when the rumble and rush of the carriage was heard. The others did not notice these sounds, but Miss Burton, whose eyes had been following the child with an amused interest, suddenly broke off in the midst of a sentence, listened a second, then swiftly springing down the steps, darted towards the child.

Quick as she had been it seemed as if she would be too late, for, with cries of horror, the startled ladies on the piazza saw the horses coming so rapidly that it appeared that both the maiden and the child must be trampled under their feet. And so they would have been, had Miss Burton sought to snatch up the child and return, but with rare presence of mind she carried the child across the carriage

track to its farther side, thus making the most of the impetus with which she had rushed to the rescue.

The exclamations of the ladies drew many eyes to the scene, and all held their breath as the horses dashed past, the driver vainly endeavoring to pull them up in time. Having passed, even Stanton was compelled to admit that the "school ma'am" appeared to very great advantage as she stood panting, and with heightened color, holding in her arms the laughing child that seemed to think that the whole excitement was created for its amusement. She was about to restore the child to its nurse quietly, who now came bustling up with many protestations, when she was arrested by a loud voice exclaiming:

"Don't let that hateful creature touch my child again give him to me," and a lady, who had been drawn to the scene by the outcry, ran down the steps, and snatching the child, almost devoured him with kisses. Then, turning to the trembling nurse, she said harshly:

"Begone; I never wish to see your face again. Had it

not been for this lady, my child would have been killed through your carelessness. Excuse me, Miss Miss "

"Miss Burton," said the young lady quietly.

"Excuse my show of feeling; but you can't realize the service you have done us. Bertie is our only child, and we just idolize him. I'm so agitated, I must go to my room."

When the lady had disappeared, Miss Burton turned to the sobbing nurse and said:

"Will you promise me to be careful in the future if I intercede for you?"

"Dade, Miss, an' I will."

"Come to me, then, after supper. In the mean time remain where your mistress can summon you should she need your services, or be inclined to forgive you of her own accord," and leaving the crude and offending jumble of humanity much comforted, she returned to the piazza again.

Of course many pressed around her with

congratulations and words of commendation. Van Berg was much interested in observing how she would receive this sudden gush of mingled honest praise and extravagant flattery, for he recognized that the occasion would prove a searching and delicate test of character for which there was no time to prepare. She did not listen to their words with deprecatory smirk, nor with the pained expression of those sensitive souls to whom hearty words and demonstrations are like rough winds; nor was there a trace of exultation and self complacency in her bearing. Van Berg thought that her manner was peculiarly her own, for she looked into the faces around her with frank gladness, and her unconsciousness of herself can be, perhaps, best suggested by her own words.

"How fortunate it was," she said, "that I stood where I did, and happened to be looking at the child. If somebody had not been at hand it might have gone hard with the little fellow. Not that I think he would have been killed, but he might have been maimed or disfigured in a way that would

have caused him pain and mortification all his life."

"Miss Burton, I take my hat to you," said Van Berg, laughing. "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you all appreciate the force of Miss Burton's phrase, 'somebody,' since it implies that any one of us would have shown like courage and presence of mind if we had only been 'at hand,' or had stood where she did. Really Miss Burton, you are like smiling fortune, and 'thrust upon' us 'greatness' and heroism."

"Mr. Van Berg, you are laughing at me, and your quotation suggests that other Shakespearean words are in your mind to wit, 'much ado about nothing.' Now if YOU had had the opportunity you would have achieved the rescue in a way that would have been heroic and striking. Instead of scrambling out of the way with the child, like a timid woman, you would have rushed upon the horses, seized them by their heads, thrown them back upon their haunches, and while posing in that masterful attitude, you would have called out in stentorian tones 'Remove the

child."

All laughed at this unexpected sally, and no one enjoyed it more than Stanton, who, a little before, had been excessively angry at his coachman, and, like the mother of the child, had summarily dismissed the poor fellow from his service. Quite forgetful of his uncomplimentary words concerning "Yankee school ma'ams" in general, and this one in particular, he now stood near, and was regarding her not only with approval but with admiration. Her ready reply to Van Berg pleased him exceedingly, especially as the rising color in the face of his self possessed friend indicated a palpable hit. But the artist was equal to the occasion, and quickly replied as one who had felt a slight spur.

"I fear you are in part correct, Miss Burton. Instead of deftly saving the child and taking both it and myself out of harm's way, after your quiet womanly fashion, I should, no doubt, have 'rushed upon the horses and seized them by their heads.' But I fear your striking tableau, in which I

appeared to such advantage, would have been wholly wanting. I could not have stopped the horses in time; the child would have been run over and killed; the big, fat coroner would have come and sat on it and have made us all, who witnessed the scene, swear over the matter; the poor mother would have gone to the lunatic asylum; the father would have committed suicide; the nursery maid would have obtained another place and been the death of an indefinite number of other innocent babies; and last, but not least, I should have been dragged and trampled upon, my legs and arms broken, and perhaps my head, and so you would all have had to take care of me and you know a cross bear is a pleasanter subject than a sick man."

"Oh, what a chapter of horrors!" exclaimed several ladies in chorus.

"Nevertheless, we would have been equal to the occasion, even if you had been so dreadfully fractured," said Miss Burton. "We all would have become your devoted nurses, and each one of us would have had a

separate and infallible remedy, which, out of courtesy, you would have been compelled to use."

"Oh, bless my soul!" exclaimed Van Berg; "I have had a greater escape than the child. In being 'at hand' as you express it, Miss Burton, I am beginning to feel that you have saved me from death by torture."

"What a compliment to us!" said Miss Burton, appealing to the ladies; "he regards our ministrations as equivalent to death by torture."

"Oh, pardon me, I referred to the numberless 'separate and infallible remedies,' the very thought of which curdles my blood."

"I cannot help thinking that my friend's prospects would have been very dismal," put in Stanton; "for with broken legs and arms and head he would have been very badly fractured indeed to begin with, and then some one of his fair nurses might have broken his heart."

"My friend probably thinks, from a direful experience," said Van Berg, "that this would be worse than

all the other fractures put together; and perhaps it would. An additional cause for gratitude, Miss Burton, that you, and not I, were 'at hand.'"

"My reasons for gratitude to Miss Burton," said Stanton, "do not rest on what undoubtedly would have happened had my friend attempted the rescue, but on what has happened; and if Mr. Van Berg will introduce me I will cordially express my thanks."

"With all my heart. Miss Burton, permit me to present to you Mr. Stanton, whose only fault is a slight monomania for New England and her institutions."

The lady recognized Stanton with her wonted smiling and pleasant manner, which seemed so frank and open, but behind which some present eventually learned the real woman was hiding, and said:

"I am inclined to think that Mr. Van Berg's English, like Hebrew, reads backwards. I warn you Mr. Stanton, not to express any indebtedness to me, or I shall straightway exhibit one of the Yankee traits which you undoubtedly

detest, and attempt a bargain."

"Although assured that I shall get the worst of this bargain, I shall nevertheless heartily thank you that you were not only 'at hand,' but that you acted so promptly and courageously that the child was saved. What pleasure could I have taken with my horses if their feet had trampled that little boy?"

"I see my opportunity," replied Miss Burton, with a decisive little nod. "Your afternoon drives might have been marred by unpleasant thoughts as one's sleep is sometimes disturbed by bad dreams. You have no idea what a delight it is to the average New England mind, Mr. Stanton, to secure the vantage ground in a bargain. In view of your own voluntary admissions, you can scarcely do otherwise than let me have my own way."

With the exception of the two or three who had formed Miss Burton's acquaintance at dinner, those who at first had gathered around her had by this time dwindled away. Ida Mayhew sat near in an open window of the parlor,

ostensibly reading a novel, but in reality observant of all that occurred. Both she and Van Berg had been amused by the fact that Stanton, usually so languid and nonchalant, had been for once thoroughly aroused. Between anger at his coachmen, alarm for the child, and interest in its preserver, he was quite shaken out of his wonted equanimity, which was composed equally of indolent good nature, self complacency, and a disposition to satirize the busy, earnest world around him. It was apparent that he was somewhat nonplussed by Miss Burton's manner and words, and those who knew him well enjoyed his perplexity, although at a loss themselves to imagine what object Miss Burton could have in view. Half unconsciously Van Berg turned his smiling, interested face towards Ida Mayhew, who was regarding her cousin with a similar expression, but the moment she caught the artist's eyes she coldly dropped her own to her book again.

"Well, Miss Burton," said Stanton, with a slightly embarrassed laugh, "I admit that I am cornered, so you can

make your own terms."

"They shall be grievous, I assure you. Do you see that rueful face in your carriage yonder?"

"That of my coachman? Bad luck to his ill omened visage! Yes."

"No need of wishing bad luck to any poor creature it will come only too soon without. In view of the indebtedness which you have so gracefully acknowledged to one of that trading and thrifty race that never loses an opportunity to turn, if not a penny more or less honest, why, something else, to their advantage, I stipulate that you give your dependent there another chance. I heard you dismiss him from your service a short time since, and he evidently does not wish to go. His disconsolate face troubles me; so please banish his dismal looks, and he'll be more careful hereafter."

"And have you had time to see and think about him?" said Stanton, with a little surprise in his tone. "You shall banish his dismal looks yourself. Barney," he called, "drive

close to the piazza here. This lady has probably saved you from arrest, and she now intercedes in your behalf. In compliance with her request, I will keep you in my service, but I wish you to thank her and not me."

Barney took off his hat and ejaculated: "May yees shadder niver grow less, me leddy, an' may the Powers grant that yees bright eyes may see no trouble o' their own, bain they're so quick to see a poor man's bad luck."

The smiling manner with which she acknowledged his good wishes seemed to warm the man all over, and he looked as if transformed as he drove back to his stand.

"How is this, Miss Burton?" said Stanton. "I feel as if I had had the best of this bargain."

"That impression is wholly due to my Yankee shrewdness; and now, having gained my point," she added, with a graceful inclination, "I will not keep you from your drive any longer."

"My conscience will not permit me to complete this transaction until I have assured you that my horses and

carriage are at your service at any time."

"Be careful; I may take advantage of you again."

"Please do so," replied Stanton, lifting his hat; and then he went to his carriage more surprised at himself than at anything else that had occurred. Miss Burton returned to the doorway and quietly resumed the conversation that had been interrupted by the peril of the child.

Van Berg was about to follow his friend, but an acquaintance coming up the steps, detained him a few moments.

"Oh, Harold, come!" cried Stanton, impatiently.

Miss Burton started violently. The sentence upon her lips was never finished, and her face became ashen in color. She looked at Van Berg with a strange expression as he, unconscious of her agitation, answered:

"Yes, I'm coming," and moved away.

"My dear Miss Burton," said the lady with whom she was speaking, "you are ill; you look ready to faint. This excitement has been a greater strain upon you than you

have realized."

"Perhaps I had better go to my room," faltered the young lady; and she fled with a precipitancy that her companion could not understand.

Ida Mayhew also witnessed this unexpected bit of mystery, and it puzzled her not a little. She had left the parlor and was standing in the hall way when her cousin's voice summoned his friend after his familiar fashion. Why should this stranger look at Mr. Van Berg as if the sound of his Christian name were a mortal wound? Or was that a mere coincidence and in reaction from excitement and unwonted effort had she suddenly taken ill? For a wonder, she thought more about Miss Burton than herself that afternoon. She had decided from the first that she did not like this new comer. That point had been settled by the fact that the artist's first impressions concerning her had evidently been favorable, and she remembered that his earliest glances and words in regard to herself had been anything but complimentary.

Chapter IX. Unexpectedly Thrown Together.

"I suppose you are satisfied by this time, Stanton," began Van Berg, as they drove away, "that I was very safe in offering you that picture on the conditions named, and that you have not the ghost of a chance of obtaining it."

"Nonsense," replied Stanton. "The picture is practically won already. I admit that Miss Burton is an exception to all her species; and, now that I have seen her, I prove how little I am under the influence of prejudice by acknowledging the fact, and by giving her credit for her courage and agreeable manners. But how absurd to imagine that this plain little stranger can ever be to me more than she is today a summer acquaintance at a summer resort! She will soon drop from our memories and leave no more trace than these rustling leaves overhead after they have fulfilled their brief purpose."

"Here's a symptom already," cried Van Berg. "My matter of fact friend is already in the subtle current, and

unconsciously drops into sentiment, and expresses himself in poetic trope. I foresee that the 'rustling leaves' will end in a rustling wedding robe and gorgeous apparel; for when you cage the 'brown thrush' you will have the bad taste to insist on a change of plumage."

"I begin to understand you at last," retorted Stanton. "You have been smitten yourself, and this is your strategy to conceal the fact. The trouble is that you have overdone the matter, and revealed your transfixed heart long before I should have suspected the wound. Had you not better commence on the picture soon, for this matter may disable you for a season?"

"I won't swear that I will not become your rival, for our little heroine interests me hugely. There is something back of her smiling face. Her manner seems like crystal in its frankness, and yet I think few in the house will ever become better acquainted with her than they are today."

"I shall take more than a languid interest in watching you progress with this smiling sphinx," said Stanton, "and

in the mean time shall gloat over my picture."

"Well, Barney," said Van Berg, as they drove up to the stables on their return, "you did have a streak of good luck this afternoon. I hope you are grateful to the lady who secured it for you."

"Faix, sur, an' I niver seed the likes o' her afore. The smilin' look she gave me jist warmed the very core o' me heart, and her swate eyes seemed to say, 'Nary a bit o' ill luck would ye have again, Barney, had I me way.' What's more, she's a goin' to intercade for the nurse maid. They nadn't tell me that all the heretics will stay in purgatory."

"Look here, Stanton, were I a theologian I'd make a note of that. Miss Burton has discovered a logic that routs superstition."

Van Berg quite longed for the supper hour, that he might resume conversation with the interesting stranger, and he was promptly in his place at the table. But she did not appear. The lady with whom she had been conversing, remarked:

"She was taken suddenly ill, just as you and your friend drove away this afternoon. Learning from Mr. Burleigh that she is here alone and without friends, I knocked at her door before I came down, and asked if I could do anything for her. She said that she would be better in the morning, and that all she needed was perfect quiet. It's strange how suddenly she was taken ill! She seemed perfectly well one moment, and then she fled to her room as if the ghost were in pursuit. I suppose it was reaction from excitement; or she may have some form of heart disease."

"Are heart difficulties so serious as that with ladies?" asked Van Berg with a smile.

"I never had acute symptoms of any kind," the lady replied. "Indeed I think I am a trifle cold and matter of fact in my disposition, but I began to thaw so perceptibly under Miss Burton's influence that I became quite interested in her. I think I deserve some credit for saving the child also, for it was I who kept her talking in the doorway. Most

people are a weariness to me, and I was surprised to find so marked an exception."

It must not be supposed that Van Berg's interest in the new arrival had led him to forget the motive which had brought him to the Lake House. This would not be in accordance with his character, and as far as possible, he had been closely observant of Miss Mayhew during the scenes of the afternoon. He had been rewarded by discovering, for the first time, that she was at least capable of a good and generous impulse, for her face had been expressive of genuine admiration and gladness when she saw Miss Burton with the rescued child in her arms after the carriage swept by. In this expression he obtained a clearer hint than he had ever before received of the beauty that might be her constant possession could the mean and marring traits of her character be exchanged for qualities in harmony with her perfect features. But while this gleam, this flash of ideal beauty increased his desire for success in his experiment, the young lady's bearing towards him was as discouraging

as ever. If he had not been at Miss Burton's side, he believed that she would have come forward and offered her congratulations as had several other ladies. It would seem that her vanity had been so severely wounded she would never forgive him, and he determined he would no longer make a martyr of himself by playing the agreeable to all in the hotel in the hope that, by pouring so much oil on the waters, even her asperity might be removed. He half believed that she recognized his effort to form her acquaintance, and found a malicious pleasure in thwarting him. Therefore, he decided to take his sketch book and go off upon the hills in the morning, thus enjoying a little respite from his apparently philanthropic labors.

Before he left the breakfast table the following day, Miss Burton appeared. He thought he detected an ominous redness about her eyes, as well as the pallor which would be the natural result of illness; but she seemed to have recovered her spirits, and the rather quiet and self absorbed little group that had hitherto seriously devoted themselves

to steak and coffee, speedily brightened up under her pleasantries. Indeed she kept them lingering so long that the Mayhews and Stanton passed out before them, the latter casting a wistful glance at the cheerful party, for he had been having a stupid time.

When, much later than he expected, he started on his brief sketching excursion he found that his mind was kindled and aglow with pleasant thoughts, and that the summer landscape had been made sunnier by the sunny face he had just left.

But as he plodded his way back late in the afternoon, the sunbeams, no longer genial, became oppressive, and he was glad to hail one of the hotel stages that was returning from a neighboring village.

The vehicle already contained two adult passengers. One was a stout, red faced woman with a baby and an indefinite number of parcels, and the other was Ida Mayhew, who was returning from a brief shopping excursion.

As the latter saw Van Berg enter she colored, bit her lip, half frowned, and looked steadfastly away from him. Thus the stage lumbered on with its oddly assorted inmates, that, although belonging to the same human family, seemed to have as little in common as if each had come from a different planet. That Miss Mayhew looked so resolutely away from him was rather to Van Berg's advantage, for it gave him a chance to compare her exquisite profile with the expanse, slightly diversified, of the broad red face opposite.

The stout woman held her baby as if it were a bundle, and stared straight before her. As far as Van Berg could observe, not a trace of an idea or a change of expression flitted across the wide area of her sultry visage, and he found himself speculating as to whether the minds of these two women differed as greatly as their outward appearance. Indeed he questioned whether one had any more mind than the other, and was inclined to think that despite their widely separated spheres of life they were equally

dwarfed.

While he was thus amusing himself with the contrasts, physical and metaphysical, which the two passengers opposite him presented, the stout woman suddenly looked out of the window at her side, and then, in a tone that would startle the quietest nerves, shouted to the driver:

"Hold on!"

Miss Mayhew half rose from her seat and looked around with something like dismay; but as she only encountered Van Berg's slightly humorous expression, she colored more deeply than before, and recalled her eyes to the farther angle of the stage with a fixedness and rigidity as great as if it had contained the head of Medusa.

Meantime the driver drew up to a small cottage by the road side, and scrambled down from his seat that he might assist the stout woman with her accumulation of bundles. She handed him out the baby, preferring to look after the more precious parcels herself. Van Berg politely held the door open for her; but just as she was squeezing through

the stage entrance with her arms full and had her foot on the last step, her cottage door flew open with something to the effect of an explosion, and out burst three or four children with a perfect din of cries and shouts. Two vociferous dogs joined in the sudden uproar; the hitherto drowsy horses started as if a bomb shell had dropped under their noses, and speedily broke into a mad gallop, leaving the stout woman prostrate upon her bundles in the road, and the driver helplessly holding her baby.

Miss Mayhew's cold rigidity vanished at once. Indeed dignity was impossible in the swaying, bounding vehicle. There was a momentary effort to ignore her companion, and then terror overcame all scruples. Turning her white face towards him, she exclaimed:

"Are we not in great danger?"

"I admit I would rather be in my chair on Mr. Burleigh's piazza. With your permission, I will come to your end of the stage and speak to the horses through the open window."

"Oh, come do anything under heaven to stop these horrid beasts."

Van Berg edged his way up a little past Miss Mayhew, and began speaking to the frightened horses in firm, quiet tones. At first they paid no heed to him, and as the stage made a sudden and desperate lurch, the young lady commenced to scream.

"If you do that you will insure the breaking of both our necks," said Van Berg, sharply. "If you will keep quiet I think I can stop them. See, we have quite a stretch of level road beyond us, before we come to a hill. Give me a chance to quiet them."

The terror stricken girl kept still for a moment, and then started up, saying

"I shall spring out."

"No, Miss Mayhew, you must not do that," said Van Berg, decidedly. "You must be greatly injured, and you would with almost certainty be disfigured for life if you sprang out upon the stony road. You could not help falling

on your face."

"Oh, horrible!" she exclaimed.

At the next heavy lurch of the stage she half rose again to carry out her rash purpose, but the artist seized her hand and held her in her place, at the same time speaking kindly and firmly to the horses. They now began to heed his voice, and to recover from their panic.

"See, Miss Mayhew," he said, "you have only to control yourself a few moments longer, and our danger is over."

"Oh, do stop them, quick," she gasped, clinging to his hand as if he were her only hope, "and I'll never forget your kind oh, merciful heaven!"

At this favorable moment, when the horses were fast coming under control, a spiteful cur came tearing out after them, renewing their panic with tenfold intensity. As the dog barked on one side they sheered off on the other, until they plunged down the side of the road. The stage was

nearly overturned, and then it stopped with a sudden and heavy thump. Miss Mayhew was precipitated into Mr. Van Berg's arms, and she clung to him for a moment in a paroxysm of terror. His wits had not so far deserted him but that he perceived that the stage had struck against a tree, that the horses had broken away, and that he and his companion were perfectly safe. If the whole truth must be told, it cannot be said that he endured the young lady's embrace with only cold and stoical philosophy. He found it wholly novel and not a painful experience. Indeed he was conscious of a temptation to delay the information of their escape, but a second's thought taught him that he must at once employ all his tact in the delicate and difficult task of reconciling the frightened girl to herself and her own conduct; otherwise her pride, and also her sense of delicacy, would now receive a new and far deeper wound, and a more hopeless estrangement follow. He therefore promptly lifted her up, and placed her limp form on the opposite seat.

"I assure you we are now perfectly safe, Miss Mayhew," he said; "and let me congratulate you that your self control prevented you from leaving the stage, for if you had done so you would undoubtedly have been greatly injured."

"Where where are the horses?" she faltered.

"I really do not know! They have disappeared. The stage struck a tree, and the brutes broke away. They will probably gallop home to the alarm and excitement of every one about the hotel. Pray compose yourself. The house is not far away, and we can soon reach it if you are not very much hurt."

"Are you sure the danger is all over?"

"Yes; this is now not the slightest chance of a tragedy."

There must have been a faint twinkle in his eye, for she exclaimed,

passionately:

"The whole thing has been a comedy to you, and I half

believe you brought it all about to annoy me."

"You do me great injustice, Miss Mayhew," said Van Berg, warmly.

"Here we are sitting in this horrid old stage by the roadside," she resumed, in tones of strong vexation. "Was there ever anything more absurd and ridiculous than it has all been! I am mortified beyond expression, and suppose I shall never hear the last of it," and she burst into a hysterical passion of tears.

"Miss Mayhew," said Van Berg hastily, "you certainly must realize that we have passed through very great peril together, and if you think me capable of saying a word about this episode that is not to your credit, you were never more mistaken in your life."

At this assurance she became more calm.

"I know you dislike me most heartily," Van Berg continued; "but you have less reason to do so than you think "

"I have good reason to dislike you. You despise me;

and now that I have been such a coward you are comparing me with Miss Burton who acted so differently yesterday."

"I have not even thought of Miss Burton," protested Van Berg, at the same time conscious, now that her name had been recalled to his memory, that she would have acted a much better part. "I am only sincerely glad that our necks were not broken, and I hope that you have not suffered any severe bruises. As to my despising you, if you will honor me with your acquaintance you may discover that you are greatly in error."

"Then you truly think that we have been in danger?" she asked, wiping her eyes.

"Most assuredly. When you come to think the matter over calmly, you will realize that we were in very great danger. I think the affair has ended most happily rather than absurdly."

"Really, sir, when I remember how the 'affair,' as you term it, actually did end, I feel as if I never wished to see you again."

"Miss Mayhew, I appeal to your generosity. Was I to blame for

that which was so disagreeable to you? Surely you will not be so unfair as to punish me for what neither you nor I could help. I think fate means we shall be friends, and has employed this unexpected episode to break the ice between us. If you are now sufficiently composed I will assist you to alight, in order that the driver, who is approaching, may be relieved of all fears on our account."

"Oh, certainly. As it is, I suppose he will have a ridiculous story to tell."

"There is nothing that he, or the others who are following him can tell, save that the horses ran away and that we most fortunately escaped all injury. Ah! I see that you are a little lame. Please take my arm; the hotel is but a quarter of a mile away. Or perhaps you would prefer that I should send the driver for a carriage. You could wait in yonder cottage, or here, in the shade of the trees."

"I am not very lame, and if I were I would not mind it."

My wish is that the horrid affair may occasion as little remark as possible. I can reach my room by a side entrance, and so come quietly down to dinner. I suppose that I must take your arm since I cannot walk very well without it."

They therefore turned their backs on the breathless driver and his eager questions, and proceeded slowly towards the hotel. After a brief examination of the shattered stage, the man ran panting past them in search of his horses; and they were again left alone.

Chapter X. Phrases too Suggestive.

For a few moments Miss Mayhew and Van Berg walked on in silence, each very doubtful of the other. At last the artist began:

"I am well aware, Miss Mayhew, that this unexpected episode and this enforced companionship give me no rights whatever. I do not propose to annoy you, after seeing you safely to the hotel, by assuming that we are acquainted, nor

do I intend to subject myself to the mortification of being informed publicly, by your manner, that we are not on speaking terms. I would be glad to have this question settled now. I ask your pardon for anything that I may have said or done to hurt your feelings, and having thus gone more than half way it would be ungenerous on your part not to respond in like spirit."

"You apologize, then?"

"No; I ask your pardon for anything that may have hurt your feelings."

"You have said very disagreeable things about me, Mr. Van Berg."

"I did not know you then."

"I do not think you have changed your opinion of me in the least."

"I evidently have a much higher opinion of you than you of me, and I am seeking your acquaintance with a persistence such as I never manifested in the case of any other lady. Thus the odds are all in your favor. Having been

so unexpectedly thrown together "

"'Thrown together,' indeed Mr. Van Berg, you ARE mocking me," and her eyes again filled with tears of vexation.

"I assure you I am not," said Van Berg earnestly. "I could not be so mean as to twit you with an accident which you could not help, and with an act which was wholly involuntary on your part. Can we not both let by gones by by gones and commence anew?"

Miss Mayhew bit her lip and hesitated a few moments.

"I think that will be the better way," she said. "We will both let by gones, especially this ridiculous episode in the stage. I'll put you on your good behavior."

"Thank you, Miss Mayhew. I would take our late risk twenty times for such a result."

"I would not take it again on any account whatever. Please refer to it no more. I declare, there comes Cousin Ik and Mr. Burleigh to meet us. Was one's fortune ever so

exasperating! Ik will tease me out of all comfort for weeks to come."

"Say little and leave all to my discretion," said Van Berg, reassuringly; "and, by the way, you might limp a little more decidedly," which she immediately did.

"My dear Miss Mayhew, I trust you are not seriously hurt," began Mr. Burleigh while still several yards off.

Stanton's face was a study as he approached. Indeed he seemed half ready to explode with suppressed merriment, but before he could speak a warning glance from Van Berg checked him.

"Miss Mayhew might have been seriously and possibly fatally injured," said the artist gravely, "had it not been for her self control. Although it seemed that the stage would be dashed to pieces every moment, I told her that in my judgement it would be safer to remain within it than to spring out upon the hard and stony road, and I am very glad that the final event confirmed my opinion."

As they were by this time near to the hotel, others who

had been alarmed by seeing the horses tearing up to the stable door, now hastily joined them; and last, but not least, Mrs. Mayhew came panting upon the scene. Van Berg felt the hand of the young lady trembling in nervous apprehension upon his arm, from which, in her embarrassment, she forgot to remove it. But the artist did not fail her, and in answer to Mr. Burleigh's eager questions as to the cause of the accident, explained all so plausibly, and in such a matter of fact manner as left little more even to be surmised. His brief and prosaic history of the affair concluded with the following implied tribute to his companion, which still further relieved her from fear of ridicule:

"Miss Mayhew," he said, "instead of jumping out, after the frantic terror blinded manner of most people, remained in the stage and so has escaped, I trust, with nothing worse than a slight lameness caused by the violent motion of the vehicle. I will now resign her to your care, Mr. Stanton, and I am glad to believe that the occasion will

require the services of the wheelwright and harness maker only, and not those of a surgeon," and lifting his hat to Mrs. Mayhew and her daughter he bowed himself off the scene.

Ida, leaning on the arm of her cousin, limped appropriately to her room, whither she had her dinner sent to her, more for the purpose of gaining time to compose her nerves than for any other reason.

The impression that she had behaved courageously in peril was rapidly increased as the story was repeated by one and another, and she received several congratulatory visits in the afternoon from her lady acquaintances; and when she came down to supper she found that she was even a greater heroine than Miss Burton had been. In answer to many sympathetic inquiries, she said that she "felt as well as ever," and she tried to prove it by her gayety and careful toilet.

But she was decidedly ill at ease. Her old self complacency was ebbing away faster than ever. From the time that it had first been disturbed by the artist's frown in

the concert garden, she had been conscious of a secret and growing self dissatisfaction.

It seemed to be this stranger's mission to break the spell vanity and flattery had woven about her. The congratulations she was now receiving were secured by a fraudulent impression, if not by actual falsehood, and she permitted this impression to remain and grow. The one, who above all others she most feared and disliked, knew this. In smilingly accepting the compliments showered upon her from all sides she felt that she must appear to him as if receiving stolen goods, and she believed that in his heart he despised her more thoroughly than ever.

To the degree that he caused her disquietude and secret humiliation, her desire to retaliate increased, and she resolved, before the day closed, to use her beauty as a weapon to inflict upon him the severest wound possible. If it were within the power of her art she would bring him to her feet and keep him there until she could, in the most decided and public manner, spurn his abject homage. She

would have no scruple in doing this in any case, but, in this instance, success would give her the keenest satisfaction.

His very desire for her acquaintance, as she understood it, was humiliating, and, in a certain sense, demoralizing. Her other suitors had imagined that she had good traits back of her beauty, and hitherto she had been carelessly content to believe that she could display such traits in abundance should the occasion require them. Here was one, however, who, while despising the woman, was apparently seeking her for the sake of her beauty merely; and her woman's soul, warped and dwarfed as it was, resented an homage that was seemingly sensuous and superficial, and would, of necessity, be transient. In her ignorance of Van Berg's motives, and in the utter impossibility of surmising them, she could scarcely come to any other conclusion; and she determined to punish him to the utmost extent of her ability.

Thus it came to pass that Miss Mayhew had designs

against Van Berg that were not quite as amiable as those of the artist in regard to herself.

Stanton, in a low tone, remarked to her at the supper table, "Now that fate has throw you and Van Berg together in such a remarkable manner" (the young lady colored deeply at this unfortunate expression and looked at him keenly), "I trust that you will yield gracefully to destiny and treat him with ordinary courtesy when you meet. Otherwise you may occasion surmises that will not be agreeable to you."

"Has he been telling you anything about this morning?" she asked quickly.

"Nothing more than he said in your presence. Why, was there anything more to tell?"

"Certainly not, but he made ill natured remarks about me once that is, you said he did and why should he not again?"

"Well, he has not. I think he spoke very handsomely of you this morning. I hope he didn't exaggerate your good

behavior."

"If you prefer to believe ill of me you are welcome to do so. For my part, I believe you exaggerate what Mr. Van Berg said at the concert, and that he never meant to be so rude. As far as I can judge, he has shown no such unmannerly disposition since coming here."

"Indeed, you are right. I think his disposition has compared favorably with your own."

"Well," she replied, with a peculiar smile, "we are on speaking terms for the present."

"That smile bodes no good will towards my friend, but for once you will find a man who will not fall helplessly in love with your mere beauty."

"If you will glance at yonder table you can see that Miss Burton has already so absorbed him that he has eyes for no one else."

"They have jolly good times at that table. I wish we were there."

"Indeed! are you bewitched also? I can't see what it is

that people find so attractive in that plain looking girl."

"Well, for one thing, she has a mind. Beauty without mind is like salad without dressing."

"And do you mean to say that I have no mind?" Ida asked, with a sudden flush.

"My dear Coz, we were speaking solely of Miss Burton. Indeed, I think you have a very decided will of your own."

"I understand you. Well, in what other respects is Miss Burton my superior?"

"I doubt if Miss Burton ever thinks of herself as superior to any one, and that's another very amiable trait in her."

"Can you not sum up her perfections a little more rapidly? Life is short," remarked Ida, acidly.

"Come, Coz, let me get you some sweet oil before you finish your supper. You know you are the handsomest girl in the State, and that's distinction enough for one woman. To you, Miss Burton is only a plain school teacher. Why

should you envy her?" "I do not envy her, nor can I see why people are so carried away with her."

"It IS remarkable to see what an impression she has made in two brief days. Of course her courage in saving the child served as a general and favorable introduction, but it does not by any means explain her growing popularity. For some reason or other those about her always seem to be having a good time. See how animated and pleased is the expression of all the faces at her table yonder. It was the same on the croquet ground this morning. She effervesced like champagne, and before we knew it we were all in a state of exhilaration and the morning had gone."

"I hate these bold, forward women who are quick to become acquainted with every one. A man of this type is bad enough, but a woman is unendurable."

"I agree with you in the abstract most heartily; but the only bold thing that I have seen Miss Burton do was to run under the feet of my horses. You might as well call a ray of

sunshine bold and forward; and people like sunshine when it is as nicely tempered as her manner is. I confess that when I first learned who she was, and before I had met her personally, I was greatly prejudiced against her, but one would have to be a churl indeed to remain proof against her genial good nature. For my part I intend to enjoy it, as I do all the other good things the gods throw in my way."

"The gods would indeed be careless to leave any good things within

your reach, unless they were meant for you," snapped Ida.

"Good for you, Coz; your ride with Van Berg has already brightened you up. There is no telling what you might not become if you would only associate with men who had sufficient brains not to grow spooney over your pretty face."

As Ida and her mother passed out on the piazza, Van Berg joined them and said:

"I am glad to see that you have so fully recovered, Miss Mayhew. You prove again that you possess good

strong nerves."

"Thank you," said the young lady, laconically, and with a sudden accession of color.

"Mr. Van Berg," began Mrs. Mayhew with great animation, "I'm excessively thankful that you happened to be on the road, and that the stage overtook you this morning. It was so fortunate that I almost think it providential. How dreadful it would have been if Ida had been alone in such frightful peril! I cannot tell you also how delighted I am that my daughter behaved so beautifully. Indeed, I must confess that I am agreeably surprised, for Ida was never famous for her courage. Your own manner must have inspired confidence in her; and now that you have been so fortunately THROWN TOGETHER, I trust you may be better friends in the future."

Miss Mayhew's rising color deepened into an intense scarlet, and, as she turned away to hide her confusion, she could not forbear shooting a wrathful glance at the artist. He had sufficient self control not to change a muscle, or to

appear in the slightest degree aware of the embarrassment caused by her mother's words, and especially the use of the phrase grown to be most hateful from its associations that so vividly recalled to the incensed maiden the anomalous position in which she found herself at the end of her perilous morning ride.

"You ladies differ favorably from us men," said Van Berg, quietly. "You rise to meet an emergency by an innate quality of your sex, whereas, in our case, if our native strength is not equal to the occasion we fall below it as a matter of course."

"Oh, that accounts for Ida's coming off with such flying colors she rose to meet the emergency. I hope, however, she will EMBRACE no more such opportunities of showing her courage why! Ida, what IS the matter? what have I said?" but the young lady, with face inflamed, vanished in the direction of her room.

"Well, this IS strange," remarked the lady with a sharp glance of inquiry at the artist, who still managed to

maintain an expression of lamb like innocence. "I do believe the poor child is ill, and, now I think of it, she has not acted like herself for several days;" and she sought her daughter with hasty steps.

But the young lady did not go to her room, being well aware that her mother would soon follow for the explanation which she could not give. Therefore, taking a side corridor, she joined some acquaintances on another piazza.

Chapter XI. A "Tableau Vivant."

"Miss Mayhew, will you please step here?" said a very fashionably dressed lady.

Turning, Ida saw near her the mother of the child that had been rescued the previous day. She, with her husband, had been talking very earnestly to Mr. Burleigh, the proprietor of the house, who seemed in rather a dubious state of mind over some proposition of theirs.

"Miss Mayhew, we want your opinion in regard to a certain matter," began the lady volubly. "Of course I and my husband feel very grateful to the young woman who saved our child from your cousin's horses yesterday. Indeed, my husband feels so deeply indebted that he wishes to make some return and I have suggested that he present her with a check for five hundred dollars. I learn from Mr. Burleigh that she is a teacher, and therefore, of course, she must be poor. Now, in my view, if my husband or some other gentleman should present this check in the parlor, with an appropriate little speech, it would be a nice acknowledgment of her act. Don't you think so?"

"I do not think I am qualified to give an opinion," said Ida, "as I have no acquaintance with the lady whatever."

"I'm sure it will be just the thing to do," said the lady, becoming more infatuated with her project every moment. "Do you think your cousin would be willing to make the speech?"

At this suggestion Ida laughed outright. "The idea,"

she said, "of my cousin making a speech of any kind, or in any circumstances!"

"Now I think of it," persisted the lady, "Miss Burton and Mr. Van Berg sit at the same table, and he seems better acquainted with her than any of the gentlemen. He's the one to make the speech, only I do not feel that I know him well enough to ask him. Do you, Miss Mayhew?"

"Indeed I do not," said the young lady, decisively; "I am the last one in the house to ask any favors of Mr. Van Berg."

"Well, then, Mr. Burleigh can explain everything and ask him."

"Really now, Mrs. Chints" for such was the lady's name "I don't quite believe that Mr. Van Berg would approve of giving Miss Burton money in public, and before anything further is done I would like to ask his judgement. It all may be eminently proper, as you say, and I would not like to stand in the way of the young lady's receiving so handsome a present, and would not for the world if

I thought it would be agreeable to her; but there is something about her that "

"I have it," interrupted the positive minded lady, unheeding and scarcely hearing Mr. Burleigh's dubious circumlocution, and she put her finger to her forehead for a moment in an affected stage like manner, as if her ideas of the "eternal fitness of things" had been obtained from the sensational drama. "I have it: the child himself shall hand her the gift from his own little hand, and you, Mr. Chints, can say all that need be said. It will be a pretty scene, a 'tableau vivant.' Mr. Chints, come with me before the young woman leaves her present favorable position near the parlor door. Mr. Burleigh, your scruples are sentimental and groundless. Of course the young woman will be delighted to receive in one evening as much, and perhaps more, than her whole year's salary amounts to. Come, Mr. Chints, Mr. Burleigh, if you wish, you may group some of your friends near;" and away she rustled, sweeping the floor with her silken train.

Mr. Chints lumbered after her with a perplexed and martyr like expression. He was a mighty man in Washington Market, but in a matter like this he was as helpless as a stranded whale. The gift of five hundred dollars did not trouble him in the least; he could soon make that up; but taking part in a "tableau vivant" under the auspices of his dramatic wife was like being impaled.

"Well," said Mr. Burleigh, shaking his head, "I wash my hands of the whole matter. Five hundred dollars is a snug sum, but I doubt if that little woman takes it. I'm more afraid she'll be offended and hurt. What do you think, Miss Mayhew?"

"I've no opinion to offer, Mr. Burleigh. These people are all comparative strangers to me. Mrs. Chints is determined to have her own way, and nothing that you or I can say would make any difference. My rule is to let people alone, and if they get into scrapes it sometimes does them good;" and she left him that she might witness the Chints' tableau.

"That's just the difference between you and Miss Burton," muttered Mr. Burleigh, nodding his head significantly after her. "She'd help a fellow out of a scrape and you'd help him into one. Well, if the old saying's true, 'Handsome is that handsome does,' the little school teacher would be the girl for me were I looking for my mate."

On her way to the entrance of the main parlor, Ida stopped a moment at an open window near the corner where Stanton and Van Berg were smoking.

"Cousin Ik," she said, 'sotto voce.'

He rose and joined her.

"If you wish to see a rich scene, hover near the entrance of the main parlor."

"What do you mean?"

"I've learned that Mr. and Mrs. Chints, and possibly your favorite new performer, Miss Burton, are going to act a little comedy together: come and see;" and she vanished.

"Van," said Stanton in a vexed tone, "there's some mischief on foot;" and he mentioned what his cousin had

said, adding: "Can Ida have been putting that brassy Mrs. Chints up to some absurd performance that will hurt Miss Burton's feelings?"

They rose and sauntered down the piazza, Van Berg trying to imagine what was about to take place and how he could shield the young lady from any annoyance.

She sat inside the entrance of the main parlor facing the open windows, and a little group had gathered around her, including the ladies who sat at her table, with whom she had already become a favorite. Ida had demurely entered by one of the open windows and was apparently reading a novel under one of the gas jets not far away. Groups of people were chatting near or were seated around card tables; others were quietly promenading in the hall ways and on the piazza. There was not an indication of any expected or unexpected "scene." Only Ida's conscious, observant expression and the absence of Mrs. Chints foreboded mischief.

"What enormity can that odious family be about to

perpetrate?" whispered Stanton.

"I cannot surmise," answered Van Berg; "something in reference to the rescue of her child, I suppose. I wish I could thwart them, for Miss Burton's position will place her full in the public eye, and I do not wish her to be the victim of their vulgarity."

After a little further hesitation and thought he stepped in, and approaching Miss Burton, said:

"Pardon me for interrupting you, but I wish to show you something on the piazza that will interest you."

She rose to follow him, but before she could take a step Mrs. Chints swept in on the arm of her husband, followed by the nurse who had been retained at Miss Burton's intercession bearing in her arms the little boy, that stared at the lights and people with the round eyes of childish wonder.

Every one looked up in surprise at the sudden appearance of the little group, that suggested a christening more than anything else.

Planting themselves before Miss Burton, thus barring all egress, Mr. Chints fumbled a moment in his pocket and drew out an envelope, and with a loud, prefatory "Ahem!" began:

"My dear Miss Burton that is the way Mrs. Chints says I should address you, thought it strikes me as a trifle familiar and affectionate; but I mean no harm we're under pecul very great obligations to YOU. We learn my wife has that you are engaged engaged in I mean that you teach. I'm sure that's a lawful calling I mean a laudable one, and no one can deny that it's useful. In my view it's to your credit that you are engaged in that you teach. I work myself, and always mean to. In fact I enjoy it more than making speeches. But feeling that we were under wonderful obligations to YOU, and learning my wife did that you were dependent on on your own labor, we thought that if this little fellow that you saved so handsomely should hand you this check for five hundred dollars it wouldn't be amiss." And here, according to rehearsal, the nurse with

great parade handed the child to Mrs. Chints, who now, with much 'empressement,' advanced to a position immediately before Miss Burton; meanwhile the poor, perspiring Mr. Chints put the envelope into the child's chubby hand, saying:

"Give it to the lady, Augustus."

But the small Augustus, on the contrary, stared at the lady and put the envelope in his mouth, to the great mortification of Mrs. Chints, who had been so preoccupied with the Chints side of the affair, and the impression they were making on the extemporized audience, that she had no eyes for Miss Burton.

And that young lady's face was, in truth, a study. An expression of surprise was followed quickly by one of resentment. Even Stanton was obliged to admit that for a moment the little "school ma'am" looked formidable. But as Mr. Chints floundered on in his speech, as some poor wretch who could not swim might struggle to get out of the deep water into which he had been thrown, the

expression of her face softened, and one might imagine the thought passing through her mind "They don't know any better;" and when, at last, the child, instead of carrying out the climax that Mrs. Chints had intended, began vigorously to munch the envelope containing the precious check, there was even a twinkle of humor in the young lady's eyes. But she responded gravely:

"Mr. Chints, I was at first inclined to resent this scene, but time has been given me to perceive that neither you nor your wife wish to hurt my feelings, and that you are in part, at least, actuated by feelings of gratitude for the service that I was so fortunate as to render you. But I fear you do not quite understand me. You are right in one respect, however. I do labor for my own livelihood, and it is a source of the deepest satisfaction to me that I can live from my own work and not from gifts. If your hearts prompt this large donation, there are hundreds of poor little waifs in the city to whom this money will bring a little of the care and comfort which blesses your child. As for myself, this is

all the reward that I wish or can receive," and she stooped and kissed the child on both cheeks. Then taking Van Berg's arm, she gladly escaped to the cool and dusky piazza.

Mr. Chints looked at Mrs. Chints in dismay. Mrs. Chints handed the baby to the nurse, and beat an undramatic and hasty retreat, her husband following in a dazed sort of manner, treading on her train at every other step.

As Van Berg passed out of the parlor, he saw Ida Mayhew vanishing from its farther side, with Stanton in close pursuit. When Miss Burton ended the disagreeable affair by kissing the child, there had been a slight murmur of applause. Significant smiles and a rising hum of voices descending on the affair in a way not at all complimentary to the crestfallen Chints family, followed the disappearances of all the actors in the unexpected scene.

Chapter XII. Miss Mayhew is Puzzled.

"Miss Burton," said Van Berg, as soon as they were alone, "I wish I could have saved you from this disagreeable experience. I tried to do so, but was not quick enough. I much blame my slow wits that I was not more prompt."

"I wish it might have been prevented," she replied, "for their sakes as well as my own."

"I have no compunctions on their account whatever," said Van Berg, "and feel that you let them off much too kindly. I think, however, that they and all others here will understand you much better hereafter. I cannot express too strongly to you how thoroughly our brief acquaintance has taught me to respect you, and if you will permit me to give an earnest meaning to Mr. Burleigh's jesting offer to share with me the responsibility of your care, I will esteem it an honor."

"I sincerely thank you, Mr. Van Berg, and should I

ever need the services of a gentleman," she laid a slight emphasis upon the term "I shall, without any hesitancy, turn to you. But I have long since learned to be my own protectress, as, after all, one must be, situated as I am."

"You seem to have the ability, not only to take care of yourself, but of others, Miss Burton. Nevertheless I shall, with your permission, establish a sort of protectorate over you which shall be exceedingly unobtrusive and undemonstrative, and not in the least like that which some powers make the excuse for exactions, until the protected party is ready to cry out in desperation to be delivered from its friends. I hesitated too long this evening from the fear of being forward; and yet I did not know what was coming, and had learned only accidentally but a few moments before that anything was coming."

"Well," replied Miss Burton with a slight laugh, "it's a comfortable thought that there's a fort near, to which one can run should an enemy appear; and a pleasanter thought still, that the fort is strong and staunch. but, to change the

figure, I have a great fancy for paddling my own light canoe, and such small craft will often float, you know, where a ship of the line would strike." "I will admit, Miss Burton, that ships of the line are often unwieldy and clumsily deep in the water; but if you ever do need a gunboat with a howitzer or two on deck, may I hope to be summoned?"

"I could ask for no better champion. I fairly tremble at the broadside that would follow."

"Are you thinking of the discharge or the recoil?"

"Both might involve danger," said Miss Burton, laughing; "but I have concluded to keep on your side through such wars as may rage at the Lake House during my sojourn. I cannot help thinking of poor Mr. and Mrs. Chints. I feel almost as sorry for such people as I do for the blind and deaf. They seem to lack a certain sense which, if possessed, would teach them to avoid such scenes."

"I detest such people and like to snub them unmercifully," said Van Berg, heartily.

"That may be in accordance with a gunboat character; but is it knightly?"

"Why not? What does snobbishness and rich vulgarity deserve at any man's hands?"

"Nothing but sturdy blows. But what do weak, imperfect, half educated men and women, who have never had a tithe of your advantages, NEED at your hands? Can we not condemn faults, and at the same time pity and help the faulty? The gunboat sends its shot crashing too much at random. It seems to me that true knighthood would spare weakness of any kind."

"I'm glad you have not spared mine. You have demolished me as a gunboat, but I would fain be your knight."

"It is Mrs. Chints who needs a knight at present, and not I. It troubles me to think of her worriment over this foolish little episode, and with your permission I will go and try to banish the cloud."

As she turned she was intercepted by Stanton, who

said:

"Miss Burton, let me present to you my cousin, Miss Mayhew."

A ray from a parlor lamp fell upon Ida's face, and Van Berg saw at once that it was clouded and unamiable in its expression. Stanton had evidently been reproaching her severely.

Miss Burton held out her hand cordially and said; "I wish to thank you for maintaining the credit of our sex this morning. These superior men are so fond of portraying us as hysterical, clinging creatures whose only instinct in peril is to throw themselves on man's protection, that I always feel a little exultation when one of the 'weaker and gentler sex,' as we are termed, show the courage and presence of mind which they coolly appropriate as masculine qualities."

"Are you an advocate of woman's rights, Miss Burton?" asked Miss Mayhew, stung by the unconscious sarcasm of the lady's words, to reply in almost as resentful

a manner as if a wound had been intended.

"Not of woman's, particularly," was the quiet answer;

"I would be glad if every one had their rights."

"You philanthropy is very wide, certainly."

"And therefore very thin, perhaps you think, since it covers so much ground. I agree with you, Miss Mayhew, that general good will is as cold and thin as moonshine. One ray of sunlight that warms some particular thing into life is worth it all."

"Indeed! I think I prefer moonlight."

"There are certain absorbing avocations in life to which moonshine is better adapted than sunlight, is probably the thought in my cousin's mind," said Stanton, satirically.

"And what are they?" asked Miss Burton.

"Flirtation, for instance."

"My cousin is speaking for himself," said Ida, acidly; "and knows better what is in his own mind than in mine."

"If some ladies themselves never know their own

minds, how can another know?" Stanton retorted.

"Well," said Miss Burton, with a laugh, "if we accept a practical philosophy much in vogue that of taking the world as we find it flirting is one of the commonest pursuits of mankind."

"I'm quite sure, Miss Burton," said Van Berg, "that your philosophy of life is the reverse of taking the world as we find it."

"Indeed, you are mistaken, sir; I am exceedingly prosaic in my views, and cherish no Utopian dreams and theories. I do indeed take the old matter of fact world as I find it, and try to make the best of it."

"Ah, your last is a very saving clause. Too many are seemingly trying to make the worst of it, and unfortunately they succeed."

Ida here shot a quick and vengeful glance at the speaker.

"Please do not present me as a general reformer, Mr. Van Berg," protested Miss Burton, with a light laugh; "I

have my hands full in mending my own ways."

"And so might we all, no doubt," said Stanton; "only most of us leave our ways unmended. but I am curious to know, Miss Burton, how you would make the best of a flirtation; since this is emphatically a part of the world as we find it, especially at a summer hotel."

"The best that we can do with many things that exist," she replied, "is to leave them alone. Italy is pre eminently the land of garlic and art; but fortunately we shall not find it necessary to indulge in both and in equal proportions when we are so happy as to go abroad."

"A great many people prefer the garlic," said Stanton.

"Oh, certainly," she answered; "it's a matter of taste."

"So then garlic and flirtation are corresponding terms in your vocabulary?"

"I cannot say which term outranks the other, but it seems to me that if a woman regards her love as a sacred thing, she cannot permit an indefinite number of commonplace people even to attempt to stain it with their

soiling touch."

"I think gentlemen show just as much of a disposition to flirt as ladies," said Ida, with resentment in her tone.

"I will not dispute that statement," replied Miss Burton, with a laugh; "indeed, I'm inclined to think they are very human."

"Humane, you mean," interposed Stanton. "Yes, I often wonder at our patient endurance."

"Which shall be taxed no longer tonight by me. Good evening, Miss Mayhew. Good evening, patient martyrs."

"Humane, indeed!" said Stanton. "Are you that way inclined, Van?"

"I have no occasion to be otherwise."

"Well, I feel savage enough to scalp some one."

"So I should judge," remarked Ida.

"Perhaps then, as my mood contrasts somewhat favorably with your cousin's, you will venture to walk with me for awhile?" said Van Berg.

"Indeed, sir," she replied, taking his arm, "there are

times when any change is a relief."

"I cannot be very greatly elated over that view of the case, certainly," remarked Van Berg, with a laugh.

She did not reply at once, but after a moment said: "I suppose you regard me as a hopeless case at best."

"what suggests that thought to you, Miss Mayhew?"

"You are not so dull as to need to ask that question, and you only ask it to draw me out. For one thing, you probably think that I instigated Mr. and Mrs. Chints to act as they did. This is not true."

"I'm very glad to hear it."

"I'm no more to blame than Mr. Burleigh was. He knew about it as well as I did, but Mrs. Chints was bound to carry out her project."

"Will you permit a suggestion?"

"I suppose you wish to insinuate that I acted like a heathen, instead of saying that I am one plainly, as does Cousin Ik?"

"I think you acted a little thoughtlessly. If Miss Burton

had been in your place, she would have tried to prevent the disagreeable scene."

"Oh, certainly! she is perfect."

"No; she is kind."

"Would it be possible to speak upon some agreeable subject, Mr. Van Berg? I have had enough mortifications for one day."

He was puzzled. What topic could he introduce that would interest this spoiled and petulant beauty.

He touched on art, but she was only artful in her small way, and could not follow him. He tried literature, and here they had even less in common. He would not and indeed could not read the thin society novels which reflected modes of life as trivial as her own, and his books might have been written in another language, so slight was her acquaintance with them. The various political, social, or scientific questions of the day had never puzzled her brain. Van Berg cautiously felt his way towards his companion's knowledge of two or three of the most popular

of them. Her answers, however, were so superficial and irrelevant, and also so evidently embarrassed, that he saw his only resources to be society chit chat, gossip about mutual acquaintances, the latest modes, the attractions of pleasure resorts in the city, and of summer resorts in the country. But he gave his mind to these unwonted themes, and labored hard to be entertaining; for now that he had gained the vantage ground he sought, he was determined to discover whether there was a sleeping mind or a vacuum behind Miss Mayhew's shapely forehead. Granting that there was a womanly intelligence there, as yet unquickened, he was not so irrational as to imagine he could jostle it into illumining activity in one short hour, or day, or week. But it seemed to him that if any mind existed worth the name, it would give such encouraging signs of life before many days passed as would promise success of his experiment. He felt that his first aim must be to establish an intimacy that would permit as full and frank an exchange of thought as was possible between people

so dissimilar.

While he tried to bring himself down to the littleness of her daily life, he determined to show his disapproval of every phrase of its meanness as far as he could without offending her. He had made her feel that he condemned her course towards Miss Burton that evening, and he had meant to do so.

She resented this disapproval, and at the same time respected him for it. Indeed he puzzled her. He evidently sought and wished for her society; and yet as they walked back and forth, even though she did not look at him when the light gave her the opportunity to do so, she felt intuitively that he did not enjoy her company. She saw that he was laboring hard to make himself agreeable; but his small talk had not the familiar flippancy and fluency of one speaking in his native tongue; nor was his manner that of one who, infatuated with her beauty, had thrown aside all other considerations.

She felt that the man at her side measured her, and

understood her littleness thoroughly.

And she herself had a growing consciousness of insignificance that was as painful as it was novel. Adding to all the humiliations of this day here was a man, not so very much older than herself, trying to come down to her level, as he would accommodate his language to a child. No labored argument could have revealed her ignorance to her so clearly, as her conscious inability to follow him into his ordinary range of thought. Unwittingly he had demonstrated his superiority in a way that she could not deny, however much she might be inclined to resent it. And yet he treated her with a sort of respect, and occasionally she saw that he bent his eyes upon her face as if in search of something.

After a transient effort to ignore everything and talk in her usual superficial manner, she became more and more silent and oppressed, and, at last said, somewhat abruptly:

"Mr. Van Berg, I am weary, and I imagine you are too. I think I will say good night."

"I scarcely wonder that you are fatigued. You have had a trying day."

"It has been a horrid day," she said, emphatically.

"It might have ended much worse, nevertheless."

"Possibly," she admitted with a shrug.

"You have more reason to congratulate yourself than you imagine, Miss Mayhew. Even that disagreeable souvenir of our morning peril, your lameness, has disappeared, and you might have been maimed for life."

"My lameness, like my courage, was chiefly a fraud to begin with, and soon disappeared; but I have other souvenirs of that occasion that I cannot get rid of so easily."

"If I am one of them, you are right, Miss Mayhew; I shall hold you to our agreement this morning. You put me on my good behavior have I not behaved well?"

"Yes, better than I have. I was not referring to you personally, but to certain memories."

"We agreed to let by gones be by gones."

"But others are not parties to this agreement, and every reference to the affair is odious to me."

"I shall make no further reference to it, and you must be fair enough not to punish me for the acts of others."

"You also despise me in your heart of my course towards Miss Burton this evening."

"If I despised you would I have sought your society this evening?"

"I do not know. I don't understand you, if you will permit my bluntness."

"Possibly you don't understand yourself, Miss Mayhew."

"I understand that I have had a miserable day, and I hope I may never see another like it. Good night, sir."

Chapter XIII. Nature's Broken Promise.

Van Berg had been left to himself but a little time before Stanton and Mr. Burleigh came out upon the piazza, and the three gentlemen sat down for a quiet chat.

"Well," remarked mine host, with a sigh of relief such as a pilot might heave after taking his ship round a perilous point; "well, thanks to Miss Burton's good sense, the affair has ended without any trouble. In a house like this, 'Satan is finding mischief still' whenever my back is turned, and sometimes he threatens to get up a row right under my nose, as in this instance. I was a 'blarsted fool,' as our English friends have it, not to know that Mrs. Chint's drama, although beginning in comedy, might end in tragedy of my losing some good paying boarders. Still further did I demonstrate the length of my ears by even imagining it possible that Miss Burton would take five hundred, or five hundred thousand dollars in any such circumstances. But the whole thing was done in a jiffy, and Mrs. Chints was

possessed to have her 'tableau vivant.' Lively picture wasn't it? Still, if Miss Mayhew, when appealed to by Mrs. Chints, had confirmed my doubts, I would have tried to stop the nonsense at any cost."

"Did Miss Mayhew advise the step?" asked Stanton.

"Oh, no! She was non committal. She acted as if it were none of her affair, save as it might afford her a little amusement. But these rows are no light matters to us poor publicans, who must please every one and keep the whole menagerie in order. Mr. Chints was swearing up and down his room that he had been made a fool of. Mrs. Chints was for leaving tomorrow morning, declaring that she would not endure such airs from a school teacher. They are rich and have a number of friends who are coming soon, and so my mind was full of 'strange oaths' also, at my prospective loss, when this blessed little woman appears, taps at their door, enters like the angel into the lion's den, and shuts their mouths by some magic all her own. And now they're going to stay; Mr. Chints will give the five

hundred to the Children's Aid Society, all is serene and I'm happy, so much so that I'll smoke another of your good cigars, Mr. Stanton."

"Certainly, half a dozen if you wish. How do you imagine she quieted the unruly beasts?"

"Oh, I suppose she got around them through the child somewhat as she won over my wife this afternoon by means of our cross baby. It's teething, you know and yet how should you young chaps know anything about babies! No matter, your time will come. This promenading the piazza with lovely creatures who have been half the afternoon at their toilets is all very nice; but wait till you have weathered innumerable squalls in the dead of night then you'll learn that teething time in a household is like going around Cape Horn. Well, to return from your future to my present. When so good natured a man as I am gets into a sympathetic mood with old King Herod, you can imagine what a state the mother's nerves must be in who has to stand it night and day. But as Miss Burton had

been commended to my care, I felt that I was in duty bound to introduce her to my wife and show her some attention. So I said to my wife, this afternoon, 'I'm going to bring a young lady in to see you.' 'Do you think I'm in a condition to entertain company?' she asked, with a faint suggestion of hard cider in her tone. 'Well, my dear,' I expostulated, 'it was just the same yesterday, and will be a little more so tomorrow, and I feel that I shall be remiss if I delay any longer.' 'Oh, very well,' she said, as if it were a tooth that must come out sooner or later, 'since the matter must be attended to, let us have it over at once.' But bless you, it wasn't over till supper time. As I brought the young lady in, the baby waked out of a five minutes' nap that had cost about an hour's rocking, and I thought the roof would come off. My wife looked cross and worried well, it was prose, gentlemen, prose not the poetry of life; and I said to myself, 'I suppose I have about made it certain that this young woman will live and die an old maid by giving her this glimpse behind the scenes. I thought the ladies could get on

better without me than with me, so I bowed myself out, glad to escape the din; and I supposed Miss Burton would say a few pleasant things in the direction of Mrs. Burleigh, which she, poor woman, might not be able to hear, and then she would bow herself out, also glad to escape. An hour and a half later I went back to see if I could not coax my wife away for a drive, and what do you suppose I saw?"

"The baby in convulsions," said Stanton.

"Give it up," added Van Berg.

"Sweet transformation scene; deep hush; my wife asleep in her rocking chair, the baby asleep in the arms of Miss Burton, who held up a warning finger at me to be quiet. But the mischief was done; my wife started up and was mortified beyond measure that she had treated her guest so rudely. The good fairy, however, was so genuinely delighted that she had quieted the baby and given the tired mother a little rest, that we had to come to the conclusion that she found pleasure in ways that are a trifle

uncommon. By some miracle or other she kept the baby asleep, and then my wife and I tried to entertain her a little, but we were the ones that were entertained. Before we knew it, the supper bell rang, and then I'm blessed if the little chap didn't wake up and grin at us all. To think then that I should reward her by letting Mr. Chints slap her face with a five hundred dollar check! I guess we'll all know better next time."

"Did she tell you anything further about her history or her connections?" asked Stanton.

Mr. Burleigh stroked his beard and looked rather blank for a moment.

"Now I think of it," he ejaculated, "I be hanged if she said a word about herself. And now I think further of it, she somehow or other got Mrs. Burleigh and myself a talking, and seemed so interested in us and what we said, that I be hanged again if we didn't tell her all we know about ourselves."

"She impresses every one as being remarkably frank,

and yet I think it will be found that she is peculiarly reticent in regard to herself," remarked Van Berg musingly. "Well, it's not often I take people on trust, but I have given this lady my entire respect and confidence."

"I assure you that there is no trust in this business," said Mr. Burleigh, emphatically. "I can't afford to indulge in sentiment, gentlemen; besides, it couldn't be any more becoming in me than in Tom Chints. I wouldn't take an unprotected, unknown female into my house if she came with a pair of wings. But Miss Burton brings letters that establish her character as a lady as truly as that of any other woman in the house. I ought to have prevented this Chints business, but then five hundred is a nice little plum, and before I pulled my slow wits together the thing was done."

"By the way, Mr. Burleigh," remarked Stanton, "I hear that the parties who are now at my friend Van Berg's table are soon to leave for the sea shore. Can you give me three seats there after their departure?"

"Certainly; put you down right alongside of Miss Burton."

"Perhaps Van Berg feels that he has the first claim to so good a position?"

"No, Stanton, I shall not place a straw in your way."

"You never were a man of straw, Van. If I were seeking more than to enjoy the society of this young lady, who seems to be embodied sunshine, I would be sorry to have you place yourself in the way."

"Sunshine brought to a focus kindles even green wood," remarked Van Berg, with a significant nod at his friend.

"Well," said Mr. Burleigh, rising, "if I had not found my mate, I'd be a burr that that little woman wouldn't get rid of very easily. Good night, gentlemen. I'll give either one of you my blessing."

"Good night, Van," said Stanton, also. "I'm not going to stay and listen to your absurd predictions. Neither shall I permit you to enjoy all by yourself the delicate wine of that

woman's wit. When good things are passing round, I propose to have my share. My presence can't hurt your prospects."

"And if it did, Ik, do you think me such a churl as to try to crowd you away?"

"That's magnanimous. I suppose you and my cousin can manage to keep the peace between you."

"I think the change will be far more disagreeable to Miss Mayhew than to me."

"You are very polite to say so. Good night."

"Well," mused Van Berg, when left to himself; "I've made progress today after a fashion. We have been quite thoroughly introduced in fact 'thrown together,' as fate and all her friends will have it. I might have been weeks in gaining as much insight into her character as circumstances have given me in a few brief hours. But what a miserable revelation she has made of herself cowardice this morning fraud this afternoon, and cold selfishness, that can amuse itself with the mortification and misfortunes of others,

this evening. This is the moral side of the picture. But when I came to 'speer' around to see whether she had any mind or real culture, the exhibition was still more pitiable. Ye gods! that a girl can live to her age and know so little that is worth knowing! She knows how to dress that is, how to enhance her physical beauty; and that, I admit, is a great deal. As far as it goes it is well. But of the taste of a beautiful and, at the same time, intellectual and highly cultivated woman, she has no conception; with her it is a question of flesh and blood only."

"I wonder if it will ever be otherwise? I wonder if her marvellous beauty, which is now like a budding rose, that partly conceals the worm in its heart, will soon, like the overblown flower, reveal so clearly what mars its life that scarcely anything else will be noticed. What a fate for a man to be tied for life to a woman who will, with sure gradation, pass from at least outward beauty to utter hideousness! Beauty, in a case like this, is but a mask which time or the loathsome fingers of disease would

surely strip off; and then what an object would confront the disenchanted lover! It would be like marrying a disguised death's head. Never before did I realize how essential is mental and moral culture to give value to mere external beauty.

"And yet she seems to have a kind of quickness and aptness. She is not wanting in womanly intuition. I still am inclined to believe she has been dwarfed by circumstances and her wretched associations. Her mind has been given no better means of development than the knowledge of her beauty, the general and superficial homage that it always receives, the little round of thought that centres about self, and the daily question of dress. That's narrowing the world down to a cage large enough only for a poll parrot. If the bird within has a parrot's nature, what is the use of opening the door and showing it larks singing in the sky? I fear that's what I'm trying to do, and that I shall go back to my fall work with a meagre portfolio and a grudge against nature, for mocking me with the fairest broken promise

ever made."

Chapter XIV. A Revelation.

The next day threatened to be a dreary one, for the rain fell so steadily as to make all sunny, out of door pleasures impossible. Many looked abroad with faces as dismal and cloudy as the sky; for the number of those who rise above their circumstances with a cheery courage are but few. Human faces can shine, although the sun be clouded; but, as a rule, the shadow falls on the face also, and the regal spirit succumbs like a clod of earth.

The people came straggling down late to breakfast in the dark morning, and, with a childish egotism that considers only self and immediate desires, the lowering weather which meant renewed beauty and wealth to all the land, was berated as if it were a small spite against the handful of people at the Lake House. Van Berg heard Ida Mayhew exclaiming against the clouds as if this spite

were aimed at herself only.

"Some of her friends might not venture from the city," she said.

"They youths are not venturesome, then," remarked Stanton, who never lost an opportunity to tease.

"Of course they don't wish to get wet," she pouted.

"And yet I'll wager any amount that they are not of the 'salt of the earth' in any scriptural sense. Well, they had better stay in town, for this would be an instance of 'much ventured, nothing gained.'"

"You remind me of a certain fox who could not say enough hard things about the grapes that were out of reach. But mark my words, Mr. Sibley will come, if it pours."

"He wouldn't risk the spoiling of his clothes for any woman living."

"You judge him by yourself. Oh, dear, how shall I get through this long, horrible day! You men can smoke like bad chimneys through a storm, but for me there is no resource today, but a dull novel that I've read once before.

Let me see, I'll read an hour and sleep three, and then it will be time to dress for dinner. Oh, good morning, Mr. Van Berg," she says to the artist who had been listening to her while apparently giving close attention to Mrs. Mayhew's interminable tirade against rainy days; "I have just been envying you gentlemen who can kill stupid hours by smoking."

"I admit that it is almost as bad as sleeping."

"I see that you have a homily prepared on improving the time, so I shall escape at once."

On the stairs she met Miss Burton, who was descending with a breezy swiftness as if she were making a charge on the general gloom and sullenness of the day.

"Good morning, Miss Mayhew," she said; "I'm glad to see you looking so well after the severe shaking up you had yesterday. You would almost tempt one to believe that rough usage is sometimes good for us."

"I have no such belief, I assure you. Yesterday was bad enough, but today promises to be worse. I was going to

make up a boating party, but what can one do when the water is overhead instead of under the keel?"

"Scores of things," was the cheery reply. "I'm going to have a good time."

"I'm going to sleep," said Ida, passing on.

"Miss Burton," said Stanton, joining her at the foot of the stairs, "I perceive, even from your manner of descending to our lower world, that you are destined to vanquish the dullness of this rainy day. Don't you wish an ally?"

"Would you be an ally, Mr. Stanton, if you saw I was destined to be vanquished?"

"Of course I would."

"Look in the parlor then. There are at least a dozen ladies already vanquished. They are oppressed by the foul fiend, 'ennui.' Transfer your chivalric offer to them and deliver them."

"Stanton," laughed Van Berg, "you are in honor bound to devote yourself to those oppressed ladies."

"The prospect is so dark and depressing that I shall at least cheer myself first with the light of a cigar."

"And so your chivalry will end in smoke," she said.

"Yes, Miss Burton, the smoke of battle, where you are concerned."

"I fear your wit is readier than your sword. The soldier that boasts how he would overwhelm some other foe than the one before him loses credit to the degree that he protests."

"You are more exacting, Miss Burton, than the lady who threw her glove down among the lions. What chance would Hercules himself have of lifting those twelve heavy females out of the dumps?"

"It's not what we do, but what we attempt, that shows our spirit."

"Then I shall expect to see you attempt great things."

"I'm only a woman."

"And I'm only a man."

"Only a man! what greater vantage ground could one

have than to be a man?"

"The advantage is not so uncommon that one need be unduly elated," state Stanton with a shrug. "I forget how many hundred millions of us there are. But I'm curious to see how you will set about rendering the hues of this leaden day prismatic."

"Only by being the innocent cause of your highly colored language, I imagine."

"Oh, dear," exclaimed a little boy petulantly, as he strolled through the hall and looked out at the steady downfall of rain. "Oh dear! Why can't it stop raining?"

"There's the philosophy of our time for you in a nutshell," said Van Berg. "When a human atom wants anything, what business has the universe to stand in its way?"

"But you have no better philosophy to offer the disconsolate little fellow, Mr. Ban Berg?" Miss Burton asked.

"Now, Van, it's your turn. Remember, Miss Burton, he

has the same vantage ground that I have. Indeed he's half an inch taller."

"The world long ago learned better than to measure men by inches, Mr. Stanton."

"Alas, Miss Burton," said Van Berg; "the best philosophy I have is this: when it rains, let it rain."

"And thus I'm privileged to meet representatives of those two ancient and honorable schools, the Stoic and Epicurean, and you both think, I fear, that if Xanthippe had founded a school, my philosophy would also be defined. But perhaps you will think better of me if I tell that little fellow a story to pass the time for him. What's the matter, little folk?" she asked, for two or three more small clouded faces had gathered at the door.

"Matter enough," said the boy. "This horrid old rain keeps us in the house, where we can't do anything or stay anywhere. We mustn't play in the parlor, we mustn't make a noise in the halls, we mustn't run on the piazzas. I'd like to live in a world where there was some place for boys."

"Poor child," said Miss Burton; "this rain is as bad for you as the deluge to Noah's dove, it has left you no refuge for the sole of your foot. Will you come with me? No one has said you must not hear a jolly story."

"You won't tell me about any good little boys who died when they were as big as I am?"

"I'll keep my word it shall be a jolly story."

"May we hear it too?" asked the other children.

"Yes, all of you."

"Where shall we go?" "We won't disturb any one in the far corner of the parlor by the piano. If you know of any other little people, you can bring them there, too," and they each darted off in search of especial cronies.

"May we not hear the story also?" asked Stanton.

"No, indeed, I may be able to interest children, but not philosophers."

"Then we will go and meditate," said Van Berg.

"Yes," she added, "and in accordance with a New York custom of great antiquity, made familiar to you, no doubt,

by that grave historian Diedrich Knickerbocker, who gives several graphic accounts of such cloudy ruminations on the part of your city's great grandfathers."

"I fear you think that the worshipful Peter Stuyvensant's counsellors indulged in more tobacco than thought, and that the majority of them had as few ideas as one of Mr. Burleigh's chimneys," said Van Berg. "And you regard us as the direct descendants of these men, whose lives were crowned with smoke wreaths only."

"Now, Mr. Van Berg, you prove yourself to be a philosopher of a modern school, you draw your inductions so far and wide from your diminutive premise."

"Well, Miss Burton, you stand in very favorable contrast with us poor mortals. We are going out to add to the clouds that lower over the world, while you are trying to banish them."

"And if, after helping the children towards the close of this dismal day, your heart should relent towards us," added Stanton, "you will find two worthy objects of your

charity."

"Oh what a falling off is here!" she exclaimed, following the impatient children. "Knights at first, then philosophers, and now objects of charity."

Miss Burton evidently kept her word, and told a "jolly story," for the friends saw through the parlor windows that the circle around her grew larger and more hilarious continually. Then would follow moments of rapt and eager attention, showing that the tale gained in excitement and interest what it lost in humor. Young people, who did not like to be classed with children, one by one yielded to the temptation. There was life and enjoyment in that corner and dulness elsewhere, and nothing is so attractive in the world as genuine and joyous life.

Even elderly ladies looked wistfully up at the occasional bursts of contagious merriment, and then sighed that they had lost the power of laughing so easily.

At last the marvelous legend came to an end amid a round of prolonged applause.

"Another, another!" was the general outcry.

But Miss Burton had observed that the ladies and gentlemen present seemed inclined to be friendly towards the young people's fun, and therefore she broached another scheme of pleasure that would vary the entertainment.

"Perhaps," she said, "your papas and mammas and the other good people will not object to an old fashioned Virginia reel."

A shout of welcome greeted this proposition.

Miss Burton raised her finger so impressively that there was an instant hush. Indeed she seemed to have gained entire control of the large and miscellaneous group which surrounded her.

"We will draw up a petition," she said; "for we best enjoy our own rights and pleasures when respecting those of others. This little boy and girl shall take the petition around to all the ladies and gentlemen in the room, and this shall be the petition:

"Dear lady and kind sir: Please don't object to our

dancing a Virginia reel in the parlor."

"All who wish to dance can sign it. Now we will go to the office and draw up the petition." And away they all started, the younger children, wild with glee, capering in advance.

Stanton threw away his cigar and met her at the office register.

"Gentle shepherdess," he asked, "whither are you leading your flock?"

"How behind the age you are!" she replied. "Can you not see that the flock is leading me?"

"If I were a wolf I would not trouble the flock but would carry off the shepherdess to a game of billiards."

"What, then, would become of the flock?"

"that's a question that never troubles a wolf."

"A wolfish answer truly. I think, however, you have reversed the parable, and are but a well meaning sheep that has donned a wolf's skin, and so we will put you to the test. We young people will give you a chance to draw up our

petition, which, if you would save your character, you must do at once with sheep like docility, asking no questions and causing no delay. There, that will answer; very sheepishly done, but no sheep's eyes, if you please," she added, as Stanton pretended to look up to her for inspiration, while writing. "Now, all sign. I think I can trust you, sir, on the outskirts of the flock. Here, my little man and woman, go to each of the ladies and gentlemen, make a bow and a courtesy, and present the petition."

"May I not gambol with the shepherdess in the coming pastoral?" asked Stanton.

"No, indeed! You are much too old; besides, I am going to play. You may look gravely on."

Every one in the parlor smiling assented to the odd little couple that bobbed up and down before them, and moved out of the way for the dancers. The petitioners therefore soon returned and were welcomed with applause.

"Now go to the inner office and present the petition to Mr. Burleigh," said Miss Burton.

"Hollo!" cried that gentleman, looking around with a great show of savagery, as the little girl pulled the skirt of his coat to attract his attention; "where's King Herod?"

"We wish to try another method with the children," answered Miss Burton. "Will it please you therefore graciously to read the petition. All in the parlor have assented."

"My goodness gracious "

"No swearing, sir, if you please."

"Woman has been too many for man ever since she got him into trouble by eating green apples," ejaculated Mr. Burleigh with a despairing gesture. "Why do you mock me with petitions? THERE is the power behind the throne," pointing to Miss Burton.

"Take your places, small ladies and gentlemen," she cried. "That's Mr. Burleigh's way of saying yes. While you are forming, I'll play a few bars to give you the time."

Did she bewitch the piano that it responded so wonderfully to her touch? Where had she found such quaint,

dainty music, simple as the old fashioned dance itself, so that the little ones could keep time to it, and yet pleasing Van Berg's fastidious ear with its unhackneyed and refined melody. But the marked and marvellous feature in her playing was an airy rolicksomeness that was as irresistible as a panic. Old ladies' heads began to bob over their fancy work most absurdly. Two quartets of elderly gentlemen at whist were evidently beginning to play badly, their feet meantime tapping the floor in a most unwonted manner.

"Were I as dead as Julius Caesar I could not resist that quickstep," cried Stanton; and he rushed over to his aunt, Mrs. Mayhew, and dragged her into line.

"What in the name of all the witches of Salem has got into that piano!" cried Mr. Burleigh, bursting into the parlor from the office, with his pen stuck behind his ear, and his hair brushed up perpendicularly. "There's sorcery in the air. I'm practised upon Keep still? No, not if I was nailed up in one of the soldier's 'wooden overcoats.' The world is transformed, transfigured, transmogrified, and 'things are

not what they seem!' Here's a blooming girl who'll dance with me," and he seized the hand of a white haired old lady who yielded to the contagion so far as to take a place in the line beside her granddaughter.

Indeed, in a few moments, all who had been familiar with the pastime in their youth, caught the joyous infection, and lengthened out the lines, each new accession being greeted with shouts and laughter.

The scene approached in character that described by Hawthorne as occurring in the grounds of the Villa Borghese when Donatello, with a simple "tambourine," produced music of such "indescribably potency" that sallow, haggard, half starved peasants, French soldiers, scarlet costumed contadinas, Swiss guards, German artists, English lords, and herdsmen from the Campagna, all "joined hands in the dance" which the musician himself led with the frisky, frolicsome step of the mythical faun.

In the latter instance it was a contagious, mad excitement easily possible among hot blooded people and

wandering pleasure seekers, the primal laws of whose being are impulse and passion. That the joyous exhilaration which filled Mr. Burleigh's parlor was akin to the wild, half pagan frenzy that the great master of fiction imagined as seizing upon the loiterers near the Villa Borghese cannot be denied. Both phases of excitement would spring naturally from the universal craving for pleasurable life and activity. The one, however, was a rank growth from a rank soil the passionate ebullition of passion swayed natures; the other was inspired by the magnetic spirit of a New England maiden, who, by some law of her nature or consecration of her life, devoted every power of her being to the vivifying of others, and the frolic she had instigated was as free from the grosser elements as the tossing wild flowers of her native hills. With the exception perhaps of Van Berg, she had impressed every one as possessing a peculiarly sunny temperament. Be this as it may, it certainly appeared true that she found her happiness in enlivening others; and it is difficult even to imagine how much a gifted mind can

accomplish in this respect when every faculty is devoted to the ministry of kindness.

This view of Miss Burton's character would account in part, but not wholly, for the power she exercised over others. Van Berg thought he at times detected a suppressed excitement in her manner. A light sometimes flickered in her deep blue eyes that might have been caused by a consuming and hidden fire, rather than by genial and joyous thoughts.

As he watched her now through the parlor window, her eyes were burning, her face reminded him of a delicate flame, and her whole being appeared concentrated into the present moment. In its vivid life it seemed one of the most remarkable faces he ever saw; but the thought occurred again and again "If the features of Ida Mayhew could be lighted up like that I'd give years of my lifetime to be able to paint the beauty that would result."

Just at this moment he saw that young lady approach the parlor entrance with an expression of wonder on her

face. He immediately joined her, and she said:

"Mr. Van Berg, what miracle has caused this scene?"

"Come with me and I'll show you," he answered and he led her to the window opposite to Miss Burton, where she sat at the piano. "There," he said, "is the miracle, a gifted, magnetic, unselfish woman devoting herself wholly to the enjoyment of others. She has created more sunshine this dismal day than we have had in the house since I've been here. Is not that face there a revelation?"

"A revelation of what?" she asked with rising color.

"Of the possibilities of the human face to grow in beauty and power, if kindled by a noble and animating mind. Ye gods!" cried the artist, expressing the excitement which he felt in common with others in accordance with the law of his own ruling passion, "but I would give much to reproduce that face on canvas;" and then he added with a despairing gesture, "but who can paint flame and spirit?"

After a moment he exclaimed, with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes: "It appears to me that if kindled by such

a mind as that which is burning in yonder face, I could attempt anything and accomplish everything. Limitations melt away before a growing sense of power. What an inspiration a woman can be to a man, or what a mill stone about his neck, according to what she is! Ah! "

The cause of this exclamation cannot be explained in the brief time that it occurred. Stanton had happened at that moment to catch a glimpse of Van Berg and his cousin, and he called quite loudly:

"Harold, bring Miss Mayhew in and join us."

At the same instant Mr. Burleigh's heavy step passing near the piano, jarred down a picture that was hung insecurely, and it fell with a crash at Miss Burton's side. Was it the shock of the falling picture upon unprepared and overstrained nerves, or what was it that produced the instantaneous change in the joyous appearing maiden? Her hands dropped nerveless from the keys. So great was the pallor that swept over her face that it suggested to the artist the sudden extinguishment of a lamp. She bowed her head

and trembled a moment and then escaped by a side door.

Van Berg walked hastily to the main entrance, thinking she was ill, but only saw her vanishing up the stairway with hasty steps. Many of the dancers, in their kindly solicitude, had tried to intercept her, but had been too late. It would seem that all ascribed her indisposition to a nervous shock.

"It is evident," said the lady who had been conversing with her when she had acted in a like manner on the first day of her arrival, "that she possesses a highly sensitive organism, which suddenly gives way when subjected to a strain too severe;" and she remained Van Berg of her former manifestation of weakness.

He accepted this view as the most natural explanation that could be given.

Chapter XV. Contrasts.

Genuine and genial were the words of sympathy that were expressed on every side for the young lady who had been transforming the dull day into one of exceptional jollity. A deputation of ladies called upon her, but from within her locked door she confirmed the impression that it was a nervous shock, and that a few hours of perfect quiet would restore her.

And it would seem that she was right, for she came down to supper apparently as genial and smiling as ever. Beyond a slight pallor and a little fulness about her eyes, Van Berg could detect no trace of her sudden indisposition.

The remainder of the day was passed more quietly by the guests of the Lake House, but the force of Miss Burton's example did not spend itself at once, and on the part of some there was developed quite a marked disposition to make kindly efforts to promote the enjoyment of others. The unwonted exhilaration with

which she had inspired her fellow guests was something they could scarcely account for, and yet the means employed had been so simple and were so plainly within the reach of all, as to suggest that a genial manner and an unselfish regard for others were the only conditions required to enable each one to do something to brighten every cloudy day.

After Miss Burton's departure, the young people had the dance to themselves, their elders resuming the avocations and soberer pleasures from which they had been swept by an impulse evoked from their half forgotten youth.

When Van Berg joined Miss Mayhew again, he found her mother and Stanton trying to explain how it all came about.

"There is no use of multiplying words," concluded Stanton; "Miss Burton is gifted with a mind, and she uses it for the benefit of others instead of tasking it solely on her own account, which is the general rule."

At this moment a letter was handed to Mrs. Mayhew, which she read with a slight frown and passed to her daughter. It was from Mr. Mayhew, and contained but a brief sentence to the effect that his absence would probably be a relief, and therefore he would not spend the coming Sabbath with them.

Ida did not show the superficial vexation that her mother manifested, and which was more assumed than real. Her cheek paled a little, and she instinctively glanced at Van Berg as if her sudden sense of guilt were apparent to his keen eyes. He was looking at her searchingly, and she turned away with a quick flush, nor did she give him a chance to speak with her again that day; but his words "what a millstone about a man's neck a woman can be!" haunted her continually. Still oftener rose before her Miss Burton's flushed and kindled face, and the artist's emphatic assertion of the power of mind and character to add to native beauty. Had she not been a millstone about her father's neck? Was there not a fatal flaw in the beauty of

which she was so proud, that spoiled it for eyes that were critical and unblinded?

Oppressed by these thoughts and being in no mood for her cousin's banter, or the artist's society which always seemed to render her more uncomfortable, she was glad to escape to the solitude of her own room.

Another "revelation" was slowly dawning upon her mind, namely just what she, Ida Mayhew, was. A woman is an "inspiration" or a "millstone according to what she is," this stranger, this disturber of her peace, from whom it seemed she could not escape, had not only asserted but proved by showing her a lady she would have passed as plain and insignificant, but who nevertheless possessed some sweet potency that won and cheered all hearts, and who, she was compelled to admit, was positively beautiful as she sat at the piano, radiant with her purpose to cause gladness in others. Miss Burton had created sunshine enough to enliven the dismal day, and had quickened a hundred pulses with pleasure. She had been a burden

even to herself.

Everything, from the artist's first disturbing frown to the present hour, had been preparing the way for the sharp and painful contrast that circumstances had forced upon her attention today.

But the thought that troubled her most, was that he saw this contrast more plainly than it was possible for her to see it.

Vaguely, and yet with some approach to the truth, her intuition began to reveal to her the attitude of his mind towards her. She believed that he was attracted, but also saw that he was not blinded by her beauty. She was already beginning to revise her first impression that he was shutting his eyes to every other consideration, as she had seen so many do in their brief infatuation. His manner was not that of one who is taking counsel of passion only. Those ominous words "according to what she is" indicated that he was looking into her mind, her character. With a sense of dismay, she was awakening to a knowledge of the dwarfed

ugliness her beauty but partially concealed, and she felt that he, from the first, had been discovering those defects of which she had been scarcely conscious herself. She began to fear that her cousin's words would prove true, and that he would not fall helplessly in love with her. Therefore the opportunity to retaliate and to punish him for all the mortifications that he had occasioned her, would never come. On the contrary, he might inflict upon her, any day, the crowning humiliation of declaring, be indifference of manner, that he had found her out so thoroughly, as to entertain for her only feelings of disgust and repugnance.

"Well," she concluded, recklessly, "why should I care what he thinks? I have lived thus far without his good opinion, and I can live a little longer, I imagine. I have had a good time for eighteen years after my own fashion, and I will just ignore him and have a good time still. Indeed I'll shock him tonight and tomorrow so thoroughly, that he won't come near me again; for I'm sick of his superior airs. I'm sick of his learned talk about books, pictures, and

politics, as if a young society girl were expected to know about these things; and as for his small talk, it reminded me of an elephant trying to dance a jig;" and she sprang up with a snatch of song from the "opera bouffe," and began her toilet for dinner.

In a few moments, however, she dropped her hairbrush absently, and forgot to look at her fair face in the mirror.

"I wonder," she mused, "if he and Miss Burton ever met before they came here? It has been a strange coincidence that she should have felt such a sudden indisposition in each instance at the same moment that his name was casually mentioned. True, on both occasions, events occurred that might account for the sudden giving way of her nerves, but I cannot help thinking that she has some association with him that the rest of us know nothing about. She certainly seems more interested in him than in any one else in the house, for I have several times noticed peculiar and furtive glances towards him;

besides, they are evidently growing to be very good friends. As for Ik, he seems quite inclined to enter upon a serious flirtation with her. But what do I care for either of them! Mr. Sibley will be here tonight, and I'll enable this artist to bring his investigations to a close at once. I am what I am, and that's the end of it, and I won't mope and have a stupid time for anybody, and certainly not for him. Let him marry the school ma'am. She can talk books, art, and all the 'isms' going, to his heart's content. I, as well as Miss Burton, have my opinion of flirting, and know from some little experience that it is jolly good fun.

"He can go his way, I'll go mine; E'en though he frowns, the sun will shine."

And with a careless gesture she affected to dismiss him from her thoughts.

To judge from her manner that evening and the following day, one might suppose that she succeeded very fully. Sibley, with an unwonted venturesomeness, did risk his one immaculate possession, his clothes, and came from

the city through the storm. Ida and himself, between them, brought about the nearest approach to a "ball" possible in the circumstances.

The dancing, under their auspices, differed from that of the morning, not merely in name and form, but in its subtle character. In the one instance it had been an innocent pastime, occasioned by childlike and joyous impulses. The people's manner might have reminded one of a bit of darkened landscape that had been rapidly filled with light, and almost ecstatic life by the advent of a May morning.

In the evening, however, everything was artificial and in keeping with the gaslight. The ladies were conscious of their toilets, conscious of themselves, looking for admiration rather than hearty enjoyment. Even the older boys and girls, who had been joyous children in the morning, were now small parodies of fashionable men and women! A band of hired performers twanged out the hackneyed dancing music then in vogue, going over their small "repertoire" with wearisome repetition. People

danced at first because it was the thing to do, and not from any inspiration from the melody. As the evening wore on, Sibley, who had been drinking quite freely, tried to introduce, as far as possible, the excitement of a revel, calling chiefly for swift waltzes and gallops through which he and Ida whirled in a way that made people's heads dizzy.

Miss Burton, after going through a quadrille with Stanton early in the evening, had declined to dance any more. She did not feel very well, she explained to Van Berg as he sought her for the next form; but he imagined that she early foresaw that Sibley and others, and among them even Stanton, were inclined to give the evening a character that was not to her taste.

As Ida had made herself somewhat prominent in inaugurating the "ball," as Sibley took pains to term it on all occasions, Van Berg, as a part of his tactics to win the beauty's good will, tried at first to make the affair successful. He danced with others, and twice sought her

hand; but in each case she rather indifferently told him that she was engaged. He would not have sought her as a partner after his first rebuff had he not imagined, from occasional and furtive glances, that she was not as indifferent as she seemed.

Early in the evening it occurred to him that her slightly reckless manner was assumed, but he saw that she was abandoning herself to the growing excitement of the dance, as Sibley, her most frequent partner, and others, were to the stronger excitement of liquor. Observant mothers called away their daughters. Ladies, in whom the instincts of true refined womanhood were in the ascendancy, looked significantly at each other, and declined further invitations.

Van Berg had also withdrawn, but with his disposition to watch manifestations of character in general, and of one present in particular, he still stood at a parlor window looking on. The band had just struck up a livelier waltz than usual, and Ida and Sibley were whirling through the

wide apartment as if treading on air; but when, a few moments later, they circled near where he stood, he saw upon the young man's face an expression of earthiness and grossness that was anything but ethereal. Indeed so unmistakably wanton was the look which Sibley bent upon his companion, whose heaving bosom he clasped against his won, that the artist frowned darkly at him, and felt his hand tingling to strike the fellow a blow.

She, looking up, caught his frown, and in her egotism and excitement, thought it meant only jealousy of the man she had so favored during the evening.

"Perhaps he is more deeply smitten than I imagined, and I can punish him yet," was the hope that entered her mind; and this prospect added to the elation and excitement which had mastered her.

"Can she know how that scoundrel is looking at her? If I believed it I'd leave her marvellous features to their fate," was the thought that passed through his mind.

In his perturbation he walked down the long piazza.

Happening to glance into one of the small private parlors, he witnessed a scene that made a very sharp contrast with the one he had just left. An old white haired, white bearded man, a well known guest of the house, reclined in an easy chair with an expression of real enjoyment on his face. His aged wife sat near, knitting away as tranquilly as if at home, while under the gas jet was Miss Burton, reading a newspaper, with two or three others upon her lap. She had evidently found the old gentleman trying to glean, with his feeble sight, the evening journals that had been brought from the city, and was lending him her young eyes and mellow voice for an hour. The picture struck him so pleasantly that he took out his notebook and indicated the fortunate grouping within, for a future sketch.

"It would make some difference in a man's future," he muttered, "whether this maiden or the one in yonder rouse's embrace were installed as the mistress of his home."

Going back into the main hallway he met Stanton coming down the stairs with his face unusually flushed.

"Oh, Van," he cried, "where have you been keeping yourself? Come with me and have some of the best brandy you ever tasted."

"Where is it?"

"In Sibley's room. He brought up a couple of bottles of the prime old article, and has invited all his friends to make free with it."

"I'm not one of his friends."

"Oh well, you're my friend! What's the odds? A swig of such brandy will do you good, so come along."

"Come out on the piazza, Stanton. I want to show you something."

"Can't you wait a few moments? I want to have a whirl in this jolly waltz before it's over."

"No; then it will be too late. I won't keep you long," and Stanton reluctantly followed him.

Van Berg understood his friend sufficiently well to know that any ordinary remonstrance would have no

influence in his present condition, and so sought to use a little strategy. Taking him to the window of the small private parlor, he showed and explained to him the pretty and quiet scene within.

Stanton's manner changed instantly, and he seemed in no haste to return to the waltz.

"I thought it would strike you as a pretty picture, as it did me," remarked Van Berg, quietly; "and I also thought that after seeing it you would not want any more of Sibley's brandy. It would choke me."

"You are right, Van. I fear I've taken too much of it already. I'm glad you showed me this quiet picture it makes me wish I were a better man."

"I like that, Ik; I always knew you had plenty of good metal in you. Now I don't want to be officious, but I would not let a cousin of mine dance with Sibley any longer if I could prevent it without attracting attention. However generous he may have been with his brandy, he has had more than his share himself."

"Thank you, Van; I understand you. By Jove, I'll try the same tactics with her that you have with me. I'll bring her here and show her a scene that has been to me like a quieting and restraining hand."

A few moments later the waltz ceased, and Miss Mayhew came out on the cool, dusky piazza, leaning on Sibley's arm. Stanton joined her and said:

"Ida, come with me; I wish to speak with you a moment. Mr. Sibley, please excuse us."

"Indeed, Mr. Stanton," said Sibley in tones of maudlin sentiment, "you are cruel to deprive me of your cousin's society even for a moment. I'll forgive you this once, but never again." And then he availed himself of the opportunity to pay another visit to his brandy.

"Ida," said Stanton, "I want to show you a little picture that has done me good."

But the young lady was in no mood for pictures or moralizing. Her blood was coursing feverishly through her veins, her spirit had been made reckless by the wilful

violence that she was doing her conscience, and also by her deep and growing dissatisfaction with herself, that was like an irritating wound. She was therefore prepared to resent any interruption to the whirl of excitement, which gave her a kind of pleasure in the place of the happiness that was impossible to one in her condition.

"You call that a pretty picture!" she said disdainfully; "Miss Burton reading a newspaper to two stupid old people who ought to be abed! A more humdrum scene I never saw. Truly, both your breath and your words show that you have been drinking too much. But you need not expect me to share in your tipsy sentiment over Miss Burton. Did Mr. Van Berg ask you to show me this matter of fact group which, in his artistic jargon, you call a picture?"

"If he had, he showed you a greater kindness than you deserved."

"Yes, and a greater one than I asked or wished from him."

"Then you are going back to dance with Sibley?"

"Yes, I am."

"The prospects are, that you and Mrs. Chints and a couple of half tipsy men will soon have it all to yourselves. I suppose the old adage about 'birds of a feather' swill still hold good. I was in hopes, however, that even if you had no appreciation of what was beautiful, refined, and unselfish in another woman's action, you still had some self respect, or at least some fear of ridicule, left. Since you won't listen to me, I shall warn your mother. If Sibley and two or three others drink much more, Burleigh will interfere for the credit of his house."

"You have been drinking as well as Mr. Sibley."

"Well, thanks to Van Berg, I stopped before I lost my head."

"From your maudlin sentiment over Miss Burton, I think you have lost your head and heart both."

"Go; dance with Sibley, then," he said in sudden irritation; "dance with him till you and Mrs. Chints between you have to hold him on his feet. Dance with him till

Burleigh sends a couple of colored waiters to take him from your embrace and carry him off to bed."

She made a gesture of rage and disgust, and went straight to her room.

Sibley, in the mean time, paid a lengthened visit to his brandy, and having already passed the point of discretion, drank recklessly. When he descended the stairs again to look for his partner, his step was uncertain and his utterance thick.

Stanton gave Mr. Burleigh a hint that the young man needed looking after, and the adroit host, skilled in managing all kinds of people and in every condition, induced him to return to his room, under the pretence of wishing to taste his fine old brandy, and then kept him there until the lethargic stage set in as the result of his excess. And so an affair, which might have created much scandal, was smuggled out of sight and knowledge as far as possible. Mrs. Mayhew had been so occupied with whist that she had not observed that anything was amiss, and

merely remarked that "Mr. Sibley's ball had ended earlier than usual."