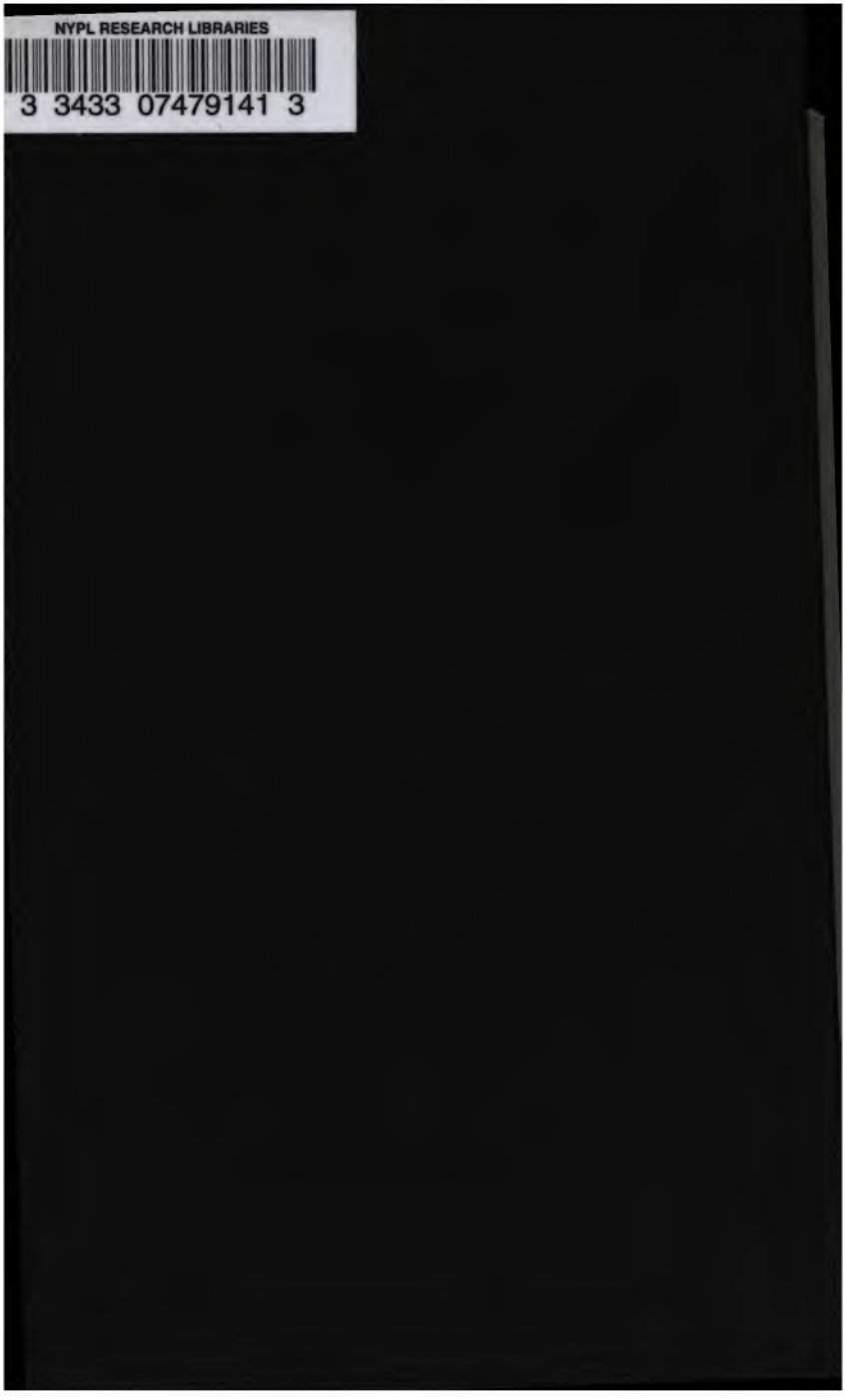

FOREST LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A NEW HOME."

"Where are the advantages, beyond the means, first, of mere subsistence, secondly, of information, which ought not to be indifferent to true philosophers? And yet, where exists the true philosopher who has been able, effectually, to detach himself from the common mode of thinking on such subjects?"

SIR W. SCOTT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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FOREST LIFE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

At his outset he was not what he became. * * * It is true there was always a large stock of Individuality — but how many ideas, how many sentiments, how many inclinations are changed in him!

GUIZOT.

A YEAR and a half had elapsed since the abstraction of the grapes, and the skin had grown over Seymour's knuckles, and also the bark over certain letters which he had carved in very high places on some of Mr. Hay's forest-trees; and, sympathetically perhaps, a suitable covering over the wounds made in his heart by the scornful eyes of the unconscious Caroline. His figure had changed its proportions, as if by a wire-drawing process, since what it had gained in length was evidently subtracted from its breadth. The potato redness of his cheeks had subsided into a more presentable complexion, and his teeth were whiter than ever, while the yawns which used to exhibit them unseasonably had given place to a tolerable flow of conversation, scarcely tinctured by *mauvaise honte.*

In short, considering that he was endowed with a good share of common sense, he was really a handsome young man. Not but some moss was still discoverable. It takes a good while to rub off inborn rusticity, especially when there is much force of character. The soft are more easily moulded.

Seymour had spent this interval in the most sedulous application; — such application as few young men exhibit, except those who have been denied the opportunity of acquiring knowledge until they have learned to feel keenly their own deficiencies.

It was by such effort that he had managed to make one year's time, under the best instruction in one of our Western cities, do the work of three at least; and the result was, that on his return home, his father, a sturdy stickler for republican simplicity, and one of that numerous class who think republicans ought to be rough and coarse, thought Seymour "a leetle too slick" for his liking. Not that our young friend was the least of a dandy. What he had seen of that sort during his city campaign had but served to deepen that contempt for effeminacy which is the heritage of every true son of the forest. But his manners were extremely quiet; — he no longer gave a certain twang to his parts of speech, without which no language is considered strictly classical among us; and he had learned to require conveniences for washing and dressing in his own room instead of sharing the family basin

and comb in the kitchen. Besides all this he dressed with a strict neatness which was supposed to indicate an incipient inclination to "stick up;" and he evinced decided objections to taking his turn at milking the twenty cows that came lowing into his father's barn-yard at sunset. These were bad signs.

However, when the old man found that in more important business Seymour was far more competent than before, and especially when he observed the clerkly skill and neatness with which he could use the pen, (an accomplishment but too rare in the neighborhood,) his respect for his son increased very rapidly, and he began to think it quite time "to set him off a farm of his own, and try if he could put so much larnin' to any real use."

These eighteen months, so important to Seymour, his scarce-remembered flame, Caroline Hay, had spent in New York, perhaps less profitably. She had gone to the city by invitation of a dear aunt, her father's sister, a member of the society of Friends; — childless, and longing for the cheering companionship of the young. Mr. Hay was scarcely willing to see his daughter depart for the gay city, even under such guardianship as that of his meek and pious sister. He feared that the fascinations of polished life — the very comforts and conveniences of the domestic arrangements she would enjoy — would cause her to look with cold eyes on her Western home, rude and laborious as that must

ever be by comparison. Still, the pleadings of Mrs. Tennett, of Mrs. Hay, and, above all, of Caroline herself, overcame his better judgment, and he gave his reluctant consent to the visit.

For some time Mrs. Tennett's letters were full of her niece's improvement, both in point of health and of the various studies to which she had directed her attention. She could not say enough of her unvarying sweetness of temper, — of her docility, — of her willingness to abide by the plain and quiet style of her aunt's house and company.

"Caroline," she would say, "is so lovable, — so exactly what I could wish for a daughter, that I could almost be selfish enough, my dear brother, to ask her of thee for a life-long comfort. With four sweet girls left, would it be too much?"

But gradually, and by degrees almost imperceptible to any but a parent's watchful heart, the good aunt's letters had assumed a different tone. Caroline had become very healthy and blooming, and went out a good deal. She had become acquainted with "a number of world's people," so wrote her kind and scrupulous guardian; and her father was given to know that dress was much more in requisition than formerly by frequent requests for money from Caroline herself.

Then Mrs. Tennett felt obliged to mention that her niece was receiving the attentions of a young man whose gay exterior and plausible address seemed to please her more than her aunt could

think safe, since the gentleman, though only an *employé* in a public office, yet carried the air and indulged in the expenses of a man of fortune. After this followed a silence of unusual length.

Come we now to a cold evening in May, the west yet red with the last sun-gleam, while the north and east were heavy with clouds driven on by a bleak and damp wind. A storm was evidently in prospect, yet Mr. Hay, well wrapped, mounted Hourglass for a ride to the post-office, three miles distant. Many times had he done the same, hoping for a letter from Caroline, now the theme of many an anxious thought, and as he went, he resolved, should he be as unsuccessful now as before, he would write requesting her immediate return, so strong a hold had the idea of impending ill taken of his mind.

But this evening, so soon as he could succeed in approaching the counter at the post-office, a counter that served as well for the dispensation of "bitters" and tobacco as of letters, he received a letter in the hand-writing of his sister. It was closely written and carefully crossed, yet there stood Mr. Hay, — elbowed and shoved, — amid all the din of spelling out newspapers, higgling about postage, and anxious but ineffectual efforts to get letters without paying for them — until he had read it quite through, by the dim rays of the one greasy lamp which shed its oil and a modicum of light from a beam over his head.

This done, he mounted Hourglass again, and striking off at a brisk trot in the teeth of a sleety shower, he stinted not nor staid till he drew bridle at his own door. It is not difficult to guess the purport of Mrs. Tennett's letter. She was about to return her fair charge to her father, with some fears that the invitation so kindly intended had not been productive of unmixed good.

"Any news from Caroline, father?" said several voices.

"Yes, a letter from your aunt," said Mr. Hay, less cheerily than usual.

"What is the matter, father? — Isn't she well?"

"Oh yes! quite well; she is coming home."

Much joy was expressed by the young folks, and Mrs. Hay, though she shared her husband's anxiety, could think of nothing now but the happiness of once more embracing the long absent object of so much care. Seymour, who, though no longer an inmate, was a frequent guest at Mr. Hay's, and who now sat by Mrs. Hay's work-table helping one of the little girls on a "hard" sum she had brought home from school, began to ask himself seriously whether he felt pleased or otherwise at the expected return of a young lady who had shown him so little favor in his chrysalis state, and who was now, probably,

Grown ten times perter than before.

Before he had time even to debate the ques-

tion, much less to decide it, a carriage drove up to the door, — there was a slight bustle in the hall, and the object of the thoughts of all present entered the room, radiant in beauty, all smiles and tears, and almost overcome with the joy of seeing once more the beloved home and its circle of happy faces. She was followed by a Quaker lady and gentleman whom she introduced as friends of her aunt, who had placed her under their care; — Mr. and Mrs. Thurston Caroline called them; they would have given themselves out in plainer style.

The warm greetings were said, and Miss Hay's fashionable courtesy to Mr. Bullitt accomplished, with scarce a suspicion on her part that the well-looking young man before her could be the yawning hero of the snapping-turtle. The Friends (exceedingly polite and well-bred people, by the by) received due welcome on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Hay, and were much urged to remain for the night.

"We must decline your kindness," said Mr. Thurston, with but little of the formality supposed by those, who do not know them, to belong to the members of his society; "my wife has set her heart on seeing her sister to-night if it may be. I think Joseph Ellingham's is but a few miles beyond this?"

"Ellingham's! Ellingham's!" repeated more than one voice, as if unconsciously, while each looked to each as if in perplexity.

Mr. Thurston noticed at once the changed expression of countenance on all around him.

"You have heard evil of Joseph or his family, I fear," said he, hesitatingly, and with some emotion.

"The road is very bad," said Mr. Hay, "and the night stormy; — wouldn't it be better to wait till morning?"

"If it be only the road and the storm," said Mr. Thurston, — "our driver is well acquainted with your roads, and if there is no other difficulty — but I fear from thy aspect, friend Hay, that there may be ——"

"There is," said Mr. Hay, kindly, taking Mr. Thurston's hand, "there is, my good friend. Our neighbor Mr. Ellingham has met with a great loss — the greatest — he is a lonely man."

"My sister!" said or rather sighed Mrs. Thurston, as she sank back, covering her face with her hands and weeping abundantly, but in silence, while her husband's sympathies, though evidently much excited, were repressed as by a powerful effort.

"And when was this?" said Mr. Thurston, after a long pause, during which nothing was heard but the stifled sobbing of his wife.

"Three weeks since," was the reply.

"And how? Thou hast heard of course."

"By a dreadful accident — by fire," said Mr. Hay, in a whisper.

"By fire! alas! alas!" said the poor lady, whose watchful grief had caught the sound; and now no longer able to exercise the strict control at which she had aimed, she fell on her knees on the floor, mingling her heart-wrung sobs with prayers and incoherent and bitter lamentations.

"Lydia!" said her husband, "my dear Lydia, recollect thyself;" and as he bent over her, his tears dropped fast upon her smooth cap; "our Heavenly Father doeth all things well! we are allowed to mourn, but we must not murmur."

And when the mourner accepted his offered assistance, and meekly suffered herself to be raised from the floor and placed on the sofa, she wept in silence, and seemed to suppress forcibly the passionate grief into which she had at first been surprised. And she might have observed that of the circle whose smiling faces had brightened the fireside, none remained to witness her distress except Mr. and Mrs. Hay and Caroline, the rest having, with a delicacy not unknown in the woods, retired silently to another room.

Few words were required to tell the particulars of a casualty but too common where the country is thinly inhabited, and the dwellings built with little precaution against fire. The result is not often so fatal, but when a fire occurs during the night, children may perish by families without a possibility of rescue.

Some two or three broad stones for the hearth,

and one or two more for the back of the chimney, are usually the only parts of a log-house not made of wood; the parts adjacent to the fire and the chimney itself being all of oak, the latter slightly covered within with clay. When this chimney takes fire, as it is very apt to do in spots where the clay has crumbled off, the loft where the children usually sleep may be all in flames before the inmates of the lower room are aware.

In this case nothing was ever known but that Mr. Ellingham, returning home late in the evening, after a short absence, found his two little daughters crying in the wood, and learned from them that the light which he saw at some distance proceeded not as he supposed from a brush-heap, but from his own dwelling. When he reached the spot a blazing ruin was all that remained. The poor babes said, mother had brought them out, and then went back, and did not come any more.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Thurston, learning that Mr. Ellingham was provided with another dwelling, still desired to proceed at once. To see the dear motherless infants would be at least a melancholy satisfaction. And Seymour, learning this from Mrs. Hay, offered to be their guide through the woods, — an offer which was thankfully accepted, as the road was newly cut and abounding in stumps and fallen trees.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Art *thou* not changed? Do the same feelings now
Come fresh and joyous that were once thine own?
When clustering locks lay on thy childish brow,
And life was new, and almost all unknown?

T. Colton.

Before Caroline Hay had been three days at home, she had become painfully sensible that her father's forebodings as to the effect of a city residence had not been unfounded. All was changed to her eye, if not to her heart. Much as she loved the dear inmates of the plentiful farm-house,—and she loved them as dearly as ever,—an air of coarseness, which she had never before observed, met her at every turn. Her mother's dress and occupations, the homely phraseology of her sisters, the furniture, the style of living, though certainly unchanged, or at least not changed for the worse, struck her unpleasantly, and chilled her feelings even against the pleadings of her heart and of her better judgment. She saw and acknowledged that all was good and true, generous and contented and happy, that her father's house was a well-spring of bounty to all who were in need, and that to him, and to his excellent partner and help in all ood things, the whole neighborhood looked with undoubting trust

for sympathy and kindness. She compared the simplicity and ease of her rustic home with the feverish excitement of the scene she had left, and though her reason and her good sense told her which to approve, she found that habit had become tyrannical, and likely to maintain a struggle in her mind which would cost her many bitter tears.

The acquaintance which she had accidentally formed in the city beyond her aunt's sober circle, had been rather showy than solid people, who were however possessed of sufficient refinement to add a degree of fascination to their gay tastes and habits; so that the eyes and ears of the inexperienced country girl were at once dazzled and delighted, and she learned to look upon elegance as almost synonymous with *dashing*, and to find every thing insipid or vulgar which was characterized by plainness and sobriety. No wonder she contemplated with mortified pride the unadorned aspect of things at home! We are all, it is true enough, marvellously forgetful of the outward life after we have lived long enough at the West to become indoctrinated with the current opinions; — but to return.

Unpleasant feelings were not wanting on the other side. So prone is youth to extremes, that it is not surprising that Caroline should have used her liberty and her father's liberal allowance in providing herself with dress which was rather gaudy than elegant. Her aunt had felt her inability to be a counsellor on a subject where her own views were

averse to even the smallest indulgence of taste or fancy, and the dress-maker had been but too happy to display all her art on so elegant a form — those artists generally considering their employers rather in the light of sign-posts than of rational beings. So our poor Caroline was very fine. There were such loads of curls that the fair head reminded one of a flourishing bed of Scotch kail, or of the decorations of some lucky child, who, having the *petites entrées* of a carpenter's shop, makes use of the opportunity to cover her eyes and ears with elegant pine shavings. Her fingers were heaped with incongruous rings, and worse than all were the long ear-pendants, which vibrated with every word, and seemed determined to repose their weary length on the snow-white shoulders below.

A costume, which would appear a little ultra even in the city, wears an air of absolute ridicule in the country; and while Caroline was feeling the plainness of her mother and sisters as a mortification to her pride, they, on their part, were absolutely ashamed of her finery. They could not think her ornaments improved her beauty, and, as a further and incontestable proof of their rustic breeding, they told her so; which made her cry, and then they were sorry, and on the whole there was a degree of constraint in their intercourse which cast a shadow on the delight of having Caroline at home once more.

These things being so, we must acknowledge

that it afforded rather a relief when word came that Mrs. Thurston, overcome by distress and fatigue, added to some exposure in her night-ride, was quite ill at Mr. Ellingham's, and much in need of some friendly aid from Caroline or her mother. Seymour Bullitt brought the message, and Caroline, when she saw him by daylight, was more struck than before with the marvellous improvement in his appearance, and particularly with the quiet self-possession of his manner. Indeed she could not but own to herself that she had known a person, far his inferior in most respects, pass in the city as "a splendid fellow" — but then, old recollections, and such a *countrified* name!

Mrs. Hay went to Mrs. Thurston, who grew worse daily; and after a few days' effort, ague accomplished its usual work by prostrating the nurse; and Caroline took her mother's place by the bedside of the sufferer.

This was a new scene for her, and one which soon proved of an absorbing interest. Mrs. Thurston's symptoms became more and more alarming, while she herself won more and more upon the affections of her young attendant. She was of a saintly piety, and so lovely in disposition and manner that it was impossible for a young and ingenuous mind to know her without loving her. No extremity of suffering ever overtasked her patience, no disappointment or omission of duty in others ever ruffled her serene countenance. Hers was that perfect

self-forgetfulness which binds all around to a warm and voluntary attention and remembrance, and Caroline felt that the cares and fatigues of such a sick chamber were any thing but a task. She was sole nurse, for though every effort had been made to procure a regular one, there was no such being within ken, and the neighbors, though all kindness, were distant, and could not leave their homes, or perhaps were detained by the illness of their own families, for it is one of the disadvantages of the country that sickness is very apt to prevail in neighborhoods so as to make it difficult to procure attendance.

During this time of trial and anxiety Seymour was by no means an idle spectator. He had become interested in Mrs. Thurston and her husband from the circumstances of his first meeting with them, and they in turn had appreciated his kind manner, and felt gratified by his friendly attentions. Now that they were in need of real and substantial aid, Seymour was at the service of the sick and afflicted, and many times a day might have been observed galloping in various directions, on different errands of mercy, a most useful auxiliary in the country where population is so scattered, and the ordinary comforts of the invalid sometimes so far to seek. It not unfrequently fell to his lot to be the bearer of messages or more ponderous matters between Mr. Hay's house and the scene of suffering,

and sometimes to escort to and fro the young nurse, when she could be spared for a little while.

It would be difficult to say just what were Seymour's feelings towards his fair enemy at this period. He thought them those belonging to indifference; indeed, he sometimes concluded, of dislike. Her manner, though softened much by the late rousing of her sensibilities, was still that of one who had been accustomed to admiration; and though she had gradually, and almost unconsciously, laid by all her finery, her appearance retained something of that dashing air which struck Seymour unpleasantly, both from his natural taste for grave simplicity and from its unsuitableness to the objects by which they were surrounded. And Miss Hay, if she thought of Seymour at all, had all old impressions habitually present, although she was often surprised to notice traits which she could not reconcile to those impressions. But she was not much concerned to do justice to one whom she had known as a clodhopper; so their intercourse, though civil and frequent, was frigid enough.

They were one evening at sunset returning together to Mr. Ellingham's, and had turned from the high road into the wood, when they were overtaken by a horseman, whose rapid pace continued till he had passed them, when he reined up suddenly, and greeted Miss Hay as an old acquaintance. He was a young man of gentlemanly

appearance, and his face was of that striking and animated cast which one does not easily forget. His whole exterior was such as would claim some praise any where, and of course it was remarkable enough in a wild Western forest.

Caroline was evidently embarrassed at the meeting, but recovering herself, introduced the gentleman as Mr. Avenard, and made inquiries after some city friends. The stranger's manner, in spite of manifest effort, betrayed a degree of agitation, and he eyed Seymour with no gratified air. The latter felt himself in the way, but he did not know very well how to get out of it, so the trio rode together to Mr. Ellingham's.

Here Caroline apologized for not inviting the stranger to enter, on account of the situation of the family. His dark eyes flashed at this, and drawing as near her as possible, he asked, in a low tone, when he might hope to see her again.

Caroline felt cruelly embarrassed. A thousand indistinct thoughts flashed across her mind in an instant. She knew that Avenard, though never a declared lover, had had abundant reason to suppose himself not disagreeable to her, and her heart whispered that if her sudden departure from the city had not prevented, he would probably have been not only a declared but an accepted one. But even the short time which had flown since her return had been sufficient, under the circumstances, to throw an air of coldness and hollowness over

most of her city reminiscences, and even over her partiality for this gay young man. The grief of Mrs. Thurston, her distressing illness, and the angelic piety which sustained her under all, had opened to Caroline a new world of thought and feeling; and the delightful consciousness of being useful had given her a sense of the true value and aim of life. So that Avenard and his claims had been for the time forgotten, and now that they were presented anew, she felt unprepared and uncomfortable.

In reply to his question, she said, in a voice as low as his own, "I cannot receive a visit here, but if you will come in the morning, I will ride over with you to my father's."

He bowed proudly and without speaking, and, turning his horse's head, rode away evidently dissatisfied; and Seymour Bullitt, not entering as usual, went his way too, with his heart beating inconveniently, and his face almost as red as when Caroline first knew him — and about what?

He could not make up his own mind on this point. What was it to him that this dashing young stranger had evidently expected a favorable reception from Miss Hay? He called to mind all the evidences of the young lady's dislike to himself, — and they were faithfully recorded in his memory, — and then tried to bring proof equally satisfactory, of his own indifference to her likes or dislikes. It required all the time occupied in a

very long *détour* — a gallop of half a dozen miles or so — to think over these things, and after all, when Seymour went to bed, the only fruit of his reflections was a manful resolution not to call at Mr. Ellingham's again while the strenger was in the neighborhood.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Here are old trees, tall oaks, and gnarled pines,
That stream with gray-green mosses; here the ground
Was never trenched by spade, and flowers spring up unsown,
And die ungathered. BRYANT.

But hark! What voice, as thunder loud,
Now shakes the wilderness profound?
CRYSTALINA.

MRS. THURSTON was so ill that night, and seemed so dreadfully prostrated in the morning, that it was feared she could not survive the day. Caroline, absorbed in grief and anxiety, had scarcely thought of her promise to Avenard, and, when he appeared to claim it, she met him at the gate, and declared it impossible to leave her friend.

"You seem to have found very dear friends here, Miss Hay," said he, bitterly.

"So dear," she replied, "that I feel that I could almost lay down my own life to save that of the one I am now attending — on her death-bed I fear — though I have known her but for a few weeks."

"It is *new* friends then who are so fortunate as to interest you! Perhaps the gentleman with whom I found you riding last evening was one of those happy beings whom you have not known long enough to despise!"

"On the contrary," said Caroline, "he is an old acquaintance, and a particular friend of my father's family."

"Oh! an old acquaintance and a family friend! very convenient relations, certainly! I presume you often claim his services as escort!"

"Mr. Avenard," said Caroline, with some touch of her natural spirit, though she was a little humbled by the consciousness that the gentleman had some right to complain, — "I know not by what right you address yourself to me in this manner! I deny your claim to the slightest interference in my choice of society."

"Caroline!" he said, in a changed and mournful tone, "do not drive me quite mad. I am unhappy, — wretched, — and to you at least I looked for sympathy and kindness! Do not trifle with my despair, but tell me when you will give me an opportunity to converse with you without interruption. I am about to leave the country."

Caroline was keenly touched by the change in his manner. Her eyes filled with tears, and she was on the point of promising an early meeting, when she was called anxiously from the house, and without an adieu to her companion, she was at the bedside of Mrs. Thurston in an instant.

Avenard waited as long as he decently could, and then, finding she did not return, he plunged into the wood, and hovered about within sight of

the cottage until he had seen Seymour dismount at the door and go in without ceremony.

* * * * * *

Seymour had found an excellent necessity for calling at Mr. Ellingham's. Finding a number of letters lying at the post-office for Mr. Thurston, he had judged it incumbent on him to ride over with them; and indeed, without this, he would have found it difficult to absent himself from a house where his services had been required daily for some time, and where he was always expected, and often waited for with anxiety.

Mr. Thurston was pacing the little garden with rapid steps, endeavoring to regain his wonted calmness, after a night of watchfulness and great distress of mind. Mrs. Thurston was now sleeping quietly, and her physicians were awaiting with solicitude the result of her repose.

"Thou art very kind," said Mr. Thurston, as he took the letters from the hand of his young friend; and from his lips these words were not words of course. As he read his letters, his countenance exhibited surprise and emotion. When he had finished, he said to Seymour that he wished immediately to send one of those letters to Mr. Hay. Seymour of course offered to be the bearer, and Mr. Thurston said,

"It is like thee, for thou art kind. Tell friend

Hay, please, that I am somewhat afraid of seeming intrusive, yet I feel as if I ought not to conceal from him the intelligence contained in this letter. If I am mistaken, I trust he will excuse me."

And Seymour departed, having seen Caroline only for an instant in passing.

He was scarcely out of sight of Mr. Ellingham's when he was joined by Avenard.

"Have you seen Miss Hay this morning?" asked the latter abruptly.

Seymour answered that he had just seen her, and he was vexed to think that, so indifferent as he was, he should have given these few words a flurried air. The sight of Avenard, he thought, seemed to cast a spell upon him.

"You seem to be a favored visitor!" said the stranger scornfully; "pray, may I ask by what right you intrude yourself upon Miss Hay at all hours?"

"When I know by what right you interfere with my movements," said Seymour in reply, "I may be disposed to answer such a question, — not till then certainly."

"Quite cavalier! well, sir! if I should inform you that I consider myself accepted by Miss Hay, you will think perhaps ——"

"That is a matter with which I have no concern," said Seymour abruptly; "but my visits at Mr. Ellingham's have another object, and my visits to Miss Hay will be regulated by herself." And

he quickened his horse's pace as if to escape further discussion of a point which seemed likely to lead to no pleasant results. Indeed the stranger seemed, by the disorder and impetuosity of his manner, to have a desire to pick a quarrel, which Seymour was determined to avoid if possible, though his Western blood had been stirred not a little, by the Newyorker's impertinent air.

Before he reached Mr. Hay's, however, Avenard was again at his side, seeming hurried, as if to follow had been a recent thought.

"You are on your way to Mr. Hay's, I presume," said he, more civilly than before. "I wish to call on him, and I will trouble you to introduce me, as I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him. Miss Hay was not at liberty to leave her friend this morning."

Seymour bowed coldly, as if not well pleased with the office; but they presently found themselves at the gate.

Mr. Avenard was, as we have said, handsome and prepossessing; and though his manners lacked that quietness and *retenue* which bespeak a mind at ease, he pleased Mr. Hay exceedingly, and the old gentleman's scrutiny was by no means an indifferent one, since rumors of Caroline's "Newyork beau" had already reached his ears.

Seymour was ill at ease, and vexed with himself for being so; and he took the earliest opportunity to call Mr. Hay aside, to give him Mr. Thurston's

letter, and the accompanying message, and to make his parting bow.

In the deep shade of the forest he endeavored to recover his wonted coolness, but in vain; and it was with a feeling of absolute despair that he for the first time owned to himself the interest with which Caroline, in her new character, as the angel of the house of mourning, had inspired him.

His hands abandoned the rein — he ceased to guide his horse, and he did not even notice that the animal had wandered, browsing, far from the beaten track, when he was recalled from a vortex of busy thoughts by a violent blow; and Avenard, his eyes flashing fire, his horse in a foam, and his whole appearance betokening complete distraction, stood beside him.

"Villain!" he shouted, "mean pitiful scoundrel! this is your indifference! you were too much of a coward to dare to avow your intentions, so you resorted to the expedient of undermining! You do not escape me!" And the madman drew a pistol before Seymour had collected his senses.

Seymour was unarmed of course, for honest men do not carry weapons in a peaceful land; — but with the instinct of self-defence he turned upon Avenard, and urged his horse forward with the spur. The animal was a heavy and powerful one, and easily rode down the other, which was of a lighter make, and Avenard, unhorsed by the unexpected shock, fell prostrate with the whole weight

of his own horse across his body. The pistol went off however, and the ball broke Seymour's bridle arm. He lost all consciousness, and sank forward, with his face on his horse's neck; upon which that wise beast took the well-known way to a good stable, and carried his master safely to Mr. Hay's gate.

We cannot report the extent to which our gay Newyorker may have been injured by this rough handling, for he quitted the country without any further effort to see Miss Hay. Mr. Thurston's letters had brought intelligence of one of those developments which too often close the career of city youths, who, unfortunately "born with the tastes of a duke without his income," find it convenient to borrow of those who have more money than they have the spirit to spend. Avenard had written somebody else's name by mistake, and received various sums of money thereupon, and he was now on his way to more congenial climes.

All that could be guessed of his intention in coming to this country was, the cruel and base design of persuading the innocent Caroline to share his exile, but we will hope he was not so utterly vile; though it may be doubted whether a person of his selfish and unprincipled habits is capable of any form of disinterested affection.

CHAPTER XXXV.

When the flame of love is kindled first,
'Tis the fire-fly's light at even;
'Tis dim as the wandering stars that burst
In the blue of the summer heaven.

Sleep, heart of mine!
Wherefore art thou beating?
Do dreams stir thy slumbers,
Vainest hopes repeating? L. E. L.

SEYMOUR'S broken arm might have been no very terrible accident for a young backwoodsman, but the excitement and agitation of his mind were unfavorable to a speedy cure, and for several days, the physician went backwards and forwards between Mr. Hay's and Mr. Ellingham's, leaving almost equally anxious faces in both. But happily all went well, and Mrs. Thurston and Seymour were nearly at the same time pronounced convalescent. The latter was most carefully nursed at Mr. Hay's, and occasionally visited for a few moments by Caroline herself. She was looking pale, sad, and spirit-worn from her long anxiety and confinement, added to the distressing thoughts naturally arising from the whole course of the Avenard affair. Between Seymour and herself there was a hopeful degree of constraint; for in his account of the affray he had unavoidably allowed it to be guessed that jealousy

was the moving cause of the young man's fury, and this presenting him in a new light to Caroline, forbade her feeling quite the ancient cool indifference, while Seymour, novice-like, was amusingly conscious.

Mr. Thurston now began to think of his return home, and he left nothing unsaid or undone to show his sense of the kindness with which he had been treated. He proposed to our friend Seymour to return with him to Newyork.

"We can do but little, my dear young friend," said he, "to show how we appreciate the kindness of all about us, but I hope thou wilt be willing to help us do what we can. I think I see in thee all that I can desire as a companion in business. Now, if thou wilt go with us to town, I will make thee such proposals as cannot but prove very advantageous to thy worldly interests, and such as will probably fix thee in the city permanently; and I am sure thou wilt not doubt that myself and my wife will do all in our power in return for thy great kindness to us in this our extremity. My business is such as thou art well fitted for, and such as will make thy station in society all thou couldst desire. Now I have made thee a long discourse," concluded the good man with a smile, "and I hope thou wilt give me a short answer, and one favorable to my wishes. — But no!" he added, recollecting himself, "I did wrong to ask thee for a sudden answer. Affairs of importance should be better

weighed. I was consulting my own wishes rather than thy good in this. Take a week for thy consideration of my proposal, and ask the counsel of thy friends. They will be better judges of thy real interest than I can be, for I am doubtless biased by my desire to have thee with me."

Seymour gratefully acknowledged Mr. Thurston's generous kindness, and, Mr. Hay coming in at the moment, the proposition was submitted for his judgment.

"You would probably live and die a richer man, Seymour," said he, "in the city than in the country; whether you would be a happier one may be doubted. But you are young enough to make the trial, and you have good sense enough to give it up if you find yourself unfitted, by character or habit, for a city life." And here the matter rested for the present.

Mr. Hay, who had always been extremely active in his habits, was now failing in health in some degree, though he had hardly yet reached the age when "the strong men shall bow themselves." He had been among the earliest pioneers of the West, and the labors and privations of his younger days had left their traces in his constitution, producing a premature old age not uncommon among the settlers. His interest in the duties and occupations of his situation were in no wise diminished, yet he was frequently prevented from taking his usual active part in them; — a state of things which

affected his spirits more than he was willing to own.

About the time of which we have been speaking, and particularly a day or two after Mr. Thurston's proposal to Seymour, Mr. Hay was quite indisposed, and more than usually depressed in spirits, in consequence of being unable to attend an election in which his old adjutant, Tim Rice, was much interested. Seymour, who observed his uneasiness, offered to go in his place, and supply the deficiency as well as he could; and Mr. Hay, though fearful that Seymour was not yet strong enough for the effort, permitted him to make it, and gave him the necessary instructions.

As he was going out, accoutred for the trip, he encountered Miss H.y in the hall.

"Are you going to ride this morning?" said she.

"Yes, to ——, to try to forward the election of your old friend Tim Rice."

"My friend!" said the young lady, with a scornful curl of the lip. "But you are not well enough! You look very pale!"

"Pale! do I?" said Seymour, the blood rushing to his face to supply the deficiency.

Caroline blushed most sympathetically, and after an instant's awkward pause, and without another word spoken, Seymour mounted his horse and was off. He had not been in so good spirits in a long time. Perhaps the brilliant opening offered by Mr.

Thurston inspired him. It certainly could not have been so slight a thing as a young lady's blush.

Arrived at the ground, he set about his second-hand canvassing with the very best intentions of fulfilling Mr. Hay's directions and wishes. His own partialities were certainly not in favor of Tim Rice, since we cannot always love our benefactors; and his view of Tim's character was a good deal clearer, and cooler, and less indulgent than was Mr. Hay's, this latter gentleman being what may well be called a warm friend, though he could not justly be styled a bitter enemy.

Seymour found Tim already warmly engaged, and all the world shouting at the very top of their powers, in order to make things clearer. There was a considerable assemblage of the farmers of the neighborhood, and we may venture to assert, without having been present, that a more respectable looking set of men cannot be found any where under the same circumstances. To be sure, as is often sagely observed, "it takes some of all sorts to make a world;" and so it does to make an election meeting; and this "all sorts" comprised some curious specimens. There was one tall fellow with his hat knocked in on one side, and a rifle on his shoulder, who was insisting on his own qualifications for a constableship; another with a blazing nose more generously advocating the claims of his friend.

"He's a little high just now, to be sure," said

this Achates, "but he's never the fellow to get drunk when he's got any thing to do."

"Vote for Spriggins," said one; "he's a high-flyer! he licked Kneeland last winter 'cause he said he wa'n't no gentleman!"

"Don't put Kneeland in," said a ragged youth, confidentially to a circle of a dozen; "don't vote for him; he's a mean tee-totaller!"

A cart, drawn up within convenient distance from the scene of action, contained the elements of a hundred quarrels and twice the number of black eyes; and there was still standing-place left on the back part. On this conspicuous perch, sure of entranced and stationary auditors, Mr. Rice now exhibited his well-known person, not dressed as for a gala-day, but studiously slovenly and common in his array. The time for opening the poll was near at hand, and not a moment was to be lost.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known laws of *modern* liberty.
MILTON.

"GENTLEMEN," said the orator, taking off his hat and waving it in a courteous and inviting manner, while he wiped his brow with a faded cotton handkerchief, — "Gentlemen! may I beg your attention for a few moments! You are aware that I do not often draw very largely on your patience, and also that I am not a man who is fond of talking about himself. It is indeed a most unpleasant thing to me to be in a manner forced to advocate my own cause, and nothing short of the desire I feel to have an opportunity of advancing the interest of my friends and neighbors in the legislature would induce me to submit to it."

Somebody groaned, "Oh, Tim, that's tough!"

"Yes, gentlemen! as you observe, it *is* tough; it is a thing that always hurts a man's feelings. But as I was observing, we must go through with whatever is for the good of our country. The greatest good of the greatest number, *I* say!"

By this time the auditory had greatly increased, and comprised indeed nearly all the voters. Mr. Rice went on with increasing animation.

"This is the principle to go upon, and if this was only carried out, we should all have been better off long ago. This is where the legislature wants mending. They always stop short of the right mark. They get frightened, gentlemen! yes, frightened, scar't! they always have a lot of these small souls among them — souls cut after a scant pattern — souls that are afraid of their own shadows — that object to all measures that would really relieve the people, so they just give the people a taste to keep them quiet, and no more, for fear of what folks a thousand miles off would say! You've heard of the jackass that was scar't at a penny trumpet — well, these jackasses are scar't at what isn't louder than a penny trumpet, nor half so loud."

Here was a laugh, which gave the orator time to moisten his throat from a tumbler handed up by a friend.

"Now you see, gentlemen, nobody would have said a word against that exemption bill, if every body was as much in favor of the people as I am. I don't care who knows it, gentlemen, *I* am in favor of the people. Don't the people want relief? And what greater relief can they have than not to be obliged to pay their debts, when they have nothing to pay them with? that is, nothing that they can spare conveniently. I call that measure a half-way measure, gentlemen, — it is a measure that leaves a way open to take a man's property if he happens to have a little laid by — a little of his

hard earnings, gentlemen; and you all know what hard earnings are.

"What is the use of having the privilege of making laws if we can't make them to suit ourselves? We might as well be a territory again, instead of a sovereign state, if we are a-going to legislate to favor the people of other states at the expense of our own people. I don't approve of the plan of creditors from other states coming here to take away our property. Folks are very fond of talking about honesty, and good faith, and all that. As to faith they may talk, but I'm more for works; and the man that works hard and can't pay his debts is the one that ought to be helped, in my judgment.

"They'll tell you that the man that sues for a debt is owing somebody else, and wants his money to pay with. Now, *I* say, he's just the man that ought to feel for the other, and not want to crowd him hard up. Besides, if we pass exemption laws, don't we help him too? Isn't it as broad as it's long?"

A murmur of applause.

"Then as to honesty; where'll you find an honest man if not among the people? and such measures are on purpose to relieve the people. The aristocracy don't like 'em perhaps, but who cares what *they* like? They like nothing but grinding the face of the poor."

Here a shout of applause, and a long application to the tumbler.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Rice, "some people talk as if what debts were not paid were lost, but it is no such thing. What one man don't get, t'other keeps; so it's all the same in the long run. Folks ought to be accommodating, and if they are accommodating they won't object to any measures for the relief of the people, and if they don't want to be accommodating, we'll just make 'em, that's all!

"Some say it's bad to keep altering and altering the laws, till nobody knows what the law is. That's a pretty principle, to be sure! what do we have a legislature for, I should be glad to know, if not to make laws? Do we pay them two dollars and fifty cents a day to sit still and do nothing? Look at the last legislature. They did not hold on above two months, and passed rising of two hundred laws, and didn't work o' Sundays neither! Such men are the men you want, if they'll only carry the laws far enough to do some good.

"Now, gentlemen, I see the poll's open, and I s'pose you want to be off, so I will not detain you much longer. All I have to observe is, that although I am far from commending myself, I must give you my candid opinion that a certain person who has thrust himself before the public on this occasion is unworthy of the suffrages of a free and

enlightened community like this. He's a man that's always talking about doing justice to all, and keeping up the reputation of the state, and a great deal more stuff of the same sort; but it's all humbug! nothing else; and he has an axe of his own to grind, just like the rest of us. And worse than all, gentlemen, as you very well know, he's one of these tee-totallers, that are trying to coax free-born Americans to sign away their liberty, and make hypocrites of 'em. I'm a man that will never refuse to take a glass of grog with a fellow-citizen because he wears a ragged coat. Liberty and equality, *I* say — Hurrah for liberty and equality! three cheers for liberty and equality, and down with the tee-totallers!"

The orator had been so attentive to the tumbler, that the sincerity of the latter part of his speech at least could not be doubted, and indeed his vehemence was such as to alarm Seymour, who felt already somewhat ashamed of the cause he was bound to advocate, and who feared that a few more tumblers would bring Tim to a point which would render his advocacy unavailing. He therefore sought an opportunity of a few moments' private talk with the candidate, and ventured to hint that if he became so enthusiastic that he could not stand, he would have very little chance of sitting in the legislature.

Now, Mr. Rice liked not such quiet youths as our friend Seymour, and especially in his present

elevated frame did he look down with supreme contempt upon any thing in the shape of advice on so delicate a subject, so that Seymour got an answer which by no means increased his zeal in Mr. Rice's service, though he still resolved to do his best to fulfil the wishes of Mr. Hay.

Rice's conduct throughout the day was in keeping with the beginning which we have described, and such was the disgust with which it inspired Seymour, that he at length concluded to quit the field, and tell Mr. Hay frankly that it was impossible for him to further the interests of so unprincipled a candidate.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was sweet,
Yet sad, to see the perfect calm which blessed
His look, that hour.

MRS. HEMANS.

Touch us gently, Time!
We've not proud nor soaring wings;
Our ambition, our content,
Lies in simple things.

BARRY CORNWALL.

MR. HAY felt exceedingly vexed, and not at all well pleased with Seymour, and visited his anger upon him, as old gentlemen will do upon young ones sometimes, by saying some things rather hard to bear. Tim Rice had always been very much under restraint when in Mr. Hay's presence, and from his quickness and readiness as a business man had acquired no small share of his good graces — a sort of habitual liking which sometimes goes further with us than a better-founded esteem would do.

So Seymour was in disgrace all day, which called forth the sympathies of the fair Caroline, who was but a soft-hearted little thing after all, and prone to take part with misfortune in any shape. She told him that her father was really ill, as indeed any body might observe, and that he

was only a little cross now and then, and so good all the rest of the time that it made up for it and a good deal more,—and such like maidenly topics of consolation; and Seymour was consoled; though evening brought intelligence of the complete defeat of Mr. Rice, and Mr. Hay was more pettish than ever. Mr. Rice had found listeners and cheerers during the lucid exposition of his sentiments, (which we were empowered to give through the kindness of an able reporter,) but when it came to the matter of actually putting into office a person of such accommodating views, the sober farmers had quietly cast their influence into the other scale, and elected a candidate who never made a stump speech in his life.

The very next morning, when Mr. Hay arose from the breakfast table and laid his hand on the great Bible as a signal for the commencement of family worship, that hand dropped powerless at his side, and he sank helpless, though not insensible, upon the floor. He tried to speak, wishing to reassure the terrified family, but no sound emanated from those revered lips, and in a few moments more he sank back with closed eyes and the pallor of death upon his countenance.

It was evidently an apoplectic seizure, and there was no physician within four miles. The agonizing distress of all may be conceived by those who have witnessed such scenes under such circumstances, but of these the dweller in the close-

packed city can have but little idea. What then was the relief of Mrs. Hay, when Seymour asked to be allowed to bleed Mr. Hay, saying that he had learned the art with an especial view to such emergencies. He was hailed as a minister of mercy, and when he performed the office with ease, and when returning animation was the result, not a member of the family but could have knelt at his feet to bless him for the kind forethought which had prompted him to acquire so inestimable a knowledge.

When Mr. Hay was in some measure restored, it was found that his right hand was almost useless, and that he was otherwise much disabled by this sudden attack. Seymour attended him constantly, and was made to hear, oftener than he wished, the regrets of his kind old friend at thought of that day's pettishness.

"You were right, my boy, and I was wrong, but you must lay it all to the apoplexy. And here, you see, I am justly punished by being obliged to call upon you for aid all day long. But we are poor helpless creatures, and we who live in the wilderness, above all, must learn to bear with each other's infirmities, since no one knows whose turn may come next, and money will not buy what we need."

This is a truth which we are daily made to feel; mutual kindness is often our sole dependence, and the character of a good neighbor is the one most coveted.

Mr. Thurston was often at the bedside of the invalid, and when he saw him recovering, he at last asked Seymour if he had come to a decision in his favor. "Here are our friends round us," said Mr. Thurston, "here is thine own father — now tell me, may I hope that thy mind is to go with us and share our lot? Depend on me for doing at least all I promise."

Seymour cast his eyes round the assembly, and every look was turned on him. He knew his father now felt sufficient confidence in him to be willing he should decide for himself, but he looked at Mr. Hay, helpless and dependent, and thought of his growing infirmities, and emotion choked his utterance.

"Thou canst not decide?" said Mr. Thurston.

"O Seymour! don't go and leave — father" — said Caroline Hay — tears trembling in her eyes, and Seymour's difficulties were solved in an instant.

"I believe I may be more useful here," said he to Mr. Thurston, "and if more useful more happy; so I can only return heartfelt thanks for your generous offer."

"Thou art right, undoubtedly," said the Friend, "but I wish my path could have been thine."

* * * * * *

Among the loads of gifts and keepsakes sent back by Mr. and Mrs. Thurston after they once

more reached their home, was a valuable case of books for Seymour, and one of more lady-like reading for Caroline, and with the latter came a dress so delicately fancied that it would have done very well to "stand up in meeting" with, for one of the plainest of the drab sisterhood. "I shall like to imagine thee dressed in it, dear Caroline," wrote Mrs. Thurston, "and I know it will suit friend Seymour's taste right well."

He did not find fault with it certainly, for in some few months after that time it was worn as a wedding-dress, and to Seymour at least Caroline had never looked so beautiful.

* * * * * *

A wedded life begun by an act of virtuous sacrifice can scarcely fail to be a happy one. That complacency of temper which sheds light over the darkest hour is never more surely nourished than by the habitual pleasure of doing good and conferring happiness. Seymour is Mr. Hay's right hand, and his influence and that of his fair and gracious Caroline is a daily blessing to the younger members of both families. I feel assured that we shall be able to point to them half a dozen years hence as a proof that cultivation and refinement are any thing but lost in the country.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

But fayrest she when so she doth display
The gate with pearles and rubyes richly dight,
Through which her words so wise do make their way,
To beare the message of her gentle spright.
SPENSER.

I HOPE the reader has not forgotten Mr. Sibthorpe. If he has, it must be because we have not succeeded in introducing him so meaningly as we meant to do. Our acquaintance with him and his family was one of those short-lived pleasures which so often gleam upon life's path only to disappear and leave it darker than before.

I shall give some account of their American experience, because their short story may be considered as a sketch of a class which is constantly becoming more numerous among us. I think them worth describing, because they were entirely free from that silly arrogance of which some of their countrymen who find it convenient to reside in the United States are justly accused.

Mr. Sibthorpe's person and manner, dress and ideas were all so thoroughly English, that the dullest of my countrymen could not bid him good evening as he passed him on the road in the twilight without saying to himself, "There goes a John

Bull!" Yet so universally popular did he become by the affability and kindness of his demeanor, that if he had remained a little longer within reach of our good-will, it would have gone hard but we had made him a justice of the peace at the very least, if not something still more dignified, in spite of himself.

One peculiarity marked our friend which I think was never noted of so stout a gentleman before. He was the most scheming and visionary of men. His round, shining head was ever full of projects, great or small, for himself or others. He should (by rule) have been tall and slender, with all the indications of the temperament scientifically designated as "nervous-sanguine;" and a head whose developments should form little hills and dales upon the cranium. But his kind easiness of disposition, or something else, had rounded out head and body until there were no inequalities left to theorize upon. As a still further contradiction, though almost a Bacchus in contour, he was stoical in his indifference to personal accommodation and indulgence. So that we can heartily say, "May his shadow never be less!" since the substance gives him no sort of inconvenience.

When I first visited Mrs. Sibthorpe, I found her in a small and very inconvenient house, to which several workmen were engaged in building an additional part, on a much more tasteful plan, al-

though still in cottage style. All was confusion and discomfort, as far as household arrangements were concerned. Every corner was strewed with boards, bricks, lime, and all the endless list of etceteras which carpenters and masons take care to scatter on all sides to give an air of importance to their business. The floors were uncarpeted and the windows were hung with paper curtains. The room was almost unfurnished, for it had not been judged best to open the boxes of household goods, which were stored at some distance, until the dirt and confusion which accompanies building any where, and in this country above all, should be out of the way.

The lady, a handsome woman of perhaps thirty or more, was seated on a rough bench, such as is sometimes used in farmers' kitchens, giving a lesson in geography to a pretty little girl, Mr. Sibthorpe's daughter by a former marriage. A small-sized globe stood on the bench between them. Mrs. Sibthorpe's eyes, shaded by a wilderness of ebon curls, were black, and quick and piercing, and her speech was correspondingly rapid and decided. She spoke with a strong English accent, (which does *not* mean *cockneyism*, whatever some of us may think,) and her conversation evinced at once the woman of the world and the romantic enthusiast — a rare combination certainly, but in this case a very delightful one. Her manners were those of

refined and fashionable society; her sentiments fresh and artless enough for a Swiss mountain girl, or a native of our own bright West.

She received us with frank cordiality, and with scarcely a reference to the scene of confusion in which we found her, though the bench on which she was sitting formed a tolerably fair specimen of the whole temporary arrangement. A small writing-table, with implements of bronze and silver, stood in a corner, and a handsome arm-chair was wheeled round for me, contrasting oddly enough with the bare floor and the paper-shaded windows. But the lady did not need the appliances which are all in all to the mere fashionable.

She was one in whose company one forgets chairs and tables. She was not so unwise, however, as to disdain the aid of dress, and, though surrounded by coarse objects, she herself was critically nice and lady-like in her appointments; and she seemed, with her bright smiles and her animated manner, to irradiate that rude cottage parlor.

Her table too — I dwell on these things partly because Mrs. Sibthorpe belonged to a much calumniated class of women, who, because they wear blue stockings occasionally, are supposed not to know how to wear any other, and partly because I do love to talk about Mrs. Sibthorpe, — the table was laid with English precision; and although the fare was plain enough, it was perfectly well served.

Indeed, if I ever envied any body an earthly possession, I certainly envied the Sibthorpes the three or four English servants who moved like clockwork through their several duties, in spite of the discouraging aspect of things around them. Something that looked very much like a carpenter's bench served as a side table, but it was covered with delicate damask, and the sober-looking attendant used it as gravely as if it had been mahogany or marble.

The lady herself had evidently never yet known any of the solicitudes of an American housekeeper in the country. Her whole heart was in the conversation, and the conversation was as far as possible from all reference to those commonplace affairs which fill the souls of so many of us. This was perhaps the more noticeable and enviable to me, because I am — habitually if not naturally — one whom cares devour, and who finds in the minute attention required by the impossibility of being well served in the woods, a dead weight forever counterbalancing the pleasure to be derived from the most interesting or brilliant conversation. This is a weakness, I know, — but it finds some apology in the weakness of others. Who cannot recollect, among his friends or visitors, some one who is made utterly uncomfortable by the least deficiency in the *ménage?* Such people abound in the United States as well as elsewhere, — people in whom "a taste for physical well-being," —

as De Tocqueville defines the foible, — has almost taken the place of all other tastes. To entertain such people, in this country, with only home-bred domestics, is a very trying pleasure indeed. Small philosophy becomes very necessary on both sides.

When Mr. and Mrs. Sibthorpe returned our visit, they had experienced some difficulties in consequence of the marriage of one of the maids with an excellent man-servant who had been Mr. Sibthorpe's factotum, and who now bought land with his wages, and assumed the position of country neighbor instead of that of faithful domestic. However, as the newly-married couple were living quite near them, they still had the benefit of their occasional services, and were in the mean time making diligent inquiry after others, who might at least be trained to fill their places. Mrs. Sibthorpe was in fine spirits, boasting that she had learned to make bread, and was even taking lessons in making butter; and declaring that she really believed the best thing that could happen to her would be the desertion of all her servants in time, in order that the domestic employments which she felt to be so rational and so healthful, might become compulsory, at least long enough to oblige her to obtain an insight into their mysteries.

It was delightful to see her taking her inoculation thus kindly, and we found her gaiety and good-humor more charming than ever.

The next time we visited Newton Grange we

found its bright-eyed mistress with her sleeves turned up, making an attempt at a pie. The only maid who still remained with her was prostrate with ague, and Mr. Sibthorpe himself had experienced a shake or two, and sat in the corner of the great kitchen fireplace, looking doleful, to be sure. The account of things was now somewhat shaded. The bright tints which had been cast upon the manufacture of bread and butter were dimmed a little. Mrs. Sibthorpe had laid aside her rings, and left the papillotes in her ringlets. A dress scarcely suited to woodland kitchening was defended by an apron borrowed from the maid. This said maid, a devoted and excellent creature, had her little bed in a corner of the kitchen, with the double view of making the care of her chill days less laborious, and of aiding her mistress in the household duties, by suggestions, and hints, and cautions, which were delivered with most amusing apologies, and ceaseless regrets that such business should fall into such hands. "O ma'am,—if you please—the kettle is boiling over! dear me! if I could but lift it off myself! This *hager* is the *hoddest* thing! yesterday I was quite stout—oh, please, ma'am, —don't scald yourself!—O ma'am! I beg your pardon—but the nasty pig is come in at the door, and has got at master's gruel!"

Mrs. Sibthorpe's spirits were almost as good as ever, and she found amusement in all the vexatious crosses of her present lot. Her husband was far

more disturbed. He could not bear to see the exertions and sacrifices made by his wife, while he, only half sick, but quite useless, sat looking on, "a sad and silent cipher."

And all this time no assistance to be procured in any department. Ague is very impartial in its visits, and often puts an entire neighborhood down at once, so that it not unfrequently occurs that there are not enough able persons in a whole district to attend properly to the sick.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Nor from this deep retirement banished was
Th' amusing care of rural industry.

Oh, let not then waste luxury impair
That manly soul of toil which strings your nerves!
Oh, let not the soft, penetrating plague
Creep on the freeborn mind, and, working there,
With the sharp tooth of many a new-formed want,
Endless and idle all, eat out the heart
Of Liberty * * ——— the swelling wish
For general good erasing from the mind.

THOMSON.

AFTER this seasoning was at an end, and ague seemed to have worn off, or nearly so, our English friends began again to enjoy the real pleasures of a country life, and to gather round them such additional means of comfort and convenience as had been at first unprovided. The new part of the dwelling was finished, and a sweet, low-browed, many-sided cottage it was. Furniture came, and was placed in its appropriate positions — that is, appropriate according to Mrs. Sibthorpe's views, though sadly out of order in the estimation of her neighbors. A fine piano-forte was drawn from its hiding-place in a neighboring barn; books in copious measure filled every corner of the little nook called a library. A rustic arbor was constructed in the garden for Charlotte's especial use, and here

her school-books and her "baby-things" were bestowed, — the arbor having been carefully thatched to protect the treasures from the weather. A light open carriage and a pair of ponies were added to the establishment, and one would have thought there was little left for plain people to wish for.

But alack for short-sighted humanity! Parlors, and libraries, and halls, and verandahs, require to be swept and dusted. An air of slovenliness soon spreads itself over gardens and shrubberies that are not duly cared for. Horses exact the most odious regularity in feeding and currying, and carriages give very little comfort if we must use them muddy or wash the mud off with our own hands. A late writer has advanced the appalling doctrine that there is a degree of immorality in dismembering one family for the accommodation of another, i. e., that each family, while in health, ought to have no greater amount of domestic business than can be performed by its own hands. Whether the speculations of this philosopher had not yet been communicated to the world, or whether Mr. and Mrs. Sibthorpe had not happened to meet with them, or whether, in spite of instruction, they still adhered to the old-fashioned notions of the advantages of a division of labor, I am not able to say. Certain it is that they found the want of good domestics a sad drawback on the comforts of their pleasant house and its accompaniments. The one faithful damsel still kept her place, and divided herself into as many parts as she

could, but she had ague enough to lessen her efficiency not a little, and besides, the more we enlarge our bounds and increase our conveniences, the more care and labor do we render necessary.

Many and desperate efforts did Mr. Sibthorpe make to supply the deficiency. Women were found who would undertake the business for good wages, but they were ignorant and must be taught, — proud and must be conciliated. Some would flounce out of doors and insist on being carried back to their homes on the discovery that they were to have a table separate from that of their employer. Others would swallow this mortification for a while, until their own purpose was answered — the price of a new dress or a smart bonnet perhaps — and then call up the latent dignity, and declare they "couldn't stan' it no longer."

These usually took a good deal of pains to make known far and wide the ground of their dissatisfaction; and it became, after a while, almost equivalent to a loss of caste to endure indignities which so many had spurned.

Then domestics were brought from the city, at enormously disproportioned expense, and these invariably became dissatisfied; — some because they were taught by busy neighbors to feel themselves in a degraded position, and others for want of company and amusement. Poor Mr. Sibthorpe was almost in despair, but his wife took all cheerily, and learned to be so good a manager that the dis-

comforts of imperfect arrangements were almost forgotten, and Mr. Sibthorpe acknowledged that a greater amount of absolute labor than he had supposed himself capable of, had really benefited his health and spirits. To till the soil is tiresome enough, but it was only pleasure to dig in the garden at his wife's solicitation. The care of horses has its disagreeables; but he could generally hire some kind of a biped who would attend to the ponies after his own fashion, and for the rest — did not the daily drive with Florella and Charlotte through the "openings" more than compensate for all the personal supervision which he himself bestowed on them?

And so the time wore on, and, for people out of their element, the Sibthorpes were the happiest family I ever saw. But it so happened that Mrs. Sibthorpe, who continued her active life after her friends thought it would have been prudent to adopt a more quiet one, was taken ill, unexpectedly, and while all needful aid was distant and the roads in their worst state.

The physician was six miles off, and the nurse a good deal further, and the kindness and sympathy of some women in the neighborhood were the only available resource. With these, most happily, our friend did as well, and perhaps better, than crowned heads are apt to do in similar straits; and something which it is proper to call a fine boy, was dressed and being fed and toasted when the doctor

arrived. But though all was thus happily over, Mr. Sibthorpe's anxiety amounted to absolute anguish in view of the isolated position in which he fancied himself. From the fever of solicitude in which I found him the next day, I can but wonder that he had not died outright before the physician and nurse made their appearance. He walked the floor with a most perturbed step, and wiped his forehead almost as often as on that burning prairie where we first met him. He declared that nothing to be named, of earthly good, would tempt him to endure again the anxiety he had suffered; and we could not but think his feelings very natural, although to us old settlers they appeared so exaggerated. It takes time, and something else too, before those who have been accustomed to deify art can venture to place confidence in nature. And it must be allowed that few things are more depressing than the lack of proper attendance for the sick.

Mrs. Sibthorpe was about very soon after, and quite absorbed in her new cares, if cares they could be called, which seemed to be mere recreation. She was one of those enviable people who accomplish a great deal without ever seeming busy; and by the habit of never really losing a minute of time, she was able to take good care of her baby with very imperfect aid, and at the same time to find leisure enough for her favorite pursuits. O! she was a jewel of a woman, that dear Mrs. Sibthorpe! With nothing of the pattern woman about her, she was

an example for any body; and yet we must lose her!

This same difficulty of procuring any thing like comfortable domestic service grew to be an intolerable evil. The cottage, with all its charms, — and they were many, — required yet this addition — somebody to keep it clean. Little Dudley was a treasure, and treasures must have keepers. Our friend Mrs. Sibthorpe, lovely as she was, and is, was yet mortal, and must have something to eat, and Mr. Sibthorpe, though a philosopher, in his way, was but a man, and had been accustomed to lean a good deal on his fellow-men. While the novelty lasted, it did very well to turn menial labors into play, and split wood and curry the horses for exercise. But it has always been found that amusements after a while become tiresome, and our friends were no exception to the general rule. Only one of the four people who came with them to the wilds now remained, and she, though faithful as gold, had a terrible proneness to ague, and was given to going beyond her strength as soon as she was able to do any thing.

After much reluctance and many ingenious expedients Mr. Sibthorpe concluded to leave the cottage for the winters at least, and make a temporary sojourn in Detroit, where a moderate amount of money will buy a goodly number of comforts, and where there is yet to be found a class of people

who are willing to sing second, for a consideration.

Mrs. Sibthorpe sighed and shook her head at this plan. She would have preferred the dear cottage with all drawbacks, and she felt assured that after a while, some of these difficulties would be overcome. But Mr. Sibthorpe's imagination was apt to run away with him, and in this instance the one frightful shadow of desertion in sickness had taken possession of his fancy. He could have been content for himself to have lived on "mashed potatoes" without "minced veal;" but it was impossible to attempt to bring up an infant without a physician at one's elbow. Laugh at this, O ye thousands of ruddy urchins, whose dancing eyes light up our forests! how many of you are there on whom learned leech never looked! whose wild pulses beat as they list, untouched by the finger of science!

The thing was settled — our regrets were but too sincere and too natural, for winter is the time when neighbors are most valuable. At this point of affairs, two of Mr. Sibthorpe's English relatives died within a week of each other, and our friend found himself a rich man, with the necessity of returning immediately to England. Here was a dilemma — we did not know whether to be glad or sorry — affection pleaded both ways.

Mrs. Sibthorpe declared she should never love

any spot on earth so dearly as she did her American cottage; but, from what we hear of Dudley Park, I fancy it will not be natural to sigh after Newton Grange.

When our dear neighbors reached Newyork on their way home, they sent us, among other kind remembrances, a packet of letters — the same they had written to friends in the city during the progress of their first year in the woods.

"Knowing your interest in these matters," wrote Mr. Sibthorpe, "I thought you might like to see the progress of our initiation into things so new to us, and you are quite welcome to make such use as you see fit of the quotable parts of these letters, if you should think they might be of the slightest use to any body." With this permission I venture to select such portions of the correspondence as refer more particularly to the character of forest life, premising only that the letters were addressed to a brother-in-law of Mr. Sibthorpe and his wife, — English people who had resided many years in Newyork.

LETTER I.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

Is it possible, my dear Williamson, that after your experience of the world's utter hollowness — its laborious pleasures and its heart-wringing disappointments — you can still be surprised at my preference of a country life? you, who have sounded to its core the heart of fashionable society in the old world and the new, tested the value of its friendship, and found it less than nothing; sifted its pretensions of every kind, and expressed a thousand times your disgust at their falseness — you think it absurd in me to venture upon so desperate a plan as retirement? You consider me as a man who has taken his last, worst step; and who will soon deserve to be set aside by his friends as an irreclaimable enthusiast. Perhaps you are right as to the folly of the thing, but that remains to be proved; and I shall at least take care that my error, if it be one, shall not be irrevocable.

It is true I left England in what you think a "temporary" disgust; but the circumstances of difficulty and vexation which suggested the removal to America were of any thing but a momentary or accidental character. It is true that I had been tolerably successful, but it is also to be recollected

that in pursuance of my favorite plan I retired earlier than was warranted by prudence. This step once taken was irretrievable. I had made choice of a residence in the vicinity of D——, and there, in the society of a few intimate friends, I hoped to pass the afternoon of life in the repose which belongs to unambitious thoughts, and a sincere though humble love of letters. And I still think the dream might have been realized, but that it pleased the Almighty to take from me the wife of my bosom; the being to whose companionship the whole scheme owed its charm, and without whose society and sympathy I could no longer hope for happiness. My Charlotte once gone, the whole aspect of life was changed. My quiet home, before so charming, wore an air of gloom which I could not endure. The very sight of the infant which remained to me, gave me almost as much pain as pleasure. I felt as one might who should see the last plank slip from his grasp, leaving him to struggle unaided on the boundless ocean.

As the bitterness of grief began to soften under the blessed influence of "Time the consoler," I felt a desire to mingle again with my fellow-men; to seek in company the solace which my own fireside now denied me. I found my friends kindly anxious to aid my return to cheerfulness and hope, but a new difficulty soon presented itself. My fortune, though sufficient for the simple and unambitious style which had fully satisfied my Charlotte's

wishes and my own, was far inferior to that of my own family connections. These all lived in a handsome and hospitable way, and when I began to mingle with them in the frequent interchange of visits, I was struck with the difference which existed between their establishments and my own. While Charlotte lived I had never given it a thought, but now, I was more dependent upon circumstances, and these things made me uncomfortable. It was a poor grief for a philosopher, I own; but who has not felt the obstinate force of petty vexations? I resolved against such unworthy emulation, and at the same time detected myself in contriving plans by which this unlucky inferiority might be rendered less apparent. I felt my difficulty to be contemptible, yet it did not the less disturb the enjoyment that I had hoped to find in society.

Add to all this that Lord ——, on whose estate I lived, and whose propensity to every variety of ingenious insolence is as well known to you as to myself, thought proper to desire my conversion to his own political views. From the moment that he found I scorned his insidious bribes, he became my bitter enemy; and unfortunately he discovered, in my natural irritability of temper, now not a little increased, all that he could wish for the exercise of his petty malice. My life from this time became intolerable. The consciousness that I had thrown away the means of placing myself

on a level with my friends, and in a good degree beyond the reach of my overbearing neighbor, vexed me to the soul, and at this very juncture, and while I was boiling under a new insult from Lord ——, I met with a considerable loss — a loss which diminished my income materially. My dear Williamson, can you blame me for coming to America, where my small means would still enable me to live comfortably, if not handsomely; and where I could hope to be always secure from the insolence of the little great?

I have not thus far been disappointed in the expectations I had formed of this land of true liberty and equality. If I have at times wished for a little more deference in the manners of the lower classes, I have found even more worth and dignity in the higher walks of life than I had anticipated. The difficulty of which many of our friends have complained as counterbalancing in a great degree the advantages of a residence in America, — that, I mean, which arises from the want of good servants, — I obviated by bringing with me from England several faithful domestics, who serve me with no diminished zeal in the new world. And on this side the water I have found, as you well know, a successor to my Charlotte, a successor worthy to be such; a mother to my daughter, a friend inestimable to myself; a countrywoman of my own too, and one whose views of life coincide in all particulars with mine.

You will perhaps inquire, why, with these advantages, I could not content myself in the city? Simply because I longed for the freedom and independence of the woods. I cannot feel that I have come to America — distant, young, wild, new America — till I have seen her in her own peculiar form; till I have learned to know her by those features which distinguish her so decidedly from the old world. I feel that "the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty," must be loveliest in her own national and characteristic costume. A city life, or a life made up of city habits, is the same in essentials every where. There is the same living for others rather than one's self; the same emulation in despicable trifles; the same unmeaning bustle; the same *gêne;* in London, in Paris, in New-york, — on a greater or a smaller scale as the case may be. I am tired of these. I am willing to give up — I will not say forever, for who can answer for himself? — but for a time at least, the very questionable advantages of a life of hackneyed movements and recurring fatigues, for one of primitive simplicity, of hardy exercise, of uninterrupted intellectual culture.

My dear Florella, who has the single-heartedness of a child, joined with much originality and independence of feeling, agrees with me entirely. She is as anxious as myself for unbroken mornings, promenades *en deshabille*, and long cheery evenings ending at ten o'clock. We bring books, music,

and all the means of comfort and employment; and with these and the cherished correspondence of a few dear friends (yourself among the number we count on) we can never be dull even in the woods which you represent as so ineffably dismal. I shall give you a token now and then that ennui has not absolutely devoured us; and I promise to be honest. I will give you the dark shades of the picture as well as the sunshine. And you in return must promise to reform your worldly opinions, and dress your estimate of comfort after our model in any degree you shall see fit. Honor bright!

Yours,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER II.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

* * * SINCE my last we have taken up our abode in the wilderness in good earnest, — not in "sober sadness," as you think the phrase ought to be shaped. There is, to be sure, an insignificant village within two or three miles of us, but our house is the only dwelling on our little clearing — the immense trunks of trees, seemingly as old as the creation, walling us in on every side. There is an indescribable charm in this sort of solitary possession. In Alexander Selkirk's case, I grant that the idea of being "monarch of all I survey," with an impassable ocean around my narrow empire, might suggest some inconvenient ideas. The knowledge that the breathing and sentient world is within a few minutes' walk, forms, it must be owned, no unpleasant difference between our lot and his. But *with* this knowledge, snugly in the background, not obtrusive, but ready for use, comparative solitude has charms, believe me. The constant sighing of the wind through the forest leaves; the wild and various noises of which we have not yet learned to distinguish one from the other — distinct yet softly mingled — clearly audible, yet only loud enough to make us remark

more frequently the silence which they seem scarcely to disturb, such masses of deep shade that even in the sunny spots the light seems tinged with green — these things fill the mind with images of repose, of leisure, of freedom, of tranquil happiness, untrammelled by pride and ceremony; — of unbounded opportunity for reflection, with the richest materials for the cultivation of our better nature.

Nothing can be more delicious than the weather at this season, in this Western country. Italian skies may be *set* off, perhaps, by relics of ancient power and splendor, and still more by the associations connected with those relics; but I am certain that even you, scornful skeptic as you are on all points touching what you are pleased to call "rural fury," could not deny that the deep, transparent blue which roofs this natural Coliseum, gives out the outline of yonder towering elm with an accuracy — a delicacy — which no Calabrian azure ever surpassed. The very sun-glints that flash from the white wings of the eagle which, even as I write, soars majestically across the sky, are distinctly visible, though the distance is so great as to make the bird of heaven seem scarce larger than a dove.

But I am forgetting that all this will cost you numberless "*Fudges*," and I will quit the poetical for the practical at once. Know then, O commonplace mortal! that the fates have not denied to your "mad" friends a tolerably comfortable house; or rather, (I make the acknowledgment lest you

should be tempted by my descriptions to visit us before we make our additions, and so accuse me of delusion or exaggeration,) I confess that the present house is, more properly, the beginning or nucleus of a house, than a structure deserving that title as serving for a gentleman's residence. Yet here, where no allowance or provision is to be made for pride, and where there is no necessity for spending money to buy the good graces of people who are nobody to you, and who care as little about you in return, the house answers our temporary need tolerably well, having a (so called) parlor; a kitchen; a bedchamber, of modest dimensions it is true; a closet for our little Charlotte, and a loft for Chadwell and the faithful Rose, who is willing to put up with any thing but the "*hodd*" ways of the people. John and Sophy, who, as you know, have, by the aid of a neighboring justice of the peace, lately become one, are obliged at present to find lodging at the house of a neighbor who lives somewhere within a mile of us, in the depths of the wood.

On our first arrival, John proposed making an extempore lodging-room in the barn, on which occasion we discovered that this essential addition to a country house had been quite forgotten in my survey of Mr. Doolittle's flattering bargain. You may laugh, but who can think of every thing? and really, the weather is so fine, that one is almost independent of roofs and walls. A bivouac be-

neath such skies, would be rather attractive than appalling.

Some difficulties have attended the transportation of our movables, and I find too that my estimate of the "must-haves" was rather limited. Florella, who is, you know, of a meditative and abstract turn of mind, would have thought a still shorter list might comprise all that was necessary. But she, as well as myself, will be glad of your friendly aid in procuring for us certain articles which you will find enumerated at the close of my letter, and which you will be so good as to see securely packed, and forwarded to the care of Messrs. ——, Detroit. The piano-forte has not yet arrived, and I confess myself at a loss how to bestow it when it does come. It had not occurred to me, that in a very small parlor, embellished with no less than six doors and four windows, to say nothing of a staircase and an immense fireplace, there would be but little space for large articles of furniture. And the sofa on which I promised myself many a sweet siesta during the hot months, is taking its own rest undisturbed in its box, under a shed at some distance from the house. But we shall soon build, and then these little inconveniences will be obviated. Besides, are there not sofas of turf? I find them a more than tolerable substitute when they do not smell of rheumatism.

In one respect I find myself disappointed. The wheat lands, which I bought at a large additional

cost in consideration of their being broken up and planted, wear at present an appearance very little promising as to the approaching harvest. Wide strips of unbroken soil intervene between the scattered lines of the plough; and if any seed was sown on these, the solid sward has sent up no return. The broad field that I survey just now from the window, bears at least as much resemblance to a great green gridiron as the Escurial does to a stone one. But it is something to feel one's self a proprietor of the soil, and I anticipate much pleasure in sending my own wheat to the mill, be it little or much. I think however I can now perceive why my friend Mr. Doolittle complimented me so highly on the extent of my agricultural knowledge, and declared his sentiments on the subject of farming to agree precisely with my own.

My letter is already femininely long, yet I must give you an instance of rustic simplicity which occurred this morning — a verification indeed of your repeated prediction. A stout youth of twenty years or so applied for work, stating that he had "hearn tell how the 'squire wanted a hand." I was glad to obtain an addition to our effective force, and the bargain was nearly concluded when our swain broke in with,

"I say, uncle! does your hands eat with you?" Conceive of the question if you can, and you will readily imagine the answer: but you can never

paint to yourself the air with which this untamed son of the forest turned on his heel, saying with the utmost coolness,

"If I a'n't good enough to eat with ye, I a'n't good enough to work for ye, that's all!"

Think of such companionship for Florella, who, though a democrat in principle on all important points, is, in personal habits, quite as fastidious as one could wish. To me these things would be matters of indifference, especially where the contact was only for a limited period. Mere accidents in social condition are nothing in themselves; and I have too high an idea of the dignity of labor to despise the practical agriculturist, though I may not relish his manners. But with ladies the case is different, and I shall never attempt to conform, in this particular, to the customs of the country. When John and Sophy get their log-house finished, they will relieve us from the disagreeable necessity of boarding hands.

Do not fear such unreasonably long letters in future. I expect to be much occupied with building and other improvements, and shall hardly have time to weary you with my favorite topics.

Ever yours,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER III.

Mrs. Sibthorpe to Mrs. Williamson.

My dearest Catharine,

Why have I not written you a dozen letters before this time? I can give you no decent or rational apology. Perhaps, because I have had too much leisure — perhaps too many things to say. Something of this sort it certainly must be, for I have none of the ordinary excuses to offer for neglect of my dear correspondent. Think any thing but that I love you less. This is the very place in which to cherish loving memories. But as to writing, this wild seclusion has so many charms for me, this delicious summer weather so many seductions, that my days glide away imperceptibly, leaving scarcely a trace of any thing accomplished during their flight. I rise in the morning determined upon the most strenuous industry.

My broken credit with half a dozen correspondents whom I have treated as ill as yourself is to be entirely redeemed before dinner. For this purpose I place my desk before a window that opens towards the west, and which is consequently shaded during all the earlier part of the day. Here do I seat myself with the resolute air of one who is not to be tempted from duty. Nothing before me but

huge trees, between whose ancient mossy trunks no ray of any but soft green light can reach the moist sward below. The only sound is that of the sighing wind that scarcely stirs the heavy verdure, yet makes its presence known by a ceaseless moan resembling almost precisely the soft rush of summer waves upon a pebbly beach; magic music any where, and fraught with dreams; but particularly so where we feel, as it were, alone in the august presence of Nature, with nothing to limit the flights of fancy, and with an unbounded leisure which seems to promise time for every thing. Pen in hand, eyes unconsciously exploring the mysterious arcades of the forest, behold your friend, her heart full of affection, and her head of pleasant musings, still hesitating for materials for an epistle, which were never to seek while surrounded with all that is supposed likely to occupy or to distract the mind.

It may be that I have a lurking doubt of your sympathy in the strange pleasure with which these solitudes inspire me; — or, possibly, a cowardly fear of the ridicule that is always attached, by those who live in the fashionable world, to any thing which approaches the romantic, whether in sentiment or action. A true enthusiast, however, would rather anticipate your speedy conversion, and, at worst, why should I dread your kind smiles? You could not, if you would, make me ashamed of my

happiness, and I am sure you would not if you could.

* * * * * *

Our way of living just now is odd enough. John's house is so nearly finished that he and Sophy live in it and take our work-people as boarders. This is quite convenient for us, since we could not obtain laborers on any other terms. But I find Sophy is sadly missed as the head of domestic affairs, (I forget whether Mr. Sibthorpe has mentioned in any of his numerous and *lengthy* epistles, that Chadwell has left us and returned to New-york, because she "couldn't a-bear the 'orrid beer as they makes in Michigan" — though this her chosen comforter was manufactured by a countryman of her own, who is considered quite an adept in the art.) Sophy's invention was all in all to Rose, whose materials are so limited as to require all Caleb Balderstone's ingenuity in order to set a table which shall in any degree accord with her ideas of propriety. Truth to say, I had a very unpractical idea of what sort of things would be needed for forest life. I forgot that our habits must be in some degree the standard, whatever should be the circumstances, and in planning for a simple country life, I did not take into account the fact that we had yet to learn to be country people. I find we must simplify our habits exceedingly, to make out at all with the moderate amount of household con-

veniences we thought it necessary to bring with us. But my good spouse is, as you know, *tant soit peu* fidgetty about small matters, (he is looking over my shoulder even now,) and instead of simplifying our habits, he is bent upon complicating our accommodations, as I think very needlessly; for we have already a list far greater than our neighbors, who, most philosophically, make one thing answer for a dozen different uses. Sophy has already caught the spirit of the country, and is beginning to keep house with a mere handful of the simplest utensils.

Where we can possibly find places for all the articles Mr. Sibthorpe has ordered, remains yet to be discovered. Even after our new buildings are completed, I fear there will be many very excellent and desirable things in the lamentable case of the Primrose family picture.

We have been very civilly treated by our neighbors of the village; and we find several among them whom we can visit with pleasure. These seem delighted at having an addition to their little circle, and we are not at all disposed to exclude the cultivation of the social feelings from the enjoyments of country life. Here will, as I foresee, be the grand difficulty after all. For want of congenial society one is in such danger of becoming self-enclosed and unsympathizing — a most unlovely, inhuman, and wicked form of pride, and one which

we must guard against if we would not forfeit our share of that mercy, which is our only hope, and which embraces alike the whole human family.

I can already perceive, that for want of this companionship one may in time become too bookish, too citatory and pedantic, through lack of that fusion by conversation, which refines and naturalizes one's literary stores. One is apt to read too much, and too miscellaneously. And as to writing, it is so much more delightful to read other people's reveries than to put one's own thoughts into words! Doing nothing has so many charms, that even writing looks like work, by contrast. The very idea of an abundance of leisure makes us use our leisure unprofitably. I have sketched out many systems of regular employment; but never did society, even in my gayest days, beguile me of my resolutions of improvement like the enticing quiet of the cool woods, with the certainty of long days of delicious reading and reverie, undisturbed by visitors and untrammelled by ceremony. I fear my reformation must wait for rainy weather, since I can never summon resolution to deny myself the pleasure of rambling under such skies and such moonlight as ours.

Dear little Charlotte feels all the delight of this charming season. Her eyes seem always full of gentle pleasure, and she often employs herself for whole hours in weaving wreaths of wild flowers,

and dressing with them a great hollow tree in which her large doll is seated, looking in its scarlet frock like the lady in the lobster.

As for your friend my husband, it would require the pen of De Foe himself to give a just idea of his occupations, his plans, his expedients; his ingenuity in contriving, his zeal in executing, the various conveniences of our new dwelling. But most surprising is the exemplary patience with which he endures the many vexations attendant upon employing workmen who are accustomed to build according to their own very peculiar ideas, and who require to be argued, if not persuaded, into every deviation from the established method of the neighborhood. For instance — it is difficult to convince these primitive utilitarians that the spacing of windows and doors is of any consequence; or that to place the windows of two stories exactly one over the other can make any material difference in the appearance of a house. It took a full hour to make our principal architect acknowledge that water would run off a roof which sloped at any less than "quarter-pitch." In passing through the larger sort of villages in this Western world, you will notice comparatively few proofs of this erratic taste; but the workmen who content themselves in little isolated settlements are often almost self-taught, and they frequently unite farming with their other avocations, so that they feel comparatively little interest in giving satisfac-

tion or acquiring reputation in their several trades. Nevertheless we feel that these are the people whom we ought to employ while we live among them, and we must, in common justice, bear witness to their good-humor and their obliging dispositions. They argue, but they quarrel not, which is something where opposition is so frequent. I must confess that my indolence would have led me to give up all the points that Mr. Sibthorpe has so faithfully contested inch by inch. Indeed I often run away to escape even the echo of one of these interminable argumentations.

The result of all will be, I believe, a pretty cottage, built without the violent contravention of any of the ordinary rules, yet presenting an exterior of rustic plainness, suited at once to its position in the wild woods, and to the limited purse of the proprietor. If we want pillars and arches, and corridors and cloisters, we have them all close at hand, built by mighty Nature, and ready to put to shame man's puny efforts at imitation. This architecture never tires. To me at least it is always new and delightful; at once satisfying the eye, exciting the imagination, and filling the soul with the most profound sense of the presence of the divine Author.

> Nature herself, it seems, would raise
> A minster to her Maker's praise!
> Nor for a meaner use ascend
> Her columns, or her arches bend.

I am sure even your cloudless gaiety would feel

and own the sense of solemn awe which these ancient shades are so well calculated to inspire. But I must recollect, too, that you may very possibly weary of it as a theme, in my hands especially — so I spare you.

Write me soon and often, and pray write yourself *out*, as I have done, or I shall learn to be ashamed of my enthusiasm and my egotism.

Yours ever,

F. S.

LETTER IV.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

My dear Williamson, *July 15th.*

I hoped to have been before this time so deeply engaged with studs and siding, casings and cornice, that letter-writing would have been out of the question. But my lumber is at the saw-mill, and all the horses in the neighborhood are too busy to be spared for my service. I must have, of course, horses of my own, but it is necessary first to build a stable, so that I am at present dependent on hiring them when necessary. This, I begin to perceive, will cause unpleasant delays, since each man keeps no more horses than he needs for his own purposes. Here is a difficulty which recurs at every turn, in the country. There is nothing like a division of labor or capital. Every body tills the ground, and, consequently, each must provide a complete equipment of whatever is necessary for his business, or lose the seasons when business may be done to best advantage. At this season, in particular, this difficulty is increased, because the most important business of the year is crowded into the space of a few months. Those who hire extra help at no other period, now employ as much as they are able to pay, which increases much the

usual scarcity of laborers. It is the time of year, too, when people in new countries are apt to be attacked by the train of ills arising from marsh miasmata, and this again diminishes the supply of able hands.

I confess that this view of the obstacles to a comfortable outset in rural life had not occurred to me, though I recollect having been struck by an observation of Sir Walter Scott in a letter to a friend who was looking towards a country life; that if one wants a bowl of milk, in the country, it is necessary to keep a cow; while in the city you need not buy a pennyworth more than you require. I have cause to feel the practical good sense of this observation twenty times a day, since we are discovering a thousand wants which have always heretofore been so regularly and so easily supplied, that we did not remember that they were wants. Florella, who has never taken much interest in household matters, finds only amusement in these various deficiencies and inconveniences, as well as in poor Rose's ludicrous perplexities and solemn disapprovals of every thing to which she has been unaccustomed. Rose declares against the people and their ways, which she pronounces the "oncivilizedest" in the world, quite unaware all the time that she herself is utterly incapable of one sentence of pure English. I wish you could have seen her yesterday, when a little boy came to me, without salutation of any sort, with,

"I say! what do you guess about lending me your axe for a spell? Do you reckon you can spare it?"

I think but little of these instances of rusticity, but I must say that the example of entire want of personal deference, which is customary here, has already some influence upon the manners of my own people — always excepting Rose, who is too devoted a creature to be spoiled by any example. I can perceive that John and Sophy, who are beginning, since their marriage, to feel something of a separate and selfish interest, are not quite so respectful in manner as before, although in their services I have nothing to complain of. This is to be expected, I know, but it is not pleasant in proof.

Little Charlotte is the person most disturbed by the delay in our building operations. Children are always longing for something new, and can appreciate none of the obstacles which often thwart our best-laid plans. She wonders why papa cannot build a pretty log-house, like John's, which she is never weary of extolling. In truth I, who am obliged almost to rest on my oars, look at John's rapid progress with a feeling akin to envy. He has but borrowed a few days' work of his neighbors, which he is to repay in kind when called upon; and with this slight aid to his own good arm, his neat little dwelling is almost finished, while mine, simple as it is to be, must wait the

convenience of others, whom I am ready to pay well for their services.

It is really surprising, the advantage which a capacity for manual labor bestows, in a state of society like this. Money is comparatively ineffectual, where there is no competition — where your laborers are sure that if you discharge them you can get no others, and that the pay must ultimately fall into their hands; any trifle is permitted to stand in the way of serving you. But it would not do thus to disappoint a neighbor, whose assistance you may require upon some occasion of great haste or importance — so that here, as in other cases, the strong-handed have the best of it.

It is often supremely vexatious to find that people will exercise their judgment as to whether your occasion for despatch is as pressing as their own, or as that of some neighbor. Even after making a positive engagement "to help you" (for pay) it is no uncommon thing to find your workman turning his back on you and his promise for a while, having made up his mind that you can wait better than others. Thus one has the double care of making a bargain and inducing the other party to keep it when made. It is no uncommon thing to make a bargain and then hire it to be kept. I must acknowledge there is, from some cause, a laxity of morals on this same point of bargain-making. While more ready than the people of older countries to give gratuitous aid to each other

in straits and difficulties — more inclined to be generous — our backwoods neighbors are less observant of their engagements — justice being a far less attractive and popular quality. They like a little show about their virtues, like the world on a larger scale. You know I promised you the shades of the picture — but to return to the point — what was it? Oh! John's house.

Charlotte is especially charmed with John's chimney. It is so like baby-house building — slender sticks crossing each other at right angles in such a manner as to form a hollow square — and this carried up entirely on the outside of the house; it has quite a gimcrack air. What Charlotte's opinion will be when she sees the whole finished within and without by a thick plastering of mud, I cannot say. Even the house whose neat rustic appearance so charms her, has to be "chinked and mudded," i. e. have its interstices filled first with slender strips of wood and then with wet clay, bountifully bestowed, to keep out the wintry blasts. The cottage, after all, will really be a pretty object in our prospect; for John, with an attempt at taste not very common except among English settlers here, has continued his roof down on both sides so as to form a narrow verandah, which he intends to ornament with vines; and he has also a small enclosure in front of the house, where roses of all hues are to make it look as much like home as possible. By the way, what think

you of intensifying the odor of the rose by planting onions (!) around its root? Who knows but this may be, after all, the true source of the power of the Persian attar? If this were proved, what an elegant way of making one's fortune!

I had intended that my garden should have been at least laid out and partly planted this summer, but I fear the lack of suitable laborers will prevent this entirely. I have a strong desire to make an experiment in the manufacture of sugar from the stalks of Indian corn, which was tried in some parts of Germany, but relinquished, being found unprofitable. I think the sun of Germany has not the power which we experience in this level peninsula during the three summer months. And if the summers are to be ordinarily as hot as this one, I am certain the hardy sorts of the olive which are raised in the Crimea may be advantageously cultivated in this warm soil. You will smile, I day say, (for I have not forgotten our old topic of castle-building,) but when I succeed in supplying the market with Western olive oil, you may perhaps change your note. I must be speedy however, for I am told the oil expressed from sun-flower seeds is likely to prove a formidable competitor.

I lack nothing but the ring of Solomon, with its power of summoning attendant genii. When I get this, or a substitute for it in the shape of half a dozen stout fellows with heads on their shoulders,

you shall not laugh at my dreams, for they will then become realities.

Meanwhile forget not the vulgar household goods you are to procure for us. We wait anxiously the intelligence of their departure for the West. This letter is absolutely a congeries of atoms; but you insisted upon my being minute, and declared that nothing in the experience of a "settler" could be uninteresting to you — so blame me not. I have jotted down every thing that occurred to me without an attempt at form or order. All due salutations from Florella and,

Yours truly,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER V.

Mrs. Sibthorpe to Mrs. Williamson.

My dearest Catharine,

I studied your last in the cool morning hour which I often devote to a ramble over the wooded hills which rise near our little cottage. I seated myself on a fallen tree, in a spot where I might have mused all day without seeing a human face, or hearing any sound more suggestive of civilization than the pretty tinkling of the numerous bells which help to find our wandering cattle. What a place in which to read a letter that seemed as if it might have been written after a stupid party, or in the agonies which attend a "spent ball." (Vide T. Hood.) Those are not your real sentiments, my dear Kate; you do not believe life to be the scene of ennui, suffering, or mere endurance, which you persuaded yourself to think it just then. If I thought you did, I should desire nothing so much as to have your hand in mine for just such a ramble and just such a lounge as gave me the opportunity for reflecting on your letter; I am sure I could make you own that life has its hours of calm and unexciting, but high enjoyment. With your capabilities, think whether there must not be something amiss in a plan or habit of being that sub-

jects you to these seasons of depression and disgust. Is that tone of chilling, I might say killing ridicule, which prevails in certain circles, towards every thing which does not approach a particular arbitrary standard, a wholesome one for our mental condition? I believe not; for I have never known one who adopted it fully, who had not at times a most uneasy consciousness that *no one* could possibly be entirely secure from its stings. Then there is a restless emulation, felt in a greater or less degree by all who have thrown themselves on the arena of fashionable life, which is, in my sober view, the enemy of repose. I am not now attempting to assign a cause for that particular fit of the blues which gave such a dark coloring to the beginning of your letter. I am only like the physician who recalls to his patient's mind the atmospheric influence that may have had an unfavorable effect upon his symptoms. You will conclude I must have determined to retort upon you in some degree the scorn which you cannot help feeling for the stupidity of a country life, by taking the first opportunity to hint that there are some evils from which the dweller in the wilds is exempt. On the other hand, I admit that in solitude we are apt to become mere theorists, or dreamers, if you will. Ideal excellence is very cheap; theory and sentiment may be wrought up to great accuracy and perfection; and it is an easy error to content ourselves with these, without seeking to ascertain whether we

are capable of the action and sacrifice which must prove that we are in earnest. You are right, certainly, in thinking that in society we have occasion for more strenuous and energetic virtues; but yet, even here, there is no day which does not offer its opportunities for effort and self-denial, and in a very humble and unenticing form too. But we shall never settle this question, for the simple reason that virtue is at home every where alike; so I will spare you further lecture.

Do not give yourself the least uneasiness lest I should become a mere book-woman. I have no idea of making myself so tiresome, as I will soon convince you when you come and shine upon our shades, or when I crawl forth timidly into your lamplight at some future day. There is an excellent hint in a comic song I picked up somewhere, — "founded on fact," I doubt not, —

There was *ink* on her thumb when I kissed her hand.

I would forswear the pen and all its concomitants rather than subject myself to such an imputation. But even you allow that a lady may be literary, if she can keep the fact profoundly secret, so I suppose I may occasionally venture upon the Black Sea if I put on gloves. You remember Mr. ——, who always wrote in gloves, lest he should write too fair a hand for a gentleman. We thought he could not have been particularly solicitous on that point; but I have my suspicions that he was more afraid

of the pollution of a chance ink-spot upon his lily-white fingers. How he used to sit admiring them! You say my pleasures are ideal;— my dearest dear, are your own less so? Take away from your happiness all that touches upon the imaginative, and you leave a duller sound than that which you suppose to be our fate in the woods. Imagination heightens every pleasure, and we give way to its illusions with more completeness in the country. The uniformity which you represent to yourself as so tiresome, is conducive to an equality of mental temperament which certainly is one of the materials of happiness. If calmness of mind preserve beauty, you will find me any thing but faded, as you prophesy. Take care of late hours and wasplike waists, and artificial modes of life in all respects! If I find *your* bloom decayed prematurely, I shall have a powerful argument against you.

I do own to a feeling of envy at your description of Madame ——'s concert. The lack of fine music is a real evil, and an irremediable one here. It is one of the pleasures which is to be sought far from home. But I hear a concert every morning from my favorite seat on the other side of the hill, where I look down upon a circular hollow, so shut in by hills on every side, and so shaded by great oaks, that it seems always twilight there, except at noon. I do not speak now of the concert of innumerable birds, which you would, I know, condemn as commonplace. This is so universal at this season

that one almost forgets its sweetness. But in addition to this endless variety of soaring trebles, I have from my rustic throne a bass of such peculiar character and force, that I doubt whether any thing but a trombone could match it for depth, while it would require a dozen other instruments to imitate its other characteristics. It proceeds from the centre of the hollow where the brilliant green and rich luxuriance of the long grass betray the presence of water, though it is only here and there that a small glassy streak throws back the sunbeams. This cool retreat seems to be the home of all the frogs that were banished from Ireland, and they have at times the air of berating the cruel expatriation in no measured terms. The prevailing tone is the rich bass I have mentioned; another resembles the creaking of a grindstone, and still others the ceaseless rattling of cog wheels in a cotton manufactory; the water vibrating all the while, I suppose by the action of indefatigable throats. At times it is so like a scolding match that I cannot forbear laughing aloud, solitary as I am; and you can't think how startling one's own laugh is, when alone in the presence of nature.

You wish to know how domestic affairs are going on in this land of equality. Easily enough in one sense, you may be sure, while I am nominally at the head. I rather think that certain cherished observances drop away one by one, almost unmissed; but I see nothing very essential in these

changes. Rose groans over the deficiencies in the kitchen, as well as over the "hokkerd" ways of a damsel who is now under her training hand; but she is learning to require fewer conveniences, and still manages to keep us very comfortable; and as to the poor girl, I think she has the worst of it. If you could overhear, as I do occasionally, the ceaseless clatter of Rose's exaggerated English, you would pity, I am sure, the unaccustomed ears of the woodland lassie. The poor child has been brought up in a log-house of the smallest size, whose single room serves for all purposes of cooking, eating, and sleeping, and whose cupboard contains all that she supposes necessary for the comfort of any body's household. It is but small matter of surprise then that she should be disposed to take always the article that comes to her hand first, whatever be the occasion she requires it for, and each and every instance of this very pardonable blunder comes over poor Rose with all the surprise of novelty, and calls down upon staring Polly a clatter which makes her look as she might if she had incautiously touched the string of a shower-bath. I think she will fly before a great while. I am sure I should, let the maternal nest be what it might.

But I am a poor hand to attempt to give the minute account of these matters which you seem to desire. You always suspect me when I give you the sunny side, and I see very little of any other. If you would know the particulars of the

business part of forest life, I shall appoint Mr. Sibthorpe secretary for the home department. He has unwearied patience for these details, and I believe feels authorized to bestow all their tediousness upon your good husband.

I must tell you, however, of a quilting which I did not share with Mr. Sibthorpe, though I wished for him many times during the afternoon. It was held at the house of a very tidy neighbor, a Mrs. Boardman, the neatness of whose dwelling and its outworks I have often admired in passing. She invited all the neighbors, and of course included my unworthy self, although I had never had any other acquaintance than that which may be supposed to result from John and Sophy's having boarded with her for some time. The walking being damp, an ox-cart was sent round for such of the guests as had no "team" of their own, which is our case as yet. This equipage was packed with hay, over which was disposed, by way of *musnud*, a blue and white coverlet; and by this arrangement half a dozen goodly dames including myself found reclining room, and were carried at a stately pace to Mrs. Boardman's. Here we found a collection of women busily occupied in preparing the quilt, which you may be sure was a curiosity to me. They had stretched the lining on a frame, and were now laying fleecy cotton on it with much care; and I understood from several aside remarks which were not intended for the ear of our hostess, that

a due regard for etiquette required that this laying of the cotton should have been performed before the arrival of the company, in order to give them a better chance for finishing the quilt before tea, which is considered a point of honor.

However, with so many able hands at work, the preparations were soon accomplished. The "batts" were smoothly disposed, and now consenting hands, on either side,

> Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
> Yellow and red —

wherein stars and garters, squares and triangles, figured in every possible relation to each other, and produced, on the whole, a very pretty mathematical piece of work, on which the eyes of Mrs. Boardman rested with no small amount of womanly pride.

Now needles were in requisition, and every available space round the frame was filled by a busy dame. Several of the company being left-handed, or rather ambidexter, (no unusual circumstance here,) this peculiarity was made serviceable at the corners, where common seamstresses could only sew in one direction, while these favored individuals could turn their double power to double account. This beginning of the solid labor was a serious time. Scarcely a word was spoken beyond an occasional request for the thread, or an exclamation at the snapping of a needle. This last seemed of no in-

frequent occurrence, as you may well suppose, when you think of the thickness of the materials and the necessity for making at least tolerably short stitches. I must own that the most I could accomplish for the first hour was the breaking of needles, and the pricking of my fingers, in the vain attempt to do as I was bid, and take my stitches "clear through."

By and by, it was announced that it was time to roll—and all was bustle and anxiety. The frame had to be taken apart at the corners, and two of the sides rolled several times with much care, and at this diminished surface we began again with renewed spirit. Now all tongues seemed loosened. The evidence of progress had raised every body's spirits, and the strife seemed to be who should talk fastest without slackening the industry of her fingers. Some held *tête à tête* communications with a crony in an under tone; others discussed matters of general interest more openly; and some made observations at nobody in particular, but with a view to the amusement of all. Mrs. Vining told the symptoms of each of her five children through an attack of the measles; Mrs. Keteltas gave her opinion as to the party most worthy of blame in a late separation in the village; and Miss Polly Mittles said she hoped the quilt would not be "scant of stitches, like a bachelder's shirt."

Tea-time came before the work was completed, and some of the more generous declared they would

rather finish it before tea. These offers fell rather coldly, however, for a real tea-drinker does not feel very good-humored just before tea. So Mr. Boardman drove four stout nails in the rafters over head, corresponding in distance to the corners of the quilt, and the frame was raised and fastened to these, so as to be undisturbed and yet out of the way during the important ceremony that was to succeed. Is it not well said that "necessity is the mother of invention?"

A long table was now spread, eked out by boards laid upon carpenters' "horses" — and this was covered with a variety of table-cloths, all shining clean however, and carefully disposed. The whole table array was equally various, the contributions, I presume, of several neighboring log-houses. The feast spread upon it included every variety that ever was put upon a tea-table; from cake and preserves to pickles and raw cabbage cut up in vinegar. Pies there were, and custards, and sliced ham, and cheese, and three or four kinds of bread. I could do little besides look, and try to guess out the dishes. However, every thing was very good, and our hostess must have felt complimented by the attention paid to her various delicacies. The cabbage, I think, was rather the favorite; vinegar being one of the rarities of a settler's cabin.

I was amused to see the loads of cake and pie that accumulated upon the plates of the guests. When all had finished, most of the plates seemed

full. But I was told afterwards that it was not considered civil to decline any one kind of food, though your hostess may have provided a dozen. You are expected at least to try each variety. But this leads to something which I cannot think very agreeable.

After all had left the table, our hostess began to clear it away, that the quilt might be restored to its place; and as a preliminary, she went all round to the different plates, selecting such pieces of cake as were but little *bitten*, and paring off the half demolished edges with a knife, in order to replace them in their original circular position in the dishes. When this was accomplished, she assiduously scraped from the edges of the plates the scraps of butter that had escaped demolition, and wiped them back on the remains of the pat. This was doubtless a season of delectation to the economical soul of Mrs. Boardman; you may imagine its effects upon the nerves of your friend. Such is the influence of habit! The good woman doubtless thought she was performing a praiseworthy action, and one in no wise at variance with her usual neat habits; and if she could have peeped into my heart, and there have read the resolutions I was tacitly making against breaking bread again under the same auspices, she would have pitied or despised such a lamentable degree of pride and extravagance. So goes this strange world.

The quilt was replaced, and several good house-

wives seated themselves at it, determined to "see it out." I was reluctantly compelled to excuse myself, my inexperienced fingers being pricked to absolute rawness. But I have since ascertained that the quilt was finished that evening, and placed on Mrs. Boardman's best bed immediately; where indeed I see it every time I pass the door, as it is not our custom to keep our handsome things in the background. There were some long stitches in it, I know, but they do not show as far as the road; so the quilt is a very great treasure, and will probably be kept as an heir-loom.

I have some thoughts of an attempt in the "patchwork" line myself. One of the company at Mrs. Boardman's remarked that the skirt of the French cambric dress I wore would make a "splendid" quilt. It is a temptation certainly.

Mr. Sibthorpe's vexations and trials with his workmen are neither few nor small, but I shall leave the description for his pen. We never enjoyed better health, for which I fear we are not as thankful as we ought to be for so great a blessing. Kind love to all, from

Yours, ever,

F. S.

LETTER VI.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

August 20.

NEXT to seeing yourself, my dear Williamson, I can scarcely think of any thing that would have afforded me more pleasure than the sight of a friend of yours bearing credentials under your hand and seal. And over and above this title to my esteem, Mr. Ellis brings with him an open letter of recommendation in that very handsome and pleasing countenance of his, and a frank and hearty manner which put us quite at ease with him directly, notwithstanding a certain awkward consciousness of the narrowness of our present accommodations, which might have made a visit from any other stranger rather embarrassing. His willingness to be pleased, his relish for the amusing points of the half-savage state, and the good-humor with which he laughed off sundry rather vexatious *contre-temps* really endeared him to us all. Half a dozen men of his turn of mind for neighbors, with wives of "kindred strain," would create a paradise in these woods, if there could be one on earth.

He chose the early morning hour to drive over from ——, in a light, open carriage, and reached here soon after our lazy breakfast, in raptures with

the fine natural road, the soft beauty of the scenery, and the delicious temperature of the lone and solemn old woods through which he passed. He is an enthusiast in scenery, and as soon as we discovered this, we felt easy as to the homely aspect of things within doors. While we have such grand avenues and cloistered promenades for the entertainment of our city guests, we may consent without scruple to receive their visits, sure that they can never surpass us in points of architectural grandeur, luxurious divans, or mossy carpets.

By the way — I attempted to analyze, for curiosity's sake, the slight feeling of embarrassment which beset me at first sight of Mr. Ellis. It could of course have no reference to our real standing in his estimation; for I knew he must be well acquainted with all that is to be known of us both as to character and condition, and that the mere outward aspect of a temporary residence could have no influence upon his opinion. So that it could not be the vulgar dread of not appearing "genteel" to a stranger. I was obliged to refer my sensations to a jealousy for the honor of rural life. I was unwilling that a man of Mr. Ellis's stamp should be led to think we had already become coarse, or rather accustomed and reconciled to coarseness, by a residence in this rough new country. This was, as nearly as I could guess, the true ground of my sudden consciousness of the rough appearance of things about us. Before Mr. Ellis came, I thought

we were getting on very well, but the sight of an elegant stranger brought to mind a thousand deficiencies that we had forgotten. I was saying, before I turned aside to give you this glimpse of my inward thoughts, that we relied on out-door attractions in entertaining Mr. Ellis. As to other matters we cannot boast — as *par exemple.*

We were seated with your pleasant friend at an early dinner, when word was brought that a man without had a nest of young bears that he wished to dispose of. We had not the least desire for such pets, characteristic as they would be at present; but we all wished to have a peep at them; and so, without ceremony, every body quitted the table, and ran to the back-yard, where the bear-merchant waited very impatiently. There were no less than four of those charming creatures, packed in a coarse basket, to the sides of which they were chained; so that when the owner set the basket on the grass, and poked up its occupants a little, they all pulled in different directions, or dragged each other about, and then fell to biting and scratching in revenge for their frequent tumbles. This was amusing enough for a few moments, but did not detain us long, for the dinner was only begun; and we had a long drive in contemplation for the afternoon.

We returned to the parlor to behold the strangest sight! We had forgotten the intrusive habits of the chickens, and so had left the table unguarded and the doors and windows open; and there were

at least a dozen of these creatures in full possession of the table, helping themselves from our plates with a nervous haste that betokened an evil conscience. Nothing escaped their ravenous appetites. The very *débris* of their brothers and cousins were not sacred from their cannibalish propensities. A plate of butter, upon which Rose had exhausted her decorative powers, was pecked into the similitude of an iceberg; and potatoes were scattered on every side, like shot after a battle. Some of the intruders, not having been able to make good a footing on the table, had condescended to the floor; carrying every one a slice of bread or a bit of meat with him. Such a mess you can never picture to yourself, until you have lived in the woods, and been subject to the irruptions of the fowls.

"Where is your poultry-yard?" methinks I hear you say. Alas! Echo might answer, "Where!" if Echo were not tired of replying to such questions. It is at least six weeks since I engaged the proper materials at the saw-mill, but the poor miller's dam was carried away by a freshet, and by over-exerting himself in attempting to repair it, he took the ague — so what could I do but wait?

"But what did you do for dinner?" Mrs. Williamson says. This query is more easily answered. Our drive was all planned, and it was voted impossible to await the result of another cooking process. The side-table having fortunately eluded the horny noses of our invaders, from its being

covered with a napkin, we made a very delicate repast on West India preserves with cream and biscuits. But after the said drive had been accomplished, and the fresh air and the exhilarating exercise had revived the "sacred rage," we called that light meal lunch, and had a substantial dinner at a fashionable hour, and probably (for I did not inquire) at the expense of some of our ravenous foes.

And to have seen the good-humored facility with which Mr. Ellis helped to laugh off our perplexities, and the awkwardness which one cannot but feel, spite of philosophy, in such cases, one might have supposed him one who had never breathed the air of courts, but who had been all his days accustomed to the shifts and expedients of an emigrant's life.

We insisted on his remaining for the night, if only for the sake of saying that he had slept in a box; namely, the one which once served to envelop a parcel of chairs, and which now fills the office of a spare bedstead. Mr. Ellis declares that he never slept more soundly, and I can well believe it, for he had earned a good night's rest by his exertions in threading the farm and the country round it, during the whole day.

* * * * * *

As we sat at breakfast in the morning, an old man, one of our good neighbors, came in with a long-handled dipper, and asked if we kept lightning in the house.

"No indeed!" said Mrs. Sibthorpe, looking of course somewhat puzzled.

"Why, do tell!" said the old man. "But may be you don't know what it is, — if you don't, I'll bet you a cookie you can't guess."

We all tried. Florella's guess was gunpowder, — Mr. Ellis's, oil, — mine, candles.

The old man laughed.

"No, no," said he, "you haven't come within rifle distance! Why, it's emptins! My woman wants to set some griddles, and she took a notion she must have risin' to put in 'em."

"How is the good lady?" asked Mrs. Sibthorpe.

"She! you couldn't kill her with a meat-axe! She's real savage upon vittles since this last turn of agur. I'd sooner board an Irishman! There's no whoa to her, when once she gits a goin' upon pork!"

And our friend took up his lightning and departed, without the ceremony of good morning.

* * * * * * *

As I was showing Mr. Ellis the piece of land which I intend planting with *morus multicaulis*, he called my attention to a fragment of fine bituminous coal which he had turned up with his foot. The land hereabout is not what is usually considered as a coal formation, but I should not be at all surprised to discover a stray stratum. The state is known to abound in coal. I think I shall make

some small examination either this autumn or early next spring. At present, laborers are too precious to be spared for any new plan. I begin to fear we shall not be ready to plaster before the frosts set in. We met with an accident the other day, which, though of no great consequence in pecuniary amount, will necessarily delay us somewhat. I had purchased a quantity of green lumber, which was to be kiln-dried before it was fit for use. But, by some unaccountable accident, the whole took fire and was consumed while the workmen were gone to dinner. So I have either to send a great distance for seasoned materials, or to wait the repairing of the mill-dam, and then the chance of another attempt at kiln-drying. I think I shall prefer the former mode, although it is much more expensive; since time is just now of more consequence than money. The conflagration cost me about two hundred dollars.

A smaller disaster was the loss of a quantity of lime which was on its way from a place about fifteen miles off. The teamster was benighted, and obliged to stop for the night at a log-tavern, owing to the extreme darkness caused by an approaching storm. The wagon, with its load of lime, was placed under a shed, and my man went quietly to sleep, lulled doubtless all the sooner by the pleasant pattering of the shower. About midnight all were awakened by a sudden blaze of light, and it was found that the lime, not having been protected from the wet by the leaky shed, had set all

on fire, and it was only by great exertion that the house was saved. So I was obliged, not only to put up with the loss of the lime, but to satisfy the teamster for the damage done to his wagon, as well as the tavern-keeper for the loss of his shed. One learns something by these things, though at a rather costly rate.

You have gathered doubtless from my sketches of affairs in general, that I, who came here for boundless leisure, am the busiest of men. It is even so, but I find much to interest me. I read no books, it is true, but I am continually turning some new leaf in the book of life, and the study of human nature. Mrs. Sibthorpe is not very well, but she is in fine spirits; and Charlotte is as brown and as happy as a gypsy, and with the same reason;—health, unbounded freedom, and a life in the open air. A little companion or two would leave her nothing to desire; but even this deficiency she scarcely feels; for her mother is of that cheerful facility of temper which makes her good company for any body.

We are all embrowned beyond belief. I am always, you know, something of a bonze in figure; now I am a bronze in complexion. Conceive the attractions of a bronze bonze!

Under any color however,

Ever truly yours,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER VII.

Mrs. Sibthorpe to Mrs. Williamson.

September 1*st.*

A LETTER is certainly your due, my dear Catharine; but yours of some fortnight since, — all kind, and lively, and sympathizing, and *conceding*, as it is, — deserves a better reply than this dripping sky will help me to indite. Why is it that I, who ever loved so dearly a rainy day in town, find it suggestive of — not melancholy — for melancholy and I are strangers — but of stupid things, in the country? To account for the difference drives me into the region of small philosophies. In the one case there is the quiet that bustle has made precious, the leisure which in visiting weather one is apt to see slip from one's grasp unimproved; a contrast like that which we feel on turning from the dusty pathway into the cool shade — a protected shade, as of a garden, where one locks the gate and looks up with satisfaction at high walls, impassable by foot unprivileged. In the other — the contrary case — we have leisure in sunshine as well as leisure in the rain; we have abundance of quiet at all seasons, and no company at any, so that when the rain comes it can but deprive us of our accustomed liberty of foot. The pattering sound so famed for

its lulling powers is but too effectual when it falls on roofs not much above our heads; and the disconsolate looking cattle, the poor shivering fowls huddled together under every sheltering covert, and the continuous snore of cat and dog as they doze on the mats — all tend towards our infectious drowsiness, that is much more apt to hint the dreamy sweetness of a canto or two of the Faery Queene, than the duteous and spirited exercise of the pen, even in such service as yours. Yet I have broken the spell of

> "Sluggish Idleness, the nurse of sin."

by the magic aid of a third reading of your letter. And now I defy even the

> "Ever drizling raine upon the lofte,
> Mixt with a murmuring winde."

I have forsaken the sofa, and put up the pretty *mignon* volume of Spenser, your own gift, and now I set out resolutely to say nothing at all, in sufficient expansion to cover this fair sheet.

To begin with the beginning of our cottage — affairs look more promising. We have had our "raising," and within a week the building has assumed a hopeful distinctness of outline. Two new carpenters have been procured from ——, a great way off; and two masons with their assistants; and some lime to replace that which chose to burn itself up a few weeks since. Oh, we are

certainly getting on finely! The raising was quite a sight, I assure you, and the rustic feast with which it concluded had much of interest for us. I watched every step of the former, and felt some desire to preside at the latter; but Mrs. Boardman, at whose house it was held, understood the matter much better, and gave, I am told, entire satisfaction, which, I dare say, I could hardly have done. At least, so whispers my indolence. The corner of our garden, which John found time to plant, has yielded us many valuable things for the table, and just now, the first fruits of a fine bed of melons. The specimen that he brought in this morning in triumph quite perfumes the room, and from present appearances we may expect a hundred such. I never saw so luxurious a growth, and the fruit is of such a variety of delicious kinds, that I fancy we shall scarcely regret your peaches.

I have, as you may recollect, become thoroughly American in my predilections for the tomato, and I insisted upon abundant provision of it, much to John's dissatisfaction. Since the weather has become so sultry, I make this vegetable almost my only food, and fancy it to be the most wholesome in the world. Mr. Sibthorpe takes to himself great credit for his fortitude in seeing me eat what is to him an abomination, but I am firm in the faith that I shall yet make a convert of him. I fancy he learned to detest tomatoes while he was in Italy. He has a truly English horror of the

indescribable messes which are found on Italian tables. I am told by some Western people that a free use of tomatoes is one of the best preventions against ague.

You will have perceived before this that these quiet and prosperous times afford but little of the stuff that letters are made of. I write principally to tell you that we are going on so smoothly that there is nothing to tell. But you *will* have letters at all events, and I dare not refuse. If they tire you, you will be able to console yourself with the proverb "Heureux le peuple dont l'histoire ennuie."

Yet I have laughed this morning, and that heartily, but I fear I shall scarce be able to amuse you at second hand with what depends altogether on certain *un-writable* turns of countenance and manner. The hero of the occasion was an old pedler who came jogging along in his hearse-shaped cart, soon after breakfast, and before this dripping humor beset the weather. He stopped his cart, on seeing several men at work, and it was not long before the laughter of the men, who usually pursue their business in solemn silence, drew my attention. The aspect of the pedler secured it, for he was a personification of Momus. His face was very red, and of a most grotesque turn, and his nut-cracker nose and chin were like nobody but Punch. His gray eyes twinkled through a pair of mock spectacles made of a strip of tin twisted into the requisite

form, and placed far down his nose, so that he was obliged to throw his head back in order to look through them. When I went to the window, he was enumerating the contents of his covered cart with a bewildering rapidity, but as soon as he observed me, he stopped short, pulled off the remains of an old straw hat, and made a very low bow in the style of Sir Pertinax, who thought the world was to be won by "booing."

"My dear beautiful lady," said he, "could I sell you any thing this morning? I sell things for nothing, and I've got most every thing you ever heard tell on. Here's fashionable calicoes," — holding up a piece of bright scarlet, — "splendid French work collars and capes," — and here he displayed some hideous things, the flowers on which were distinctly traceable from where I stood, — "elegant milk-pans, and Harrison skimmers, and *ne plus ultry* dippers! patent pills — cure any thing you like — ague bitters — Shaker yarbs — essences, winter-green, peppermint, lobely — tapes, pins, needles, hooks and eyes — broaches and brasslets — smelling-bottles — castor ile — corn-plaster — mustard — garding seeds — silver spoons — pocket-combs — tea-pots — green tea — saleratus — tracts, song-books — thimbles — baby's whistles — copy-books, slates, playin' cards — puddin' sticks — butter-prints — baskets — wooden bowls ——"

"Any wooden nutmegs, daddy?" said one of the men.

"No, but as I come past I see your father a turnin' some out o' that piece o' lignum vitæ you got him last week, so you can get some o' him," said the pedler quietly; then turning again to the window — "Can I suit you to-day, ma'am? I've all sorts o' notions — powder and shot, (but I 'spose you do all your shootin' at home,) but may be your old man goes a gunnin' — I sha'n't offer you lucifers, for ladies with sich eyes never buys matches, — but you can't ask me for any thing I haven't got, I guess."

While I was considering my wants, one of the men must try a fall with this professed wit.

"Any goose-yokes, mister?" said he.

"I'm afraid I've sold the last, sir; there is so many wanted in this section of the country. But I'll take your measure, and fetch you a supply next time I come along." This of course produced a laugh.

"Well! I want a pair o' boots, any how," said the prostrate hero, rallying, to show that he was not discomfited. "These here old ones o' mine lets in gravel, but won't let it out again. If you've got any to fit me, I'll look at 'em." And thus saying he stretched out a leg of curious wire-drawn appearance. "Any to fit, old boss?"

"Fit you like a whistle, sir," said the pedler, fumbling among his wares, and at length drawing forth a pair of *candle moulds*, much to the amusement of the bystanders.

The rain which had begun to fall now cut short our conference. I bought a few trifles, and the pedler received his pay with a bow which was almost a salaam. Mounting his blue hearse, he drove off in triumph, not minding the rain, from which he was completely sheltered by a screen of boughs fitted in the sides of his wagon, and meeting over his head, — a protection against sun and rain which I much admired.

This is the first specimen of Autolycus that I have seen. There are scores of pedlers travelling the country, but they are generally grave, business-like personages, standing much upon their dignity, or rude and saucy, and disposed to attempt bullying one into buying. One of the former kind told me that he was "about retiring from this section of the country," and had it "in contemplation to go to the south."

So much for my laugh, which I could have justified more fully if I had been industrious enough to write out more of my recollections. But indeed, spite of good resolutions, there *is* something wilting in this gentle, uniform, soft-dropping rain. It takes the energies out of my *morale* as it does the starch out of my collars, leaving all alike limpsy — to use a favorite term of Mrs. Boardman. I must yield me to the drowsy influences — not however without having fulfilled my intention of covering this goodly sheet with "an infinite deal of nothing."

Mr. Sibthorpe, who pretends to be busied in arranging a multitude of accounts and such like rainy-day improvements, while he is in reality catching a very consoling nap now and then, is just now awake enough to beg his duteous remembrances to your ladyship, with like friendly greeting to Mr. Williamson and to Mr. Ellis, who lives in our memories as

> a most engaging wight,
> Of social glee, and wit humane, though keen.

Charlotte's little love too, and a larger share

From yours,

F. S.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

September 22d.

* * * OUGHT a letter to be a transcript of one's better mind, or only of one's present and temporary humor? If the former, I must throw away the pen, I fear, for some time to come. If the latter, I have only to scrawl the single word AGUE a thousand times on the face of my paper, or write it once in letters which would cover the whole surface. I have no other thought. I can no longer say,

"My mind my kingdom is."

I am deposed, and this vile blue-visaged fiend has usurped the throne. There he sits with his yellow eyes and his quivering chin, making hideous faces at me, and calling up dreams, which might terrify one far stouter-hearted than I. I see my wife, pale and ghastly, with filmy eyes, imploring help, which I cannot give her. My daughter, stiff — cold dead — the life pressed out of her little heart by the chill monster. Waves of sorrow, heavy, tangible, rise to overwhelm me; no friend remains to cheer my dying pillow. Stretched on the damp ground I see all around me graves yawning, and wild shapes impatiently waiting for my

last breath. The clouds teem with lurid fires; the very light is burning flame, while I shiver with cold. Horror pursues me — never again, O my friend, shall this friendly hand —— just here came the sweet voice of my little darling.

"Dear papa," she said, laying her cool hand on my forehead, "dear papa, why *will* you write when you are so ill? you promised mamma to lie still on the sofa, if she would go away and get some rest; and very soon you started up and said you *must* write; and ever since, I could hear your pen, scratch — scratch — so wildly — I am frightened, papa! shall I call mamma? she always persuades you to be *so* quiet —— "

It is even as you see, my dear Williamson, and I shall send this very awful "scratch — scratch," that frightened poor little Charlotte, that you may have some idea of the condition in which one "comes out" of an ague fit. I had begun to feel relieved, and thought my fever had subsided, as it probably would have done, if I had remained quiet. But the slightest intellectual effort, and particularly the least indulgence of the imagination, recalls and redoubles the departing horrors.

I could with difficulty be persuaded by my little trembler; but after she had enticed me to the sofa I soon fell asleep, and so remained for two or three hours, when I awoke quite relieved. And this has been the course for a fortnight past. However, I believe I am now quite cured, and I shall endeavor

to provide against a recurrence of the evil by all sorts of precautions.

The most intelligent people here advocate a depletory course, and think it safe to use tonics only to "break" the habit of the disease — not to prevent it. I would willingly have submitted to be let blood in the cold stage, (a practice much approved,) but that, with my constitution, I fear the effects of a habit of bleeding.

Poor Rose will have nothing effectual done for the obstinate ague. She has been persuaded by some of the neighbors that it is dangerous to be bled, and equally so to take quinine; so she shakes and burns every other day, and cries and bewails her hard fate most piteously while the fit is on, and the moment it is off, feels entirely sure she never shall have another, and goes to her work with delighted alacrity. But the poor thing loses strength perceptibly, and we have now two maids who attempt to fill her place, poorly enough. John and his wife both have ague — fortunately on alternate days, so that they can nurse each other.

But Mrs. Sibthorpe is the nurse of all, besides doing much to supply the deficiencies in the clumsy service of the new maids. These treat her as a sister of the craft, and seem disposed to put upon her a regular and very liberal share of the household duties. One of them proposed to her the other day to assist in the washing, and upon her replying that she did not know how to wash, held

up her hands and eyes in a paroxysm of virtuous astonishment.

"Not know how to wash! Well! I should think it was high time you did! every woman that *is* a woman had orter know how to wash."

Florella, who was highly amused, led the damsel on by saying that she had not lived where such things were customary.

"Why! I s'pose *somebody* washed, didn't they? I should ha' thought you'd have wanted to help! Now, the woman I lived with afore I came here was as pretty a woman to live with as ever I'd wish to see. Me and her used to work together all the forenoon, and then after dinner we'd set down and take comfort, or go and drink tea with some of the neighbors. That's my notion! There wa'n't no pride about Mrs. Mucklewain."

That lady's disinterested admirer, however, has so much of this same troublesome quality, that I have written to Detroit to procure some domestics of a different cast. Florella puts up with this sort of impertinence with immovable patience and good-humor, and even declares that the exercise which she is obliged to take in order to keep things tolerably comfortable is decidedly beneficial to her health and spirits. But it is easy to perceive that there must be an end to this view of the case. This accumulation of petty cares steals away one's whole time, and it is too uncongenial not in a little while to affect the spirits also. But we do not despair.

It can hardly be that this lack of good household service should prove an insurmountable evil.

It is a standing marvel to me that people, who are such worshippers of common sense and practical utility as the Americans, should have made so prodigious a blunder as to this matter. They will embrace the most odious, filthy, and debasing callings for the sake of making money; yet the mere name of a difference in rank is sufficient to drive them from one that is comparatively easy, and in all civilized countries respectable, according to the real worth of those who exercise in it; while the remuneration is, or might be large, in comparison with any thing which the parties could earn in any other way. In England, though "service is no inheritance," according to the proverb, yet it is a very excellent business; and its rules are as well defined, and its claims as willingly acknowledged, as those of any other useful art. The relation between employer and employed is so well understood, that one party is as little liable to encroachments as the other, and there is perhaps no position in which real worth of character is more certain of securing due respect than that of a domestic in families of the middle ranks. Whenever — if ever — this shall be the case in America, English people of the better classes will flock to our shores. This is all that is needed to render the United States a very desirable residence to those who are crowded out of the struggling mass in the old world.

In spite of sundry agues and other hindrances among the workmen, our cottage is nearly finished. We shall be obliged to wait some little time for the plastering to dry thoroughly, since I am not disposed to adopt the theory of some of my neighbors, who insist that the dampness of new mortar can never hurt any body. We have begun the unpacking of the furniture however, and find things in good order, spite of their long sojourn in an open shed. The piano-forte is of course untuned, sadly — every note set up for itself, like the jangling bells of a Spanish city, and some even divided within themselves. Florella has fortunately been taught to tune, as every lady should be who brings an instrument into the wilds.

October 5.

A most uncomfortable state of confusion has prevailed since I had proceeded thus far in this medley. My ague had not done with me, as I had fondly hoped; but was only waiting to take fresh breath for a more furious onslaught. I consented at length to be blooded in the cold stage, and have not had a fit since — but will refrain from further prognostics as to recurrence. Besides this, the free and easy damsel, whose wise sayings you find reported above, was attacked with fever, and lay very ill for eight or ten days, during which time, what with constant attention and night watches, we were all quite worn out. Some of the neighbors were ill, and others were afraid the

fever was "ketchin'" and as I was myself ill nearly all the time, the burden of affairs came, as usual, upon Florella. She is quite well, however, and made very happy by the recovery of the girl, whose situation was at one time rendered extremely alarming. We should have sent her home as a matter of course, but the weather was unfavorable, her home was a very wretched one, and her attack very sudden — so that it was scarcely possible without great inhumanity.

We have now the most charming weather, and we are enjoying it to the uttermost. I fancy that sunset in the region of these great lakes is more miraculously splendid than elsewhere, and certainly the sun sets nowhere on such woods as those of an American October. You have seen them, I think; — if not, one day's drive would repay you for a journey to Michigan. You have a painter's eye, I know, and a poet's heart; and fate ought to have endowed you with unbounded leisure, so that you might fly a thousand miles to gaze on a glorious sunset without incurring the imputation of having shot madly from your sphere on a fool's errand. I cannot but believe that there are other worlds in which we shall yet be permitted to enjoy the many innocent delights for which time and opportunity are denied us in this. Meanwhile *we* are making use of the present, and it does my heart good to see the light that dances in Florella's eyes, and the deepening bloom on the cheeks of my little Char-

lotte, while we thread every "alley green and bosky dell" in these boundless glades. Roads are not of the slightest consequence. We can go as we like — on foot, in the carriage, or on horseback; — the elastic sward is like a scarce moistened sponge, and diversified every where with streaks of velvet moss; and if one did not find here and there a fallen tree or a huge branch broken off by the wind and left to decay as it fell, you might easily fancy yourself in one of our own sylvan parks, the proud boast of English wealth. "Vert and venison" are here in abundance; and we can dispense with enclosure, since fences of any sort would be sadly in the way of such insatiable rangers.

My plans and projects of all sorts are of course at a dead stand for the present; I mean the execution of them, for as to the projects themselves, a certain degree of fever only warms them into more luxuriant life. I have never woven such splendid webs as during the fever which follows what is called a *slight* ague. At such times imagination is often exalted and memory excited to a surprising degree, while reason still remains lord of the ascendant, and makes grave remarks and draws sober inferences, as the wild pageants flit by. At some such moment I had a distinct recollection of having seen, years ago, some mention of the manufacture of indigo from oak saw-dust, — somewhere in France, I think, — but further I cannot go. Will you, who have access to references of all sorts, find out for

me what it is I am thinking of? the piles of that humble material which now meet my eye every where, make me feel not a little curious on the subject.

You may thank or blame the ague for this lady-like letter. Such moonlight as this would have been irresistible, but that with moonlight comes dew, and with dew dampness, and with dampness certain associations no wise pleasant to one who has been for weeks either trembling on the verge of ague, or popping in —

Like your friend,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER IX.

Mr. Sibthorpe to Mr. Williamson.

MY DEAR WILLIAMSON, *November* 15.

DIDN'T I say something, in one of my late letters, about an October landscape? I had not yet seen a November one in the forest. Since the splendid coloring of those days has been toned down by some hard frosts, and all lights and shades blended into heavenly harmony by the hazy atmosphere of the delicious period here called "Indian summer," Florella and I have done little else but wander about, gazing in rapture, and wishing we could share our pleasure with somebody as silly as ourselves. If the Indians named this season, it must have been from a conviction that such a sky and such an atmosphere must be granted as an encouraging sample of the far-away Isles of Heaven, where they expect to chase the deer forever unmolested. If you can imagine a view in which the magnificent coloring of Tintoretto has been softened to the taste of Titian or Giorgione, and this seen through a transparent veil of dim silver, you may form some notion of our November landscape.

It may have been the effect of this Arcadian scenery, which seems made for painters and poets, and which ought to purify the thoughts and exalt

the imagination of every thing endowed with soul, — it may have been this, more than the simple reality that gave so touching a character to a funeral service that I have just witnessed in our neighborhood. I have seen, as you know, much of this world's splendid pageantry, never more lavishly bestowed than in doing honor to the senseless dust; — I have gazed and listened while royalty was inurned amid the thundering of cannon, and the spirit-quelling tones of music, like the voice of the everlasting grave warning the sons of men of their inevitable destiny; but no splendid rites ever possessed the solemnity which seemed to preside over that hushed assembly of plain men and women gathered from far and near, at the call of sympathy alone — sympathy in the fate of a man who had no claim to their especial regard beyond that of having needed their assistance while he lived.

He was a man not remarkable in any way; an easy commonplace insignificant sort of person, whose lot had been like that of many such characters — a series of misfortunes unaverted by any vigorous effort of his own, and gradually breaking down his spirit, and leaving him at last to be provided for — first by the kindness of individuals, and latterly by the public — so that at the time of his death, he was neither more nor less than a town pauper. He had been long ill, and had left a large family utterly destitute, and now the concourse assembled at his funeral exceeded all

customary gatherings, and the sympathy was deep and general. It was not regret, for his condition in life was fixed beyond hope, and he was supposed to be quite prepared for a change of worlds. Death had come not in the hideous skeleton form with which he is endowed by vulgar superstition, but as a merciful and soft-voiced angel, sent to bear the soul from pain, and care, and humiliation, to happiness and repose.

It was pure human sympathy — not hollow show — not venal parade — but a touching recognition of a common nature and interest — a spontaneous vibration of the public heart-strings at the thought that a man — a brother — God's image shrined in clay, — one who had acquired respectability by misfortune, and awakened affection by needing kindness — was at last gathered to his rest. I despair of giving you an idea of what seemed to me to be the all-pervading expression of the scene, — but I may confess that even I, though but little given to shedding unaccountable tears, found myself betrayed into a softness somewhat in unison with the many sobs which attested the pity of the crowd.

The discourse which was delivered over the body was solemn and earnest, and I found much that was appropriate and likely to be useful, but to me the effect, as a whole, was marred by the attempt to frighten people into piety, by means of the mere bodily terrors of the last hour; an at-

tempt which implies a departure from the simple truth, since it is not to be pretended that religious people dread death less than others. It is however a common instrument of exhortation, and every exaggeration of fancy, and even the destructive agency of superstition, is sometimes resorted to, to heighten its effect; as if "the bondage through fear of death," were not heavy enough already; or as if life — life temporal and life eternal — did not furnish a thousand inducements to holiness, where the death-bed can offer one.

This style of preaching is in use elsewhere, but I think it is more particularly in vogue in these newly-settled regions; perhaps because it is supposed that rough people need more urgency, or that they will be more easily aroused by what is addressed to the imagination — an opinion from which I dissent entirely. Earnestness and simplicity, — the simplicity of immutable truth, are the great and only requisites in addressing the uneducated; and every attempt at mere effect is rejected at once, by people whose distinctive trait is plain common sense.

As we rode slowly to the distant burial-place, the long train of humble vehicles, the delicious atmosphere, and the soft-toned light — the aspect of the dying woods and the peculiar nature of the occasion — combined to excite the imagination to the utmost; and I found my reveries leading me to the primal time when the veiled Isis was believed to

welcome the return of her offspring to her mysterious bosom; — when simple and passionate tragedy was the outpouring of this same ever-welling fountain of human sensibilities; and majestic sculpture gave form and substance to the lofty creations of the soul — the fruit of vague longings after immortality. The very simplicity and humbleness of all the outward circumstances gave a solemn dignity to the scene; and I never felt such an overwhelming sense of the equal value of all souls in the sight of God, as while I watched the lowering of that rude coffin into the earth.

I returned home in a softened mood, which I willingly prolong by attempting this sketch of my feelings, and I claim your indulgence for what may seem extravagant, on the score of your reiterated request that I would give you an impartial transcript of the impressions made on me by the ordinary course of things in this new world.

The feeling of literal and unmodified equality which is evinced by such scenes as the one I have attempted to describe, however beautiful and touching when applied to the claims of suffering humanity, takes, it must be confessed, a different shape when it is brought to bear upon matters of business, with which it has, it seems to me, no rational connection. I love the one manifestation, but I cannot help detesting the other. When my fellow-creatures through pressure of misfortune require my aid and sympathy, God forbid that I should

bring into account the difference which circumstances may have placed between us, as an apology for neglect or unkindness; but in transactions which are conducted on business principles, and in which every particular is specifically bargained and paid for, I must acknowledge, that continual attempts at encroachments and imposition are very annoying, and go near to provoke one into condemning the whole system, as subversive of good faith and good order. If a friend promises me his assistance on some particular occasion, and afterwards finds himself constrained to disappoint me, I can readily accept his apology, since the promise was only a favor; but if I agree with a workman for a certain stipulated price to perform a specified amount of labor at a fixed time, I can ill bear to see my business neglected, and to be told in extenuation that home affairs required his attention, or that another man's business was more pressing than mine, or that there had been a previous engagement which was forgotten until now. Yet all this has not unfrequently occurred during my operations here; while any delay on my part would have been resented as an imposition, and probably have brought the law upon me immediately, though public opinion would have been decidedly adverse to my attempting to obtain redress for these incessantly violated engagements. A very one-sided equality, certainly! And the same views prevail

as to domestic service; a strict and punctual compliance with the letter of the engagement is exacted on one side, and an unlimited discretion exercised on the other. A person on whom you depend for the main business of your household will quit you in the midst of illness or during the stay of visitors, and that without a moment's warning; feeling quite satisfied with saying in reply to your remonstrances, "Well! I thought I could stay —but you see, our folks wants me *to hum*, and so I've got to go!"

But I am falling into the scolding line, one in which I do not often indulge, and which, indulged, certainly unfits one for making the best of things as they are. We have, just now, two very decent maids, besides poor Rose, who, with all her feebleness, is invaluable as a balance-wheel. John and Sophy are pretty much self-absorbed; and have imbibed so much of the spirit of the country, that they seem ever on the watch lest I should remember that they called me master for five years, at home. The English of that class do not bear very meekly the change in their condition when they become independent farmers in the new world. Their children will take equality more moderately and more rationally, for they will enjoy some advantages of education, which their parents never had.

Florella's love and my own to you and yours. The new house and its arrangements suit us ex-

tremely well, and with some society such as we *could* select, would leave us little to desire as a residence. I trust you are thinking seriously of a flight across the lakes for a summer at least.

Yours ever,

T. SIBTHORPE.

LETTER X.

Mrs. Sibthorpe to Mrs. Williamson.

February 20.

I HAVE grown very lazy of late, — so much so, that even letter-writing has become quite a task. Perhaps it is only that I so much prefer flying over this fine, hard, smooth snow in a sleigh, that I feel a chill of impatience at in-door employment. I make a point of duty of Charlotte's daily lessons, but beyond that I am but idle just now. The weather has been so excessively cold for some days that we have had much ado to keep comfortably warm, even with the aid of great stoves in the hall and kitchen, and bountiful wood fires elsewhere. These wood fires are the very image of abundance, and they are so enlivening that I am becoming quite fond of them, though they require much more attention than coal, and will, occasionally, snap terribly, even to the further side of the room, though the rug is generally the sufferer. An infant of one of our neighbors was badly burned, a day or two since, by a coal which flew into the cradle at a great distance from the fire. I marvel daily that destructive fires are not more frequent, when I see beds surrounded with light cotton curtains so near the immense fires

which are kept in log-houses. How much more rational would be worsted hangings!

It is no uncommon thing to employ a horse to bring in the back-log, and the fire is built in due proportion to this foundation. I cannot describe to you my astonishment, when I was sitting by a sick woman, at seeing her husband coolly drive his horse into the room; and I was scarcely less surprised when I saw the prodigious log which followed at no great distance, fastened in a great chain. The animal seemed to understand his business very well, and after he had backed the log into a convenient position on the hearth, and felt himself free from it, he walked quietly out of the back-door, which had been set open for his egress.

This sharp frost, though rather inconvenient at home, makes fine sleighing. The sun shines brightly, but seems to have no effect upon the crackling snow. The runners whistle as they skim over the smooth track, and the horses are as much inspirited as we by the keen air and the exciting rapidity of motion, so that they go like winged creatures, their feet seeming scarcely to touch the dazzling sheen. Of all the delightful modes of conquering space, this is surely the most delightful, and to me it has almost the charm of novelty, for city sleighing, with its thousand hinderances and dangers, is but a poor attempt at such a bewitching flight. Dancing has been called the poetry of motion, but I think sleighing, in the true,

free, forest style, deserves that praise still better. You should see one of our fine, tall, elastic young woodsmen, in his close cap and trim costume, a gay sash streaming behind him, standing in his sleigh, and skimming along the path, holding the reins with a careless natural grace, and seeming scarce conscious that his fiery steeds are at full speed, though the air is full of the sparkling fragments thrown up by their dashing hoofs. You would find in the picture no inelegant representation of the car of Apollo with Phaeton for a charioteer at the very least, though this last is all too poor a comparison, since our youthful aspirants might be trusted with the day-god's own team.

Oh! sleighing for me, beyond all the exhilarating devices that have ever yet sprung from man's teeming brain. Railroad speed is so nullified by the mechanical means necessary for its production, that it is mere rambling dulness compared with sleighing. And then the splendor of the landscape — every branch loaded with piled silver — every twig sheathed in crystal — and earth's broad bosom, covered with a mantle of immaculate purity, inlaid throughout with diamond sparks that dazzle the eye, which is yet fascinated by their twinkling brilliancy.

Once lately we had a mingling of something else with the usual pleasurable excitement of a sleigh-ride. We were going twenty miles or so to dine with our friends the C——s, and for variety's

sake tried a newly-opened road through the woods. The sunlight was splendid, the way had been well-enough tracked, and we found the sleighing excellent, and the shifting shadows of the overhanging trees a very charming feature of the new route.

We had made perhaps half the distance, when we met a prodigious "saw-log," — that is, the huge trunk of a tree, drawn by oxen, on its way to the mill. This great body enjoys royal privileges on the highway, for it could not turn out without a certainty of turning over; — so, the track being but single, ours was the task of finding a way through the deep snow at the side of the road. To effect this, our man and the other were obliged to plunge in and make a path for the horses by buffeting and trampling the snow as well as they could, a matter of no small difficulty, as it was nearly breast-high in some hollow places. Then the horses were led forward through this devious track, plunging and snorting, and showing no little reluctance to such cold swimming; and at last landing us safely on the road again, at the expense of a dip which nearly overturned the sleigh. We were scarcely calmed down after this excitement, when we met another log, and had all the plunging, and tacking, and dipping, over again, but still regained our track in safety. I was beginning to confess that I was not at all sorry that we had passed the saw-logs, when another came in sight, and I begged to be allowed to alight and make the passage afoot.

To this there were a thousand objections; — I should get very cold — perhaps freeze my feet, and certainly encounter a great deal of unnecessary fatigue. I saw that Mr. Sibthorpe was very much annoyed by my alarm, and our driver confidently asserted that we were perfectly safe; so I thought of my reputation, and crouching down in the very bottom of the sleigh, submitted to my fate with the best face I could command. Another log passed, and yet another, and at length I ventured to ask one of the men how many were behind, as they seemed all of one party.

"Why! I guess there an't more than a dozen or so," said he. I would fain have turned back; but in that case, we must either have repassed all that had gone on, or have travelled at their snail's pace; so I said nothing, but cried a little behind my veil. By and by, we absolutely saw the last one, and this being once ascertained, I took my proper seat, and set about behaving like a lady once more, though my nerves were more in a flutter than is becoming in a backwoodswoman. I tried to laugh off the whole affair, and declared that it would be pleasant to look back upon, as a novelty in our woodland experience.

But what saith the sensible proverb, about not exulting till you get out of the wood? I forget, but I commend its practical bearing none the less. We had scarcely a mile yet to go when we encountered an apparition yet more appalling than a

saw-log — an immense herd of unruly cattle driven by two or three men on horseback. No sooner did I become sensible of the approach of this tremendous looking *cortége*, the drivers cracking their whips and shouting wildly to preserve command of their riotous charge, than my newly-built fabric of fortitude crumbled into very dust, and I shrieked and cried like a naughty baby. We had none the less to go through the whole drove, and as they went stumbling and plunging by, their feet were often on a level with the top of our sleigh, as they trod on the crusts of the high banks at the side of the road; and although Mr. Sibthorpe and our Phaeton stood up and kept them from absolutely trampling on us, yet their too close neighborhood and their fierce threatening aspect finished the disgrace of your poor friend. I remember nothing more until I found myself stretched on the floor in Mrs. C.'s parlor, with half the household engaged in recalling my scattered wits. Tell it not, after all my boasting; but make all the charitable allowance you can. * * *

We returned by the common road, you may be sure. My high aspirings were completely humbled, yet I did not the less enjoy the exquisite moonlight by which we came home; but in spite of past terrors, sang and laughed, and could, but for very shame, have screamed like a child, in ecstasy at the heavenly splendor of the scene.

Do not imagine I set Charlotte such a bad ex-

ample as that of these riotous spirits that I describe to you. She, dear child! was enjoying the ride in her own way; lying fast asleep in her father's lap all the way home.

Write oftener. I thirst for letters. If you had ever spent a winter in the country, with frozen lakes lying between you and the busy world, you would need no urging, I am sure.

Yours in all affection,

F. S.

LETTER XI.

Mrs. Sibthorpe to Mrs. Williamson.

April 22.

Once more, with pen in hand, dearest Catharine; and oh, how glad and how thankful to find myself so well and so happy! I could have written you a week ago, but Mr. Sibthorpe, who is indeed a sad fidget, as I tell him every day, locked up pen, ink, and paper, most despotically, leaving me to grumble like Baron Trenck or any other important prisoner. To-day the interdict is taken off, and I must spur up my lagging thoughts, or I shall not have said forth half my say before I shall be reduced to my dormouse condition again.

I dare not begin with any other subject than the boy, lest the writing materials should be locked up for another month; but I shall leave all particulars to your imagination, or to Mr. Sibthorpe's indefatigable pen. *I* see in the new comer only a very hungry citizen, who bids fair to be robust enough not to discredit his birthplace, and who already claims the rule of the house — rather prematurely, as I think. He is well cared for, by a stout dame, who has had abundant experience; and I interfere very little with her management, being rather occupied in stealing lessons against the time when I may very likely be obliged to take the sole care of him.

The spring has opened charmingly. The early bulbs are all fully blown, and a beautiful perennial, here called the Ohio bluebell, a far larger plant than the one we know by that name; — and the flowering currant, a climbing shrub, already strung with golden, clove-scented wreaths, looking at a little distance like miniature laburnum. Some of our neighbors have fruit-trees in blossom, and currants already formed, in distinct clusters. We must wait a year or two for ours. The wheat has already taken the hue of the richest emerald — the most beautiful green indeed that it is possible to conceive; and the grass is beginning to emulate it, in spots where that has been improved by cultivation. Wild grass does not spring so early, except in moist situations. The cows have been picking a little on the marshes, for a week or two past, but the pastures near us are still rather brown.

The trees do not yet begin to wear the least tinge of green, which rather disappoints me, as I had always supposed they kept pace with the grass. The fallows are silvered over with strawberry blossoms, rich promise for June. The asparagus beds of an old settler in the neighborhood have been in cutting order for ten days or more.

So much for the country chronicle for April, which I dare say will find you in deep deliberation upon spring ribbons or the last light mantilla. My preparations for enjoying spring have been a pair of very stout shoes, water proof; and a great bon-

net braided of oat-straw by a good lady of my neighbors. These, with a pair of indescribable gloves, will furnish me forth for public appearance for some time to come.

I wish you could have been here this morning, when I had a visit from an old woman who is my adviser in perilous emergencies, such as the contumacious refusal of a turkey hen to sit still on her eggs, or the obstinacy of a caldron of soap, refusing to "come," and so justifying the opinion of some ingenious philologist that the term *soap* is a contraction of "so hap," betokening the uncertainty attending the manufacture. This good dame dabbles in half the circle of sciences, and when I ask for information on any particular point, I always get a vast deal of gratuitous information. This morning the matter in hand was Charlotte's wrist, which she scraped badly in falling out of her swing a day or two ago. The place looked so angry this morning that I sent for old Mrs. Lettsom in her surgical capacity.

"Land o' Goshen!" said the good woman, holding up both her hands, when Charlotte, with doleful eyes, unwrapped her arm, "why, that does look perfectly awful! I never see sich a one but once since I was born, and that was Miss Taylor's, and she came nigh hevin' to hev' her hand took off!"

Charlotte looked at me, perfectly aghast, and began to cry sadly.

"Law me!" said Mrs. Lettsom, "don't you be

scar't! *I* can cure ye! *I've* cured worse things than that. I cured Miss Taylor's, quick as wink! Jist smash up everlastin'; and lay on a good mess of it, and it'll get the information out on't like witchcraft!"

This sounds like a stupendous operation, but a little inquiry brought to light the true nature of Mrs. Lettsom's "everlastin'," which is only a soft cooling herb much cultivated in these regions.

This being disposed of, I had the usual discursive lecture.

"That everlastin'," said the good woman, "is a prime thing to wrap up the axe in, after you've cut yourself a choppin'. As long as that keeps moist, the wound'll keep cool and easy. The bees knows the good of it, for when they've been a fightin', you'll always see 'em a huntin' for everlastin', if there is any, and they go and get it for to heal 'em up. But bees is dreadful knowin' critters! They understand what you say jist as well as any body. If there's any body dies in the house, they'll all go away if you don't take no notice on 'em; but if you go and talk to 'em, and tell 'em that sich a one is dead, (calling him by name,) and hang a black cloth over the hive, and tell the bees if they'll stay you'll do well by 'em, why, they'll stay, and go to work peaceable. And if there's dissension in a house, the hives ought to be set a great way off, down in the garden, so that the bees can't hear what is said. There was the Johnsons

down in Austerlitz; there was a division in their family, and the bees began to grow dreadful uneasy, and hardly made any honey; but by-'n-by, one day, Johnson gin' his wife a whippin', and the bees all flew away. And, any how, bees won't never thrive well unless you talk with 'em; you must take your knittin' work and go and sit by 'em, and tell 'em things, and talk about the neighbors and sich, or they'll get lonesome and discouraged, and your honey'll be all bee-bread. Now, honey is one o' the best things you can have in your family, for it's good sweetnin' for any thing — cake or coffee, or any thing. You take a table-spoonful of coffee to five quarts of water, and sweeten it well with honey, and bile it about an hour, and it'll be as good coffee as any body need to wish to drink. To be sure it gives some folks the corry-mobbley, but I know how to cure that, jist as easy! Take and stew angle-worms, and spread a plaster on 'em, and lay it on your stomick, and drink red-pepper tea bilin' hot, and see how quick the pain'll leave ye!"

But here comes my master with a brow of ominous anxiety; so I must break off my gossip for to-day, though I feel I shall forget before to-morrow sundry recipes with which I meant to have enriched your collection.

April 24.

* * * What do I hear, my dear Catharine? are you really serious in your idea of going abroad?

Oh, how that will break in upon my pleasant dreams! To say nothing of my hope of visiting the city before a great while, the very landscape looks distasteful to me when I think that you are not to gaze upon it with me for these three years at least! I know I ought not to complain, but I must lament my sad disappointment. This world's course is so full of uncertainty, that a three years' separation is a serious matter, since it makes reunion hardly a thing to be depended upon. You think it will benefit your children, and so it may, doubtless, in many respects; but if they are to live in America, would it not be better to bring them up here? I think I have not observed among those Americans who were sent abroad for their *early* education, very favorable results. But these are selfish views perhaps. I am not a good judge when the question under discussion involves a separation from you. * * * * Do you know, I never sing our dear old song, "Love not," without such tender recollections that I have learned to reserve it for the lonely hour when I can indulge my reminiscences without witness? You remember it, dearest Kate, do you not? or has the stream of new music swept it away? "Love not! love not! the thing you love may change!" We never thought of the timid caution — and why should we? Sing it for my sake, and keep it sacred, as I do, till we meet again. Oh! must it be so long? * * * *

CHAPTER XL.

Blessed with a kindly faculty, to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
WORDSWORTH.

NOTHING is made more apparent in the course of these our desultory sketches, than that to people circumstanced as we are, some modification of the ordinary relations of society must be absolutely necessary. Colonists must not expect to carry with them the whole social fabric undisturbed, as houses are transported in the city — chimneys all standing, partitions as stout as ever, and inmates pursuing their usual avocations, scarce conscious of change. No such mode of removal to the wilderness has yet been discovered. Plaster will fall, and windows be broken, and joints loosened, if nothing worse; and it may be found impossible ever to bring the edifice back to its original form, though it will continue to be a good substantial dwelling after all — a wholesome shade in the sunshine, and a cosy bield against the storm. It will be the part of wisdom to accommodate our ideas and habits to its present condition, biding our time to amend it when we can.

In circumstances where so many of the regular and systematic and costly appliances of civilized life are as yet unprovided, there will of course spring up a thousand unconsidered wants, which, though trivial singly, may yet make large deductions from comfort and convenience. The first result of this state of things is the awakening of ingenuity — the invention of new modes of supplying these wants; the substitution of one thing for another; the application of the same article to many different purposes, all of which will perhaps be quite different from the one for which it was originally designed. Many a leathern hinge — many a wooden latch — many a window-pane of oiled paper, bears witness to the wit-quickening power of necessity. What else would have suggested the substitution of a griddle and smoothing iron, for a slab and muller wherewith to grind paint? What else would have taught the farmer's wife to make a coffee or a spice-mill out of a piece of thick cloth and a hammer? or to think that roasted corn did very well instead of the coffee itself?

A more important result of the lack of the advantages which belong to a settled state of things, is a certain feeling of mutual dependence; — a sense of natural equality; — and a high appreciation of such people as are emphatically termed among us — good neighbors. The meaning which we apply to the phrase is much more comprehensive than that which can be found in the dictionary.

In cities, every man is, or would be thought to be, sufficient for himself, and he forgets as far as possible his relationship to the great human family. He seems to himself to draw the requisites for daily life from some great indefinite mass — some general provision; and he scarcely remembers that this mass is made up of individuals, on each of whom he is in some degree dependent; — that this provision for his need is the result of corresponding necessities in his brother man. Competition has rendered supply so easy and so certain that there is little or no recognition of a mutual, personal dependence, and there is consequently very little personal interest beyond a very narrow circle. Rules are strict, and lines are accurately drawn, and every body is forced to observe them, however they may contravene erratic propensities, aspiring wishes, or rebellious sensibilities. Propinquity has nothing to do with bringing people together. People who have lived next door neighbors for seven years may be, and often are, utter strangers; and though every countenance in each family be perfectly familiar to every member of the other, yet the two races may be crammed into a close carriage, and dragged up Cattskill Mountain on the hottest day in July, without a glance or a nod betokening that they have ever met before.

To be sure, if one of the children should fall into the water, and neighbor Nextdoor should pull it out at the risk of his life, we may thank him, unin-

troduced, without a breach of etiquette, and even recognize him after our return to town, until he invites us to a party, (not of our set,) or asks us to endorse a note for him — either of which would effectually build again the icy barrier between us.

It were vain, in such regions, to inquire, "Who is my neighbor?" The relation is unknown.

In the country, and especially in the new country, the case is far different. The code of morals, as well as of manners, has a warmer, a more human tinge. It is not enough that you avoid all encroachments upon the rights of others. It will not do to wrap yourself in exclusiveness — meddling with nobody, and claiming no aid but such as can be bought with money —

A nice oyster, shut up in a fine shell of pride.

You would be set down for a brute in a little while, and, what would be much worse, you would begin to fear that you deserved the character. Such a position is odiously unnatural where men are few and the means of life distributed with tolerable equality. If harmony is desirable — as where is it not? —— there must be sympathy; and where there is sympathy, there will be contact; and where there is contact, we cannot but learn to appreciate people according to their real merit, and not according to their outward advantages, since their personal character is alone of any consequence to us.

This closeness of acquaintance leads to great

plainness and sincerity — not always pleasant perhaps, but still, nearer right than its hollow-hearted opposite. There is no glare thrown round any body; no chance to pass for any thing but just what you are; no opportunity to be grand, or overpowering, or condescending; since the foundation of such display must always be laid in the minds and habits of those on whom it is to take effect. You cannot be "charitable" at small cost, in the country. It would not do to sit, richly dressed, on a silken sofa, and plead poverty as an apology for not helping to rebuild the cottage of a poor man who has lost his all by fire. Inextinguished laughter would shake the country round. Nor can you feed the destitute with what none of your own family would eat. Such messes as I have seen doled out from city areas would be sent back from the most wretched hovel in the wide West, with a feeling of deep and general contempt for the giver. Reputation is not cheaply maintained here. Where every thing is known and understood there can be no illusion; and all is certain to be known where every body feels perfectly at liberty to ask point blank questions upon any and every subject. A certain class in the gay world, who *act* falsehood daily; whose whole life is a — fib, to say the least; — whose happiness and respectability (in their own computation) depend upon their appearing what they are not, and despising what they really are, would soon find themselves routed out of their

skulking-places of deceit, and reduced to the necessity of "walking uprightly," since no curtain of ceremony would be of any avail in hiding what should be behind the scene.

It is not to be supposed that, even to those who have no desire to deceive, this extreme of freedom can be always agreeable. It is, indeed, often far otherwise; but those who think so are but a small minority — a mere fraction of the body politic, and not usually the busiest or the most earnest class, so that their opinion goes for little. Seeing this to be the case, they rather endeavor to conform to the general view, since whatever price the community sets upon its good-will, it is always cheap to pay it. And perhaps the general improvement is not the less probable for the cultivation of a spirit of patient humanity in those who claim to have made some advances in the philosophy of life. The most certain method of proving the truth of their views and the value of their discoveries, both to themselves and to others, is to show the practical effects of their doctrines in the elevation of their own characters. The mere *gloss* of civilization, without this elevation, is worse than useless, inasmuch as hypocrisy is worse than coarseness.

But, as we were saying, these primitive ways of ours afford a field for a character unknown in the more advanced stages of society — the good neighbor. We could not get along without him. He is the main stay of the community. We

have no "True-neighbor-societies," — they are not suited to our condition. We have none so well off as to be able to bestow a great amount of time or means in aiding others, and few so poor as to need any but *neighborly* aid. Good neighbors are all we want.

It is not easy to describe this beneficent spirit. It takes a thousand forms. It changes its aspect like the clouds of a glowing sunset, but it wears ever the rich golden tint of a true human sympathy. Does disease invade your dwelling? The good neighbor does not pass coldly by, and take it for granted that you have all that is needed. He sends his horse for a doctor or his wagon for a nurse; he offers aid for the long night-watches, or perhaps takes kindly away to his own home the little noisy voices that might disturb the invalid. Does death, in spite of all care and kindness, make good his dreaded entrance? You cannot send for an undertaker, but you have such aid as professional hands never gave. The good neighbor relieves you of all anxiety as to the details of the last sad parting, watching your wishes with a delicacy which is erroneously supposed by many to be foreign to unpolished natures; and he leaves not the good work until he has with his own hands laid the loved remains in the earth, with all due rites and pious care. Can this do less than bind your heart to him forever, and secure to him as warm a friend for a like hour of need?

Is a mother called from her helpless infant? The new-born will not lack any thing that it requires, if there be but one nursing mother within many miles. Are children orphaned, or worse than orphaned, by the death or misconduct of a parent? They will soon be distributed, and each one cared for as a sacred trust, with a feeling of responsibility of which those who have seen only the little outcasts of city poor-houses can have but a faint conception.

Besides these more active forms of well-doing, the good neighbor has abundant occasion for the exercise of passive virtues — often the more difficult of the two. This land of imperfect arrangements and half-executed labors, abounds in petty trespasses, silent encroachments, and very impudent impositions. These our good neighbor bears with unblenching patience as long as they are bearable; for he sees that ungoverned temper is the source of most of the evils which retard the progress of our forming society. A slight dispute — rough words — a quarrel — an outrage — these are the gradations; the good neighbor prevents all by refraining from the first step. If however he be surprised into a harsh word, he will seek occasion to allow himself to be obliged by the offended party. He will ask a favor perhaps, and it will be a rare case if this do not restore the good understanding that previously existed. Revengeful tempers are not to be reckoned among our Western sins. The fire

that blazes fiercely at night, will scarce live in its smouldering ashes on the morrow. A kind word will often solder what seemed a hopeless breach, and nothing is more common than to see two men who have pursued each other from court to court with an angry lawsuit, make up at last in all heartiness, and be good friends ever after.

The *very* good neighbor does not get his good name for nothing. He must keep nothing exclusively for his own use. To have any thing too good to go the rounds, is death to his fame. It was for this reason that 'Squire Fellingwood, who is a shrewd old pioneer, sold a handsome carriage which was left him by a friend — a gay, high-built thing, with a bright yellow body and wheels picked out with vermilion — and a spirited high-trotting horse which had been accustomed to draw it. It was for this reason he sold it, though he *said* he was afraid it would not stand our roads. Our roads are smooth enough, but the 'squire did well when he bought a great wagon with the money. *That* will serve to carry whole families, with their luggage, without racking or bruising; and his stout farm team will not let any body hurt them by overdriving.

What will the good neighbor do when unruly cattle or ravenous pigs break into his enclosures and damage his crop? Turn them out, mend his fences, and say never a word unless it be to lament his "luck." If he is in the habit of keeping — as

every farmer ought — a book of profit and loss, the entry on such occasion will be,

"LUCK . . . . . DR.

To ——— *dollars' damage by reason of A's oxen.*"

Speaking of fields, — we have a singular custom, which he that would play good neighbor must never think of violating. It is that of permitting people to cross your grounds, either on foot or with cart or wagon — at any time before the grain is six inches high, in order to make a short cut when convenient, instead of going round by the road. If the fence is replaced three times out of four, the good neighbor will be content, and put it up the fourth time himself.

Even the good neighbor is shy of lending his horse, but there are times when that must be public property too. Should he be brought back with marks of rather free usage, the good neighbor will observe, "The weather is very warm;" or, "The roads are heavy;" or, "My horse always did tire easy;" or still better, he will avoid looking at the horse at all. Should saddle be torn or bridle broken, "'Twas an old thing," the owner will say; "I didn't suppose it would have lasted so long;" and he will be very careful never to hint that he should be much obliged if the borrower saw fit to repair the injury.

B lent C a saddle for a two days' ride. When C

returned, he was tired and it was quite dark, so he laid the saddle down on the marsh where he turned out his horse, and went away to bed, thinking to attend to it in the morning. Meanwhile some half a dozen frolicsome calves, that were feeding on the marsh, found the saddle, which happened to be stuffed with hay, and having once effected an entrance, they made a perfect wreck of it before morning came, or at least before B in Sunday trim sought his saddle for a Sunday ride. Now B thinks it very hard that C is not willing to pay for the damage done to the saddle, and C cries out upon B's *meanness* in requiring it. They talk of a lawsuit, for they neither of them set up for the character of good neighbors; but we hope somebody that does, may yet interfere to prevent that mode of settling the point.

The reader may think we have hinted at some rather costly sacrifices as the price of this same character of ours, but indeed they are not greater than the position is worth. Those who would be the ministers of good on a larger scale, must make themselves known first in humble efforts. True benevolence will not disdain the humblest. We have seen some rather ludicrous instances of the petty trials which are inseparable from new country life, but it is a serious and an interesting truth that the spirit of the good Samaritan is nowhere found in livelier exercise.

An instance of this occurs to me as worth recording. At a time of distressing scarcity — I think the winter of '37—'38 — Mr. ——, whose crop had been abundant, refused to sell his produce to any one who had money to pay for it. Those, he said, could buy any where. He parted with his entire crop on credit, to the poor; and thereby saved many families from the extreme of want. The next harvest gave his debtors the means of paying, without reducing themselves to distress. Such a man may well be called a good neighbor.

CHAPTER XLI.

Thou art not for the fashion of these times.
SHAKSPERE.

After all that has been said and written to show that the poor and the unlettered, the awkward, the vulgar, and the rough of our race ought, in spite of their disadvantages, and even because of them, to awaken an interest in the hearts of their more favored fellow-mortals, nothing is more difficult than to call up any thing like true sympathy for those whose outward appearance and circumstances are divested of every thing that captivates the imagination. I am disposed, after some experience, to count it among the compensations of a country life, that in the close contact into which the joint tenants of the wilds must come, — be their discrepancies what they may, — we are brought sooner and more certainly to a sense of the *dignity of human nature* — independent of all the accessories on which so much stress is laid in society, — than we could ever be amid the forms and barriers of more polished life.

There is very little disguise or reserve in the intercourse of this new country. Every one's affairs are talked over without stint or measure;

and if they are, or ought to be, private affairs, so much the worse for the owner. Indeed it is, I believe, part of the creed imported into these shades by the Orientals, that nobody ought to have any private affairs; and that if there be any, it is the duty of the community to ferret them out. This is a little unpleasant before one gets used to it; but there is a comfort in thinking that such a limitless unveiling of the springs and motives of human action brings us acquainted occasionally with varieties of character which would never have come under our notice in the more ceremonious world.

I have mentioned the dignity of human nature, and I will here sketch an instance which occurs to me as explanatory of what I mean by the term.

In a small house, on the outskirts of our village, lives an old woman with whom the country in general claims relationship; at least every body calls her Aunty Parshalls. I had often noticed an odd-looking figure hovering about that isolated dwelling, sometimes seeming engaged in various homely household labors, and more than once every day toiling up a hill which rises back of the house, loaded apparently with something too heavy for her strength. I conjectured that she was some poor widow, who led a lonely life, spending her whole time in feeble efforts for the little that nature required, but probably inured to hardship and solitude, and too dull to desire companionship. I do

not know how I could have imbibed so uncharitable an opinion, but I suppose it was the uncouth outline of the figure, together with the spiritless, packhorse air with which she pursued her daily labors. The distance between us was too great to allow of my making out more than an outline, but I often followed her movements with listless eye, and at last began to feel some curiosity to know something of her.

It so happened that I had become the happy possessor of the spare fleeces of two sheep that spent their time looking into each other's silly eyes in a little enclosure on our premises; and it was a matter of no small moment to me to dispose of this produce of the *farm* to the very best advantage. I could readily have exchanged the wool for yarn, at the store, or with one of the neighbors, or I could have sold it for "hard money," so great a treasure is it as yet among the pioneers. But this would not have been farmish; so I determined to have it spun into stocking-yarn at once, that some of my household at least might be clothed in some small measure with home-manufacture. It lacked but little and I should have proposed buying a wheel and hiring an expert maiden to perform the work; but a stray smile or two, when I touched upon this plan, warned me that I was quitting the sublime for something less pleasant, and I contented myself, after all, with making inquiry where and by whom I could get my four pounds of wool transformed into

stocking-yarn in the most unexceptionable style. More than one good housewife recommended me to "Aunty Parshalls."

"That leetle taunty house there, there — at the bottom of the knob — with that queer stick chimbly and sich a poor fence — that's Mr. Parshalls-es."

Unwilling of course to intrust any one with so important a negotiation, I posted at once to the "taunty" house, pleased to find an excuse for getting a little nearer to the odd-looking tenant, and quite surprised to discover that she was the owner of a husband, having often seen her putting up fences which were invariably down again the next day, and driving out cattle that sometimes spent a great part of the time in her cornfield. These being, by country etiquette, mannish offices, I took it for granted the husband must be helpless at least, since he was not dead.

I found Aunty Parshalls out of doors as usual. She had placed her wheel in the shady spot at the west end of the house, and there she was spinning with all the alacrity of a young girl; while in the middle of the only room in the house, in a great arm chair placed directly between two doors, so as to catch every breath of air, sat a jolly-looking man scarcely as old as herself,— his feet propped up, a long pipe in his mouth, and in his hand a newspaper which he seemed attentively studying.

I opened my business, received a favorable reply, and feeling my mind relieved from the pressure of

this important affair, began in earnest to make a new acquaintance. One single question answered the purpose, and that was one which might be stereotyped as the universal form of opening a conversation among us.

"How long have you lived in the Western country?" This lifted the flood-gates. The old woman began on her own biography and that of her husband — told the county and town in Connecticut where each was born, the county and town in "York state," in which each had lived before marriage; and every particular point of topography relating to the places where they had resided since; the day of the month and year when they had first spoken of coming to Michigan, and also the particular day on which they came to a decision to that effect, with the causes thereunto moving; the day of the week and month on which they set out; ditto when they arrived at Buffalo; the various chances which had befallen their attempts at getting their "things" on board a steamboat, and all that the captain said touching a reduction of fare, the inconveniences of two nights' lodgings on deck, when the cabin passengers objected to the deck passengers blocking up every avenue, which the deck passengers thought very tyrannical; the arrival at Detroit, and the deposit of the "things" on the wharf, where "th' old man" staid by them while the good wife went round and looked up a teamster, and brought him to her husband to be bargained with; the hazards

and delays in crossing the Rouge, which was swollen by a freshet, and had lost its poor old bridge, the frail dependence of those times; then the crossing in a scow, and her fears lest the old man should get tipped over, as he would not get out of the wagon; and the arrival in the neighborhood of the "eighty," on which the backwoods life was to commence. All this, though thus succinctly indicated here, took a good hour in the telling; and the poor woman had removed her wheel and I my seat several times to avoid the encroachments of the sun, which now approached the noon-mark.

"Why do you not spin in the house, Mrs. Parshalls?" I asked; "it is much cooler there, I have no doubt." "Oh yes, to be sure and sartin it is; but then you see the hum of the wheel disturbs my old man so, he can't take no comfort a readin'. So I spin out o' doors as long as it's shady, and then go about my other work. But come in now, and I'll show you the prettiest brood of young ducks you ever saw in all your born days." So saying she went into the house, and I followed, to see the young ducks, but more curious to see "th' old man," who seemed a person of so much importance.

He looked up from his paper and vouchsafed me a civil salutation, and then asked his wife rather sharply whether dinner was ready.

"Bless your dear soul!" she exclaimed, "why, I ha'n't so much as thought about dinner! But I

can get some snaps in a minute, and stir up some griddles, if that'll do. You don't care much about dinner, such a hot day, do ye?"

"Snaps!" said the fat man contemptuously, "keep your green victuals for your goslins; and as for griddles, I a'n't a going to have a fire in here; so whatever you do, you must do it out o' doors. I must have some pork, any way. I sha'n't keep, this weather, if I don't have some salt meat."

Poor Aunty Parshalls cast a doleful glance at the blazing sunshine, and ventured a gentle remonstrance.

"Why, deary now, them snaps is so tender, I know you would like 'em with butter, and I could cook 'em with a little blaze of chips, and bake the griddles too. But then if you don't like it," she concluded, seeing a frown gathering on his brow, "why, it a'n't no matter. I'll make a fire out o' doors."

I admired the young ducks duly, and accorded just commendation to the little tub of water sunk in the ground near the back door for them to paddle in, and then took my leave. (I must tell my reader what I did not always know myself, that "snaps" are young green beans, and "griddles" cakes baked on a griddle;—favorite cates in these parts.)

After I reached home again, and sat fanning myself by the window, I saw Mrs. Parshalls hazing

about her open fire, and I had a feeling sense of what she must be suffering.

This business acquaintance ripened into real interest before a great while. Mr. Parshalls was always the very man he appeared at first sight, selfish and exacting, and determinedly indolent. In summer it was too hot for him to stir, in winter too cold; and in the intermediate seasons it was either wet or windy or chilly, neither of which conditions of atmosphere agreed with him. The greatest exertion he was ever known to make was to walk over to the village in the morning, and sit smoking on the tavern steps or in the store all day; laying down the law on all disputed points for the instruction of the hordes of idlers who are always to be found about those places. His wife, meanwhile, led, as I have before hinted, a sort of shifting, Robinson Crusoe life, doing the best she could with very small means, and performing the parts of man and woman both.

She was the very opposite of her husband, in exterior as well as in heart. As he was fat she was lean, and even to a much greater degree. Her long knobby limbs looked like mere frame-work, while he wore the air of having been run into his clothes, and pretty large clothes too. His face was of a hue approaching that of a red cabbage; his wife's brown and wrinkled with exposure and fatigue. His walk was an habitual strut; she had,

at least while in his presence, an uneasy, watching air, keeping her eye on him as much as possible, as if she dreaded a blow, although I believe nobody ever suspected Mr. Parshalls of *that* sort of brutality. He ruled by a less unpopular species of tyranny, and the humble and loving disposition of his wife gave him unusual opportunities in this way. A harsh word or an angry look had more terrors for her than a blow would have for harder natures. And she had so much of that charity which "hopeth all things" that she persuaded herself always that her husband was improving.

CHAPTER XLII.

> For the true-hearted soul deemed a weather-stained face
> And a toil-hardened hand were no marks of disgrace.
>
> MRS. SIGOURNEY.

I HAD been some little time acquainted with Mrs. Parshalls before I knew that she had a son — one only son, who had been married, and was now a widower with a little boy of his own, an infant of some three years old, or perhaps not so much. It was in her longings after this darling grandchild that she first mentioned her son to me, and from what she said of her desire to have the child with her, and of her son's refusal, I came to the conclusion that Mr. Henry Parshalls was more like his father than like herself, or he would have allowed the child to cheer her loneliness at least a part of the time.

At length Henry came for a visit, and with him the sweet rosy-cheeked boy, and the poor old mother was the happiest of the happy. She said she took "clear comfort," and no one could doubt it who saw her with her little grandson in her arms. To be sure, she rose earlier, and toiled still harder than before, but the new spring at her heart lightened all her labors. Little Alfred was always with her. With the unerring instinct of childhood

he preferred following her steps all day, to enjoying any of the various temptations offered by his grandfather, and by virtue of this exclusive preference, added to his thousand little winning ways, he became part and parcel of poor Aunty Parshalls' being. Henry, though he was but a cold son of such a mother, could not but yield to her entreaties, and leave the boy with her when he went away.

Soon after this we heard of his marriage. He had chosen a girl of sixteen, thoughtless and unformed even more than is usual at that age. From this time Mrs. Parshalls lived in constant fear lest her darling would be required of her. But three months passed away and no word came from Henry, who lived at some distance, and was not a very attentive son. By and by a letter was received announcing that he was about to remove into our neighborhood, where he owned a piece of land. The world had gone amiss with him, and he wrote in poor spirits, scarcely mentioning his young wife, and indeed saying nothing beyond what was absolutely necessary. Here was an increase of poor Aunty's cares and anxieties! Henry had been very prosperous; so much so that the order of nature had become reversed in some degree, and his parents looked up to him — no unusual state of things where filial reverence is held in small account. Now the tide had turned, and Henry was going to try hard work again, with the encum-

brance of a young wife who was reputed to know nothing whatever of any domestic employment.

They came, and for once rumor was found to have fallen short of the truth. A more useless little doll than our new neighbor Mrs. Henry Parshalls never trod a ducal hall. She was of extreme delicacy of person, *petite* to a fault, with wild haught black eyes, and the air of a woman of fortune. Her father had been able to give her nothing whatever in support of these high pretensions, but he wrote himself "Attorney at Law" in a village somewhere further West, and, being a widower, had boarded out with his only child, who had found, consequently, little or nothing to do.

One ought to have seen Mr. Parshalls senior and his house, and that good but very odd-looking wife of his, to imagine any thing of the poor little daughter-in-law's situation after she became an inmate of the paternal establishment. She sat on one of the chests which garnished the sides of the room, her white hands idly resting in her lap or listlessly straying among her mazy curls, while she watched with an aspect of real distress the labors of poor Aunty. These were of the most primitive kind; various enough indeed, but all performed with scarcely more utensils than would have been invented by our first mother if she had had workmen at command.

One article in particular which Mrs. Parshalls

called her "dish-kettle," performed daily a round of duties which would utterly have confounded Papin's digester or the "marmite perpetuelle." It cooked the potatoes for breakfast, and was then put on to heat water for washing the dishes. When this same washing process was about to commence, the dish-kettle was always hoisted to the table, since where was the use of wearing out a pan when the dish-kettle did just as well, and kept the water hot longer too? By the time the dishes were washed, it was time to feed the pigs, and then poor Aunty, being sadly scanted in pails, carried this heavy iron vessel up the rising ground at the top of which the pen was placed. Then the kettle was scoured and put on for dinner. After dinner came the whole dish-washing process over again, and then the factotum was cleaned once more, and put on to heat water for mopping the floor — a daily ceremony. At this point of the diurnal round I confess a discrepancy of opinion between Aunty Parshalls and myself, since I could never quite like to see the mop going in and out of the dish-kettle. But as she said in reply to a very sharp remonstrance of her lady daughter on this head, "Why! bless your dear soul! I sca-oured it!" I will answer for it she did, but we all have our prejudices.

But the dish-kettle is not yet at rest for the night. It has still, after another "sca-ouring" pro-

cess, to cook the supper, wash the dishes, carry the pigs' mess up the hill, and come home to be cleaned again in order that the beans may be put to soak for to-morrow's porridge.

This is one of Mrs. Parshalls' peculiarities, and it is one which I doubt not will cleave to her as long as she lives, in spite of many snappish remarks from her husband, and the undisguised horror of Mrs. Henry. She says she must do as she has been used to, and as her mother did before her, or she should get her work all "out of kelter." And whatever may be the judgment of others upon this coarse estimate of comfort, I am sure neither of the objectors just mentioned had any right to say a word, since neither of them ever lifted a finger to lighten the good woman's labors.

Mrs. Henry's only amusement, and indeed her only occupation while her husband was building his house, was playing with little Alfred, whose heart she won very soon by her attentions, and whom she seemed really to love. Her prejudice against his grandmother was very evident. She had not the sense to value good qualities under so unattractive an exterior. She was at an age when with most girls exterior is all, and she seemed to have been utterly unprepared for finding her husband's parents so different from himself. Henry Parshalls had by nature a fine person and a handsome face; and withal, an air which seems to come to some people by nature too — a gentle-

manly ease of manner — a repose which is often labored after in the fashionable world, where it is in high repute as bespeaking, in the first place, a habit of entire idleness, and in the next a most dignified consciousness of one's own importance. A towering development of self-esteem, and the contagious example of his worthy father, had done wonders for Henry; and unexpected success in the world had still further contributed to give him an exalted estimate of his own claims. Now, after all that has been hinted of the characteristics of these two young people, it cannot be necessary to show how very largely they drew upon poor Aunty's patience. And yet when they removed to their new house, she felt that she would have been willing to endure always this extra load of toil and vexation for the sake of retaining the little Alfred. But he was taken home and made a plaything of by his pretty young mamma, grandmamma retaining only the privilege of taking care of his clothes and providing for him in many respects out of her own scanty supplies.

CHAPTER XLIII.

O! goodly golden chayne, wherewith yfere
The virtues linked are in lovely wize.
SPENSER.

TIME wore on thus — Mr. Parshalls skimming the cream of life, such as it was, and leaving only a sky-blue remainder for his devoted wife, who always excused all his exactions on the ground of his being "so fleshy;" Henry Parshalls bearing his enforced change of condition with little attempt at cheerfulness, and his pretty Mary generally in either extravagant spirits or equally extravagant depression, but through all evincing a scarce disguised contempt for her mother-in-law, and gradually withdrawing little Alfred from her as much as possible.

This was any thing but happiness, and the care-worn countenance of Aunty Parshalls showed how deeply she felt that heaviness which weighs at a mother's heart — and such a heart! — when she sees things "going wrong" among her dear ones. There was a gleam of something like joy when Mary gave birth to a little daughter, but this was soon overclouded by the extreme illness of the mother and the subsequent death of the child. When Mrs. Henry Parshalls had recovered so far as to be

considered out of danger, things wore a still more unhappy aspect, for her variableness and her angry grief for the loss of her infant approached the tone of insanity; and after some months had elapsed in this way, her husband looked like a broken-down man, and scarcely made an effort towards securing the means of life. Here again the burden fell on the much-enduring mother, who found time, even from her husband's service, to labor for her son's family, and who also found means, in spite of penury, to contribute many a little comfort to that gloomy and desolate household. Yet never did these efforts and sacrifices succeed in winning, in the smallest degree, the regard of the wayward Mary. She evinced ever the same scorn and hatred of her mother-in-law's coarse appearance and rude habits, wilfully closing her eyes to traits of character which could have derived no real lustre from any station on earth.

But there was yet a shade to be added to this unhappy picture. Little Alfred, who before the birth of the baby had been the darling of the young wife, had for some time been observed to call forth her irritable feelings more than any other object. When she was in her seasons of wild and flighty spirits she would sometimes play with him as before; but when the tide turned, as it was sure to do, the unnatural flashing of her dark eyes turned first upon him, and the innocent creature, feeling the malign influence, would hide himself from her,

and sometimes run away to his grandmother, and whisper to her that mother was very naughty.

It is not to be supposed that these things passed unnoticed by those most interested. Even the old man was aroused to a suspicion that Mary was "going crazy," and his wife spent her days and nights in the most painful anxiety lest some dreadful catastrophe should yet prove the correctness of the idea; especially as Henry, with a pride which was part of his very existence, treated his mother's anguished hints and cautions with scorn and derision, though in his secret heart he felt convinced that some sad change had taken place in his unhappy wife. He even requested his mother not to come to his house, telling her that it was only her odd ways that irritated Mary!

If any thing was yet lacking to complete the crushing of poor Aunty it was a stroke like this. To know that her presence was tolerated only because it was needed, had been killing enough to a heart overflowing with affection; but to find herself excluded as a thing to shudder at! And that dear boy over whom her old heart yearned so fondly — was he to be left to the mercy of a mother who was all but a maniac, and who would doubtless teach him to hate his grandmother, if she taught him any thing! She could only go away and pray that "yet worse things" might be spared her.

It was with all this load at her heart, and the

bitter tears of wounded affection welling from her old eyes, that Mrs. Parshalls, in the weary round of her daily labors, ascended the hill of which mention has been made; her steps tottering beneath the weight of the dish-kettle, which she scarcely used to think of while little Alfred trotted by her side. Arrived at the top, her eye wandered mechanically around the various fields in the neighborhood — the watching of unruly or straying cattle being, as we said before, a part of her imposed duty. At this moment she saw Mary, holding little Alfred by the hand, come out of her house and walk hurriedly towards a wood which lay at some little distance, west of the village. The mother's heart died within her. She felt — who has not felt? — that dread presentiment of evil whose agony can scarcely be exceeded by the occurrence of all we fear. She hesitated but for a moment, and then, with all the speed her trembling limbs could master, hastened to the wood by another path.

Fears that had haunted her for months past led her at once to a deep hollow at some distance from the road, where was a small circular pond without any apparent outlet — one of those deposits of water called in this country, cat-holes — completely imbedded in hills and shaded by great overhanging trees.

Those fears, the result of perceptions rendered acute by a mother's anxious love, had not deceived her. Before she could reach the spot she heard the

piteous cries of her darling,—"Oh, mother! mother! mother!" and Mary's voice replying, "You shall not live, little wretch, when my own baby is dead and buried!" then struggles and blows, and then a plunge into the still waters.

With a piercing shriek she sprang forward, and at the sound the unhappy Mary, clasping her hands above her head, threw herself into the pond, before Mrs. Parshalls had gained the bank.

To rush down, to plunge into the slimy waters, and to draw to land both the victims, was the work of only as much time as would have served a strong man to do the same. The little boy was able to stand, at once, but poor Mary was entirely insensible, and Mrs. Parshalls, knowing it would be in vain to call for help from that remote recess, bore her in her arms to the top of the bank, the child following, and thence, often resting on her weary way, succeeded in carrying her to the roadside, where assistance was easily found.

Long did this death-like swoon hold the unfortunate creature; so long that almost all hope was exhausted but Aunty's. She ceased not for a moment to chafe the helpless limbs, and to try all her simple restoratives in succession, till at length returning life rewarded her efforts, though the stupor was still so heavy that it seemed as if no ray of reason would ever be rekindled. The physician, when questioned by the wretched husband, declined giving a present opinion, but recom-

mended rest and extreme quiet, and left the sufferer to Mrs. Parshalls.

It was midnight in that sad chamber, and the dim light of a shaded candle scarcely reached the bed, when Mary, after some uneasy sighs and restless movements, suddenly started up, drew her hands across her brow, and looked around her as if bewildered.

"Where am I? where is Alfred? Am I in this weary world yet!" then seeing her faithful nurse at the bedside, she screamed, and covered her eyes with her hands.

"*You* here! go away! go away!" she exclaimed, in extreme agitation; then seeming gradually to recover her recollection, she asked again for Alfred.

"He is in his little bed asleep, my darling," said Mrs. Parshalls; "lie down like a good girl now, and you shall see him in the morning."

"Asleep, is he? are you sure he is only asleep? oh mother, I was so afraid — but I have been in a dream — oh! is it *all* a dream?" she asked almost gasping.

"You have been asleep a long time," said the good woman with the utmost tenderness; "but you are ill, my dear Mary, and you must try to be very quiet. Alfred is quite well."

Mary gazed intently at the old woman, as if in deep thought, and then began searching in her bosom as if for something lost.

"I am undressed — who undressed me? you?

where is it? where is the — the box ——" she asked in the wildest tone.

"Here, Mary," said Mrs. Parshalls, approaching the bedside with a mournful air — "this is the box, and I took it from your bosom. You don't want it again, dear?"

"Give it me! give it me! do you know what ——"

"Hush, hush, my dear; do not be so violent."

"But do you know — tell me! did you open it? ah! you do! you know what is in it, and you have told Henry! Say! tell me! you have told him, haven't you? You went right to him and told him what a poor creature his wife was — an opium-eater."

"Mary, my dear daughter," said the kind soul, sobbing ready to break her heart, "you don't know your old mother! You see me a poor rough humly old woman, and you think I'm all through alike. I never told Henry, nor I never shall tell any living soul. But oh! my darling, how *can* you ——"

But she could not finish, for Mary, struck at once with shame and remorse, burst into tears, and threw her white arms round poor Aunty's bony neck, and kissed again and again the withered bosom.

"Oh mother! true mother! I see all now! You have been my guardian angel! I remember all that has happened! And you have not told Henry? but I will tell him myself! He shall know all my weakness, my wickedness, — he little thinks

that the six opium pills that Doctor —— left for me before my baby was born were the beginning of all our misery! I never tasted it before, mother, but the relief — the delight — which followed the use of those fatal doses were my ruin! I have paid dearly for all since! But now — after this awful day — you will let me live with you, won't you, mother? You will take care of me, you will watch me, for fear — dear, dear mother, you shall be always my guardian angel!"

Mrs. Parshalls tried in vain to check the gush of Mary's awakened sensibilities. She told her she must look higher than to a poor woman of the dust for guardianship. She tried by every love-taught art to quiet the agitated spirits of her charge, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing her fall into a sweet sleep, holding to the very last one of those poor, worn out, shapeless hands which she had often looked on with such contempt and aversion.

Mary's new life dates from this awful crisis. Every day has improved her, and though the vehemence of her gratitude to her husband's mother faded with the unnatural excitement which attended its birth, the sentiment remains in undiminished force, and is exhibited in a thousand tender cares and dutiful offices. And as such feelings are happily contagious, we need not marvel that Henry's character seems to have undergone some sympathetic change, and to partake something of the warmth which appears so lovely in his young wife.

As for father Parshalls, I fear he is too old to learn. The last time I saw his "old woman," she was on the top of the hill again, and by way of adding to her height, already passing that of women, she had turned the dish-kettle upside down, and was standing on it, a skeleton statue scantily draperied — looking round the landscape with a searching glance.

"I do wonder," she said, "what has become of that heifer critter! If my old man comes home afore I find her, I shall get an awful talkin' to!"

Talk of the Venus! The statue that enchants the world is not half so respectable as Aunty Parshalls standing on her dish-kettle!

CHAPTER XLIV.

A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
WORDSWORTH.

THE love of dress is said by some to be the ruling passion of the female soul. This is a slanderous accusation, no doubt; and one which is to be traced to the anxiety with which the stronger sex would fain fasten upon the weaker the imputation of a frivolity and feebleness of mind proportioned to their deficiency in bodily energy; and this in revenge for certain signal victories obtained by the weakest of the one over the strongest of the other. I, though no champion of "woman's rights" in a technical sense, and even a firm and submissive believer in the inferiority of the sisterhood in many essential points, deny this particular imputation entirely; and defy those who write us down popinjays to any thing like reasonable proof. So much by way of general protest.

A single instance proves nothing; if it did, I should not be disposed to mention, even in this confidential way, — "to a few friends,"— the heart-breaking quarrel which divided pretty Candace

Beamer from her faithful swain; and which began, as I must believe however reluctantly, in the attractions of a string of blue glass beads, and other seductive appendages thereunto appertaining.

The parents of Candace are the plainest of plain people. They are of the small number — small even here — of those who do not make the slightest effort towards any thing beyond bare utility — who do not seem even to wish that the banks of life's muddy stream should be cheered by a single flower. They toil on and on, with the single object of acquiring an additional number of acres on which their children may toil after them.

Candace never in her little life wore any thing better than a shilling calico; — but truly, if all girls wore faces like hers, silks might go out of fashion. Yet I doubt whether her father or mother ever noticed the exceeding beauty of that rich cheek, with its twilight shadows of brown hair; or the grace of a person which though *petite*, and unaided by the *plastic* art, asked nothing from calisthenics. They would be more likely to lament that such little hands could not accomplish half as much work as Nabby Gilkin's, whose fingers are long and hard and horny as the claws of an ostrich.

It is not to be supposed that Candace could be quite as indifferent on the subject of her own personal appearance as were her parents. There are some secrets that *will* not be kept, do what we will. But she was a sweet-tempered and submissive las-

sie, who took it for granted that father and mother must know best, being the oldest. And besides, Lewis Arden, who knew a good deal, had never hinted to her that she did not look as pretty as she ought.

But light will occasionally penetrate even the depths of the wilderness. A young lady came to make a visit at Mrs. Flyaway's, whose aim it seemed to be to atone for the parsimony of nature towards her person, by loading herself with every attainable gewgaw — giving preference to those which would be likely to strike at the greatest distance. This could be none other than a distinguished guest, in our village where finery is "a sight for sair e'en."

Not that we have not some attempts at the beautifying art. Some of our fair damsels *will* line their straw bonnets with coarse cotton flowers, which appear with enhanced meanness lying near such fresh, rosebud complexions. And they are apt to be fond of doleful caricatures of jewelry, — "whiting's eyes for pearls" — and copper brooches set with green glass.

When I see these sad-looking affairs, I am sometimes tempted to ask, (being a little given to moralizing,) wherein, after all, consists the essential difference between mean and costly ornaments? The one strikes us as palpably absurd; — how much less absurd is the other? Why is a necklace that costs fifty cents more ridiculous than one at fifty dollars? By what standard is finery legiti-

mated? Should it be proportioned to the means of the wearer? Is every woman to get as much as she can? If so, let no smile curl the lip of the town-bred dame as she casts her careless eye around the humble village church. The rustic maiden only follows her example, and she is not to blame for the partiality of fortune. What does mere ornament do for either? It may flush with pride a cheek otherwise wan and lifeless, but will it smooth a harsh skin, blanch a brown throat, or give a soft, womanly tenderness to the light of a haughty eye?

It may not be disputed that the habit of wearing *counterfeits* is of unmixed evil meaning; but here the country girl is clearly superior. She wears every thing in good faith, and leaves the shame of a false outside to those who despise her.

It would require no labored argument to prove that the country girl's longing after finery has no *inherent* vulgarity that does not attach with equal force to the more successful and costly efforts of the city belle — but, as we were saying, or about to say ——

Miss Henrietta Duncan had been a guest at Mrs. Flyaway's for a full fortnight, and in that time she had had time and opportunity to make a great impression by the elegance of her appearance. She wore a pink bonnet with rainbow-tinted "chany-oysters" all over it; and, depending from its very small front, a long white veil; under which her nose made a kind of masked sortie, as a chicken's

elbow will sometimes do in the thin cover of a *paté.* Her robe was a blue *mousseline*, splashed with gorgeous flowers, and this was set off by a sentimental black scarf, and a muslin pocket kerchief, edged with broad cotton lace, and much embroidered in the corners. All these charms were heightened by glistening ear-drops, four parti-colored bracelets on one arm, a brooch large enough for a dressing-glass, and a long string of blue glass beads; — not to mention collars, ribbons, and all the etcetera of the feminine armory.

The lady herself was of a pale brunette complexion, deepened not a little by masses of curls, black and shining as if they had been japanned. Her eyes were not very bright, but they were very scornful, which did as well, and produced a greater sensation. She generally wore to meeting a double-flounced apron, into one pocket of which was thrust the central part of the *mouchoir brodé* before mentioned, and into the other a scarlet hymn-book, by the aid of which Miss Duncan performed a very high and conspicuous part in the music. But I need not dwell on particulars. The *tout ensemble* was very dashing.

Mrs. Flyaway lived near Mr. Beamer's; and being a very busy lady, with but little to do at home, she had time to do a good deal for other people; and she took some pains to encourage an intimacy between Candace and Miss Duncan, hoping, we may suppose, that high breeding would prove contagious.

After a while, Miss Duncan, whose visit seemed

of an elastic quality, was transferred, chest and all, to Mr. Beamer's, and so had an opportunity for much private tuition of the guileless Candace.

We must always think the best we can; so we will not suspect for a moment that Mrs. Flyaway had become tired of her gay guest. It is certain however that it was she who proposed the flitting to Mr. Beamer's; and it is at least whispered that Mrs. Flyaway had mentioned confidentially to several of her neighbors that she had picked up Miss Duncan by chance, while visiting in a neighboring district where that young lady was teaching school. Candace had imbibed a profound respect for Miss Duncan's finery when she first beheld it at a distance. Some vague notions of power and dignity, as connected with such splendor of costume, had then dawned upon her for the first time; and when we consider how much this sort of impression is counted upon in the greater world, we must make allowance for our little rustic. And when this bright, particular star became an acquaintance — an inmate, — and seemed disposed, too, to treat the humble country maiden with such marked consideration, — to patronize her, in fact, — (for things may be done on all scales) — her gratitude and her deference knew no bounds. She listened to every suggestion for the improvement of her own appearance with a feeling of new self-importance, and congratulated herself upon each successful attempt to imitate the elegant airs of Miss Duncan.

"Well!" said the model, "if *my* hair was all wavy like yours, and *would* curl every how, I should dip my head into a pail of water twice't a day, and see if I couldn't make it a little slicker! You never can make it curl in the fashion!"

"That would only make it worse," said Candace despondingly; "when I wet it, or when the weather is damp, it curls all over my head, so that I can't do any thing with it. Grandfather used to call me his almanac, because he could always tell when it was going to rain, by my curls."

"It is dreadful, I declare!" said Miss Duncan; "don't you think if you should have it all shaved off it would grow straight? I could sell it for you, and buy you some elegant long ringlets with the money!"

* * * * * *

Next to amending Candace's appearance, Miss Duncan's favorite object was to induce her to break with Lewis Arden, who did not like the gay lady, and had treated her somewhat cavalierly, especially after he observed her efforts to acquire an influence over Candace. We cannot say how far the guest was conscious of a spiteful feeling towards a handsome young man who had shown something beyond a decided indifference to her charms; but she lost no occasion of depreciating him in the esteem of his fair mistress, and for this she thought she had sure ground. With all his manliness, his fine eyes, noble forehead, and frank address, Lewis

Arden had one immense, undeniable, unpardonable fault.

His father, a plain, hard-working farmer, had toiled all his life for little more than a living for his family. He was one of those farmers who look neither to the right hand nor to the left — notice nobody's plans but their own — eschew every thing like experiment — observe no necessity for improvement in implements or modes of tillage — feel too poor to take an agricultural paper, and too busy to read one — and so go on, from year to year, plodding in circuitous paths, when a little inquiry would have shown them short cuts equally safe; and groaning under the unprofitableness of farming, without a single effort to discover why this necessary and fundamental branch of business should not be influenced by causes identical with those which influence all the other modes of earning a share of this world's goods. Mr. Arden had made up his mind that hard work was all; and most faithfully had he acted upon this idea.

But there was another reason why his affairs had prospered no better. Some years before the time of which we have been speaking, he had, in a moment of angry dispute with a friend and neighbor — an uncle of Candace, by the way — become engaged in a lawsuit; which, being carried from court to court with characteristic obstinacy, had silently devoured all the profits of the farm; and resulted in a heavy encumbrance on the land itself, in the

shape of a mortgage given to the lawyer; who, far from "doing it on spec," would not go on with the suit unless his pay was secured beforehand.

And this brings us back to that great, overshadowing fault which was the only one to be charged against that fine, high-spirited youth, his son. Lewis Arden was poor.

CHAPTER XLV.

How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice!
JOHNSON.

VARIOUS as are the characteristics of mankind, there are yet some traits in which all agree; and one of the most striking of these is a propensity to be ungrateful to our best friends. We are not entirely incapable of gratitude. There are some occasions that call forth warm emotions which must be referred to this virtue. But this fact weakens not our position. It is not to our *best* friends that we are grateful. It is to those who humor our whims or gratify our passions, not to those who give us unpalatable advice, who remind us of our besetting sin, or endeavor to rectify our estimate of our own abilities.

For instance — who loves poverty? who courts poverty? who sings the praises of this great teacher? Who tells of the cures it has performed — the eyes it has opened? Who calls upon his friends to rejoice with him when his merchandise is shipwrecked, or his house burned? Who gives a ball to celebrate his removal from a marble mansion in Carroll Place to a two-story tenement in Twenty-

fifth Street? Who carries his head the higher for a patched coat or a bad hat?

Is it necessary to prove that poverty is a friend? Let us consider for a moment. What is the most desirable kind of knowledge? Self-knowledge of course. This is emphatically the boon of poverty. Who tells the rich man of his faults? He struts through the world wrapped as it were in a golden mantle, which the darts of wholesome truth can never penetrate. He may have a thousand faults and failings that every body sees but himself; yet in the wretchedness of his prosperity no voice is found to whisper in his ear the startling words that should arouse him to self-examination — to repentance — to amendment — to restitution.

Let the poor man rejoice in the contrast. Has *he* any glaring sin unrebuked? Nay — has he one single foible, however unobtrusive, which is not ferreted out for him by the faithful scent of friendship? Can he plead unconsciousness as an apology for any — even the least — fault? If he but stumble, does he not find five hundred friends, each capable of the noblest self-sacrifice for the sake of enlightening his mind as to the nature and consequences of his error? If he grow not perfect he will have himself to blame.

This finding out one's friends is no small incidental advantage of a low estate. Much has been said of "fair weather friends" — but I fancy the expression is generally misapplied. It refers,

undoubtedly, to those who smile when they ought to frown — who try to cheer us under misfortune, instead of aiding us by their hints and suggestions in drawing lessons from it. Such friends should be shunned, certainly even though it cost some struggles of our weaker nature. They interpose between the scholar and the teacher.

Economy, that first of virtues, should be the precious lesson of poverty. Instead of this, the rich are generally the most eminent professors of the art — or science, which is it? With such striking examples before his eyes, how is it that the poor man will allow himself to spend his means with so little attention to their just distribution and sure increase? It is not for want of good advice, certainly, for that pours upon him from every quarter; neither can he be in any doubt as to the comfort bestowed by the mere sense of possession; for if he has himself never tried it, he may see its outward signs every day in the very walk of his rich neighbor. He will tell you, perhaps, that the little he has is barely sufficient for the purchase of ordinary comforts. Comforts! here we come at the ground of the error. A poor man has no business with comforts. He should take advantage of his position to study self-denial, and leave comforts to those who have nothing better.

Humility too — but this is too obvious to be dwelt upon for a single moment. A poor man unhumbled would be an anomaly indeed. Yet there

be some who slight their opportunities even in this respect; who cling to their own opinions, maintain their right to think for themselves, and decline walking by the light of other people's wisdom. Poor men sometimes build houses, and little shabby inconvenient places they make of them. But will they thank an opulent friend for his kind suggestion of improvements which might have been made in the plan or its execution? Far from it! on the contrary, nothing is more common than the reply —impatiently enough given too, sometimes, — "I could not afford any thing so expensive" — or, "This suits better with the circumstances of my family" — and this too in the very face of the assurance that such a sum is a mere trifle when one is building! Blind perversity!

How much is the world of art indebted to poverty benign! How many things had been left undone if all the world had been rich! While we are stupidly basking in the sunshine of prosperity, nobody ever breathes a syllable to remind us that we are wasting ourselves — that we have dormant abilities — buried talents — which ought to be thrown into the public treasury. Even as weeping skies, we are told, are requisite, in order to "bring the full spirit of fragrancy out" of the flower, so do the storms of adversity alone discover to admiring friendship the power (to help ourselves) which might have lain unsuspected and unpraised forever, if we had needed no aid. What monu-

ments of genius had been lost to the world if the rich and powerful had cruelly placed their originators above want, instead of keeping them as near starvation as possible, for the benevolent purpose of bringing out their powers! Do we not put out the eyes of singing-birds?

There is not a more baleful passion, among those which man encourages to torment him, than envy. To feel that their condition may sometimes awaken this cruel serpent in the bosoms of their fellow-creatures must be among the constant trials of the wealthy. We have shown that pity would be the more rational feeling, since the poor are the true objects of envy — yet, if there be an earthly ill from which the gracious presence of poverty secures us entirely, it is this. The most sublime virtues may be brought into action by adversity without attracting a moment's notice. A poet may fast and freeze in his garret, until his disencumbered brain become the theatre of visions more unearthly than Dante's, yet he runs no risk of being besieged by rich men, clamorous to purchase his privilege. The honest debtor may step lightly as he reflects that long years of self-sacrificing effort are about to be rewarded by the consciousness of a complete satisfaction of all claims, but nobody will long for his threadbare coat, even with the accompaniment of the proud heart beating beneath it. Envy follows not the poor.

What a labor is that of the care of a great es-

tate! How piteously rich men groan under their burdens, and how they will sometimes be heard to wish they had not a dollar in the world! This shows their wisdom; and it must be confessed too that they usually exhibit the influence of the most exalted benevolence in not even attempting to throw any part of the weight upon others. They might often relieve themselves in this way, if it were not for fear of increasing the cares of their neighbors.

How very convenient it is to need neither locks nor bolts! to lie down in peace, undisturbed by fear of the midnight robber! to walk the streets without the least solicitude about pockets! to be able to take out one's purse without danger of exciting any body's cupidity!

The rich philosophize in words; the poor must do it in deeds, which is more dignified. The *millionaire* sighs when he tells you that it is long since wealth has been competent to purchase him a single pleasure. The poor man congratulates himself as he finds his tastes and habits becoming more and more suited to his circumstances. It might be possible for the rich man to buy pleasure by trying, on a small scale, the game of equalization; — but it may be feared that this would spoil the poor man's philosophy — so it must be better as it is.

But I must own this discussion to be somewhat erratic; and I can only hope to be excused on the ground of the increased interest felt in the subject

matter of our digression since the change in the times. The philosophy of poverty is the study of the day.

As for Lewis Arden's poverty, it was not only inconvenient on the ordinary accounts, just as other men's poverty is inconvenient, but it took a shape of aggravated cruelty in his eyes, (Lewis was no philosopher — least of all a Stoic,) from the fact that it arose in great part from the indulgence of unhappy temper, and thus helped to make broader the chilling line of separation between himself and the object of his affections; — his father's adversary being an inmate at Mr. Beamer's, and a person of much influence in the family.

Not that all intercourse between the Ardens and the Beamers was suspended by this unhappy course of litigation. Such a thing was never heard of in these parts. But this had been productive of too much angry feeling, and Lewis Arden was too decidedly on the *poor* side to allow of his urging his suit — at least so whispered a not dishonorable pride. William Beamer was a bachelor, and had saved an amount of property rather unusual in the country; and this, he had declared, was to be divided among the children of his brother. So Candace was an heiress — every where an object of a certain degree of importance, shilling calico to the contrary notwithstanding.

Miss Duncan's efforts to estrange Candace from her lover may have been instigated directly or

indirectly by William Beamer. He *may* have whispered something of the obligation under which the whole family would be laid by such a result, or she may have whispered to herself that a bold bachelor like William was a very proper person for a damsel of five and twenty to oblige. The cause may be doubtful — the efforts were obvious enough.

Though Miss Duncan had spoken so disparagingly of the rich brown curls, she lost no opportunity of instilling into the willing ears of Candace the idea that nothing but dress was wanting to make her "a real beauty — handsome enough for a clock-picter!"

"If your folk's people would only give you sich things as you'd oughter have, there a'n't a girl in this deestrict that could hold a candle to you! Those girls that's took for clocks wouldn't be nothing wonderful if it warn't for their bein' fixed up so! I declare it is a shame that you shouldn't have things suitable! your nose is kept to the grindstone, and so! that's all about it!"

So vehement was Miss Duncan's metaphorical style that Candace put her hand to her nose instinctively. But the young lady, not noticing this, went on in the same strain, dwelling much upon the view that where one is kept down to the ground, one is obliged to keep company with low people.

"I don't keep company with any body," said poor Candace, turning very red.

"Well! I declare! look o' there now! how people does talk! Every body says you used to keep company with that there Arden boy! I said I knew you'd be above *that!* Them Ardens is as poor as drownded rats, and as proud as Lucifer! And Lewis Arden has said that you was too cheap for him! I wouldn't bear that, any how!"

Candace was thunderstruck. With all the newly-raised flutter of vanity in her little heart, there had not yet been a serious thought of breaking with poor Lewis — but what element of woman's nature does not rise against this especial form of disparagement? The simple maiden was transformed in a moment. She said not a word, but her eyes flashed, her cheek burned with natural indignation, and the tempter saw her work as good as done.

"You won't tell any one, will you?" she said; "you'll get me into trouble if you do. I only mentioned it out of friendship to you."

There was no need to extort a promise. Candace could as soon have died as mention the odious subject. Her mind was a whirl of wounded pride, new-born vanity, and a desire to act with the spirit which she saw that her adviser expected, and withal, a deep-rooted confidence in her lover's truth, which could scarcely be shaken even by such testimony.

She had promptly denied the imputation of "keeping company" with Lewis, and with truth; for be it known that the term has with us a sort of technical sense, which it would be difficult for me

to explain. Suffice it to say that it implies a regular Sunday evening visit from the gentleman; and that it is considered only part of the etiquette of "keeping company" if the sitting is prolonged far into the small hours, or even until daylight. This mode of courtship has the parental sanction, and is doubtless kept up in all modesty and good faith; yet some of us have been inclined to think that such a relic of the dark ages ought hardly to maintain a place under the light of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XLVI.

But now I'm as waefu' as waefu' can be;
Come summer, come winter, 'tis a' ane to me!

A FEAST of quilts which was held in the neighborhood about this time afforded a convenient opportunity to convince Lewis Arden that he was not so happy as he thought himself. All the young people were to be there, and Miss Duncan told Candace that she never would forgive her if she did not show some "spunk." By way of security, she administered a double dose of flattery, and expended besides all her gayest taste in decorating the simple girl with finery like her own. She tortured the wilful curls into as fashionable a shape as possible; laced to thread-paper size the graceful and well-proportioned waist; and when she had made Candace look as unlike her own sweet natural self as possible, she hung round her neck that very necklace of blue beads which made her own sallow complexion look so muddy, but which set off the pure white and red of the young beauty to a dazzling splendor, and matched the color of her eyes better than any thing but living sapphires could have done.

"Now you look something like!" exclaimed

the fashionable, when the great work was finished. "Them beads makes your neck look as white as a curd! I've a great mind to make you a present of 'em! What'll you give me if I do?"

Candace had nothing, and therefore could make no offer for the *present*, but Miss Duncan declared that should make no difference.

"You will find something, I dare say," said she with an air of magnanimity, "or may be your mother will be a mind to give me one o' them nice cheeses of hers ——"

Candace was overpowered by such generosity, and she could not help blushing with pleasure as she gave a glance at her altered appearance, a bit at a time, in a triangular fragment of looking-glass which had been the only voucher for her beauty before Miss Duncan came.

"You *do* look like a picter, and no mistake!" exclaimed that lady, who was contemplating her work with much self-gratulation; "I hope you'll treat that Arden boy with some sperrit! I should let him know I wasn't too cheap for his betters! A fellow that hasn't got a cent to be so uppish!"

Strange! how soon this principle of estimation finds its way to the woods!

It never entered the wise head of our little Candace to question the truth of Miss Duncan's report; so there was a fine show of contempt at the quilting. Lewis Arden's attentions were rejected in every way, and although it was hard to make him

understand, yet at last the meaning of things seemed, as Miss Duncan said, to "get through his hair." He said nothing however, but in spite of his efforts at self-command, his brow grew redder and redder, till the veins stood out like whip-cord, and his eyes looked as if they would be consumed in their own smothered fire. He took care to retort scorn for scorn with ample interest, whispered to the prettiest girls round the quilt, and at the romping scene of the shaking and folding, and during the dance which followed, any one who did not know Lewis Arden would have set him down as the gayest of the gay.

Yet when the time for parting arrived, old habits resumed something of their wonted power. In the bustle of seeking bonnets and shawls he found a moment to speak to Candace out of hearing of Miss Duncan.

"Candace!" he whispered, "are you in earnest!"

We were not there, and nobody ever told us—but we can answer for it that the poor little heart of Candace, angry as she tried to be, thrilled to its core at these few words. But womanly pride came to her rescue, and she gave a brief reply in the newly-adopted tone of disregard.

"Then I am not to go home with you to-night?" persisted Lewis, half choked with emotion.

"No, I thank you," said Candace, running away to hide the tears that would gush in spite of her, and hurrying to join her new friend, who was looking for her.

It will be seen that our little country-girl was an apt scholar; but such lore is soon learned. She slept but little that night, however; and she would have slept still less if she had known that Lewis roamed till daylight through the leafless woods, in a state of mind little short of madness. He was a young man of strong feelings, and attached to Candace with a passionate energy of which her gentler nature could form but faint conception. His character had been developed by difficulty and hardship to a manly tone, which befits the back-woodsman well; but the sense of grinding poverty rendered his feelings only the more keenly watchful against the very shadow of contempt.

Matters between Lewis and Candace having come thus to an open rupture, every day served to widen the breach; and the usual course of irritation and misconstruction by which such people ingeniously help on their own misery rendered it very unlikely that the broken cords would ever be reunited. But turn we aside now, in order to say something of the lawsuit, which had been sufficient to imbitter the feelings of the two families, even without the malicious aid of Miss Duncan.

The main point in dispute was a certain *sugar-bush*, the title to which had become doubtful by means of some legal quiddities of which I can give no account. Mr. Arden had been for several years in quiet possession, and he looked upon the attempt of William Beamer, a rich bachelor, ("rich" means

only that he might have been laid by with the ague for six months or a year without coming to the end of his means,) — he looked upon such an attempt to prove property, as an act of oppression; not precisely one of those acts which prove the rich to be the natural enemies of the poor, — for William Beamer, not being an *educated* man, did not come quite within the category, — but as an unneighborly thing, against a poor man with a large family; — in short — an excuse for that ruinous remedy, an angry lawsuit.

Perhaps my reader may require enlightening as to how and why men should fight and hate each other for years, and spend a great deal of money, in order to establish property in a bush.

A sugar-bush, to some ears doubtless, brings no idea more important than that of the Christmas tree on whose stiff branches are hung the treasures of Santa Claus; — great coils of candy and horns of sugar-plums and kisses; not to mention oranges, raisins, figs, and many a pretty ticketed gift besides. That would do for a city meaning of the term. But where little boys and girls are obliged to make tamarack-gum serve instead of sugar-candy, a sugar-bush means from two hundred to a thousand maple-trees, grouped here and there within the circuit of a mile or so; their luxuriant crowns making a cool twilight under the hottest summer sun, and their straight and polished shafts giving, in the glittering winter moonlight, no faint idea of those remaining

columns of the fanes of old, so fraught with associations of grace and elegance to the mind of the classic traveller. *We* say little about their beauty, although it is probable that even here, that is not without a degree of its own benign influence; but happy he whose far-reaching "eighties" enclose a sugar-bush!

A thousand miles from the ocean, even brown Havanas cost money; and I believe it may be asserted that all the world like sugar. A late traveller tells us that his wild kervash — a being to whom one might have supposed a Cossack girdle of raw pork would have been the more acceptable dainty — would bury his fingers in a plate of sugar, and devour it by the handful; and we have ourselves known a grave philosopher from whom his lady declared she should be obliged to lock up her sugar-barrel. In these Western shades, to which sugars from abroad come burdened with many a profit, the taste is quite as conspicuous; and the primitive resources of wild honey and maple sugar are much sought after. Honey, though very valuable, is not so universally adapted to the taste, and therefore takes only the second place. The sap of the soft-maple is used for a variety of household purposes besides making sugar, so that what is called the sugar season — somewhere about the month of March — is looked upon as a time of domestic hilarity; and if the season prove favorable, no pains are spared to secure all its advantages.

This implies no small effort, for no one makes a business of sugar-making, important as it is. It is an affair of expedients and special provision, year after year; — managed just in that disadvantageous jack-of-all-trades sort of way with many other operations in a thinly-peopled region, where every body engages in every thing.

The Indians used almost to monopolize the trade in maple sugar. The mococks, or bark panniers in which they brought the sugar to market, were pretty objects at least, and the sugar itself brought them something towards their wretched living. The manufacture just suited them; — a week's labor to a month's rest is quite enough for an Indian. But rumors got afloat that the red men boiled their food — musk-rats for instance — in the kettle of sap, during the sugar-making process; and some said too that they used their blankets for strainers — all which contributed to bring the sugar into bad odor — (an unavoidable pun, reader!) — so there was one means of whisky-buying the less for the poor wretches, before they left us.

Their first successor in the woods, the pioneer, without sympathy for them personally, seems yet to have imbibed, perhaps from the forest air, somewhat of their love of roving, their desire of freedom from restraint, their dislike of continuous labor, and their preference for such as promises a speedy return, however small. Going into the sugar-bush has something of the excitement which the forester

loves so well to mingle, whenever and wherever he can, with all his work. A dash of uncertainty — a chance of failure — relieves the tedium of mere labor. An enterprise in the success of which *luck* is to have its share, is always undertaken with more zest, as the hunter would lose half the pleasure of the chase if he were sure of bagging the game.

But what can *luck* have to do with sugar-making? The trees cannot run away — the axe will cut — the gouge will pierce — the troughs will hold — fire will burn — sap will boil. True; but the sun is fitful and will not always shine just enough and not too much, nor the frost come always at night and stay away by day. It may be too warm to freeze, or too cold to thaw. It is this regular alternation that brings delight to the sugar-boiler; for it is only in the freezing process that the sap is accumulated, and in the thawing that it is given out. Nor is this all for which we look to *luck*. The sap is sometimes not so nectareous as it should be, and so yields less than its forty-eighth of the delicious sweet which the man of kettles claims as his due; and for an inferior yield luck gets always the blame.

But when he "lots" of a good season, he reaps a rich reward for his labor. The breaking up of winter, when the frozen earth and frozen trees begin to feel the sun's genial influence, is the propitious period. Winters of abundant snow are

more particularly favorable, as more frequent changes of temperature usually attend its departure. In this case, the sugar-maker sets forth with lively hopes, and works indefatigably in preparing his troughs, in which labor his only aid is his faithful axe, with which he will scoop out two dozen a day. This done, he selects the fairest trees — hacks them after a peculiar fashion, (opinions conflict on this important point,) and then places a bark conductor, or something better if he can get it, so that no drop of the precious liquid may escape the rough-cut troughs arranged below. A huge "lug-pole," supported on crotches, receives the kettles; which in size and number are the best which can be found, and these are usually each slung by the aid of an ox-chain. With such primitive contrivances many thousands of pounds of maple sugar are made every year. No expensive apparatus, no attempt at refining — if we except a great tub of lime-water in which to rinse every trough and bucket frequently during the whole process of collecting the sap — and this is cared for only by the careful — a small minority.

But I am before my story a little. Sugar-making is undertaken, as before hinted, by every body indiscriminately, who can command a "bush," and this includes many whose disposable means could not compass the purchase of *one* great caldron, much less of half a dozen. This occasions a racing and chasing after kettles; — scouring the

country in all directions to borrow or hire those indispensable articles. I have known them sought at a distance of twenty miles, with a promise of the payment of one half the value of the kettles, in sugar. With a favorite object ahead, we are apt to promise largely, and with the best intentions too; and what an object is it to get plenty of sugar for wife and children, without paying the grocer, — nay, with something to exchange with him for tea for the good woman! If the season be favorable, and the sap run well, and the bush be not too far off, the aid of the wife is not unfrequently called in, to tend fires and do the lighter part of the work. I have seen the pony saddled, and wife and baby mounted on it, and led into the woods, looking like the picture of Joseph and Mary going down into Egypt. What a primitive, pastoral air runs through all the arrangements of this backwoods life! It startles one sometimes to see things that bring back the oldest scenes on record.

The process called "sugaring-off" — rather an abstruse affair — is, I believe, not considered likely to be quite perfect without the aid of female hands, and the making of a sort of candy, pulled from hand to hand scientifically, is to be done by the young folks, of course. This is a frolic, or the excuse for one; and the candy is beautiful and most delicious. It is a part which I confess a weakness for myself; and it is not without sufficient precedent; for many a gay *demoiselle* has

made her fingers sticky with *la tire.* But lest the reader should imagine I have got fast among the sugar-kettles, like a fly in a honey-pot, return we to our lambs — lovers, I mean; only premising that I expect thanks for this digression upon sugar-making, as I take it for granted my reader is among those who are about emigrating to these fruitful wilds.

CHAPTER XLVII.

If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, there ensue
Aught untoward or unfit,
She, in benign affections pure,
Sheds, round the transient harm or vague mischance,
A light unknown to tutored elegance.
WORDSWORTH.

THE season for sugar-making had arrived. The sun was oppressively hot during the greater part of the day, and yet the frost at night was as certain, if not as severe, as in January. The usual anxious race after kettles was in full cry, and all the world had but one object of interest. At this crisis William Beamer gave due notice to Mr. Arden that he should prosecute in case of any attempt to use the contested tract, and Arden on his part made his usual preparations, and proceeded to the boring of the trees, as if his claim had been confirmed by the majesty of the law. I dare say he was wrong; but *our* principal concern in the matter lies with our friend Lewis, who was sent on by his father to maintain possession at all hazards. About five hundred trees were bored, — kettles set, and a shanty built; and here Lewis, with a bed of hemlock branches, was to pass day and night, during the whole sugaring season.

A wrathful man was William Beamer when he was apprized of the cool determination of his opponent. He cursed the slow process of law, — he revolved many a scheme of desperate vengeance, and concluded by declaring that the Ardens should never make a grain of sugar on that land, if he had to burn every tree to eject them.

Miss Duncan, who thought she had made considerable progress in his good graces, and who now began to talk of taking a school in the neighborhood, took care that no whisper of village gossip should escape his ear — no innuendo of want of *spunk*, — no fear that he would "be wronged out of his property after all!" She was one of those spirits of unrest whose atmosphere is a storm, however petty. She made mischief, partly for the love of it, partly because she fancied it increased her consequence with the world in general, partly hoping to gain an interest in the mind of William Beamer, by feeding his angry humor. She felt as if he'd oughter know what folks said! She could not bear to see him imposed upon! Any body so high-sperrited hadn't oughter be cheated out of their own! Amiable creature!

Lewis had been two or three days at the sugar-bush, assisted during the day by several men, but passing his nights alone in the shanty. Brooding over the treatment he had received, where he had garnered up his heart, his reflections were of any but a soothing character; and he had more than

once received William Beamer and his angry remonstrances with an air of reckless defiance which exasperated that worthy to the last degree. On one of these occasions William came home foaming with rage, and declared within hearing of the trembling Candace, whose heart was sore with sad misgivings since she had begun to see through Miss Duncan a little, that he would bear it no longer, but take the law into his own hands, and "settle up with the Ardens, short metre."

"There's no chance at that rascal in the daytime, with three or four stout fellows to back him," said he; "but I'll go this night, after he's left alone, and I'll have it out with him, if it costs me all I'm worth."

"Well! I should think you'd put up with their impidence long enough!" said the amiable Henrietta; "you've had more patience with 'em than *I* should have had, I'm sure! I should have thought you'd have given them their deservin's long ago!"

"I'll do it all up at one job," said William, as he sat peeling a great hickory club in the corner. "The father's too old, or I'd give it to *him;* but the young chap'll do! He's just such another! clear grit, both of 'em! I used to like Lewis Arden, there was something so manly about him; but he's very much altered of late."

Candace seemed to have acquired a new sense of hearing, so acute that every word her uncle uttered fell on her quickened ear like a thrill of pain. Mrs.

Beamer tried to soften her brother-in-law's ire, saying that she knew *her* old man would not let him get himself into trouble if he was at home, which he did not happen to be just then.

"Don't be so wrathy, brother," said she; "them that goes out head foremost is very apt to come home feet foremost. Lewis Arden isn't the boy to let any body walk through him. If you undertake to dress him out, you'll like enough get hatchell'd yourself. Lewis Arden could hug a bear."

"Yes, but I'm an alligator," said William, on whom Mrs. Beamer's eloquence was quite lost. "Call me at nine o'clock, will you, sister?" he continued, as he stretched himself out on two chests at the back of the room, with a bag of corn for a pillow, and the club laid on the floor close at his side.

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing!" said Mrs. Beamer, angrily. "If you're bent upon such unlawful doings, you may wake when you can. I will have nothing to do with it!"

The good woman was aroused to an unusual display of spirit by the warlike preparations of the bachelor; and she bade Candace go to bed, and showed a determination to prevent any of her family from having any concern in the matter.

"Never mind! *I'll* call you!" whispered Miss Duncan; and even as she spoke she took from her "work-pocket" a guard-chain on which she had been working so long that it had acquired quite a

dusky hue, so that even the beads which composed the touching motto

"While this you vew
To me be trew"

had lost their primeval lustre — and seated herself by the candle, with the air of one who has business on hand, thus to await the destined hour.

Candace said not a word during this scene. Her thoughts were in a whirl, and the only distinguishable point was danger to Lewis. All that had estranged her was forgotten; she no longer gave a thought to the offence against herself. Indeed, her disgust at Miss Duncan's manœuvres had already gone far towards neutralizing the malicious efforts of the school-ma'am, and all she now thought of was how to warn Lewis of the meditated attack.

"I'm glad enough," said William Beamer, just before he dropped asleep, "that Candace has given that young scamp the mitten! She never should have touched a cent of mine if she hadn't!"

"That was my doin's, warn't it, Candace?" said Miss Duncan with some exultation; "*I* put you up to that, didn't I?"

But Candace was gone, so Miss Henrietta Duncan went on figuring her guard-chain, and William Beamer, the alligator, snored like a hippopotamus.

All Candace's ingenuity could suggest but one way of putting Lewis upon his guard — to be herself the messenger. The sugar-bush was nearly

two miles off, and the ground was covered with a thawing snow, which made walking peculiarly difficult, but this did not give her a moment's thought. The only hesitation she felt arose from a natural reluctance to present herself before Lewis under such circumstances; but the moments were too precious to allow much deliberation upon this point or any other. She had no doubt Miss Duncan would awaken William very punctually, and the time was already short.

Fortunately for her undertaking, our ceilings are not fashionably high, so that, stepping from her window to a shed just beneath it, she was able to spring to the snowy ground, with very little risk. Then wrapping her cloak closely round her, she sped forward like a true daughter of the forest, and soon found herself in the midst of the newly-cleared tract which lay between her father's and the sugar-bush. The snow lay in huge drifts, with spaces of half-frozen ground between; the night was piercingly cold, and the stars looked as if they were shivering in the pale, chilly sky. The half-burnt trees and stumps stood ghastly and threatening enough around her on every side, and there are few sights more exciting to the unpractised imagination than this; but Candace, who had lived among them from her infancy, saw not the horrid forms which they have often figured to eyes that I know of, but merely simple and very commonplace stumps, not burnt quite as thoroughly

as they should have been. Once indeed she did fancy for a moment that she saw a squaw with her pappoose on her back, but she soon remembered that the red race had been driven far from our borders, and her heart resumed its wonted beating, and she turned all her attention to the devious path, scarcely perceptible on the fading snow.

Ere long even this faint trace disappeared, and the thickly-laced branches through which the way led, scarcely admitted the faint starlight; so that Candace wandered far and wide in blind uncertainty until she caught sight of a light which she knew must proceed from the fires in the sugar-bush. Towards this she now sped with renewed courage, and it was not long before she could hear the welcome sound of the crackling flames.

But the worst difficulty was yet to come, and she leaned against a bending ash to recover her breath and recall her waning courage. A dry branch snapped, and Lewis Arden sprang from the shanty.

"Who goes there?" he shouted.

Candace's quivering lips refused to frame a word.

"Who is it?" cried Lewis again, advancing towards her. "A woman! ha! borrowed feathers!" —and he grasped the cloak rudely and dragged her forward, evidently suspecting some disguise which the uncertain light did not allow him to penetrate.

"Lewis!" said Candace — and the young man fell back as if he had received a blow.

"*You* here, Candace!" he said; "what is the matter? what *can* have happened? are you in trouble?"

"No, no, — but, O Lewis! — my uncle — uncle William" — and Candace could get no further.

"What of your uncle?" said Lewis, with much less eagerness; "has he sent you to persuade me to give up my father's rights? nonsense! why did you come on such a silly errand? There *was* a time — when *you*, Candace, could have wound me round your finger — but that time is past and gone now."

"Lewis," again began Candace, calling up her prouder self, "I only came to give you warning that my uncle is coming here to-night, with such threats — such hard thoughts — such angry words — that I thought — I felt — I was afraid ——"

"Let him come!" said the young man bitterly; "I am past caring for him or any body else. I am sent here to maintain possession of this land, and I shall certainly keep it, and it will be all the worse for any body that shall try to drive me off. While you were true-hearted, Candace, I never would have raised a finger against your uncle or any one belonging to you; but since you have been bought off — or coaxed off — or scared off — no matter which — all men are alike to me — so you had better go home again, and tell your uncle that you have had no success."

No wonder that Candace was angry! no wonder

that she needed no Miss Duncan to urge her to be "spunky"!

"Lewis!" she said, as she prepared to return homeward, "I have been very silly, and I deserve to be punished. If I made myself *cheap* before, I have made myself cheaper now, and I shall take very good care not to do it a third time. Good night!"

The emphasis on the unfortunate word was such that Lewis threw himself in her path, insisting upon an explanation.

"Keep off!" she cried, "let me go!" and so angrily, that Lewis started back.

If ash-trees bore pumpkins weighing two hundred pounds apiece, our young folks might have supposed it a specimen of that kind of fruit which now plumped heavily on the path between them. But pumpkins (even Yankee ones) are mute, and this huge object began at once to utter stranger sounds.

"Oh dear! how sick we are! how bad we *do* feel!" drawled the voice of William Beamer, drawn out into a whine of the most exquisite mockery. And he looked first at one and then at the other, and burst into a laugh that made the woods ring again. "Well! I'd no more idee," he continued, "of catching a pair of turkle-doves to-night, than I had of shootin' a painter! I came along a while ago, and, thinks I, I'll climb up into this here tree, and watch that chap a little, and see that he don't carry

pistols; and by and by who should I see a creepin' along but Miss Candace Beamer, a comin' to visit a young feller in a shanty! Hey, Candace! that'll be a good story to tell, won't it?"

"Oh uncle!" said Candace, crying with vexation and terror, "how *can* you! I only came because — you know mother thought it was very wrong — and I was afraid — afraid you'd get hurt!"

"Oh! poor girl! yes!" and the drawl came again; "you was afraid your poor dear uncle would get hurt! But it forgot to say so at home, to uncle, and it made itself dreadful cheap by comin' here to tell Lewis about hurtin' uncle! But come, come, never mind!" continued he, relenting, "uncle a'n't half so bad as you thought he was — and it's ten to one that Lewis a'n't half so bad as uncle thought he was; — and perhaps now, if all was known, Lewis didn't say any thing naughty about Candace — and then how foolish we should all look, eh!"

Lewis did not lack words, and words do not lack power when one's feelings are thoroughly roused; so that Candace after a while was brought to believe Miss Duncan might have been *misinformed*, to take the mildest view of the case. Uncle William waited with wonderful patience through the explanation, but cut short Lewis's superfluous protestations by tucking Candace under his arm, and trudging home again through the trackless wood.

The next morning, Lewis Arden came to Mr. Beamer's to breakfast.

"Pretty quick upon the trigger!" muttered uncle William; and Miss Duncan stared, to the great hazard of her eye-strings. Mrs. Beamer, however, announced that Candace was not well, and could not come down to breakfast, which Miss Duncan ascribed to *spunk*.

"Well, I couldn't think where Candace was, last night," said the fashionable; "I reckoned she was sick, and had gone to sleep with you." Nobody spoke. Miss Duncan perceived a dawning coolness, but she had too much at stake to afford to notice it. "You all seem to be rather dumbfoundered, this morning," she said.

Just at this moment a wagon stopped at the gate, and one of the boys went out to see who it might be.

"Good day!" shouted a loud hearty voice. "This is Jeems Beamer's, a'n't it?"

The boy said, "Yes."

"Well! is my darter Keery here?" said the voice, and now Miss Duncan could not remark upon other people's looks. The boy said, "No."

"Not here! why, Miss Flyaway said she was!" and thus saying, a stout old farmer walked in, taking off his bowl-crowned wool hat, and smoothing down his hair with a great knotty hand.

"Not here!" he exclaimed again: "why, you're

cracked, I guess! a'n't she a settin' there with your folks, hey? How are you, Keery? How do you stan' it?"

To judge by Miss Duncan's countenance she found it very hard to stand it at all.

The boy laughed. "Why, that's Miss Duncan!" said he.

"Miss Duncan, is it, hey!" said the farmer; "then she must have got married since I heer'd from her last. Her name *was* Kerenhappuch Ann Dunks, when she left hum; and the Reverend Believe Bissell of the town of Bean Creek, in the State o' Maine, gin her that name, or the first part on't, twenty-seven year ago the fust day of last April. You a'n't married, be you, Keery?"

"Nor likely to be," thought William Beamer to himself, but he said nothing.

The damsel, deeply mortified, said, "No."

"What did you change your name for, then, Keery?" said her father. "Wa'n't your old father's name good enough? it is an honest name, and it seems to me you might have waited till you got another of your own. But I s'pose you a'n't to blame for bein' born on the fust of April, and I s'pose too that that's the reason why you're so fond o' readin' these here *nawvels*, as they call 'em. They make the gals greater fools than they need be. But howsomdever, you're wanted to hum now. Your poor old mother's sick, and

wants to see you. I've took the team off the plough, and I've had a real chase after you. Gather yourself together as quick as you can."

Poor Keery needed no urging, but made ready and departed, terribly crestfallen.

"Well now," said William Beamer, rather relieved, "that job's settled up. I'll just fix off another, since there's no knowin' how great a fool a man *may* be." And without any delay he made over to Candace Beamer all his right and title in the contested land; which proved a very satisfactory mode of putting a stop to the legal quarrel between the Ardens and the Beamers, since Lewis found but little difficulty in concluding a negotiation with the new claimant. The sequel showed that William had judged well of probabilities. The tough fibres of his heart had been so much softened by the power of Miss Dunks's charms, that the very next attack found him unequal to any resistance; and he was married to a tidy damsel of the neighborhood, on the very day which gave Candace and her sweet heritage to Lewis Arden.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Wings have we, — and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

WORDSWORTH.

IT can hardly be necessary for me to confess that it is not among our privileges to dip daily in the ever-welling stream of current literature, and so brighten our dusty notions. New books seldom find their way into these shades. It must have required no great penetration to discover that our round is very limited; and for my own part I am rather disposed to boast of this as one of our advantages. We claim to be *deeper* read than our neighbors. We have time to get the very marrow out of one book before we are tempted with another. We do not practise skimming, or finger reading. We begin at the title-page and end at "finis," omitting not a word between; and then begin at "finis" and go back again; and then begin in the middle and read both ways. At least such is my own practice, though I sometimes reverse the mere order of the process, for which I quote no

less authority than that of Dr. Johnson himself. If the "man of one book" is to be shunned as an antagonist, I hope the woman of one or two books may come in for at least a woman's share of the respect due to intense concentration of ideas.

Some two or three years ago, a kind friend of those left behind in the world sent us Lockhart's Life of Scott, then newly out; a particularly delightful book both as to quality and quantity; a literary *pièce de resistance*, — truly a "cut and come again." Upon this reservoir of good things did I fasten with all the eagerness of famine, and before I felt at all satisfied I found I had read it till not a page in the whole seven volumes but was perfectly familiar to me. It is a melancholy book — most melancholy; — Moore's Life of Byron scarcely more so; — but it is so rich, so vivid, so touching; so filled to overflowing with the deep and boundless human sympathies of the world's favorite, that it had for me a fascination perfectly irresistible, and I took it for granted that every body's head and heart were as full of it as my own.

When we took that pleasant peep at the outer life to which reference was made somewhere in these skipping pages, I felt much solicitude to obtain a preparatory hint or two as to costume, knowing how soon one's most respectable gear may be left behind by the fleeting fashions; but I never thought of a similar anxiety as to mental array. What then was my surprise when awa-

kened to the knowledge that in the whirling race of mind — it is no longer a march — *my* book had become one of the antiquated; — that people had forgotten it entirely! Here was a mortification! to find one's only reading — one's mental costume, obsolete! I tried to hide my mistake, but it would not do. I could not, for my life, remember not to refer to my treasury, and to save people the trouble of hunting up my allusions to musty literature I was compelled to become a concordance — a walking commentary upon the Life and Letters of the Author of Waverley. If I should ever venture forth again I mean to get the latest advices and read up for the occasion.

But how I pitied such infatuation, and how I exclaimed against the intellectual dissipation which had allowed a multitude of skimmed books to cast into the shade a treasure so far richer than all their tribe! I only got laughed at for my pains. This was counted among my Rip-Van-Winkle-isms.

But although I deferred habitually to such opinions while I was myself within the influence of the same whirl, I could not but return to my own after some consideration of the matter in the quiet atmosphere of my rustic home. Circumstances have much to do with our estimates of every thing. Here in this little cell, — this den — this nest — this cranny — where a *partie quarrée* who should stand in the corners and make a simultaneous bow would be in danger of knocking their

heads together, — in this secret recess, whose silence and privacy are guarded by double doors, so that no sound profane can ever penetrate its twilight precincts, — here and here only, with none but spiders' eyes to intimidate me, I dare avow that I think the true delight and sweetness of reading lies in the dwelling upon the good and pleasant thoughts of others until we incorporate them with the texture of our own minds.

The thing may be carried to extremes, to be sure. One of our compatriots, being solicited to purchase one of those almanacs put out by the benevolent, the reading matter of which has an especial bearing upon one point of morals to the exclusion of most other subjects, was heard to reply —

"No! I don't like to have *all* my reading of one kind!"

This is further than I should care to extend my notion of the concentration of ideas. But I cannot help thinking that we of the country get more of the true pleasure of reading than those whose attention is distracted by incessant novelty. And as to the *utility* of reading, that must be proportioned to the degree to which we are able to make the thoughts of others our own, so that when we ply the mental distaff we draw forth a newly-colored thread — tinctured with a hue formed we know not how — distinct from that of our own ordinary thoughts, yet not exactly resembling the color of

the thoughts of others; — as red and blue, well combined, form that richer and softer color, purple.

It is by some such tricks of fancy that we of the wilds console ourselves for the want of the many good things which have not yet found their way so far. We exercise our ingenuity in discovering our advantages. We praise peace and security (as well we may, when we read of the bold advance of crime!) and independence and industry. We speak of the pleasure of seeing every thing about us in a state of continual improvement, as contrasted with the downward tendency of the over-wrought world. We please ourselves with the idea that we are preparing materials for the most enlightened civilization, for those who are to succeed us, if not for ourselves. We pity those whose ears are doomed to an incessant roar of carts and omnibuses; who cannot hope for a night's rest unbroken by terrific cries of fire and the sound of melancholy bells.

If people who have been born and bred in the country find it difficult to form an idea of the splendor and importance of the great marts, those who have lived nowhere but in that vortex of excitement can as little appreciate the calm, contemplative quiet of a country life. The contrast can be imagined only by those who have tried both, and to them it is marvellous indeed. It seems like a glimpse of two separate worlds; or, to speak more moderately, the difference may be compared

to that which marks the course of the Niagara; — in one place rapids and cataracts agitating the mighty flood till the air is filled with a brilliant spray, and earth trembles to the deep-voiced roar of waters; and again, after only a single bend in the river, a glassy, waveless expanse, whose onward movement is scarcely perceptible. Over the one may now and then be discerned a glorious rainbow, but the other reflects always the green and peaceful shores, and the bright and steady lamps of heaven. Yet I suppose one must be like the fish, cold-blooded, to prefer the still water.

A comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of city and country life, though in the estimation of some not deserving of even a question, is yet to a certain class of thinking people no uninteresting subject. The lot of the great majority of mankind is determined more by circumstances than by choice; but there are yet a few who deliberate and decide upon this momentous point, feeling within themselves the power to govern circumstances, if not completely, yet to a degree of which more timid spirits know nothing. Providence regulates our condition not so much by the bestowal of fortune as by the gift of a greater or less amount of energy and ability; and daily observation shows that none are so often the mere puppets of circumstance as those who are born to the possession of wealth such as might seem to

promise a command over the world's most enviable positions.

There are some who, though dissatisfied with their condition, and without the materials of ordinary content, yet make no effort towards a better lot; but this is a class scarcely worth considering, in our country at least.

The number of those among us who feel the disadvantages of a wrong position or an overcrowded arena, and who are full of determination to remedy the evil, and only deliberating upon the best mode of accomplishing this, is an immense one — larger probably at the present moment than ever before in the history of our nation. To this fact is to be ascribed the interest with which all works touching upon the condition of this great, growing Western country — this peculiar field for the energetic and the enterprising — have been regarded, for some years past.

It was not without an especial reference to this state of things that these simple and unpretending sketches were undertaken. Their form was scarcely a matter of choice. Politics and statistics are work for wiser heads, and abler hands, and more extensive information. But views of society have been thought to come legitimately within the feminine province, and for this purpose the humblest form has been adopted; — that which ventures only upon a general outline of truth, with a saving veil of acknowledged fiction.

When I began this second attempt to note some of the peculiarities of the Western settler's life, it was my intention to have dwelt rather more upon such portions of our experience as related principally to our own simple selves. But before I had proceeded far I made the discovery that the day had gone by for such plain personal reminiscences as filled the pages of "A New Home." A stranger, feeling as a stranger, equally indifferent to all, writes with a freedom which a friend and neighbor of several years' standing must renounce entirely. It is impossible to describe minutely our own personal experience without giving in some degree the experience of others; and this is a matter requiring careful handling, to say the least. We may say of ourselves what we must not say of others. We may describe our own log-house, but woe betide us if we should make it appear that any body else lived in one! We may tell of our own blunders, but we must beware how we touch upon the blunders of others.

So that upon the whole I thought I should better succeed in my object of giving a fair and truthful picture of our present condition, if I allowed general inferences to be deduced by the reader from such recollections of real life as I might without offence lay before him. That my views are drawn from real life need not be doubted, when it is considered that a very monotonous course of daily cares, such as falls to the lot of

most housekeepers in this region, is not likely to brighten the inventive faculties, or to give wings to the fancy.

If it should be thought that such a state of things as I have pictured is not very enticing to the educated and refined, I can only say that the emigration of a few such persons as the objectors themselves would soon add all that is desirable. Every natural advantage is already ours, and the foundation for the best and most substantial state of society is laid in an unusually orderly and moral population. I wished to be fair. If I had written as a partisan, the addition of a few shades of dashing color would have made a more glowing picture, but it would have been at the expense of truth.

I now take my leave for the present, only remarking that the want of continuity observable in these sketches is to be ascribed, in part at least, to their having been written at long intervals, and under every variety of hinderance.

Leaving to the last what might more properly have been said at first, I entreat the reader not to puzzle himself by endeavoring to draw the line between the true and the imaginary; but to surrender himself to the writer, and go with her in good faith; looking only for such amusement or instruction as may be found in what professes not to be a narrative of facts, but only the PICTURE OF AN IDEA.

END.

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RECOMMENDATIONS.

'French Practical Teacher.—Mons. B. F. Bugard, author of the "French Practical Translator," a work of distinguished merit, has just given to the public 'A complete Grammar of the French Language, on the *progressive principle*: comprising two hundred and forty-four exercises, mostly written in the style of conversation;' to which is added a comprehensive vocabulary of the words of the exercises.

'The plan of the work is ingenious and new. It differs from all grammars hitherto published, especially in the order of the rules and composition of the exercises, in which not any part of speech is employed until its use has been fully stated and illustrated. One of the peculiarities of the work, and one of its excellences too, is, that the *rules* are all numbered, and the *words* of the exercises have over them corresponding numbers, or the numbers of the rules to be referred to for their translation. This arrangement not only affords the student a sure and easy guide, but it obviates the necessity of directly committing the rules to memory; and thus relieves him from a burden of no inconsiderable magnitude, the dread of encountering which has discouraged thousands from attempting the acquisition of this elegant and fashionable language. In his progress through the exercises, he is so frequently under the necessity of referring to the rules, that he necessarily and *practically* learns and retains them, without extra or unpleasant effort. To attain this object, the author was obliged to adopt a new classification of certain words, such as *mon, ma, mes, ton*, &c. which in most grammars are called adjective pronouns, but which he has classed among the articles. We have not room to state the reasons which are urged in justification of this change. To our own mind they are entirely satisfactory, and we believe will be generally so received. It has been adopted by the author after great deliberation, and as the result of eight years' experience in teaching the language.'

"We confidently commend the work to the attention of teachers and students. The adoption of it would be of mutual advantage, as both would be relieved of much unnecessary and vexatious labor. The community, and especially that part of it who are engaged in the teaching or study of the language, are much indebted to Mons. BUGARD, not only for the present excellent work, but for his '*Practical Translator*,' indisputably the best work of its character ever presented to the American public." *Bunker-Hill Aurora, and Boston Mirror, Oct.* 1838.

FRENCH PRACTICAL TEACHER.—The North American Review for October, 1838, speaks of this work in high terms of recommendation. It will probably soon become the class-book in all our seminaries where the French Language is taught. The Review says:

"We recommend this book to the attention of all teachers and students of the French Language. It is the best of its kind that has ever fallen in our way; and we should think it impossible for any one of tolerable capacity to go through it faithfully, without a very competent knowledge of French. The student is taken through a series of rules and exercises, in which no part of speech is employed, until its use has been fully stated and illustrated. The Rules are numbered, and there are abundant references to them by figures in the Exercises. At the end of the book is a Vocabulary of all the words used in the Exercises, so that no other Dictionary is wanted in writing them. The whole plan is carried through with great care and fidelity. *Fabricando fit faber* is the author's motto; and he has produced a work calculated, we think, to facilitate, in no ordinary degree, the student's labour in acquiring the French Language." *North Amer. Rev.*

"BUGARD'S FRENCH TEACHER.—Munroe & Francis, of Boston, have just published a work, entitled, 'The French Practical Teacher.' There are a number of good French Grammars extant—indeed good books on almost every study abound among us—but after having carefully examined this work of Mr. Bugard, we are strongly impressed in its favor—it appearing to us decidedly superior to any French Grammar we have seen. The plan of it is in a great degree original—and we are induced to believe, that it will take the place of other Grammars of the French language. With this work, and Mr. Bugard's Practical Translator, a person may easily master the French language without any other assistant."—*Mercantile Journal, Oct.* 17, 1838.

From Professor ELTON, *Providence, R. I.*

DEAR SIR, Brown University, Nov. 8th, 1838.

I have examined with much pleasure your "FRENCH PRACTICAL TEACHER," and consider it as decidedly superior to the French Grammars generally used. It is executed throughout with judgment and ability; the arrangement is lucid and philosophical, the rules are developed with perspicuity, and the exercises are highly appropriate and admirably adapted to the practical purposes of instruction. I trust the work will meet with a favorable reception from the public.

Very respectfully, yours, ROMEO ELTON.

Mons. B. F. Bugard.

P. S. I wished to examine your Grammar fully before I gave a recommendation, or I should have written you earlier. R. E.

May 13th, 1835.

Dear Sir,

I have examined with much pleasure the sheets of the French Practical Translator, which you were kind enough to send me. As far as I am able to judge, I should think it would be found a very useful auxiliary to the French instructer. I concur fully in the opinion of the work, expressed by Mr. T. B. Hayward.

Very respectfully, your obdt. servant, F. P. LEVERETT.

Mons. B. F. Bugard.

Mons. B. F. Bugard,

Sir—It gives me much pleasure to express the high opinion I entertain of the "New French Practical Translator," as an introduction to the study of the French language. The plan of it is very judicious. While those difficulties are removed which perplex and discourage young learners, it demands sufficient exercise of the pupil's own powers to keep alive the interest arising from the consciousness of successful effort.

Very respectfully, yours, JOS. HALE ABBOT.

Mount Vernon Street, Oct. 20, 1835.

My Dear Sir, School for Moral Discipline, Oct. 28th, 1835.

I should be happy if I could from my own knowledge give you a recommendation of your book, the Practical Translator. But, from my own little knowledge and from the most thorough information I can obtain, I am satisfied that we have no so valuable book of its kind for the study of the French language, and have therefore introduced it into my school.

I am, dear sir, very respectfully, your friend, E. M. P. WELLS.

Mons. B. F. Bugard.

Dear Sir, Jamaica Plain, Nov. 21st, 1835.

I have examined with much pleasure the new French Practical Translator, which you were so kind as to send me. I consider it a very valuable book for beginners, as it removes many difficulties, which have heretofore embarrassed them. I shall immediately introduce it into my school.

Very respectfully yours, STEPHEN M. WELD.

Mons. B. F. Bugard.

Salem Classical School.

Mons. B. F. Bugard, Salem, Dec. 5th, 1835.

Dear Sir,—It gives me great pleasure to add my testimonial in favour of your "New Practical Translator," to the many you have already received. I have used the work with a great many pupils in this institution, and find it a very excellent and interesting manual. It is of great service in removing the difficulties which beginners encounter at the commencement of their French Studies. I wish you much success in introducing it into our Schools and Academies.

Truly yr. friend, H. K. OLIVER.