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NOBODY

BY

SUSAN WARNER

AUTHOR OF "THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD" "QUEECHY" ETC. ETC.

"Let me see; What think you of falling in love?"

—*As You Like It*

LONDON

JAMES NISBET & C° LIMITED

31 BERNERS STREET

NOTICE TO READER.

The following is again a true story of real life. For character and colouring, no doubt, I am responsible; but the facts are facts.

MARTLAER'S ROCK,

Aug. 9, 1882.

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NOBODY.

CHAPTER I.

WHO IS SHE?

"Tom, who was that girl you were so taken with last night?"

"Wasn't particularly taken last night with anybody."

Which practical falsehood the gentleman escaped from by a mental reservation, saying to himself that it was not *last night* that he was "taken."

"I mean the girl you had so much to do with. Come, Tom!"

"I hadn't much to do with her. I had to be civil to somebody. She was the easiest."

"Who is she, Tom?"

"Her name is Lothrop."

"O you tedious boy! I know what her name is, for I was introduced to her, and Mrs. Wishart spoke so I could not help but understand her; but I mean something else, and you know I do. Who is she? And where does she come from?"

"She is a cousin of Mrs. Wishart; and she comes from the country somewhere."

"One can see *that*."

"How can you?" the brother asked rather fiercely.

"You see it as well as I do," the sister returned coolly. "Her dress shows it."

"I didn't notice anything about her dress."

"You are a man."

"Well, you women dress for the men. If you only knew a thing or two, you would dress differently."

"That will do! You would not take me anywhere, if I dressed like Miss Lothrop."

"I'll tell you what," said the young man, stopping short in his walk up and down the floor;—"she can afford to do without your advantages!"

"Mamma!" appealed the sister now to a third member of the party,—"do you hear? Tom has lost his head."

The lady addressed sat busy with newspapers, at a table a little withdrawn from the fire; a lady in fresh middle age, and comely to look at. The daughter, not comely, but sensible-looking, sat in the glow of the fireshine, doing nothing. Both were extremely well dressed, if "well" means in the fashion and in rich stuffs, and with no sparing of money or care. The elder woman looked up from her studies now for a moment, with the remark, that she did not care about Tom's head, if he would keep his heart.

"But that is just precisely what he will not do, mamma. Tom can't keep anything, his heart least of all. And this girl mamma, I tell you he is in danger. Tom, how many times have you been to see her?"

"I don't go to see *her;* I go to see Mrs. Wishart."

"Oh!—and you see Miss Lothrop by accident! Well, how many times, Tom?
Three—four—five."

"Don't be ridiculous!" the brother struck in. "Of course a fellow goes where he can amuse himself and have the best time; and Mrs. Wishart keeps a pleasant house."

"Especially lately. Well, Tom, take care! it won't do. I warn you."

"What won't do?"—angrily.

"This girl; not for *our* family. Not for you, Tom. She hasn't anything,—and she isn't anybody; and it will not do for you to marry in that way. If your fortune was ready made to your hand, or if you were established in your profession and at the top of it,—why, perhaps you might be justified in pleasing yourself; but as it is, *don't*, Tom! Be a good boy, and *don't!*"

"My dear, he will not," said the elder lady here. "Tom is wiser than you give him credit for."

"I don't give any man credit for being wise, mamma, when a pretty face is in question. And this girl has a pretty face; she is very pretty. But she has no style; she' is as poor as a mouse; she knows nothing of the world; and to crown all, Tom, she's one of the religious sort.—Think of that! One of the real religious sort, you know. Think how that would fit."

"What sort are you?" asked her brother.

"Not that sort, Tom, and you aren't either."

"How do you know she is?"

"Very easy," said the girl coolly. "She told me herself."

"She told you!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"O, simply enough. I was confessing that Sunday is such a fearfully long day to me, and I did not know what to do with it; and she looked at me as if I were a poor heathen—which I suppose she thought me—and said, 'But there is always the Bible!' Fancy!—'always the Bible.' So I knew in a moment where to place her."

"I don't think religion hurts a woman," said the young man.

"But you do not want her to have too much of it—" the mother remarked, without looking up from her paper.

"I don't know what you mean by too much, mother. I'd as lief she found
Sunday short as long. By her own showing, Julia has the worst of it."

"Mamma! speak to him," urged the girl.

"No need, my dear, I think. Tom isn't a fool."

"Any man is, when he is in love, mamma."

Tom came and stood by the mantelpiece, confronting them. He was a remarkably handsome young man; tall, well formed, very well dressed, hair and moustaches carefully trimmed, and features of regular though manly beauty, with an expression of genial kindness and courtesy.

"I am not in love," he said, half laughing. "But I will tell you,—I never saw a nicer girl than Lois Lothrop. And I think all that you say about her being poor, and all that, is just—bosh."

The newspapers went down.

"My dear boy, Julia is right. I should be very sorry to see you hurt your career and injure your chances by choosing a girl who would give you no sort of help. And you would regret it yourself, when it was too late. You would be certain to regret it. You could not help but regret it."

"I am not going to do it. But why should I regret it?"

"You know why, as well as I do. Such a girl would not be a good wife for you. She would be a millstone round your neck."

Perhaps Mr. Tom thought she would be a pleasant millstone in those circumstances; but he only remarked that he believed the lady in question would be a good wife for whoever could get her.

"Well, not for you. You can have anybody you want to, Tom; and you may just as well have money and family as well as beauty. It is a very bad thing for a girl not to have family. That deprives her husband of a great advantage; and besides, saddles upon him often most undesirable burdens in the shape of brothers and sisters, and nephews perhaps. What is this girl's family, do you know?"

"Respectable," said Tom, "or she would not be a cousin of Mrs. Wishart.
And that makes her a cousin of Edward's wife."

"My dear, everybody has cousins; and people are not responsible for them. She is a poor relation, whom Mrs. Wishart has here for the purpose of befriending her; she'll marry her off if she can; and you would do as well as another. Indeed you would do splendidly; but the advantage would be all on their side; and that is what I do not wish for you."

Tom was silent. His sister remarked that Mrs. Wishart really was not a match-maker.

"No more than everybody is; it is no harm; of course she would like to see this little girl well married. Is she educated? Accomplished?"

"Tom can tell," said the daughter. "I never saw her do anything. What can she do, Tom?"

"*Do?*" said Tom, flaring up. "What do you mean?"

"Can she play?"

"No, and I am glad she can't. If ever there was a bore, it is the performances of you young ladies on the piano. It's just to show what you can do. Who cares, except the music master?"

"Does she sing?"

"I don't know!"

"Can she speak French?"

"French!" cried Tom. "Who wants her to speak French? We talk English in this country."

"But, my dear boy, we often have to use French or some other language, there are so many foreigners that one meets in society. And a lady *must* know French at least. Does she know anything?"

"I don't know," said Tom. "I have no doubt she does. I haven't tried her. How much, do you suppose, do girls in general know? girls with ever so much money and family? And who cares how much they know? One does not seek a lady's society for the purpose of being instructed."

"One might, and get no harm," said the sister softly; but Tom flung out of the room. "Mamma, it is serious."

"Do you think so?" asked the elder lady, now thrusting aside all her papers.

"I am sure of it. And if we do not do something—we shall all be sorry for it."

"What is this girl, Julia? Is she pretty?"

Julia hesitated. "Yes," she said. "I suppose the men would call her so."

"You don't?"

"Well, yes, mamma; she is pretty, handsome, in a way; though she has not the least bit of style; not the least bit! She is rather peculiar; and I suppose with the men that is one of her attractions."

"Peculiar how?" said the mother, looking anxious.

"I cannot tell; it is indefinable. And yet it is very marked. Just that want of style makes her peculiar."

"Awkward?"

"No."

"Not awkward. How then? Shy?"

"No."

"How then, Julia? What is she like?"

"It is hard to tell in words what people are like. She is plainly dressed, but not badly; Mrs. Wishart would see to that; so it isn't exactly her dress that makes her want of style. She has a very good figure; uncommonly good. Then she has most beautiful hair, mamma; a full head of bright brown hair, that would be auburn if it were a shade or two darker; and it is somewhat wavy and curly, and heaps itself around her head in a way that is like a picture. She don't dress it in the fashion; I don't believe there is a hairpin in it, and I am sure there isn't a cushion, or anything; only this bright brown hair puffing and waving and curling itself together in some inexplicable way, that would be very pretty if it were not so altogether out of the way that everybody else wears. Then there *is* a sweet, pretty face under it; but you can see at the first look that she was never born or brought up in New York or any other city, and knows just nothing about the world."

"Dangerous!" said the mother, knitting her brows.

"Yes; for just that sort of thing is taking to the men; and they don't look any further. And Tom above all. I tell you, he is smitten, mamma. And he goes to Mrs. Wishart's with a regularity which is appalling."

"Tom takes things hard, too," said the mother.

"Foolish boy!" was the sister's comment.

"What can be done?"

"I'll tell you, mamma. I've been thinking. Your health will never stand the March winds in New York. You must go somewhere."

"Where?"

"Florida, for instance?"

"I should like it very well."

"It would be better anyhow than to let Tom get hopelessly entangled."

"Anything would be better than that."

"And prevention is better than cure. You can't apply a cure, besides. When a man like Tom, or any man, once gets a thing of this sort in his head, it is hopeless. He'll go through thick and thin, and take time to repent afterwards. Men are so stupid!"

"Women sometimes."

"Not I, mamma; if you mean me. I hope for the credit of your discernment you don't."

"Lent will begin soon," observed the elder lady presently.

"Lent will not make any difference with Tom," returned the daughter.
"And little parties are more dangerous than big ones."

"What shall I do about the party we were going to give? I should be obliged to ask Mrs. Wishart."

"I'll tell you, mamma," Julia said after a little thinking. "Let it be a luncheon party; and get Tom to go down into the country that day. And then go off to Florida, both of you."

CHAPTER II.

AT BREAKFAST.

"How do you like New York, Lois? You have been here long enough to judge of us now?"

"Have I?"

Mrs. Wishart and her guest being at breakfast, this question and answer go over the table. It is not exactly in New York, however. That is, it is within the city bounds, but not yet among the city buildings. Some little distance out of town, with green fields about it, and trees, and lawn sloping down to the river bank, and a view of the Jersey shore on the other side. The breakfast room windows look out over this view, upon which the winter sun is shining; and green fields stand in beautiful illumination, with patches of snow lying here and there. Snow is not on the lawn, however. Mrs. Wishart's is a handsome old house, not according to the latest fashion, either in itself or its fitting up; both are of a simpler style than anybody of any pretension would choose now-a-days; but Mrs. Wishart has no need to make any pretension; her standing and her title to it are too well known. Moreover, there are certain quain't witnesses to it all over, wherever you look. None but one of such secured position would have such an old carpet on her floor; and few but those of like antecedents could show such rare old silver on the board. The shawl that wraps the lady is Indian, and not worn for show; there are portraits on the walls that go back to a respectable English ancestry; there is precious old furniture about, that money could not buy; old and quain't and rich, and yet not striking the eye; and the lady is served in the most observant style by one of those ancient house servants whose dignity is inseparably connected with the dignity of the house and springs from it. No new comer to wealth and place can be served so. The whole air of everything in the room is easy, refined, leisurely, assured, and comfortable. The coffee is capital; and the meal, simple enough, is very delicate in its arrangement.

Only the two ladies are at the table; one behind the coffee urn, and the other near her. The mistress of the house has a sensible, agreeable face, and well-bred manner; the other lady is the one who has been so jealously discussed and described in another family. As Miss Julia described her, there she sits, in a morning dress which lends her figure no attraction whatever. And—her figure can do without it. As the question is asked her about New York, her eye goes over to the glittering western shore.

"I like this a great deal better than the city," she added to her former words.

"O, of course, the brick and stone!" answered her hostess. "I did not mean *that*. I mean, how do you like *us?*"

"Mrs. Wishart, I like *you* very much," said the girl with a certain sweet spirit.

"Thank you! but I did not mean that either. Do you like no one but me?"

"I do not know anybody else."

"You have seen plenty of people."

"I do not know them, though. Not a bit. One thing I do not like. People talk so on the surface of things."

"Do you want them to go deep in an evening party?"

"It is not only in evening parties. If you want me to say what I think, Mrs. Wishart. It is the same always, if people come for morning calls, or if we go to them, or if we see them in the evening; people talk about nothing; nothing they care about."

"Nothing *you* care about."

"They do not seem to care about it either."

"Why do you suppose they talk it then?" Mrs. Wishart asked, amused.

"It seems to be a form they must go through," Lois said, laughing a little. "Perhaps they enjoy it, but they do not seem as if they did. And they laugh so incessantly,—some of them,—at what has no fun in it. That seems to be a form too; but laughing for form's sake seems to me hard work."

"My dear, do you want people to be always serious?"

"How do you mean, 'serious'?"

"Do you want them to be always going 'deep' into things?"

"N-o, perhaps not; but I would like them to be always in earnest."

"My dear! What a fearful state of society you would bring about!
Imagine for a moment that everybody was always in earnest!"

"Why not? I mean, not always *sober;* did you think I meant that? I mean, whether they laugh or talk, doing it heartily, and feeling and thinking as they speak. Or rather, speaking and laughing only as they feel."

"My dear, do you know what would become of society?"

"No. What?"

"I go to see Mrs. Brinkerhoff, for instance. I have something on my mind, and I do not feel like discussing any light matter, so I sit silent. Mrs. Brinkerhoff has a fearfully hard piece of work to keep the conversation going; and when I have departed she votes me a great bore, and hopes I will never come again. When she returns my visit, the conditions are reversed; I vote *her* a bore; and we conclude it is easier to do without each other's company."

"But do you never find people a bore as it is?"

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Do you?"

"Sometimes. At least I should if I lived among them. *Now*, all is new, and I am curious."

"I can tell you one thing, Lois; nobody votes you a bore."

"But I never talk as they do."

"Never mind. There are exceptions to all rules. But, my dear, even you must not be always so desperately in earnest. By the way! That handsome young Mr. Caruthers—does he make himself a bore too? You have seen a good deal of him."

"No," said Lois with some deliberation. "He is pleasant, what I have seen of him."

"And, as I remarked, that is a good deal. Isn't he a handsome fellow? I think Tom Caruthers is a good fellow, too. And he is likely to be a successful fellow. He is starting well in life, and he has connections that will help him on. It is a good family; and they have money enough."

"How do you mean, 'a good family'?"

"Why, you know what that phrase expresses, don't you?"

"I am not sure that I do, in your sense. You do not mean religious?"

"No," said Mrs. Wishart, smiling; "not necessarily. Religion has nothing to do with it. I mean—we mean— It is astonishing how hard it is to put some things! I mean, a family that has had a good social standing for generations. Of course such a family is connected with other good families, and it is consequently strong, and has advantages for all belonging to it."

"I mean," said Lois slowly, "a family that has served God for generations. Such a family has connections too, and advantages."

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart, opening her eyes a little at the girl, "the two things are not inconsistent, I hope."

"I hope not."

"Wealth and position are good things at any rate, are they not?"

"So far as they go, I suppose so," said Lois. "O yes, they are pleasant things; and good things, if they are used right."

"They are whether or no. Come! I can't have you holding any extravagant ideas, Lois. They don't do in the world. They make one peculiar, and it is not good taste to be peculiar."

"You know, I am not in the world," Lois answered quietly.

"Not when you are at home, I grant you; but here, in my house, you are; and when you have a house of your own, it is likely you will be. No more coffee, my dear? Then let us go to the order of the day. What is this, Williams?"

"For Miss Lot'rop," the obsequious servant replied with a bow,—"de bo-quet." But he presented to his mistress a little note on his salver, and then handed to Lois a magnificent bunch of hothouse flowers. Mrs. Wishart's eyes followed the bouquet, and she even rose up to examine it.

"That is beautiful, my dear. What camellias! And what geraniums! That is the Black Prince, one of those, I am certain; yes, I am sure it is; and that is one of the new rare varieties. That has not come from any florist's greenhouse. Never. And that rose-coloured geranium is Lady Sutherland. Who sent the flowers, Williams?"

"Here is his card, Mrs. Wishart," said Lois. "Mr. Caruthers."

"Tom Caruthers!" echoed Mrs. Wishart. "He has cut them in his mother's greenhouse, the sinner!"

"Why?" said Lois. "Would that be not right?"

"It would be right, *if*—. Here's a note from Tom's mother, Lois—but not about the flowers. It is to ask us to a luncheon party. Shall we go?"

"You know, dear Mrs. Wishart, I go just where you choose to take me," said the girl, on whose cheeks an exquisite rose tint rivalled the Lady Sutherland geranium blossoms. Mrs. Wishart noticed it, and eyed the girl as she was engrossed with her flowers, examining, smelling, and smiling at them. It was pleasure that raised that delicious bloom in her cheeks, she decided; was it anything more than pleasure? What a fair creature! thought her hostess; and yet, fair as she is, what possible chance for her in a good family? A young man may be taken with beauty, but not his relations; and they would object to a girl who is nobody and has nothing. Well, there is a chance for her, and she shall have the chance.

"Lois, what will you wear to this luncheon party?"

"You know all my dresses, Mrs. Wishart. I suppose my black silk would be right."

"No, it would not be right at all. You are too young to wear black silk to a luncheon party. And your white dress is not the thing either."

"I have nothing else that would do. You must let me be old, in a black silk."

"I will not let you be anything of the kind. I will get you a dress."

"No, Mrs. Wishart; I cannot pay for it."

"I will pay for it."

"I cannot let you do that. You have done enough for me already. Mrs. Wishart, it is no matter. People will just think I cannot afford anything better, and that is the very truth."

"No, Lois; they will think you do not know any better."

"That is the truth too," said Lois, laughing.

"No it isn't; and if it is, I do not choose they should think so. I shall dress you for this once, my dear; and I shall not ruin myself either."

Mrs. Wishart had her way; and so it came to pass that Lois went to the luncheon party in a dress of bright green silk; and how lovely she looked in it is impossible to describe. The colour, which would have been ruinous to another person, simply set off her delicate complexion and bright brown hair in the most charming manner; while at the same time the green was not so brilliant as to make an obvious patch of colour wherever its wearer might be. Mrs. Wishart was a great enemy of startling effects, in any kind; and the hue was deep and rich and decided, without being flashy.

"You never looked so well in anything," was Mrs. Wishart's comment. "I have hit just the right thing. My dear, I would put one of those white camellias in your hair—that will relieve the eye."

"From what?" Lois asked, laughing.

"Never mind; you do as I tell you."

CHAPTER III.

A LUNCHEON PARTY.

Luncheon parties were not then precisely what they are now; nevertheless the entertainment was extremely handsome. Lois and her friend had first a long drive from their home in the country to a house in one of the older parts of the city. Old the house also was; but it was after a roomy and luxurious fashion, if somewhat antiquated; and the air of ancient respectability, even of ancient distinction, was stamped upon it, as upon the family that inhabited it. Mrs. Wishart and Lois were received with warm cordiality by Miss Caruthers; but the former did not fail to observe a shadow that crossed Mrs. Caruthers' face when Lois was presented to her. Lois did not see it, and would not have known how to interpret it if she had seen it. She is safe, thought Mrs. Wishart, as she noticed the calm unembarrassed air with which Lois sat down to talk with the younger of her hostesses.

"You are making a long stay with Mrs. Wishart," was the unpromising opening remark.

"Mrs. Wishart keeps me."

"Do you often come to visit her?"

"I was never here before."

"Then this is your first acquain'tance with New York?"

"Yes."

"How does it strike you? One loves to get at new impressions of what one has known all one's life. Nothing strikes us here, I suppose. Do tell me what strikes you."

"I might say, everything."

"How delightful! Nothing strikes me. I have seen it all five hundred times. Nothing is new."

"But people are new," said Lois. "I mean they are different from one another. There is continual variety there."

"To me there seems continual sameness!" said the other, with a half shutting up of her eyes, as of one dazed with monotony. "They are all alike. I know beforehand exactly what every one will say to me, and how every one will behave."

"That is not how it is at home," returned Lois. "It is different there."

"People are *not* all alike?"

"No indeed. Perfectly unlike, and individual."

"How agreeable! So that is one of the things that strike you here? the contrast?"

"No," said Lois, laughing; "*I* find here the same variety that I find at home. People are not alike to me."

"But different, I suppose, from the varieties you are accustomed to at home?"

Lois admitted that.

"Well, now tell me how. I have never travelled in New England; I have travelled everywhere else. Tell me, won't you, how those whom you see here differ from the people you see at home."

"In the same sort of way that a sea-gull differs from a land sparrow,"

Lois answered demurely.

"I don't understand. Are we like the sparrows, or like the gulls?"

"I do not know that. I mean merely that the different sorts are fitted to different spheres and ways of life."

Miss Caruthers looked a little curiously at the girl. "I know *this* sphere," she said. "I want you to tell me yours."

"It is free space instead of narrow streets, and clear air instead of smoke. And the people all have something to do, and are doing it."

"And you think *we* are doing nothing?" asked Miss Caruthers, laughing.

"Perhaps I am mistaken. It seems to me so."

"O, you are mistaken. We work hard. And yet, since I went to school, I never had anything that I *must* do, in my life."

"That can be only because you did not know what it was."

"I had nothing that I must do."

"But nobody is put in this world without some thing to do," said Lois. "Do you think a good watchmaker would carefully make and finish a very costly pin or wheel, and put it in the works of his watch to do nothing?"

Miss Caruthers stared now at the girl. Had this soft, innocent-looking maiden absolutely dared to read a lesson to her?—"You are religious!" she remarked dryly.

Lois neither affirmed nor denied it. Her eye roved over the gathering throng; the rustle of silks, the shimmer of lustrous satin, the falls of lace, the drapery of one or two magnificent camels'-hair shawls, the carefully dressed heads, the carefully gloved hands; for the ladies did not keep on their bonnets then; and the soft murmur of voices, which, however, did not remain soft. It waxed and grew, rising and falling, until the room was filled with a breaking sea of sound. Miss Caruthers had been called off to attend to other guests, and then came to conduct Lois herself to the dining-room.

The party was large, the table was long; and it was a mass of glitter and glisten with plate and glass. A superb old-fashioned épergne in the middle, great dishes of flowers sending their perfumed breath through the room, and bearing their delicate exotic witness to the luxury that reigned in the house. And not they alone. Before each guest's plate a semicircular wreath of flowers stood, seemingly upon the tablecloth; but Lois made the discovery that the stems were safe in water in crescent-shaped glass dishes, like little troughs, which the flowers completely covered up and hid. Her own special wreath was of heliotropes. Miss Caruthers had placed her next herself.

There were no gentlemen present, nor expected, Lois observed. It was simply a company of ladies, met apparently for the purpose of eating; for that business went on for some time with a degree of satisfaction, and a supply of means to afford satisfaction, which Lois had never seen equalled. From one delicate and delicious thing to another she was required to go, until she came to a stop; but that was the case, she observed, with no one else of the party.

"You do not drink wine?" asked Miss Caruthers civilly.

"No, thank you."

"Have you scruples?" said the young lady, with a half smile.

Lois assented.

"Why? what's the harm?"

"We all have scruples at Shampuashuh."

"About drinking wine?"

"Or cider, or beer, or anything of the sort."

"Do tell me why."

"It does so much mischief."

"Among low people," said Miss Caruthers, opening her eyes; "but not among respectable people."

"We are willing to hinder mischief anywhere," said Lois with a smile of some fun.

"But what good does *your* not drinking it do? That will not hinder them."

"It does hinder them, though," said Lois; "for we will not have liquor shops. And so, we have no crime in the town. We could leave our doors unlocked, with perfect safety, if it were not for the people that come wandering through from the next towns, where liquor is sold. We have no crime, and no poverty; or next to none."

"Bless me! what an agreeable state of things! But that need not hinder your taking a glass of champagne *here?* Everybody here has no scruple, and there are liquor shops at every corner; there is no use in setting an example."

But Lois declined the wine.

"A cup of coffee then?"

Lois accepted the coffee.

"I think you know my brother?" observed Miss Caruthers then, making her observations as she spoke.

"Mr. Caruthers? yes; I believe he is your brother."

"I have heard him speak of you. He has seen you at Mrs. Wishart's, I think."

"At Mrs. Wishart's—yes."

Lois spoke naturally, yet Miss Caruthers fancied she could discern a certain check to the flow of her words.

"You could not be in a better place for seeing what New York is like, for everybody goes to Mrs. Wishart's; that is, everybody who is anybody."

This did not seem to Lois to require any answer. Her eye went over the long tableful; went from face to face. Everybody was talking, nearly everybody was smiling. Why not? If enjoyment would make them smile, where could more means of enjoyment be heaped up, than at this feast? Yet Lois could not help thinking that the tokens of real pleasure-taking were not unequivocal. *She* was having a very good time; full of amusement; to the others it was an old story. Of what use, then?

Miss Caruthers had been engaged in a lively battle of words with some of her young companions; and now her attention came back to Lois, whose meditative, amused expression struck her.

"I am sure," she said, "you are philosophizing! Let me have the results of your observations, do! What do your eyes see, that mine perhaps do not?"

"I cannot tell," said Lois. "Yours ought to know it all."

"But you know, we do not see what we have always seen."

"Then I have an advantage," said Lois pleasantly. "My eyes see something very pretty."

"But you were criticizing something.—O you unlucky boy!"

This exclamation, and the change of tone with it, seemed to be called forth by the entrance of a new comer, even Tom Caruthers himself. Tom was not in company trim exactly, but with his gloves in his hand and his overcoat evidently just pulled off. He was surveying the company with a contented expression; then came forward and began a series of greetings round the table; not hurrying them, but pausing here and there for a little talk.

"Tom!" cried his mother, "is that you?"

"To command. Yes, Mrs. Badger, I am just off the cars. I did not know what I should find here."

"How did you get back so soon, Tom?"

"Had nothing to keep me longer, ma'am. Miss Farrel, I have the honour to remind you of a *phillipoena*."

There was a shout of laughter. It bewildered Lois, who could not understand what they were laughing

about, and could as little keep her attention from following Tom's progress round the table. Miss Caruthers observed this, and was annoyed.

"Careless boy!" she said. "I don't believe he has done the half of what he had to do, Tom, what brought you home?"

Tom was by this time approaching them.

"Is the question to be understood in a physical or moral sense?" said he.

"As you understand it!" said his sister.

Tom disregarded the question, and paid his respects to Miss Lothrop. Julia's jealous eyes saw more than the ordinary gay civility in his face and manner.

"Tom," she cried, "have you done everything? I don't believe you have."

"Have, though," said Tom. And he offered to Lois a basket of bon-bons.

"Did you see the carpenter?"

"Saw him and gave him his orders."

"Were the dogs well?"

"I wish you had seen them bid me good morning!"

"Did you look at the mare's foot?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with it?"

"Nothing—a nail—Miss Lothrop, you have no wine."

"Nothing! and a nail!" cried Miss Julia as Lois covered her glass with her hand and forbade the wine. "As if a nail were not enough to ruin a horse! O you careless boy! Miss Lothrop is more of a philosopher than you are. She drinks no wine."

Tom passed on, speaking to other ladies. Lois had scarcely spoken at all; but Miss Caruthers thought she could discern a little stir in the soft colour of the cheeks and a little additional life in the grave soft eyes; and she wished Tom heartily at a distance.

At a distance, however, he was no more that day. He made himself gracefully busy indeed with the rest of his mother's guests; but after they quitted the table, he contrived to be at Lois's side, and asked if she would not like to see the greenhouse? It was a welcome proposition, and while nobody at the moment paid any attention to the two young people, they passed out by a glass door at the other end of the dining-room into the conservatory, while the stream of guests went the other way. Then Lois was plunged in a wilderness of green leafage and brilliant bloom, warm atmosphere and mixed perfume; her first breath was an involuntary exclamation of delight and relief.

"Ah! you like this better than the other room, don't you?" said Tom.

Lois did not answer; however, she went with such an absorbed expression from one plant to another, that Tom must needs conclude she liked this better than the other company too.

"I never saw such a beautiful greenhouse," she said at last, "nor so large a one."

"*This* is not much," replied Tom. "Most of our plants are in the country—where I have come from to-day; this is just a city affair. Shampuashuh don't cultivate exotics, then?"

"O no! Nor anything much, except the needful."

"That sounds rather—tiresome," said Tom.

"O, it is not tiresome. One does not get tired of the needful, you know."

"Don't you! *I* do," said Tom. "Awfully. But what do you do for pleasure then, up there in Shampuashuh?"

"Pleasure? O, we have it—I have it— But we do not spend much time in the search of it. O how beautiful! what is that?"

"It's got some long name—Metrosideros, I believe. What *do* you do for pleasure up there then, Miss Lothrop?"

"Dig clams."

"Clams!" cried Tom.

"Yes. Long clams. It's great fun. But I find pleasure all over."

"How come you to be such a philosopher?"

"That is not philosophy."

"What is it? I can tell you, there isn't a girl in New York that would say what you have just said."

Lois thought the faces around the lunch table had quite harmonized with this statement. She forgot them again in a most luxuriant trailing Pelargonium covered with large white blossoms of great elegance.

"But it is philosophy that makes you not drink wine? Or don't you like it?"

"O no," said Lois, "it is not philosophy; it is humanity."

"How? I think it is humanity to share in people's social pleasures."

"If they were harmless."

"This is harmless!"

Lois shook her head. "To you, maybe."

"And to you. Then why shouldn't we take it?"

"For the sake of others, to whom it is not harmless."

"They must look out for themselves."

"Yes, and we must help them."

"We *can't* help them. If a man hasn't strength enough to stand, you cannot hold him up."

"O yes," said Lois gently, "you can and you must. That is not much to do! When on one side it is life, and on the other side it is only a minute's taste of something sweet, it is very little, I think, to give up one for the other."

"That is because you are so good," said Tom. "I am not so good."

At this instant a voice was heard within, and sounds of the servants removing the lunch dishes.

"I never heard anybody in my life talk as you do," Tom went on.

Lois thought she had talked enough, and would say no more. Tom saw she would not, and gave her glance after glance of admiration, which began to grow into veneration. What a pure creature was this! what a gentle simplicity, and yet what a quiet dignity! what absolutely natural sweetness, with no airs whatever! and what a fresh beauty.

"I think it must be easier to be good where you live," Tom added presently, and sincerely.

"Why?" said Lois.

"I assure you it ain't easy for a fellow here."

"What do you mean by 'good,' Mr. Caruthers? not drinking wine?" said Lois, somewhat amused.

"I mean, to be like you," said he softly. "You are better than all the rest of us here."

"I hope not. Mr. Caruthers, we must go back to Mrs. Wishart, or certainly *she* will not think me good."

So they went back, through the empty lunch room.

"I thought you would be here to-day," said Tom. "I was not going to miss the pleasure; so I took a

frightfully early train, and despatched business faster than it had ever been despatched before, at our house. I surprised the people, almost as much as I surprised my mother and Julia. You ought always to wear a white camellia in your hair!"

Lois smiled to herself. If he knew what things she had to do at her own home, and how such an adornment would be in place! Was it easier to be good there? she queried. It was easier to be pleased here. The guests were mostly gone.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart on the drive home, "how have you enjoyed yourself?"

Lois looked grave. "I am afraid it turns my head," she answered.

"That shows your head is *not* turned. It must carry a good deal of ballast too, somewhere."

"It does," said Lois. "And I don't like to have my head turned."

"Tom," said Miss Julia, as Mrs. Wishart's carriage drove off and Tom came back to the drawing-room, "you mustn't turn that little girl's head."

"I can't," said Tom.

"You are trying."

"I am doing nothing of the sort."

"Then what *are* you doing? You are paying her a great deal of attention. She is not accustomed to our ways; she will not understand it. I do not think it is fair to her."

"I don't mean anything that is not fair to her. She is worth attention ten times as much as all the rest of the girls that were here to-day."

"But, Tom, she would not take it as coolly. She knows only country ways. She might think attentions mean more than they do."

"I don't care," said Tom.

"My dear boy," said his mother now, "it will not do, not to care. It would not be honourable to raise hopes you do not mean to fulfil; and to take such a girl for your wife, would be simply ruinous."

"Where will you find such another girl?" cried Tom, flaring up.

"But she has nothing, and she is nobody."

"She is her own sweet self," said Tom.

"But not an advantageous wife for you, my dear. Society does not know her, and she does not know society. Your career would be a much more humble one with her by your side. And money you want, too. You need it, to get on properly; as I wish to see you get on, and as you wish it your self. My dear boy, do not throw your chances away!"

"It's my belief, that is just what you are trying to make me do!" said the young man; and he went off in something of a huff.

"Mamma, we must do something. And soon," remarked Miss Julia. "Men are such fools! He rushed through with everything and came home to-day just to see that girl. A pretty face absolutely bewitches them." *N. B.* Miss Julia herself did not possess that bewitching power.

"I will go to Florida," said Mrs. Caruthers, sighing.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER LUNCHEON PARTY.

A journey can be decided upon in a minute, but not so soon entered upon. Mrs. Caruthers needed a week to make ready; and during that week her son and heir found opportunity to make several visits at Mrs. Wishart's. A certain marriage connection between the families gave him somewhat the familiar

right of a cousin; he could go when he pleased; and Mrs. Wishart liked him, and used no means to keep him away. Tom Caruthers was a model of manly beauty; gentle and agreeable in his manners; and of an evidently affectionate and kindly disposition. Why should not the young people like each other? she thought; and things were in fair train. Upon this came the departure for Florida. Tom spoke his regrets unreservedly out; he could not help himself, his mother's health required her to go to the South for the month of March, and she must necessarily have his escort. Lois said little. Mrs. Wishart feared, or hoped, she felt the more. A little absence is no harm, the lady thought; *may* be no harm. But now Lois began to speak of returning to Shampuashuh; and that indeed might make the separation too long for profit. She thought too that Lois was a little more thoughtful and a trifle more quiet than she had been before this journey was talked of.

One day, it was a cold, blustering day in March, Mrs. Wishart and her guest had gone down into the lower part of the city to do some particular shopping; Mrs. Wishart having promised Lois that they would take lunch and rest at a particular fashionable restaurant. Such an expedition had a great charm for the little country girl, to whom everything was new, and to whose healthy mental senses the ways and manners of the business world, with all the accessories thereof, were as interesting as the gayer regions and the lighter life of fashion. Mrs. Wishart had occasion to go to a banker's in Wall Street; she had business at the Post Office; she had something to do which took her to several furrier's shops; she visited a particular magazine of varieties in Maiden Lane, where things, she told Lois, were about half the price they bore up town. She spent near an hour at the Tract House in Nassau Street. There was no question of taking the carriage into these regions; an omnibus had brought them to Wall Street, and from there they went about on their own feet, walking and standing alternately, till both ladies were well tired. Mrs. Wishart breathed out a sigh of relief as she took her seat in the omnibus which was to carry them up town again.

"Tired out, Lois, are you? I am."

"I am not. I have been too much amused."

"It's delightful to take you anywhere! You reverse the old fairy-tale catastrophe, and a little handful of ashes turns to fruit for you, or to gold. Well, I will make some silver turn to fruit presently. I want my lunch, and I know you do. I should like to have you with me always, Lois. I get some of the good of your fairy fruit and gold when you are along with me. Tell me, child, do you do that sort of thing at home?"

"What sort?" said Lois, laughing.

"Turning nothings into gold."

"I don't know," said Lois. "I believe I do pick up a good deal of that sort of gold as I go along. But at home our life has a great deal of sameness about it, you know. *Here* everything is wonderful."

"Wonderful!" repeated Mrs. Wishart. "To you it is wonderful. And to me it is the dullest old story, the whole of it. I feel as dusty now, mentally, as I am outwardly. But we'll have some luncheon, Lois, and that will be refreshing, I hope."

Hopes were to be much disappointed. Getting out of the omnibus near the locality of the desired restaurant, the whole street was found in confusion. There had been a fire, it seemed, that morning, in a house adjoining or very near, and loungers and firemen and an engine and hose took up all the way. No restaurant to be reached there that morning. Greatly dismayed, Mrs. Wishart put herself and Lois in one of the street cars to go on up town.

"I am famishing!" she declared. "And now I do not know where to go. Everybody has had lunch at home by this time, or there are half-a-dozen houses I could go to."

"Are there no other restaurants but that one?"

"Plenty; but I could not eat in comfort unless I know things are clean.
I know that place, and the others I don't know. Ha, Mr. Dillwyn!"—

This exclamation was called forth by the sight of a gentleman who just at that moment was entering the car. Apparently he was an old acquain'tance, for the recognition was eager on both sides. The new comer took a seat on the other side of Mrs. Wishart.

"Where do you come from," said he, "that I find you here?"

"From the depths of business—Wall Street—and all over; and now the depths of despair, that we cannot get lunch. I am going home starving."

"What does that mean?"

"Just a *contretemps*. I promised my young friend here I would give her a good lunch at the best restaurant I knew; and to-day of all days, and just as we come tired out to get some refreshment, there's a fire and firemen and all the street in a hubbub. Nothing for it but to go home fasting."

"No," said he, "there is a better thing. You will do me the honour and give me the pleasure of lunching with me. I am living at the 'Imperial,'—and here we are!"

He signalled the car to stop, even as he spoke, and rose to help the ladies out. Mrs. Wishart had no time to think about it, and on the sudden impulse yielded. They left the car, and a few steps brought them to the immense beautiful building called the Imperial Hotel. Mr. Dillwyn took them in as one at home, conducted them to the great dining-room; proposed to them to go first to a dressing-room, but this Mrs. Wishart declined. So they took places at a small table, near enough to one of the great clear windows for Lois to look down into the Avenue and see all that was going on there. But first the place where she was occupied her. With a kind of wondering delight her eye went down the lines of the immense room, reviewed its loftiness, its adornments, its light and airiness and beauty; its perfection of luxurious furnishing and outfitting. Few people were in it just at this hour, and the few were too far off to trouble at all the sense of privacy. Lois was tired, she was hungry; this sudden escape from din and motion and dust, to refreshment and stillness and a soft atmosphere, was like the changes in an Arabian Nights' enchantment. And the place was splendid enough and dainty enough to fit into one of those stories too. Lois sat back in her chair, quietly but intensely enjoying. It never occurred to her that she herself might be a worthy object of contemplation.

Yet a fairer might have been sought for, all New York through. She was not vulgarly gazing; she had not the aspect of one strange to the place; quiet, grave, withdrawn into herself, she wore an air of most sweet reserve and unconscious dignity. Features more beautiful might be found, no doubt, and in numbers; it was not the mere lines, nor the mere colours of her face, which made it so remarkable, but rather the mental character. The beautiful poise of a spirit at rest within itself; the simplicity of unconsciousness; the freshness of a mind to which nothing has grown stale or old, and which sees nothing in its conventional shell; along with the sweetness that comes of habitual dwelling in sweetness. Both her companions occasionally looked at her; Lois did not know it; she did not think herself of sufficient importance to be looked at.

And then came the luncheon. Such a luncheon! and served with a delicacy which became it. Chocolate which was a rich froth; rolls which were puff balls of perfection; salad, and fruit. Anything yet more substantial Mrs. Wishart declined. Also she declined wine.

"I should not dare, before Lois," she said.

Therewith came their entertainer's eyes round to Lois again.

"Is she allowed to keep your conscience, Mrs. Wishart?"

"Poor child! I don't charge her with that. But you know, Mr. Dillwyn, in presence of angels one would walk a little carefully!"

"That almost sounds as if the angels would be uncomfortable companions," said Lois.

"Not quite *sans gêne*"—the gentleman added, Then Lois's eyes met his full.

"I do not know what that is," she said.

"Only a couple of French words."

"I do not know French," said Lois simply.

He had not seen before what beautiful eyes they were; soft and grave, and true with the clearness of the blue ether. He thought he would like another such look into their transparent depths. So he asked,

"But what is it about the wine?"

"O, we are water-drinkers up about my home," Lois answered, looking, however, at her chocolate cup from which she was refreshing herself.

"That is what the English call us as a nation, I am sure most inappropriately. Some of us know good wine when we see it; and most of the rest have an intimate acquain'tance with wine or some thing else that is *not* good. Perhaps Miss Lothrop has formed her opinion, and practice, upon knowledge of this latter kind?"

Lois did not say; she thought her opinions, or practice, could have very little interest for this fine

gentleman.

"Lois is unfashionable enough to form her own opinions," Mrs. Wishart remarked.

"But not inconsistent enough to build them on nothing, I hope?"

"I could tell you what they are built on," said Lois, brought out by this challenge; "but I do not know that you would see from that how well founded they are."

"I should be very grateful for such an indulgence."

"In this particular case we are speaking of, they are built on two foundation stones—both out of the same quarry," said Lois, her colour rising a little, while she smiled too. "One is this—'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' And the other—'I will neither eat meat, nor drink wine, nor *anything*, by which my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak.'"

Lois did not look up as she spoke, and Mrs. Wishart smiled with amusement. Their host's face expressed an undoubted astonishment. He regarded the gentle and yet bold speaker with steady attention for a minute or two, noting the modesty, and the gentleness, and the fearlessness with which she spoke. Noting her great beauty too.

"Precious stones!" said he lightly, when she had done speaking. "I do not know whether they are broad enough for such a superstructure as you would build on them." And then he turned to Mrs. Wishart again, and they left the subject and plunged into a variety of other subjects where Lois scarce could follow them.

What did they not talk of! Mr. Dillwyn, it appeared, had lately returned from abroad, where Mrs. Wishart had also formerly lived for some time; and now they went over a multitude of things and people familiar to both of them, but of which Lois did not even know the names. She listened, however, eagerly; and gleaned, as an eager listener generally may, a good deal. Places, until now unheard of, took a certain form and aspect in Lois's imagination; people were discerned, also in imagination, as being of different types and wonderfully different habits and manners of life from any Lois knew at home, or had even seen in New York. She heard pictures talked of, and wondered what sort of a world that art world might be, in which Mr. Dillwyn was so much at home. Lois had never seen any pictures in her life which were much to her. And the talk about countries sounded strange. She knew where Germany was on the map, and could give its boundaries no doubt accurately; but all this gossip about the Rhineland and its vineyards and the vintages there and in France, sounded fascinatingly novel. And she knew where Italy was on the map; but Italy's skies, and soft air, and mementos of past times of history and art, were unknown; and she listened with ever-quickening attention. The result of the whole at last was a mortifying sense that she knew nothing. These people, her friend and this other, lived in a world of mental impressions and mentally stored-up knowledge, which seemed to make their life unendingly broader and richer than her own. Especially the gentleman. Lois observed that it was constantly he who had something new to tell Mrs. Wishart, and that in all the ground they went over, he was more at home than she. Indeed, Lois got the impression that Mr. Dillwyn knew the world and everything in it better than anybody she had ever seen. Mr. Caruthers was extremely *au fait* in many things; Lois had the thought, not the word; but Mr. Dillwyn was an older man and had seen much more. He was terrifically wise in it all, she thought; and by degrees she got a kind of awe of him. A little of Mrs. Wishart too. How much her friend knew, how at home she was in this big world! what a plain little piece of ignorance was she herself beside her. Well, thought Lois—every one to his place! My place is Shampuashuh. I suppose I am fitted for that.

"Miss Lothrop," said their entertainer here, "will you allow me to give you some grapes?"

"Grapes in March!" said Lois, smiling, as a beautiful white bunch was laid before her. "People who live in New York can have everything, it seems, that they want."

"Provided they can pay for it," Mrs. Wishart put in.

"How is it in your part of the world?" said Mr. Dillwyn. "You cannot have what you want?"

"Depends upon what order you keep your wishes in," said Lois. "You can have strawberries in June—and grapes in September."

"What order do you keep your wishes in?" was the next question.

"I think it best to have as few as possible."

"But that would reduce life to a mere framework of life,—if one had no wishes!"

"One can find something else to fill it up," said Lois.

"Pray what would you substitute? For with wishes I connect the accomplishment of wishes."

"Are they always connected?"

"Not always; but generally, the one are the means to the other."

"I believe I do not find it so."

"Then, pardon me, what would you substitute, Miss Lothrop, to fill up your life, and not have it a bare existence?"

"There is always work—" said Lois shyly; "and there are the pleasures that come without being wished for. I mean, without being particularly sought and expected."

"Does much come that way?" asked their entertainer, with an incredulous smile of mockery.

"O, a great deal!" cried Lois; and then she checked herself.

"This is a very interesting investigation, Mrs. Wishart," said the gentleman. "Do you think I may presume upon Miss Lothrop's good nature, and carry it further?"

"Miss Lothrop's good nature is a commodity I never knew yet to fail."

"Then I will go on, for I am curious to know, with an honest desire to enlarge my circle of knowledge. Will you tell me, Miss Lothrop, what are the pleasures in your mind when you speak of their coming unsought?"

Lois tried to draw back. "I do not believe you would understand them," she said a little shyly.

"I trust you do my understanding less than justice!"

"No," said Lois, blushing, "for your enjoyments are in another line."

"Please indulge me, and tell me the line of yours."

He is laughing at me, thought Lois. And her next thought was, What matter! So, after an instant's hesitation, she answered simply.

"To anybody who has travelled over the world, Shampuashuh is a small place; and to anybody who knows all you have been talking about, what we know at Shampuashuh would seem very little. But every morning it is a pleasure to me to wake and see the sun rise; and the fields, and the river, and the Sound, are a constant delight to me at all times of day, and in all sorts of weather. A walk or a ride is always a great pleasure, and different every time. Then I take constant pleasure in my work."

"Mrs. Wishart," said the gentleman, "this is a revelation to me. Would it be indiscreet, if I were to ask Miss Lothrop what she can possibly mean under the use of the term '*work*'?"

I think Mrs. Wishart considered that it *would* be rather indiscreet, and wished Lois would be a little reticent about her home affairs. Lois, however, had no such feeling.

"I mean work," she said. "I can have no objection that anybody should know what our life is at home. We have a little farm, very small; it just keeps a few cows and sheep. In the house we are three sisters; and we have an old grandmother to take care of, and to keep the house, and manage the farm."

"But surely you cannot do that last?" said the gentleman.

"We do not manage the cows and sheep," said Lois, smiling; "men's hands do that; but we make the butter, and we spin the wool, and we cultivate our garden. *That* we do ourselves entirely; and we have a good garden too. And that is one of the things," added Lois, smiling, "in which I take unending pleasure."

"What can you do in a garden?"

"All there is to do, except ploughing. We get a neighbour to do that."

"And the digging?"

"I can dig," said Lois, laughing.

"But do not?"

"Certainly I do."

"And sow seeds, and dress beds?"

"Certainly. And enjoy every moment of it. I do it early, before the sun gets hot. And then, there is all the rest; gathering the fruit, and pulling the vegetables, and the care of them when we have got them; and I take great pleasure in it all. The summer mornings and spring mornings in the garden are delightful, and all the work of a garden is delightful, I think."

"You will except the digging?"

"You are laughing at me," said Lois quietly. "No, I do not except the digging. I like it particularly. Hoeing and raking I do not like half so well."

"I am not laughing," said Mr. Dillwyn, "or certainly not at you. If at anybody, it is myself. I am filled with admiration."

"There is no room for that either," said Lois. "We just have it to do, and we do it; that is all."

"Miss Lothrop, I never have *had* to do anything in my life, since I left college."

Lois thought privately her own thoughts, but did not give them expression; she had talked a great deal more than she meant to do. Perhaps Mrs. Wishart too thought there had been enough of it, for she began to make preparations for departure.

"Mrs. Wishart," said Mr. Dillwyn, "I have to thank you for the greatest pleasure I have enjoyed since I landed."

"Unsought and unwished-for, too, according to Miss Lothrop's theory. Certainly we have to thank you, Philip, for we were in a distressed condition when you found us. Come and see me. And," she added *sotto voce* as he was leading her out, and Lois had stepped on before them, "I consider that all the information that has been given you is strictly in confidence."

"Quite delicious confidence!"

"Yes, but not for all ears," added Mrs. Wishart somewhat anxiously.

"I am glad you think me worthy. I will not abuse the trust."

"I did not say I thought you worthy," said the lady, laughing; "I was not consulted. Young eyes see the world in the fresh colours of morning, and think daisies grow everywhere."

They had reached the street. Mr. Dillwyn accompanied the ladies a part of their way, and then took leave of them.

CHAPTER V.

IN COUNCIL.

Sauntering back to his hotel, Mr. Dillwyn's thoughts were a good deal engaged with the impressions of the last hour. It was odd, too; he had seen all varieties and descriptions of feminine fascination, or he thought he had; some of them in very high places, and with all the adventitious charms which wealth and place and breeding can add to those of nature's giving. Yet here was something new. A novelty as fresh as one of the daisies Mrs. Wishart had spoken of. He had seen daisies too before, he thought; and was not particularly fond of that style. No; this was something other than a daisy.

Sauntering along and not heeding his surroundings, he was suddenly hailed by a joyful voice, and an arm was thrust within his own.

"Philip! where did you come from? and when did you come?"

"Only the other day—from Egypt—was coming to see you, but have been bothered with custom-house business. How do you all do, Tom?"

"What are you bringing over? curiosities? or precious things?"

"Might be both. How do you do, old boy?"

"Very much put out, just at present, by a notion of my mother's; she will go to Florida to escape March winds."

"Florida! Well, Florida is a good place, when March is stalking abroad like this. What are you put out for? I don't comprehend."

"Yes, but you see, the month will be half over before she gets ready to be off; and what's the use? April will be here directly; she might just as well wait here for April."

"You cannot pick oranges off the trees here in April. You forget that."

"Don't want to pick 'em anywhere. But come along, and see them at home.
They'll be awfully glad to see you."

It was not far, and talking of nothings the two strolled that way. There was much rejoicing over Philip's return, and much curiosity expressed as to where he had been and what he had been doing for a long time past. Finally, Mrs. Caruthers proposed that he should go on to Florida with them.

"Yes, do!" cried Tom. "You go, and I'll stay."

"My dear Tom!" said his mother, "I could not possibly do without you."

"Take Julia. I'll look after the house, and Dillwyn will look after your baggage."

"And who will look after you, you silly boy?" said his sister. "You're the worst charge of all."

"What is the matter?" Philip asked now.

"Women's notions," said Tom. "Women are always full of notions! They can spy game at hawk's distance; only they make a mistake sometimes, which the hawk don't, I reckon; and think they see something when there is nothing."

"We know what we see this time," said his sister. "Philip, he's dreadfully caught."

"Not the first time?" said Dillwyn humorously. "No danger, is there?"

"There is real danger," said Miss Julia. "He is caught with an impossible country girl."

"Caught *by* her? Fie, Tom! aren't you wiser?"

"That's not fair!" cried Tom hotly. "She catches nobody, nor tries it, in the way you mean. I am not caught, either; that's more; but you shouldn't speak in that way."

"Who is the lady? It is very plain Tom isn't caught. But where is she?"

"She is a little country girl come to see the world for the first time. Of course she makes great eyes; and the eyes are pretty; and Tom couldn't stand it." Miss Julia spoke laughing, yet serious.

"I should not think a little country girl would be dangerous to Tom."

"No, would you? It's vexatious, to have one's confidence in one's brother so shaken."

"What's the matter with her?" broke out Tom here. "I am not caught, as you call it, neither by her nor with her; but if you want to discuss her, I say, what's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, Tom!" said his mother soothingly; "there is nothing whatever the matter with her; and I have no doubt she is a nice girl. But she has no education."

"Hang education!" said Tom. "Anybody can pick that up. She can talk, I can tell you, better than anybody of all those you had round your table the other day. She's an uncommon good talker."

"You are, you mean," said his sister; "and she listens and makes big eyes. Of course nothing can be more delightful. But, Tom, she knows nothing at all; not so much as how to dress herself."

"Wasn't she well enough dressed the other day?"

"Somebody arranged that for her."

"Well, somebody could do it again. You girls think so much of *dressing*. It isn't the first thing about a woman, after all."

"You men think enough about it, though. What would tempt you to go out with me if I wasn't *assez bien mise?* Or what would take any man down Broadway with his wife if she hadn't a hoop on?"

"Doesn't the lady in question wear a hoop?" inquired Philip.

"No, she don't."

"Singular want of taste!"

"Well, you don't like them; but, after all, it's the fashion, and one can't help oneself. And, as I said, you may not like them, but you wouldn't walk with me if I hadn't one."

"Then, to sum up—the deficiencies of this lady, as I understand, are,—education and a hoop? Is that all?"

"By no means!" cried Mrs. Caruthers. "She is nobody, Philip. She comes from a family in the country—very respectable people, I have no doubt, but,—well, she is nobody. No connections, no habit of the world. And no money. They are quite poor people."

"That *is* serious," said Dillwyn. "Tom is in such straitened circumstances himself. I was thinking, he might be able to provide the hoop; but if she has no money, it is critical."

"You may laugh!" said Miss Julia. "That is all the comfort one gets from a man. But he does not laugh when it comes to be his own case, and matters have gone too far to be mended, and he is feeling the consequences of his rashness."

"You speak as if I were in danger! But I do not see how it should come to be 'my own case,' as I never even saw the lady. Who is she? and where is she? and how comes she—so dangerous—to be visiting you?"

All spoke now at once, and Philip heard a confused medley of "Mrs. Wishart"—"Miss Lothrop"—"staying with her"—"poor cousin"—"kind to her of course."

Mr. Dillwyn's countenance changed.

"Mrs. Wishart!" he echoed. "Mrs. Wishart is irreproachable."

"Certainly, but that does not put a penny in Miss Lothrop's pocket, nor give her position, nor knowledge of the world."

"What do you mean by knowledge of the world?" Mr. Dillwyn inquired with slow words.

"Why! you know. Just the sort of thing that makes the difference between the raw and the manufactured article," Miss Julia answered, laughing. She was comfortably conscious of being thoroughly "manufactured" herself. No crude ignorances or deficiencies there.—"The sort of thing that makes a person at home and *au fait* everywhere, and in all companies, and shuts out awkwardnesses and inelegancies.

"*Does* it shut them out?"

"Why, of course! How can you ask? What else will shut them out? All that makes the difference between a woman of the world and a milkmaid."

"This little girl, I understand, then, is awkward and inelegant?"

"She is nothing of the kind!" Tom burst out. "Ridiculous!" But Dillwyn waited for Miss Julia's answer.

"I cannot call her just *awkward*," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"N-o," said Julia, "perhaps not. She has been living with Mrs. Wishart, you know, and has got accustomed to a certain set of things. She does not strike you unpleasantly in society, seated at a lunch table, for instance; but of course all beyond the lunch table is like London to a Laplander."

Tom flung himself out of the room.

"And that is what you are going to Florida for?" pursued Dillwyn.

"You have guessed it! Yes, indeed. Do you know, there seems to be nothing else to do. Tom is in actual danger. I know he goes very often to Mrs. Wishart's; and you know Tom is impressible; and

before we know it he might do something he would be sorry for. The only thing is to get him away."

"I think I will go to Mrs. Wishart's too," said Philip. "Do you think there would be danger?"

"I don't know!" said Miss Julia, arching her brows. "I never can comprehend why the men take such furies of fancies for this girl or for that. To me they do not seem so different. I believe this girl takes just because she is not like the rest of what one sees every day."

"That might be a recommendation. Did it never strike you, Miss Julia, that there is a certain degree of sameness in our world? Not in nature, for there the variety is simply endless; but in our ways of living. Here the effort seems to be to fall in with one general pattern. Houses and dresses; and entertainments, and even the routine of conversation. Generally speaking, it is all one thing."

"Well," said Miss Julia, with spirit, "when anything is once recognized as the right thing, of course everybody wants to conform to it."

"I have not recognized it as the right thing."

"What?"

"This uniformity."

"What would you have?"

"I think I would like to see, for a change, freedom and individuality. Why should a woman with sharp features dress her hair in a manner that sets off their sharpness, because her neighbour with a classic head can draw it severely about her in close bands and coils, and so only the better show its nobility of contour? Why may not a beautiful head of hair be dressed flowingly, because the fashion favours the people who have no hair at all? Why may not a plain dress set off a fine figure, because the mode is to leave no unbroken line or sweeping drapery anywhere? And I might go on endlessly."

"I can't tell, I am sure," said Miss Julia; "but if one lives in the world, it won't do to defy the world. And that you know as well as I."

"What would happen, I wonder?"

"The world would quietly drop you. Unless you are a person of importance enough to set a new fashion."

"Is there not some unworthy bondage about that?"

"You can't help it, Philip Dillwyn, if there is. We have got to take it as it is; and make the best of it."

"And this new Fate of Tom's—this new Fancy rather,—as I understand, she is quite out of the world?"

"Quite. Lives in a village in New England somewhere, and grows onions."

"For market?" said Philip, with a somewhat startled face.

"No, no!" said Julia, laughing—"how could you think I meant that? No; I don't know anything about the onions; but she has lived among farmers and sailors all her life, and that is all she knows. And it is perfectly ridiculous, but Tom is so smitten with her that all we can do is to get him away. Fancy, Tom!"

"He has got to come back," said Philip, rising. "You had better get somebody to take the girl away."

"Perhaps you will do that?" said Miss Julia, laughing.

"I'll think of it," said Dillwyn as he took leave.

CHAPTER VI.

HAPPINESS.

Philip kept his promise. Thinking, however, he soon found, did not amount to much till he had seen more; and he went a few days after to Mrs. Wishart's house.

It was afternoon. The sun was streaming in from the west, filling the sitting-room with its splendour; and in the radiance of it Lois was sitting with some work. She was as unadorned as when Philip had seen her the other day in the street; her gown was of some plain stuff, plainly made; she was a very unfashionable-looking person. But the good figure that Mr. Dillwyn liked to see was there; the fair outlines, simple and graceful, light and girlish; and the exquisite hair caught the light, and showed its varying, warm, bright tints. It was massed up somehow, without the least artificiality, in order, and yet lying loose and wavy; a beautiful combination which only a few heads can attain to.

There was nobody else in the room; and as Lois rose to meet the visitor, he was not flattered to see that she did not recognize him. Then the next minute a flash of light came into her face.

"I have had the pleasure," said Dillwyn. "I was afraid you were going to ignore the fact."

"You gave us lunch the other day," said Lois, smiling. "Yes, I remember. I shall always remember."

"You got home comfortably?"

"O yes, after we were so fortified. Mrs. Wishart was quite exhausted, before lunch, I mean."

"This is a pleasant situation," said Philip, going a step nearer the window.

"Yes, very! I enjoy those rocks very much."

"You have no rocks at home?"

"No rocks," said Lois; "plenty of *rock*, or stone; but it comes up out of the ground just enough to make trouble, not to give pleasure. The country is all level."

"And you enjoy the variety?"

"O, not because it is variety. But I have been nowhere and have seen nothing in my life."

"So the world is a great unopened book to you?" said Philip, with a smile regarding her.

"It will always be that, I think," Lois replied, shaking her head.

"Why should it?"

"I live at Shampuashuh."

"What then? Here you are in New York."

"Yes, wonderfully. But I am going home again."

"Not soon?"

"Very soon. It will be time to begin to make garden in a few days."

"Can the garden not be made without you?"

"Not very well; for nobody knows, except me, just where things were planted last year."

"And is that important?"

"Very important." Lois smiled at his simplicity. "Because many things must be changed. They must not be planted where they were last year."

"Why not?"

"They would not do so well. They have all to shift about, like Puss-in-the-corner; and it is puzzling. The peas must go where the corn or the potatoes went; and the corn must find another place, and so on."

"And you are the only one who keeps a map of the garden in your head?"

"Not in my head," said Lois, smiling. "I keep it in my drawer."

"Ah! That is being more systematic than I gave you credit for."

"But you cannot do anything with a garden if you have not system."

"Nor with anything else! But where did *you* learn that?"

"In the garden, I suppose," said Lois simply.

She talked frankly and quietly. Mr. Dillwyn could see by her manner, he thought, that she would be glad if Mrs. Wishart would come in and take him off her hands; but there was no awkwardness or ungracefulness or unreadiness. In fact, it was the grace of the girl that struck him, not her want of it. Then she was so very lovely. A quiet little figure, in her very plain dress; but the features were exceedingly fair, the clear skin was as pure as a pearl, the head with its crown of soft bright hair might have belonged to one of the Graces. More than all, was the very rare expression and air of the face. That Philip could not read; he could not decide what gave the girl her special beauty. Something in the mind or soul of her, he was sure; and he longed to get at it and find out what it was.

She is not commonplace, he said to himself, while he was talking something else to her;—but it is more than being not commonplace. She is very pure; but I have seen other pure faces. It is not that she is a Madonna; this is no creature

". . . . too bright and good For human nature's daily food."

But what "daily food" for human nature she would be! She is a lofty creature; yet she is a half-timid country girl; and I suppose she does not know much beyond her garden. Yes, probably Mrs. Caruthers was right; she would not do for Tom. Tom is not a quarter good enough for her! She is a little country girl, and she does not know much; and yet—happy will be the man to whom she will give a free kiss of those wise, sweet lips!

With these somewhat contradictory thoughts running through his mind, Mr. Dillwyn set himself seriously to entertain Lois. As she had never travelled, he told her of things he had seen—and things he had known without seeing—in his own many journeyings about the world. Presently Lois dropped her work out of her hands, forgot it, and turned upon Mr. Dillwyn a pair of eager, intelligent eyes, which it was a pleasure to talk to. He became absorbed in his turn, and equally; ministering to the attention and curiosity and power of imagination he had aroused. What listeners her eyes were! and how quick to receive and keen to pass judgement was the intelligence behind them. It surprised him; however, its responses were mainly given through the eyes. In vain he tried to get a fair share of words from her too; sought to draw her out. Lois was not afraid to speak; and yet, for sheer modesty and simpleness, that supposed her words incapable of giving pleasure and would not speak them as a matter of conventionality, she said very few. At last Philip made a determined effort to draw her out.

"I have told you now about my home," he said. "What is yours like?" And his manner said, I am going to stop, and you are going to begin.

"There is nothing striking about it, I think," said Lois.

"Perhaps you think so, just because it is familiar to you."

"No, it is because there is really not much to tell about it. There are just level farm fields; and the river, and the Sound."

"The river?"

"The Connecticut."

"O, *that* is where you are, is it? And are you near the river?"

"Not very near. About as near the river on one side as we are to the Sound on the other; either of them is a mile and more away."

"You wish they were nearer?"

"No," said Lois; "I don't think I do; there is always the pleasure of going to them."

"Then you should wish them further. A mile is a short drive."

"O, we do not drive much. We walk to the shore often, and sometimes to the river."

"You like the large water so much the best?"

"I think I like it best," said Lois, laughing a little; "but we go for clams."

"Can you get them yourself?"

"Certainly! It is great fun. While you go to drive in the Park, we go to dig clams. And I think we have the best of it too, for a stand-by."

"Do tell me about the clams."

"Do you like them?"

"I suppose I do. I do not know them. What are they? the usual little soup fish?"

"I don't know about soup fish. O no! not those; they are *not* the sort Mrs. Wishart has sometimes. These are long; ours in the Sound, I mean; longish and blackish; and do not taste like the clams you have here."

"Better, I hope?"

"A great deal better. There is nothing much pleasanter than a dish of long clams that you have dug yourself. At least we think so."

"Because you have got them yourself!"

"No; but I suppose that helps."

"So you get them by digging?"

"Yes. It is funny work. The clams are at the edge of the water, where the rushes grow, in the mud. We go for them when the tide is out. Then, in the blue mud you see quantities of small holes as big as a lead pencil would make; those are the clam holes."

"And what then?"

"Then we dig for them; dig with a hoe; and you must dig very fast, or the clam will get away from you. Then, if you get pretty near him he spits at you."

"I suppose that is a harmless remonstrance."

"It may come in your face."

Mr. Dillwyn laughed a little, looking at this fair creature, who was talking to him, and finding it hard to imagine her among the rushes racing with a long clam.

"It is wet ground I suppose, where you find the clams?"

"O yes. One must take off shoes and stockings and go barefoot. But the mud is warm, and it is pleasant enough."

"The clams must be good, to reward the trouble?"

"We think it is as pleasant to get them as to eat them."

"I believe you remarked, this sport is your substitute for our Central Park?"

"Yes, it is a sort of a substitute."

"And, in the comparison, you think you are the gainers?"

"You cannot compare the two things," said Lois; "only that both are ways of seeking pleasure."

"So you say; and I wanted your comparative estimate of the two ways."

"Central Park is new to me, you know," said Lois; "and I am very fond of riding,—*driving*, Mrs. Wishart says I ought to call it; the scene is like fairyland to me. But I do not think it is better fun, really, than going after clams. And the people do not seem to enjoy it a quarter as much."

"The people whom you see driving?"

"Yes. They do not look as if they were taking much pleasure. Most of them."

"Pray why should they go, if they do not find pleasure in it?"

Lois looked at her questioner.

"You can tell, better than I, Mr. Dillwyn. For the same reasons, I suppose, that they do other things."

"Pardon me,—what things do you mean?"

"I mean, *all* the things they do for pleasure, or that are supposed to be for pleasure. Parties—luncheon parties, and dinners, and—" Lois hesitated.

"*Supposed* to be for pleasure!" Philip echoed the words. "Excuse me—but what makes you think they do not gain their end?"

"People do not look really happy," said Lois. "They do not seem to me as if they really enjoyed what they were doing."

"You are a nice observer!"

"Am I?"

"Pray, at—I forget the name—your home in the country, are the people more happily constituted?"

"Not that I know of. Not more happily constituted; but I think they live more natural lives."

"Instance!" said Philip, looking curious.

"Well," said Lois, laughing and colouring, "I do not think they do things unless they want to. They do not ask people unless they want to see them; and when they *do* make a party, everybody has a good time. It is not brilliant, or splendid, or wonderful, like parties here; but yet I think it is more really what it is meant to be."

"And here you think things are not what they are meant to be?"

"Perhaps I am mistaken," said Lois modestly. "I have seen so little."

"You are not mistaken in your general view. It would be a mistake to think there are no exceptions."

"O, I do not think that."

"But it is matter of astonishment to me, how you have so soon acquired such keen discernment. Is it that you do not enjoy these occasions yourself?"

"O, I enjoy them intensely," said Lois, smiling. "Sometimes I think I am the only one of the company that does; but *I* enjoy them."

"By the power of what secret talisman?"

"I don't know;—being happy, I suppose," said Lois shyly.

"You are speaking seriously; and therefore you are touching the greatest question of human life. Can you say of yourself that you are truly *happy?*"

Lois met his eyes in a little wonderment at this questioning, and answered a plain "yes."

"But, to be *happy*, with me, means, to be independent of circumstances. I do not call him *happy*, whose happiness is gone if the east wind blow, or a party miscarry, or a bank break; even though it were the bank in which his property is involved."

"Nor do I," said Lois gravely.

"And—pray forgive me for asking!—but, are you happy in this exclusive sense?"

"I have no property in a bank," said Lois, smiling again; "I have not been tried that way; but I suppose it may do as well to have no property anywhere. Yes, Mr. Dillwyn."

"But that is equal to having the philosopher's stone!" cried Dillwyn.

"What is the philosopher's stone?"

"The wise men of old time made themselves very busy in the search for some substance, or composition, which would turn other substances to gold. Looking upon gold as the source and sum of all felicity, they spent endless pains and countless time upon the search for this transmuting substance. They thought, if they could get gold enough, they would be happy. Sometimes some one of them fancied he was just upon the point of making the immortal discovery; but there he always broke down."

"They were looking in the wrong place," said Lois thoughtfully.

"Is there a *right* place to look then?"

Lois smiled. It was a smile that struck Philip very much, for its calm and confident sweetness; yes, more than that; for its gladness. She was not in haste to answer; apparently she felt some difficulty.

"I do not think gold ever made anybody happy," she said at length.

"That is what moralists tell us. But, after all, Miss Lothrop, money is the means to everything else in this world."

"Not to happiness, is it?"

"Well, what is, then? They say—and perhaps you will say—that friendships and affections can do more; but I assure you, where there are not the means to stave off grinding toil or crushing poverty, affections wither; or if they do not quite wither, they bear no golden fruit of happiness. On the contrary, they offer vulnerable spots to the stings of pain."

"Money can do a great deal," said Lois.

"What can do more?"

Lois lifted up her eyes and looked at her questioner inquiringly. Did he know no better than that?

"With money, one can do everything," he went on, though struck by her expression.

"Yes," said Lois; "and yet—all that never satisfied anybody."

"Satisfied!" cried Philip. "Satisfied is a very large word. Who is satisfied?"

Lois glanced up again, mutely.

"If I dared venture to say so—you look, Miss Lothrop, you absolutely look, as if *you* were; and yet it is impossible."

"Why is it impossible?"

"Because it is what all the generations of men have been trying for, ever since the world began; and none of them ever found it."

"Not if they looked for it in their money bags," said Lois. "It was never found there."

"Was it ever found anywhere?"

"Why, yes!"

"Pray tell me where, that I may have it too!"

The girl's cheeks flushed; and what was very odd to Philip, her eyes, he was sure, had grown moist; but the lids fell over them, and he could not see as well as he wished. What a lovely face it was, he thought, in this its mood of stirred gravity!

"Do you ever read the Bible, Mr. Dillwyn?"

The question occasioned him a kind of revulsion. The Bible! was *that* to be brought upon his head? A confused notion of organ-song, the solemnity of a still house, a white surplice, and words in measured cadence, came over him. Nothing in that connection had ever given him the idea of being satisfied. But Lois's question—

"The Bible?" he repeated. "May I ask, why you ask?"

"I thought you did not know something that is in it."

"Very possibly. It is the business of clergymen, isn't it, to tell us what is in it? That is what they are paid for. Of what are you thinking?"

"I was thinking of a person in it, mentioned in it, I mean,—who said just what you said a minute ago."

"What was that? And who was that?"

"It was a poor woman who once held a long talk with the Lord Jesus as he was resting beside a well. She had come to draw water, and Jesus asked her for some; and then he told her that whoever drank of that water would thirst again—as she knew; but whoever should drink of the water that *he* would give,

should never thirst. I was telling you of that water, Mr. Dillwyn. And the woman answered just what you answered—'Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.'"

"Did she get it?"

"I think she did."

"You mean, something that satisfied her, and would satisfy me?"

"It satisfies every one who drinks of it," said Lois.

"But you know, I do not in the least understand you."

The girl rose up and fetched a Bible which lay upon a distant table. Philip looked at the book as she brought it near; no volume of Mrs. Wishart's, he was sure. Lois had had her own Bible with her in the drawing-room. She must be one of the devout kind. He was sorry. He believed they were a narrow and prejudiced sort of people, given to laying down the law and erecting barricades across other people's paths. He was sorry this fair girl was one of them. But she was a lovely specimen. Could she unlearn these ways, perhaps? But now, what was she going to bring forth to him out of the Bible? He watched the fingers that turned the leaves; pretty fingers enough, and delicate, but not very white. Gardening probably was not conducive to the blanching of a lady's hand. It was a pity. She found her place so soon that he had little time to think his regrets.

"You allowed that nobody is satisfied, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois then.
"See if you understand this."

"'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.'"

Lois closed her book.

"Who says that?" Philip inquired.

"God himself, by his messenger."

"And to whom?"

"I think, just now, the words come to you, Mr. Dillwyn." Lois said this with a manner and look of such simplicity, that Philip was not even reminded of the class of monitors he had in his mind assigned her with. It was absolute simple matter of fact; she meant business.

"May I look at it?" he said.

She found the page again, and he considered it. Then as he gave it back, remarked,

"This does not tell me yet *what* this satisfying food is?"

"No, that you can know only by experience."

"How is the experience to be obtained?"

Again Lois found the words in her book and showed them to him. "'Whosoever drinketh of the water *that I shall give him*'—and again, above, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and *he would have given thee* living water.' Christ gives it, and he must be asked for it."

"And then—?" said Philip.

"Then you would be *satisfied*."

"You think it?"

"I know it."

"It takes a great deal to satisfy a man!"

"Not more than it does for a woman."

"And you are satisfied?" he asked searchingly.

But Lois smiled as she gave her answer; and it was an odd and very inconsistent thing that Philip should be disposed to quarrel with her for that smile. I think he wished she were *not* satisfied. It was very absurd, but he did not reason about it; he only felt annoyed.

"Well, Miss Lothrop," he said as he rose, "I shall never forget this conversation. I am very glad no one came in to interrupt it."

Lois had no phrases of society ready, and replied nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORTH OF THINGS.

Mr. Dillwyn walked away from Mrs. Wishart's in a discontented mood, which was not usual with him. He felt almost annoyed with something; yet did not quite know what, and he did not stop to analyze the feeling. He walked away, wondering at himself for being so discomposed, and pondering with sufficient distinctness one or two questions which stood out from the discomposure.

He was a man who had gone through all the usual routine of education and experience common to those who belong to the upper class of society, and can boast of a good name and family. He had lived his college life; he had travelled; he knew the principal cities of his own country, and many in other lands, with sufficient familiarity. Speaking generally, he had seen everything, and knew everybody. He had ceased to be surprised at anything, or to expect much from the world beyond what his own efforts and talents could procure him. His connections and associations had been always with good society and with the old and established portions of it; but he had come into possession of his property not so very long ago, and the pleasure of that was not yet worn off. He was a man who thought himself happy, and certainly possessed a very high place in the esteem of those who knew him; being educated, travelled, clever, and of noble character, and withal rich. It was the oddest thing for Philip to walk as he walked now, musingly, with measured steps, and eyes bent on the ground. There was a most strange sense of uneasiness upon him.

The image of Lois busied him constantly. It was such a lovely image. But he had seen hundreds of handsomer women, he told himself. Had he? Yes, he thought so. Yet not one, not one of them all, had made as much impression upon him. It was inconvenient; and why was it inconvenient? Something about her bewitched him. Yes, he had seen handsomer women; but more or less they were all of a certain pattern; not alike in feature, or name, or place, or style, yet nevertheless all belonging to the general sisterhood of what is called the world. And this girl was different. How different? She was uneducated, but *that* could not give a charm; though Philip thereby reflected that there was a certain charm in variety, and this made variety. She was unaccustomed to the great world and its ways; there could be no charm in that, for he liked the utmost elegance of the best breeding. Here he fetched himself up again. Lois was not in the least ill-bred. Nothing of the kind. She was utterly and truly refined, in every look and word and movement showing that she was so. Yet she had no "manner," as Mrs. Caruthers would have expressed it. No, she had not. She had no trained and inevitable way of speaking and looking; her way was her own, and sprang naturally from the truth of her thought or feeling at the moment. Therefore it could never be counted upon, and gave one the constant pleasure of surprises. Yes, Philip concluded that this was one point of interest about her. She had not learned how to hide herself, and the manner of her revelations was a continual refreshing variety, inasmuch as what she had to reveal was only fair and delicate and true. But what made the girl so provokingly happy? so secure in her contentment? Mr. Dillwyn thought himself a happy man; content with himself and with life; yet life had reached something too like a dead level, and himself, he was conscious, led a purposeless sort of existence. What purpose indeed was there to live for? But this little girl—Philip recalled the bright, soft, clear expression of eye with which she had looked at him; the very sweet curves of happy consciousness about her lips; the confident bearing with which she had spoken, as one who had found a treasure which, as she said, satisfied her. But it cannot! said Philip to himself. It is that she is pure and sweet, and takes happiness like a baby, sucking in what seems to her the pure milk of existence. It is true, the remembered expression of Lois's features did not quite agree with this explanation; pure and sweet, no doubt, but also grave and high, and sometimes evidencing a keen intellectual perception and wisdom. Not just like a baby; and he found he could not dismiss the matter so. What made her, then, so happy? Philip could not remember ever seeing a grown person who seemed so happy; whose happiness seemed to rest on such a steady foundation. Can she be in love? thought Dillwyn; and the idea gave him a most unreasonable thrill of displeasure. For a moment only;

then his reason told him that the look in Lois's face was not like that. It was not the brilliance of ecstasy; it was the sunshine of deep and fixed content. Why in the world should Mr. Dillwyn wish that Lois were not so content? so beyond what he or anybody could give her? And having got to this point, Mr. Dillwyn pulled himself up again. What business was it of his, the particular spring of happiness she had found to drink of? and if it quenched her thirst, as she said it did, why should he be anything but glad of it? Why, even if Lois were happy in some new-found human treasure, should it move him, Philip Dillwyn, with discomfort? Was it possible that he too could be following in those steps of Tom Caruthers, from which Tom's mother was at such pains to divert her son? Philip began to see where he stood. Could it be?—and what if?

He studied the question now with a clear view of its bearings. He had got out of a fog. Lois was all he had thought of her. Would she do for a wife for him? Uneducated—inexperienced—not in accord with the habits of the world—accustomed to very different habits and society—with no family to give weight to her name and honour to his choice,—all that Philip pondered; and, on the other side, the loveliness, the freshness, the intellect, the character, and the refinement, which were undoubted. He pondered and pondered. A girl who was nobody, and whom society would look upon as an intruder; a girl who had had no advantages of education—how she could express herself so well and so intelligently Philip could not conceive, but the fact was there; Lois had had no education beyond the most simple training of a school in the country;—would it do? He turned it all over and over, and shook his head. It would be too daring an experiment; it would not be wise; it would not do; he must give it up, all thought of such a thing; and well that he had come to handle the question so early, as else he might—he—might have got so entangled that he could not save himself. Poor Tom! But Philip had no mother to interpose to save *him;* and his sister was not at hand. He went thinking about all this the whole way back to his hotel; thinking, and shaking his head at it. No, this kind of thing was for a boy to do, not for a man who knew the world. And yet, the image of Lois worried him.

I believe, he said to himself, I had better not see the little witch again.

Meanwhile he was not going to have much opportunity. Mrs. Wishart came home a little while after Philip had gone. Lois was stitching by the last fading light.

"Do stop, my dear! you will put your eyes out. Stop, and let us have tea. Has anybody been here?"

"Mr. Dillwyn came. He went away hardly a quarter of an hour ago."

"Mr. Dillwyn! Sorry I missed him. But he will come again. I met Tom Caruthers; he is mourning about this going with his mother to Florida."

"What are they going for?" asked Lois.

"To escape the March winds, he says."

"Who? Mr. Caruthers? He does not look delicate."

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Not very! And his mother don't either, does she? But, my dear, people are weak in different spots; it isn't always in their lungs."

"Are there no March winds in Florida?"

"Not where they are going. It is all sunshine and oranges—and orange blossoms. But Tom is not delighted with the prospect. What do you think of that young man?"

"He is a very handsome man."

"Is he not? But I did not mean that. Of course you have eyes. I want to know whether you have judgment."

"I have not seen much of Mr. Caruthers to judge by."

"No. Take what you have seen and make the most of it."

"I don't think I have judgment," said Lois. "About people, I mean, and men especially. I am not accustomed to New York people, besides."

"Are they different from Shampuashuh people?"

"O, very."

"How?"

"Miss Caruthers asked me the same thing," said Lois, smiling. "I suppose at bottom all people are alike; indeed, I know they are. But in the country I think they show out more."

"Less disguise about them?"

"I think so."

"My dear, are we such a set of masqueraders in your eyes?"

"No," said Lois; "I did not mean that."

"What do you think of Philip Dillwyn? Comare him with young Caruthers."

"I cannot," said Lois. "Mr. Dillwyn strikes me as a man who knows everything there is in all the world."

"And Tom, you think, does not?"

"Not so much," said, Lois hesitating; "at least he does not impress me so."

"You are more impressed with Mr. Dillwyn?"

"In what way?" said Lois simply. "I am impressed with the sense of my own ignorance. I should be oppressed by it, if it was my fault."

"Now you speak like a sensible girl, as you are. Lois, men do not care about women knowing much."

"Sensible men must."

"They are precisely the ones who do not. It is odd enough, but it is a fact. But go on; which of these two do you like best?"

"I have seen most of Mr. Caruthers, you know. But, Mrs. Wishart, sensible men *must* like sense in other people."

"Yes, my dear; they do; unless when they want to marry the people; and then their choice very often lights upon a fool. I have seen it over and over and over again; the clever one of a family is passed by, and a silly sister is the one chosen."

"Why?"

"A pink and white skin, or a pair of black eyebrows, or perhaps some soft blue eyes."

"But people cannot live upon a pair of black eyebrows," said Lois.

"They find that out afterwards."

"Mr. Dillwyn talks as if he liked sense," said Lois. "I mean, he talks about sensible things."

"Do you mean that Tom don't, my dear?"

A slight colour rose on the cheek Mrs. Wishart was looking at; and Lois said somewhat hastily that she was not comparing.

"I shall try to find out what Tom talks to you about, when he comes back from Florida. I shall scold him if he indulges in nonsense."

"It will be neither sense nor nonsense. I shall be gone long before then."

"Gone whither?"

"Home—to Shampuashuh. I have been wanting to speak to you about it,
Mrs. Wishart. I must go in a very few days."

"Nonsense! I shall not let you. I cannot get along without you. They don't want you at home, Lois."

"The garden does. And the dairy work will be more now in a week or two; there will be more milk to take care of, and Madge will want help."

"Dairy work! Lois, you must not do dairy work. You will spoil your hands."

Lois laughed. "Somebody's hands must do it. But Madge takes care of the dairy. My hands see to the garden."

"Is it necessary?"

"Why, yes, certainly, if we would have butter or vegetables; and you would not counsel us to do without them. The two make half the living of the family."

"And you really cannot afford a servant?"

"No, nor want one," said Lois. "There are three of us, and so we get along nicely."

"Apropos;—My dear, I am sorry that it is so, but must is must. What I wanted to say to you is, that it is not necessary to tell all this to other people."

Lois looked up, surprised. "I have told no one but you, Mrs. Wishart. O yes! I did speak to Mr. Dillwyn about it, I believe."

"Yes. Well, there is no occasion, my dear. It is just as well not."

"Is it *better* not? What is the harm? Everybody at Shampuashuh knows it."

"Nobody knows it here; and there is no reason why they should. I meant to tell you this before."

"I think I have told nobody but Mr. Dillwyn."

"He is safe. I only speak for the future, my dear."

"I don't understand yet," said Lois, half laughing. "Mrs. Wishart, we are not ashamed of it."

"Certainly not, my dear; you have no occasion."

"Then why *should* we be ashamed of it?" Lois persisted.

"My dear, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Do not think I mean that.
Only, people here would not understand it."

"How could they _mis_understand it?"

"You do not know the world, Lois. People have peculiar ways of looking at things; and they put their own interpretation on things; and of course they often make great blunders. And so it is just as well to keep your own private affairs to yourself, and not give them the opportunity of blundering."

Lois was silent a little while.

"You mean," she said then,—"you think, that some of these people I have been seeing here, would think less of me, if they knew how we do at home?"

"They might, my dear. People are just stupid enough for that."

"Then it seems to me I ought to let them know," Lois said, half laughing again. "I do not like to be taken for what I am not; and I do not want to have anybody's good opinion on false grounds." Her colour rose a bit at the same time.

"My dear, it is nobody's business. And anybody that once knew you would judge you for yourself, and not upon any adventitious circumstances. They cannot, in my opinion, think of you too highly."

"I think it is better they should know at once that I am a poor girl," said Lois. However, she reflected privately that it did not matter, as she was going away so soon. And she remembered also that Mr. Dillwyn had not seemed to think any the less of her for what she had told him. Did Tom Caruthers know?

"But, Lois, my dear, about your going— There is no garden work to be done yet. It is March."

"It will soon be April. And the ground must be got ready, and potatoes must go in, and peas."

"Surely somebody else can stick in potatoes and peas."

"They would not know where to put them."

"Does it matter where?"

"To be sure it does!" said Lois, amused. "They must not go where they were last year."

"Why not?"

"I don't know! It seems that every plant wants a particular sort of food, and gets it, if it can; and so, the place where it grows is more or less impoverished, and would have less to give it another year. But a different sort of plant requiring a different sort of food, would be all right in that place."

"Food?" said Mrs. Wishart. "Do you mean manure? you can have that put in."

"No, I do not mean that. I mean something the plant gets from the soil itself."

"I do not understand! Well, my dear, write them word where the peas must go."

Lois laughed again.

"I hardly know myself, till I have studied the map," she said. "I mean, the map of the garden. It is a more difficult matter than you can guess, to arrange all the new order every spring; all has to be changed; and upon where the peas go depends, perhaps, where the cabbages go, and the corn, and the tomatoes, and everything else. It is a matter for study."

"Can't somebody else do it for you?" Mrs. Wishart asked compassionately.

"There is no one else. We have just our three selves; and all that is done we do; and the garden is under my management."

"Well, my dear, you are wonderful women; that is all I have to say. But, Lois, you must pay me a visit by and by in the summer time; I must have that; I shall go to the Isles of Shoals for a while, and I am going to have you there."

"If I can be spared from home, dear Mrs. Wishart, it would be delightful!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. ARMADALE.

It was a few days later, but March yet, and a keen wind blowing from the sea. A raw day out of doors; so much the more comfortable seemed the good fire, and swept-up hearth, and gentle warmth filling the farmhouse kitchen. The farmhouse was not very large, neither by consequence was the kitchen; however, it was more than ordinarily pleasant to look at, because it was not a servants' room; and so was furnished not only for the work, but also for the habitation of the family, who made it in winter almost exclusively their abiding-place. The floor was covered with a thick, gay rag carpet; a settee sofa looked inviting with its bright chintz hangings; rocking chairs, well cushioned, were in number and variety; and a basket of work here, and a pretty lamp there, spoke of ease and quiet occupation. One person only sat there, in the best easy-chair, at the hearth corner; beside her a little table with a large book upon it and a roll of knitting. She was not reading nor working just now; waiting, perhaps, or thinking, with hands folded in her lap. By the look of the hands they had done many a job of hard work in their day; by the look of the face and air of the person, one could see that the hard work was over. The hands were bony, thin, enlarged at the joints, so as age and long rough usage make them, but quiet hands now; and the face was steady and calm, with no haste or restlessness upon it any more, if ever there had been, but a very sweet and gracious repose. It was a hard-featured countenance; it had never been handsome; only the beauty of sense and character it had, and the dignity of a well-lived life. Something more too; some thing of a more noble calm than even the fairest retrospect can give; a more restful repose than comes of mere cessation from labour; a deeper content than has its ground in the actual present. She was a most reverent person, to look at. Just now she was waiting for something, and listening; for her ear caught the sound of a door, and then the tread of swift feet coming down the stair, and then Lois entered upon the scene; evidently fresh from her journey. She had been to her room to lay by her wrappings and change her dress; she was in a dark stuff gown now, with an enveloping white apron. She came up and kissed once more the face which had watched her entrance.

"You've been gone a good while, Lois!"

"Yes, grandma. Too long, did you think?"

"I don' know, child. That depends on what you stayed for."

"Does it? Grandma, I don't know what I stayed for. I suppose because it was pleasant."

"Pleasanter than here?"

"Grandma, I haven't been home long enough to know. It all looks and feels so strange to me as you cannot think!"

"What looks strange?"

"Everything! The house, and the place, and the furniture—I have been living in such a different world till my eyes have grown unaccustomed. You can't think how odd it is."

"What sort of a world have you been living in, Lois? Your letters didn't tell." The old lady spoke with a certain serious doubtfulness, looking at the girl by her side.

"Didn't they?" Lois returned. "I suppose I did not give you the impression because I had it not myself. I had got accustomed to that, you see; and I did not realize how strange it was. I just took it as if I had always lived in it."

"*What?*"

"O grandma, I can never tell you so that you can understand! It was like living in the Arabian Nights."

"I don't believe in no Arabian Nights."

"And yet they were there, you see. Houses so beautiful, and filled with such beautiful things; and you know, grandmother, I like things to be pretty;—and then, the ease, I suppose. Mrs. Wishart's servants go about almost like fairies; they are hardly seen or heard, but the work is done. And you never have to think about it; you go out, and come home to find dinner ready, and capital dinners too; and you sit reading or talking, and do not know how time goes till it is tea-time, and then there comes the tea; and so it is in-doors and out of doors. All that is quite pleasant."

"And you are sorry to be home again?"

"No, indeed, I am glad. I enjoyed all I have been telling you about, but I think I enjoyed it quite long enough. It is time for me to be here. Is the frost well out of the ground yet?"

"Mr. Bince has been ploughin'."

"Has he? I'm glad. Then I'll put in some peas to-morrow. O yes! I am glad to be home, grandma." Her hand nestled in one of those worn, bony ones affectionately.

"Could you live just right there, Lois?"

"I tried, grandma."

"Did all that help you?"

"I don't know that it hindered. It might not be good for always; but I was there only for a little while, and I just took the pleasure of it."

"Seems to me, you was there a pretty long spell to be called 'a little while.' Ain't it a dangerous kind o' pleasure, Lois? Didn't you never get tempted?"

"Tempted to what, grandma?"

"I don' know! To want to live easy."

"Would that be wrong?" said Lois, putting her soft cheek alongside the withered one, so that her wavy hair brushed it caressingly. Perhaps it was unconscious bribery. But Mrs. Armadale was never bribed.

"It wouldn't be right, Lois, if it made you want to get out o' your duties."

"I think it didn't, grandma. I'm all ready for them. And your dinner is the first thing. Madge and Charity—you say they are gone to New Haven?"

"Charity's tooth tormented her so, and Madge wanted to get a bonnet; and they thought they'd make one job of it. They didn't know you was comin' to-day, and they thought they'd just hit it to go before you come. They won't be back early, nother."

"What have they left for your dinner?" said Lois, going to rummage.
"Grandma, here's nothing at all!"

"An egg'll do, dear. They didn't calkilate for you."

"An egg will do for me," said Lois, laughing; "but there's only a crust of bread."

"Madge calkilated to make tea biscuits after she come home."

"Then I'll do that now."

Lois stripped up the sleeves from her shapely arms, and presently was very busy at the great kitchen table, with the board before her covered with white cakes, and the cutter and rolling pin still at work producing more. Then the fire was made up, and the tin baker set in front of the blaze, charged with a panful for baking. Lois stripped down her sleeves and set the table, cut ham and fried it, fried eggs, and soon sat opposite Mrs. Armadale pouring her out a cup of tea.

"This is cosy!" she exclaimed. "It is nice to have you all alone for the first, grandma. What's the news?"

"Ain't no news, child. Mrs. Saddler's been to New London for a week."

"And I have come home. Is that all?"

"I don't make no count o' news, child. 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.'"

"But one likes to hear of the things that change, grandma."

"Do 'ee? I like to hear of the things that remain."

"But grandma! the earth itself changes; at least it is as different in different places as anything can be."

"Some's cold, and some's hot," observed the old lady.

"It is much more than that. The trees are different, and the fruits are different; and the animals; and the country is different, and the buildings, and the people's dresses."

"The men and women is the same," said the old lady contentedly.

"But no, not even that, grandma. They are as different as they can be, and still be men and women."

"'As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' Be the New York folks so queer, then, Lois?"

"O no, not the New York people; though they are different too; quite different from Shampuashuh—"

"How?"

Lois did not want to say. Her grandmother, she thought, could not understand her; and if she could understand, she thought she would be perhaps hurt. She turned the conversation. Then came the clearing away the remains of dinner; washing the dishes; baking the rest of the tea-cakes; cleansing and putting away the baker; preparing flour for next day's bread-making; making her own bed and putting her room in order; doing work in the dairy which Madge was not at home to take care of; brushing up the kitchen, putting on the kettle, setting the table for tea. Altogether Lois had a busy two or three hours, before she could put on her afternoon dress and come and sit down by her grandmother.

"It is a change!" she said, smiling. "Such a different life from what I have been living. You can't think, grandma, what a contrast between this afternoon and last Friday."

"What was then?"

"I was sitting in Mrs. Wishart's drawing-room, doing nothing but play work, and a gentleman talking to me."

"Why was he talking to *you?* Warn't Mrs. Wishart there?"

"No; she was out."

"What did he talk to you for?"

"I was the only one there was," said Lois. But looking back, she could not avoid the thought that Mr.

Dillwyn's long stay and conversation had not been solely a taking up with what he could get.

"He could have gone away," said Mrs. Armadale, echoing her thought.

"I do not think he wanted to go away. I think he liked to talk to me."
It was very odd too, she thought.

"And did you like to talk to him?"

"Yes. You know I hare not much to talk about; but somehow he seemed to find out what there was."

"Had *he* much to talk about?"

"I think there is no end to that," said Lois. "He has been all over the world and seen everything; and he is a man of sense, to care for the things that are worth while; and he is educated; and it is very entertaining to hear him talk."

"Who is he? A young man?"

"Yes, he is young. O, he is an old friend of Mrs. Wishart."

"Did you like him best of all the people you saw?"

"O no, not by any means. I hardly know him, in fact; not so well as others."

"Who are the others?"

"What others, grandmother?"

"The other people that you like better."

Lois named several ladies, among them Mrs. Wishart, her hostess.

"There's no men's names among them," remarked Mrs. Armadale. "Didn't you see none, savin' that one?"

"Plenty!" said Lois, smiling.

"An' nary one that you liked?"

"Why, yes, grandmother; several; but of course—"

"What of course?"

"I was going to say, of course I did not have much to do with them; but there was one I had a good deal to do with."

"Who was he?"

"He was a young Mr. Caruthers. O, I did not have much to do with *him;* only he was there pretty often, and talked to me. He was pleasant."

"Was he a real godly man?"

"No, grandmother. He is not a Christian at all, I think."

"And yet he pleased you, Lois?"

"I did not say so, grandmother."

"I heerd it in the tone of your voice."

"Did you? Yes, he was pleasant. I liked him pretty well. People that you would call godly people never came there at all. I suppose there must be some in New York; but I did not see any."

There was silence a while.

"Eliza Wishart must keep poor company, if there ain't one godly one among 'em," Mrs. Armadale began again. But Lois was silent.

"What do they talk about?"

"Everything in the world, except that. People and things, and what this one says and what that one

did, and this party and that party. I can't tell you, grandma. There seemed no end of talk; and yet it did not amount to much when all was done. I am not speaking of a few, gentlemen like Mr. Dillwyn, and a few more."

"But he ain't a Christian?"

"No."

"Nor t'other one? the one you liked."

"No."

"I'm glad you've come away, Lois."

"Yes, grandma, and so am I; but why?"

"You know why. A Christian woman maunt have nothin' to do with men that ain't Christian."

"Nothing to do! Why, we must, grandma. We cannot help seeing people and talking to them."

"The snares is laid that way," said Mrs. Armadale.

"What are we to do, then, grandmother?"

"Lois Lothrop," said the old lady, suddenly sitting upright, "what's the Lord's will?"

"About—what?"

"About drawin' in a yoke with one that don't go your way?"

"He says, don't do it."

"Then mind you don't."

"But, grandma, there is no talk of any such thing in this case," said Lois, half laughing, yet a little annoyed. "Nobody was thinking of such a thing."

"You don' know what they was thinkin' of."

"I know what they *could not* have thought of. I am different from them; I am not of their world; and I am not educated, and I am poor. There is no danger, grandmother."

"Lois, child, you never know where danger is comin'. It's safe to have your armour on, and keep out o' temptation. Tell me you'll never let yourself like a man that ain't Christian!"

"But I might not be able to help liking him."

"Then promise me you'll never marry no sich a one."

"Grandma, I'm not thinking of marrying."

"Lois, what is the Lord's will about it?"

"I know, grandma," Lois answered rather soberly.

"And you know why. 'Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.' I've seen it, Lois, over and over agin. I've been a woman—or a man—witched away and dragged down, till if they hadn't lost all the godliness they ever had, it warn't because they didn't seem so. And the children grew up to be scapegraces.'"

"Don't it sometimes work the other way?"

"Not often, if a Christian man or woman has married wrong with their eyes open. Cos it proves, Lois, *that* proves, that the ungodly one of the two has the most power; and what he has he's like to keep. Lois, I mayn't be here allays to look after you; promise me that you'll do the Lord's will."

"I hope I will, grandma," Lois answered soberly.

"Read them words in Corinthians again."

Lois got the Bible and obeyed, "'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?'"

"Lois, ain't them words plain?"

"Very plain, grandma."

"Will ye mind 'em?"

"Yes, grandma; by his grace."

"Ay, ye may want it," said the old lady; "but it's safe to trust the Lord. An' I'd rather have you suffer heartbreak follerin' the Lord, than goin' t'other way. Now you may read to me, Lois. We'll have it before they come home."

"Who has read to you while I have been gone?"

"O, one and another. Madge mostly; but Madge don't care, and so she don' know how to read."

Mrs. Armadale's sight was not good; and it was the custom for one of the girls, Lois generally, to read her a verse or two morning and evening. Generally it was a small portion, talked over if they had time, and if not, then thought over by the old lady all the remainder of the day or evening, as the case might be. For she was like the man of whom it is written—"His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

"What shall I read, grandma?"

"You can't go wrong."

The epistle to the Corinthians lay open before Lois, and she read the words following those which had just been called for.

"'And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'"

If anybody had been there to see, the two women made the loveliest picture at this moment. The one of them old, weather-worn, plain-featured, sitting with the quiet calm of the end of a work day and listening; the other young, blooming, fresh, lovely, with a wealth of youthful charms about her, bending a little over the big book on her lap; on both faces a reverent sweet gravity which was most gracious. Lois read and stopped, without looking up.

"I think small of all the world, alongside o' that promise, Lois."

"And so do I, grandmother."

"But, you see, the Lord's sons and daughters has got to be separate from other folks."

"In some ways."

"Of course they've got to live among folks, but they've got to be separate for all; and keep their garments."

"I do not believe it is easy in a place like New York," said Lois.
"Seems to me I was getting all mixed up."

"'Tain't easy nowheres, child. Only, where the way is very smooth, folks slides quicker."

"How can one be 'separate' always, grandma, in the midst of other people?"

"Take care that you keep nearest to God. Walk with him; and you'll be pretty sure to be separate from the most o' folks."

There was no more said. Lois presently closed the book and laid it away, and the two sat in silence awhile. I will not affirm that Lois did not feel something of a stricture round her, since she had given that promise so clearly. Truly the promise altered nothing, it only made things somewhat more tangible; and there floated now and then past Lois's mental vision an image of a handsome head, crowned with graceful locks of luxuriant light brown hair, and a face of winning pleasantness, and eyes that looked eagerly into her eyes. It came up now before her, this vision, with a certain sense of something lost. Not that she had ever reckoned that image as a thing won; as belonging, or ever

possibly to belong, to herself; for Lois never had such a thought for a moment. All the same came now the vision before her with the commentary,—'You never can have it. That acquain'tance, and that friendship, and that intercourse, is a thing of the past; and whatever for another it might have led to, it could lead to nothing for you.' It was not a defined thought; rather a floating semi-consciousness; and Lois presently rose up and went from thought to action.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMILY.

The spring day was fading into the dusk of evening, when feet and voices heard outside announced that the travellers were returning. And in they came, bringing a breeze of business and a number of tied-up parcels with them into the quiet house.

"The table ready! how good! and the fire. O, it's Lois! Lois is here!"—and then there were warm embraces, and then the old grandmother was kissed. There were two girls, one tall, the other very tall.

"I'm tired to death!" said the former of these. "Charity would do no end of work; you know she is a steam-engine, and she had the steam up to-day, I can tell you. There's no saying how good supper will be; for our lunch wasn't much, and not good at that; and there's something good here, I can tell by my nose. Did you take care of the milk, Lois? you couldn't know where to set it."

"There is no bread, Lois. I suppose you found out?" the other sister said.

"O, she's made biscuits!" said Madge. "Aren't you a brick, though, Lois! I was expecting we'd have everything to do; and it's all done. Ain't that what you call comfortable? Is the tea made? I'll be ready in a minute."

But that was easier said than done.

"Lois! what sort of hats are they wearing in New York?"

"Lois, are mantillas fashionable? The woman in New Haven, the milliner, said everybody was going to wear them. She wanted to make me get one."

"We can make a mantilla as well as she can," Lois answered.

"If we had the pattern! But is everybody wearing them in New York?"

"I think it must be early for mantillas."

"O, lined and wadded, of course. But is every body wearing them?"

"I do not know. I do not recollect."

"Not recollect!" cried the tall sister. "What are your eyes good for? What *do* people wear?"

"I wore my coat and cape. I do not know very well about other people. People wear different things."

"O, but that they do not, Lois!" the other sister exclaimed. "There is always one thing that is the fashion; and that is the thing one wants to know about. Last year it was visites. Now what is it this year? And what are the hats like?"

"They are smaller."

"There! And that woman in New Haven said they were going to be large still. Who is one to trust!"

"You may trust me," said Lois. "I am sure of so much. Moreover, there is my new straw bonnet which Mrs. Wishart gave me; you can see by that."

This was very satisfactory; and talk ran on in the same line for some time.

"And Lois, have you seen a great many people? At Mrs. Wishart's, I mean."

"Yes, plenty; at her house and at other houses."

"Was it great fun?" Madge asked.

"Sometimes. But indeed, yes; it was great fun generally, to see the different ways of people, and the beautiful houses, and furniture, and pictures, and everything."

"*Everything!* Was everything beautiful?"

"No, not beautiful; but everything in most of the houses where I went was handsome; often it was magnificent."

"I suppose it seemed so to you," said Charity.

"Tell us, Lois!" urged the other sister.

"What do you think of solid silver dishes to hold the vegetables on the table, and solid silver pudding dishes, and gold teaspoons, in the most delicate little painted cups?"

"I should say it was ridiculous," said the elder sister. "What's the use o' havin' your vegetables in silver dishes?"

"What's the use of having them in dishes at all?" laughed Lois. "They might be served in big cabbage leaves; or in baskets."

"That's nonsense," said Charity. "Of course they must be in dishes of some sort; but vegetables don't taste any better out o' silver."

"The dinner does not taste any better," said Lois, "but it *looks* a deal better, I can tell you. You have just no idea, girls, how beautiful a dinner table can be. The glass is beautiful; delicate, thin, clear glass, cut with elegant flowers and vines running over it. And the table linen is a pleasure to see, just the damask; it is so white, and so fine, and so smooth, and woven in such lovely designs. Mrs. Wishart is very fond of her table linen, and has it in beautiful patterns. Then silver is always handsome. Then sometimes there is a most superb centre-piece to the table; a magnificent tall thing of silver—I don't know what to call it; not a vase, and not a dish; but high, and with different bowls or shells filled with flowers and fruit. Why the mere ice-creams sometimes were in all sorts of pretty flower and fruit forms."

"Ice-cream!" cried Madge.

"And I say, what's the use of all that?" said Charity, who had not been baptized in character.

"The use is, its looking so very pretty," Lois answered.

"And so, I suppose you would like to have *your* vegetables in silver dishes? I should like to know why things are any better for looking pretty, when all's done?"

"They are not better, I suppose," said Madge.

"I don't know *why,* but I think they must be," said Lois, innocent of the personal application which the other two were making. For Madge was a very handsome girl, while Charity was hard-favoured, like her grandmother. "It does one good to see pretty things."

"That's no better than pride," said Charity. "Things that ain't pretty are just as useful, and more useful. That's all pride, silver dishes, and flowers, and stuff. It just makes people stuck-up. Don't they think themselves, all those grand folks, don't they think themselves a hitch or two higher than Shampuashuh folks?"

"Perhaps," said Lois; "but I do not know, so I cannot say."

"O Lois," cried Madge, "are the people very nice?"

"Some of them."

"You haven't lost your heart, have you?"

"Only part of it."

"Part of it! O, to whom, Lois? Who is it?"

"Mrs. Wishart's black horses."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Charity. "Haven't Shampuashuh folks got horses? Don't tell me!"

"But, Lois!" pursued Madge, "who was the nicest person you saw?"

"Madge, I don't know. A good many seemed to be nice."

"Well, who was the handsomest? and who was the cleverest? and who was the kindest to you? I don't mean Mrs. Wishart. Now answer."

"The handsomest, and the cleverest, and the kindest to me?" Lois repeated slowly. "Well, let me see. The handsomest was a Mr. Caruthers."

"Who's he?"

"Mr. Caruthers."

"*What* is he, then?"

"He is a gentleman, very much thought of; rich, and knows everybody; that's about all I can tell."

"Was he the cleverest, too, that you saw?"

"No, I think not."

"Who was that?"

"Another gentleman; a Mr. Dillwyn."

"Dillun!" Madge repeated.

"That is the pronunciation of the name. It is spelt D, i, l, l, w, y, n,—Dilwin; but it is called Dillun."

"And who was kindest to you? Go on, Lois."

"O, everybody was kind to me," Lois said evasively. "Kind enough. I did not need kindness."

"Whom did you like best, then?"

"Of those two? They are both men of the world, and nothing to me; but of the two, I think I like the first best."

"Caruthers. I shall remember," said Madge.

"That is foolish talk, children," remarked Mrs. Armadale.

"Yes, but grandma, you know children are bound to be foolish sometimes," returned Madge.

"And then the rod of correction must drive it far from them," said the old lady. "That's the common way; but it ain't the easiest way. Lois said true; these people are nothing and can be nothing to her. I wouldn't make believe anything about it, if I was you."

The conversation changed to other things. And soon took a fresh spring at the entrance of another of the family, an aunt of the girls; who lived in the neighbourhood, and came in to hear the news from New Haven as well as from New York. And then it knew no stop. While the table was clearing, and while Charity and Madge were doing up the dishes, and when they all sat down round the fire afterwards, there went on a ceaseless, restless, unending flow of questions, answers, and comments; going over, I am bound to say, all the ground already travelled during supper. Mrs. Armadale sometimes sighed to herself; but this, if the others heard it, could not check them.

Mrs. Marx was a lively, clever, kind, good-natured woman; with plenty of administrative ability, like so many New England women, full of resources; quick with her head and her hands, and not slow with her tongue; an uneducated woman, and yet one who had made such good use of life-schooling, that for all practical purposes she had twice the wit of many who have gone through all the drill of the best institutions. A keen eye, a prompt judgment, and a fearless speech, all belonged to Mrs. Marx; universally esteemed and looked up to and welcomed by all her associates. She was not handsome; she was even strikingly deficient in the lines of beauty; and refinement was not one of her characteristics, other than the refinement which comes of kindness and unselfishness. Mrs. Marx would be delicately careful of another's feelings, when there was real need; she could show an exceeding great tenderness

and tact then; while in ordinary life her voice was rather loud, her movements were free and angular, and her expressions very unconstrained. Nobody ever saw Mrs. Marx anything but neat, whatever she possibly might be doing; in other respects her costume was often extremely unconventional; but she could dress herself nicely and look quite as becomes a lady. Independent was Mrs. Marx, above all and in everything.

"I guess she's come back all safe!" was her comment, made to Mrs. Armadale, at the conclusion of the long talk. Mrs. Armadale made no answer.

"It's sort o' risky, to let a young thing like that go off by herself among all those highflyers. It's like sendin' a pigeon to sail about with the hawks."

"Why, aunt Anne," said Lois at this, "whom can you possibly mean by the hawks?"

"The sort o' birds that eat up pigeons."

"I saw nobody that wanted to eat me up, I assure you."

"There's the difference between you and a real pigeon. The pigeon knows the hawk when she sees it; you don't."

"Do you think the hawks all live in cities?"

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Marx. "They go swoopin' about in the country now and then. I shouldn't a bit wonder to see one come sailin' over our heads one of these fine days. But now, you see, grandma has got you under her wing again." Mrs. Marx was Mrs. Armadale's half-daughter only, and sometimes in company of others called her as her grandchildren did. "How does home look to you, Lois, now you're back in it?"

"Very much as it used to look," Lois answered, smiling.

"The taste ain't somehow taken out o' things? Ha' you got your old appetite for common doin's?"

"I shall try to-morrow. I am going out into the garden to get some peas in."

"Mine is in."

"Not long, aunt Anne? the frost hasn't been long out of the ground."

"Put 'em in to-day, Lois. And your garden has the sun on it; so I shouldn't wonder if you beat me after all. Well, I must go along and look arter my old man. He just let me run away now 'cause I told him I was kind o' crazy about the fashions; and he said 'twas a feminine weakness and he pitied me. So I come. Mrs. Dashiell has been a week to New London; but la! New London bonnets is no account."

"You don't get much light from Lois," remarked Charity.

"No. Did ye learn anything, Lois, while you was away?"

"I think so, aunt Anne."

"What, then? Let's hear. Learnin' ain't good for much, without you give it out."

Lois, however, seemed not inclined to be generous with her stores of new knowledge.

"I guess she's learned Shampuashuh ain't much of a place," the elder sister remarked further.

"She's been spellin' her lesson backwards, then. Shampuashuh's a first-rate place."

"But we've no grand people here. We don't eat off silver dishes, nor drink out o' gold spoons; and our horses can go without little lookin'-glasses over their heads," Charity proceeded.

"Do you think there's any use in all that, Lois?" said her aunt.

"I don't know, aunt Anne," Lois answered with a little hesitation.

"Then I'm sorry for ye, girl, if you are left to think such nonsense. Ain't our victuals as good here, as what comes out o' those silver dishes?"

"Not always."

"Are New York folks better cooks than we be?"

"They have servants that know how to do things."

"Servants! Don't tell me o' no servants' doin's! What can they make that I can't make better?"

"Can you make a soufflé, aunt Anne?"

"What's that?"

"Or biscuit glacé?"

"*Biskwee glassy?*" repeated the indignant Shampuashuh lady. "What do you mean, Lois? Speak English, if I am to understand you."

"These things have no English names."

"Are they any the better for that?"

"No; and nothing could make them better. They are as good as it is possible for anything to be; and there are a hundred other things equally good, that we know nothing about here."

"I'd have watched and found out how they were done," said the elder woman, eyeing Lois with a mingled expression of incredulity and curiosity and desire, which it was comical to see. Only nobody there perceived the comicality. They sympathized too deeply in the feeling.

"I would have watched," said Lois; "but I could not go down into the kitchen for it."

"Why not?"

"Nobody goes into the kitchen, except to give orders."

"Nobody goes into the kitchen!" cried Mrs. Marx, sinking down again into a chair. She had risen to go.

"I mean, except the servants."

"It's the shiftlessest thing I ever heard o' New York. And do you think *that's* a nice way o' livin', Lois?"

"I am afraid I do, aunt Anne. It is pleasant to have plenty of time for other things."

"What other things?"

"Reading."

"Reading! La, child! I can read more books in a year than is good for me, and do all my own work, too. I like play, as well as other folks; but I like to know my work's done first. Then I can play."

"Well, there the servants do the work."

"And you like that? That ain't a nat'ral way o' livin', Lois; and I believe it leaves folks too much time to get into mischief. When folks hasn't business enough of their own to attend to, they're free to put their fingers in other folks' business. And they get sot up, besides. My word for it, it ain't healthy for mind nor body. And you needn't think I'm doin' what I complain of, for your business is my business. Good-bye, girls. I'll buy a cook-book the next time I go to New London, and learn how to make suflles. Lois shan't hold that whip over me."

CHAPTER X.

LOIS'S GARDEN.

Lois went at her gardening the next morning, as good as her word. It was the last of March, and an anticipation of April, according to the fashion the months have of sending promissory notes in advance of them; and this year the spring was early. The sun was up, but not much more, when Lois, with her spade and rake and garden line, opened the little door in the garden fence and shut it after her. Then she was alone with the spring. The garden was quite a roomy place, and pretty, a little later in the season; for some old and large apple and cherry trees shadowed parts of it, and broke up the stiff, bare regularity of an ordinary square bit of ground laid out in lesser squares. Such regularity was impossible

here. In one place, two or three great apple trees in a group formed a canopy over a wide circuit of turf. The hoe and the spade must stand back respectfully; there was nothing to be done. One corner was quite given up to the occupancy of an old cherry tree, and its spread of grassy ground beneath and about it was again considerable. Still other trees stood here and there; and the stems of none of them were approached by cultivation. In the spaces between, Lois stretched her line and drew her furrows, and her rows of peas and patches of corn had even so room enough.

Grass was hardly green yet, and tree branches were bare, and the upturned earth was implanted. There was nothing here yet but the Spring with Lois. It is wonderful what a way Spring has of revealing herself, even while she is hid behind the brown and grey wrappings she has borrowed from Winter. Her face is hardly seen; her form is not discernible; but there is a breath and a smile and a kiss, that are like nothing her brothers and sisters have to give. Of them all, Spring's smile brings most of hope and expectation with it. And there is a perfume Spring wears, which is the rarest, and most untraceable, and most unmistakeable, of all. The breath and the perfume, and the smile and the kiss, greeted Lois as she went into the old garden. She knew them well of old time, and welcomed them now. She even stood still a bit to take in the rare beauty and joy of them. And yet, the apple trees were bare, and the cherry trees; the turf was dead and withered; the brown ploughed-up soil had no relief of green growths. Only Spring was there with Lois, and yet that seemed enough; Spring and associations. How many hours of pleasant labour in that enclosed bit of ground there had been; how many lapfuls and basketfuls of fruits the rich reward of the labour; how Lois had enjoyed both! And now, here was spring again, and the implanted garden. Lois wanted no more.

She took her stand under one of the bare old apple trees, and surveyed her ground, like a young general. She had it all mapped out, and knew just where things were last year. The patch of potatoes was in that corner, and a fine yield they had been. Corn had been here; yes, and here she would run her lines of early peas. Lois went to work. It was not very easy work, as you would know if you had ever tried to reduce ground that has been merely ploughed and harrowed, to the smooth evenness necessary for making shallow drills. Lois plied spade and rake with an earnest good-will, and thorough knowledge of her business. Do not imagine an untidy long skirt sweeping the soft soil and transferring large portions of it to the gardener's ankles; Lois was dressed for her work in a short stuff frock and leggins; and looked as nice when she came out as when she went in, albeit not in any costume ever seen in Fifth Avenue or Central Park. But what do I say? If she looked "nice" when she went out to her garden, she looked superb when she came in, or when she had been an hour or so delving. Her hat fallen back a little; her rich masses of hair just a little loosened, enough to show their luxuriance; the colour flushed into her cheeks with the exercise, and her eyes all alive with spirit and zeal—ah, the fair ones in Fifth or any other avenue would give a great deal to look so; but that sort of thing goes with the short frock and leggins, and will not be conjured up by a mantua-maker. Lois had after a while a strip of her garden ground nicely levelled and raked smooth; and then her line was stretched over it, and her drills drawn, and the peas were planted and were covered; and a little stick at each end marked how far the planted rows extended.

Lois gathered up her tools then, to go in, but instead of going in she sat down on one of the wooden seats that were fixed under the great apple trees. She was tired and satisfied; and in that mood of mind and body one is easily tempted to musing. Aimlessly, carelessly, thoughts roved and carried her she knew not whither. She began to draw contrasts. Her home life, the sweets of which she was just tasting, set off her life at Mrs. Wishart's with its strange difference of flavour; hardly the brown earth of her garden was more different from the brilliant—coloured Smyrna carpets upon which her feet had moved in some people's houses. Life there and life here,—how diverse from one another! Could both be life? Suddenly it occurred to Lois that her garden fence shut in a very small world, and a world in which there was no room for many things that had seemed to her delightful and desirable in these weeks that were just passed. Life must be narrow within these borders. She had had several times in New York a sort of perception of this, and here it grew defined. Knowledge, education, the intercourse of polished society, the smooth ease and refinement of well-ordered households, and the habits of affluence, and the gratification of cultivated tastes; more yet, the *having* cultivated tastes; the gratification of them seemed to Lois a less matter. A large horizon, a wide experience of men and things; was it not better, did it not make life richer, did it not elevate the human creature to something of more power and worth, than a very narrow and confined sphere, with its consequent narrow and confined way of looking at things? Lois was just tired enough to let all these thoughts pass over her, like gentle waves of an incoming tide, and they were emphazised here and there by a vision of a brown curly head, and a kindly, handsome, human face looking into hers. It was a vision that came and went, floated in and disappeared among the waves of thought that rose and fell. Was it not better to sit and talk even with Mr. Dillwyn, than to dig and plant peas? Was not the Lois who did *that*, a quite superior creature to the Lois who did *this?* Any common, coarse man could plant peas, and do it as well as she; was this to be her work, this and the like, for the rest of her life? Just the labour for material existence, instead of the refining and forming and up-building of the nobler, inner nature, the elevation of existence itself? My

little garden ground! thought Lois; is this indeed all? And what would Mr. Caruthers think, if he could see me now? Think he had been cheated, and that I am not what he thought I was. It is no matter what he thinks; I shall never see him again; it will not be best that I should ever pay Mrs. Wishart a visit again, even if she should ask me; not in New York. I suppose the Isles of Shoals would be safe enough. There would be nobody there. Well—I like gardening. And it is great fun to gather the peas when they are large enough; and it is fun to pick strawberries; and it is fun to do everything, generally. I like it all. But if I could, if I had a chance, which I cannot have, I would like, and enjoy, the other sort of thing too. I could be a good deal more than I am, *if* I had the opportunity.

Lois was getting rested by this time, and she gathered up her tools again, with the thought that breakfast would taste good. I suppose a whiff of the fumes of coffee preparing in the house was borne out to her upon the air, and suggested the idea. And as she went in she cheerfully reflected that their plain house was full of comfort, if not of beauty; and that she and her sisters were doing what was given them to do, and therefore what they were meant to do; and then came the thought, so sweet to the servant who loves his Master, that it is all *for* the Master; and that if he is pleased, all is gained, the utmost, that life can do or desire. And Lois went in, trilling low a sweet Methodist hymn, to an air both plaintive and joyous, which somehow—as many of the old Methodist tunes do—expressed the plaintiveness and the joyousness together with a kind of triumphant effect.

"O tell me no more of this world's vain store!
The time for such trifles with me now is o'er."

Lois had a voice exceedingly sweet and rich; an uncommon contralto; and when she sang one of these hymns, it came with its fall power. Mrs. Armadale heard her, and murmured a "Praise the Lord!" And Charity, getting the breakfast, heard her; and made a different comment.

"Were you meaning, now, what you were singing when you came in?" she asked at breakfast.

"What I was singing?" Lois repeated in astonishment.

"Yes, what you were singing. You sang it loud enough and plain enough; ha' you forgotten? Did you mean it?"

"One should always mean what one sings," said Lois gravely.

"So I think; and I want to know, did you mean that? 'The time for such trifles'—is it over with you, sure enough?"

"What trifles?"

"You know best. What did you mean? It begins about 'this world's vain store;' ha' you done with the world?"

"Not exactly."

"Then I wouldn't say so."

"But I didn't say so," Lois returned, laughing now. "The hymn means, that 'this world's vain store' is not my treasure; and it isn't. 'The time for such trifles with me now is o'er.' I have found something better. As Paul says, 'When I became a man, I put away childish things.' So, since I have learned to know something else, the world's store has lost its great value for me."

"Thank the Lord!" said Mrs. Armadale.

"You needn't say that, neither, grandma," Charity retorted. "I don't believe it one bit, all such talk. It ain't nature, nor reasonable. Folks say that just when somethin's gone the wrong way, and they want to comfort themselves with makin' believe they don't care about it. Wait till the chance comes, and see if they don't care! That's what I say."

"I wish you wouldn't say it, then, Charity," remarked the old grandmother.

"Everybody has a right to his views," returned Miss Charity. "That's what I always say."

"You must leave her her views, grandma," said Lois pleasantly. "She will have to change them, some day."

"What will make me change them?"

"Coming to know the truth."

"You think nobody but you knows the truth. Now, Lois, I'll ask you. Ain't you sorry to be back and out of 'this world's vain store'—out of all the magnificence, and back in your garden work again?"

"No."

"You enjoy digging in the dirt and wearin' that outlandish rig you put on for the garden?"

"I enjoy digging in the dirt very much. The dress I admire no more than you do."

"And you've got everythin' you want in the world?"

"Charity, Charity, that ain't fair," Madge put in. "Nobody has that; you haven't, and I haven't; why should Lois?"

"'Cos she says she's found 'a city where true joys abound;' now let's hear if she has."

"Quite true," said Lois, smiling.

"And you've got all you want?"

"No, I would like a good many things I haven't got, if it's the Lord's pleasure to give them."

"Suppose it ain't?"

"Then I do not want them," said Lois, looking up with so clear and bright a face that her carping sister was for the moment silenced. And I suppose Charity watched; but she never could find reason to think that Lois had not spoken the truth. Lois was the life of the house. Madge was a handsome and quiet girl; could follow but rarely led in the conversation. Charity talked, but was hardly enlivening to the spirits of the company. Mrs. Armadale was in ordinary a silent woman; could talk indeed, and well, and much; however, these occasions were mostly when she had one auditor, and was in thorough sympathy with that one. Amidst these different elements of the household life Lois played the part of the flux in a furnace; she was the happy accommodating medium through which all the others came into best play and found their full relations to one another. Lois's brightness and spirit were never dulled; her sympathies were never wearied; her intelligence was never at fault. And her work was never neglected. Nobody had ever to remind Lois that it was time for her to attend to this or that thing which it was her charge to do. Instead of which, she was very often ready to help somebody else not quite so "forehanded." The garden took on fast its dressed and ordered look; the strawberries were uncovered; and the raspberries tied up, and the currant bushes trimmed; and pea-sticks and bean-poles bristled here and there promisingly. And then the green growths for which Lois had worked began to reward her labour. Radishes were on the tea-table, and lettuce made the dinner "another thing;" and rows of springing beets and carrots looked like plenty in the future. Potatoes were up, and rare-ripes were planted, and cabbages; and corn began to appear. One thing after another, till Lois got the garden all planted; and then she was just as busy keeping it clean. For weeds, we all know, do thrive as unaccountably in the natural as in the spiritual world. It cost Lois hard work to keep them under; but she did it. Nothing would have tempted her to bear the reproach of them among her vegetables and fruits. And so the latter had a good chance, and throve. There was not much time or much space for flowers; yet Lois had a few. Red poppies found growing room between the currant bushes; here and there at a corner a dahlia got leave to stand and rear its stately head. Rose-bushes were set wherever a rose-bush could be; and there were some balsams, and pinks, and balm, and larkspur, and marigolds. Not many; however, they served to refresh Lois's soul when she went to pick vegetables for dinner, and they furnished nosegays for the table in the hall, or in the sitting-room, when the hot weather drove the family out of the kitchen.

Before that came June and strawberries. Lois picked the fruit always. She had been a good while one very warm afternoon bending down among the strawberry beds, and had brought in a great bowl full of fruit. She and Madge came together to their room to wash hands and get in order for tea.

"I have worked over all that butter," said Madge, "and skimmed a lot of milk. I must churn again to-morrow. There is no end to work!"

"No end to it," Lois assented. "Did you see my strawberries?"

"No."

"They are splendid. Those Black Princes are doing finely too. If we have rain they will be superb."

"How many did you get to-day?"

"Two quarts, and more."

"And cherries to preserve to-morrow. Lois, I get tired once in a while!"

"O, so do I; but I always get rested again."

"I don't mean that. I mean it is *all* work, work; day in and day out, and from one year's end to another. There is no let up to it. I get tired of that."

"What would you have?"

"I'd like a little play."

"Yes, but in a certain sense I think it is all play."

"In a nonsensical sense," said Madge. "How can work be play?"

"That's according to how you look at it," Lois returned cheerfully. "If you take it as I think you can take it, it is much better than play."

"I wish you'd make me understand you," said Madge discontentedly. "If there is any meaning to your words, that is."

Lois hesitated.

"I like work anyhow better than play," she said. "But then, if you look at it in a certain way, it becomes much better than play. Don't you know, Madge, I take it all, everything, as given me by the Lord to do;—to do for him;—and I do it so; and that makes every bit of it all pleasant."

"But you can't!" said Madge pettishly. She was not a pettish person, only just now something in her sister's words had the effect of irritation.

"Can't what?"

"Do everything for the Lord. Making butter, for instance; or cherry sweetmeats. Ridiculous! And nonsense."

"I don't mean it for nonsense. It is the way I do my garden work and my sewing."

"What *do* you mean, Lois? The garden work is for our eating, and the sewing is for your own back, or grandma's. I understand religion, but I don't understand cant."

"Madge, it's not cant; it's the plain truth."

"Only that it is impossible."

"No. You do not understand religion, or you would know how it is. All these things are things given us to do; we must make the clothes and preserve the cherries, and I must weed strawberries, and then pick strawberries, and all the rest. God has given me these things to do, and I do them for him."

"You do them for yourself, or for grandma, and for the rest of us."

"Yes, but first for Him. Yes, Madge, I do. I do every bit of all these things in the way that I think will please and honour him best—as far as I know how."

"Making your dresses!"

"Certainly. Making my dresses so that I may look, as near as I can, as a servant of Christ in my place ought to look. And taking things in that way, Madge, you can't think how pleasant they are; nor how all sorts of little worries fall off. I wish you knew, Madge! If I am hot and tired in a strawberry bed, and the thought comes, whose servant I am, and that he has made the sun shine and put me to work in it,—then it's all right in a minute, and I don't mind any longer."

Madge looked at her, with eyes that were half scornful, half admiring.

"There is just one thing that does tempt me," Lois went on, her eye going forth to the world outside the window, or to a world more distant and in tangible, that she looked at without seeing,—"I *do* sometimes wish I had time to read and learn."

"Learn!" Madge echoed. "What?"

"Loads of things. I never thought about it much, till I went to New York last winter; then, seeing

people and talking to people that were different, made me feel how ignorant I was, and what a pleasant thing it would be to have knowledge—education—yes, and accomplishments. I have the temptation to wish for that sometimes; but I know it is a temptation; for if I was intended to have all those things, the way would have been opened, and it is not, and never was. Just a breath of longing comes over me now and then for that; not for play, but to make more of myself; and then I remember that I am exactly where the Lord wants me to be, and *as* he chooses for me, and then I am quite content again."

"You never said so before," the other sister answered, now sympathizingly.

"No," said Lois, smiling; "why should I? Only just now I thought I would confess."

"Lois, I have wished for that very thing!"

"Well, maybe it is good to have the wish. If ever a chance comes, we shall know we are meant to use it; and we won't be slow!"

CHAPTER XI.

SUMMER MOVEMENTS.

All things in the world, so far as the dwellers in Shampuashuh knew, went their usual course in peace for the next few months. Lois gathered her strawberries, and Madge made her currant jelly. Peas ripened, and green corn was on the board, and potatoes blossomed, and young beets were pulled, and peaches began to come. It was a calm, gentle life the little family lived; every day exceedingly like the day before, and yet every day with something new in it. Small pieces of novelty, no doubt; a dish of tomatoes, or the first yellow raspberries, or a new pattern for a dress, or a new receipt for cake. Or they walked down to the shore and dug clams, some fine afternoon; or Mrs. Dashiell lent them a new book; or Mr. Dashiell preached an extraordinary sermon. It was a very slight ebb and flow of the tide of time; however, it served to keep everything from stagnation. Then suddenly, at the end of July, came Mrs. Wishart's summons to Lois to join her on her way to the Isles of Shoals. "I shall go in about a week," the letter ran; "and I want you to meet me at the Shampuashuh station; for I shall go that way to Boston. I cannot stop, but I will have your place taken and all ready for you. You must come, Lois, for I cannot do without you; and when other people need you, you know, you never hesitate. Do not hesitate now."

There was a good deal of hesitation, however, on one part and another, before the question was settled.

"Lois has just got home," said Charity. "I don't see what she should be going again for. I should like to know if Mrs. Wishart thinks she ain't wanted at home!"

"People don't think about it," said Madge; "only what they want themselves. But it is a fine chance for Lois."

"Why don't she ask you?" said Charity.

"She thought Madge would enjoy a visit to her in New York more," said Lois. "So she said to me."

"And so I would," cried Madge. "I don't care for a parcel of little islands out at sea. But that would just suit Lois. What sort of a place *is* the Isles of Shoals anyhow?"

"Just that," said Lois; "so far as I know. A parcel of little islands, out in the sea."

"Where at?" said Charity.

"I don't know exactly."

"Get the map and look."

"They are too small to be down on the map."

"What is Eliza Wishart wantin' to go there for?" asked Mrs. Armadale.

"O, she goes somewhere every year, grandma; to one place and another; and I suppose she likes

novelty."

"That's a poor way to live," said the old lady. "But I suppose, bein' such a place, it'll be sort o' lonesome, and she wants you for company. May be she goes for her health."

"I think quite a good many people go there, grandma."

"There can't, if they're little islands out at sea. Most folks wouldn't like that. Do you want to go, Lois?"

"I would like it, very much. I just want to see what they are like, grandmother. I never did see the sea yet."

"You saw it yesterday, when we went for clams," said Charity scornfully.

"That? O no. That's not the sea, Charity."

"Well, it's mighty near it."

It seemed to be agreed at last that Lois should accept her cousin's invitation; and she made her preparations. She made them with great delight. Pleasant as the home-life was, it was quite favourable to the growth of an appetite for change and variety; and the appetite in Lois was healthy and strong. The sea and the islands, and, on the other hand, an intermission of gardening and fruit-picking; Shampuashuh people lost sight of for a time, and new, new, strange forms of humanity and ways of human life; the prospect was happy. And a happy girl was Lois, when one evening in the early part of August she joined Mrs. Wishart in the night train to Boston. That lady met her at the door of the drawing-room car, and led her to the little compartment where they were screened off from the rest of the world.

"I am so glad to have you!" was her salutation. "Dear me, how well you look, child! What have you been doing to yourself?"

"Getting brown in the sun, picking berries."

"You are not brown a bit. You are as fair as—whatever shall I compare you to? Roses are common."

"Nothing better than roses, though," said Lois.

"Well, a rose you must be; but of the freshest and sweetest. We don't have such roses in New York. Fact, we do not. I never see anything so fresh there. I wonder why?"

"People don't live out-of-doors picking berries," suggested Lois.

"What has berry-picking to do with it? My dear, it is a pity we shall have none of your old admirers at the Isles of Shoals; but I cannot promise you one. You see, it is off the track. The Caruthers are going to Saratoga; they stayed in town after the mother and son got back from Florida. The Bentons are gone to Europe. Mr. Dillwyn, by the way, was he one of your admirers, Lois?"

"Certainly not," said Lois, laughing. "But I have a pleasant remembrance of him, he gave us such a good lunch one day. I am very glad I am not going to see anybody I ever saw before. Where *are* the Isles of Shoals? and what are they, that you should go to see them?"

"I'm not going to see them—there's nothing to see, unless you like sea and rocks. I am going for the air, and because I must go somewhere, and I am tired of everywhere else. O, they're out in the Atlantic —sea all round them—queer, barren places. I am so glad I've got you, Lois! I don't know a soul that's to be there—can't guess what we shall find; but I've got you, and I can get along."

"Do people go there just for health?"

"O, a few, perhaps; but the thing is what I am after—novelty; they are hardly the fashion yet."

"That is the very oddest reason for doing or not doing things!" said Lois. "Because it's the fashion! As if that made it pleasant, or useful."

"It does!" said Mrs. Wishart. "Of course it does. Pleasant, yes, and useful too. My dear, you don't want to be out of the fashion?"

"Why not, if the fashion does not agree with me?"

"O my dear, you will learn. Not to agree with the fashion, is to be out with the world."

"With one part of it," said Lois merrily.

"Just the part that is of importance. Never mind, you will learn. Lois, I am so sleepy, I can not keep up any longer. I must curl down and take a nap. I just kept myself awake till we reached Shampuashuh. You had better do as I do. My dear, I am very sorry, but I can't help it."

So Mrs. Wishart settled herself upon a heap of bags and wraps, took off her bonnet, and went to sleep. Lois did not feel in the least like following her example. She was wide-awake with excitement and expectation, and needed no help of entertainment from anybody. With her thoroughly sound mind and body and healthy appetites, every detail and every foot of the journey was a pleasure to her; even the corner of a drawing-room car on a night train. It was such change and variety! and Lois had spent all her life nearly in one narrow sphere and the self-same daily course of life and experience. New York had been one great break in this uniformity, and now came another. Islands in the sea! Lois tried to fancy what they would be like. So much resorted to already, they must be very charming; and green meadows, shadowing trees, soft shores and cosy nooks rose up before her imagination. Mr. Caruthers and his family were at Saratoga, that was well; but there would be other people, different from the Shampuashuh type; and Lois delighted in seeing new varieties of humankind as well as new portions of the earth where they live. She sat wide-awake opposite to her sleeping hostess, and made an entertainment for herself out of the place and the night journey. It was a starlit, sultry night; the world outside the hurrying train covered with a wonderful misty veil, under which it lay half revealed by the heavenly illumination; soft, mysterious, vast; a breath now and then whispering of nature's luxuriant abundance and sweetness that lay all around, out there under the stars, for miles and hundreds of miles. Lois looked and peered out sometimes, so happy that it was not Shampuashuh, and that she was away, and that she would see the sun shine on new landscapes when the morning came round; and sometimes she looked within the car, and marvelled at the different signs and tokens of human life and character that met her there. And every yard of the way was a delight to her.

Meanwhile, how weirdly and strangely do the threads of human life cross and twine and untwine in this world!

That same evening, in New York, in the Caruthers mansion in Twenty-Third Street, the drawing-room windows were open to let in the refreshing breeze from the sea. The light lace curtains swayed to and fro as the wind came and went, but were not drawn; for Mrs. Caruthers liked, she said, to have so much of a screen between her and the passers-by. For that matter, the windows were high enough above the street to prevent all danger of any one's looking in. The lights were burning low in the rooms, on account of the heat; and within, in attitudes of exhaustion and helplessness sat mother and daughter in their several easy-chairs. Tom was on his back on the floor, which, being nicely matted, was not the worst place. A welcome break to the monotony of the evening was the entrance of Philip Dillwyn. Tom got up from the floor to welcome him, and went back then to his former position.

"How come you to be here at this time of year?" Dillwyn asked. "It was mere accident my finding you. Should never have thought of looking for you. But by chance passing, I saw that windows were open and lights visible, so I concluded that something else might be visible if I came in."

"We are only just passing through," Julia explained. "Going to Saratoga to-morrow. We have only just come from Newport."

"What drove you away from Newport? This is the time to be by the sea."

"O, who cares for the sea! or anything else? it's the people; and the people at Newport didn't suit mother. The Benthams were there, and that set; and mother don't like the Benthams; and Miss Zagumski, the daughter of the Russian minister, was there, and all the world was crazy about her. Nothing was to be seen or heard but Miss Zagumski, and her dancing, and her playing, and her singing. Mother got tired of it."

"And yet Newport is a large place," remarked Philip.

"Too large," Mrs. Caruthers answered.

"What do you expect to find at Saratoga?"

"Heat," said Mrs. Caruthers; "and another crowd."

"I think you will not be disappointed, if this weather holds."

"It is a great deal more comfortable here!" sighed the elder lady. "Saratoga's a dreadfully hot place! Home is a great deal more comfortable."

"Then why not stay at home? Comfort is what you are after."

"O, but one can't! Everybody goes somewhere; and one must do as everybody does."

"Why?"

"Philip, what makes you ask such a question?"

"I assure you, a very honest ignorance of the answer to it."

"Why, one must do as everybody does?"

"Yes."

The lady's tone and accent had implied that the answer was self-evident; yet it was not given.

"Really,"—Philip went on. "What should hinder you from staying in this pleasant house part of the summer, or all of the summer, if you find yourselves more comfortable here?"

"Being comfortable isn't the only thing," said Julia.

"No. What other consideration governs the decision? that is what I am asking."

"Why, Philip, there is nobody in town."

"That is better than company you do not like."

"I wish it was the fashion to stay in town," said Mrs. Caruthers. "There is everything here, in one's own house, to make the heat endurable, and just what we miss when we go to a hotel. Large rooms, and cool nights, and clean servants, and gas, and baths—hotel rooms are so stuffy."

"After all, one does not live in one's rooms," said Julia.

"But," said Philip, returning to the charge, "why should not you, Mrs. Caruthers, do what you like? Why should you be displeased in Saratoga, or anywhere, merely because other people are pleased there? Why not do as you like?"

"You know one can't do as one likes in this world," Julia returned.

"Why not, if one can,—as you can?" said Philip, laughing.

"But that's ridiculous," said Julia, raising herself up with a little show of energy. "You know perfectly well, Mr. Dillwyn, that people belonging to the world must do as the rest of the world do. Nobody is in town. If we stayed here, people would get up some unspeakable story to account for our doing it; that would be the next thing."

"Dillwyn, where are you going?" said Tom suddenly from the floor, where he had been more uneasy than his situation accounted for.

"I don't know—perhaps I'll take your train and go to Saratoga too. Not for fear, though."

"That's capital!" said Tom, half raising himself up and leaning on his elbow. "I'll turn the care of my family over to you, and I'll seek the wilderness."

"What wilderness?" asked his sister sharply.

"Some wilderness—some place where I shall not see crinoline, nor be expected to do the polite thing. I'll go for the sea, I guess."

"What have you in your head, Tom?"

"Refreshment."

"You've just come from the sea."

"I've just come from the sea where it was fashionable. Now I'll find some place where it is unfashionable. I don't favour Saratoga any more than you do. It's a jolly stupid; that's what it is."

"But where do you want to go, Tom? you have some place in your head."

"I'd as lief go off for the Isles of Shoals as anywhere," said Tom, lying down again. "They haven't got fashionable yet. I've a notion to see 'em first."

"I doubt about that," remarked Philip gravely. "I am not sure but the

Isles of Shoals are about the most distinguished place you could go to."

"Isles of Shoals. Where are they? and what are they?" Julia asked.

"A few little piles of rock out in the Atlantic, on which it spends its wrath all the year round; but of course the ocean is not always raging; and when it is not raging, it smiles; and they say the smile is nowhere more bewitching than at the Isles of Shoals," Philip answered.

"But will nobody be there?"

"Nobody you would care about," returned Tom.

"Then what'll you do?"

"Fish."

"Tom! you're not a fisher. You needn't pretend it."

"Sun myself on the rocks."

"You are brown enough already."

"They say, everything gets bleached there."

"Then I should like to go. But I couldn't stand the sea and solitude, and I don't believe you can stand it. Tom, this is ridiculous. You're not serious?"

"Not often," said Tom; "but this time I am. I am going to the Isles of Shoals. If Philip will take you to Saratoga, I'll start to-morrow; otherwise I will wait till I get you rooms and see you settled."

"Is there a hotel there?"

"Something that does duty for one, as I understand."

"Tom, this is too ridiculous, and vexatious," remonstrated his sister.
"We want you at Saratoga."

"Well, it is flattering; but you wanted me at St. Augustine a little while ago, and you had me. You can't always have a fellow. I'm going to see the Isles of Shoals before they're the rage. I want to get cooled off, for once, after Florida and Newport, besides."

"Isn't that the place where Mrs. Wishart is gone," said Philip now.

"I don't know—yes, I believe so."

"Mrs. Wishart!" exclaimed Julia in a different tone. "*She* gone to the
Isles of Shoals?"

"'Mrs. Wishart!" Mrs. Caruthers echoed. "Has she got that girl with her?"

Silence. Then Philip remarked with a laugh, that Tom's plan of "cooling off" seemed problematical.

"Tom," said his sister solemnly, "*is* Miss Lothrop going to be there?"

"Don't know, upon my word," said Tom. "I haven't heard."

"She is, and that's what you're going for. O Tom, Tom!" cried his sister despairingly. "Mr. Dillwyn, what shall we do with him?"

"Can't easily manage a fellow of his size, Miss Julia. Let him take his chance."

"Take his chance! Such a chance!"

"Yes, Philip," said Tom's mother; "you ought to stand by us."

"With all my heart, dear Mrs. Caruthers; but I am afraid I should be a weak support. Really, don't you think Tom might do worse?"

"Worse?" said the elder lady; "what could be worse than for him to bring such a wife into the house?"

Tom gave an inarticulate kind of snort just here, which was not lacking in expression. Philip went on calmly.

"Such a wife—" he repeated. "Mrs. Caruthers, here is room for discussion. Suppose we settle, for example, what Tom, or anybody situated like Tom, ought to look for and insist upon finding, in a wife. I wish you and Miss Julia would make out the list of qualifications."

"Stuff!" muttered Tom. "It would be hard lines, if a fellow must have a wife of his family's choosing!"

"His family can talk about it," said Philip, "and certainly will. Hold your tongue, Tom. I want to hear your mother."

"Why, Mr. Dillwyn," said the lady, "you know as well as I do; and you think just as I do about it, and about this Miss Lothrop."

"Perhaps; but let us reason the matter out. Maybe it will do Tom good. What ought he to have in a wife, Mrs. Caruthers? and we'll try to show him he is looking in the wrong quarter."

"I'm not looking anywhere!" growled Tom; but no one believed him.

"Well, Philip," Mrs. Caruthers began, "he ought to marry a girl of good family."

"Certainly. By 'good family' you mean—?"

"Everybody knows what I mean."

"Possibly Tom does not."

"I mean, a girl that one knows about, and that everybody knows about; that has good blood in her veins."

"The blood of respectable and respected ancestors," Philip said.

"Yes! that is what I mean. I mean, that have been respectable and respected for a long time back—for years and years."

"You believe in inheritance."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Caruthers. "I believe in family."

"Well, *I* believe in inheritance. But what proof is there that the young lady of whom we were speaking has no family?"

Julia raised herself up from her reclining position, and Mrs. Caruthers sat suddenly forward in her chair.

"Why, she is nobody!" cried the first. "Nobody knows her, nor anything about her."

"*Here*—" said Philip.

"Here! Of course. Where else?"

"Yes, just listen to that!" Tom broke in. "I xxow should anybody know her here, where she has never lived! But that's the way—"

"I suppose a Sandwich Islander's family is known in the Sandwich Islands," said Mrs. Caruthers. "But what good is that to us?"

"Then you mean, the family must be a New York family?"

"N—o," said Mrs. Caruthers hesitatingly; "I don't mean that exactly. There are good Southern families—"

"And good Eastern families!" put in Tom.

"But nobody knows anything about this girl's family," said the ladies both in a breath.

"Mrs. Wishart does," said Philip. "She has even told me. The family dates back to the beginning of the colony, and boasts of extreme respectability. I forget how many judges and ministers it can count up; and at least one governor of the colony; and there is no spot or stain upon it anywhere."

There was silence.

"Go on, Mrs. Caruthers. What else should Tom look for in a wife?"

"It is not merely what a family has been, but what its associations have been," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"These have evidently been respectable."

"But it is not that only, Philip. We want the associations of good society; and we want position. I want Tom to marry a woman of good position."

"Hm!" said Philip. "This lady has not been accustomed to anything that you would call 'society,' and 'position'—But your son has position enough, Mrs. Caruthers. He can stand without much help."

"Now, Philip, don't you go to encourage Tom in this mad fancy. It's just a fancy. The girl has nothing; and Tom's wife ought to be— I shall break my heart if Tom's wife is not of good family and position, and good manners, and good education. That's the least I can ask for."

"She has as good manners as anybody you know!" said Tom flaring up. "As good as Julia's, and better."

"I should say, she has no manner whatever," remarked Miss Julia quietly.

"What is 'manner'?" said Tom indignantly. "I hate it. Manner! They all have 'manner'—except the girls who make believe they have none; and their 'manner' is to want manner. Stuff!"

"But the girl knows nothing," persisted Mrs. Caruthers.

"She knows absolutely *nothing*,"—Julia confirmed this statement.

Silence.

"She speaks correct English," said Dillwyn. "That at least."

"English!—but not a word of French or of any other language. And she has no particular use for the one language she does know; she cannot talk about anything. How do you know she speaks good grammar, Mr. Dillwyn? did you ever talk with her?"

"Yes—" said Philip, making slow admission. "And I think you are mistaken in your other statement; she *can* talk on some subjects. Probably you did not hit the right ones."

"Well, she does not know anything," said Miss Julia.

"That is bad. Perhaps it might be mended."

"How? Nonsense! I beg your pardon, Mr. Dillwyn; but you cannot make an accomplished woman out of a country girl, if you don't begin before she is twenty. And imagine Tom with such a wife! and me with such a sister!"

"I cannot imagine it. Don't you see, Tom, you must give it up?" Dillwyn said lightly.

"I'll go to the Isles of Shoals and think about that," said Tom.
Wherewith he got up and went off.

"Mamma," said Julia then, "he's going to that place to meet that girl. Either she is to be there with Mrs. Wishart, or he is reckoning to see her by the way; and the Isles of Shoals are just a blind. And the only thing left for you and me is to go too, and be of the party!"

"Tom don't want us along," said Tom's mother.

"Of course he don't want us along; and I am sure we don't want it either; but it is the only thing left for us to do. Don't you see? She'll be there, or he can stop at her place by the way, going and coming; maybe Mrs. Wishart is asking her on purpose—I shouldn't be at all surprised—and they'll make up the match between them. It would be a thing for the girl, to marry Tom Caruthers!"

Mrs. Caruthers groaned, I suppose at the double prospect before her and before Tom. Philip was silent. Miss Julia went on discussing and arranging; till her brother returned.

"Tom," said she cheerfully, "we've been talking over matters, and I'll tell you what we'll do—if you won't go with us, we will go with you!"

"Where?"

"Why, to the Isles of Shoals, of course."

"You and mother!" said Tom.

"Yes. There is no fun in going about alone. We will go along with you."

"What on earth will *you* do at a place like that?"

"Keep you from being lonely."

"Stuff, Julia! You will wish yourself back before you've been there an hour; and I tell you, I want to go fishing. What would become of mother, landed on a bare rock like that, with nobody to speak to, and nothing but crabs to eat?"

"Crabs!" Julia echoed. Philip burst into a laugh.

"Crabs and mussels," said Tom. "I don't believe you'll get anything else."

"But is Mrs. Wishart gone there?"

"Philip says so."

"Mrs. Wishart isn't a fool."

And Tom was unable to overthrow this argument.

CHAPTER XII.

APPLEDORE.

It was a very bright, warm August day when Mrs. Wishart and her young companion steamed over from Portsmouth to the Isles of Shoals. It was Lois's first sight of the sea, for the journey from New York had been made by land; and the ocean, however still, was nothing but a most wonderful novelty to her. She wanted nothing, she could well-nigh attend to nothing, but the movements and developments of this vast and mysterious Presence of nature. Mrs. Wishart was amused and yet half provoked. There was no talk in Lois; nothing to be got out of her; hardly any attention to be had from her. She sat by the vessel's side and gazed, with a brow of grave awe and eyes of submissive admiration; rapt, absorbed, silent, and evidently glad. Mrs. Wishart was provoked at her, and envied her.

"What *do* you find in the water, Lois?"

"O, the wonder of it!" said the girl, with a breath of rapture.

"Wonder! what wonder? I suppose everything is wonderful, if you look at it. What do you see there that seems so very wonderful?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Wishart. It is so great! and it is so beautiful! and it is so awful!"

"Beautiful?" said Mrs. Wishart. "I confess I do not see it. I suppose it is your gain, Lois. Yes, it is awful enough in a storm, but not to-day. The sea is quiet."

Quiet! with those low-rolling, majestic soft billows. The quiet of a lion asleep with his head upon his paws. Lois did not say what she thought.

"And you have never seen the sea-shore yet," Mrs. Wishart went on. "Well, you will have enough of the sea at the Isles. And those are they, I fancy, yonder. Are those the Isles of Shoals?" she asked a passing man of the crew; and was answered with a rough voiced, "Yaw, mum; they be th' oisles."

Lois gazed now at those distant brown spots, as the vessel drew nearer and nearer. Brown spots they remained, and, to her surprise, *small* brown spots. Nearer and nearer views only forced the conviction deeper. The Isles seemed to be merely some rough rocky projections from old Ocean's bed, too small to have beauty, too rough to have value. Were those the desired Isles of Shoals? Lois felt deep disappointment. Little bits of bare rock in the midst of the sea; nothing more. No trees, she was sure; as the light fell she could even see no green. Why would they not be better relegated to Ocean's domain, from which they were only saved by a few feet of upheaval? why should anybody live there? and still more, why should anybody make a pleasure visit there?

"I suppose the people are all fishermen?" she said to Mrs. Wishart.

"I suppose so. O, there is a house of entertainment—a sort of hotel."

"How many people live there?"

"My dear, I don't know. A handful, I should think, by the look of the place. What tempts *them*, I don't see."

Nor did Lois. She was greatly disappointed. All her fairy visions were fled. No meadows, no shady banks, no soft green dales; nothing she had ever imagined in connection with country loveliness. Her expectations sank down, collapsed, and vanished for ever.

She showed nothing of all this. She helped Mrs. Wishart gather her small baggage together, and followed her on shore, with her usual quiet thoughtfulness; saw her established in the hotel, and assisted her to get things a little in order. But then, when the elder lady lay down to "catch a nap," as she said, before tea, Lois seized her flat hat and fled out of the house.

There was grass around it, and sheep and cows to be seen. Alas, no trees. But there were bushes certainly growing here and there, and Lois had not gone far before she found a flower. With that in her hand she sped on, out of the little grassy vale, upon the rocks that surrounded it, and over them, till she caught sight of the sea. Then she made her way, as she could, over the roughnesses and hindrances of the rocks, till she got near the edge of the island at that place; and sat down a little above where the billows of the Atlantic were rolling in. The wide sea line was before her, with its mysterious and infinite depth of colour; at her feet the waves were coming in and breaking, slow and gently to-day, yet every one seeming to make an invasion of the little rocky domain which defied it, and to retire unwillingly, foiled, beaten, and broken, to gather new forces and come on again for a new attack. Lois watched them, fascinated by their persistence, their sluggish power, and yet their ever-recurring discomfiture; admired the changing colours and hues of the water, endlessly varying, cool and lovely and delicate, contrasting with the wet washed rocks and the dark line of sea-weed lying where high tide had cast it up. The breeze blew in her face gently, but filled with freshness, life, and pungency of the salt air; sea-birds flew past hither and thither, sometimes uttering a cry; there was no sound in earth or heaven but that of the water and the wild birds. And by and by the silence, and the broad freedom of nature, and the sweet freshness of the life-giving breeze, began to take effect upon the watcher. She drank in the air in deep breaths; she watched with growing enjoyment the play of light and colour which offered such an endless variety; she let slip, softly and insensibly, every thought and consideration which had any sort of care attached to it; her heart grew light, as her lungs took in the salt breath, which had upon her somewhat the effect of champagne. Lois was at no time a very heavy-hearted person; and I lack a similitude which should fitly image the elastic bound her spirits made now. She never stirred from her seat, till it suddenly came into her head to remember that there might be dinner or supper in prospect somewhere. She rose then and made her way back to the hotel, where she found Mrs. Wishart just arousing from her sleep.

"Well, Lois" said the lady, with the sleep still in her voice, "where have you been? and what have you got? and what sort of a place have we come to?"

"Look at that, Mrs. Wishart!"

"What's that? A white violet! Violets here, on these rocks?"

"Did you ever see *such* a white violet? Look at the size of it, and the colour of it. And here's pimpernel. And O, Mrs. Wishart, I am so glad we came here, that I don't know what to do! It is just delightful. The air is the best air I ever saw."

"Can you *see* it, my dear? Well, I am glad you are pleased. What's that bell for, dinner or supper? I suppose all the meals here are alike. Let us go down and see."

Lois had an excellent appetite.

"This fish is very good, Mrs. Wishart."

"O my dear, it is just fish! You are in a mood to glorify everything. I am envious of you, Lois."

"But it is really capital; it is so fresh. I don't believe you can get such blue fish in New York."

"My dear, it is your good appetite. I wish I was as hungry, for anything, as you are."

"Is it Mrs. Wishart?" asked a lady who sat opposite them at the table.
She spoke politely, with an accent of hope and expectation. Mrs.

Wishart acknowledged the identity.

"I am very happy to meet you. I was afraid I might find absolutely no one here that I knew. I was saying only the other day—three days ago; this is Friday, isn't it? yes; it was last Tuesday. I was saying to my sister after our early dinner—we always have early dinner at home, and it comes quite natural here—we were sitting together after dinner, and talking about my coming. I have been meaning to come ever since three years ago; wanting to make this trip, and never could get away, until this summer things opened out to let me. I was saying to Lottie I was afraid I should find nobody here that I could speak to; and when I saw you, I said to myself, Can that be Mrs. Wishart?—I am so very glad. You have just come?"

"To-day,"—Mrs. Wishart assented.

"Came by water?"

"From Portsmouth."

"Yes—ha, ha!" said the affable lady. "Of course. You could not well help it. But from New York?"

"By railway. I had occasion to come by land."

"I prefer it always. In a steamer you never know what will happen to you. If it's good weather, you may have a pleasant time; but you never can tell. I took the steamer once to go to Boston—I mean to Stonington, you know; and the boat was so loaded with freight of some sort or other that she was as low down in the water as she could be and be safe; and I didn't think she was safe. And we went so slowly! and then we had a storm, a regular thunderstorm and squall, and the rain poured in torrents, and the Sound was rough, and people were sick, and I was very glad and thankful when we got to Stonington. I thought it would never be for pleasure that I would take a boat again."

"The Fall River boats are the best."

"I daresay they are, but I hope to be allowed to keep clear of them all. You had a pleasant morning for the trip over from Portsmouth."

"Very pleasant."

"It is such a gain to have the sea quiet! It roars and beats here enough in the best of times. I am sure I hope there will not a storm come while we are here; for I should think it must be dreadfully dreary. It's all sea here, you know."

"I should like to see what a storm here is like," Lois remarked.

"O, don't wish that!" cried the lady, "or your wish may bring it. Don't think me a heathen," she added, laughing; "but I have known such queer things. I must tell you—"

"You never knew a wish bring fair weather?" said Lois, smiling, as the lady stopped for a mouthful of omelet.

"O no, not fair weather; I am sure, if it did, we should have fair weather a great deal more than we do. But I was speaking of a storm, and I must tell you what I have seen.—These fish are very deliciously cooked!"

"They understand fish, I suppose, here," said Lois.

"We were going down the bay to escort some friends who were going to Europe. There was my cousin Llewellyn and his wife, and her sister, and one or two others in the party; and Lottie and I went to see them off. I always think it's rather a foolish thing to do, for why shouldn't one say good-bye at the water's edge, when they go on board, instead of making a journey of miles out to sea to say it there?—but this time Lottie wanted to go. She had never seen the ocean, except from the land; and you know that is very different; so we went. Lottie always likes to see all she can, and is never satisfied till she has got to the bottom of everything—"

"She would be satisfied with something less than that in this case?" said Lois.

"Hey? She was satisfied," said the lady, not apparently catching Lois's meaning; "she was more delighted with the sea than I was; for though it was quiet, they said, there was unquietness enough to make a good deal of motion; the vessel went sailing up and down a succession of small rolling hills, and I began to think there was nothing steady inside of me, any more than _out_side. I never can bear to be rocked, in any shape or form."

"You must have been a troublesome baby," said Lois.

"I don't know how that was; naturally I have forgotten; but since I have been old enough to think for myself, I never could bear rocking-chairs. I like an easy-chair—as easy as you please—but I want it to stand firm upon its four legs. So I did not enjoy the water quite as well as my sister did. But she grew enthusiastic; she wished she was going all the way over, and I told her she would have to drop *me* at some wayside station—"

"Where?" said Lois, as the lady stopped to carry her coffee cup to her lips. The question seemed not to have been heard.

"Lottie wished she could see the ocean in a mood not quite so quiet; she wished for a storm; she said she wished a little storm would get up before we got home, that she might see how the waves looked. I begged and prayed her not to say so, for our wishes often fulfil themselves. Isn't it extraordinary how they do? Haven't you often observed it, Mrs. Wishart?"

"In cases where wishes could take effect," returned that lady. "In the case of the elements, I do not see how they could do that."

"But I don't know how it is," said the other; "I have observed it so often."

"You call me by name," Mrs. Wishart went on rather hastily; "and I have been trying in vain to recall yours. If I had met you anywhere else, of course I should be at no loss; but at the Isles of Shoals one expects to see nobody, and one is surprised out of one's memory."

"I am never surprised out of my memory," said the other, chuckling. "I am poor enough in all other ways, I am sure, but my memory is good. I can tell you where I first saw you. You were at the Catskill House, with a large party; my brother-in-law Dr. Salisbury was there, and he had the pleasure of knowing you. It was two years ago."

"I recollect being at the Catskill House very well," said Mrs. Wishart, "and of course it was there I became acquain'ted with you; but you must excuse me, at the Isles of Shoals, for forgetting all my connections with the rest of the world."

"O, I am sure you are very excusable," said Dr. Salisbury's sister-in-law. "I am delighted to meet you again. I think one is particularly glad of a friend's face where one had not expected to see it; and I really expected nothing at the Isles of Shoals—but sea air."

"You came for sea air?"

"Yes, to get it pure. To be sure, Coney Island beach is not far off—for we live in Brooklyn; but I wanted the sea air wholly sea air—quite unmixed; and at Coney Island, somehow New York is so near, I couldn't fancy it would be the same thing. I don't want to smell the smoke of it. And I was curious about this place too; and I have so little opportunity for travelling, I thought it was a pity now when I *had* the opportunity, not to take the utmost advantage of it. They laughed at me at home, but I said no, I was going to the Isles of Shoals or nowhere. And now I am very glad I came."—

"Lois," Mrs. Wishart said when they went back to their own room, "I don't know that woman from Adam. I have not the least recollection of ever seeing her. I know Dr. Salisbury—and he might be anybody's brother-in-law. I wonder if she will keep that seat opposite us? Because she is worse than a smoky chimney!"

"O no, not that," said Lois. "She amuses me."

"Everything amuses you, you happy creature! You look as if the fairies that wait upon young girls had made you their special care. Did you ever read the 'Rape of the Lock'?"

"I have never read anything," Lois answered, a little soberly.

"Never mind; you have so much the more pleasure before you. But the 'Rape of the Lock'—in that story there is a young lady, a famous beauty, whose dressing-table is attended by sprites or fairies. One of them colours her lips; another hides in the folds of her gown; another tucks himself away in a curl of her hair.—You make me think of that young lady."

CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. Wishart was reminded of Belinda again the next morning. Lois was beaming. She managed to keep their talkative neighbour in order during breakfast; and then proposed to Mrs. Wishart to take a walk. But Mrs. Wishart excused herself, and Lois set off alone. After a couple of hours she came back with her hands full.

"O, Mrs. Wishart!" she burst forth,—"this is the very loveliest place you ever saw in your life! I can never thank you enough for bringing me! What can I do to thank you?"

"What makes it so delightful?" said the elder lady, smiling at her. "There is nothing here but the sea and the rocks. You have found the philosopher's stone, you happy girl!"

"The philosopher's stone?" said Lois. "That was what Mr. Dillwyn told me about."

"Philip? I wish he was here."

"It would be nice for you. *I* don't want anybody. The place is enough."

"What have you found, child?"

"Flowers—and mosses—and shells. O, the flowers are beautiful! But it isn't the flowers, nor any one thing; it is the place. The air is wonderful; and the sea, O, the sea is a constant delight to me!"

"The philosopher's stone!" repeated the lady. "What is it, Lois? You are the happiest creature I ever saw.—You find pleasure in everything."

"Perhaps it is that," said Lois simply. "Because I am happy."

"But what business have you to be so happy?—living in a corner like Shampuashuh. I beg your pardon, Lois, but it is a corner of the earth. What makes you happy?"

Lois answered lightly, that perhaps it was easier to be happy in a corner than in a wide place; and went off again. She would not give Mrs. Wishart an answer she could by no possibility understand.

Some time later in the day, Mrs. Wishart too, becoming tired of the monotony of her own room, descended to the piazza; and was sitting there when the little steamboat arrived with some new guests for the hotel. She watched one particular party approaching. A young lady in advance, attended by a gentleman; then another pair following, an older lady, leaning on the arm of a cavalier whom Mrs. Wishart recognized first of them all. She smiled to herself.

"Mrs. Wishart!" Julia Caruthers exclaimed, as she came upon the verandah. "You *are* here. That is delightful! Mamma, here is Mrs. Wishart. But whatever did bring you here? I am reminded of Captain Cook's voyages, that I used to read when I was a child, and I fancy I have come to one of his savage islands; only I don't see the salvages. They will appear, perhaps. But I don't see anything else; cocoanut trees, or palms, or bananas, the tale of which used to make my mouth water. There are no trees here at all, that I can see, nor anything else. What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart? May I present Mr. Lenox?—What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart?"

"What brought *you* here?" was the smiling retort. The answer was prompt.

"Tom."

Mrs. Wishart looked at Tom, who came up and paid his respects in marked form; while his mother, as if exhausted, sank down on one of the chairs.

"Yes, it was Tom," she repeated. "Nothing would do for Tom but the Isles of Shoals; and so, Julia and I had to follow in his train. In my grandmother's days that would have been different. What is here, dear Mrs. Wishart, besides you? You are not alone?"

"Not quite. I have brought my little friend, Lois Lothrop, with me; and she thinks the Isles of Shoals the most charming place that was ever discovered, by Captain Cook or anybody else."

"Ah, she is here!" said Mrs. Caruthers dryly; while Julia and Mr. Lenox exchanged glances. "Much other company?"

"Not much; and what there is comes more from New Hampshire than New

York, I fancy."

"Ah!—And what else is here then, that anybody should come here for?"

"I don't know yet. You must ask Miss Lothrop. Yonder she comes. She has been exploring ever since five o'clock, I believe."

"I suppose she is accustomed to get up at that hour," remarked the other, as if the fact involved a good deal of disparagement. And then they were all silent, and watched Lois, who was slowly and unconsciously approaching her reviewers. Her hands were again full of different gleanings from the wonderful wilderness in which she had been exploring; and she came with a slow step, still busy with them as she walked. Her hat had fallen back a little; the beautiful hair was a trifle disordered, showing so only the better its rich abundance and exquisite colour; the face it framed and crowned was fair and flushed, intent upon her gains from rock and meadow—for there was a little bit of meadow ground at Appledore;—and so happy in its sweet absorption, that an involuntary tribute of homage to its beauty was wrung from the most critical. Lois walked with a light, steady step; her careless bearing was free and graceful; her dress was not very fashionable, but entirely proper for the place; all eyes consented to this, and then all eyes came back to the face. It was so happy, so pure, so unconscious and unshadowed; the look was of the sort that one does not see in the assemblies of the world's pleasure-seekers; nor ever but in the faces of heaven's pleasure-finders. She was a very lovely vision, and somehow all the little group on the piazza with one consent kept silence, watching her as she came. She drew near with busy, pleased thoughts, and leisurely happy steps, and never looked up till she reached the foot of the steps leading to the piazza. Nor even then; she had picked up her skirt and mounted several steps daintily before she heard her name and raised her eyes. Then her face changed. The glance of surprise, it is true, was immediately followed by a smile of civil greeting; but the look of rapt happiness was gone; and somehow nobody on the piazza felt the change to be flattering. She accepted quietly Tom's hand, given partly in greeting, partly to assist her up the last steps, and faced the group who were regarding her.

"How delightful to find you here, Miss Lothrop!" said Julia,—"and how strange that people should meet on the Isles of Shoals."

"Why is it strange?"

"O, because there is really nothing to come here for, you know. I don't know how we happen to be here ourselves.—Mr. Lenox, Miss Lothrop.—What have you found in this desert?"

"You have been spoiling Appledore?" added Tom.

"I don't think I have done any harm," said Lois innocently. "There is enough more, Mr. Caruthers."

"Enough of what?" Tom inquired, while Julia and her friend exchanged a swift glance again, of triumph on the lady's part.

"There is a shell," said Lois, putting one into his hand. "I think that is pretty, and it certainly is odd. And what do you say to those white violets, Mr. Caruthers? And here is some very beautiful pimpernel —and here is a flower that I do not know at all,—and the rest is what you would call rubbish," she finished with a smile, so charming that Tom could not see the violets for dazzled eyes.

"Show me the flowers, Tom," his mother demanded; and she kept him by her, answering her questions and remarks about them; while Julia asked where they could be found.

"I find them in quite a good many places," said Lois; "and every time it is a sort of surprise. I gathered only a few; I do not like to take them away from their places; they are best there."

She said a word or two to Mrs. Wishart, and passed on into the house.

"That's the girl," Julia said in a low voice to her lover, walking off to the other end of the verandah with him.

"Tom might do worse," was the reply.

"George! How can you say so? A girl who doesn't know common English!"

"She might go to school," suggested Lenox.

"To school! At her age! And then, think of her associations, and her ignorance of everything a lady should be and should know. O you men! I have no patience with you. See a face you like, and you lose your wits at once, the best of you. I wonder you ever fancied me!"

"Tastes are unaccountable," the young man returned, with a lover-like smile.

"But do you call that girl pretty?"

Mr. Lenox looked portentously grave. "She has handsome hair," he ventured.

"Hair! What's hair! Anybody can have handsome hair, that will pay for it."

"She has not paid for hers."

"No, and I don't mean that Tom shall. Now George, you must help. I brought you along to help. Tom is lost if we don't save him. He must not be left alone with this girl; and if he gets talking to her, you must mix in and break it up, make love to her yourself, if necessary. And we must see to it that they do not go off walking together. You must help me watch and help me hinder. Will you?"

"Really, I should not be grateful to anyone who did *me* such kind service."

"But it is to save Tom."

"Save him! From what?"

"From a low marriage. What could be worse?"

"Adjectives are declinable. There is low, lower, lowest."

"Well, what could be lower? A poor girl, uneducated, inexperienced, knowing nobody, brought up in the country, and of no family in particular, with nothing in the world but beautiful hair! Tom ought to have something better than that."

"I'll study her further, and then tell you what I think."

"You are very stupid to-day, George!"

Nobody got a chance to study Lois much more that day. Seeing that Mrs. Wishart was for the present well provided with company, she withdrew to her own room; and there she stayed. At supper she appeared, but silent and reserved; and after supper she went away again. Next morning Lois was late at breakfast; she had to run a gauntlet of eyes, as she took her seat at a little distance.

"Overslept, Lois?" queried Mrs. Wishart.

"Miss Lothrop looks as if she never had been asleep, nor ever meant to be," quoth Tom.

"What a dreadful character!" said Miss Julia. "Pray, Miss Lothrop, excuse him; the poor boy means, I have no doubt, to be complimentary."

"Not so bad, for a beginner," remarked Mr. Lenox. "Ladies always like to be thought bright-eyed, I believe."

"But never to sleep!" said Julia. "Imagine the staring effect."

"*You* are complimentary without effort," Tom remarked pointedly.

"Lois, my dear, have you been out already?" Mrs. Wishart asked. Lois gave a quiet assent and betook herself to her breakfast.

"I knew it," said Tom. "Morning air has a wonderful effect, if ladies would only believe it. They won't believe it, and they suffer accordingly."

"Another compliment!" said Miss Julia, laughing. "But what do you find, Miss Lothrop, that can attract you so much before breakfast? or after breakfast either, for that matter?"

"Before breakfast is the best time in the twenty-four hours," said Lois.

"Pray, for what?"

"If *you* were asked, you would say, for sleeping," put in Tom.

"For what, Miss Lothrop? Tom, you are troublesome."

"For doing what, do you mean?" said Lois. "I should say, for anything; but I was thinking of enjoying."

"We are all just arrived," Mr. Lenox began; "and we are slow to believe there is anything to enjoy at

the Isles. Will Miss Lothrop enlighten us?"

"I do not know that I can," said Lois. "You might not find what I find."

"What do you find?"

"If you will go out with me to-morrow morning at five o'clock, I will show you," said Lois, with a little smile of amusement, or of archness, which quite struck Mr. Lenox and quite captivated Tom.

"Five o'clock!" the former echoed.

"Perhaps he would not then see what you see," Julia suggested.

"Perhaps not," said Lois. "I am by no means sure."

She was let alone after that; and as soon as breakfast was over she escaped again. She made her way to a particular hiding-place she had discovered, in the rocks, down near the shore; from which she had a most beautiful view of the sea and of several of the other islands. Her nook of a seat was comfortable enough, but all around it the rocks were piled in broken confusion, sheltering her, she thought, from any possible chance comer. And this was what Lois wanted; for, in the first place, she was minded to keep herself out of the way of the newly-arrived party, each and all of them; and, in the second place, she was intoxicated with the delights of the ocean. Perhaps I should say rather, of the ocean and the rocks and the air and the sky, and of everything at Appledore, Where she sat, she had a low brown reef in sight, jutting out into the sea just below her; and upon this reef the billows were rolling and breaking in a way utterly and wholly entrancing. There was no wind, to speak of, yet there was much more motion in the sea than yesterday; which often happens from the effect of winds that have been at work far away; and the breakers which beat and foamed upon that reef, and indeed upon all the shore, were beyond all telling graceful, beautiful, wonderful, mighty, and changeful. Lois had been there to see the sunrise; now that fairy hour was long past, and the day was in its full bright strength; but still she sat spellbound and watched the waves; watched the colours on the rocks, the brown and the grey; the countless, nameless hues of ocean, and the light on the neighbouring islands, so different now from what they had been a few hours ago.

Now and then a thought or two went to the hotel and its new inhabitants, and passed in review the breakfast that morning. Lois had taken scarce any part in the conversation; her place at table put her at a distance from Mr. Caruthers; and after those few first words she had been able to keep very quiet, as her wish was. But she had listened, and observed. Well, the talk had not been, as to quality, one whit better than what Shampuashuh could furnish every day; nay, Lois thought the advantage of sense and wit and shrewdness was decidedly on the side of her country neighbours; while the staple of talk was nearly the same. A small sort of gossip and remark, with commentary, on other people and other people's doings, past, present, and to come. It had no interest whatever to Lois's mind, neither subject nor treatment. But the *manner* to-day gave her something to think about. The manner was different; and the manner not of talk only, but of all that was done. Not so did Shampuashuh discuss its neighbours, and not so did Shampuashuh eat bread and butter. Shampuashuh ways were more rough, angular, hurried; less quietness, less grace, whether of movement or speech; less calm security in every action; less delicacy of taste. It must have been good blood in Lois which recognized all this, but recognize it she did; and, as I said, every now and then an involuntary thought of it came over the girl. She felt that she was unlike these people; not of their class or society; she was sure they knew it too, and would act accordingly; that is, not rudely or ungracefully making the fact known, but nevertheless feeling, and showing that they felt, that she belonged to a detached portion of humanity. Or they; what did it matter? Lois did not misjudge or undervalue herself; she knew she was the equal of these people, perhaps more than their equal, in true refinement of feeling and delicacy of perception; she knew she was not awkward in manner; yet she knew, too, that she had not their ease of habit, nor the confidence given by knowledge of the world and all other sorts of knowledge. Her up-bringing and her surroundings had not been like theirs; they had been rougher, coarser, and if of as good material, of far inferior form. She thought with herself that she would keep as much out of their company as she properly could. For there was beneath all this consciousness an unrecognized, or at least unacknowledged, sense of other things in Lois's mind; of Mr. Caruthers' possible feelings, his people's certain displeasure, and her own promise to her grandmother. She would keep herself out of the way; easy at Appledore—

"Have I found you, Miss Lothrop?" said a soft, gracious voice, with a glad accent.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Have I found you, Miss Lothrop?"

Looking over her shoulder, Lois saw the handsome features of Mr. Caruthers, wearing a smile of most undoubted satisfaction. And, to the scorn of all her previous considerations, she was conscious of a flush of pleasure in her own mind. This was not suffered to appear.

"I thought I was where nobody could find me," she answered.

"Do you think there is such a place in the whole world?" said Tom gallantly. Meanwhile he scrambled over some inconvenient rocks to a place by her side. "I am very glad to find you, Miss Lothrop, both ways,—first at Appledore, and then here."

To this compliment Lois made no reply.

"What has driven you to this little out-of-the-way nook?"

"You mean Appledore?"

"No, no! this very uncomfortable situation among the rocks here? What drove you to it?"

"You think there is no attraction?"

"I don't see what attraction there is here for you."

"Then you should not have come to Appledore."

"Why not?"

"There is nothing here for you."

"Ah, but! What is there for you? Do you find anything here to like now, really?"

"I have been down in this 'uncomfortable place' ever since near five o'clock—except while we were at breakfast."

"What for?"

"What for?" said Lois, laughing. "If you ask, it is no use to tell you, Mr. Caruthers."

"Ah, be generous!" said Tom. "I'm a stupid fellow, I know; but do try and help me a little to a sense of the beautiful. *Is* it the beautiful, by the way, or is it something else?"

Lois's laugh rang softly out again. She was a country girl, it is true; but her laugh was as sweet to hear as the ripple of the waters among the stones. The laugh of anybody tells very much of what he is, making revelations undreamt of often by the laugher. A harsh croak does not come from a mind at peace, nor an empty clangour from a heart full of sensitive happiness; nor a coarse laugh from a person of refined sensibilities, nor a hard laugh from a tender spirit. Moreover, people cannot dissemble successfully in laughing; the truth comes out in a startling manner. Lois's laugh was sweet and musical; it was a pleasure to hear. And Tom's eyes said so.

"I always knew I was a stupid fellow," he said; "but I never felt myself so stupid as to-day! What is it, Miss Lothrop?"

"What is what, Mr. Caruthers?—I beg your pardon."

"What is it you find in this queer place?"

"I am afraid it is waste trouble to tell you."

"Good morning!" cried a cheery voice here from below them; and looking towards the water they saw Mr. Lenox, making his way as best he could over slippery seaweed and wet rocks.

"Hollo, George!" cried Tom in a different tone—"What are you doing there?"

"Trying to keep out of the water, don't you see?"

"To an ordinary mind, that object would seem more likely to be attained if you kept further away from

it."

"May I come up where you are?"

"Certainly!" said Lois. "But take care how you do it."

A little scrambling and the help of Tom's hand accomplished the feat; and the new comer looked about him with much content.

"You came the other way," he said. "I see. I shall know how next time.
What a delightful post, Miss Lothrop!"

"I have been trying to find what she came here for; and she won't tell me," said Tom.

"You know what you came here for," said his friend. "Why cannot you credit other people with as much curiosity as you have yourself?"

"I credit them with more," said Tom. "But curiosity on Appledore will find itself baffled, I should say."

"Depends on what curiosity is after," said Lenox. "Tell him, Miss
Lothrop; he will not be any the wiser."

"Then why should I tell him?" said Lois.

"Perhaps I shall!"

Lois's laugh came again.

"Seriously. If any one were to ask me, not only what we but what anybody should come to this place for, I should be unprepared with an answer. I am forcibly reminded of an old gentleman who went up Mount Washington on one occasion when I also went up. It came on to rain—a sudden summer gust and downpour, hiding the very mountain it self from our eyes; hiding the path, hiding the members of the party from each other. We were descending the mountain by that time, and it was ticklish work for a nervous person; every one was committed to his own sweet guidance; and as I went blindly stumbling along, I came every now and then upon the old gentleman, also stumbling along, on his donkey. And whenever I was near enough to him, I could hear him dismally soliloquizing, 'Why am I here!'—in a tone of mingled disgust and self-reproach which was in the highest degree comical."

"So that is your state of mind now, is it?" said Tom.

"Not quite yet, but I feel it is going to be. Unless Miss Lothrop can teach me something."

"There are some things that cannot be taught," said Lois.

"And people—hey? But I am not one of those, Miss Lothrop."

He looked at her with such a face of demure innocence, that Lois could not keep her gravity.

"Now Tom *is*," Lenox went on. "You cannot teach him anything, Miss
Lothrop. It would be lost labour."

"I am not so stupid as you think," said Tom.

"He's not stupid—he's obstinate," Lenox went on, addressing himself to Lois. "He takes a thing in his head. Now that sounds intelligent; but it isn't, or *he* isn't; for when you try, you can't get it out of his head again. So he took it into his head to come to the Isles of Shoals, and hither he has dragged his mother and his sister, and hither by consequence he has dragged me. Now I ask you, as one who can tell—what have we all come here for?"

Half-quizzically, half-inquisitively, the young man put the question, lounging on the rocks and looking up into Lois's face. Tom grew impatient. But Lois was too humble and simple-minded to fall into the snare laid for her. I think she had a half-discernment of a hidden intent under Mr. Lenox's words; nevertheless in the simple dignity of truth she disregarded it, and did not even blush, either with consciousness or awkwardness. She was a little amused.

"I suppose experience will have to be your teacher, as it is other people's."

"I have heard so; I never saw anybody who had learned much that way."

"Come, George, that's ridiculous. Learning by experience is proverbial," said Tom.

"I know!—but it's a delusion nevertheless. You sprain your ankle among these stones, for instance. Well—you won't put your foot in that particular hole again; but you will in another. That's the way you do, Tom. But to return—Miss Lothrop, what has experience done for you in the Isles of Shoals?"

"I have not had much yet."

"Does it pay to come here?"

"I think it does."

"How came anybody to think of coming here at first? that is what I should like to know. I never saw a more uncompromising bit of barrenness. Is there no desolation anywhere else, that men should come to the Isles of Shoals?"

"There was quite a large settlement here once," said Lois.

"Indeed! When?"

"Before the war of the revolution. There were hundreds of people; six hundred, somebody told me."

"What became of them?"

"Well," said Lois, smiling, "as that is more than a hundred years ago,
I suppose they all died."

"And their descendants?—"

"Living on the mainland, most of them. When the war came, they could not protect themselves against the English."

"Fancy, Tom," said Lenox. "People liked it so well on these rocks, that it took ships of war to drive them away!"

"The people that live here now are just as fond of them, I am told."

"What earthly or heavenly inducement?—"

"Yes, I might have said so too, the first hour of my being here, or the first day. The second, I began to understand it."

"Do make me understand it!"

"If you will come here at five o'clock to-morrow, Mr. Leno—xin the morning, I mean,—and will watch the wonderful sunrise, the waking up of land and sea; if you will stay here then patiently till ten o'clock, and see the changes and the colours on everything—let the sea and the sky speak to you, as they will; then they will tell you—all you can understand!"

"All I can understand. H'm! May I go home for breakfast?"

"Perhaps you must; but you will wish you need not."

"Will you be here?"

"No," said Lois. "I will be somewhere else."

"But I couldn't stand such a long talk with myself as that," said the young man.

"It was a talk with Nature I recommended to you."

"All the same. Nature says queer things if you let her alone."

"Best listen to them, then."

"Why?"

"She tells you the truth."

"Do you like the truth?"

"Certainly. Of course. Do not you?"

"*Always?*"

"Yes, always. Do not you?"

"It's fearfully awkward!" said the young man.

"Yes, isn't it?" Tom echoed.

"Do you like falsehood, Mr. Lenox?"

"I dare not say what I like—in this presence. Miss Lothrop, I am very much afraid you are a Puritan."

"What is a Puritan?" asked Lois simply.

"He doesn't know!" said Tom. "You needn't ask him."

"I will ask you then, for I do not know. What does he mean by it?"

"He doesn't know that," said Lenox, laughing. "I will tell you, Miss Lothrop—if I can. A Puritan is a person so much better than the ordinary run of mortals, that she is not afraid to let Nature and Solitude speak to her—dares to look roses in the face, in fact;—has no charity for the crooked ways of the world or for the people entangled in them; a person who can bear truth and has no need of falsehood, and who is thereby lifted above the multitudes of this world's population, and stands as it were alone."

"I'll report that speech to Julia," said Tom, laughing.

"But that is not what a 'Puritan' generally means, is it?" said Lois. They both laughed now at the quain't simplicity with which this was spoken.

"That is what it *is*," Tom answered.

"I do not think the term is complimentary," Lois went on, shaking her head, "however Mr. Lenox's explanation may be. Isn't it ten o'clock?"

"Near eleven."

"Then I must go in."

The two gentlemen accompanied her, making themselves very pleasant by the way. Lenox asked her about flowers; and Tom, who was some thing of a naturalist, told her about mosses and lichens, more than she knew; and the walk was too short for Lois. But on reaching the hotel she went straight to her own room and stayed there. So also after dinner, which of course brought her to the company, she went back to her solitude and her work. She must write home, she said. Yet writing was not Lois's sole reason for shutting herself up.

She would keep herself out of the way, she reasoned. Probably this company of city people with city tastes would not stay long at Appledore; while they were there she had better be seen as little as possible. For she felt that the sight of Tom Caruthers' handsome face had been a pleasure; and she felt —and what woman does not?—that there is a certain very sweet charm in being liked, independently of the question how much you like in return. And Lois knew, though she hardly in her modesty acknowledged it to herself, that Mr. Caruthers liked her. Eyes and smiles and manner showed it; she could not mistake it; nay, engaged man though he was, Mr. Lenox liked her too. She did not quite understand him or his manner; with the keen intuition of a true woman she felt vaguely what she did not clearly discern, and was not sure of the colour of his liking, as she was sure of Tom's. Tom's—it might not be deep, but it was true, and it was pleasant; and Lois remembered her promise to her grandmother. She even, when her letter was done, took out her Bible and opened it at that well-known place in 2nd Corinthians; "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"—and she looked hard at the familiar words. Then, said Lois to herself, it is best to keep at a distance from temptation. For these people were unbelievers. They could not understand one word of Christian hope or joy, if she spoke them. What had she and they in common?

Yet Lois drew rather a long breath once or twice in the course of her meditations. These "unbelievers" were so pleasant. Yes, it was an undoubted fact; they were pleasant people to be with and to talk to. They might not think with her, or comprehend her even, in the great questions of life and duty; in the lesser matters of everyday experience they were well versed. They understood the world and the things in the world, and the men; and they were skilled and deft and graceful in the arts of society. Lois knew no young men,—nor old, for that matter,—who were, as gentlemen, as social companions, to be compared with these and others their associates in graces of person and manner, and interest of conversation. She went over again and again in memory the interview and the talk of that morning; and not without a secret thrill of gratification, although also not without a vague half perception of something in Mr. Lenox's manner that she could not quite read and did not quite trust.

What did he mean? He was Miss Caruthers' property; how came he to busy himself at all with her own insignificant self? Lois was too innocent to guess; at the same time too finely gifted as a woman to be entirely hoodwinked. She rose at last with a third little sigh, as she concluded that her best way was to keep as well away as she could from this pleasant companionship.

But she could not stay in-doors. For once in her life she was at Appledore; she must not miss her chance. The afternoon was half gone; the house all still; probably everybody was in his room, and she could slip out safely. She went down on soft feet; she found nobody on the piazza, not a creature in sight; she was glad; and yet, she would not have been sorry to see Tom Caruthers' genial face, which was always so very genial towards her. Inconsistent!—but who is not inconsistent? Lois thought herself free, and had half descended the steps from the verandah, when she heard a voice and her own name. She paused and looked round.

"Miss Lothrop!—are you going for a walk? may I come with you?"—and therewith emerged the form of Miss Julia from the house. "Are you going for a walk? will you let me go along?"

"Certainly," said Lois.

"I am regularly cast away here," said the young lady, joining her. "I don't know what to do with myself. *Is* there anything to do or to see in this place?"

"I think so. Plenty."

"Then do show me what you have found. Where are you going?"

"I am going down to the shore somewhere. I have only begun to find things yet; but I never in my life saw a place where there was so much to find."

"What, pray? I cannot imagine. I see a little wild bit of ground, and that is all I see; except the sea beating on the rocks. It is the forlornest place of amusement I ever heard of in my life!"

"Are you fond of flowers, Miss Caruthers?"

"Flowers? No, not very. O, I like them to dress a dinner table, or to make rooms look pretty, of course; but I am not what you call 'fond' of them. That means, loving to dig in the dirt, don't it?"

Lois presently stooped and gathered a flower or two.

"Did yon ever see such lovely white violets?" she said; "and is not that eyebright delicate, with its edging of colour? There are quantities of flowers here. And have you noticed how deep and rich the colours are? No, you have not been here long enough perhaps; but they are finer than any I ever saw of their kinds."

"What do you find down at the shore?" said Miss Caruthers, looking very disparagingly at the slight beauties in Lois's fingers. "There are no flowers there, I suppose?"

"I can hardly get away from the shore, every time I go to it," said Lois. "O, I have only begun to explore yet. Over on that end of Appledore there are the old remains of a village, where the people used to live, once upon a time. I want to go and see that, but I haven't got there yet. Now take care of your footing, Miss Caruthers—"

They descended the rocks to one of the small coves of the island. Out of sight now of all save rocks and sea and the tiny bottom of the cove filled with mud and sand. Even the low bushes which grow so thick on Appledore were out of sight, huckleberry and bayberry and others; the wildness and solitude of the spot were perfect. Miss Caruthers found a dry seat on a rock. Lois began to look carefully about in the mud and sand.

"What are you looking for?" her companion asked, somewhat scornfully.

"Anything I can find!"

"What can you find in that mud?"

"*This* is gravel, where I am looking now."

"Well, what is in the gravel?"

"I don't know," said Lois, in the dreamy tone of rapt enjoyment. "I don't know yet. Plenty of broken shells."

"Broken shells!" ejaculated the other. "Are you collecting broken shells?"

"Look," said Lois, coming to her and displaying her palm full of sea treasures. "See the colours of those bits of shell—that's a bit of a mussel; and that is a piece of a snail shell, I think; and aren't those little stones lovely?"

"That is because they are wet!" said the other in disgust. "They will be nothing when they are dry."

Lois laughed and went back to her search; and Miss Julia waited awhile with impatience for some change in the programme.

"Do you enjoy this, Miss Lothrop?"

"Very much! More than I can in any way tell you!" cried Lois, stopping and turning to look at her questioner. Her face answered for her; it was all flushed and bright with delight and the spirit of discovery; a pretty creature indeed she looked as she stood there on the wet gravel of the cove; but her face lost brightness for a moment, as Lois discerned Tom's head above the herbs and grasses that bordered the bank above the cove. Julia saw the change, and then the cause of it.

"Tom!" said she, "what brought you here?"

"What brought you, I suppose," said Mr. Tom, springing down the bank. "Miss Lothrop, what can you be doing?" Passing his sister he went to the other girl's side. And now there were *two* searching and peering into the mud and gravel which the tide had left wet and bare; and Miss Caruthers, sitting on a rock a little above them, looked on; much marvelling at the follies men will be guilty of when a pretty face draws them on.

"Tom—Tom!—what do you expect to find?" she cried after awhile. But Tom was too busy to heed her. And then appeared Mr. Lenox upon the scene.

"You too!" said Miss Caruthers. "Now you have only to go down into the mud like the others and complete the situation. Look at Tom! Poking about to see if he can find a whole snail shell in the wet stuff there. Look at him! George, a brother is the most vexatious thing to take care of in the world. Look at Tom!"

Mr. Lenox did, with an amused expression of feature.

"Bad job, Julia," he said.

"It is in one way, but it isn't in another, for I am not going to be baffled. He shall not make a fool of himself with that girl."

"She isn't a fool."

"What then?" said Julia sharply.

"Nothing. I was only thinking of the materials upon which your judgment is made up."

"Materials!" echoed Julia. "Yours is made up upon a nice complexion.
That bewilders all men's faculties. Do *you* think she is very pretty,
George?"

Mr. Lenox had no time to answer, for Lois, and of course Tom, at this moment left the cove bottom and came towards them. Lois was beaming, like a child, with such bright, pure pleasure; and coming up, showed upon her open palm a very delicate little white shell, not a snail shell by any means. "I have found that!" she proclaimed.

"What is that?" said Julia disdainfully, though not with rudeness.

"You see. Isn't it beautiful? And isn't it wonderful that it should not be broken? If you think of the power of the waves here, that have beat to pieces almost everything—rolled and ground and crushed everything that would break—and this delicate little thing has lived through it."

"There is a power of life in some delicate things," said Tom.

"Power of fiddlestick!" said his sister. "Miss Lothrop, I think this place is a terrible desert!"

"Then we will not stay here any longer," said Lois. "I am very fond of these little coves."

"No, no, I mean Appledore generally. It is the stupidest place I ever was in in my life. There is nothing here."

Lois looked at the lady with an expression of wondering compassion.

"Your experience does not agree with that of Miss Caruthers?" said Lenox.

"No," said Lois. "Let us take her to the place where you found me this morning; maybe she would like that."

"We must go, I suppose," groaned Julia, as Mr. Lenox helped her up over the rocks after the lighter-footed couple that preceded them. "George, I believe you are in the way."

"Thanks!" said the young man, laughing. "But you will excuse me for continuing to be in the way."

"I don't know—you see, it just sets Tom free to attend to her. Look at him—picking those purple irises—as if iris did not grow anywhere else! And now elderberry blossoms! And he will give her lessons in botany, I shouldn't wonder. O, Tom's a goose!"

"That disease is helpless," said Lenox, laughing again.

"But George, it is madness!"

Mr. Lenox's laugh rang out heartily at this. His sovereign mistress was not altogether pleased.

"I do certainly consider—and so do you,—I do certainly consider unequal marriages to be a great misfortune to all concerned."

"Certainly—inequalities that cannot be made up. For instance, too tall and too short do not match well together. Or for the lady to be rich and the man to be poor; that is perilous."

"Nonsense, George! don't be ridiculous! Height is nothing, and money is nothing; but family—and breeding—and habits—"

"What is her family?" asked Mr. Lenox, pursing up his lips as if for a whistle.

"No family at all. Just country people, living at Shampuashuh."

"Don't you know, the English middle class is the finest in the world?"

"No! no better than ours."

"My dear, we have no middle class."

"But what about the English middle class? why do you bring it up?"

"It owes its great qualities to its having the mixed blood of the higher and the lower."

"Ridiculous! What is that to us, if we have no middle class? But don't you *see*, George, what an unhappy thing it would be for Tom to marry this girl?"

Mr. Lenox whistled slightly, smiled, and pulled a purple iris blossom from a tuft growing in a little spot of wet ground. He offered it to his disturbed companion.

"There is a country flower for you," he observed.

But Miss Caruthers flung the flower impatiently away, and hastened her steps to catch up with her brother and Lois, who made better speed than she. Mr. Lenox picked up the iris and followed, smiling again to himself.

They found Lois seated in her old place, where the gentlemen had seen her in the morning. She rose at once to give the seat to Miss Caruthers, and herself took a less convenient one. It was almost a new scene to Lois, that lay before them now. The lights were from a different quarter; the colours those of the sinking day; the sea, from some inexplicable reason, was rolling higher than it had done six hours ago, and dashed on the rocks and on the reef in beautiful breakers, sending up now and then a tall jet of foam or a shower of spray. The hazy mainland shore line was very indistinct under the bright sky and lowering sun; while every bit of west-looking rock, and every sail, and every combing billow was touched with warm hues or gilded with a sharp reflection. The air was like the air nowhere but at the Isles of Shoals; with the sea's salt strength and freshness, and at times a waft of perfumes from the land side. Lois drank it with an inexpressible sense of exhilaration; while her eye went joyously roving from the lovely light on a sail, to the dancing foam of the breakers, to the colours of driftwood or seaweed or moss left wet and bare on the rocks, to the line of the distant ocean, or the soft vapoury racks of clouds floating over from the west. She well-nigh forgot her companions altogether; who,

however, were less absorbed. Yet for a while they all sat silent, looking partly at Lois, partly at each other, partly no doubt at the leaping spray from the broken waves on the reef. There was only the delicious sound of the splash and gurgle of waters—the scream of a gull—the breath of the air—the chirrup of a few insects; all was wild stillness and freshness and pureness, except only that little group of four human beings. And then, the puzzled vexation and perplexity in Tom's face, and the impatient disgust in the face of his sister, were too much for Mr. Lenox's sense of the humorous; and the silence was broken by a hearty burst of laughter, which naturally brought all eyes to himself.

"Pardon!" said the young gentleman. "The delight in your face, Julia, was irresistible."

"Delight!" she echoed. "Miss Lothrop, do you find something here in which you take pleasure?"

Lois looked round. "Yes," she said simply. "I find something everywhere to take pleasure in."

"Even at Shampuashuh?"

"At Shampuashuh, of course. That is my home."

"But I never take pleasure in anything at home. It is all such an old story. Every day is just like any other day, and I know beforehand exactly how everything will be; and one dress is like another, and one party is like another. I must go away from home to get any real pleasure."

Lois wondered if she succeeded.

"That's a nice look-out for you, George," Caruthers remarked.

"I shall know how to make home so agreeable that she will not want to wander any more," said the other.

"That is what the women do for the men, down our way," said Lois, smiling. She began to feel a little mischief stirring.

"What sort of pleasures do you find, or make, at home, Miss Lothrop?"
Julia went on. "You are very quiet, are you not?"

"There is always one's work," said Lois lightly. She knew it would be in vain to tell her questioner the instances that came up in her memory; the first dish of ripe strawberries brought in to surprise her grandmother; the new potatoes uncommonly early; the fine yield of her raspberry bushes; the wonderful beauty of the early mornings in her garden; the rarer, sweeter beauty of the Bible reading and talk with old Mrs. Armadale; the triumphant afternoons on the shore, from which she and her sisters came back with great baskets of long clams; and countless other visions of home comfort and home peace, things accomplished and the fruit of them enjoyed. Miss Caruthers could not understand all this; so Lois answered simply,

"There is always one's work."

"Work! I hate work," cried the other woman. "What do you call work?"

"Everything that is to be done," said Lois. "Everything, except what we do for mere pleasure. We keep no servant; my sisters and I do all that there is to do, in doors and out."

"*Out*—of—doors!" cried Miss Caruthers. "What do you mean? You cannot do the farming?"

"No," said Lois, smiling merrily; "no; not the farming. That is done by men. But the gardening I do."

"Not seriously?"

"Very seriously. If you will come and see us, I will give you some new potatoes of my planting. I am rather proud of them. I was just thinking of them."

"Planting potatoes!" repeated the other lady, not too politely. "Then *that* is the reason why you find it a pleasure to sit here and see those waves beat."

The logical concatenation of this speech was not so apparent but that it touched all the risible nerves of the party; and Miss Caruthers could not understand why all three laughed so heartily.

"What did you expect when you came here?" asked Lois, still sparkling with fun.

"Just what I found!" returned the other rather grumbly.

CHAPTER XV.

TACTICS.

Miss Caruthers carried on the tactics with which she had begun. Lois had never in her life found her society so diligently cultivated. If she walked out, Miss Caruthers begged to be permitted to go along; she wished to learn about the Islands. Lois could not see that she advanced much in learning; and sometimes wondered that she did not prefer her brother or her lover as instructors. True, her brother and her lover were frequently of the party; yet even then Miss Julia seemed to choose to take her lessons from Lois; and managed as much as possible to engross her. Lois could see that at such times Tom was often annoyed, and Mr. Lenox amused, at something, she could not quite tell what; and she was too inexperienced, and too modest withal, to guess. She only knew that she was not as free as she would have liked to be. Sometimes Tom found a chance for a little walk and talk with her alone; and those quarters of an hour were exceedingly pleasant; Tom told her about flowers, in a scientific way, that is; and made himself a really charming companion. Those minutes flew swiftly. But they never were many. If not Julia, at least Mr. Lenox was sure to appear upon the scene; and then, though he was very pleasant too, and more than courteous to Lois, somehow the charm was gone. It was just as well, Lois told herself; but that did not make her like it. Except with Tom, he did not enjoy herself thoroughly in the Caruthers society. She felt, with a sure, secret, fine instinct, what they were not high-bred enough to hide;—that they did not accept her as upon their own platform. I do not think the consciousness was plain enough to be put into words; nevertheless it was decided enough to make her quite willing to avoid their company. She tried, but she could not avoid it. In the house as out of the house. Tom would seek her out and sit down beside her; and then Julia would come to learn a crochet stitch, or Mrs. Caruthers would call her to remedy a fault in her knitting, or to hold her wool to be wound; refusing to let Mr. Lenox hold it, under the plea that Lois did it better; which was true, no doubt. Or Mr. Lenox himself would join them, and turn everything Tom said into banter; till Lois could not help laughing, though yet she was vexed.

So days went on. And then something happened to relieve both parties of the efforts they were making; a very strange thing to happen at the Isles of Shoals. Mrs. Wishart was taken seriously ill. She had not been quite well when she came; and she always afterwards maintained that the air did not agree with her. Lois thought it could not be the air, and must be some imprudence; but however it was, the fact was undoubted. Mrs. Wishart was ill; and the doctor who was fetched over from Portsmouth to see her, said she could not be moved, and must be carefully nursed. Was it the air? It couldn't be the air, he answered; nobody ever got sick at the Isles of Shoals. Was it some imprudence? Couldn't be, he said; there was no way in which she could be imprudent; she could not help living a natural life at Appledore. No, it was something the seeds of which she had brought with her; and the strong sea air had developed it. Reasoning which Lois did not understand; but she understood nursing, and gave herself to it, night and day. There was a sudden relief to Miss Julia's watch and ward; nobody was in danger of saying too many words to Lois now; nobody could get a chance; she was only seen by glimpses.

"How long is this sort of thing going on?" inquired Mr. Lenox one afternoon. He and Julia had been spending a very unrefreshing hour on the piazza doing nothing.

"Impossible to say."

"I'm rather tired of it. How long has Mrs. Wishart been laid up now?"

"A week; and she has no idea of being moved."

"Well, are we fixtures too?"

"You know what I came for, George. If Tom will go, I will, and thankful."

"Tom," said the gentleman, as Tom at this minute came out of the house, "have you got enough of Appledore?"

"I don't care about Appledore. It's the fishing." Tom, I may remark, had been a good deal out in a fishing-boat during this past week. "That's glorious."

"But you don't care for fishing, old boy."

"O, don't I!"

"No, not a farthing. Seriously, don't you think we might mend our quarters?"

"You can," said Tom. "Of course I can't go while Mrs. Wishart is sick.
I can't leave those two women alone here to take care of themselves.
You can take Julia and my mother away, where you like."

"And a good riddance," muttered Lenox, as the other ran down the steps and went off.

"He won't stir," said Julia. "You see how right I was."

"Are you sure about it?"

"Why, of course I am! Quite sure. What are you thinking about?"

"Just wondering whether you might have made a mistake."

"A mistake! How? I don't make mistakes."

"That's pleasant doctrine! But I am not so certain. I have been thinking whether Tom is likely ever to get anything better."

"Than this girl? George, don't you think he *deserves* something better? My brother? What are you thinking of?"

"Tom has got an enormous fancy for her; I can see that. It's not play with him. And upon my honour, Julia, I do not think she would do any thing to wear off the fancy."

"Not if she could help it!" returned Julia scornfully.

"She isn't a bit of a flirt."

"You think that is a recommendation? Men like flirts. This girl don't know how, that is all."

"I do not believe she knows how to do anything wrong."

"Now do set up a discourse in praise of virtue! What if she don't?
That's nothing to the purpose. I want Tom to go into political life."

"A virtuous wife wouldn't hurt him there."

"And an ignorant, country-bred, untrained woman wouldn't help him, would she?"

"Tom will never want help in political life, for he will never go into it. Well, I have said my say, and resign myself to Appledore for two weeks longer. Only, mind you, I question if Tom will ever get anything as good again in the shape of a wife, as you are keeping him from now. It is something of a responsibility to play Providence."

The situation therefore remained unchanged for several days more. Mrs. Wishart needed constant attention, and had it; and nobody else saw Lois for more than the merest snatches of time. I think Lois made these moments as short as she could. Tom was in despair, but stuck to his post and his determination; and with sighs and groans his mother and sister held fast to theirs. The hotel at Appledore made a good thing of it.

Then one day Tom was lounging on the piazza at the time of the steamer's coming in from Portsmouth; and in a short time thereafter a new guest was seen advancing towards the hotel. Tom gave her a glance or two; he needed no more. She was middle-aged, plain, and evidently not from that quarter of the world where Mr. Tom Caruthers was known. Neatly dressed, however, and coming with an alert, business step over the grass, and so she mounted to the piazza. There she made straight for Tom, who was the only person visible.

"Is this the place where a lady is lying sick and another lady is tendin' her?"

"That *is* the case here," said Tom politely. "Miss Lothrop is attending upon a sick friend in this house."

"That's it—Miss Lothrop. I'm her aunt. How's the sick lady? Dangerous?"

"Not at all, I should say," returned Tom; "but Miss Lothrop is very much confined with her. She will be very glad to see you, I have no doubt. Allow me to see about your room." And so saying, he would have relieved the new comer of a heavy handbag.

"Never mind," she said, holding fast. "You're very obliging—but when I'm away from home I always hold fast to whatever I've got; and I'll go to Miss Lothrop's room. Are there more folks in the house?"

"Certainly. Several. This way—I will show you."

"Then I s'pose there's plenty to help nurse, and they have no call for me?"

"I think Miss Lothrop has done the most of the nursing. Your coming will set her a little more at liberty. She has been very much confined with her sick friend."

"What have the other folks been about?"

"Not helping much, I am afraid. And of course a man is at a disadvantage at such a time."

"Are they all men?" inquired Mrs. Marx suddenly.

"No—I was thinking of my own case. I would have been very glad to be useful."

"O!" said the lady. "That's the sort o' world we live in; most of it ain't good for much when it comes to the pinch. Thank you—much obliged."

Tom had guided her up-stairs and along a gallery, and now indicated the door of Lois's room. Lois was quite as glad to see her aunt as Tom had supposed she would be.

"Aunty!—Whatever has brought you here, to the Isles of Shoals?"

"Not to see the Isles, you may bet. I've come to look after you."

"Why, I'm well enough. But it's very good of you."

"No, it ain't, for I wanted an excuse to see what the place is like. You haven't grown thin yet. What's all the folks about, that they let you do all the nursing?"

"O, it comes to me naturally, being with Mrs. Wishart. Who should do it?"

"To be sure," said Mrs. Marx; "who should do it? Most folks are good at keepin' out o' the way when they are wanted. There's one clever chap in the house—he showed me the way up here; who's he?"

"Fair hair?"

"Yes, and curly. A handsome fellow. And he knows you."

"O, they all know me by this time."

"This one particularly?"

"Well—I knew him in New York."

"I see! What's the matter with this sick woman?"

"I don't know. She is nervous, and feverish, and does not seem to get well as she ought to do."

"Well, if I was going to get sick, I'd choose some other place than a rock out in the middle of the ocean. *Seems* to me I would. One never knows what one may be left to do."

"One cannot generally choose where one will be sick," said Lois, smiling.

"Yes, you can," said the other, as sharp as a needle. "If one's in the wrong place, one can keep up till one can get to the right one. You needn't tell me. I know it, and I've done it. I've held up when I hadn't feet to stand upon, nor a head to hold. If you're a mind to, you can. Nervous, eh? That's the trouble o' folks that haven't enough to do. Mercy! I don't wonder they get nervous. But you've had a little too much, Lois, and you show it. Now, you go and lie down. I'll look after the nerves."

"How are they all at home?"

"Splendid! Charity goes round like a bee in a bottle, as usual. Ma's well; and Madge is as handsome as ever. Garden's growin' up to weeds, and I don't see as there's anybody to help it; but that corner peach tree's ripe, and as good as if you had fifteen gardeners."

"It's time I was home!" said Lois, sighing.

"No, it ain't,—not if you're havin' a good time here. *Are* you havin' a good time?"

"Why, I've been doing nothing but take care of Mrs. Wishart for this week past."

"Well, now I'm here. You go off. Do you like this queer place, I want to know?"

"Aunty, it is just perfectly delightful!"

"Is it? I don't see it. Maybe I will by and by. Now go off, Lois."

Mrs. Marx from this time took upon herself the post of head nurse. Lois was free to go out as much as she pleased. Yet she made less use of this freedom than might have been expected, and still confined herself unnecessarily to the sick-room.

"Why don't you go?" her aunt remonstrated. "Seems to me you ain't so dreadful fond of the Isles of Shoals after all."

"If one could be alone!" sighed Lois; "but there is always a pack at my heels."

"Alone! Is that what you're after? I thought half the fun was to see the folks."

"Well, some of them," said Lois. "But as sure as I go out to have a good time with the rocks and the sea, as I like to have it, there comes first one and then another and then another, and maybe a fourth; and the game is up."

"Why? I don't see how they should spoil it."

"O, they do not care for the things I care for; the sea is nothing to them, and the rocks less than nothing; and instead of being quiet, they talk nonsense, or what seems nonsense to me; and I'd as lieve be at home."

"What do they go for then?"

"I don't know. I think they do not know what to do with themselves."

"What do they stay here for, then, for pity's sake? If they are tired, why don't they go away?"

"I can't tell. That is what I have asked myself a great many times.
They are all as well as fishes, every one of them."

Mrs. Marx held her peace and let things go their train for a few days more. Mrs. Wishart still gave her and Lois a good deal to do, though her ailments aroused no anxiety. After those few days, Mrs. Marx spoke again.

"What keeps you so mum?" she said to Lois. "Why don't you talk, as other folks do?"

"I hardly see them, you know, except at meals."

"Why don't you talk at meal times? that's what I am askin' about. You can talk as well as anybody; and you sit as mum as a stick."

"Aunty, they all talk about things I do not understand."

"Then I'd talk of something *they* don't understand. Two can play at that game."

"It wouldn't be amusing," said Lois, laughing.

"Do you call *their* talk amusing? It's the stupidest stuff I ever did hear. I can't make head or tail of it; nor I don't believe they can. Sounds to me as if they were tryin' amazin' hard to be witty, and couldn't make it out."

"It sounds a good deal like that," Lois assented.

"They go on just as if you wasn't there!"

"And why shouldn't they?"

"Because you are there."

"I am nothing to them," said Lois quietly.

"Nothing to them! You are worth the whole lot."

"They do not think so."

"And politeness is politeness."

"I sometimes think," said Lois, "that politeness is rudeness."

"Well, I wouldn't let myself be put in a corner so, if I was you."

"But I am in a corner, to them. All the world is where *they* live; and I live in a little corner down by Shampuashuh."

"Nobody's big enough to live in more than a corner—if you come to that; and one corner's as good as another. That's nonsense, Lois."

"Maybe, aunty. But there is a certain knowledge of the world, and habit of the world, which makes some people very different from other people; you can't help that."

"I don't want to help it?" said Mrs. Marx. "I wouldn't have you like them, for all the black sheep in my flock."

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. MARX'S OPINION.

A few more days went by; and then Mrs. Wishart began to mend; so much that she insisted her friends must not shut themselves up with her. "Do go down-stairs and see the people!" she said; "or take your kind aunt, Lois, and show her the wonders of Appledore. Is all the world gone yet?"

"Nobody's gone," said Mrs. Marx; "except one thick man and one thin one; and neither of 'em counts."

"Are the Caruthers here?"

"Every man of 'em."

"There is only one man of them; unless you count Mr. Lenox."

"I don't count him. I count that fair-haired chap. All the rest of 'em are stay in' for him."

"Staying for him!" repeated Mrs. Wishart.

"That's what they say. They seem to take it sort o' hard, that Tom's so fond of Appledore."

Mrs. Wishart was silent a minute, and then she smiled.

"He spends his time trollin' for blue fish," Mrs. Marx went on.

"Ah, I dare say. Do go down, Mrs. Marx, and take a walk, and see if he has caught anything."

Lois would not go along; she told her aunt what to look for, and which way to take, and said she would sit still with Mrs. Wishart and keep her amused.

At the very edge of the narrow valley in which the house stood, Mrs. Marx came face to face with Tom Caruthers. Tom pulled off his hat with great civility, and asked if he could do anything for her.

"Well, you can set me straight, I guess," said the lady. "Lois told me which way to go, but I don't seem to be any wiser. Where's the old dead village? South, she said; but in such a little place south and north seems all alike. *I* don' know which is south."

"You are not far out of the way," said Tom. "Let me have the pleasure of showing you. Why did you not bring Miss Lothrop out?"

"Best reason in the world; I couldn't. She would stay and see to Mrs. Wishart."

"That's the sort of nurse I should like to have take care of me," said Tom, "if ever I was in trouble."

"Ah, wouldn't you!" returned Mrs. Marx. "That's a kind o' nurses that ain't in the market. Look here,

young man—where are we going?"

"All right," said Tom. "Just round over these rocks. The village was at the south end of the island, as Miss Lois said. I believe she has studied up Appledore twice as much as any of the rest of us."

It was a fresh, sunny day in September; everything at Appledore was in a kind of glory, difficult to describe in words, and which no painter ever yet put on canvas. There was wind enough to toss the waves in lively style; and when the two companions came out upon the scene of the one-time settlement of Appledore, all brilliance of light and air and colour seemed to be sparkling together. Under this glory lay the ruins and remains of what had been once homes and dwelling-places of men. Grass-grown cellar excavations, moss-grown stones and bits of walls; little else; but a number of those lying soft and sunny in the September light. Soft, and sunny, and lonely; no trace of human habitation any longer, where once human activity had been in full play. Silence, where the babble of voices had been; emptiness, where young feet and old feet had gone in and out; barrenness, where the fruits of human industry had been busily gathered and dispensed. Something in the quiet, sunny scene stilled for a moment the not very sensitive spirits of the two who had come to visit it; while the sea waves rose and broke in their old fashion, as they had done on those same rocks in old time, and would do for generation after generation yet to come. That was always the same. It made the contrast greater with what had passed and was passing away.

"There was a good many of 'em."—Mrs. Marx' voice broke the pause which had come upon the talk.

"Quite a village," her companion assented.

"Why ain't they here now?"

"Dead and gone?" suggested Tom, half laughing.

"Of course! I mean, why ain't the village here, and the people? The people are somewhere—the children and grandchildren of those that lived here; what's become of 'em?"

"That's true," said Tom; "they are somewhere. I believe they are to be found scattered along the coast of the mainland."

"Got tired o' livin' between sea and sky with no ground to speak of.
Well, I should think they would!"

"Miss Lothrop says, on the contrary, that they never get tired of it, the people who live here; and that nothing but necessity forced the former inhabitants to abandon Appledore."

"What sort of necessity?"

"Too exposed, in the time of the war."

"Ah! likely. Well, we'll go, Mr. Caruthers; this sort o' thing makes me melancholy, and that' against my principles to be." Yet she stood still, looking.

"Miss Lothrop likes this place," Tom remarked.

"Then it don't make her melancholy."

"Does anything?"

"I hope so. She's human."

"But she seems to me always to have the sweetest air of happiness about her, that ever I saw in a human being."

"Have you got where you can see *air?*" inquired Mrs. Marx sharply. Tom laughed.

"I mean, that she finds something everywhere to like and to take pleasure in. Now I confess, this bit of ground, full of graves and old excavations, has no particular charms for me; and my sister will not stay here a minute."

"And what does Lois find here to delight her?

"Everything!" said Tom with enthusiasm. "I was with her the first time she came to this corner of the island,—and it was a lesson, to see her delight. The old cellars and the old stones, and the graves; and then the short green turf that grows among them, and the flowers and weeds—what *I* call weeds, who know no better—but Miss Lois tried to make me see the beauty of the sumach and all the rest of it."

"And she couldn't!" said Mrs. Marx. "Well, I can't. The noise of the sea, and the sight of it, eternally breaking there upon the rocks, would drive me out of my mind, I believe, after a while." And yet Mrs. Marx sat down upon a turfy bank and looked contentedly about her.

"Mrs. Marx," said Tom suddenly, "you are a good friend of Miss Lothrop, aren't you?"

"Try to be a friend to everybody. I've counted sixty-six o' these old cellars!"

"I believe there are more than that. I think Miss Lothrop said seventy."

"She seems to have told you a good deal."

"I was so fortunate as to be here alone with her. Miss Lothrop is often very silent in company."

"So I observe," said Mrs. Marx dryly.

"I wish you'd be my friend too!" said Tom, now taking a seat by her side. "You said you are a friend of everybody."

"That is, of everybody who needs me," said Mrs. Marx, casting a side look at Tom's handsome, winning countenance. "I judge, young man, that ain't your case."

"But it is, indeed!"

"Maybe," said Mrs. Marx incredulously. "Go on, and let's hear."

"You will let me speak to you frankly?"

"Don't like any other sort."

"And you will answer me also frankly?"

"I don't know," said the lady, "but one thing I can say, if I've got the answer, I'll give it to you."

"I don't know who should," said Tom flatteringly, "if not you. I thought I could trust you, when I had seen you a few times."

"Maybe you won't think so after to-day. But go on. What's the business?"

"It is very important business," said Tom slowly; "and it concerns—Miss Lothrop."

"You have got hold of me now," said Lois's aunt. "I'll go into the business, you may depend upon it. What *is* the business?"

"Mrs. Marx, I have a great admiration for Miss Lothrop."

"I dare say. So have some other folks."

"I have had it for a long while. I came here because I heard she was coming. I have lost my heart to her, Mrs. Marx."

"Ah!—What are you going to do about it? or what can *I* do about it?
Lost hearts can't be picked up under every bush."

"I want you to tell me what I shall do."

"What hinders your making up your own mind?"

"It is made up!—long ago."

"Then act upon it. What hinders you? I don't see what I have got to do with that."

"Mrs. Marx, do you think she would have me if I asked her? As a friend, won't you tell me?"

"I don't see why I should,—if I knew,—which I don't. I don't see how it would be a friend's part. Why should I tell you, supposin' I could? She's the only person that knows anything about it."

Tom pulled his moustache right and left in a worried manner.

"Have you asked her?"

"Haven't had a ghost of a chance, since I have been here!" cried the young man; "and she isn't like other girls; she don't give a fellow a bit of help."

Mrs. Marx laughed out.

"I mean," said Tom, "she is so quiet and steady, and she don't talk, and she don't let one see what she thinks. I think she must know I like her—but I have not the least idea whether she likes me."

"The shortest way would be to ask her."

"Yes, but you see I can't get a chance. Miss Lothrop is always up-stairs in that sick-room; and if she comes down, my sister or my mother or somebody is sure to be running after her."

"Besides you," said Mrs. Marx.

"Yes, besides me."

"Perhaps they don't want to let you have her all to yourself."

"That's the disagreeable truth!" said Tom in a burst of vexed candour.

"Perhaps they are afraid you will do something imprudent if they do not take care."

"That's what they call it, with their ridiculous ways of looking at things. Mrs. Marx, I wish people had sense."

"Perhaps they are right. Perhaps they *have* sense, and it would be imprudent."

"Why? Mrs. Marx, I am sure *you* have sense. I have plenty to live upon, and live as I like. There is no difficulty in my case about ways and means."

"What is the difficulty, then?"

"You see, I don't want to go against my mother and sister, unless I had some encouragement to think that Miss Lothrop would listen to me; and I thought—I hoped—you would be able to help me."

"How can I help you?"

"Tell me what I shall do."

"Well, when it comes to marryin'," said Mrs. Marx, "I always say to folks, If you can live and get along without gettin' married—don't!"

"Don't get married?"

"Just so," said Mrs. Marx. "Don't get married; not if you can live without."

"You to speak so!" said Tom. "I never should have thought, Mrs. Marx, you were one of that sort."

"What sort?"

"The sort that talk against marriage."

"I don't!—only against marryin' the wrong one; and unless it's somebody that you can't live without, you may be sure it ain't the right one."

"How many people in the world do you suppose are married on that principle?"

"Everybody that has any business to be married at all," responded the lady with great decision.

"Well, honestly, I don't feel as if I could live without Miss Lothrop.
I've been thinking about it for months."

"I wouldn't stay much longer in that state," said Mrs. Marx, "if I was you. When people don' know whether they're goin' to live or die, their existence ain't much good to 'em."

"Then you think I may ask her?"

"Tell me first, what would happen if you did—that is, supposin' she said yes to you, about which I don't know anything, no more'n the people that lived in these old cellars. What would happen if you did? and if she did?"

"I would make her happy, Mrs. Marx!"

"Yes," said the lady slowly—"I guess you would; for Lois won't say yes to anybody *she* can live without; and I've a good opinion of your disposition; but what would happen to other people?"

"My mother and sister, you mean?"

"Them, or anybody else that's concerned."

"There is nobody else concerned," said Tom, idly defacing the rocks in his neighbourhood by tearing the lichen from them. And Mrs. Marx watched him, and patiently waited.

"There is no sense in it!" he broke out at last. "It is all folly. Mrs.
Marx, what is life good for, but to be happy?"

"Just so," assented Mrs. Marx.

"And haven't I a right to be happy in my own way?"

"If you can."

"So I think! I will ask Miss Lothrop if she will have me, this very day. I'm determined."

"But I said, *if you can*. Happiness is somethin' besides sugar and water. What else'll go in?"

"What do you mean?" asked Tom, looking at her.

"Suppose you're satisfied, and suppose *she's* satisfied. Will everybody else be?"

Tom went at the rocks again.

"It's my affair—and hers," he said then.

"And what will your mother and sister say?"

"Julia has chosen for herself."

"I should say, she has chosen very well. Does she like your choice."

"Mrs. Marx," said the poor young man, leaving the lichens, "they bother me to death!"

"Ah? How is that?"

"Always watching, and hanging around, and giving a fellow no chance for his life, and putting in their word. They call themselves very wise, but I think it is the other thing."

"They don't approve, then?"

"I don't want to marry money!" cried Tom; "and I don't care for fashionable girls. I'm tired of 'em. Lois is worth the whole lot. Such absurd stuff! And she is handsomer than any girl that was in town last winter."

"They want a fashionable girl," said Mrs. Marx calmly.

"Well, you see," said Tom, "they live for that. If an angel was to come down from heaven, they would say her dress wasn't cut right, and they wouldn't ask her to dinner!"

"I don't suppose they'd know how to talk to her either, if they did," said Mrs. Marx. "It would be uncomfortable—for them; I don't suppose an angel can be uncomfortable. But Lois ain't an angel. I guess you'd better give it up, Mr. Caruthers."

Tom turned towards her a dismayed kind of look, but did not speak.

"You see," Mrs. Marx went on, "things haven't gone very far. Lois is all right; and you'll come back to life again. A fish that swims in fresh water couldn't go along very well with one that lives in the salt. That's how I look at it. Lois is one sort, and you're another. I don't know but both sorts are good; but they are different, and you can't make 'em alike."

"I would never want her to be different!" burst out Tom.

"Well, you see, she ain't your sort exactly," Mrs. Marx added, but not as if she were depressed by the consideration. "And then, Lois is religious."

"You don't think that is a difficulty? Mrs. Marx, I am not a religious man myself; at least I have never made any profession; but I assure you I have a great respect for religion."

"That is what folks say of something a great way off, and that they don't want to come nearer."

"My mother and sister are members of the church; and I should like my wife to be, too."

"Why?"

"I told you, I have a great respect for religion; and I believe in it especially for women."

"I don't see why what's good for them shouldn't be good for you."

"That need be no hindrance," Tom urged.

"Well, I don' know. I guess Lois would think it was. And maybe you would think it was, too,—come to find out. I guess you'd better let things be, Mr. Caruthers."

Tom looked very gloomy. "You think she would not have me?" he repeated.

"I think you will get over it," said Mrs. Marx, rising. "And I think you had better find somebody that will suit your mother and sister."

And after that time, it may be said, Mrs. Marx was as careful of Lois on the one side as Mrs. and Miss Caruthers were of Tom on the other. Two or three more days passed away.

"How *is* Mrs. Wishart?" Miss Julia asked one afternoon.

"First-rate," answered Mrs. Marx. "She's sittin' up. She'll be off and away before you know it."

"Will you stay, Mrs. Marx, to help in the care of her, till she is able to move?"

"Came for nothin' else."

"Then I do not see, mother, what good we can do by remaining longer.
Could we, Mrs. Marx?"

"Nothin', but lose your chance o' somethin' better, I should say."

"Tom, do you want to do any more fishing? Aren't you ready to go?"

"Whenever you like," said Tom gloomily.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOM'S DECISION.

The Caruthers family took their departure from Appledore.

"Well, we have had to fight for it, but we have saved Tom," Julia remarked to Mr. Lenox, standing by the guards and looking back at the Islands as the steamer bore them away.

"Saved!—"

"Yes!" she said decidedly,—"we have saved him."

"It's a responsibility," said the gentleman, shrugging his shoulders. "I am not clear that you have not 'saved' Tom from a better thing than he'll ever find again."

"Perhaps *you'd* like her!" said Miss Julia sharply. "How ridiculous all you men are about a pretty face!"

The remaining days of her stay in Appledore Lois roved about to her heart's content. And yet I will not say that her enjoyment of rocks and waves was just what it had been at her first arrival. The island seemed empty, somehow. Appledore is lovely in September and October; and Lois sat on the rocks and watched the play of the waves, and delighted herself in the changing colours of sea, and sky, and clouds, and gathered wild-flowers, and picked up shells; but there was somehow very present to her the vision of a fair, kindly, handsome face, and eyes that sought hers eagerly, and hands that were ready gladly with any little service that there was room to render. She was no longer troubled by a group of people dogging her footsteps; and she found now that there had been, however inopportune, a little

excitement in that. It was very well they were gone, she acknowledged; for Mr. Caruthers *might* have come to like her too well, and that would have been inconvenient; and yet it is so pleasant to be liked! Upon the sober humdrum of Lois's every day home life, Tom Caruthers was like a bit of brilliant embroidery; and we know how involuntarily the eyes seek out such a spot of colour, and how they return to it. Yes, life at home was exceedingly pleasant, but it was a picture in grey; this was a dash of blue and gold. It had better be grey, Lois said to herself; life is not glitter. And yet, a little bit of glitter on the greys and browns is so delightful. Well, it was gone. There was small hope now that anything so brilliant would ever illuminate her quiet course again. Lois sat on the rocks and looked at the sea, and thought about it. If they, Tom and his friends, had not come to Appledore at all, her visit would have been most delightful; nay, it had been most delightful, whether or no; but—this and her New York experience had given Lois a new standard by which to measure life and men. From one point of view, it is true, the new lost in comparison with the old. Tom and his people were not "religious." They knew nothing of what made her own life so sweet; they had not her prospects or joys in looking on towards the far future, nor her strength and security in view of the trials and vicissitudes of earth and time. She had the best of it; as she joyfully confessed to herself, seeing the glorious breaking waves and watching the play of light on them, and recalling Cowper's words—

"My Father made them all!"

But there remained another aspect of the matter which raised other feelings in the girl's mind. The difference in education. Those people could speak French, and Mr. Caruthers could speak Spanish, and Mr. Lenox spoke German. Whether well or ill, Lois did not know; but in any case, how many doors, in literature and in life, stood open to them; which were closed and locked doors to her! And we all know, that ever since Bluebeard's time—I might go back further, and say, ever since Eve's time—Eve's daughters have been unable to stand before a closed door without the wish to open it. The impulse, partly for good, partly for evil, is incontestable. Lois fairly longed to know what Tom and his sister knew in the fields of learning. And there were other fields. There was a certain light, graceful, inimitable habit of the world and of society; familiarity with all the pretty and refined ways and uses of the more refined portions of society; knowledge and practice of proprieties, as the above-mentioned classes of the world recognize them; which all seemed to Lois greatly desirable and becoming. Nay, the said "proprieties" and so forth were not always of the most important kind; Miss Caruthers could be what Lois considered coolly rude, upon occasion; and her mother could be carelessly impolite; and Mr. Lenox could be wanting in the delicate regard which a gentleman should show to a lady; "I suppose," thought Lois, "he did not think I would know any better." In these things, these essential things, some of the farmers of Shampuashuh and their wives were the peers at least, if not the superiors, of these fine ladies and gentlemen. But in lesser things! These people knew how to walk gracefully, sit gracefully, eat gracefully. Their manner and address in all the little details of life, had the ease, and polish, and charm which comes of use, and habit, and confidence. The way Mr. Lenox and Tom would give help to a lady in getting over the rough rocks of Appledore; the deference with which they would attend to her comfort and provide for her pleasure; the grace of a bow, the good breeding of a smile; the ease of action which comes from trained physical and practised mental nature; these and a great deal more, even the details of dress and equipment which are only possible to those who know how, and which are instantly seen to be excellent and becoming, even by those who do not know how; all this had appealed mightily to Lois's nature, and raised in her longings and regrets more or less vague, but very real. All that, she would like to have. She wanted the familiarity with books, and also the familiarity with the world, which some people had; the secure *à plomb* and the easy facility of manner which are so imposing and so attractive to a girl like Lois. She felt that to these people life was richer, larger, wider than to her; its riches more at command; the standpoint higher from which to take a view of the world; the facility greater which could get from the world what it had to give. And it was a closed door before which Lois stood. Truly on her side of the door there was very much that she had and they had not; she knew that, and did not fail to recognize it and appreciate it. What was the Lord's beautiful creation to them? a place to kill time in, and get rid of it as fast as possible. The ocean, to them, was little but a great bath-tub; or a very inconvenient separating medium, which prevented them from going constantly to Paris and Rome. To judge by all that appeared, the sky had no colours for them, and the wind no voices, and the flowers no speech. And as for the Bible, and the hopes and joys which take their source there, they knew no more of it *so* than if they had been Mahometans. They took no additional pleasure in the things of the natural world, because those things were made by a Hand that they loved. Poor people! and Lois knew they were poor; and yet—she said to herself, and also truly, that the possession of her knowledge would not be lessened by the possession of *theirs*. And a little pensiveness mingled for a few days with her enjoyment of Appledore. Meanwhile Mrs. Wishart was getting well.

"So they have all gone!" she said, a day or two after the Caruthers party had taken themselves away.

"Yes, and Appledore seems, you can't think how lonely," said Lois. She had just come in from a ramble.

"You saw a great deal of them, dear?"

"Quite a good deal. Did you ever see such bright pimpernel? Isn't it lovely?"

"I don't understand how Tom could get away."

"I believe he did not want to go."

"Why didn't you keep him?"

"I!" said Lois with an astonished start. "Why should I keep him, Mrs. Wishart?"

"Because he likes you so much."

"Does he?" said Lois a little bitterly.

"Yes! Don't you like him? How do you like him, Lois?"

"He is nice, Mrs. Wishart. But if you ask me, I do not think he has enough strength of character."

"If Tom has let them carry him off against his will, he *is* rather weak."

Lois made no answer. Had he? and had they done it? A vague notion of what might be the truth of the whole transaction floated in and out of her mind, and made her indignant. Whatever one's private views of the danger may be, I think no one likes to be taken care of in this fashion. Of course Tom Caruthers was and could be nothing to her, Lois said to herself; and of course she could be nothing to him; but that his friends should fear the contrary and take measures to prevent it, stirred her most disagreeably. Yes; if things had gone *so*, then Tom certainly was weak; and it vexed her that he should be weak. Very inconsistent, when it would have occasioned her so much trouble if he had been strong! But when is human nature consistent? Altogether this visit to Appledore, the pleasure of which began so spicily, left rather a flat taste upon her tongue; and she was vexed at that.

There was another person who probably thought Tom weak, and who was curious to know how he had come out of this trial of strength with his relations; but Mr. Dillwyn had wandered off to a distance, and it was not till a month later that he saw any of the Caruthers. By that time they were settled in their town quarters for the winter, and there one evening he called upon them. He found only Julia and her mother.

"By the way," said he, when the talk had rambled on for a while, "how did you get on at the Isles of Shoals?"

"We had an awful time," said Julia. "You cannot conceive of anything so slow."

"How long did you stay?"

"O, ages! We were there four or five weeks. Imagine, if you can. Nothing but sea and rocks, and no company!"

"No company! What kept you there?"

"O, Tom!"

"What kept Tom?"

"Mrs. Wishart got sick, you see, and couldn't get away, poor soul! and that made her stay so long."

"And you had to stay too, to nurse her?"

"No, nothing of that. Miss Lothrop was there, and she did the nursing; and then a ridiculous aunt of hers came to help her."

"You staid for sympathy?"

"Don't be absurd, Philip! You know we were kept by Tom. We could not get him away."

"What made Tom want to stay?"

"O, that girl."

"How did you get him away at last?"

"Just because we stuck to him. No other way. He would undoubtedly have made a fool of himself with that girl—he was just ready to do it—but we never left him a chance. George and I, and mother, we surrounded him," said Julia, laughing; "we kept close by him; we never left them alone. Tom got enough of it at last, and agreed, very melancholy, to come away. He is dreadfully in the blues yet."

"You have a good deal to answer for, Julia."

"Now, don't, Philip! That's what George says. It is *too* absurd. Just because she has a pretty face. All you men are bewitched by pretty faces."

"She has a good manner, too."

"Manner? She has no manner at all; and she don't know anything, out of her garden. We have saved Tom from a great danger. It would be a terrible thing, perfectly *terrible*, to have him marry a girl who is not a lady, nor even an educated woman."

"You think you could not have made a lady of her?"

"Mamma, do hear Philip! isn't he too bad? Just because that girl has a little beauty. I wonder what there is in beauty, it turns all your heads! Mamma, do you hear Mr. Dillwyn? he wishes we had let Tom have his head and marry that little gardening girl."

"Indeed I do not," said Philip seriously. "I am very glad you succeeded in preventing it But allow me to ask if you are sure you *have* succeeded? Is it quite certain Tom will not have his head after all? He may cheat you yet."

"O no! He's very melancholy, but he has given it up. If he don't, we'll take him abroad in the spring. I think he has given it up. His being melancholy looks like it."

"True. I'll sound him when I get a chance."

The chance offered itself very soon; for Tom came in, and when Dillwyn left the house, Tom went to walk with him. They sauntered along Fifth Avenue, which was pretty full of people still, enjoying the mild air and beautiful starlight.

"Tom, what did you do at the Isles of Shoals?" Mr. Dillwyn asked suddenly.

"Did a lot of fishing. Capital trolling."

"All your fishing done on the high seas, eh?"

"All my successful fishing."

"What was the matter? Not a faint heart?"

"No. It's disgusting, the whole thing!" Tom broke out with hearty emphasis.

"You don't like to talk about it? I'll spare you, if you say so."

"I don't care what you do to me," said Tom; "and I have no objection to talk about it—to you."

Nevertheless he stopped.

"Have you changed your mind?"

"I shouldn't change my mind, if I lived to be as old as Methuselah!"

"That's right. Well, then,—the thing is going on?"

"It *isn't* going on! and I suppose it never will!"

"Had the lady any objection? I cannot believe that."

"I don't know," said Tom, with a big sigh. "I almost think she hadn't; but I never could find that out."

"What hindered you, old fellow?"

"My blessed relations. Julia and mother made such a row. I wouldn't have minded the row neither; for a man must marry to please himself and not his mother; and I believe no man ever yet married to please his sister; but, Philip, they didn't give me a minute. I could never join her anywhere, but Julia

would be round the next corner; or else George would be there before me. George must put his oar in; and between them they kept it up."

"And you think she liked you?"

Tom was silent a while.

"Well," said he at last, "I won't swear; for you never know where a woman is till you've got her; but if she didn't, all I have to say is, signs aren't good for anything."

It was Philip now who was silent, for several minutes.

"What's going to be the upshot of it?"

"O, I suppose I shall go abroad with Julia and George in the spring, and end by taking an orthodox wife some day; somebody with blue blood, and pretension, and nothing else. My people will be happy, and the family name will be safe."

"And what will become of her?"

"O, she's all right. She won't break her heart about me. She isn't that sort of girl," Tom Caruthers said gloomily. "Do you know, I admire her immensely, Philip! I believe she's good enough for anything. Maybe she's too good. That's what her aunt hinted."

"Her aunt! Who's she?"

"She's a sort of a snapping turtle. A good sort of woman, too. I took counsel with her, do you know, when I found it was no use for me to try to see Lois. I asked her if she would stand my friend. She was as sharp as a fish-hook, and about as ugly a customer; and she as good as told me to go about my business."

"Did she give reasons for such advice?"

"O yes! She saw through Julia and mother as well as I did; and she spoke as any friend of Lois would, who had a little pride about her. I can't blame her."

Silence fell again, and lasted while the two young men walked the length of several blocks. Then Mr. Dillwyn began again.

"Tom, there ought to be no more shilly-shallying about this matter."

"No *more!* Yes, you're right. I ought to have settled it long ago, before Julia and mother got hold of it. That's where I made a mistake."

"And you think it too late?"

Tom hesitated. "It's too late. I've lost my time. *She* has given me up, and mother and Julia have set their hearts that I should give her up. I am not a match for them. Is a man ever a match for a woman, do you think, Dillwyn, if she takes something seriously in hand?"

"Will you go to Europe next spring?"

"Perhaps. I suppose so."

"If you do, perhaps I will join the party—that is, if you will all let me."

So the conversation went over into another channel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. DILLWYN'S PLAN.

Two or three evenings after this, Philip Dillwyn was taking his way down the Avenue, not up it. He followed it down to nearly its lower termination, and turned up into Clinton Place, where he presently run up the steps of a respectable but rather dingy house, rang the bell, and asked for Mrs. Barclay.

The room where he awaited her was one of those dismal places, a public parlour in a boarding-house of second or third rank. Respectable, but forlorn. Nothing was ragged or untidy, but nothing either had the least look of home comfort or home privacy. As to home elegance, or luxury, the look of such a room is enough to put it out of one's head that there can be such things in the world. The ugly ingrain carpet, the ungraceful frame of the small glass in the pier, the abominable portraits on the walls, the disagreeable paper with which they were hung, the hideous lamps on the mantelpiece;—wherever the eye looked, it came back with uneasy discomfort. Philip's eye came back to the fire; and *that* was not pleasant to see; for the fireplace was not properly cared for, the coals were lifeless, and evidently more economical than useful. Philip looked very out of place in these surroundings. No one could for a moment have supposed him to be living among them. His thoroughly well-dressed figure, the look of easy refinement in his face, the air of one who is his own master, so inimitable by one whose circumstances master him; all said plainly that Mr. Dillwyn was here only on account of some one else. It could be no home of his.

As little did it seem fitted to be the home of the lady who presently entered. A tall, elegant, dignified woman; in the simplest of dresses, indeed, which probably bespoke scantiness of means, but which could not at all disguise or injure the impression of high breeding and refinement of manners which her appearance immediately produced. She was a little older than her visitor, yet not much; a woman in the prime of life she would have been, had not life gone hard with her; and she had been very handsome, though the regular features were shadowed with sadness, and the eyes had wept too many tears not to have suffered loss of their original brightness. She had the slow, quiet manner of one whose life is played out; whom the joys and sorrows of the world have both swept over, like great waves, and receding, have left the world a barren strand for her; where the tide is never to rise again. She was a sad-eyed woman, who had accepted her sadness, and could be quietly cheerful on the surface of it. Always, at least, as far as good breeding demanded. She welcomed Mr. Dilhvyn with a smile and evident genuine pleasure.

"How do I find you?" he said, sitting down.

"Quite well. Where have you been all summer? I need not ask how *you* are."

"Useless things always thrive," he said. "I have been wandering about among the mountains and lakes in the northern part of Maine."

"That is very wild, isn't it?"

"Therein lies its charm."

"There are not roads and hotels?"

"The roads the lumberers make. And I saw one hotel, and did not want to see any more."

"How did you find your way?"

"I had a guide—an Indian, who could speak a little English."

"No other company?"

"Rifle and fishing-rod."

"Good work for them there, I suppose?"

"Capital. Moose, and wild-fowl, and fish, all of best quality. I wished
I could have sent you some."

"Thank you for thinking of me. I should have liked the game too."

"Are you comfortable here?" he asked, lowering his voice. Just then the door opened; a man's head was put in, surveyed the two people in the room, and after a second's deliberation disappeared again.

"You have not this room to yourself?" inquired Dilhvyn.

"O no. It is public property."

"Then we may be interrupted?"

"At any minute. Do you want to talk to me, '*unter vier Augen*'?"

"I want no more, certainly. Yes, I came to talk to you; and I cannot, if people keep coming in." A woman's head had now shown itself for a moment. "I suppose in half an hour there will be a couple of

old gentlemen here playing backgammon. I see a board. Have you not a corner to yourself?"

"I have a corner," she said, hesitating; "but it is only big enough to hold me. However, if you will promise to make no remarks, and to 'make believe,' as the children say, that the place is six times as large as it is, I will, for once take you to it. I would take no one else."

"The honour will not outweigh the pleasure," said Dillwyn as he rose.
"But why must I put such a force upon my imagination?"

"I do not want you to pity me. Do you mind going up two flights of stairs?"

"I would not mind going to the top of St. Peter's!"

"The prospect will be hardly like that."

She led the way up two flights of stairs. At the top of them, in the third story, she opened the door of a little end room, cut off the hall. Dillwyn waited outside till she had found her box of matches and lit a lamp; then she let him come in and shut the door. It was a little bit of a place indeed, about six feet by twelve. A table, covered with books and papers, hanging shelves with more books, a work-basket, a trunk converted into a divan by a cushion and chintz cover, and a rocking-chair, about filled the space. Dillwyn took the divan, and Mrs. Barclay the chair. Dillwyn looked around him.

"I should never dream of pitying the person who can be contented here," he said.

"Why?"

"The mental composition must be so admirable! I suppose you have another corner, where to sleep?"

"Yes," she said, smiling; "the other little room like this at the other end of the hall. I preferred this arrangement to having one larger room where I must sit and sleep both. Old habits are hard to get rid of. Now tell me more about the forests of Maine. I have always had a curiosity about that portion of the country."

He did gratify her for a while; told of his travels, and camping out; and of his hunting and fishing; and of the lovely scenery of the lakes and hills. He had been to the summit of Mount Kataydin, and he had explored the waters in 'birches;' and he told of odd specimens of humanity he had found on his way; but after a while of this talk Philip came suddenly back to his starting point.

"Mrs. Barclay, you are not comfortable here?"

"As well as I can expect," she said, in her quiet, sad manner. The sadness was not obtrusive, not on the surface; it was only the background to everything.

"But it is not comfort. I am not insulting you with pity, mind; but I am thinking. Would you not like better to be in the country? in some pleasant place?"

"You do not call this a pleasant place?" she said, with her faint smile. "Now I do. When I get up here, and shut the door, I am my own mistress."

"Would you not like the country?"

"It is out of my reach, Philip. I must do something, you know, to keep even this refuge."

"I think you said you would not be averse to doing something in the line of giving instruction?"

"If I had the right pupils. But there is no chance of that. There are too many competitors. The city is overstocked."

"We were talking of the country."

"Yes, but it is still less possible in the country. I could not find *there* the sort of teaching I could do. All requisitions of that sort, people expect to have met in the city; and they come to the city for it,"

"I do not speak with certain'ty," said Philip, "but I *think* I know a place that would suit you. Good air, pleasant country, comfortable quarters, and moderate charges. And if you went *there*, there is work."

"Where is it?"

"On the Connecticut shore—far down the Sound. Not too far from New
York, though; perfectly accessible."

"Who lives there?"

"It is a New England village, and you know what those are. Broad grassy streets, and shadowy old elms, and comfortable houses; and the sea not far off. Quiet, and good air, and people with their intelligence alive. There is even a library."

"And among these comfortable inhabitants, who would want to be troubled with me?"

"I think I know. I think I know just the house, where your coming would be a boon. They are *not* very well-to-do. I have not asked, but I am inclined to believe they would be glad to have you."

"Who are they?"

"A household of women. The father and mother are dead; the grandmother is there yet, and there are three daughters. They are relations of an old friend of mine, indeed a connection of mine, in the city. So I know something about them."

"Not the people themselves?"

"Yes, I know the people,—so far as one specimen goes. I fancy they are people you could get along with."

Mrs. Barclay looked a little scrutinizingly at the young man. His face revealed nothing, more than a friendly solicitude. But he caught the look, and broke out suddenly with a change of subject.

"How do you women get along without cigars? What is your substitute?"

"What does the cigar, to you, represent?"

"Soothing and comforting of the nerves—aids to thought—powerful helps to good humour—something to do—"

"There! now you have it. Philip you are talking nonsense. Your nerves are as steady and sound as a granite mountain; you can think without help of any extraneous kind; your good-humour is quite as fair as most people's; but—you do want something to do! I cannot bear to have you waste your life in smoke, be it never so fragrant."

"What would you have me do?"

"Anything! so you were hard at work, and *doing* work."

"There is nothing for me to do."

"That cannot be," said she, shaking her head.

"Propose something."

"You have no need to work for yourself," she said; "so it must be for other people. Say politics."

"If ever there was anything carried on purely for selfish interests, it is the business you name."

"The more need for some men to go into it *not* for self, but for the country."

"It's a Maelstrom; one would be sure to get drawn in. And it is a dirty business. You know the proverb about touching pitch."

"It need not be so, Philip."

"It brings one into disgusting contact and associations. My cigar is better."

"It does nobody any good except the tobacconist. And, Philip, it helps this habit of careless letting everything go, which you have got into."

"I take care of myself, and of my money," he said.

"Men ought to live for more than to take care of themselves."

"I was just trying to take care of somebody else, and you head me off! You should encourage a fellow better. One must make a beginning. And I *would* like to be of use to somebody, if I could."

"Go on," she said, with her faint smile again. "How do you propose that I shall meet the increased expenditures of your Connecticut paradise?"

"You would like it?" he said eagerly.

"I cannot tell. But if the people are as pleasant as the place—it would be a paradise. Still, I cannot afford to live in paradise, I am afraid."

"You have only heard half my plan. It will cost you nothing. You have heard only what you are to get—not what you are to give."

"Let me hear. What am I to give?"

"The benefits of your knowledge of the world, and knowledge of literature, and knowledge of languages, to two persons who need and are with out them all."

"'Two persons.' What sort of persons?"

"Two of the daughters I spoke of."

Mrs. Barclay was silent a minute, looking at him.

"Whose plan is this?"

"Your humble servant's. As I said, one must make a beginning; and this is my beginning of an attempt to do good in the world."

"How old are these two persons?"

"One of them, about eighteen, I judge. The other, a year or two older."

"And they wish for such instruction?"

"I believe they would welcome it. But they know nothing about the plan—and must not know," he added very distinctly, meeting Mrs. Barclay's eyes with praiseworthy steadiness.

"What makes you think they would be willing to pay for my services, then? Or, indeed, how could they do it?"

"They are not to do it. They are to know nothing whatever about it. They are not able to pay for any such advantages. Here comes in the benevolence of my plan. You are to do it for *me*, and I am to pay the worth of the work; which I will do to the full. It will much more than meet the cost of your stay in the house. You can lay up money," he said, smiling.

"Phil," said Mrs. Barclay, "what is behind this very odd scheme?"

"I do not know that anything—beyond the good done to two young girls, and the good done to you."

"It is not that," she said. "This plan never originated in your regard for my welfare solely."

"No. I had an eye to theirs also."

"*Only* to theirs and mine, Phil?" she asked, bending a keen look upon him. He laughed, and changed his position, but did not answer.

"Philip, Philip, what is this?"

"You may call it a whim, a fancy, a notion. I do not know that anything will ever come of it. I could wish there might—but that is a very cloudy and misty château en Espagne, and I do not much look at it. The present thing is practical. Will you take the place, and do what you can for these girls?"

"What ever put this thing in your head?"

"What matter, if it is a good thing?"

"I must know more about it. Who are these people?"

"Connections of Mrs. Wishart. Perfectly respectable."

"*What* are they, then?"

"Country people. They belong, I suppose, to the farming population of a New England village. That is very good material."

"Certainly—for some things. How do they live—by keeping boarders?"

"Nothing of the kind! They live, I suppose,—I don't know how they live; and I do not care. They live as farmers, I suppose. But they are poor."

"And so, without education?"

"Which I am asking you to supply."

"Phil, you are interested in one of these girls?"

"Didn't I tell you I was interested in both of them?" he said, laughing. And he rose now, and stood half leaning against the door of the little room, looking down at Mrs. Barclay; and she reviewed him. He looked exactly like what he was; a refined and cultivated man of the world, with a lively intelligence in full play, and every instinct and habit of a gentleman. Mrs. Barclay looked at him with a very grave face.

"Philip, this is a very crazy scheme!" she said, after a minute or two of mutual consideration.

"I cannot prove it anything else," he said lightly. "Time must do that."

"I do not think Time will do anything of the kind. What Time does ordinarily, is to draw the veil off the follies our passions and fancies have covered up."

"True; and there is another work Time some times does. He sometimes draws forth a treasure from under the encumbering rubbish that hid it, and lets it appear for the gold it is."

"Philip, you have never lost your heart to one of these girls?" said
Mrs. Barclay, with an expression of real and grave anxiety.

"Not exactly."

"But your words mean that."

"They are not intended to convey any such meaning. Why should they?"

"Because if they do not mean that, your plan is utterly wild and extravagant. And if they do—"

"What then?"

"*Then* it would be far more wild and extravagant. And deplorable."

"See there the inconsistency of you good people!" said Mr. Dillwyn, still speaking lightly. "A little while ago you were urging me to make myself useful. I propose a way, in which I want your co-operation, calculated to be highly beneficial in a variety of ways,—and I hit upon hindrances directly."

"Philip, it isn't that. I cannot bear to think of your marrying a woman unworthy of you."

"I still less!" he assured her, with mock gravity.

"And that is what you are thinking of. A woman without education, without breeding, without knowledge of the world, without *anything*, that could make her a fit companion for you. Philip, give this up!"

"Not my plan," said he cheerfully. "The rest is all in your imagination. What you have to do, if you will grant my prayer, is to make this little country girl the exact opposite of all that. You will do it, won't you?"

"Where will you be?"

"Not near, to trouble you. Probably in Europe. I think of going with the Caruthers in the spring."

"What makes you think this girl wants—I mean, desires—education?"

"If she does not, then the fat's in the fire, that's all."

"I did not know you were so romantic, before."

"Romantic! Could anything be more practical? And I think it will be so good for you, in that sea air."

"I would rather never smell the sea air, if this is going to be for your damage. Does the girl know you are an admirer of hers?"

"She hardly knows I am in the world! O yes, she has seen me, and I have talked with her; by which

means I come to know that labour spent on her will not be spent in vain. But of me *she* knows nothing."

"After talking with you!" said Mrs. Barclay. "What else is she? Handsome?"

"Perhaps I had better let you judge of that. I could never marry a mere pretty face, I think. But there is a wonderful charm about this creature, which I do not yet understand. I have never been able to find out what is the secret of it."

"A pretty face and a pink cheek!" said Mrs. Barclay, with half a groan. "You are all alike, you men! Now we women—Philip, is the thing mutual already? Does she think of you as you think of her?"

"She does not think of me at all," said he, sitting down again, and facing Mrs. Barclay with an earnest face. "She hardly knows me. Her attention has been taken up, I fancy, with another suitor."

"Another suitor! You are not going to be Quixote enough to educate a wife for another man?"

"No," said he, half laughing. "The other man is out of the way, and makes no more pretension."

"Rejected? And how do you know all this so accurately?"

"Because he told me. Now have you done with objections?"

"Philip, this is a very blind business! You may send me to this place, and I may do my best, and you may spend your money,—and at the end of all, she may marry somebody else; or, which is quite on the cards, you may get another fancy."

"Well," said he, "suppose it. No harm will be done. As I never had any fancy whatever before, perhaps your second alternative is hardly likely. The other I must risk, and you must watch against."

Mrs. Barclay shook her head, but the end was, she yielded.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEWS.

November had come. It was early in the month still; yet, as often happens, the season was thoroughly defined already. Later, perhaps, some sweet relics or reminders of October would come in, or days of the soberer charm which October's successor often brings; but just now, a grey sky and a brown earth and a wind with no tenderness in it banished all thought of such pleasant times. The day was dark and gloomy. So the fire which burned bright in the kitchen of Mrs. Armadale's house showed particularly bright, and its warm reflections were exceedingly welcome both to the eye and to the mind. It was a wood fire, in an open chimney, for Mrs. Armadale would sit by no other; and I call the place the kitchen, for really a large portion of the work of the kitchen was done there; however, there was a stove in an adjoining room, which accommodated most of the boilers and kettles in use, while the room itself was used for all the "mussy" work. Nevertheless, it was only upon occasion that fire was kindled in that outer room, economy in fuel forbidding that two fires should be all the while kept going.

In the sitting-room kitchen, then, this November afternoon, the whole family were assembled. The place was as nice as a pin, and as neat as if no work were ever done there. All the work of the day, indeed, was over; and even Miss Charity had come to sit down with the rest, knitting in hand. They had all changed their dresses and put off their big aprons, and looked unexceptionably nice and proper; only, it is needless to say, with no attempt at a fashionable appearance. Their gowns were calico; collars and cuffs of plain linen; and the white aprons they all wore were not fine nor ornamented. Only the old lady, who did no housework any longer, was dressed in a stuff gown, and wore an apron of black silk. Charity, as I said, was knitting; so was her grandmother. Madge was making more linen collars. Lois sat by her grandmother's chair, for the minute doing nothing.

"What do you expect to do for a bonnet, Lois?" Charity broke the silence.

"Or I either?" put in Madge. "Or you yourself, Charity? We are all in the same box."

"I wish our hats were!" said the elder sister.

"I have not thought much about it," Lois answered. "I suppose, if necessary, I shall wear my straw."

"Then you'll have nothing to wear in the summer! It's robbing Peter to pay Paul."

"Well," said Lois, smiling,—"if Paul's turn comes first. I cannot look so long ahead as next summer."

"It'll be here before you can turn round," said Charity, whose knitting needles flew without her having any occasion to watch them. "And then, straw is cold in winter."

"I can tie a comforter over my ears."

"That would look poverty-stricken."

"I suppose," said Madge slowly, "that is what we are. It looks like it, just now."

"'The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich,'" Mrs. Armadale said.

"Yes, mother," said Charity; "but our cow died because she was tethered carelessly."

"And our hay failed because there was no rain," Madge added. "And our apples gave out because they killed themselves with bearing last year."

"You forget, child, it is the Lord 'that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season.'"

"But he *didn't* give it, mother; that's what I'm talking about; neither the former *nor* the latter; though what that means, I'm sure I don't know; we have it all the year round, most years."

"Then be contented if a year comes when he does not send it."

"Grandmother, it'll do for you to talk; but what are we girls going to do without bonnets?"

"Do without," said Lois archly, with the gleam of her eye and the arch of her pretty brow which used now and then to bewitch poor Tom Caruthers.

"We have hardly apples to make sauce of," Charity went on. "If it had been a good year, we could have got our bonnets with our apples, nicely. Now, I don't see where they are to come from."

"Don't wish for what the Lord don't send, child," said Mrs. Armadale.

"O mother! that's a good deal to ask," cried Charity. "It's very well for you, sitting in your arm-chair all the year round; but we have to put our heads out; and for one, I'd rather have something on them. Lois, haven't you got anything to do, that you sit there with your hands in your lap?"

"I am going to the post-office," said Lois, rising; "the train's in. I heard the whistle."

The village street lay very empty, this brown November day; and so, to Lois's fancy, lay the prospect of the winter. Even so; brown and lightless, with a chill nip in the air that dampened rather than encouraged energy. She was young and cheery-tempered; but perhaps there was a shimmer yet in her memory of the colours on the Isles of Shoals; at any rate the village street seemed dull to her and the day forbidding. She walked fast, to stir her spirits. The country around Shampuashuh is flat; never a hill or lofty object of any kind rose upon her horizon to suggest wider look-outs and higher standing-points than her present footing gave her. The best she could see was a glimpse of the distant Connecticut, a little light blue thread afar off; and I cannot tell why, what she thought of when she saw it was Tom Caruthers. I suppose Tom was associated in her mind with any wider horizon than Shampuashuh street afforded. Anyhow, Mr. Caruthers' handsome face came be fore her; and a little, a very little, breath of regret escaped her, because it was a face she would see no more. Yet why should she wish to see it? she asked herself. Mr. Caruthers could be nothing to her; he *never* could be anything to her; for he knew not and cared not to know either the joys or the obligations of religion, in which Lois's whole life was bound up. However, though he could be nothing to her, Lois had a woman's instinctive perception that she herself was, or had been, something to him; and that is an experience a simple girl does not easily forget. She had a kindness for him, and she was pretty sure he had more than a kindness for her, or would have had, if his sister had let him alone. Lois went back to her Appledore experiences, revolving and studying them, and understanding them a little better now, she thought, than at the time. At the time she had not understood them at all. It was just as well! she said to herself. She could never have married him. But why did his friends not want him to marry her? She was in the depths of this problem when she arrived at the post-office.

The post-office was in the further end of a grocery store, or rather a store of varieties, such as country villages find convenient. From behind a little lattice the grocer's boy handed her a letter, with the remark that she was in luck to-day. Lois recognized Mrs. Wishart's hand, and half questioned the

assertion. What was this? a new invitation? That cannot be, thought Lois; I was with her so long last winter, and now this summer again for weeks and weeks— And, anyhow, I could not go if she asked me. I could not even get a bonnet to go in; and I could not afford the money for the journey.

She hoped it was not an invitation. It is hard to have the cup set to your lips, if you are not to drink it; any cup; and a visit to Mrs. Wishart was a very sweet cup to Lois. The letter filled her thoughts all the way home; and she took it to her own room at once, to have the pleasure, or the pain, mastered before she told of it to the rest of the family. But in a very few minutes Lois came flying down-stairs, with light in her eyes and a sudden colour in her cheeks.

"Girls, I've got some news for you!" she burst in.

Charity dropped her knitting in her lap. Madge, who was setting the table for tea, stood still with a plate in her hand. All eyes were on Lois.

"Don't say news never comes! We've got it to-day."

"What? Who is the letter from?" said Charity.

"The letter is from Mrs. Wishart, but that does not tell you anything."

"O, if it is from Mrs. Wishart, I suppose the news only concerns you," said Madge, setting down her plate.

"Mistaken!" cried Lois. "It concerns us all. Madge, don't go off. It is such a big piece of news that I do not know how to begin to give it to you; it seems as if every side of it was too big to take hold of for a handle. Mother, listen, for it concerns you specially."

"I hear, child." And Mrs. Armadale looked interested and curious.

"It's delightful to have you all looking like that," said Lois, "and to know it's not for nothing. You'll look more 'like that' when I've told you—if ever I can begin."

"My dear, you are quite excited," said the old lady.

"Yes, grandmother, a little. It's so seldom that anything happens, here."

"The days are very good, when nothing happens. I think," said the old lady softly.

"And now something has really happened—for once. Prick up your ears, Charity! Ah, I see they are pricked up already," Lois went on merrily. "Now listen. This letter is from Mrs. Wishart."

"She wants you again!" cried Madge.

"Nothing of the sort. She asks—"

"Why don't you read the letter?"

"I will; but I want to tell you first. She says there is a certain friend of a friend of hers—a very nice person, a widow lady, who would like to live in the country if she could find a good place; and Mrs. Wishart wants to know, if *we* would like to have her in our house."

"To board?" cried Madge.

Lois nodded, and watched the faces around her.

"We never did that before," said Madge.

"No. The question is, whether we will do it now."

"Take her to board!" repeated Charity. "It would be a great bother. What room would you give her?"

"Rooms. She wants two. One for a sitting-room."

"Two! We couldn't, unless we gave her our best parlour, and had none for ourselves. *That* wouldn't do."

"Unless she would pay for it," Lois suggested.

"How much would she pay? Does Mrs. Wishart say?"

"Guess, girls! She would pay—twelve dollars a week."

Charity almost jumped from her chair. Madge stood leaning with her hands upon the table and stared at her sister. Only the old grandmother went on now quietly with her knitting. The words were re-echoed by both sisters.

"Twelve dollars a week! Fifty dollars a month!" cried Madge, and clapped her hands. "We can have bonnets all round; and the hay and the apples won't matter. Fifty dollars a month! Why, Lois!—"

"It would be an awful bother," said Charity.

"Mrs. Wishart says not. At least she says this lady—this Mrs. Barclay—is a delightful person, and we shall like her so much we shall not mind the trouble. Besides, I do not think it will be so much trouble. And we do not use our parlour much. I'll read you the letter now."

So she did; and then followed an eager talk.

"She is a city body, of course. Do you suppose she will be contented with our ways of going on?" Charity queried.

"What ways do you mean?"

"Well—will our table suit her?"

"We can make it suit her," said Madge. "Just think—with fifty dollars a month—"

"But we're not going to keep a cook," Charity went on. "I won't do that. I can do *all* the work of the house, but I can't do half of it. And if I do the cooking, I shall do it just as I have always done it. I can't go to fussing. It'll be country ways she'll be treated to; and the question is, how she'll like 'em?"

"She can try," said Lois.

"And then, maybe she'll be somebody that'll take airs."

"Perhaps," said Lois, laughing; "but not likely. What if she did,
Charity? That would be her affair."

"It would be my affair to bear it," said Charity grimly.

"Daughters," said Mrs. Armadale gently, "suppose we have some tea."

This suggestion brought all to their bearings. Madge set the table briskly, Charity made the tea, Lois cut bread and made toast; and presently talking and eating went on in the harmonious combination which is so agreeable.

"If she comes," said Lois, "there must be curtains to the parlour windows. I can make some of chintz, that will look pretty and not cost much. And there must be a cover for the table."

"Why must there? The table is nice mahogany," said Charity.

"It looks cold and bare so. All tables in use have covers, at Mrs.
Wishart's."

"I don't see any sense in that. What's the good of it?"

"Looks pretty and comfortable."

"That's nothing but a notion. I don't believe in notions. You'll tell me next our steel forks won't do."

"Well, I do tell you that. Certainly they will not do, to a person always accustomed to silver."

"That's nothing but uppishness, Lois. I can't stand that sort of thing. Steel's *just* as good as silver, only it don't cost so much; that's all."

"It don't taste as well."

"You don't need to eat your fork."

"No, but you have to touch your lips to it."

"How does that hurt you, I want to know?"

"It hurts my taste," said Lois; "and so it is uncomfortable. If Mrs. Barclay comes, I should certainly get some plated forks. Half a dozen would not cost much."

"Mother," said Charity, "speak to Lois! She's getting right worldly, I think. Set her right, mother!"

"It is something I don't understand," said the old lady gravely. "Steel forks were good enough for anybody in the land, when I was young. I don't see, for my part, why they ain't just as good now."

Lois wisely left this question unanswered.

"But you think we ought to let this lady come, mother, don't you?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Armadale, "I think it's a providence!"

"And it won't worry you, grandmother, will it?"

"I hope not. If she's agreeable, she may do us good; and if she's disagreeable, we may do her good."

"That's grandma all over!" exclaimed Charity; "but if she's disagreeable, I'll tell you what, girls, I'd rather scrub floors. 'Tain't my vocation to do ugly folks good."

"Charity," said Mrs. Armadale, "it *is* your vocation. It is what everybody is called to do."

"It's what you've been trying to do to me all my life, ain't it?" said Charity, laughing. "But you've got to keep on, mother; it ain't done yet. But I declare! there ought to be somebody in a house who can be disagreeable by spells, or the rest of the world'd grow rampant."

CHAPTER XX.

SHAMPUASHUH.

It was in vain to try to talk of anything else; the conversation ran on that one subject all the evening. Indeed, there was a great deal to be thought of and to be done, and it must of necessity be talked of first.

"How soon does she want to come?" Mrs. Armadale asked, meaning of course the new inmate proposed for the house.

"Just as soon as we are ready for her; didn't you hear what I read, grandmother? She wants to get into the country air."

"A queer time to come into the country!" said Charity. "I thought city folks kept to the city in winter. But it's good for us."

"We must get in some coal for the parlour," remarked Madge.

"Yes; and who's going to make coal fires and clean the grate and fetch boxes of coal?" said Charity. "I don't mind makin' a wood fire, and keepin' it up; wood's clean; but coals I do hate."

There was general silence.

"I'll do it," said Lois.

"I guess you will! You look like it."

"Somebody must; and I may as well as anybody."

"You could get Tim Bodson to carry coal for you," remarked Mrs.
Armadale.

"So we could; that's an excellent idea; and I don't mind the rest at all," said Lois. "I like to kindle fires. But maybe she'll want soft coal. I think it is likely. Mrs. Wishart never will burn hard coal where she sits. And soft coal is easier to manage."

"It's dirtier, though," said Charity. "I hope she ain't going to be a fanciful woman. I can't get along with fancy folks. Then she'll be in a fidget about her eating; and I can't stand that. I'll cook for her, but

she must take things as she finds them. I can't have anything to do with tomfooleries."

"That means custards?" said Lois, laughing. "I like custards myself.
I'll take the tomfoolery part of the business, Charity."

"Will you?" said Charity. "What else?"

"I'll tell you what else, girls. We must have some new tablecloths, and some napkins."

"And we ought to have our bonnets before anybody comes," added Madge.

"And I must make some covers and mats for the dressing table and washstand in the best room," said Lois.

"Covers and mats! What for? What ails the things as they are? They've got covers."

"O, I mean white covers. They make the room look so much nicer."

"I'll tell you what, Lois; you can't do everything that rich folks do; and it's no use to try. And you may as well begin as you're goin' on. Where are you going to get money for coal and bonnets and tablecloths and napkins and curtains, before we begin to have the board paid in?"

"I have thought of that. Aunt Marx will lend us some. It won't be much, the whole of it."

"I hope we aren't buying a pig in a poke," said Charity.

"Mother, do you think it will worry you to have her?" Lois asked tenderly.

"No, child," said the old lady; "why should it worry me?"

So the thing was settled, and eager preparations immediately set on foot. Simple preparations, which did not take much time. On her part Mrs. Barclay had some to make, but hers were still more quickly despatched; so that before November had run all its thirty days, she had all ready for the move. Mr. Dillwyn went with her to the station and put her into the car. They were early, so he took a seat beside her to bear her company during the minutes of waiting.

"I would gladly have gone with you, to see you safe there," he remarked; "but I thought it not best, for several reasons."

"I should think so!" Mrs. Barclay returned dryly. "Philip, I consider this the very craziest scheme I ever had to do with!"

"Precisely; your being in it redeems it from that character."

"I do not think so. I am afraid you are preparing trouble for yourself; but your heart cannot be much in it yet!"

"Don't swear that," he said.

"Well, it cannot, surely. Love will grow on scant fare, I acknowledge; but it must have a little."

"It has had a little. But you are hardly to give it that name yet. Say, a fancy."

"Sensible men do not do such things for a fancy. Why, Philip, suppose I am able to do my part, and that it succeeds to the full; though how I am even to set about it I have at present no idea; I cannot assume that these young women are ignorant, and say I have come to give them an education! But suppose I find a way, and suppose I succeed; what then? *You* will be no nearer your aim—perhaps not so near."

"Perhaps not," he said carelessly.

"Phil, it's a very crazy business! I wouldn't go into it, only I am so selfish, and the plan is so magnificent for me."

"That is enough to recommend it. Now I want you to let me know, from time to time, what I can send you that will either tend to your comfort, or help the work we have in view. Will you?"

"But where are you going to be? I thought you were going to Europe?"

"Not till spring. I shall be in New York this winter."

"But you will not come to—what is the name of the place—where I am going?" she asked earnestly.

"No," said he, smiling. "Shall I send you a piano?"

"A piano! Is music intended to be in the programme? What should I do with a piano?"

"That you would find out. But you are so fond of music—it would be a comfort, and I have no doubt it would be a help."

Mrs. Barclay looked at him with a steady gravity, under which lurked a little sparkle of amusement.

"Do you mean that I am to teach your Dulcinea to play? Or to sing?"

"The use of the possessive pronoun is entirely inappropriate."

"Which *is* she, by the way? There are three, are there not? How am I to know the person in whom I am to be interested?"

"By the interest."

"That will do!" said Mrs. Barclay, laughing. "But it is a very mad scheme, Philip—a very mad scheme! Here you have got me—who ought to be wiser—into a plan for making, not history, but romance. I do not approve of romance, and not at all of making it."

"Thank you!" said he, as he rose in obedience to the warning stroke of the bell. "Do not be romantic, but as practical as possible. I am. Good-bye! Write me, won't you?"

The train moved out of the station, and Mrs. Barclay fell to meditating. The prospect before her, she thought, was extremely misty and doubtful. She liked neither the object of Mr. Dillwyn's plan, nor the means he had chosen to attain it; and yet, here she was, going to be his active agent, obedient to his will in the matter. Partly because she liked Philip, who had been a dear and faithful friend of her husband; partly because, as she said, the scheme offered such tempting advantage to herself; but more than either, because she knew that if Philip could not get her help he was more than likely to find some other which would not serve him so well. If Mrs. Barclay had thought that her refusal to help him would have put an end to the thing, she would undoubtedly have refused. Now she pondered what she had undertaken to do, and wondered what the end would be. Mr. DilIwyn had been taken by a pretty face; that was the old story; he retained wit enough to feel that something more than a pretty face was necessary, therefore he had applied to her; but suppose her mission failed? Brains cannot be bought. Or suppose even the brains were there, and her mission succeeded? What then? How was the wooing to be done? However, one thing was certain—Mr. Dillwyn must wait. Education is a thing that demands time. While he was waiting, he might wear out his fancy, or get up a fancy for some one else. Time was everything.

So at last she quieted herself, and fell to a restful enjoyment of her journey, and amused watching of her fellow-travellers, and observing of the country. The country offered nothing very remarkable. After the Sound was lost sight of, the road ran on among farms and fields and villages; now and then crossing a stream; with nothing specially picturesque in land or water. Mrs. Barclay went back to thoughts that led her far away, and forgot both the fact of her travelling and the reason why. Till the civil conductor said at her elbow—"Here's your place, ma'am—Shampuashuh."

Mrs. Barclay was almost sorry, but she rose, and the conductor took her bag, and they went out. The afternoons were short now, and the sun was already down; but Mrs. Barclay could see a neat station-house, with a long platform extending along the track, and a wide, level, green country. The train puffed off again. A few people were taking their way homewards, on foot and in waggons; she saw no cab or omnibus in waiting for the benefit of strangers. Then, while she was thinking to find some railway official and ask instructions, a person came towards her; a woman, bundled up in a shawl and carrying a horsewhip.

"Perhaps you are Mrs. Barclay?" she said unceremoniously. "I have come after you."

"Thank you. And who is it that has come after me?"

"You are going to the Lothrops' house, ain't you? I thought so. It's all right. I'm their aunt. You see, they haven't a team; and I told 'em I'd come and fetch you, for as like as not Tompkins wouldn't be here. Is that your trunk?—Mr. Lifton, won't you have the goodness to get this into my buggy? it's round at the other side. Now, will you come?"

This last to Mrs. Barclay. And, following her new friend, she and her baggage were presently disposed of in a neat little vehicle, and the owner of it got into her place and drove off.

The soft light showed one of those peaceful-looking landscapes which impress one immediately with

this feature in their character. A wide grassy street, or road, in which carriages might take their choice of tracks; a level open country wherever the eye caught a sight of it; great shadowy elms at intervals, giving an air of dignity and elegance to the place; and neat and well-to-do houses scattered along on both sides, not too near each other for privacy and independence. Cool fresh air, with a savour in it of salt water; and stillness—stillness that told of evening rest, and quiet, and leisure. One got a respect for the place involuntarily.

"They're lookin' for you," the driving lady began.

"Yes. I wrote I would be here to-day."

"They'll do all they can to make you comfortable; and if there's anything you'd like, you've only to tell 'em. That is, anything that can be had at Shampuashuh; for you see, we ain't at New York; and the girls never took in a lodger before. But they'll do what they can."

"I hope I shall not be very exacting."

"Most folks like Shampuashuh that come to know it. That is!—we don't have much of the high-flyin' public; that sort goes over to Castletown, and I'm quite willin' they should; but in summer we have quite a sprinklin' of people that want country and the sea; and they most of 'em stay right along, from the beginning of the season to the end of it. We don't often have 'em come in November, though."

"I suppose not."

"Though the winters here are pleasant," the other went on. "*I* think they're first-rate. You see, we're so near the sea, we never have it very cold; and the snow don't get a chance to lie. The worst we have here is in March; and if anybody is particular about his head and his eyes, I'd advise him to take 'em somewheres else; but, dear me! there's somethin' to be said about every place. I do hear folks say, down in Florida is a regular garden of Eden; but I don' know! seems to me I wouldn't want to live on oranges all the year round, and never see the snow. I'd rather have a good pippin now than ne'er an orange. Here we are. Mr. Starks!"—addressing a man who was going along the side way—"hold on, will you? here's a box to lift down—won't you bear a hand?"

This service was very willingly rendered, the man not only lifting the heavy trunk out of the vehicle, but carrying it in and up the stairs to its destination. The door of the house stood open. Mrs. Barclay descended from the buggy, Mrs. Marx kept her seat.

"Good-bye," she said. "Go right in—you'll find somebody, and they'll take care of you."

Mrs. Barclay went in at the little gate, and up the path of a few yards to the house. It was a very seemly white house, quite large, with a porch over the door and a balcony above it. Mrs. Barclay went in, feeling herself on very doubtful ground; then appeared a figure in the doorway which put her meditations to flight. Such a fair figure, with a grave, sweet, innocent charm, and a manner which surprised the lady. Mrs. Barclay looked, in a sort of fascination.

"We are very glad to see you," Lois said simply. "It is Mrs. Barclay, I suppose? The train was in good time. Let me take your bag, and I will show you right up to your room."

"Thank you. Yes, I am Mrs. Barclay; but who are you?"

"I am Lois. Mrs. Wishart wrote to me about you. Now, here is your room; and here is your trunk. Thank you, Mr. Starks.—What can I do for you? Tea will be ready presently."

"You seem to have obliging neighbours! Ought I not to pay him for his trouble?" said Mrs. Barclay, looking after the retreating Starks.

"Pay? O no!" said Lois, smiling. "Mr Starks does not want pay. He is very well off indeed; has a farm of his own, and makes it valuable."

"He deserves to be well off, for his obligingness. Is it a general characteristic of Shampuashuh?"

"I rather think it is," said Lois. "When you come down, Mrs. Barclay, I will show you your other room."

Mrs. Barclay took off her wrappings and looked about her in a maze. The room was extremely neat and pleasant, with its white naperies and old-fashioned furniture. All that she had seen of the place was pleasant. But the girl!—O Philip, Philip! thought Mrs. Barclay, have you lost your heart here! and what ever will come of it all? I can understand it; but what will come of it!

Down-stairs Lois met her again, and took her into the room arranged for her sitting-room. It was not

a New York drawing-room; but many gorgeous drawing-rooms would fail in a comparison with it. Warm-coloured chintz curtains; the carpet neither fine nor handsome, indeed, but of a hue which did not clash violently with the hue of the draperies; plain, dark furniture; and a blaze of soft coal. Mrs. Barclay exclaimed,

"Delightful! O, delightful! Is this my room, did you say? It is quite charming. I am afraid I am putting you to great inconvenience?"

"The convenience is much greater than the inconvenience," said Lois simply. "I hope we may be able to make you comfortable; but my sisters are afraid you will not like our country way of living."

"Are you the housekeeper?"

"No," said Lois, with her pleasant smile again; "I am the gardener and the out-of-doors woman generally; the man of business of the house."

"That is a rather hard place for a woman to fill, sometimes."

"It is easy here, and where people have so little out-of-door business as we have."

She arranged the fire and shut the shutters of the windows; Mrs. Barclay watching and admiring her as she did so. It was a pretty figure, though in a calico and white apron. The manner of quiet self-possession and simplicity left nothing to be desired. And the face,—but what was it in the face which so struck Mrs. Barclay? It was not the fair features; they *were* fair, but she had seen others as fair, a thousand times before. This charm was something she had never seen before in all her life. There was a gravity that had no connection with shadows, nor even suggested them; a curious loftiness of mien, which had nothing to do with external position or internal consciousness; and a purity, which was like the grave purity of a child, without the child's want of knowledge or immaturity of mental power. Mrs. Barclay was attracted, and curious. At the same time, the dress and the apron were of a style—well, of no style; the plainest attire of a plain country girl.

"I will call you when tea is ready," said Lois. "Or would you like to come out at once, and see the rest of the family?"

"By all means! let me go with you," Mrs. Barclay answered; and Lois opened a door and ushered her at once into the common room of the family. Here Mrs. Armadale was sitting in her rocking-chair.

"This is my grandmother," said Lois simply; and Mrs. Barclay came up.

"How do you do, ma'am?" said the old lady. "I am pleased to see you."

Mrs. Barclay took a chair by her side, made her greetings, and surveyed the room. It was very cheerful and home-looking, with its firelight, and the table comfortably spread in the middle of the floor, and various little tokens of domestic occupation.

"How pleasant this fire is!" she remarked. "Wood is so sweet!"

"It's better than the fire in the parlour," said Mrs. Armadale; "but that room has only a grate."

"I will never complain, as long as I have soft coal," returned the new guest; "but there is an uncommon charm to me in a wood fire."

"You don't get it often in New York, Lois says."

"Miss Lois has been to the great city, then?"

"Yes, she's been there. Our cousin, Mrs. Wishart, likes to have her, and Lois was there quite a spell last winter; but I expect that's the end of it. I guess she'll stay at home the rest of her life."

"Why should she?"

"Here's where her work is," said the old lady; "and one is best where one's work is."

"But her work might be elsewhere? She'll marry some day. If I were a man, I think I should fall in love with her."

"She mightn't marry you, still," said Mrs. Armadale, with a fine smile.

"No, certainly," said Mrs. Barclay, returning the smile; "but—you know, girls' hearts are not to be depended on. They do run away with them, when the right person comes."

"My Lois will wait till he comes," said the old lady, with a sort of tender confidence that was impressive and almost solemn. Mrs. Barclay's thoughts made a few quick gyrations; and then the door opened, and Lois, who had left the room, came in again, followed by one of her sisters bearing a plate of butter.

"Another beauty!" thought Mrs. Barclay, as Madge was presented to her. "Which is which, I wonder?" This was a beauty of quite another sort. Regular features, black hair, eyes dark and soft under long lashes, a white brow and a very handsome mouth. But Madge had a bow of ribband in her black hair, while Lois's red-brown masses were soft, and fluffy, and unadorned. Madge's face lacked the loftiness, if it had the quietness, of the other; and it had not that innocent dignity which seemed—to Mrs. Barclay's fancy—to set Lois apart from the rest of young women. Yet most men would admire Madge most, she thought. O Philip, Philip! she said to herself, what sort of a mess have you brought me into! This is no common romance you have induced me to put my fingers in. These girls!—

But then entered a third, of a different type, and Mrs. Barclay felt some amusement at the variety surrounding her. Miss Charity was plain, like her grandmother; and Mrs. Armadale was not, as I have said, a handsome old woman. She had never been a handsome young one; bony, angular, strong, *not* gracious; although the expression of calm sense, and character, and the handwriting of life-work, and the dignity of mental calm, were unmistakeable now, and made her a person worth looking at. Charity was much younger, of course; but she had the plainness without the dignity; sense, I am bound to say, was not wanting.

The supper was ready, and they all sat down. The meal was excellent; but at first very silently enjoyed. Save the words of anxious hospitality, there were none spoken. The quicker I get acquain'ted, the better, thought Mrs. Barclay. So she began.

"Your village looks to me like a quiet place."

"That is its character," said Mrs. Armadale.

"Especially in winter, I suppose?"

"Well, it allays was quiet, since I've known it," the old lady went on. "They've got a hotel now for strangers, down at the Point—but that ain't the village."

"And the hotel is empty now," added Lois.

"What does the village do, to amuse itself, in these quiet winter days and nights?"

"Nothing," said Charity.

"Really? Are there *no* amusements? I never heard of such a place."

"I don't know what you mean by amusements," Mrs. Armadale took up the subject. "I think, doin' one's work is the best amusement there is. I never wanted no other."

"Does the old proverb not hold good then in Shampuashuh, of 'All work and no play'—you know? The consequences are said to be disastrous."

"No," said Lois, laughing, "it does not hold good. People are not dull here. I don't mean that they are very lively; but they are not dull."

"Is there a library here?"

"A sort of one; not large. Books that some of the people subscribe for, and pass round to each other's houses."

"Then it is not much of a reading community?"

"Well, it is, considerable," said Mrs. Armadale. "There's a good many books in the village, take 'em all together. I guess the folks have as much as they can do to read what they've got, and don't stand in need of no more."

"Well, are people any happier for living in such a quiet way? Are they sheltered in any degree from the storms that come upon the rest of the world? How is it? As I drove along from the station to-night, I thought it looked like a haven of peace, where people could not have heartbreaks."

"I hope the Lord will make it such to you, ma'am," the old lady said solemnly.

The turn was so sudden and so earnest, that it in a sort took Mrs. Barclay's breath away. She merely said, "Thank you!" and let the talk drop.

CHAPTER XXI.

GREVILLE'S MEMOIRS.

Mrs. Barclay found her room pleasant, her bed excellent, and all the arrangements and appointments simple, indeed, but quite sufficient. The next morning brought brilliant sunlight, glittering in the elm trees, and on the green sward which filled large spaces in the street, and on chimneys and housetops, and on the bit of the Connecticut river which was visible in the distance. Quiet it was certainly, and peaceful, and at the same time the sight was inspiriting. Mrs. Barclay dressed and went down; and there she found her parlour in order, the sunlight streaming in, and a beautiful fire blazing to welcome her.

"This is luxury!" thought she, as she took her place in a comfortable rocking-chair before the fire. "But how am I to get at my work!"—Presently Lois came in, looking like a young rose.

"I beg pardon!" she said, greeting Mrs. Barclay, "but I left my duster—"

Has *she* been putting my room in order! thought the lady. This elegant creature? But she showed nothing of her feeling; only asked Lois if she were busy.

"No," said Lois, with a smile; "I have done. Do you want something of me?"

"Yes, in that case. Sit down, and let us get acquain'ted."

Lois sat down, duster in hand, and looked pleasantly ready.

"I am afraid I am giving you a great deal of trouble! If you get tired of me, you must just let me know. Will you?"

"There is no fear," Lois assured her. "We are very glad to have you. If only you do not get tired of our quiet. It is very quiet, after what you have been accustomed to."

"Just what I want! I have been longing for the country; and the air here is delicious. I cannot get enough of it. I keep sniffing up the salt smell. And you have made me so comfortable! How lovely those old elms are over the way! I could hardly get dressed, for looking at them. Do you draw?"

"I? O no!" cried Lois. "I have been to school, of course, but I have learned only common things. I do not know anything about drawing."

"Perhaps you will let me teach you?"

The colour flashed into the girl's cheeks; she made no answer at first, and then murmured, "You are very kind!"

"One must do something, you know," Mrs. Bar clay said. "I cannot let all your goodness make me idle. I am very fond of drawing, myself; it has whiled away many an hour for me. Besides, it enables one to keep a record of pretty and pleasant things, wherever one goes."

"We live among our pleasant things," said Lois; "but I should think that would be delightful for the people who travel."

"You will travel some day."

"No, there is no hope of that."

"You would like it, then?"

"O, who would not like it! I went with Mrs. Wishart to the Isles of Shoals last summer; and it was the first time I began to have a notion what a place the world is."

"And what a place do you think it is?"

"O, so wonderfully full of beautiful things—so full! so full!—and of such *different* beautiful things. I had only known Shampuashuh and the Sound and New York; and Appledore was like a new world." Lois spoke with a kind of inner fire, which sparkled in her eyes and gave accent to her words.

"What was the charm? I do not know Appledore," said Mrs. Barclay carelessly, but watching her.

"It is difficult to put some things in words. I seemed to be out of the world of everyday life, and surrounded by what was pure and fresh and powerful and beautiful—it all comes back to me now, when I think of the surf breaking on the rocks, and the lights and colours, and the feeling of the air."

"But how were the people? were *they* uncommon too? Part of one's impression is apt to come from the human side of the thing."

"Mine did not. The people of the Islands are queer, rough people, almost as strange as all the rest; but I saw more of some city people staying at the hotel; and they did not fit the place at all."

"Why not?"

"They did not enjoy it. They did not seem to see what I saw, unless they were told of it; nor then either."

"Well, you must come in and let me teach you to draw," said Mrs. Barclay. "I shall want to feel that I have some occupation, or I shall not be happy. Perhaps your sister will come too."

"Madge? O, thank you! how kind of you! I do not know whether Madge ever thought of such a thing."

"You are the man of business of the house. What is she?"

"Madge is the dairywoman, and the sempstress. But we all do that."

"You are fond of reading? I have brought a few books with me, which I hope you will use freely. I shall unpack them by and by."

"That will be delightful," Lois said, with a bright expression of pleasure. "We have not subscribed to the library, because we felt we could hardly spare the money."

They were called to breakfast; and Mrs. Barclay studied again with fresh interest all the family group. No want of capacity and receptive readiness, she was sure; nor of active energy. Sense, and self-reliance, and independence, and quick intelligence, were to be read in the face and manner of each one; good ground to work upon. Still Mrs. Barclay privately shook her head at her task.

"Miss Madge," she said suddenly, "I have been proposing to teach your sister to draw. Would you like to join her?"

Madge seemed too much astonished to answer immediately. Charity spoke up and asked, "To draw what?"

"Anything she likes. Pretty things, and places."

"I don't see what's the use. When you've got a pretty thing, what should you draw it for?"

"Suppose you have *not* got it."

"Then you can't draw it," said Charity.

"O Charity, you don't understand," cried Lois. "If I had known how to draw, I could have brought you home pictures of the Isles of Shoals last summer."

"They wouldn't have been like."

Lois laughed, and Mrs. Barclay remarked, that was rather begging the question.

"What question?" said Charity.

"I mean, you are assuming a thing without evidence."

"It don't need evidence," said Charity. "I never saw a picture yet that was worth a red cent. It's only a make-believe."

"Then you will not join our drawing class, Miss Charity?"

"No; and I should think Madge had better stick to her sewing. There's plenty to do."

"Duty comes first," said the old lady; "and *I* shouldn't think duty would leave much time for making marks on paper."

The first thing Mrs. Barclay did after breakfast was to unpack some of her books and get out her writing box; and then the impulse seized her to write to Mr. Dillwyn.

"I had meant to wait," she wrote him, "and not say anything to you until I had had more time for observation; but I have seen so much already that my head is in an excited state, and I feel I must relieve myself by talking to you. Which of these ladies is *the* one? Is it the black-haired beauty, with her white forehead and clean-cut features? she is very handsome! But the other, I confess, is my favourite; she is less handsome, but more lovely. Yes, she is lovely; and both of them have capacity and cleverness. But, Philip, they belong to the strictly religious sort; I see that; the old grandmother is a regular Puritan, and the girls follow her lead; and I am in a confused state of mind thinking what can ever be the end of it all. Whatever would you do with such a wife, Philip Dillwyn? You are not a bad sort of man at all; at least you know *I* think well of you; but you are not a Puritan, and this little girl *is*. I do not mean to say anything against her; only, you want me to make a woman of the world out of the girl—and I doubt much whether I shall be able. There is strength in the whole family; it is a characteristic of them; a capital trait, of course, but in certain cases interfering with any effort to mould or bend the material to which it belongs. What would you do, Philip, with a wife who would disapprove of worldly pleasures, and refuse to take part in worldly plans, and insist on bringing all questions to the bar of the Bible? I have indeed heard no distinctively religious conversation here yet; but I cannot be mistaken; I see what they are; I know what they will say when they open their lips. I feel as if I were a swindler, taking your money on false pretences; setting about an enterprise which may succeed, possibly, but would succeed little to your advantage. Think better of it and give it up! I am unselfish in saying that; for the people please me. Life in their house, I can fancy, might be very agreeable to me; but I am not seeking to marry them, and so there is no violent forcing of incongruities into union and fellowship. Phil, you cannot marry a Puritan."

How Mrs. Barclay was to initiate a system of higher education in this farmhouse, she did not clearly see. Drawing was a simple thing enough; but how was she to propose teaching languages, or suggest algebra, or insist upon history? She must wait, and feel her way; and in the meantime she scattered books about her room, books chosen with some care, to act as baits; hoping so by and by to catch her fish. Meanwhile she made herself very agreeable in the family; and that without any particular exertion, which she rightly judged would hinder and not help her object.

"Isn't she pleasant?" said Lois one evening, when the family were alone.

"She's elegant!" said Madge.

"She has plenty to say for herself," added Charity.

"But she don't look like a happy woman, Lois," Madge went on. "Her face is regularly sad, when she ain't talking."

"But it's sweet when she is."

"I'll tell you what, girls," said Charity,—"she's a real proud woman."

"O Charity! nothing of the sort," cried Lois. "She is as kind as she can be."

"Who said she wasn't? I said she was proud, and she is. She's a right, for all I know; she ain't like our Shampuashuh people."

"She is a lady," said Lois.

"What do you mean by that, Lois?" Madge fired up. "You don't mean, I hope, that the rest of us are not ladies, do you?"

"Not like her."

"Well, why should we be like her?"

"Because her ways are so beautiful. I should be glad to be like her.
She is just what you called her—elegant."

"Everybody has their own ways," said Madge.

"I hope none of you will be like her," said Mrs. Armadale gravely; "for she's a woman of the world, and knows the world's ways, and she knows nothin' else, poor thing!"

"But, grandmother," Lois put in, "some of the world's ways are good."

"Be they?" said the old lady. "I don' know which of 'em."

"Well, grandmother, this way of beautiful manners. They don't all have it—I don't mean that—but some of them do. They seem to know exactly how to behave to everybody, and always what to do or to say; and you can see Mrs. Barclay is one of those. And I like those people. There is a charm about them."

"Don't you always know what's right to do or say, with the Bible before you?"

"O grandmother, but I mean in little things; little words and ways, and tones of voice even. It isn't like Shampuashuh people."

"Well, *we*'re Shampuashuh folks," said Charity. "I hope you won't set up for nothin' else, Lois. I guess your head got turned a bit, with goin' round the world. But I wish I knew what makes her look so sober!"

"She has lost her husband."

"Other folks have lost their husbands, and a good many of 'em have found another. Don't be ridiculous, Lois!"

The first bait that took, in the shape of books, was Scott's "Lady of the Lake." Lois opened it one day, was caught, begged to be allowed to read it; and from that time had it in her hand whenever her hand was free to hold it. She read it aloud, sometimes, to her grandmother, who listened with a half shake of her head, but allowed it was pretty. Charity was less easy to bribe with sweet sounds.

"What on earth is the use of that?" she demanded one day, when she had stood still for ten minutes in her way through the room, to hear the account of Fitz James's adventure in the wood with Roderick Dhu.

"Don't you like it?" said Lois.

"Don't make head or tail of it. And there sits Madge with her mouth open, as if it was something to eat; and Lois's cheeks are as pink as if she expected the people to step out and walk in. Mother, do you like all that stuff?"

"It is *poetry*, Charity," cried Lois.

"What's the use o' poetry? can you tell me? It seems to me nonsense for a man to write in that way. If he has got something to say, why don't he *say* it, and be done with it?"

"He does say it, in a most beautiful way."

"It'd be a queer way of doing business!"

"It is *not* business," said Lois, laughing. "Charity, will you not understand? It is *poetry*."

"What is poetry?"

But alas! Charity had asked what nobody could answer, and she had the field in triumph.

"It is just a jingle-jangle, and what I call nonsense. Mother, ain't that what you would say is a waste of time?"

"I don't know, my dear," said Mrs. Armadale doubtfully, applying her knitting needle to the back of her ear.

"It isn't nonsense; it is delightful!" said Madge indignantly.

"You want me to go on, grandmother, don't you?" said Lois. "We want to know about the fight, when the two get to Coilantogle ford."

And as she was not forbidden, she went on; while Charity got the spice-box she had come for, and left the room superior.

The "Lady of the Lake" was read through. Mrs. Barclay had hoped to draw on some historical inquiries by means of it; but before she could find a chance, Lois took up Greville's Memoirs. This she read to herself; and not many pages, before she came with the book and a puzzled face to Mrs. Barclay's room. Mrs. Barclay was, we may say, a fisher lying in wait for a bite; now she saw she had got one; the thing was to haul in the line warily and skilfully. She broke up a piece of coal on the fire, and gave her visitor an easy-chair.

"Sit there, my dear. I am very glad of your company. What have you in your hand? Greville?"

"Yes. I want to ask you about some things. Am I not disturbing you?"

"Most agreeably. I can have nothing better to do than to talk with you.
What is the question?"

"There are several questions. It seems to me a very strange book!"

"Perhaps it is. But why do you say so?"

"Perhaps I should rather say that the people are strange. Is *this* what the highest society in England is like?"

"In what particulars, do you mean?"

"Why, I think Shampuashuh is better. I am sure Shampuashuh would be ashamed of such doings."

"What are you thinking of?" Mrs. Barclay asked, carefully repressing a smile.

"Why, here are people with every advantage, with money and with education, and with the power of place and rank,—living for nothing but mere amusement, and very poor amusement too."

"The conversations alluded to were very often not poor amusement. Some of the society were very brilliant and very experienced men."

"But they did nothing with their lives."

"How does that appear?"

"Here, at the Duke of York's," said Lois, turning over her leaves;—"they sat up till four in the morning playing whist; and on Sunday they amused themselves shooting pistols and eating fruit in the garden, and playing with the monkeys! That is like children."

"My dear, half the world do nothing with their lives, as you phrase it."

"But they ought. And you expect it of people in high places, and having all sorts of advantages."

"You expect, then, what you do not find."

"And is all of what is called the great world, no better than that?"

"Some of it is better." (O Philip, Philip, where are you? thought Mrs. Barclay.) "They do not all play whist all night. But you know, Lois, people come together to be amused; and it is not everybody that can talk, or act, sensibly for a long stretch."

"How *can* they play cards all night?"

"Whist is very ensnaring. And the little excitement of stakes draws people on."

"Stakes?" said Lois inquiringly.

"Sums staked on the game."

"Oh! But that is worse than foolish."

"It is to keep the game from growing tiresome. Do you see any harm in it?"

"Why, that's gambling."

"In a small way."

"Is it always in a small way?"

"People do not generally play very high at whist."

"It is all the same thing," said Lois. "People begin with a little, and then a little will not satisfy them."

"True; but one must take the world as one finds it."

"Is the New York world like this?" said Lois, after a moment's pause.

"No! Not in the coarseness you find Mr. Greville tells of. In the matter of pleasure-seeking, I am afraid times and places are much alike. Those who live for pleasure, are driven to seek it in all manner of ways. The ways sometimes vary; the principle does not."

"And do all the men gamble?"

"No. Many do not touch cards. My friend, Mr. Dillwyn, for example."

"Mr. Dillwyn? Do you know him?"

"Very well. He was a dear friend of my husband, and has been a faithful friend to me. Do you know him?"

"A little. I have seen him."

"You must not expect too much from the world, my dear."

"According to what you say, one must not expect *anything* from it."

"That is too severe."

"No," said Lois. "What is there to admire or respect in a person who lives only for pleasure?"

"Sometimes there are fine qualities, and brilliant parts, and noble powers."

"Ah, that makes it only worse!" cried Lois. "Fine qualities, and brilliant parts, and noble powers, all used for nothing! That *is* miserable; and when there is so much to do in the world, too!"

"Of what kind?" asked Mrs. Barclay, curious to know her companion's course of thought.

"O, help."

"What sort of help?"

"Almost all sorts," said Lois. "You must know even better than I. Don't you see a great many people in New York that are in want of some sort of help?"

"Yes; but it is not always easy to give, even where the need is greatest. People's troubles come largely from their follies."

"Or from other people's follies."

"That is true. But how would you help, Lois?"

"Where there's a will, there's a way, Mrs. Barclay."

"You are thinking of help to the poor? There is a great deal of that done."

"I am thinking of poverty, and sickness, and weakness, and ignorance, and injustice. And a grand man could do a great deal. But not if he lived like the creatures in this book. I never saw such a book."

"But we must take men as we find them; and most men are busy seeking their own happiness. You cannot blame them for that. It is human nature."

"I blame them for seeking it so. And it is not happiness that people play whist for, till four o'clock in the morning."

"What then?"

"Forgetfulness, I should think; distraction; because they do not know anything about happiness."

"Who does?" said Mrs. Barclay sadly.

Lois was silent, not because she had not something to say, but because she was not certain how best to say it. There was no doubt in her sweet face, rather a grave assurance which stimulated Mrs.

Barclay's curiosity.

"We must take people as we find them," she repeated. "You cannot expect men who live for pleasure to give up their search for the sake of other people's pleasure."

"Yet that is the way,—which they miss," said Lois.

"The way to what?"

"To real enjoyment. To life that is worth living."

"What would you have them do?"

"Only what the Bible says."

"I do not believe I know the Bible as well as you do. Of what directions are you thinking? 'The poor ye have always with you'?"

"Not that," said Lois. "Let me get my Bible, and I will tell you.—This, Mrs. Barclay—'To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke..... To deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh'....."

"And do you think, to live right, one must live so?"

"It is the Bible!" said Lois, with so innocent a look of having answered all questions, that Mrs. Barclay was near smiling.

"Do you think anybody ever did live so?"

"Job."

"Did he! I forget."

Lois turned over some leaves, and again read—"'When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.... I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause that I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.'"

"To be a *father to the poor*, in these days, would give a man enough to do, certainly; especially if he searched out all the causes which were doubtful. It would take all a man's time, and all his money too, if he were as rich as Job;—unless you put some limit, Lois."

"What limit, Mrs. Barclay?"

"Do you put none? I was not long ago speaking with a friend, such a man of parts and powers as was mentioned just now; a man who thus far in his life has done nothing but for his own cultivation and amusement. I was urging upon him to do *something* with himself; but I did not tell him what. It did not occur to me to set him about righting ail the wrongs of the world."

"Is he a Christian?"

"I am afraid you would not say so."

"Then he could not. One must love other people, to live for them."

"Love *all sorts?*" said Mrs. Barclay.

"You cannot work for them unless you do."

"Then it is hopeless!—unless one is born with an exceptional mind."

"O no," said Lois, smiling, "not hopeless. The love of Christ brings the love of all that he loves."

There was a glow and a sparkle, and a tenderness too, in the girl's face, which made Mrs. Barclay look at her in a somewhat puzzled admiration. She did not understand Lois's words, and she saw that her face was a commentary upon them; therefore also unintelligible; but it was strangely pure and fair. "You would do for Philip, I do believe," she thought, "if he could get you; but he will never get you."

Aloud she said nothing. By and by Lois returned to the book she had brought in with her.

"Here are some words which I cannot read; they are not English. What are they?"

Mrs. Barclay read: "*Le bon goût, les ris, l'aimable liberté*. That is French."

"What does it mean?"

"Good taste, laughter, and charming liberty. You do not know French?"

"O no," said Lois, with a sort of breath of longing. "French words come in quite often here, and I am always so curious to know what they mean."

"Very well, why not learn? I will teach you."

"O, Mrs. Barclay!"—

"It will give me the greatest pleasure. And it is very easy."

"O, I do not care about *that*," said Lois; "but I would be so glad to know a little more than I do."

"You seem to me to have *thought* a good deal more than most girls of your age; and thought is better than knowledge."

"Ah, but one needs knowledge in order to think justly."

"An excellent remark! which—if you will for give me—I was making to myself a few minutes ago."

"A few minutes ago? About what I said? O, but there I *have* knowledge," said Lois, smiling.

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes," said Lois, gravely now. "The Bible cannot be mistaken, Mrs. Barclay."

"But your application of it?"

"How can that be mistaken? The words are plain."

"Pardon me. I was only venturing to think that you could have seen little, here in Shampuashuh, of the miseries of the world, and so know little of the difficulty of getting rid of them, or of ministering to them effectually."

"Not much," Lois agreed. "Yet I have seen so much done by people without means—I thought, those who *have* means might do more."

"What have you seen? Do tell me. Here I am ignorant; except in so far as I know what some large societies accomplish, and fail to accomplish."

"I have not seen much," Lois repeated. "But I know one person, a farmer's wife, no better off than a great many people here, who has brought up and educated a dozen girls who were friendless and poor."

"A dozen girls!" Mrs. Barclay echoed.

"I think there have been thirteen. She had no children of her own; she was comfortably well off; and she took these girls, one after another, sometimes two or three together; and taught them and trained them, and fed and clothed them, and sent them to school; and kept them with her until one by one they married off. They all turned out well."

"I am dumb!" said Mrs. Barclay. "Giving money is one thing; I can understand that; but taking strangers' children into one's house and home life—and a *dozen* strangers' children!"

"I know another woman, not so well off, who does her own work, as most do here; who goes to nurse any one she hears of that is sick and cannot afford to get help. She will sit up all night taking care of somebody, and then at break of the morning go home to make her own fire and get her own family's breakfast."

"But that is superb!" cried Mrs. Barclay.

"And my father," Lois went on, with a lowered voice,—"he was not very well off, but he used to keep a

certain little sum for lending; to lend to anybody that might be in great need; and generally, as soon as one person paid it back another person was in want of it."

"Was it always paid back?"

"Always; except, I think, at two times. Once the man died before he could repay it. The other time it was lent to a woman, a widow; and she married again, and between the man and the woman my father never could get his money. But it was made up to him another way. He lost nothing."

"You have been in a different school from mine, Lois," said Mrs.
Barclay. "I am filled with admiration."

"You see," Lois went on, "I thought, if with no money or opportunity to speak of, one can do so much, what might be done if one had the power and the will too?"

"But in my small experience it is by no means the rule, that money lent is honestly paid back again."

"Ah," said Lois, with an irradiating smile, "but this money was lent to the Lord; I suppose that makes the difference."

"And are you bound to think well of no man but one who lives after this exalted fashion? How will you ever get married, Lois?"

"I should not like to be married to this Duke of York the book tells of; nor to the writer of the book," Lois said, smiling.

"That Duke of York was brother to the King of England."

"The King was worse yet! He was not even respectable."

"I believe you are right. Come—let us begin our French lessons."

With shy delight, Lois came near and followed with most eager attention the instructions of her friend. Mrs. Barclay fetched a volume of Florian's "Easy Writing"; and to the end of her life Lois will never forget the opening sentences in which she made her first essay at French pronunciation, and received her first knowledge of what French words mean. "Non loin de la ville de Cures, dans le pays des Sabins, au milieu d'une antique forêt, s'élève un temple consacré à Cérès." So it began; and the words had a truly witching interest for Lois.. But while she delightedly forgot all she had been talking about, Mrs. Barclay, not delightedly, recalled and went over it. Philip, Philip! your case is dark! she was saying. And what am I about, trying to help you!

CHAPTER XXII.

LEARNING.

There came a charming new life into the house of the Lothrops. Madge and Lois were learning to draw, and Lois was prosecuting her French studies with a zeal which promised to carry all before it. Every minute of her time was used; every opportunity was grasped; "Numa Pompilius" and the dictionary were in her hands whenever her hands were free; or Lois was bending over her drawing with an intent eye and eager fingers. Madge kept her company in these new pursuits, perhaps with less engrossing interest; nevertheless with steady purpose and steady progress. Then Mrs. Barclay received from New York a consignment of beautiful drawings and engravings from the best old masters, and some of the best of the new; and she found her hands becoming very full. To look at these engravings was almost a passion with the two girls; but not in the common way of picture-seeing. Lois wanted to understand everything; and it was necessary, therefore, to go into wide fields of knowledge, where the paths branched many ways, and to follow these various tracks out, one after another. This could not be done all in talking; and Lois plunged into a very sea of reading. Mrs. Barclay was not obliged to restrain her, for the girl was thorough and methodical in her ways of study, as of doing other things; however, she would carry on two or three lines of reading at once. Mrs. Barclay wrote to her unknown correspondent, "Send me 'Sismondi';" "send me Hallam's 'Middle Ages';" "send me 'Walks about Kome';" "send me 'Plutarch's Lives';" "send me D'Aubigné's 'Réformation';" at last she wrote, "Send me Ruskin's 'Modern Painters'." "I have the most enormous intellectual appetite to feed that ever I had to do with in my life. And yet no danger of an indigestion. Positively, Philip, my task is growing from day

to day delightful; it is only when I think of the end and aim of it all that I get feverish and uneasy. At present we are going with 'a full sail and a flowing sea'; a regular sweeping into knowledge, with a smooth, easy, swift occupying and taking possession, which gives the looker-on a stir of wondering admiration. Those engravings were a great success; they opened for me, and at once, doors before which I might have waited some time; and now, eyes are exploring eagerly the vast realms those doors unclose, and hesitating only in which first to set foot. You may send the 'Stones of Venice' too; I foresee that it will be useful; and the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture.' I am catching my breath, with the swiftness of the way we go on. It is astonishing, what all clustered round a view of Milan Cathedral yesterday. By the way, Philip,—no hurry,—but by and by a stereoscope would be a good thing here. Let it be a little hand-glass, not a great instrument of unvarying routine and magnificent sameness."

Books came by packages and packages. Such books! The eyes of the two girls gloated over them, as they helped Mrs. Barclay unpack; the room grew full, with delightful disorder of riches; but none too much, for they began to feel their minds so empty that no amount of provision could be too generous.

"The room is getting to be running-over full. What will you do, Mrs.
Barclay?"

"It is terrible when you have to sweep the carpet, isn't it? I must send for some book cases."

"You might let Mr. Midgin put up some—shelves I could stain them, and make them look very nice."

"Who is Mr. Midgin?"

"The carpenter."

"Oh! Well.—I think we had better send for him, Lois."

The door stood open into the kitchen, or dining-room rather, on account of the packing-cases which the girls were just moving out; then appeared the figure of Mrs. Marx in the opening.

"Lois, Charity ain't at home—How much beef are you goin' to want?"

"Beef?" said Lois, smiling at the transition in her thoughts.—"For salting, you mean?"

"For salting, and for smoking, and for mince-meat, and for pickling.
What is the girl thinking of?"

"She is thinking of books just now, Mrs. Marx," suggested Mrs. Barclay.

"Books!" The lady stepped nearer and looked in. "Well, I declare! I should think you had *some*. What in all the world can you do with so many?"

"Just what we were considering. I think we must have the carpenter here, to put up some shelves."

"Well I should say that was plain. But when you have got 'em on the shelves, what next? What will you do with 'em then?"

"Take 'em down and read them, aunt Anne."

"Your life ain't as busy as mine, then, if you have time for all that.
What's the good o' readin' so much?"

"There's so much to know, that we don't know!"

"I should like to know what,"—said Mrs. Marx, going round and picking up one book after another. "You've been to school, haven't you?"

Lois changed her tone.

"I'll talk to Charity about the beef, and let you know, aunt Anne."

"Well, come out to the other room and let me talk to you! Good afternoon, ma'am—I hope you don't let these girls make you too much worry.—Now, Lois" (after the door was shut between them and Mrs. Barclay), "I just want you to tell me what you and Madge are about?"

Lois told her, and Mrs. Marx listened with a judicial air; then observed gravely,

"'Seems to me, there ain't much sense in all that, Lois."

"O, yes, aunt Anne! there is."

"What's the use? What do you want to know more tongues than your own for, to begin with? you can't talk but in one at once. And spending your time in making marks on paper! I believe in girls goin' to school, and gettin' all they can there; but when school is done, then they have something else to see to. I'd rather have you raakin' quilts and gettin' ready to be married; dom' women's work."

"I do my work," said Lois gaily.

"Child, your head's gettin' turned. Mother, do you know the way Madge and Lois are goin' on?"

"I don't understand it," said Mrs. Armadale.

"I understand it. And I'll tell you. I like learning,—nobody better; but I want things kept in their places. And I tell you, if this is let to go on, it'll be like Jack's bean vine, and not stop at the top of the house; and they'll be like Jack, and go after to see, and never come back to common ground any more."

Mrs. Armadale sat looking unenlightened. Madge, who had come in midway of this speech, stood indignant.

"Aunt Anne, that's not like you! You read as much yourself as ever you can; and never can get books enough."

"I stick to English."

"English or French, what's the odds?"

"What was good enough for your fathers and mothers ought to be good enough for you."

"That won't do, aunt Anne," retorted Madge. "You were wanting a Berkshire pig a while ago, and I heard you talking of 'shorthorns.'"

"That's it. I'd like to hear you talking of shorthorns."

"If it is necessary, I could," said Lois; "but there are pleasanter things to talk about."

"There you are! But pictures won't help Madge make butter; and French is no use in a garden. It's all very well for some people, I suppose; but, mother, if these girls go on, they'll be all spoiled for their place in life. This lodger of yours is trying to make 'em like herself."

"I wish she could!" said Madge.

"That's it, mother; that's what I say. But she's one thing, and they're another; she lives in her world, which ain't Shampuashuh by a long jump, and they live in Shampuashuh, and have got to live there. Ain't it a pity to get their heads so filled with the other things that they'll be for ever out o' conceit o' their own?"

"It don't work so, aunt Anne," said Lois.

"It will work so. What use can all these krinkum-krankums be to you? Shampuashuh ain't the place for 'em. You'll be like the girl that got a new bonnet, and had to sit with her head out o' window to wear it."

Madge's cheeks grew red. Lois laughed.

"Daughter," said Mrs. Armadale, "'seems to me you are making a storm in a teapot."

Mrs. Marx laughed at that; then became quite serious again.

"I ain't doin' that," she said. "I never do. And I've no enmity against all manner of fiddle-faddling, if folks have got nothin' better to do. But 'tain't so with our girls. They work for their livin', and they've got to work; and what I say is, they're in a way to get to hate work, if they don't despise it, and in my judgment that's a poor business. It's going the wrong way to be happy. Mother, they ought to marry farmers; and they won't look at a farmer in all Shampuashuh, if you let 'em go on."

Lois remarked merrily that she did not want to look at a man anywhere.

"Then you ought. It's time. I'd like to see you married to a good, solid man, who would learn you to talk of shorthorns and Berkshires. Life's life, chickens; and it ain't the tinkle of a piano. All well enough for your neighbour in the other room; but you're a different sort."

Privately, Lois did not want to be of a different sort. The refinement, the information, the accomplishments, the grace of manner, which in a high degree belonged to Mrs. Barclay, seemed to

her very desirable possessions and endowments; and the mental life of a person so enriched and gifted, appeared to her far to be preferred over a horizon bounded by cheese and bed-quilts. Mrs. Marx was not herself a narrow-minded woman, or one wanting in appreciation of knowledge and culture; but she was also a shrewd business woman, and what she had seen at the Isles of Shoals had possibly given her a key wherewith to find her way through certain problems. She was not sure but Lois had been a little touched by the attentions of that very handsome, fair-haired and elegant gentleman who had done Mrs. Marx the honour to take her into his confidence; she was jealous lest all this study of things unneeded in Shampuashuh life might have a dim purpose of growing fitness for some other. There she did Lois wrong, for no distant image of Mr. Caruthers was connected in her niece's mind with the delight of the new acquirements she was making; although Tom Caruthers had done his part, I do not doubt, towards Lois's keen perception of the beauty and advantage of such acquirements. She was not thinking of Tom, when she made her copies and studied her verbs; though if she had never known the society in which she met Tom and of which he was a member, she might not have taken hold of them so eagerly.

"Mother," she said when Mrs. Marx was gone, "are you afraid these new things will make me forget my duties, or make me unfit for them?"

Mrs. Armadale's mind was a shade more liberal than her daughter's, and she had not been at the Isles of Shoals. She answered somewhat hesitatingly,

"No, child—I don't know as I am. I don't see as they do. I don't see what use they will be to you; but maybe they'll be some."

"They are pleasure," said Lois.

"We don't live for pleasing ourselves, child."

"No, mother; but don't you think, if duties are not neglected, that we ought to educate ourselves all we can, and get all of every sort of good that we can, when we have the opportunity?"

"To be sure," said Mrs. Armadale; "if it ain't a temptation, it's a providence. Maybe you'll find a use for it you don't think. Only take care it ain't a temptation, Lois."

From that time Lois's studies were carried on with more systematic order. She would not neglect her duties, and the short winter days left her little spare time of daylight; therefore she rose long before daylight came. If anybody had been there to look, Lois might have been seen at four o'clock in the family room, which this winter rather lost its character of kitchen, seated at the table with her lamp and her books; the room warm and quiet, no noise but the snapping of the fire and breathing of the flames, and now and then the fall of a brand. And Lois sitting absorbed and intent, motionless, except when the above-mentioned falling brands obliged her to get up and put them in their places. Her drawing she left for another time of day; she could do that in company; in these hours she read and wrote French, and read pages and pages of history. Sometimes Madge was there too; but Lois always, from a very early hour until the dawn was advanced far enough for her to see to put Mrs. Barclay's room in order. Then with a sigh of pleasure Lois would turn down her lamp, and with another breath of hope and expectation betake herself to the next room to put all things in readiness for its owner's occupancy and use, which occupancy and use involved most delightful hours of reading and talking and instruction by and by. Making the fire, sweeping, brushing, dusting, regulating chairs and tables and books and trifles, drawing back the curtains and opening the shutters; which last, to be sure, she began with. And then Lois went to do the same offices for the family room, and to set the table for breakfast; unless Madge had already done it.

And then Lois brought her Bible and read to Mrs. Armadale, who by this time was in her chair by the fireside, and busy with her knitting. The knitting was laid down then, however; and Mrs. Armadale loved to take the book in her hands, upon her lap, while her granddaughter, leaning over it, read to her. They two had it alone; no other meddled with them. Charity was always in the kitchen at this time, and Madge often in her dairy, and neither of them inclined to share in the service which Lois always loved dearly to render. They two, the old and the young, would sit wholly engrossed with their reading and their talk, unconscious of what was going on around them; even while Charity and Madge were bustling in and out with the preparations for breakfast. Nothing of the bustle reached Mrs. Armadale or Lois, whose faces at such times had a high and sweet and withdrawn look, very lovely to behold. The hard features and wrinkled lines of the one face made more noticeable the soft bloom and delicate moulding of the other, while the contrast enhanced the evident oneness of spirit and interest which filled them both. When they were called to breakfast and moved to the table, then there was a difference. Both, indeed, showed a subdued sweet gravity; but Mrs. Armadale was wont also to be very silent and withdrawn into herself, or busied with inner communings; while Lois was ready with speech or action for everybody's occasions, and full of gentle ministry. Mrs. Barclay used to study them both, and be wonderingly busy with the contemplation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BREAKFAST TABLE.

It was Christmas eve. Lois had done her morning work by the lamplight, and was putting the dining-room, or sitting-room rather, in order; when Madge joined her and began to help.

"Is the other room ready?"

"All ready," said Lois.

"Are you doing that elm tree?"

"Yes."

"How do you get along?"

"I cannot manage it yet, to my satisfaction; but I will. O Madge, isn't it too delicious?"

"What? the drawing? Isn't it!!"

"I don't mean the drawing only. Everything. I am getting hold of French, and it's delightful. But the books! O Madge, the books! I feel as if I had been a chicken in his shell until now, and as if I were just getting my eyes open to see what the world is like."

"What *is* it like?" asked Madge, laughing. "My eyes are shut yet, I suppose, for *I* haven't found out. You can tell me."

"Eyes that are open cannot help eyes that are shut. Besides, mine are only getting open."

"What do they see? Come, Lois, tell."

Lois stood still, resting on her broom handle.

"The world seems to me an immense battle-place, where wrong and right have been struggling; always struggling. And sometimes the wrong seems to cover the whole earth, like a flood, and there is nothing but confusion and horror; and then sometimes the floods part and one sees a little bit of firm ground, where grass and flowers might grow, if they had a chance. And in those spots there is generally some great, grand man, who has fought back the flood of wrong and made a clearing."

"Well, I do not understand all that one bit!" said Madge.

"I do not wonder," said Lois, laughing, "I do not understand it very clearly myself. I cannot blame you. But it is very curious, Madge, that the ancient Persians had just that idea of the world being a battle-place, and that wrong and right were fighting; or rather, that the Spirit of good and the Spirit of evil were struggling. Ormuzd was their name for the good Spirit, and Ahriman the other. It is very strange, for that is just the truth."

"Then why is it strange?" said downright Madge.

"Because they were heathen; they did not know the Bible."

"Is that what the Bible says? I didn't know it."

"Why, Madge, yes, you did. You know who is called the 'Prince of this world'; and you know Jesus 'was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil'; and you know 'he shall reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.' But how should those old Persians know so much, with out knowing more? I'll tell you, Madge! You know, Enoch knew?"—

"No, I don't."

"Yes, you do! Enoch knew. And of course they all knew when they came out of the ark"—

"Who—the Persians?"

Lois broke out into a laugh, and began to move her broom again.

"What have you been reading, to put all this into your head?"

The broom stopped.

"Ancient history, and modern; parts here and there, in different books.
Mrs. Barclay showed me where; and then we have talked"—

Lois began now to sweep vigorously.

"Lois, is *she* like the people you used to see in New York? I mean, were they all like her?"

"Not all so nice."

"But like her?"

"Not in everything. No, they were not most of them so clever, and most of them did not know so much, and were not so accomplished."

"But they were like her in other things?"

"No," said Lois, standing still; "she is a head and shoulders above most of the women I saw; but they were of her sort, if that is what you mean."

"That is what I mean. She is not a bit like people here. We must seem very stupid to her, Lois."

"Shampuashuh people are not stupid."

"Well, aunt Anne isn't stupid; but she is not like Mrs. Barclay. And she don't want us to be like Mrs. Barclay."

"No danger!"—said Lois, very busy now at her work.

"But wouldn't you *like* to be like Mrs. Barclay?"

"Yes."

"So would I."

"Well, we can, in the things that are most valuable," said Lois, standing still again for a moment to look at her sister.

"O, yes, books— But I would like to be graceful like Mrs. Barclay. You would call that not valuable; but I care more for it than for all the rest. Her beautiful manners."

"She *has* beautiful manners," said Lois. "I do not think manners can be taught. They cannot be imitated."

"Why not?"

"O, they wouldn't be natural. And what suits one might not suit another. A very handsome nose of somebody else might not be good on my face. No, they would not be natural."

"You need not wish for anybody's nose but your own," said Madge. "*That* will do, and so will mine, I'm thankful! But what makes her look so unhappy, Lois?"

"She does look unhappy."

"She looks as if she had lost all her friends."

"She has got *one*, here," said Lois, sweeping away.

"But what good can you do her?"

"Nothing. It isn't likely that she will ever even know the fact."

"She's doing a good deal for us."

A little later, Mrs. Barclay came down to her room. She found it, as always, in bright order; the fire casting red reflections into every corner, and making pleasant contrast with the grey without. For it was cloudy and windy weather, and wintry neutral tints were all that could be seen abroad; the clouds swept along grey overhead, and the earth lay brown and bare below. But in Mrs. Barclay's room was the cheeriest play of light and colour; here it touched the rich leather bindings of books, there the black and white of an engraving; here it was caught in tin folds of the chintz curtains which were ruddy and purple in hue, and again it warmed up the old-fashioned furniture and lost itself in a brown tablecover.

Mrs. Barclay's eye loved harmonies, and it found them even in this country-furnished room at Shampuashuh. Though, indeed, the piles of books came from afar, and so did the large portfolio of engravings, and Mrs. Barclay's desk was a foreigner. She sat in her comfortable chair before the fire and read her letters, which Lois had laid ready for her; and then she was called to breakfast.

Mrs. Barclay admired her surroundings here too, as she had often done before. The old lady, ungainly as her figure and uncomely as her face were, had yet a dignity in both; the dignity of a strong and true character, which with abundant self-respect, had not, and never had, any anxious concern about the opinion of any human being. Whoever feels himself responsible to the one Great Ruler alone, and *does* feel that responsibility, will be both worthy of respect and sure to have it in his relations with his fellows. Such tribute Mrs. Barclay paid Mrs. Armadale. Her eye passed on and admired Madge, who was very handsome in her neat, smart home dress; and rested on Lois finally with absolute contentment. Lois was in a nut-brown stuff dress, with a white knitted shawl bound round her shoulders in the way children sometimes have, the ends crossed on the breast and tied at the back of the waist. Brown and white was her whole figure, except the rosy flush on cheeks and lips; the masses of fluffy hair were reddish-brown, a shade lighter than her dress. At Charity Mrs. Barclay did not look much, unless for curiosity; she was a study of a different sort.

"What delicious rolls!" said Mrs. Barclay. "Are these your work, Miss Charity?"

"I can make as good, I guess," said that lady; "but these ain't mine. Lois made 'em."

"Lois!" said Mrs. Barclay. "I did not know that this was one of your accomplishments."

"Is *that* what you call an accomplishment," said Charity.

"Certainly. What do you mean by it?"

"I thought an accomplishment was something that one could accomplish that was no use."

"I am sorry you have such an opinion of accomplishments."

"Well, ain't it true? Lois, maybe Mrs. Barclay don't care for sausages. There's cold meat."

"Your sausages are excellent. I like *such* sausage very much."

"I always think sausages ain't sausages if they ain't stuffed. Aunt Anne won't have the plague of it; but I say, if a thing's worth doing at all, it's worth doing the best way; and there's no comparison in my mind."

"So you judge everything by its utility."

"Don't everybody, that's got any sense?"

"And therefore you condemn accomplishments?"

"Well, I don't see the use. O, if folks have got nothing else to do, and just want to make a flare-up—but for us in Shampuashuh, what's the good of them? For Lois and Madge, now? I don't make it out."

"You forget, your sisters may marry, and go somewhere else to live; and then"—

"I don't know what Madge'll do; but Lois ain't goin' to marry anybody but a real godly man, and what use'll her accomplishments be to her then?"

"Why, just as much use, I hope," said Mrs. Barclay, smiling. "Why not? The more education a woman has, the more fit she is to content a man of education, anywhere."

"Where's she to get a man of education?" said Charity. "What you mean by that don't grow in these parts. We ain't savages exactly, but there ain't many accomplishments scattered through the village. Unless, as you say, bread-makin's one. We do know how to make bread, and cake, with anybody; Lois said she didn't see a bit o' real good cake all the while she was in Gotham; and we can cure hams, and we understand horses and cows, and butter and cheese, and farming, of course, and that; but you won't find your man of education here, or Lois won't."

"She may find him somewhere else," said Mrs. Barclay, looking at Charity over her coffee-cup.

"Then he won't be the right kind," persisted Charity; while Lois laughed, and begged they would not discuss the question of her possible "finds"; but Mrs. Barclay asked, "How not the right kind?"

"Well, every place has its sort," said Charity. "Our sort is religious. I don't know whether we're any *better* than other folks, but we're religious; and your men of accomplishments ain't, be they?"

"Depends on what you mean by religious."

"Well, I mean godly. Lois won't ever marry any but a godly man."

"I hope not!" said Mrs. Armadale.

"*She* won't," said Charity; "but you had better talk to Madge, mother. I am not so sure of her. Lois is safe."

"'The fashion of this world passeth away,'" said the old lady, with a gravity which was yet sweet; "'but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.'"

Mrs. Barclay was now silent. This morning, contrary to her usual wont, she kept her place at the table, though the meal was finished. She was curious to see the ways of the household, and felt herself familiar enough with the family to venture to stay. Charity began to gather her cups.

"Did you give aunt Anne's invitation? Hand along the plates, Madge, and carry your butter away. We've been for ever eating breakfast."

"Talking," said Mrs. Barclay, with a smile.

"Talking's all very well, but I think one thing at a time is enough. It is as much as most folks can attend to. Lois, do give me the plates; and give your invitation."

"Aunt Anne wants us all to come and take tea with her to-night," said Lois; "and she sent her compliments to Mrs. Barclay, and a message that she would be very glad to see her with the rest of us."

"I am much obliged, and shall be very happy to go."

"'Tain't a party," said Charity, who was receiving plates and knives and forks from Lois's hand, and making them elaborately ready for washing; while Madge went back and forth clearing the table of the remains of the meal. "It's nothin' but to go and take our tea there instead of here. We save the trouble of gettin' it ready, and have the trouble of going; that's our side; and what aunt Anne has for her side she knows best herself. I guess she's proud of her sweetmeats."

Mrs. Barclay smiled again. "It seems parties are much the same thing, wherever they are given," she said.

"This ain't a party," repeated Charity. Madge had now brought a tub of hot water, and the washing up of the breakfast dishes was undertaken by Lois and Charity with a despatch and neatness and celerity which the looker-on had never seen equalled.

"Parties do not seem to be Shampuashuh fashion," she remarked. "I have not heard of any since I have been here."

"No," said Charity. "We have more sense."

"I am not sure that it shows sense," remarked Lois, carrying off a pile of clean hot plates to the cupboard.

"What's the use of 'em?" said the elder sister.

"Cultivation of friendly feeling," suggested Mrs. Barclay.

"If folks ain't friendly already, the less they see of one another the better they'll agree," said Charity.

"Miss Charity, I am afraid you do not love your fellow-creatures," said
Mrs. Barclay, much amused.

"As well as they love me, I guess," said Charity.

"Mrs. Armadale," said Mrs. Barclay, appealing to the old lady who sat in her corner knitting as usual, —"do not these opinions require some correction?"

"Charity speaks what she thinks," said Mrs. Armadale, scratching behind her ear with the point of her

needle, as she was very apt to do when called upon.

"But that is not the right way to think, is it?"

"It's the natural way," said the old lady. "It is only the fruit of the Spirit that is 'love, joy, peace.' 'Tain't natural to love what you don't like."

"What you don't like! no," said Mrs. Barclay; "that is a pitch of love
I never dreamed of."

"'If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?'" said the old lady quietly.

"Mother's off now," said Charity; "out of anybody's understanding. One would think I was more unnatural than the rest of folks!"

"She *said* you were more natural, thats all," said Lois, with a sly smile.

The talk ceased. Mrs. Barclay looked on for a few minutes more, marvelling to see the quick dexterity with which everything was done by the two girls; until the dishes were put away, the tcib and towels were gone, the table was covered with its brown cloth, a few crumbs were brushed from the carpet; and Charity disappeared in one direction and Lois in another. Mrs. Barclay herself withdrew to her room and her thoughts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CARPENTER.

The day was a more than commonly busy one, so that the usual hours of lessons in Mrs. Barclay's room did not come off. It was not till late in the afternoon that Lois went to her friend, to tell her that Mrs. Marx would send her little carriage in about an hour to fetch her mother, and that Mrs. Barclay also might ride if she would. Mrs. Barclay was sitting in her easy-chair before the fire, doing nothing, and on receipt of this in formation turned a very shadowed face towards the bringer of it.

"What will you say to me, if after all your aunt's kindness in asking me, I do not go?"

"Not go? You are not well?" inquired Lois anxiously.

"I am quite well—too well!"

"But something is the matter?"

"Nothing new."

"Dear Mrs. Barclay, can I help you?"

"I do not think you can. I am tired, Lois!"

"Tired! O, that is spending so much time giving lessons to Madge and me! I am so sorry."

"It is nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Barclay, stretching out her hand to take one of Lois's, which she retained in her own. "If anything would take away this tired feeling, it is just that, Lois. Nothing refreshes me so much, or does me so much good."

"Then what tires you, dear Mrs. Barclay?"

Lois's face showed unaffected anxiety. Mrs. Barclay gave the hand she held a little squeeze.

"It is nothing new, my child," she said, with a faint smile. "I am tired of life."

Looking at the girl, as she spoke, she saw how unable her listener's mind was to comprehend her. Lois looked puzzled.

"You do not know what I mean?" she said.

"Hardly—"

"I hope you never will. It is a miserable feeling. It is like what I can fancy a withered autumn leaf feeling, if it were a sentient and intelligent thing;—of no use to the branch which holds it—freshness and power gone—no reason for existence left—its work all done. Only I never did any work, and was never of any particular use."

"O, you cannot mean that!" cried Lois, much troubled and perplexed.

"I keep going over to-day that little hymn you showed me, that was found under the dead soldier's pillow. The words run in my head, and wake echoes.

'I lay me down to sleep,
With little thought or care
Whether the waking find
Me here, or there.

'A bowing, burdened head—'"

But here the speaker broke off abruptly, and for a few minutes Lois saw, or guessed, that she could not go on.

"Never mind that verse," she said, beginning again; "it is the next. Do you remember?—

'My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now.
To march the weary march,
I know not how.

'I am not eager, bold,
Nor brave; all that is past.
I am ready not to do,
At last, at last!—'

I am too young to feel so," Mrs. Barclay went on, after a pause which Lois did not break; "but that is how I feel to-day."

"I do not think one need—or ought—at any age," Lois said gently; but her words were hardly regarded.

"Do you hear that wind?" said Mrs. Barclay. "It has been singing and sighing in the chimney in that way all the afternoon."

"It is Christmas," said Lois. "Yes, it often sings so, and I like it. I like it especially at Christmas time."

"It carries me back—years. It takes me to my old home, when I was a child. I think it must have sighed so round the house then. It takes me to a time when I was in my fresh young life and vigour—the unfolding leaf—when life was careless and cloudless; and I have a kind of home-sickness to-night for my father and mother.—Of the days since that time, I dare not think."

Lois saw that rare tears had gathered in her friend's eyes, slowly and few, as they come to people with whom hope is a lost friend; and her heart was filled with a great pang of sympathy. Yet she did not know how to speak. She recalled the verse of the soldier's hymn which Mrs. Barclay had passed over—

"A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest,
Unquestioning, upon
A loving breast."

She thought she knew what the grief was; but how to touch it? She sat still and silent, and perhaps even so spoke her sympathy better than any words could have done it. And perhaps Mrs. Barclay felt it so, for she presently went on after a manner which was not like her usual reserve.

"O that wind! O that wind! It sweeps away all that has been between, and puts home and my childhood before me. But it makes me home-sick, Lois!"

"Cannot you go on with the hymn, dear Mrs. Barclay? You know how it goes,—

'My half day's work is done;
And this is all my part—
I give a patient God
My patient heart.'"

"What does he want with it?" said the weary woman beside her.

"What? O, it is the very thing he wants of us, and of you; the one thing he cares about! That we would love him."

"I have not done a half day's work," said the other; "and my heart is not patient. It is only tired, and dead."

"It is not that," said Lois. "How very, very good you have been to Madge and me!"

"You have been good to me. And, as your grandmother quoted this morning, no thanks are due when we only love those who love us. My heart does not seem to be alive, Lois. You had better go to your aunt's without me, dear. I should not be good company."

"But I cannot leave you so!" exclaimed Lois; and she left her seat and sank upon her knees at her friend's side, still clasping the hand that had taken hers. "Dear Mrs. Barclay, there is help."

"If you could give it, there would be, you pretty creature!" said Mrs. Barclay, with her other hand pushing the beautiful masses of red-brown hair right and left from Lois's brow.

"But there is One who can give it, who is stronger than I, and loves you better."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because he has promised. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Mrs. Barclay said nothing, but she shook her head.

"It is a promise," Lois repeated. "It is a PROMISE. It is the King's promise; and he never breaks his word."

"How do you know, my child? You have never been where I am."

"No," said Lois, "not there. I have never felt just *so*."

"I have had all that life could give. I have had it, and knew I had it. And it is all gone. There is nothing left."

"There is this left," said Lois eagerly, "which you have not tried."

"What?"

"The promise of Christ."

"My dear, you do not know what you are talking of. Life is in its spring with you."

"But I know the King's promise," said Lois.

"How do you know it?"

"I have tried it."

"But you have never had any occasion to try it, you heart-sound creature!" said Mrs. Barclay, with again a caressing, admiring touch of Lois's brow.

"O, but indeed I have. Not in need like yours—I have never touched *that*—I never felt like that; but in other need, as great and as terrible. And I know, and everybody else who has ever tried knows, that the Lord keeps his word."

"How have you tried?" Mrs. Barclay asked abstractedly.

"I needed the forgiveness of sin," said Lois, letting her voice fall a little, "and deliverance from it."

"*You!*" said Mrs. Barclay.

"I was as unhappy as anybody could be till I got it."

"When was that?"

"Four years ago."

"Are you much different now from what you were before?"

"Entirely."

"I cannot imagine you in need of forgiveness. What had you done?"

"I had done nothing whatever that I ought to have done. I loved only myself,—I mean *first*,—and lived only to myself and my own pleasure, and did my own will."

"Whose will do you now? your grandmother's?"

"Not grandmother's first. I do God's will, as far as I know it."

"And therefore you think you are forgiven?"

"I don't *think*, I know," said Lois, with a quick breath. "And it is not 'therefore' at all; it is because I am covered, or my sin is, with the blood of Christ. And I love him; and he makes me happy."

"It is easy to make you happy, dear. To me there is nothing left in the world, nor the possibility of anything. That wind is singing a dirge in my ears; and it sweeps over a desert. A desert where nothing green will grow any more!"

The words were spoken very calmly; there was no emotion visible that either threatened or promised tears; a dull, matter-of-fact, perfectly clear and quiet utterance, that almost broke Lois's heart. The water that was denied to the other eyes sprang to her own.

"It was in the wilderness that the people were fed with manna," she said, with a great gush of feeling in both heart and voice. "It was when they were starving and had no food, just then, that they got the bread from heaven."

"Manna does not fall now-a-days," said Mrs. Barclay with a faint smile.

"O yes, it does! There is your mistake, because you do not know. It *does* come. Look here, Mrs. Barclay—"

She sprang up, went for a Bible which lay on one of the tables, and, dropping on her knees again by Mrs. Barclay's side, showed her an open page.

"Look here—'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst… This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.' Not die of weariness, nor of anything else."

Mrs. Barclay did look with a little curiosity at the words Lois held before her, but then she put down the book and took the girl in her arms, holding her close and laying her own head on Lois's shoulder. Whether the words had moved her, Lois could not tell, or whether it was the power of her own affection and sympathy; Mrs. Barclay did not speak, and Lois did not dare add another word. They were still, wrapped in each other's arms, and one or two of Lois's tears wet the other woman's cheek; and there was no movement made by either of them; until the door was suddenly opened and they sprang apart.

"Here's Mr. Midgin," announced the voice of Miss Charity. "Shall he come in? or ain't there time? Of all things, why can't folks choose convenient times for doin' what they have to do! It passes me. It's because it's a sinful world, I suppose. But what shall I tell him? to go about his business, and come New Year's, or next Fourth of July?"

"You do not want to see him now?" said Lois hastily. But Mrs. Barclay roused herself, and begged that

he might come in. "It is the carpenter, I suppose," said she.

Mr. Midgin was a tall, loose-jointed, large-featured man, with an undecided cast of countenance, and slow movements; which fitted oddly to his big frame and powerful muscles. He wore his working suit, which hung about him in a flabby way, and entered Mrs. Barclay's room with his hat on. Hat and all, his head made a little jerk of salutation to the lady.

"Good arternoon!" said he. "Sun'thin' I kin do here?"

"Yes, Mr. Midgin—I left word for you three days ago," said Lois.

"Jest so. I heerd. And here I be. Wall, I never see a room with so many books in it! Lois, you must be like a cow in clover, if you're half as fond of 'em as I be."

"You are fond of reading, Mr. Midgin?" said Mrs. Barclay.

"Wall, I think so. But what's in 'em all?" He came a step further into the room and picked up a volume from the table. Mrs. Barclay watched him. He opened the book, and stood still, eagerly scanning the page, for a minute or two.

"'Lamps of Architectur'," said he, looking then at the title-page;—"that's beyond me. The only lamps of architectur that *I* ever see, in Shampuashuh anyway, is them that stands up at the depot, by the railroad; but here's 'truth,' and 'sacrifice,' and I don' know what all; 'hope' and 'love,' I expect. Wall, them's good lamps to light up anythin' by; only I don't make out whatever they kin have to do with buildin's." He picked up an other volume.

"What's this?" said he. "'Tain't *my* native tongue. What do ye call it, Lois?"

"That is French, Mr. Midgin."

"That's French, eh?" said he, turning over the leaves. "I want to know!
Don't look as though there was any sense in it. What is it about, now?"

"It is a story of a man who was king of Rome a great while ago."

"King o' Rome! What was his name? Not Romulus and Remus, I s'pose?"

"No; but he came just after Romulus."

"Did, hey? Then you s'pose there ever *was* sich a man as Romulus?"

"Probably," Mrs. Barclay now said. "When a story gets form and lives, there is generally some thing of fact to serve as foundation for it."

"You think that?" said the carpenter. "Wall, I kin tell you stories that had form enough and life enough in 'em, to do a good deal o' work; and that yet grew up out o' nothin' but smoke. There was Governor Denver; he was governor o' this state for quite a spell; and he was a Shampuashuh man, so we all knew him and thought lots o' him. He was sot against drinking. Mebbe you don't think there's no harm in wine and the like?"

"I have not been accustomed to think there was any harm in it certainly, unless taken immoderately."

"Ay, but how're you goin' to fix what's moderately? there's the pinch. What's a gallon for me's only a pint for you. Wall, Governor Denver didn't believe in havin' nothin' to do with the blamed stuff; and he had taken the pledge agin it, and he was known for an out and out temperance man; teetotal was the word with him. Wall, his daughter was married, over here at New Haven; and they had a grand weddin', and a good many o' the folks was like you, they thought there was no harm in it, if one kept inside the pint, you know; and there was enough for everybody to hev had his gallon. And then they said the Governor had taken his glass to his daughter's health, or something like that. Wall, all Shampuashuh was talkin' about it, and Governor Denver's friends was hangin' their heads, and didn't know what to say; for whatever a man thinks,—and thoughts is free,—he's bound to stand to what he *says*, and particularly if he has taken his oath upon it. So Governor Denver's friends was as worried as a steam-vessel in a fog, when she can't hear the 'larm bells; and one said this and t'other said that. And at last I couldn't stand it no longer; and I writ him a letter—to the Governor; and says I, 'Governor,' says I, '*did* you drink wine at your daughter Lottie's weddin' at New Haven last month?' And if you'll believe me, he writ me back, 'Jonathan Midgin, Esq. Dear sir, I was in New York the day you mention, shakin' with chills and fever, and never got to Lottie's weddin' at all.'—What do you think o' that? Overturns your theory a leetle, don't it? Warn't no sort o' foundation for that story; and yet it did go round, and folks said it was so."

"It is a strong story for your side, Mr. Midgin, undoubtedly."

"Ain't it! La! bless you, there's nothin' you kin be sartain of in this world. I don't believe in no Romulus and his wolf. Half o' all these books, now, I have no doubt, tells lies; and the other half, you don' know which 'tis."

"I cannot throw them away however, just yet; and so, Mr. Midgin, I want some shelves to keep them off the floor."

"I should say you jest did! Where'll you put 'em?"

"The shelves? All along that side of the room, I think. And about six feet high."

"That'll hold 'em," said Mr. Midgin, as he applied his measuring rule.
"Jest shelves? or do you want a bookcase fixed up all reg'lar?"

"Just shelves. That is the prettiest bookcase, to my thinking."

"That's as folks looks at it," said Mr. Midgin, who apparently was of a different opinion. "What'll they be? Mahogany, or walnut, or cherry, or maple, or pine? You kin stain 'em any colour. One thing's handsome, and another thing's cheap; and I don' know yet whether you want 'em cheap or handsome."

"Want 'em both, Mr. Midgin," said Lois.

"H'm!— Well—maybe there's folks that knows how to combine both advantages—but I'm afeard I ain't one of 'em. Nothin' that's cheap's handsome, to my way o' thinkin'. You don't make much count o' cheap things *here* anyhow," said he, surveying the room. And then he began his measurements, going round the sides of the apartment to apply his rule to all the plain spaces; and Mrs. Barclay noticed how tenderly he handled the books which he had to move out of his way. Now and then he stopped to open one, and stood a minute or two peering into it. All this while his hat was on.

"Should like to read that," he remarked, with a volume of Macaulay's Essays in his hands. "That's well written. But a man can't read all the world," he went on, as he laid it out of his hands again. "'Much study is a weariness to the flesh.' Arter all, I don't suppose a man'd be no wiser if he'd read all you've got here. The biggest fool I ever knowed, was the man that had read the most."

"How did he show his folly?" Mrs. Barclay asked.

"Wall, it's a story. Lois knows. He was dreadfully sot on a little grandchild he had; his chil'n was all dead, and he had jest this one left; she was a little girl. And he never left her out o' his sight, nor she him; until one day he had to go to Boston for some business; and he couldn't take her; and he said he knowed some harm'd come. Do you believe in presentiments."

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Barclay.

"How should a man have presentiments o' what's comin'?"

"I cannot answer that."

"No, nor nobody else. It ain't reason. I believe the presentiments makes the things come."

"Was that the case in this instance?"

"Wall, I don't see how it could. When he come back from Boston, the little girl was dead; but she was as well as ever when he went away. Ain't that curious?"

"Certainly; if it is true."

"I'm tellin' you nothin' but the truth. The hull town knows it. 'Tain't no secret. 'Twas old Mr. Roderick, you know, Lois; lived up yonder on the road to the ferry. And after he come back from the funeral he shut himself up in the room where his grandchild had been—and nobody ever see him no more from that day, 'thout 'twas the folks in the house; and there warn't many o' them; but he never went out. An' he never went out for seven years; and at the end o' seven years he *had* to—there was money in it—and folks that won't mind nothin' else, they minds Mammon, you know; so he went out. An' as soon as he was out o' the house, his women-folks, they made a rush for his room, fur to clean it; for, if you'll believe me, it hadn't been cleaned all those years; and I expect 'twas in a condition; but the women likes nothin' better; and as they opened some door or other, of a closet or that, out runs a little white mouse, and it run clear off; they couldn't catch it any way, and they tried every way. It was gone, and they were scared, for they knowed the old gentleman's ways. It wasn't a closet either it was in, but some piece o' furniture; I'm blessed ef I can remember what they called it. The mouse was gone, and

the women-folks was scared; and to be sure, when Mr. Roderick come home he went as straight as a line to that there door where the mouse was; and they say he made a terrible rumpus when he couldn't find it; but arter that the spell was broke, like; and he lived pretty much as other folks. Did you say six feet?"

"That will be high enough. And you may leave a space of eight or ten feet on that side, from window to window."

"Thout any?"

"Yes."

"That'll be kind o' lop-sided, won't it? I allays likes to see things samely. What'll you do with all that space of emptiness? It'll look awful bare."

"I will put something else there. What do you suppose the white mouse had to do with your old gentleman's seclusion?"

"Seclusion? Livin' shut up, you mean? Why, don't ye see, he believed the mouse was the sperrit o' the child—leastways the sperrit o' the child was in it. You see, when he got back from the funeral the first thing his eyes lit upon was that ere white mouse; and it was white, you see, and that ain't a common colour for a mouse; and it got into his head, and couldn't get out, that that was Ella's sperrit. It mought ha' ben, for all I can say; but arter that day, it was gone."

"You think the child's spirit might have been in the mouse?"

"Who knows? I never say nothin' I don't know, nor deny nothin' I *du* know; ain't that a good principle?"

"But you know better than that, Mr. Midgin," said Lois.

"Wall, I don't! Maybe you do, Lois; but accordin' to my lights I *don't* know. You'll hev 'em walnut, won't you? that'll look more like furniture."

"Are you coming? The waggon's here, Lois," said Madge, opening the door. "Is Mrs. Barclay ready?"

"Will be in two minutes," replied that lady. "Yes, Mr. Midgin, let them be walnut; and good evening! Yes, Lois, I am quite roused up now, and I will go with you. I will walk, dear; I prefer it."

CHAPTER XXV.

ROAST PIG.

Mrs. Barclay seemed to have entirely regained her usual composure and even her usual spirits, which indeed were never high. She said she enjoyed the walk, which she and Lois took in company, Madge having gone with her grandmother and Charity in Mrs. Marx's waggon. The winter evening was falling grey, and the grey was growing dark; and there was something in the dusky stillness, and soft, half-defined lines of the landscape, with the sharp, crisp air, which suited the mood of both ladies. The stars were not visible yet; the western horizon had still a glow left from the sunset; and houses and trees stood like dark solemn ghosts along the way before the end of the walk was reached. They talked hardly at all, but Mrs. Barclay said when she got to Mrs. Marx's, that the walk had been delightful.

At Mrs. Marx's all was in holiday perfection of order; though that was the normal condition of things, indeed, where that lady ruled. The paint of the floors was yellow and shining; the carpets were thick and bright; the table was set with great care; the great chimney in the upper kitchen where the supper was prepared, was magnificent with its blazing logs. So was a lesser fireplace in the best parlour, where the guests were first received; but supper was ready, and they adjourned to the next room. There the table invited them most hospitably, loaded with dainties such as people in the country can get at Christmas time. One item of the entertainment not usual at Christmas time was a roast pig; its brown and glossy back making a very conspicuous object at one side of the board.

"I thought I'd surprise you all," remarked the satisfied hostess; for she knew the pig was done to a turn; "and anything you don't expect tastes twice as good. I knew ma' liked pig better'n anything; and I think myself it's about the top sheaf. I suppose nothin' can be a surprise to Mrs. Barclay."

"Why do you suppose so?" asked that lady.

"I thought you'd seen everything there was in the world, and a little more."

"Never saw a roast pig before in my life. But I have read of them."

"Read of them!" exclaimed their hostess. "In a cook-book, likely?"

"Alas! I never read a cook-book."

"No more didn't I; but you'll excuse me, I didn't believe you carried it all in your head, like we folks."

"I have not a bit of it in my head, if you mean the art of cookery. I have a profound respect for it; but I know nothing about it whatever."

"Well, you're right to have a respect for it. Uncle Tim, do you just give Mrs. Barclay some of the best of that pig, and let us see how she likes it. And the stuffing, uncle Tim, and the gravy; and plenty of the crackle. Mother, it's done just as you used to do it."

Mrs. Barclay meanwhile surveyed the company. Mrs. Armadale sat at the end of the table; placid and pleasant as always, though to Mrs. Barclay her aspect had somewhat of the severe. She did not smile much, yet she looked kindly over her assembled children. Uncle Tim was her brother; Uncle Tim Hotchkiss. He had the so frequent New England mingling of the shrewd and the benevolent in his face; and he was a much more jolly personage than his sister; younger than she, too, and still vigorous. Unlike her, also, he was a handsome man; had been very handsome in his young days; and, as Mrs. Barclay's eye roved over the table, she thought few could show a better assemblage of comeliness than was gathered round this one. Madge was strikingly handsome in her well-fitting black dress; Lois made a very plain brown stuff seem resplendent; she had a little fleecy white woollen shawl wound about her shoulders, and Mrs. Barclay could hardly keep her eyes away from the girl. And if the other members of the party were less beautiful in feature, they had every one of them in a high degree the stamp of intellect and of character. Mrs. Barclay speculated upon the strange society in which she found herself; upon the odd significance of her being there; and on the possible outcome, weighty and incalculable, of the connection of the two things. So intently that she almost forgot what she was eating, and she started at Mrs. Marx's sudden question—"Well, how do you like it? Charity, give Mrs. Barclay some pickles—what she likes; there's sweet pickle, that's peaches; and sharp pickle, that's red cabbage; and I don' know which of 'em she likes best; and give her some apple—have you got any apple sauce, Mrs. Barclay?"

"Thank you, everything; and everything is delicious."

"That's how things are gen'ally, in Mrs. Marx's hands," remarked uncle Tim. "There ain't her beat for sweets and sours in all the country."

"Mrs. Barclay's accustomed to another sort o' doings," said their hostess. "I didn't know but she mightn't like our ways."

"I like them very much, I assure you."

"There ain't no better ways than Shampuashuh ways," said uncle Tim. "If there be, I'd like to see 'em once. Lois, you never see a handsomer dinner'n this in New York, did you? Come now, and tell. *Did* you?"

"I never saw a dinner where things were better of their kind, uncle Tim."

Mrs. Barclay smiled to herself. That will do, she thought.

"Is that an answer?" said uncle Tim. "I'll be shot if I know."

"It is as good an answer as I can give," returned Lois, smiling.

"Of course she has seen handsomer!" said Mrs. Marx. "If you talk of elegance, we don't pretend to it in Shampuashuh. Be thankful if what you have got is good, uncle Tim; and leave the rest."

"Well, I don't understand," responded uncle Tim. "Why shouldn't Shampuashuh be elegant, I don't see? Ain't this elegant enough for anybody?"

"'Tain't elegant at all," said Mrs. Marx. "If this was in one o' the elegant places, there'd be a bunch o' flowers in the pig's mouth, and a ring on his tail."

At the face which uncle Tim made at this, Lois's gravity gave way; and a perfect echo of laughter went round the table.

"Well, I don' know what you're all laughin' at nor what you mean," said the object of their merriment; "but I should uncommonly like to know."

"Tell him, Lois," cried Madge, "what a dinner in New York is like. You never did tell him."

"Well, I'm ready to hear," said the old gentleman. "I thought a dinner was a dinner; but I'm willin' to learn."

"Tell him, Lois!" Madge repeated.

"It would be very stupid for Mrs. Barclay," Lois objected.

"On the contrary!" said that lady. "I should very much like to hear your description. It is interesting to hear what is familiar to us described by one to whom it is novel. Go on, Lois."

"I'll tell you of one dinner, uncle Tim," said Lois, after a moment of consideration. "*All* dinners in New York, you must understand, are not like this; this was a grand dinner."

"Christmas eve?" suggested uncle Tim.

"No. I was not there at Christmas; this was just a party. There were twelve at table.

"In the first place, there was an oval plate of looking-glass, as long as this table—not quite so broad—that took up the whole centre of the table." Here Lois was interrupted.

"Looking-glass!" cried uncle Tim.

"Did you ever hear anything so ridiculous?" said Charity.

"Looking-glass to set the hot dishes on?" said Mrs. Marx, to whom this story seemed new.

"No; not to set anything on. It took up the whole centre of the table. Round the edge of this looking-glass, all round, was a border or little fence of solid silver, about six or eight inches high; of beautiful wrought open-work; and just within this silver fence, at intervals, stood most exquisite little white marble statues, about a foot and a half high. There must have been a dozen of them; and anything more beautiful than the whole thing was, you cannot imagine."

"I should think they'd have been awfully in the way," remarked Charity.

"Not at all; there was room enough all round outside for the plates and glasses."

"The looking-glass, I suppose, was for the pretty ladies to see themselves in!"

"Quite mistaken, uncle Tim; one could not see the reflection of oneself; only bits of one's opposite neighbours; little flashes of colour here and there; and the reflection of the statuettes on the further side; it was prettier than ever you can think."

"I reckon it must ha' been; but I don't see the use of it," said uncle Tim.

"That wasn't all," Lois went on. "Everybody had his own salt-cellar."

"Table must ha' been full, I should say."

"No, it was not full at all; there was plenty of room for everything, and that allowed every pretty thing to be seen. And those salt-cellars were a study. They were delicious little silver figures—every one different from the others—and each little figure presented the salt in something. Mine was a little girl, with her apron all gathered up, as if to hold nuts or apples, and the salt was in her apron. The one next to her was a market-woman with a flat basket on her head, and the salt was in the basket. Another was a man bowing, with his hat in his hand; the salt was in the hat. I could not see them all, but each one seemed prettier than the other. One was a man standing by a well, with a bucket drawn up, but full of salt, not water. A very pretty one was a milkman with a pail."

Uncle Tim was now reduced to silence, but Charity remarked that she could not understand where the dishes were—the dinner.

"It was somewhere else. It was not on the table at all. The waiters brought the things round. There were six waiters, handsomely dressed in black, and with white silk gloves."

"White silk gloves!" echoed Charity. "Well, I *do* think the way some people live is just a sin and a shame!"

"How did you know what there was for dinner?" inquired Mrs. Marx now. "I shouldn't like to make my dinner of boiled beef, if there was partridges comin'. And when there's plum-puddin' I always like to know it beforehand."

"We knew everything beforehand, aunt Anne. There were beautifully painted little pieces of white silk on everybody's plate, with all the dishes named; only many, most of them, were French names, and I was none the wiser for them."

"Can't they call good victuals by English names?" asked uncle Tim.
"What's the sense o' that? How was anybody to know what he was eatin'?"

"O they all knew," said Lois. "Except me."

"I'll bet you were the only sensible one o' the lot," said the old gentleman.

"Then at every plate there was a beautiful cut glass bottle, something like a decanter, with ice water, and over the mouth of it a tumbler to match. Besides that, there were at each plate five or six other goblets or glasses, of different colours."

"What colours?" demanded Charity.

"Yellow, and dark red, and green, and white."

"What were *they* all for?" asked uncle Tim.

"Wine; different sorts of wine."

"Different sorts o' wine! How many sorts did they have, at one dinner?"

"I cannot tell you. I do not know. A great many."

"Did you drink any, Lois?"

"No, aunt Anne."

"I suppose they thought you were a real country girl, because you didn't?"

"Nobody thought anything about it. The servants brought the wine; everybody did just as he pleased about taking it."

"What did you have to eat, Lois, with so much to drink?" asked her elder sister.

"More than I can tell, Charity. There must have been a dozen large dishes, at each end of the table, besides the soup and the fish; and no end of smaller dishes."

"For a dozen people!" cried Charity.

"I suppose it's because I don't know anythin'," said Mr. Hotchkiss,—"but I always *du* hate to see a whole lot o' things before me more'n I can eat!"

"It's downright wicked waste, that's what I call it," said Mrs. Marx; "but I s'pose that's because I don't know anythin'."

"And you like that sort o' way better 'n this 'n?" inquired uncle Tim of Lois.

"I said no more than that it was prettier, uncle Tim."

"But *du* ye?"

Lois's eye met involuntarily Mrs. Barclay's for an instant, and she smiled.

"Uncle Tim, I think there is something to be said on both sides."

"There ain't no sense on that side."

"There is some prettiness; and I like prettiness."

"Prettiness won't butter nobody's bread. Mother, you've let Lois go once too often among those city folks. She's nigh about sp'iled for a Shampuashuh man now."

"Perhaps a Shampuashuh man will not get her," said Mrs. Barclay mischievously.

"Who else is to get her?" cried Mrs. Marx. "We're all o' one sort here; and there's hardly a man but what's respectable, and very few that ain't more or less well-to-do; but we all work and mean to work, and we mostly all know our own mind. I do despise a man who don't do nothin', and who asks other folks what he's to think!"

"That sort of person is not held in very high esteem in any society, I believe," said Mrs. Barclay courteously; though she was much amused, and was willing for her own reasons that the talk should go a little further. Therefore she spoke.

"Well, idleness breeds 'em," said the other lady.

"But who respects them?"

"The world'll respect anybody, even a man that goes with his hands in his pockets, if he only can fetch 'em out full o' money. There was such a feller hangin' round Appledore last summer. My! didn't he try my patience!"

"Appledore?" said Lois, pricking up her ears.

"Yes; there was a lot of 'em."

"People who did not know their own minds?" Mrs. Barclay asked, purposely and curiously.

"Well, no, I won't say that of all of 'em. There was some of 'em knew their own minds a'most *too* well; but he warn't one. He come to me once to help him out; and I filled his pipe for him, and sent him to smoke it."

"Aunt Anne!" said Lois, drawing up her pretty figure with a most unwonted assumption of astonished dignity. Both the dignity and the astonishment drew all eyes upon her. She was looking at Mrs. Marx with eyes full of startled displeasure. Mrs. Marx was entrenched behind a whole army of coffee and tea pots and pitchers, and answered coolly.

"Yes, I did. What is it to you? Did he come to *you* for help too?"

"I do not know whom you are talking of."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Marx. "I thought you *did*. Before I'd have you marry such a soft feller as that, I'd—I'd shoot him!"

There was some laughter, but Lois did not join in it, and with heightened colour was attending very busily to her supper.

"Was the poor man looking that way?" asked Mrs. Barclay.

"He was lookin' two ways," said Mrs. Marx; "and when a man's doin' that, he don't fetch up nowhere, you bet. I'd like to know what becomes of him! They were all of the sort Lois has been tellin' of; thought a deal o' 'prettiness.' I do think, the way some people live, is a way to shame the flies; and I don't know nothin' in creation more useless than they be!"

Mrs. Marx could speak better English, but the truth was, when she got much excited she forgot her grammar.

"But at a watering-place," remarked Mrs. Barclay, "you do not expect people to show their useful side. They are out for play and amusement."

"I can play too," said the hostess; "but my play always has some meaning to it. Did I tell you, mother, what that lady was doing?"

"I thought you were speaking of a gentleman," said quiet Mrs. Armadale.

"Well, there was a lady too; and she was doin' a piece o' work. It was a beautiful piece of grey satin; thick and handsome as you ever see; and she was sewin' gold thread upon it with fine gold-coloured silk; fine gold thread; and it went one way straight and another way round, curling and crinkling, like nothin' on earth but a spider's web; all over the grey satin. I watched her a while, and then, says I, 'What are you doin', if you please? I've been lookin' at you, and I can't make out.' 'No,' says she, 'I s'pose not. It's a cover for a bellows.' 'For a *what?*' says I. 'For a bellows,' says she; 'a *bellows*, to blow the fire with. Don't you know what they are?' 'Yes,' says I; 'I've seen a fire bellows before now; but in our part o' the country we don't cover 'em with satin.' 'No,' says she, 'I suppose not.' 'I would just like to

ask one more question,' says I. 'Well, you may,' says she; 'what is it?' 'I would just like to know,' says I, 'what the fire is made of that you blow with a satin and gold bellows?' And she laughed a little. ' 'Cause,' says I, 'it ought to be somethin' that won't soil a kid glove and that won't give out no sparks nor smoke.' 'O,' says she, 'nobody really blows the fire; only the bellows have come into fashion, along with the *fire-dogs*, wherever people have an open fireplace and a wood fire.' Well, what she meant by fire dogs I couldn't guess; but I thought I wouldn't expose any more o' my ignorance. Now, mother, how would you like to have Lois in a house like that?—where people don't know any better what to do with their immortal lives than to make satin covers for bellows they don't want to blow the fire with! and dish up dinner enough for twelve people, to feed a hundred?"

"Lois will never be in a house like that," responded the old lady contentedly.

"Then it's just as well if you keep her away from the places where they make so much of *prettiness*, I can tell you. Lois is human."

"Lois is Christian," said Mrs. Armadale; "and she knows her duty."

"Well, it's heart-breakin' work, to know one's duty, sometimes," said Mrs. Marx.

"But you do not think, I hope, that one is a pattern for all?" said Mrs. Barclay. "There are exceptions; it is not everybody in the great world that lives to no purpose."

"If that's what you call the great world, *I* call it mighty small, then. If I didn't know anything better to do with myself than to work sprangles o' gold on a satin cover that warn't to cover nothin', I'd go down to Fairhaven and hire myself out to open oysters! and think I made by the bargain. Anyhow, I'd respect myself better."

"I don't know what you mean by the great world," said uncle Tim. "Be there two on 'em—a big and a little?"

"Don't you see, all Shampuashuh would go in one o' those houses Lois was tellin' about! and if it got there, I expect they wouldn't give it house-room."

"The worlds are not so different as you think," Mrs. Barclay went on courteously. "Human nature is the same everywhere."

"Well, I guess likely," responded Mrs. Marx. "Mother, if you've done, we'll go into the other."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SCRUPLES.

The next day was Christmas; but in the country of Shampuashuh, Christmas, though a holiday, was not held in so high regard as it receives in many other quarters of the earth. There was no service in the church; and after dinner Lois came as usual to draw in Mrs. Barclay's room.

"I did not understand some of your aunt's talk last evening," Mrs. Barclay remarked after a while.

"I am not surprised at that," said Lois.

"Did you?"

"O yes. I understand aunt Anne."

"Does she really think that *all* the people who like pretty things, lead useless lives?"

"She does not care so much about pretty things as I do," said Lois slightly.

"But does she think all who belong to the 'great world' are evil? given up to wickedness?"

"Not so bad as that," Lois answered, smiling; "but naturally aunt Anne does not understand any world but this of Shampuashuh."

"I understood her to assume that under no circumstances could you marry one of the great world she was talking of?"

"Well," said Lois, "I suppose she thinks that one of them would not be a Christian."

"You mean, an enthusiast."

"No," said Lois; "but I mean, and she means, one who is in heart a true servant of Christ. He might, or he might not, be enthusiastic."

"And would you marry no one who was not a Christian, as you understand the word?"

"The Bible forbids it," said Lois, her colour rising a little.

"The Bible forbids it? I have not studied the Bible like you; but I have heard it read from the pulpit all my life; and I never heard, either from the pulpit or out of it, such an idea, as that one who is a Christian may not marry one who is not."

"I can show you the command—in more places than one," said Lois.

"I wish you would."

Lois left her drawing and fetched a Bible.

"It is forbidden in the Old Testament and in the New," she said; "but I will show you a place in the New. Here it is—in the second Epistle to the Corinthians—'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;' and it goes on to give the reason."

"Unbelievers! But those, in that day, were heathen."

"Yes," said Lois simply, going on with her drawing.

"There are no heathen now,—not here."

"I suppose that makes no difference. It is the party which will not obey and serve Christ; and which is working against him. In that day they worshipped idols of wood and stone; now they worship a different sort. They do not worship *him;* and there are but two parties."

"No neutrals?"

"No. The Bible says not."

"But what is being 'yoked together'? what do you understand is forbidden by that? Marriage?"

"Any connection, I suppose," said Lois, looking up, "in which two people are forced to pull together. You know what a 'yoke' is?"

"And you can smile at that, you wicked girl?"

Lois laughed now. "Why not?" she said. "I have not much fancy for putting my head in a yoke at all; but a yoke where the two pull different ways must be very miserable!"

"You forget; you might draw somebody else to go the right way."

"That would depend upon who was the strongest."

"True," said Mrs. Barclay. "But, my dear Lois! you do not suppose that a man cannot belong to the world and yet be what you call a Christian? That would be very uncharitable."

"I do not want to be uncharitable," said Lois. "Mrs. Barclay, it is *extremely* difficult to mark the foliage of different sorts of trees!"

"Yes, but you are making a very good beginning. Lois, do you know, you are fitting to be the wife of just one of that world you are condemning-cultivated, polished, full of accomplishments and graces, and fine and refined tastes."

"Then he would be very dangerous," said Lois, "if he were not a Christian. He might have all that, and yet be a Christian too."

"Suppose he were not; would you refuse him?"

"I hope I should," said Lois. But her questioner noticed that this answer was soberly given.

That evening she wrote a letter to Mr. Dillwyn.

"I am enjoying the most delightful rest," the letter said, "that I have known for a very long time; yet I have a doubt whether I ought to confess it; whether I ought not to declare myself tired of Shampuashuh, and throw up my cards. I feel a little like an honest swindler, using your money, not on false pretences, but on a foregone case. I should *never* get tired of the place or the people. Everyone of them, indeed almost every one that I see, is a character; and here, where there is less varnish, the grain of the wood shows more plainly. I have had a most original carpenter here to measure for my book-shelves, only yesterday; for my room is running over with books. Not only everybody is a character, but nearly everybody has a good mixture of what is admirable in his composition; and as for these two girls—well, I am even more in love than you are, Philip. The elder is the handsomer, perhaps; she is very handsome; but your favourite is my favourite. Lois is lovely. There is a strange, fresh, simple, undefinable charm about the girl that makes one her captive. Even me, a woman. She wins upon me daily with her sweet unconscious ways. But nevertheless I am uneasy when I remember what I am here for, and what you are expecting. I fear I am acting the part of an innocent swindler, as I said; little better.

"In one way there is no disappointment to be looked for. These girls are both gifted with a great capacity and aptitude for mental growth. Lois especially, for she cares more to go into the depths of things; but both of them grow fast, and I can see the change almost from day to day. Tastes are waking up, and eager for gratification; there is no limit to the intellectual hunger or the power of assimilation; the winter is one of very great enjoyment to them (as to me!), and there is, and that has been from the first, a refinement of manner which surprised me, but that too is growing. And yet, with all this, which promises so much, there is another element which threatens discomfiture to our hopes. I must not conceal it from you. These people are regular Puritans. They think now, in this age of the world, to regulate their behaviour entirely by the Bible. You are of a different type; and I am persuaded that the whole family would regard an alliance with a man like you as an unlawful thing; ay, though he were a prince or a Rothschild, it would make no difference in their view of the thing. For here is independence, pure and absolute. The family is very poor; they are glad of the money I pay them; but they would not bend their heads before the prestige of wealth, or do what they think wrong to gain any human favour or any earthly advantage. And Lois is like the rest; quite as firm; in fact, some of these gentlewomen have a power of saying 'no' which is only a little less than fearful. I cannot tell what love would do; but I do not believe it would break down her principle. We had a talk lately on this very subject; she was very firm.

"I think I ought not to conceal from you that I have doubts on another question. We were at a family supper party last night at an aunt's house. She is a character too; a kind of a grenadier of a woman, in nature, not looks. The house and the entertainment were very interesting to me; the mingling of things was very striking, that one does not expect to find in connection. For instance, the appointments of the table were, as of course they would be, of no pretension to style or elegance; clumsily comfortable, was all you could say. And the cooking was delicately fine. Then, manners and language were somewhat lacking in polish, to put it mildly; and the tone of thought and the qualities of mind and character exhibited were very far above what I have heard often in circles of great pretension. Once the conversation got upon the contrasting ways of life in this society and in what is called the world; the latter, I confess to you, met with some hard treatment; and the idea was rejected with scorn that one of the girls should ever be tempted out of her own sphere into the other. All this is of no consequence; but what struck me was a hint or two that Lois *had been* tempted; and a pretty plain assertion that this aunt, who it seems was at Appledore last summer nursing Mrs. Wishart, had received some sort of overture or advance on Lois's behalf, and had rejected it. This was evidently news to Lois; and she showed so much startled displeasure—in her face, for she said almost nothing—that the suspicion was forced upon me, there might have been more in the matter than the aunt knew. Who was at Appledore? a friend of yours, was it not? and are you *sure* he did not gain some sort of lien upon this heart which you are so keen to win? I owe it to you to set you upon this inquiry; for if I know anything of the girl, she is as true and as unbending as steel. What she holds she will hold; what she loves she will love, I believe, to the end. So, before we go any further, let us find whether we have ground to go on. No, I would not have you come here at present. Not in any case; and certainly not in this uncertain'ty. You are too wise to wish it."

Whether Philip were too wise to wish it, he was too wise to give the rein to his wishes. He stayed in New York all winter, contenting himself with sending to Shampuashuh every imaginable thing that could make Mrs. Barclay's life there pleasant, or help her to make it useful to her two young friends. A fine Chickering piano arrived between Christmas and New Year's day, and was set up in the space left for it between the bookshelves. Books continued to flow in; books of all sorts—science and art, history

and biography, poetry and general literature. And Lois would have developed into a bookworm, had not the piano exercised an almost equal charm upon her. Listening to Mrs. Barclay's music at first was an absorbing pleasure; then Mrs. Barclay asked casually one day "Shall I teach you?"

"O, you could not!" was Lois's answer, given with a breath and a flush of excitement.

"Let us try," said Mrs. Barclay, smiling. "You might learn at least enough to accompany yourself. I have never heard your voice. Have you a voice?"

"I do not know what you would call a voice," said Lois, smiling.

"But you sing?"

"Hymns. Nothing else."

"Have you a hymn-book? with music, I mean?"

Lois brought one. Mrs. Barclay played the accompaniment of a familiar hymn, and Lois sang.

"My dear," exclaimed the former when she had done, "that is delicious!"

"Is it?"

"Your voice is very fine; it has a peculiar and uncommon richness. You must let me train that voice."

"I should like to sing hymns as well as I *can*," Lois answered, flushing somewhat.

"You would like to sing other things, too."

"Songs?"

"Yes. Some songs are beautiful."

"I never liked much those I have heard."

"Why not?"

"They seemed rather foolish."

"Did they! The choice must have been unfortunate. Where did you hear them?"

"In New York. In company there. The voices were sometimes delightful; but the words—"

"Well, the words?"

"I wondered how they could like to sing them. There was nothing in them but nonsense."

"You are a very severe critic!"

"No," said Lois deprecatingly; "but I think hymns are so much better."

"Well, we will see. Songs are not the first thing; your voice must be trained."

So a new element came into the busy life of that winter; and music now made demands on time and attention which Lois found it a little difficult to meet, without abridging the long reading hours and diligent studies to which she had hitherto been giving all her spare time. But the piano was so alluring! And every morsel of real music that Mrs. Barclay touched was so entrancing to Lois. To Lois; Madge did not care about it, except for the wonder of seeing Mrs. Barclay's fingers fly over the keys; and Charity took quite a different view again.

"Mother," she said one evening to the old lady, whom they often called so, "don't it seem to you that Lois is gettin' turned round?"

"How, my dear?"

"Well, it ain't like the Lois we used to have. She's rushin' at books from morning to night, or scritch-scratching on a slate; and the rest o' the time she's like nothin' but the girl in the song, that had 'bells on her fingers and rings on her toes.' I hear that piano-forty going at all hours; it's tinkle, tinkle, every other thing. What's the good of all that?"

"What's the *harm?*" said Lois.

"What's she doin' it for, that woman? One 'ud think she had come here just on purpose to teach

Madge and you; for she don't do anything else. What's it all for? that's what I'd like to be told."

"I'm sure she's very kind," said Madge.

"Mother, do you like it?"

"What is the harm in what we are doing, Charity?" asked her younger sister.

"If a thing ain't good it's always harm!"

"But these things are good."

"Maybe good for some folks; they ain't good for you."

"I wish you would say 'are not,'" said Lois.

"There!" said Charity. "There it is! You're pilin' one thing on top of another, till your head won't stand it; and the house won't be high enough for you by and by. All these ridiculous ways, of people that think themselves too nice for common things! and you've lived all your life among common things, and are going to live all your life among them. And, mother, all this French and music will just make Lois discontented. You see if it don't."

"Do I act discontented?" Lois asked, with a pleasant smile.

"Does she leave any of her work for you to do, Charity?" said Madge.

"Wait till the spring opens and garden must be made," said Charity.

"I should never think of leaving *that* to you to do, Charity," said Lois, laughing. "We should have a poor chance of a garden."

"Mother, I wish you'd stop it."

Mrs. Armadale said, however, nothing at the time. But the next chance she had when she and her youngest granddaughter were alone, she said,

"Lois, are you in danger of lettin' your pleasure make you forget your duty?"

"I hope not, grandmother. I do not think it. I take these things to be duty. I think one ought always to learn anything one has an opportunity of learning."

"One thing is needful," said the old lady doubtfully.

"Yes, grandmother. I do not forget that."

"You don't want to learn the ways of the world, Lois?"

"No, grandmother."

CHAPTER XXVII.

PEAS AND RADISHES.

Mr. Dillwyn, as I said, did not come near Shampuashuh. He took his indemnification in sending all sorts of pleasant things. Papers and magazines overflowed, flowed over into Mrs. Marx's hands, and made her life rich; flowed over again into Mr. Hotchkiss's hands, and embroidered his life for him. Mr. Dillwyn sent fruit; foreign fruit, strange and delicious, which it was a sort of education even to eat, bringing one nearer to the countries so far and unknown, where it grew. He sent music; and if some of it passed under Lois's ban as "nonsense," that was not the case with the greater part. "She has a marvellous true appreciation of what is fine," Mrs. Barclay wrote; "and she rejects with an accuracy which surprises me, all that is merely pretty and flashy. There are some bits of Handel that have great power over the girl; she listens to them, I might almost say, devoutly, and is never weary. Madge is delighted with Rossini; but Lois gives her adherence to the German classics, and when I play Haydn or Mozart or Mendelssohn, stands rapt in her delighted listening, and looking like—well, I will not tantalize you by trying to describe to you what I see every day. I marvel only where the girl got these

tastes and susceptibilities; it must be blood; I believe in inheritance. She has had until now no training or experience; but your bird is growing her wings fast now, Philip. If you can manage to cage her! Natures hereabout are not tame, by any means."

Mr. Dillwyn, I believe I mentioned, sent engravings and exquisite photographs; and these almost rivalled Haydn and Mozart in Lois's mind. For various reasons, Mrs. Barclay sought to make at least this source of pleasure common to the whole family; and would often invite them all into her room, or carry her portfolio out into their general sitting-room, and display to the eyes of them all the views of foreign lands; cities, castles and ruins, palaces and temples, Swiss mountains and Scotch lochs, Paris Boulevards and Venetian canals, together with remains of ancient art and works of modern artists; of all which Philip sent an unbounded number and variety. These evenings were unendingly curious to Mrs. Barclay. Comment was free, and undoubtedly original, whatever else might be said of it; and character, and the habit of life of her audience, were unconsciously revealed to her. Intense curiosity and eagerness for information were observable in them all; but tastes, and the power of apprehension and receptiveness towards new and strange ideas, and the judgment passed upon things, were very different in the different members of the group. These exhibitions had further one good effect, not unintended by the exhibitor; they brought the whole family somewhat in tone with the new life to which two of its members were rising. It was not desirable that Lois should be too far in advance of her people, or rather that they should be too far behind her. The questions propounded to Mrs. Barclay on these occasions, and the elucidations she found it desirable to give without questions, transformed her part into that of a lecturer; and the end of such an evening would find her tired with her exertions, yet well repaid for them. The old grandmother manifested great curiosity, great admiration, with frequently an expression of doubt or disapproval; and very often a strange, slight, inexpressible air of one who felt herself to belong to a different world, to which all these things were more or less foreign. Charity showed also intense eagerness and curiosity, and inquisitiveness; and mingled with those, a very perceptible flavour of incredulity or of disdain, the latter possibly born of envy. But Lois and Madge were growing with every journey to distant lands, and every new introduction to the great works of men's hands, of every kind and of every age.

After receiving that letter of Mrs. Barclay's mentioned in the last chapter, Philip Dillwyn would immediately have attacked Tom Caruthers again on the question of his liking for Miss Lothrop, to find out whether possibly there were any the least foundation for Mrs. Barclay's scruples and fears. But it was no longer in his power. The Caruthers family had altered their plans; and instead of going abroad in the spring, had taken their departure with the first of December, after an impromptu wedding of Julia to her betrothed. Mr. Dillwyn did not seriously believe that there was anything his plan had to fear from this side; nevertheless he preferred not to move in the dark; and he waited. Besides, he must allow time for the work he had sent Mrs. Barclay to do; to hurry matters would be to spoil everything; and it was much better on every ground that he should keep away from Shampuashuh. As I said, he busied himself with Shampuashuh affairs all he could, and wore out the winter as he best might; which was not very satisfactorily. And when spring came he resolutely carried out his purpose, and sailed for Europe. Till at least a year had gone by he would not try to see Lois; Mrs. Barclay should have a year at least to push her beneficent influence and bring her educational efforts to some visible result; he would keep away; but it would be much easier to keep away if the ocean lay between them, and he went to Florence and northern Italy and the Adriatic.

Meanwhile the winter had "flown on soft wings" at Shampuashuh. Every day seemed to be growing fuller and richer than its predecessors; every day Lois and Madge were more eager in the search after knowledge, and more ready for the reception of it. A change was going on in them, so swift that Mrs. Barclay could almost see it from day to day. Whether others saw it I cannot tell; but Mrs. Marx shook her head in the fear of it, and Charity opined that the family "might whistle for a garden, and for butter and cheese next summer." Precious opportunity of winter days, when no gardening nor dairy work was possible! and blessed long nights and mornings, after sunset and before sunrise, when no housework of any sort put in claims upon the leisure of the two girls. There were no interruptions from without. In Shampuashuh, society could not be said to flourish. Beyond an occasional "sewing society" meeting, and a much more rare gathering for purely social purposes, nothing more than a stray caller now and then broke the rich quiet of those winter days; the time for a tillage, and a sowing, and a growth far beyond in preciousness all "the precious things put forth by the sun" in the more genial time of the year. But days began to become longer, nevertheless, as the weeks went on; and daylight was pushing those happy mornings and evenings into lesser and lesser compass; and snow quite disappeared from the fields, and buds began to swell on the trees and take colour, and airs grew more gentle in temperature; though I am bound to say there is a sharpness sometimes in the nature of a Shampuashuh spring, that quite outdoes all the greater rigours of the winter that has gone.

"The frost is out of the ground!" said Lois one day to her friend.

"Well," said Mrs. Barclay innocently; "I suppose that is a good thing."

Lois went on with her drawing, and made no answer.

But soon Mrs. Barclay began to perceive that less reading and studying were done; or else some drawing lingered on its way towards completion; and the deficits became more and more striking. At last she demanded the reason.

"O," said Madge, "the cows have come in, and I have a good deal to do in the dairy now; it takes up all my mornings. I'm so sorry, I don't know what to do! but the milk must be seen to, and the butter churned, and then worked over; and it takes time, Mrs. Barclay."

"And Lois?"

"O, Lois is making garden."

"Making garden!"

"Yes; O, she always does it. It's her particular part of the business. We all do a little of everything; but the garden is Lois's special province, and the dairy mine, and Charity takes the cooking and the sewing. O, we all do our own sewing, and we all do grandmother's sewing; only Charity takes head in that department."

"What does Lois do in the garden?"

"O, everything. We get somebody to plough it up in the fall; and in the spring we have it dug over; but all the rest she does. We have a good garden too," said Madge, smiling.

"And these things take your morning and her morning?"

"Yes, indeed; I should think they did. Rather!"

Mrs. Barclay held her peace then, and for some time afterwards. The spring came on, the days became soft and lovely, after March had blown itself out; the trees began to put forth leaves, the blue-birds were darting about, like skyey messengers; robins were whistling, and daffodils were bursting, and grass was green. One lovely warm morning, when everything without seemed beckoning to her, Mrs. Barclay threw on a shawl and hat, and made her way out to the old garden, which up to this day she had never entered.

She found the great wide enclosure looking empty and bare enough. The two or three old apple trees hung protectingly over the wooden bench in the middle, their branches making pretty tracery against the tender, clear blue of the sky; but no shade was there. The branches only showed a little token of swelling and bursting buds, which indeed softened in a lovely manner the lines of their interlacing network, and promised a plenty of green shadow by and by. No shadow was needed at present, for the sun was too gentle; its warmth was welcome, and beneficent, and kindly. The old cherry tree in the corner was beginning to open its wealth of white blossoms; everywhere else the bareness and brownness of winter was still reigning, only excepting the patches of green turf around the boles and under the spreading boughs of the trees here and there. The garden was no garden, only a spread of soft, up-turned brown loam. It looked a desolate place to Mrs. Barclay.

In the midst of it, the one point of life and movement was Lois. She was in a coarse, stout stuff dress, short, and tucked up besides, to keep it out of the dirt. Her hands were covered with coarse, thick gloves, her head with a little old straw hat. At the moment Mrs. Barclay came up, she was raking a patch of ground which she had carefully marked out, and bounded with a trampled footway; she was bringing it with her rake into a condition of beautiful level smoothness, handling her tool with light dexterity. As Mrs. Barclay came near, she looked up with a flash of surprise and a smile.

"I have found you," said the lady. "So this is what you are about!"

"It is what I am always about at this time of year."

"What are you doing?"

"Just here I am going to put in radishes and lettuce."

"Radishes and lettuce! And that is instead of French and philosophy!"

"This is philosophy," said Lois, while with a neat movement of her rake she threw off some stones which she had collected from the surface of the bed. "Very good philosophy. Surely the philosophy of life is first—to live."

Mrs. Barclay was silent a moment upon this.

"Are radishes and lettuce the first thing you plant in the spring, then?"

"O dear, no!" said Lois. "Do you see all that corner? that's in potatoes. Do you see those slightly marked lines—here, running across from the walk to the wall?—peas are there. They'll be up soon. I think I shall put in some corn to-morrow. Yonder is a bed of radishes and lettuce just out of the ground. We'll have some radishes for tea, before you know it."

"And do you mean to say that *you* have been planting potatoes? *you?*"

"Yes," said Lois, looking at her and laughing. "I like to plant potatoes. In fact, I like to plant anything. What I do not always like so well, is the taking care of them after they are up and growing."

Mrs. Barclay sat down and watched her. Lois was now tracing delicate little drills across the breadth of her nicely-prepared bed; little drills all alike, just so deep and just so far apart. Then she went to a basket hard by for a little paper of seeds; two papers; and began deftly to scatter the seed along the drills, with delicate and careful but quick fingers. Mrs. Barclay watched her till she had filled all the rows, and began to cover the seeds in; that, too, she did quick and skilfully.

"That is not fit work for you to do, Lois."

"Why not?"

"You have something better to do."

"I do not see how I can. This is the work that is given me."

"But any common person could do that?"

"We have not got the common person to do it," said Lois, laughing; "so it comes upon an uncommon one."

"But there is a fitness in things."

"So you will think, when you get some of my young lettuce." The drills were fast covered in, but there were a good many of them, and Lois went on talking and working with equal spirit.

"I do not think I shall—" Mrs. Barclay answered the last statement.

"I like to do this, Mrs. Barclay. I like to do it very much. I *am* pulled a little two ways this spring—but that only shows this is good for me."

"How so?"

"When anybody is living to his own pleasure, I guess he is not in the best way of improvement."

"Is there no one but you to do all the weeding, by and by, when the garden will be full of plants?"

"Nobody else," said Lois.

"That must take a great deal of your time!"

"Yes," said Lois, "it does; that and the fruit-picking."

"Fruit-picking! Mercy! Why, child, *must* you do all that?"

"It is my part," said Lois pleasantly. "Charity and Madge have each their part. This is mine, and I like it better than theirs. But it is only so, Mrs. Barclay, that we are able to get along. A gardener would eat up our garden. I take only my share. And there is a great deal of pleasure in it. It is pleasant to provide for the family's wants, and to see the others enjoy what I bring in;—yes, and to enjoy it myself. And then, do you see how pleasant the work is! Don't you like it out here this morning?"

Mrs. Barclay cast a glance around her again. There was a slight spring haze in the air, which seemed to catch and hold the sun's rays and diffuse them in gentle beneficence. Through it the opening cherry blossoms gave their tender promise; the brown, bare apple trees were softened; an indescribable breath of hope and life was in the air, to which the birds were doing all they could to give expression; there was a delicate joy in Nature's face, as if at being released from the bands of Winter and having her hands free again. The smell of the upturned earth came fresh to Mrs. Barclay's nostrils, along with a salt savour from the not distant sea. Yes, it was pleasant, with a rare and wonderful pleasantness; and yet Mrs. Barclay's eyes came discontentedly back to Lois.

"It would be possible to enjoy all this, Lois, if you were not doing such evil work."

"Evil work! O no, Mrs. Barclay. The work that the Lord gives anybody to do cannot be evil. It must be the very best thing he can do. And I do not believe I should enjoy the spring—and the summer—and the autumn—near so well, if I were not doing it."

"Must one be a gardener, to have such enjoyment?"

"*I* must," said Lois, laughing. "If I do not follow my work, my work follows me; and then it comes like a taskmaster, and carries a whip."

"But, Lois! that sort of work will make your hands rough."

Lois lifted one of her hands in its thick glove, and looked at it.
"Well," she said, "what then? What are hands made for?"

"You know very well what I mean. You know a time may come when you would like to have your hands white and delicate."

"The time is come now," said Lois, laughing. "I have not to wait for it. I like white hands, and delicate hands, as well as anybody. Mine must do their work, all the same. Something might be said for my feet, too, I suppose," she added, with another laugh.

At the moment she had finished outlining an other bed, and was now trampling a little hard border pathway round it, making the length of her foot the breadth of the pathway, and setting foot to foot close together, so bit by bit stamping it round. Mrs. Barclay looked on, and wished some body else could have looked on, at the bright, fresh face under the little old hat, and the free action and spirit and accuracy with which everything that either feet or hands did was done. Somehow she forgot the coarse dress, and only saw the delicate creature in it.

"Lois, I do not like it!" she began again. "Do you know, some people are very particular about these little things—fastidious about them. You may one day yet want to please one of those very men."

"Not unless he wants to please me first!" said Lois, with a glance from her path-treading.

"Of course. I am supposing that."

"I don't know him!" said Lois. "And I don't see him in the distance!"

"That proves nothing."

"And it wouldn't make any difference if I did."

"You are mistaken in thinking that. You do not know yet what it is to be in love, Lois."

"I don't know," said Lois. "Can't one be in love with one's grandmother?"

"But, Lois, this is going to take a great deal of your time."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you want all your time, to give to more important things. I can't bear to have you drop them all to plant potatoes. Could not somebody else be found to do it?"

"We could not afford the somebody, Mrs. Barclay."

It was not doubtfully or regretfully that the girl spoke; the brisk content of her answers drove Mrs. Barclay almost to despair.

"Lois, you owe something to yourself."

"What, Mrs. Barclay?"

"You owe it to yourself to be prepared for what I am sure is coming to you. You are not made to live in Shampuashuh all your life. Somebody will want you to quit it and go out into the wide world with him."

Lois was silent a few minutes, with her colour a little heightened, fresh as it had been already; then, having tramped all round her new bed, she came up to where Mrs. Barclay and her basket of seeds were.

"I don't believe it at all," she said. "I think I shall live and die here."

"Do you feel satisfied with that prospect?"

Lois turned over the bags of seeds in her basket, a little hurriedly; then she stopped and looked up at her questioner.

"I have nothing to do with all that," she said. "I do not want to think of it. I have enough in hand to think of. And I am satisfied, Mrs. Barclay, with whatever God gives me." She turned to her basket of seeds again, searching for a particular paper.

"I never heard any one say that before," remarked the other lady.

"As long as I can say it, don't you see that is enough?" said Lois lightly. "I enjoy all this work, besides; and so will you by and by when you get the lettuce and radishes, and some of my Tom Thumb peas. And I am not going to stop my studies either."

She went back to the new bed now, where she presently was very busy putting more seeds in. Mrs. Barclay watched her a while. Then, seeing a small smile break on the lips of the gardener, she asked Lois what she was thinking of? Lois looked up.

"I was thinking of that geode you showed us last night."

"That geode!"

"Yes, it is so lovely. I have thought of it a great many times. I am wanting very much to learn about stones now. I thought always *till* now that stones were only stones. The whole world is changed to me since you have come, Mrs. Barclay."

Yes, thought that lady to herself, and what will be the end of it?

"To tell the truth," Lois went on, "the garden work comes harder to me this spring than ever it did before; but that shows it is good for me. I have been having too much pleasure all winter."

"Can one have too much pleasure?" said Mrs. Barclay discontentedly.

"If it makes one unready for duty," said Lois.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LAGOON OF VENICE.

Towards evening, one day late in the summer, the sun was shining, as its manner is, on that marvellous combination of domes, arches, mosaics and carvings which goes by the name of St. Mark's at Venice. The soft Italian sky, glowing and rich, gave a very benediction of colour; all around was the still peace of the lagoon city; only in the great square there was a gentle stir and flutter and rustle and movement; for thousands of doves were flying about, and coming down to be fed, and a crowd of varied human nature, but chiefly not belonging to the place, were watching and distributing food to the feathered multitude. People were engaged with the doves, or with each other; few had a look to spare for the great church; nobody even glanced at the columns bearing St. Theodore and the Lion.

That is, speaking generally. For under one of the arcades, leaning against one of the great pillars of the same, a man stood whose look by turns went to everything. He had been standing there motionless for half an hour; and it passed to him like a minute. Sometimes he studied that combination aforesaid, where feeling and fancy and faith have made such glorious work together; and to which, as I hinted, the Venetian evening was lending such indescribable magnificence. His eye dwelt on details of loveliness, of which it was constantly discovering new revelations; or rested on the whole colour-glorified pile with meditative remembrance of what it had seen and done, and whence it had come. Then with sudden transition he would give his attention to the motley crowd before him, and the soft-winged doves fluttering up and down and filling the air. And, tiring of these, his look would go off again to the bronze lion on his place of honour in the Piazzetta, his thought probably wandering back to the time when he

was set there. The man himself was noticed by nobody. He stood in the shade of the pillar and did not stir. He was a gentleman evidently; one sees that by slight characteristics, which are nevertheless quite unmistakeable and not to be counterfeited. His dress of course was the quiet, unobtrusive, and yet perfectly correct thing, which dress ought to be. His attitude was that of a man who knew both how to move and how to be still, and did both easily; and further, the look of him betrayed the habit of travel. This man had seen so much that he was not moved by any young curiosity; knew so much, that he could weigh and compare what he knew. His figure was very good; his face agreeable and intelligent, with good observant grey eyes; the whole appearance striking. But nobody noted him.

And he had noted nobody; the crowd before him was to him simply a crowd, which excited no interest except as a whole. Until, suddenly, he caught sight of a head and shoulders in the moving throng, which started him out of his carelessness. They were but a few yards from him, seen and lost again in the swaying mass of human beings; but though half seen he was sure he could not mistake. He spoke out a little loud the word "Tom!"

He was not heard, and the person spoken to moved out of sight again. The speaker, however, now left his place and plunged among the people. Presently he had another glimpse of the head and shoulders, and was yet more sure of his man; lost sight of him anew, but, following in the direction taken by the chase, gradually won his way nearer, and at length overtook the man, who was then standing between the pillars of the Lion and St. Theodore, and looking out towards the water.

"Tom!" said his pursuer, clapping him on the shoulder.

"Philip Dillwyn!" said the other, turning. "Philip! Where did you come from? What a lucky turn-up! That I should find you here!"

"I found you, man. Where have *you* come from?"

"O, from everywhere."

"Are you alone? Where are your people?"

"O, Julia and Lenox are gone home. Mamma and I are here yet. I left mamma in a *pension* in Switzerland, where I could not hold it out any longer; and I have been wandering about—Florence, and Pisa, and I don't know all—till now I have brought up in Venice. It is so jolly to get you!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Nothing."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing. O, I have done everything, you know. There is nothing left to a fellow."

"That sounds hopeless," said Dillwyn, laughing.

"It is hopeless. Really I don't see, sometimes, what a fellow's life is good for. I believe the people who have to work for it, have after all the best time!"

"They work to live," said the other.

"I suppose they do."

"Therefore you are going round in a circle. If life is worth nothing, why should one work to keep it up?"

"Well, what is it worth, Dillwyn? Upon my word, I have never made it out satisfactorily."

"Look here—we cannot talk in this place. Have you ever been to
Torcello?"

"No."

"Suppose we take a gondola and go?"

"Now? What is there?"

"An old church."

"There are old churches all over. The thing is to find a new one."

"You prefer the new ones?"

"Just for the rarity," said Tom, smiling.

"I do not believe you have studied the old ones yet. Do you know the mosaics in St. Mark's?"

"I never study mosaics."

"And I'll wager you have not seen the Tintorets in the Palace of the Doges?"

"There are Tintorets all over!" said Tom, shrugging his shoulders wearily.

"Then have you seen Murano?"

"The glass-works, yes."

"I do not mean the glass-works. Come along—anywhere in a gondola will do, such an evening as this; and we can talk comfortably. You need not look at anything."

They entered a gondola, and were presently gliding smoothly over the coloured waters of the lagoon; shining with richer sky reflections than any mortal painter could put on canvas. Not long in silence.

"Where have you been, Tom, all this while?"

"I told you, everywhere!" said Tom, with another shrug of his shoulders. "The one thing one comes abroad for, you know, is to run away from the winter; so we have been doing that, as long as there was any winter to run from, and since then we have been running away from the summer. Let me see—we came over in November, didn't we? or December; we went to Rome as fast as we could. There was very good society in Rome last winter. Then, as spring came on, we coasted down to Naples and Palermo. We staid at Palermo a while. From there we went back to England; and from England we came to Switzerland. And there we have been till I couldn't stand Switzerland any longer; and I bolted."

"Palermo isn't a bad place to spend a while in."

"No;—but Sicily is stupid generally. It's all ridiculous, Philip. Except for the name of the thing, one can get just as good nearer home. I could get *better* sport at Appledore last summer, than in any place I've been at in Europe."

"Ah! Appledore," said Philip slowly, and dipping his hand in the water. "I surmise the society also was good there?"

"Would have been," Tom returned discontentedly, "if there had not been a little too much of it."

"Too much of it!"

"Yes. I couldn't stir without two or three at my heels. It's very kind, you know; but it rather hampers a fellow."

"Miss Lothrop was there, wasn't she?"

"Of course she was! That made all the trouble."

"And all the sport too; hey, Tom? Things usually are two-sided in this world."

"She made no trouble. It was my mother and sister. They were so awfully afraid of her. And they drilled George in; so among them they were too many for me. But I think Appledore is the nicest place I know."

"You might buy one of the islands—a little money would do it—build a lodge, and have your Europe always at hand; when the winter is gone, as you say. Even the winter you might manage to live through, if you could secure the right sort of society. Hey, Tom? Isn't that an idea? I wonder it never occurred to you. I think one might bid defiance to the world, if one were settled at the Isles of Shoals."

"Yes," said Tom, with something very like a groan. "If one hadn't a mother and sister."

"You are heathenish!"

"I'm not, at all!" returned Tom passionately. "See here, Philip. There is one thing goes before mother and sister; and that you know. It's a man's wife. And I've seen my wife, and I can't get her."

"Why?" said Dillwyri dryly. He was hanging over the side of the gondola, and looking attentively at the play of colour in the water; which reflecting the sky in still splendour where it lay quiet, broke up in ripples under the gondolier's oar, and seemed to scatter diamonds and amethysts and topazes in fairy-like prodigality all around.

"I've told you!" said Tom fretfully.

"Yes, but I do not comprehend. Does not the lady in question like
Appledore as well as you do?"

"She likes Appledore well enough. I do not know how well she likes me. I never had a chance to find out. I don't think she _dis_likes me, though," said Tom meditatively.

"It is not too late to find out yet," Philip said, with even more dryness in his tone.

"O, isn't it, though!" said Tom. "I'm tied up from ever asking her now.
I'm engaged to another woman."

"Tom!" said the other, suddenly straightening himself up.

"Don't shout at a fellow! What could I do? They wouldn't let me have what I wanted; and now they're quite pleased, and Julia has gone home. She has done her work. O, I am making an excellent match. 'An old family, and three hundred thousand dollars,' as my mother says. That's all one wants, you know."

"Who is the lady?"

"It don't matter, you know, when you have heard her qualifications. It's Miss Dulcimer—one of the Philadelphia Dulcimers. Of course one couldn't make a better bargain for oneself. And I'm as fond of her as I can be; in fact, I was afraid I was getting *too* fond. So I ran away, as I told you, to think over my happiness at leisure, and moderate my feelings."

"Tom, Tom, I never heard you bitter before," said his friend, regarding him with real concern.

"Because I never *was* bitter before. O, I shall be all right now. I haven't had a soul on whom I could pour out my mind, till this hour. I know you're as safe as a mine. It does me good to talk to you. I tell you, I shall be all right. I'm a very happy bridegroom expectant. You know, if the Caruthers have plenty of money, the Dulcimers have twice as much. Money's really everything."

"Have you any idea how this news will touch Miss—the other lady you were talking about?"

"I suppose it won't touch her at all. She's different; that's one reason why I liked her. She would not care a farthing for me because I'm a Caruthers, or because I have money; not a brass farthing! She is the _real_est person I ever saw. She would go about Appledore from morning to night in the greatest state of delight you ever saw anybody; where my sister, for instance, would see nothing but rocks and weeds, Lois would have her hands full of what Julia would call trash, and what to her was better than if the fairies had done it. Things pulled out of the shingle and mud,—I can just see her,—and flowers, and stones, and shells. What she would make of *this* now!—But you couldn't set that girl down anywhere, I believe, that she wouldn't find something to make her feel rich. She's a richer woman this minute, than my Dulcimer with her thousands. And she's got good blood in her too, Philip. I learned that from Mrs. Wishart. She has the blood of ever so many of the old Pilgrims in her veins; and that is good descent, Philip?"

"They think so in New England."

"Well, they are right, I am ready to believe. Anyhow, I don't care—"

He broke off, and there was a silence of some minutes' length. The gondola swam along over the quiet water, under the magnificent sky; the reflected colours glanced upon two faces, grave and self-absorbed.

"Old boy," said Philip at length, "I hardly think you are right."

"Right in what? I am right in all I have told you."

"I meant, right in your proposed plan of action. You may say it is none of my business."

"I shall not say it, though. What's the wrong you mean?"

"It seems to me Miss Dulcimer would not feel obliged to you, if she knew all."

"She doesn't feel obliged to me at all," said Tom. "She gives a good as she gets."

"No better?"

"What do you mean?"

"Pardon me, Tom; but you have been frank with me. By your own account, she will get very little."

"All she wants. I'll give her a local habitation and a name."

"I am sure you are unjust."

"Not at all. That is all half the girls want; all they try for. She's very content. O, I'm very good to her when we are together; and I mean to be. You needn't look at me," said Tom, trying to laugh. "Three-quarters of all the marriages that are made are on the same pattern. Why, Phil, what do the men and women of this world live for? What's the purpose in all I've been doing since I left college? What's the good of floating round in the world as I have been doing all summer and winter here this year? and at home it is different only in the manner of it. People live for nothing, and don't enjoy life. I don't know at this minute a single man or woman, of our sort, you know, that enjoys life; except that one. And *she* isn't our sort. She has no money, and no society, and no Europe to wander round in! O, they would *say* they enjoy life; but their way shows they don't."

"Enjoyment is not the first thing," Philip said thoughtfully.

"O, isn't it! It's what we're all after, anyhow; you'll allow that."

"Perhaps that is the way we miss it."

"So Dulcimer and I are all right, you see," pursued Tom, without heeding this remark. "We shall be a very happy couple. All the world will have us at their houses, and we shall have all the world at ours. There won't be room left for any thing but happiness; and that'll squeeze in anywhere, you know. It's like chips floating round on the surface of a whirlpool—they fly round and round splendidly—till they get sucked in."

"Tom!" cried his companion. "What has come to you? Your life is not so different now from what it has always been;—and I have always known you for a light-hearted fellow. I can't have you take this tone."

Tom was silent, biting the ends of his moustache in a nervous way, which bespoke a good deal of mental excitement; Philip feared, of mental trouble.

"If a friend may ask, how came you to do what is so unsatisfactory to you?" he said at length.

"My mother and sister! They were so preciously afraid I should ruin myself. Philip, I *could not* make head against them. They were too much for me, and too many for me; they were all round me; they were ahead of me; I had no chance at all. So I gave up in despair. Women are the overpowering when they take a thing in their head! A man's nowhere. I gave in, and gave up, and came away, and now—they're satisfied."

"Then the affair is definitely concluded?"

"As definitely as if my head was off."

Philip did not laugh, and there was a pause again. The colours were fading from sky and water, and a yellow, soft moonlight began to assert her turn. It was a change of beauty for beauty; but neither of the two young men seemed to take notice of it.

"Tom," began the other after a time, "what you say about the way most of us live, is more or less true; and it ought not to be true."

"Of course it is true!" said Tom.

"But it ought not to be true."

"What are you going to do about it? One must do as everybody else does;
I suppose."

"*Must* one? That is the very question."

"What can you do else, as long as you haven't your bread to get?"

"I believe the people who *have* their bread to get have the best of it. But there must be some use in

the world, I suppose, for those who are under no such necessity. Did you ever hear that Miss—Lothrop's family were strictly religious?"

"No—yes, I have," said Tom. "I know *she* is."

"That would not have suited you."

"Yes, it would. Anything she did would have suited me. I have a great respect for religion, Philip."

"What do you mean by religion?"

"I don't know—what everybody means by it. It is the care of the spiritual part of our nature, I suppose."

"And how does that care work?"

"I don't know," said Tom. "It works altar-cloths; and it seems to mean church-going, and choral music, and teaching ragged schools; and that sort of thing. I don't understand it; but I should never interfere with it. It seems to suit the women particularly."

Again there fell a pause.

"Where have *you* been, Dillwyn? and what brought you here again?" Tom began now.

"I came to pass the time," the other said musingly.

"Ah! And where have you passed it?"

"Along the shores of the Adriatic, part of the time. At Abazzia, and Sebenico, and the islands."

"What's in all that? I never heard of Abazzia."

"The world is a large place," said Philip absently.

"But what is Abazzia?"

"A little paradise of a place, so sheltered that it is like a nest of all lovely things. Really; it has its own climate, through certain favouring circumstances; and it is a hidden little nook of delight."

"Ah!—What took you to the shores of the Adriatic, anyhow?"

"Full of interest," said Philip.

"Pray, of what kind?"

"Every kind. Historical, industrial, mechanical, natural, and artistic. But I grant you, Tom, that was not why I went there. I went there to get out of the ruts of travel and break new ground. Like you, being a little tired of going round in a circle for ever. And it occurs to me that man must have been made for somewhat else than such a purposeless circle. No other creature is a burden to himself."

"Because no other creature thinks," said Tom.

"The power of thought can surely be no final disadvantage."

"I don't see what it amounts to," Tom returned. "A man is happy enough, I suppose, as long as he is busy thinking out some new thing—inventing, creating, discovering, or working out his discoveries; but as soon as he has brought his invention to perfection and set it going, he is tired of it, and drives after something else."

"You are coming to Solomon's judgment," said the other, leaning back upon the cushions and clasping his hands above his head,—"what the preacher says—'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'"

"Well, so are you," said Tom.

"It makes me ashamed."

"Of what?"

"Myself."

"Why?"

"That I should have lived to be thirty-two years old, and never have done anything, or found any way to be of any good in the world! There isn't a butterfly of less use than I!"

"You weren't made to be of use," said Tom.

"Upon my word, my dear fellow, you have said the most disparaging thing, I hope, that ever was said of me! You cannot better that statement, if you think an hour! You mean it of me as a human being, I trust? not as an individual? In the one case it would be indeed melancholy, but in the other it would be humiliating. You take the race, not the personal view. The practical view is, that what is of no use had better not be in existence. Look here—here we are at Murano; I had not noticed it. Shall we land, and see things by moonlight? or go back to Venice?"

"Back, and have dinner," said Tom.

"By way of prolonging this existence, which to you is burdensome and to me is unsatisfactory. Where is the logic of that?"

But they went back, and had a very good dinner too.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN OX CART.

It happened not far from this same time in the end of August, when Mr. Dillwyn and Tom Caruthers came together on the Piazzetta of St. Mark, that another meeting took place in the far-away regions of Shampuashuh. A train going to Boston was stopped by a broken bridge ahead, and its passengers discharged in one of the small towns along the coast, to wait until the means of getting over the little river could be arranged. People on a railway journey commonly do not like to wait; it was different no doubt in the days of stage-coaches, when patience had some exercise frequently; now, we are spoiled, and you may notice that ten minutes' delay is often more than can be endured with complacency. Our fathers and mothers had hours to wait, and took it as a matter of course.

Among the impatient passengers thrown out at Independence were two specially impatient.

"What on earth shall we do with ourselves?" said the lady.

"Pity the break-down had not occurred a little further on," said the gentleman. "You might have visited your friend—or Tom's friend—Miss Lothrop. We are just a few miles from Shampuashuh."

"Shampuashuh!—Miss Lothrop!—Was that where she lived? How far,
George?"

"A few miles—half a dozen, perhaps."

"O George, let us get horses and drive there!"

"But then you may not catch the train this evening again."

"I don't care. I cannot wait *here*. It would be a great deal better to have the drive and see the other place. Yes, we will go and visit her. Get horses, George, please! Quick. *This* is terrible."

"Will you ask for their hospitality?"

"Yes, of course. They would be delighted. That is just what the better sort of country people like, to have somebody come and see them. Make haste, George."

With a queer little smile on his face, Mr. Lenox however did as he was desired. A waggon was procured without very much delay, in which they could be driven to Shampuashuh.

It was a very warm day, and the travellers had just the height of it. Hot sunbeams poured down upon them; the level, shadeless country through which lay their way, showed as little as it could of the attractive features which really belonged to it. The lady declared herself exceeded by the heat and dust; the gentleman opined they might as well have stayed in Independence, where they were. Between two and three o'clock they entered the long green street of Shampuashuh. The sunbeams seemed tempered there, but it was only a mental effect produced by the quiet beauty and airy space of the

village avenue, and the shade of great elms which fell so frequently upon the wayside grass.

"What a sweet place!" cried the lady.

"Comfortable-looking houses," suggested the gentleman.

"It seems cooler here," the lady went on.

"It is getting to a cooler time of day."

"Why, no, George! Three o'clock is just the crown of the heat. Don't it look as if nobody ever did anything here? There's no stir at all."

"My eyes see different tokens; they are more versed in business than yours are—naturally."

"What do your eyes see?"—a little impatiently.

"You may notice that nothing is out of order. There is no bit of fence out of repair; and never a gate hanging upon its hinges. There is no carelessness. Do you observe the neatness of this broad street?"

"What should make it unneat? with so few travellers?"

"Ground is the last thing to keep itself in order. I notice, too, the neat stacks of wood in the wood-sheds. And in the fields we have passed, the work is all done, up to the minute; nothing hanging by the eyelids. The houses are full of windows, and all of them shining bright."

"You might be a newspaper reporter, George! Is this the house we are coming to? It is quite a large house; quite respectable."

"Did you think that little girl had come out of any but a respectable house?"

"Pshaw, George! you know what I mean. They are very poor and very plain people. I suppose we might go straight in?"

They dismissed their vehicle, so burning their ships, and knocked at the front door. A moment after it was opened by Charity. Her tall figure was arrayed in a homely print gown, of no particular fashion; a little shawl was over her shoulders, notwithstanding the heat, and on her head a sun-bonnet.

"Does Miss Lothrop live here?"

"Three of us," said Charity, confronting the pair with a doubtful face.

"Is Miss Lois at home?"

"She's as near as possible not," said the door-keeper; "but I guess she is. You may come in, and I'll see."

She opened a door in the hall which led to a room on the north side of it, corresponding to Mrs. Barclay's on the south; and there she left them. It was large and pleasant and cool, if it was also very plain; and Mrs. Lenox sank into a rocking-chair, repeating to herself that it was 'very respectable.' On a table at one side lay a few books, which drew Mr. Lenox's curiosity.

"Ruskin's 'Modern Painters'!" he exclaimed, looking at his wife.

"Selections, I suppose."

"No, this is Vol. 5. And the next is Thiers' 'Consulate and Empire'!"

"Translation."

"No. Original. And 'the Old Red Sandstone.'"

"What's that?"

"Hugh Miller."

"Who's Hugh Miller?"

"He is, or was, a gentleman whom you would not admit to your society.
He began life as a Scotch mason."

Meanwhile, Charity, going back to the living-room of the family, found there Lois busied in arraying

old Mrs. Armadale for some sort of excursion; putting a light shawl about her, and drawing a white sun-bonnet over her cap. Lois herself was in an old nankeen dress with a cape, and had her hat on.

"There's some folks that want you, Lois," her sister announced.

"Want me!" said Lois. "Who is it? why didn't you tell them we were just going out?"

"I don't usually say things without I know that it's so," responded Charity. "Maybe we're going to be hindered."

"We must not be hindered," returned Lois. "Grandmother is ready, and Mrs. Barclay is ready, and the cart is here. We must go, whoever comes. You get mother into the cart, and the baskets and everything, and I'll be as quick as I can."

So Lois went into the parlour. A great surprise came over her when she saw who was there, and with the surprise a slight feeling of amusement; along with some other feeling, she could not have told what, which put her gently upon her mettle. She received her visitors frankly and pleasantly, and also with a calm ease which at the moment was superior to their own. So she heard their explanation of what had befallen them, and of their resolution to visit her; and a slight account of their drive from Independence; all which Mrs. Lenox gave with more prolixity than she had intended or previously thought necessary.

"And now," said Lois, "I will invite you to another drive. We are just going down to the Sound, to smell the salt air and get cooled off. We shall have supper down there before we come home. I do not think I could give you anything pleasanter, if I had the choice; but it happens that all is arranged for this. Do come with us; it will be a variety for you, at least."

The lady and gentleman looked at each other.

"It's so hot!" objected the former.

"It will be cooler every minute now," said Lois.

"We ought to take the train—when it comes along—"

"You cannot tell when that will be," said Mr. Lenox. "You would find it very tedious waiting at the station. We might take the night train. That will pass about ten o'clock, or should."

"But we should be in your way, I am afraid," Mrs. Lenox went on, turning to Lois. "You are not prepared for two more in your party."

"Always!" said Lois, smiling. "We should never think ourselves prepared at all, in Shampuashuh, if we were not ready for two more than the party. And the cart will hold us all."

"The cart!" cried the other.

"Yes. O yes! I did not tell you that," said Lois, smiling more broadly. "We are going in an ox cart. That will be a novel experience for you too."

If Mrs. Lenox had not half accepted the invitation already, I am not sure but this intimation would have been too much for her courage. However, she was an outwardly well-bred woman; that is, like so many others, well-bred when there was nothing to gain by being otherwise; and so she excused her hesitation and doubt by the plea of being "so dusty." There was help for that; Lois took her upstairs to a neat chamber, and furnished her with water and towels.

It was new experience to the city lady. She took note, half disdainfully, of the plainness of the room; the painted floor, yellow and shining, which boasted only one or two little strips of carpet; the common earthenware toilet-set; the rush-bottomed chairs. On the other hand, there was an old mahogany dressing bureau; a neat bed; and water and towels (the latter coarse) were exceedingly fresh and sweet. She made up her mind to go through with the adventure, and rejoined her husband with a composed mind.

Lois took them first to the sitting-room, where they were introduced to Mrs. Barclay, and then they all went out at the back door of the house, and across a little grassy space, to a gate leading into a lane. Here stood the cart, in which the rest of the family was already bestowed; Mrs. Armadale being in an arm-chair with short legs, while Madge and Charity sat in the straw with which the whole bottom of the cart was spread. A tall, oldish man, with an ox whip, stood leaning against the fence and surveying things.

"Are we to go in *there?*" said Mrs. Lenox, with perceptible doubt.

"It's the only carriage we have to offer you," said Lois merrily. "For your sake, I wish we had a better; for my own, I like nothing so well as an ox cart. Mrs. Barclay, will you get in? and stimulate this lady's courage?"

A kitchen chair had been brought out to facilitate the operation; and Mrs. Barclay stepped lightly in, curled herself down in the soft bed of straw, and declared that it was very comfortable. With an expression of face which made Lois and Madge laugh for weeks after when they recalled it, Mrs. Lenox stepped gingerly in, following, and took her place.

"Grandmother," said Lois, "this is Mrs. Lenox, whom you have heard me speak about. And these are my sisters, Madge and Charity, Mrs. Lenox. And grandmother, this is Mr. Lenox. Now, you see the cart has room enough," she added, as herself and the gentleman also took their seats.

"Is that the hull of ye?" inquired now the man with the ox whip, coming forward. "And be all your stores got in for the v'yage? I don't want to be comin' back from somewheres about half-way."

"All right, Mr. Sears," said Lois. "You may drive on. Mother, are you comfortable?"

And then there was a "whoa"-ing and a "gee"-ing and a mysterious flourishing of the long leathern whip, with which the driver seemed to be playing; for if its tip touched the shoulders of the oxen it did no more, though it waved over them vigorously. But the oxen understood, and pulled the cart forward; lifting and setting down their heavy feet with great deliberation seemingly, but with equal certain'ty, and swaying their great heads gently from side to side as they went. Lois was so much amused at her guests' situation, that she had some difficulty to keep her features in their due calmness and sobriety. Mrs. Lenox eyed the oxen, then the contents of the cart, then the fields.

"Slow travelling!" said Lois, with a smile.

"Can they go no faster?"

"They could go a little faster if they were urged; but that would spoil the comfort of the whole thing. The entire genius of a ride in an ox cart is, that everybody should take his ease."

"Oxen included?" said Mr. Lenox.

"Why not?"

"Why not, indeed!" said the gentleman, smiling. "Only, ordinary people cannot get rid easily of the notion that the object of going is to get somewhere."

"That's not the object in this case," Lois answered merrily. "The one sole object is fun."

Mrs. Lenox said nothing more, but her face spoke as plainly as possible, And you call *this* fun!

"I am enjoying myself very much," said Mrs. Barclay. "I think it is delightful."

Something in her manner of speech made Mr. Lenox look at her. She was sitting next him on the cart bottom.

"Perhaps this is a new experience also to you?" he said.

"Delightfully new. Never rode in an ox cart before in my life; hardly ever saw one, in fact. We are quite out of the race and struggle and uneasiness of the world, don't you see? There comes down a feeling of repose upon one, softly, as Longfellow says—

'As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.'

Only I should say in this case it was from the wing of an angel."

"Mrs. Barclay, you are too poetical for an ox cart," said Lois, laughing. "If we began to be poetical, I am afraid the repose would be troubled."

"'Twont du Poetry no harm to go in an ox cart," remarked here the ox driver.

"I agree with you, sir," said Mrs. Barclay. "Poetry would not be Poetry if she could not ride anywhere.

But why should she trouble repose. Lois?"

"Yes," added Mr. Lenox; "I was about to ask that question. I thought poetry was always soothing. Or that the ladies at least think so."

"I like it well enough," said Lois, "but I think it is apt to be melancholy. Except in hymns."

"*Except* hymns!" said Mrs. Lenox. "I thought hymns were always sad. They deal so much with death and the grave."

"And the resurrection!" said Lois.

"They always make *me* gloomy," the lady went on. "The resurrection! do you call that a lively subject?"

"Depends on how you look at it, I suppose," said her husband. "But, Miss Lothrop, I cannot recover from my surprise at your assertion respecting non-religious poetry."

Lois left that statement alone. She did not care whether he recovered or not. Mr. Lenox, however, was curious.

"I wish you would show me on what your opinion is founded," he went on pleasantly.

"Yes, Lois, justify yourself," said Mrs. Barclay.

"I could not do that without making quotations, Mrs. Barclay, and I am afraid I cannot remember enough. Besides, it would hardly be interesting."

"To me it would," said Mrs. Barclay. "Where could one have a better time? The oxen go so comfortably, and leisure is so graciously abundant."

"Pray go on, Miss Lothrop!" Mr. Lenox urged.

"And then I hope you'll go on and prove hymns lively," added his wife.

The conversation which followed was long enough to have a chapter to itself; and so may be comfortably skipped by any who are so inclined.

CHAPTER XXX.

POETRY.

"Perhaps you will none of you agree with me," Lois said; "and I do not know much poetry; but there seems to me to run an undertone of lament and weariness through most of what I know. Now take the 'Death of the Flowers,'—that you were reading yesterday, Mrs. Barclay—

'The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.'

That is the tone I mean; a sigh and a regret."

"But the 'Death of the Flowers' is *exquisite*," pleaded Mrs. Lenox.

"Certainly it is," said Lois; "but is it gay?

'The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.'"

"How you remember it, Lois!" said Mrs. Barclay.

"But is not that all true?" asked Mr. Lenox.

"True in fact," said Lois. "The flowers do die. But the frost does not fall like a plague; and nobody that was right happy would say so, or think so. Take Pringle's 'Afar in the Desert,' Mrs. Barclay—

'When the sorrows of life the soul o'ercast,
And sick of the present I turn to the past;
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears
From the fond recollections of former years,
And shadows of things that are long since fled,
Flit over the brain like the ghosts of the dead;
Bright visions—'

I forget how it goes on."

"But that is as old as the hills!" exclaimed Mrs. Lenox.

"It shows what I mean."

"I am afraid you will not better your case by coming down into modern time, Mrs. Lenox," remarked Mrs. Barclay. "Take Tennyson—

'With weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies;
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.'"

"Take Byron," said Lois—

'My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flower and fruit of life are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone.'"

"O, Byron was morbid," said Mrs. Lenox.

"Take Moore," Mrs. Barclay went on, humouring the discussion on purpose. "Do you remember?—

'My birthday! what a different sound
That word had in my younger years!
And now, each time the day comes round,
Less and less white its mark appears.'"

"Well, I am sure that is true," said the other lady.

"Do you remember Robert Herrick's lines to daffodils?—

'Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon.'

And then—

'We have short time to stay as you;
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or anything:

We die
As your showers do; and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew,
Ne'er to be found again.'

And Waller to the rose—

'Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee.
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!'

"And Burns to the daisy," said Lois—

'There in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snowy bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

'Even thou who mournst the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till, crushed beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!'"

"O, you are getting very gloomy!" exclaimed Mrs. Lenox.

"Not we," said Lois merrily laughing, "but your poets."

"Mend your cause, Julia," said her husband.

"I haven't got the poets in my head," said the lady. "They are not all like that. I am very fond of Elizabeth Barrett Browning."

"The 'Cry of the Children'?" said Mrs. Barclay.

"O no, indeed! She's not all like that."

"She is not all like that. There is 'Hector in the Garden.'"

"O, that is pretty!" said Lois. "But do you remember how it runs?—

'Nine years old! The first of any
Seem the happiest years that come—'"

"Go on, Lois," said her friend. And the request being seconded, Lois gave the whole, ending with—

'Oh the birds, the tree, the ruddy
And white blossoms, sleek with rain!
Oh my garden, rich with pansies!
Oh my childhood's bright romances!
All revive, like Hector's body,
And I see them stir again!

'And despite life's changes—chances,
And despite the deathbell's toll,
They press on me in full seeming!
Help, some angel! stay this dreaming!
As the birds sang in the branches,
Sing God's patience through my soul!

'That no dreamer, no neglecter
Of the present work unsped,
I may wake up and be doing,
Life's heroic ends pursuing,
Though my past is dead as Hector,
And though Hector is twice dead.'"

"Well," said Mrs. Lenox slowly, "of course that is all true."

"From her standpoint," said Lois. "That is according to my charge, which you disallowed."

"From her standpoint?" repeated Mr. Lenox. "May I ask for an explanation?"

"I mean, that as she saw things,—

'The first of any
Seem the happiest years that come.'"

"Well, of course!" said Mrs. Lenox. "Does not everybody say so?"

Nobody answered.

"Does not everybody agree in that judgment, Miss Lothrop?" urged the gentleman.

"I dare say—everybody looking from that standpoint," said Lois. "And the poets write accordingly. They are all of them seeing shadows."

"How can they help seeing shadows?" returned Mrs. Lenox impatiently. "The shadows are there!"

"Yes," said Lois, "the shadows are there." But there was a reservation in her voice.

"Do not *you*, then, reckon the years of childhood the happiest?" Mr. Lenox inquired.

"No."

"But you cannot have had much experience of life," said Mrs. Lenox, "to say so. I don't see how they can *help* being the happiest, to any one."

"I believe," Lois answered, lowering her voice a little, "that if we could see all, we should see that the oldest person in our company is the happiest here."

The eyes of the strangers glanced towards the old lady in her low chair at the front of the ox cart. In her wrinkled face there was not a line of beauty, perhaps never had been; in spite of its sense and character unmistakeable; it was grave, she was thinking her own thoughts; it was weather-beaten, so to say, with the storms of life; and yet there was an expression of unruffled repose upon it, as calm as the glint of stars in a still lake. Mrs. Lenox's look was curiously incredulous, scornful, and wistful, together; it touched Lois.

"One's young years ought not to be one's best," she said.

"How are you going to help it?" came almost querulously. Lois thought, if *she* were Mr. Lenox, she would not feel flattered.

"When one is young, one does not know disappointment," the other went on.

"And when one is old, one may get the better of disappointment."

"When one is young, everything is fresh."

"I think things grow fresher to me with every year," said Lois, laughing. "Mrs. Lenox, it is possible to keep one's youth."

"Then you have found the philosopher's stone?" said Mr. Lenox.

Lois's smile was brilliant, but she said nothing to that. She was beginning to feel that she had talked more than her share, and was inclined to draw back. Then there came a voice from the arm-chair, it came upon a pause of stillness, with its quiet, firm tones:

'He satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.'"

The voice came like an oracle, and was listened to with somewhat of the same silent reverence. But after that pause Mr. Lenox remarked that he never understood that comparison. What was it about an eagle's youth?

"Why," said Lois, "an eagle never grows old!"

"Is that it! But I wish you would go on a little further, Miss Lothrop. You spoke of hymn-writers having a different standpoint, and of their words as more cheerful than the utterances of other poets. Do you know, I had never thought other poets were not cheerful, until now; and I certainly never got the notion that hymns were an enlivening sort of literature. I thought they dealt with the shadowy side of life almost exclusively."

"Well—yes, perhaps they do," said Lois; "but they go kindling beacons everywhere to light it up; and it is the beacons you see, and not the darkness. Now the secular poets turn that about. They deal with the brightest things they can find; but, to change the figure, they cannot keep the minor chord out of their music."

Mr. and Mrs. Lenox looked at each other.

"Do you mean to say," said the latter, "that the hymn-writers do not use the minor key? They write in it, or they sing in it, more properly, altogether!"

"Yes," said Lois, into whose cheeks a slight colour was mounting; "yes, perhaps; but it is with the blast of the trumpet and the clash of the cymbals of triumph. There may be the confession of pain, but the cry of victory is there too!"

"Victory—over what?" said Mrs. Lenox rather scornfully,

"Over pain, for one thing," said Lois; "and over loss, and weariness, and disappointment."

"You will have to confirm your words by examples again, Lois," said
Mrs. Barclay. "We do not all know hymn literature as well as you do."

"I never saw anything of all that in hymns," said Mrs. Lenox. "They always sound a little, to me, like dirges."

Lois hesitated. The cart was plodding along through the smooth lanes at the rate of less than a mile an hour, the oxen swaying from side to side with their slow, patient steps. The level country around lay sleepily still under the hot afternoon sun; it was rarely that any human stir was to be seen, save only the ox driver walking beside the cart. He walked beside the *cart,* not the oxen; evidently lending a curious ear to what was spoken in the company; on which account also the progress of the vehicle was a little less lively than it might have been.

"My Cynthy's writ a lot o' hymns," he remarked just here. "I never heerd no trumpets in 'em, though. I don' know what them other things is."

"Cymbals?" said Lois. "They are round, thin plates of metal, Mr. Sears, with handles on one side to hold them by; and the player clashes them together, at certain parts of the music—as you would slap the palms of your hands."

"Doos, hey? I want to know! And what doos they sound like?"

"I can't tell," said Lois. "They sound shrill, and sweet, and gay."

"But that's cur'ous sort o' church music!" said the farmer.

"Now, Miss Lothrop,—you must let us hear the figurative cymbals," Mr. Lenox reminded her.

"Do!" said Mrs. Barclay.

"There cannot be much of it," opined Mrs. Lenox.

"On the contrary," said Lois; "there is so much of it that I am at a loss where to begin.

'I love yon pale blue sky; it is the floor
Of that glad home where I shall shortly be;
A home from which I shall go out no more,
From toil and grief and vanity set free.

'I gaze upon yon everlasting arch,
Up which the bright stars wander as they shine;
And, as I mark them in their nightly march,
I think how soon that journey shall be mine!

'Yon silver drift of silent cloud, far up
In the still heaven—through you my pathway lies:
Yon rugged mountain peak—how soon your top
Shall I behold beneath me, as I rise!

'Not many more of life's slow-pacing hours,
Shaded with sorrow's melancholy hue;
Oh what a glad ascending shall be ours,
Oh what a pathway up yon starry blue!

'A journey like Elijah's, swift and bright,
Caught gently upward to an early crown,
In heaven's own chariot of all-blazing light,
With death untasted and the grave unknown.'"

"That's not like any hymn I ever heard," remarked Mrs. Lenox, after a pause had followed the last words.

"That is a hymn of Dr. Bonar's," said Lois. "I took it merely because it came first into my head. Long ago somebody else wrote something very like it—

'Ye stars are but the shining dust
Of my divine abode;
The pavement of those heavenly courts
Where I shall see my God.

'The Father of unnumbered lights
Shall there his beams display;
And not one moment's darkness mix
With that unvaried day.'

Do you hear the cymbals, Mrs. Lenox?"

There came here a long breath, it sounded like a breath of satisfaction or rest; it was breathed by Mrs. Armadale. In the stillness of their progress, the slowly revolving wheels making no noise on the smooth road, and the feet of the oxen falling almost soundlessly, they all heard it; and they all felt it. It was nothing less than an echo of what Lois had been repeating; a mute "Even so!"—probably unconscious, and certainly undesigned. Mrs. Lenox glanced that way. There was a far-off look on the

old worn face, and lines of peace all about the lips and the brow and the quiet folded hands. Mrs. Lenox did not know that a sigh came from herself as her eyes turned away.

Her husband eyed the three women curiously. They were a study to him, albeit he hardly knew the grammar of the language in which so many things seemed to be written on their faces. Mrs. Armadale's features, if strong, were of the homeliest kind; work-worn and weather-worn, to boot; yet the young man was filled with reverence as he looked from the hands in their cotton gloves, folded on her lap, to the hard features shaded and framed by the white sun-bonnet. The absolute, profound calm was imposing to him; the still peace of the spirit was attractive. He looked at his wife; and the contrast struck even him. Her face was murky. It was impatience, in part, he guessed, which made it so; *but* why was she impatient? It was cloudy with unhappiness; and she ought to be very happy, Mr. Lenox thought; had she not everything in the world that she cared about? How could there be a cloud of unrest and discontent on her brow, and those displeased lines about her lips? His eye turned to Lois, and lingered as long as it dared. There was peace too, very sunny, and a look of lofty thought, and a brightness that seemed to know no shadow; though at the moment she was not smiling.

"Are you not going on, Miss Lothrop?" he said gently; for he felt Mrs. Barclay's eye upon him. And, besides, he wanted to provoke the girl to speak more.

"I could go on till I tired you," said Lois.

"I do not think you could," he returned pleasantly. "What can we do better? We are in a most pastoral frame of mind, with pastoral surroundings; poetry could not be better accompanied."

"When one gets excited in talking, perhaps one had better stop," Lois said modestly.

"On the contrary! Then the truth will come out best."

Lois smiled and shook her head. "We shall soon be at the shore.
Look,—this way we turn down to go to it, and leave the high road."

"Then make haste!" said Mr. Lenox. "It will sound nowhere better than here."

"Yes, go on," said his wife now, raising her heavy eyelids.

"Well," said Lois. "Do you remember Bryant's 'Thanatopsis'?"

"Of course. *That* is bright enough at any rate," said the lady.

"Do you think so?"

"Yes! What is the matter with it?"

"Dark—and earthly."

"I don't think so at all!" cried Mrs. Lenox, now becoming excited in her turn. "What would you have? I think it is beautiful! And elevated; and hopeful."

"Can you repeat the last lines?"

"No; but I dare say you can. You seem to me to have a library of poets in your head."

"I can," said Mrs. Barclay here, putting in her word at this not very civil speech. And she went on—

'The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favourite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee.'"

"Well, of course," said Mrs. Lenox. "That is true."

"Is it cheerful?" said Mrs. Barclay. "But that is not the last.—

'So live, that when thy summons comes to join

The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.'"

"There!" Mrs. Lenox exclaimed. "What would you have, better than that?"

Lois looked at her, and said nothing. The look irritated husband and wife, in different ways; her to impatience, him to curiosity.

"Have you got anything better, Miss Lothrop?" he asked.

"You can judge. Compare that with a dying Christian's address to his soul—

'Deathless principle, arise;
Soar, thou native of the skies.
Pearl of price, by Jesus bought,
To his glorious likeness wrought,
Go, to shine before the throne;
Deck the mediatorial crown;
Go, his triumphs to adorn;
Made for God, to God return.'

I won't give you the whole of it—

'Is thy earthly house distressed?
Willing to retain her guest?
'Tis not thou, but she, must die;
Fly, celestial tenant, fly.'
Burst thy shackles, drop thy clay,
Sweetly breathe thyself away:
Singing, to thy crown remove,
Swift of wing, and fired with love.'

'Shudder not to pass the stream;
Venture all thy care on him;
Him whose dying love and power
Stilled its tossing, hushed its roar.
Safe is the expanded wave,
Gentle as a summer's eve;
Not one object of his care
Ever suffered shipwreck there.'"

"That ain't no hymn in the book, is it?" inquired the ox driver. "Haw!—go 'long. That ain't in the book, is it, Lois?"

"Not in the one we use in church, Mr. Sears."

"I wisht it was!—like it fust-rate. Never heerd it afore in my life."

"There's as good as that *in* the church book," remarked Mrs. Armadale.

"Yes," said Lois; "I like Wesley's hymn even better—

'Come, let us join our friends above

That have obtained the prize;
And on the eagle wings of love
To joys celestial rise.

. . . .

'One army of the living God,
To his command we bow;
Part of his host have crossed the flood
And part are crossing now.

. . . . . .

'His militant embodied host,
With wishful looks we stand,
And long to see that happy coast,
And reach the heavenly land.

'E'en now, by faith, we join our hands
With those that went before;
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.'"

CHAPTER XXXI.

LONG CLAMS.

There was a soft ring in Lois's voice; it might be an echo of the trumpets and cymbals of which she had been speaking. Yet not done for effect; it was unconscious, and delicate as indescribable, for which reason it had the greater power. The party remained silent for a few minutes, all of them; during which a killdeer on the fence uttered his little shout of gratulation; and the wild, salt smell coming from the Sound and the not distant ocean, joined with the silence and Lois's hymn, gave a peculiar impression of solitude and desolation to at least one of the party. The cart entered an enclosure, and halted before a small building at the edge of the shore, just above high-water mark. There were several such buildings scattered along the shore at intervals, some enclosed, some not. The whole breadth of the Sound lay in view, blinking under the summer sun; yet the air was far fresher here than it had been in the village. The tide was half out; a wide stretch of wet sand, with little pools in the hollows, intervened between the rocks and the water; the rocks being no magnificent buttresses of the land, but large and small boulders strewn along the shore edge, hung with seaweed draperies; and where there were not rocks there was a growth of rushes on a mud bottom. The party were helped out of the cart one by one, and the strangers surveyed the prospect.

"'Afar in the desert,' this is, I declare," said the gentleman.

"Might as well be," echoed his wife. "Whatever do you come here for?" she said, turning to Lois; "and what do you do when you are here?"

"Get some clams and have supper."

"*Clams!*"—with an inimitable accent. "Where do you get clams?"

"Down yonder—at the edge of the rushes."

"Who gets them? and how do you get them?"

"I guess I shall get them to-day. O, we do it with a hoe."

Lois stayed for no more, but ran in. The interior room of the house, which was very large for a bathing-house, was divided in two by a partition. In the inner, smaller room, Lois began busily to change her dress. On the walls hung a number of bathing suits of heavy flannel, one of which she appropriated. Charity came in after her.

"You ain't a goin' for clams, Lois? Well, I wouldn't, if I was you."

"Why not?"

"I wouldn't make myself such a sight, for folks to see."

"I don't at all do it for folks to see, but that folks may eat. We have brought 'em here, and now we must give them something for supper."

"Are you goin' with bare feet?"

"Why not?" said Lois, laughing. "Do you think I am going to spoil my best pair of shoes for vanity's sake?" And she threw off shoes and stockings as she spoke, and showed a pair of pretty little white feet, which glanced coquettishly under the blue flannel.

"Lois, what's brought these folks here?"

"I am sure I don't know."

"I wish they'd stayed where they belong. That woman's just turning up her nose at every blessed thing she sees."

"It won't hurt the Sound!" said Lois, laughing.

"What did they come for?"

"I can't tell; but, Charity, it will never do to let them go away feeling they got nothing by coming. So you have the kettle boiled, will you, and the table all ready—and I'll try for the clams."

"They won't like 'em."

"Can't help that."

"And what am I going to do with Mr. Sears?"

"Give him his supper of course."

"Along with all the others?"

"You must. You cannot set two tables."

"There's aunt Anne!" exclaimed Charity; and in the next minute aunt Anne came round to them by the front steps; for each half of the bathing-house had its own door of approach, as well as a door of communication. Mrs. Marx came in, surveyed Lois, and heard Charity's statement.

"These things will happen in the best regulated families," she remarked, beginning also to loosen her dress.

"What are you going to do, aunt Anne?"

"Going after clams, with Lois. We shall want a bushel or less; and we can't wait till the moon rises, to eat 'em."

"And how am I going to set the table with them all there?"

Mrs. Marx laughed. "I expect they're like cats in a strange garret. Set your table just as usual, Charry; push 'em out o' the way if they get in it. Now then, Lois!"

And, slipping down the steps and away off to the stretch of mud where the rushes grew, two extraordinary, flannel-clad, barefooted figures, topped with sun-bonnets and armed with hoes and baskets, were presently seen to be very busy there about something. Charity opened the door of communication between the two parts of the house, and surveyed the party. Mrs. Barclay sat on the step outside, looking over the plain of waters, with her head in her hand. Mrs. Armadale was in a rocking-chair, just within the door, placidly knitting. Mr. and Mrs. Lenox, somewhat further back, seemed not to know just what to do with themselves; and Madge, holding a little aloof, met her sister's eye with an expression of despair and doubt. Outside, at the foot of the steps, where Mrs. Barclay sat, lounged the ox driver.

"Ben here afore?" he asked confidentially of the lady.

"Yes, once or twice. I never came in an ox cart before."

"I guess you hain't," he replied, chewing a blade of rank grass which he had pulled for the purpose.

"My judgment is we had a fust-rate entertainment, comin' down."

"I quite agree with you."

"Now in anythin' *but* an ox cart, you couldn't ha' had it."

"No, not so well, certainly."

"*I* couldn't ha' had it, anyway, withouten we'd come so softly. I declare, I believe them critters stepped soft o' purpose. It's better'n a book, to hear that girl talk, now, ain't it?"

"Much better than many books."

"She's got a lot o' 'em inside her head. That beats me! She allays was smart, Lois was; but I'd no idee she was so full o' book larnin'. Books is a great thing!" And he heaved a sigh.

"Do you have time to read much yourself, sir?"

"Depends on the book," he said, with a bit of a laugh. "Accordin' to that, I get much or little. No; in these here summer days a man can't do much at books; the evenin's short, you see, and the days is long; and the days is full o' work. The winter's the time for readin'. I got hold o' a book last winter that was wuth a great deal o' time, and got it. I never liked a book better. That was Rollin's 'Ancient History.'"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Barclay. "So you enjoyed that?"

"Ever read it?"

"Yes."

"Didn't you enjoy it?"

"I believe I like Modern history better."

"I've read some o' that too," said he meditatively. "It ain't so different. 'Seems to me, folks is allays pretty much alike; only we call things by different names. Alexander the Great, now,—he warn't much different from Napoleon Buonaparte."

"Wasn't he a better man?" inquired Mr. Lenox, putting his head out at the door.

"Wall, I don' know; it's difficult, you know, to judge of folk's insides; but I don't make much count of a man that drinks himself to death at thirty."

"Haven't you any drinking in Shampuashuh?"

"Wall, there ain't much; and what there is, is done in the dark, like.
You won't find no rum-shops open."

"Indeed! How long has the town been so distinguished?"

"I guess it's five year. I *know* it is; for it was just afore we put in our last President. Then we voted liquor shouldn't be president in Shampuashuh."

"Do you get along any better for it?"

"Wall"—slowly—"I should say we did. There ain't no quarrellin', nor fightin', nor anybody took up for the jail, nor no one livin' in the poorhouse—'thout it's some tramp on his way to some place where there *is* liquor. An' *he* don't want to stay."

"What are those two figures yonder among the grass?" Mrs. Lenox now asked; she also having come out of the house in search of objects of interest, the interior offering none.

"Them?" said Mr. Sears. "Them's Lois and her aunt. Their baskets is gettin' heavy, too. I'll make the fire for ye, Miss Charity," he cried, lifting his voice; and therewith disappeared.

"What are they doing?" Mrs. Lenox asked, in a lower tone.

"Digging clams," Mrs. Barclay informed her.

"Digging clams! How do they dig them?"

"With a hoe, I believe."

"I ought to go and offer my services," said the gentleman, rising.

"Do not think of it," said Mrs. Barclay. "You could not go without plunging into wet, soft mud; the clams are found only there, I believe."

"How do *they* go?"

"Barefoot-dressed for it."

"_Un_dressed for it," said Mrs. Lenox. "Barefoot in the mud! Could you have conceived it!"

"They say the mud is warm," Mrs. Barclay returned, keeping back a smile.

"But how horrid!"

"I am told it is very good sport. The clams are shy, and endeavour to take flight when they hear the strokes of the hoe; so that it comes to a trial of speed between the pursuer and the pursued; which is quite exciting."

"I should think, if I could see a clam, I could pick it up," Mrs. Lenox said scornfully.

"Yes; you cannot see them."

"Do you mean, they run away *under ground?*"

"So I am told."

"How can they? they have no feet."

Mrs. Barclay could not help laughing now, and confessed her ignorance of the natural powers of the clam family.

"Where is that old man gone to make his fire? didn't he say he was going to make a fire?"

"Yes; in the cooking-house."

"Where is that?" And Mrs. Lenox came down the steps and went to explore. A few yards from the bathing-house, just within the enclosure fence, she found a small building, hardly two yards square, but thoroughly built and possessing a chimney. The door stood open; within was a cooking-stove, in which fire was roaring; a neat pile of billets of wood for firing, a tea-kettle, a large iron pot, and several other kitchen utensils.

"What is this for?" inquired Mrs. Lenox, looking curiously in.

"Wall, I guess we're goin' to hev supper by and by; ef the world don't come to an end sooner than I expect, we will, sure. I'm a gettin' ready."

"And is this place built and arranged just for the sake of having supper, as you call it, down here once in a while?"

"Couldn't be no better arrangement," said Mr. Sears. "This stove draws first-rate."

"But this is a great deal of trouble. I should think they would take their clams home and have them there."

"Some folks doos," returned Mr. Sears. "These here folks knows what's good. Wait till you see. I tell you! long clams, fresh digged, and b'iled as soon as they're fetched in, is somethin' you never see beat."

"*Long* clams," repeated the lady. "Are they not the usual sort?"

"Depends on what you're used to. These is usual here, and I'm glad on't. Round clams ain't nowheres alongside o' 'em."

He went off to fill the kettle, and the lady returned slowly round the house to the steps and the door, which were on the sea side. Mr. Lenox had gone in and was talking to Mrs. Armadale; Mrs. Barclay was in her old position on the steps, looking out to sea. There was a wonderful light of westering rays on land and water; a rich gleam from brown rock and green seaweed; a glitter and fresh sparkle on the waves of the incoming tide; an indescribable freshness and life in the air and in the light; a delicious invigoration in the salt breath of the ocean. Mrs. Barclay sat drinking it all in, like one who had been long athirst. Mrs. Lenox stood looking, half cognizant of what was before her, more than half impatient and scornful of it; yet even on her the witchery of the place and the scene was not without its effect.

"Do you come here often?" she asked Mrs. Barclay. .

"Never so often as I would like."

"I should think you would be tired to death!"

Then, as Mrs. Barclay made no answer, she looked at her watch.

"Our train is not till ten o'clock," she remarked.

"Plenty of time," said the other. And then there was silence; and the sun's light grew more westering, and the sparkle on earth and water more fresh, and the air only more and more sweet; till two figures were discerned approaching the bathing-house, carrying hoes slung over their shoulders, and baskets, evidently filled, in their hands. They went round the house towards the cook-house; and Mrs. Barclay came down from her seat and went to meet them there, Mrs. Lenox following.

Two such figures! Sun-bonnets shading merry faces, flushed with business; blue flannel bathing-suits draping very unpicturesquely the persons, bare feet stained with mud,—baskets full of the delicate fish they had been catching.

"What a quantity!" exclaimed Mrs. Barclay.

"Yes, because I had aunt Anne to help. We cannot boil them all at once, but that is all the better. They will come hot and hot."

"You don't mean that you are going to cook all those?" said Mrs. Lenox incredulously.

"There will not be one too many," said Lois. "You do not know long clams yet."

"They are ugly things!" said the other, with a look of great disgust into the basket. "I don't think I could touch them."

"There's no obligation," responded here Mrs. Marx. She had thrown one basketful into a huge pan, and was washing them free from the mud and sand of their original sphere. "It's a free country. But looks don't prove much—neither at the shore nor anywhere else. An ugly shell often covers a good fish. So I find it; and t'other way."

"How do you get them?" inquired Mr. Lenox, who also came now to the door of the cook-house. Lois made her escape. "I see you make use of hoes."

"Yes," said Mrs. Marx, throwing her clams about in the water with great energy; "we dig for 'em. See where the clam lives, and then drive at him, and don't be slow about it; and then when the clam spits at you, you know you're on his heels—or on his track, I should say; and you take care of your eyes and go ahead, till you catch up with him; and then you've got him. And every one you throw into your basket you feel gladder and gladder; in fact, as the basket grows heavy, your heart grows light. And that's diggin' for long clams."

"The best part of it is the hunt, isn't it?"

"I'll take your opinion on that after supper."

Mr. Lenox laughed, and he and his wife sauntered round to the front again. The freshness, the sweetness, the bright rich colouring of sky and water and land, the stillness, the strangeness, the novelty, all moved Mr. Lenox to say,

"I would not have missed this for a hundred dollars!"

"Missed what?" asked his wife.

"This whole afternoon."

"It's one way that people live, I suppose."

"Yes, for they really do live; there is no stagnation; that is one thing that strikes me."

"Don't you want to buy a farm here, and settle down?" asked Mrs. Lenox scornfully. "Live on hymns and long clams?"

Meanwhile the interior of the bathing-house was changing its aspect. Part of the partition of boards had been removed and a long table improvised, running the length of the house, and made of planks laid on trestles. White cloths hid the rudeness of this board, and dishes and cups and viands were

giving it a most hospitable look. A whiff of coffee aroma came now and then through the door at the back of the house, which opened near the place of cookery; piles of white bread and brown gingerbread, and golden butter and rosy ham and new cheese, made a most abundant and inviting display; and, after the guests were seated, Mr. Sears came in bearing a great dish of the clams, smoking hot.

Well, Mrs. Lenox was hungry, through the combined effects of salt air and an early dinner; she found bread and butter and coffee and ham most excellent, but looked askance at the dish of clams; which, however, she saw emptied with astonishing rapidity. Noticing at last a striking heap of shells beside her husband's plate, the lady's fastidiousness gave way to curiosity; and after that,—it was well that another big dishful was coming, or *somebody* would have been obliged to go short.

At ten o'clock that evening Mr. and Mrs. Lenox took the night train to Boston.

"I never passed a pleasanter afternoon in my life," was the gentleman's comment as the train started.

"Pretty faces go a great way always with you men!" answered his wife.

"There is something more than a pretty face there. And she is improved—changed, somehow—since a year ago. What do you think now of your brother's choice, Julia?"

"It would have been his ruin!" said the lady violently.

"I declare I doubt it. I am afraid he'll never find a better. I am afraid you have done him mistaken service."

"George, this girl is *nobody*."

"She is a lady. And she is intelligent, and she is cultivated, and she has excellent manners. I see no fault at all to be found. Tom does not need money."

"She is nobody, nevertheless, George! It would have been miserable for Tom to lose all the advantage he is going to have with his wife, and to marry this girl whom no one knows, and who knows nobody."

"I am sorry for poor Tom!"

"George, you are very provoking. Tom will live to thank mamma and me all his life."

"Do you know, I don't believe it. I am glad to see *she's* all right, anyhow. I was afraid at the Isles she might have been bitten."

"You don't know anything about it," returned his wife sharply. "Women don't show. *I* think she was taken with Tom."

"I hope not!" said the gentleman; "that's all I have to say."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A VISITOR.

After that summer day, the time sped on smoothly at Shampuashuh; until the autumn coolness had replaced the heat of the dog days, and hay harvest and grain harvest were long over, and there began to be a suspicion of frost in the air. Lois had gathered in her pears, and was garnering her apples. There were two or three famous apple trees in the Lothrop old garden, the fruit of which kept sound and sweet all through the winter, and was very good to eat.

One fair day in October, Mrs. Barclay, wanting to speak with Lois, was directed to the garden and sought her there. The day was as mild as summer, without summer's passion, and without spring's impulses of hope and action. A quiet day; the air was still; the light was mellow, not brilliant; the sky was clear, but no longer of an intense blue; the little racks of cloud were lying supine on its calm depths, apparently having nowhere to go and nothing to do. The driving, sweeping, changing forms of vapour, which in spring had come with rain and in summer had come with thunder, had all disappeared; and these little delicate lines of cloud lay purposeless and at rest on the blue. Nature had

done her work for the year; she had grown the grass and ripened the grain, and manufactured the wonderful juices in the tissues of the fruit, and laid a new growth of woody fibre round the heart of the trees. She was resting now, as it were, content with her work. And so seemed Lois to be doing, at the moment Mrs. Barclay entered the garden. It was unusual to find her so. I suppose the witching beauty of the day beguiled her. But it was of another beauty Mrs. Barclay thought, as she drew near the girl.

A short ladder stood under one of the apple trees, upon which Lois had been mounting to pluck her fruit. On the ground below stood two large baskets, full now of the ruddy apples, shining and beautiful. Beside them, on the dry turf, sat Lois with her hands in her lap; and Mrs. Barclay wondered at her as she drew near.

Yet it is not too easy to tell why, at least so as to make the reader get at the sense of the words. I have the girl's image before my eyes, mentally, but words have neither form nor colour; how shall I paint with them? It was not the beauty of mere form and colour, either, that struck Mrs. Barclay in Lois's face. You may easily see more regular features and more dazzling complexion. It was not any particular brilliance of eye, or piquancy of expression. There was a soundness and fulness of young life; that is not so uncommon either. There was a steadfast strength and sweetness of nature. There was an unconscious, innocent grace, that is exceedingly rare. And a high, noble expression of countenance and air and movement, such as can belong only to one whose thoughts and aims never descend to pettinesses; who assimilates nobility by being always concerned with what is noble. And then, the face was very fair; the ruddy brown hair very rich and abundant; the figure graceful and good; all the spiritual beauty I have been endeavouring to describe had a favouring groundwork of nature to display itself upon. Mrs. Barclay's steps grew slower and slower as she came near, that she might prolong the view, which to her was so lovely. Then Lois looked at her and slightly smiled.

"Lois, my dear, what are you doing?"

"Not exactly nothing, Mrs. Barclay; though it looks like it. Such a day one cannot bear to go in-doors!"

"You are gathering your apples?"

"I have got done for to-day."

"What are you studying, here beside your baskets? What beautiful apples!"

"Aren't they? These are our Royal Reddings; they are good for eating and cooking, and they keep perfectly. If only they are picked off by hand."

"What were you studying, Lois? May I not know?" Mrs. Barclay took an apple and a seat on the turf beside the girl.

"Hardly studying. Only musing—as such a day makes one muse. I was thinking, Mrs. Barclay, what use I could make of my life."

"What *use?* Can you make better use of it than you are doing, in taking care of Mrs. Armadale?"

"Yes—as things are now. But in the common course of things I should outlive grandmamma."

"Then you will marry somebody, and take care of him."

"Very unlikely, I think."

"May I ask, why?"

"I do not know anybody that is the sort of man I could marry."

"What do you require?" asked Mrs. Barclay.

"A great deal, I suppose," said Lois slowly. "I have never studied that; I was not studying it just now. But I was thinking, what might be the best way of making myself of some use in the world. Foolish, too."

"Why so?"

"It is no use for us to lay plans for our lives; not much use for us to lay plans for anything. They are pretty sure to be broken up."

"Yes," said Mrs. Barclay, sighing. "I wonder why!"

"I suppose, because they do not fall in with God's plans for us."

"His plans for us," repeated Mrs. Barclay slowly. "Do you believe in such things? That would mean, individual plans, Lois; for you individually, and for me?"

"Yes, Mrs. Barclay—that is what I believe."

"It is incomprehensible to me."

"Why should it be?"

"To think that the Highest should concern him self with such small details."

"It is just because he is the Highest, and so high, that he can.
Besides—do we know what *are* small details?"

"But why should he care what becomes of us?" said Mrs. Barclay gloomily.

"O, do you ask that? When he is Love itself, and would have the very best things for each one of us?"

"We don't have them, I am sure."

"Because we will not, then. To have them, we must fall in with his plans."

"My dear Lois, do you know that you are talking the profoundest mysteries?"

"No. They are not mysteries to me. The Bible says all I have been saying."

"That is sufficient for you, and you do not stop to look into the mystery. Lois, it is *all* mystery. Look at all the wretched ruined lives one sees; what becomes of those plans for good for them?"

"Failed, Mrs. Barclay; because of the people's unwillingness to come into the plans."

"They do not know them!"

"No, but they do know the steps which lead into them, and those steps they refuse to take."

"I do not understand you. What steps?"

"The Lord does not show us his plans. He shows us, one by one, the steps he bids us take. If we take them, one by one, they will bring us into all that God has purposed and meant for us—the very best that could come to us."

"And you think his plans and purposes could be overthrown?"

"Why, certainly. Else what mean Christ's lamentations over Jerusalem? 'O Jerusalem,... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not.' I would—ye would not; and the choice lies with us."

"And suppose a person falls in with these plans, as you say, step by step?"

"O, then it is all good," said Lois; "the way and the end; all good.
There is no mistake nor misadventure."

"Nor disaster?"

"Not what turns out to be such."

"Lois," said Mrs. Barclay, after a thoughtful pause, "you are a very happy person!"

"Yes," said Lois, smiling; "and I have just told you the reason. Don't you see? I have no care about anything."

"On your principles, I do not see what need you had to consider your future way of life; to speculate about it, I mean."

"No," said Lois, rising, "I have not. Only sometimes one must look a little carefully at the parting of the ways, to see which road one is meant to take."

"Sit down again. I did not come out here to talk of all this. I wanted to ask you something."

Lois sat down.

"I came to ask a favour."

"How could you, Mrs. Barclay? I mean, nothing we could do could be a *favour* to you!"

"Yes, it could. I have a friend that wants to come to see me."

"Well?"

"May he come?"

"Why, of course."

"But it is a gentleman."

"Well," said Lois again, smiling, "we have no objections to gentlemen."

"It is a friend whom I have not seen in a very long while; a dear friend; a dear friend of my husband's in years gone by. He has just returned from Europe; and he writes to ask if he may call on his way to Boston and spend Sunday with me."

"He shall be very welcome, Mrs. Barclay; and we will try to make him comfortable."

"O, comfortable! there is no question of that. But will it not be at all inconvenient?"

"Not in the least."

"Then he may come?"

"Certainly. When does he wish to come?"

"This week—Saturday. His name is Dillwyn."

"Dillwyn!" Lois repeated. "Dillwyn? I saw a Mr. Dillwyn at Mrs.
Wishart's once or twice."

"It must be the same. I do not know of two. And he knows Mrs. Wishart.
So you remember him? What do you remember about him?"

"Not much. I have an impression that he knows a great deal, and has very pleasant manners."

"Quite right. That is the man. So he may come? Thank you."

Lois took up one of her baskets of apples and carried it into the house, where she deposited it at Mrs. Armadale's feet.

"They are beautiful this year, aren't they, mother? Girls, we are going to have a visitor."

Charity was brushing up the floor; the broom paused. Madge was sewing; the needle remained drawn out. Both looked at Lois.

"A visitor!" came from both pairs of lips.

"Yes, indeed. A visitor. A gentleman. And he is coming to stay over Sunday. So, Charry, you must see and have things very special. And so must I."

"A gentleman! Who is he? Uncle Tim?"

"Not a bit of it. A young, at least a much younger, gentleman; a travelled gentleman; an elegant gentleman. A friend of Mrs. Barclay."

"What are we to do with him?"

"Nothing. Nothing whatever. We have nothing to do with him, and couldn't do it if we had."

"You needn't laugh. We have got to lodge him and feed him."

"That's easy. I'll put the white spread on the bed in the spare room; and you may get out your pickles."

"Pickles! Is he fond of pickles?"

"I don't know!" said Lois, laughing still. "I have an impression he is a man who likes all sorts of nice things."

"I hate men who like nice things! But, Lois!—there will be Saturday tea, and Sunday breakfast and

dinner and supper, and Monday morning breakfast."

"Perhaps Monday dinner."

"O, he can't stay to dinner."

"Why not?"

"It is washing day."

"My dear Charry! to such men Monday is just like all other days; and washing is—well, of course, a necessity, but it is done by fairies, or it might be, for all they know about it."

"There's five meals anyhow," Charity went on.—"Wouldn't it be a good plan to get uncle Tim to be here?"

"What for?"

"Why, we haven't a man in the house."

"What then?"

"Who'll talk to him?"

"Mrs. Barclay will take care of that. You, Charity dear, see to your pickles."

"I don't know what you mean," said Charity fretfully. "What are we going to have for dinner, Sunday? I could fricassee a pair of chickens."

"No, Charity, you couldn't. Sunday is Sunday, just as much with Mr.
Dillwyn here."

"Dillwyn!" said Madge. "I've heard you speak of him."

"Very likely. I saw him once or twice in my New York days."

"And he gave you lunch."

"Mrs. Wishart and me. Yes. And a good lunch it was. That's why I spoke of pickles, Charity. Do the very best you can."

"I cannot do my best, unless I can cook the chickens," said Charity, who all this while stood leaning upon her broom. "I might do it for once."

"Where is your leave to do wrong once?"

"But this is a particular occasion—you may call it a necessity; and necessity makes an exception."

"What is the necessity, Charity?" said Mrs. Armadale, who until now had not spoken.

"Why, grandma, you want to treat a stranger well?"

"With whatever I have got to give him. But Sunday time isn't mine to give."

"But *necessary* things, grandma?—we may do necessary things?"

"What have you got in the house?"

"Nothing on earth, except a ham to boil. Cold ham,—that's all. Do you think that's enough?"

"It won't hurt him to dine on cold ham," the old lady said complacently.

"Why don't you cook your chickens and have them cold too?" Lois asked.

"Cold fricassee ain't worth a cent."

"Cook them some other way. Roast them,—or— Give them to me, and I'll do them for you! I'll do them, Charity. Then with your nice bread, and apple sauce, and potatoes, and some of my pears and apples, and a pumpkin pie, Charity, and coffee,—we shall do very well. Mr. Dillwyn has made a worse dinner in the course of his wanderings, I'll undertake to maintain."

"What shall I have for supper?" Charity asked doubtfully. "Supper comes first."

"Shortcake. And some of your cold ham. And stew up some quinces and apples together, Cherry. You don't want anything more,—or better."

"Do you think he will understand having a cold dinner, Sunday?" Charity asked. "Men make so much of hot dinners."

"What does it signify, my dear, whether he understands it or not?" said Mrs. Armadale. "What we have to do, is what the Lord tells us to do. That is all you need mind."

"I mind what folks think, though," said Charity. "Mrs. Barclay's friend especially."

"I do not think he will notice it," said simple Mrs. Armadale.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE VALUE OF MONEY.

There was a little more bustle in the house than usual during the next two days; and the spare room was no doubt put in very particular order, with the best of all the house could furnish on the bed and toilet-table. Pantry and larder also were well stocked; and Lois was just watching the preparation of her chickens, Saturday evening, and therefore in the kitchen, when Mr. Dillwyn came to the door. Mrs. Barclay herself let him in, and brought him into her own warm, comfortable, luxurious-looking sitting-room. The evening was falling dusk, so that the little wood lire in Mrs. Barclay's chimney had opportunity to display itself, and I might say, the room too; which never could have showed to better advantage. The flickering light danced back again from gilded books, from the polished case of the piano, from picture frames, and pictures, and piles of music, and comfortable easy-chairs standing invitingly, and trinkets of art or curiosity; an unrolled engraving in one place, a stereoscope in another, a work-basket, and the bright brass stand of a microscope.

The greeting was warm between the two friends; and then Mrs. Barclay sat down and surveyed her visitor, whom she had not seen for so long. He was not a beauty of Tom Caruthers' sort, but he was what I think better; manly and intelligent, and with an air and bearing of frank nobleness which became him exceedingly. That he was a man with a serious purpose in life, or any object of earnest pursuit, you would not have supposed; and that character had never belonged to him. Mrs. Barclay, looking at him, could not see any sign that it was his now. Look and manner were easy and careless as of old.

"You are not changed," she remarked.

"What should change me?" said he, while his eye ran rapidly over the apartment. "And you?—you do not look as if life was stagnating here."

"It does not stagnate. I never was further from stagnation in all my life."

"And yet Shampuashuh is in a corner!"

"Is not most of the work of the world done in corners? It is not the butterfly, but the coral insect, that lays foundations and lifts up islands out of the sea."

"You are not a coral insect any more than I am a butterfly," said Dillwyn, laughing.

"Rather more."

"I acknowledge it, thankfully. And I am rejoiced to know from your letters that the seclusion has been without any evil consequences to yourself. It has been pleasant?"

"Royally pleasant. I have delighted in my building; even although I could not tell whether my island would not prove a dangerous one to mariners."

"I have just been having a discourse on that subject with my sister. I think one's sisters are—I beg your pardon!—the mischief. Tom's sister has done for him; and mine is very eager to take care of me."

"Did you consult her?" asked Mrs. Barclay, with surprise.

"Nothing of the kind! I merely told her I was coming up here to see you. A few questions followed, as to what you were doing here,—which I did not tell her, by the way,—and she hit the bull's eye with the instinctive accuracy of a woman; poured out upon me in consequence a lecture upon imprudence. Of course I confessed to nothing, but that mattered not. All that Tom's sister urged upon him, my good sister pressed upon me."

"So did I once, did I not?"

"You are not going to repeat it?"

"No; that is over, for me. I know better. But, Philip, I do not see the way very clear before you."

He left the matter there, and went off into a talk with her upon widely-different subjects, touching or growing out of his travels and experiences during the last year and a half. The twilight darkened, and the fire brightened, and in the light of the fire the two sat and talked; till a door opened, and in the same flickering shine a figure presented itself which Mr. Dillwyn remembered. Though now it was clothed in nothing finer than a dark calico, and round her shoulders a little white worsted shawl was twisted. Mrs. Barclay began a sentence of introduction, but Mr. Dillwyn cut her short.

"Do not do me such dishonour," he said. "Must I suppose that Miss
Lothrop has forgotten me?"

"Not at all, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois frankly; "I remember you very well. Tea will be ready in a minute—would you like to see your room first?"

"You are too kind, to receive me!"

"It is a pleasure. You are Mrs. Barclay's friend, and she is at home here; I will get a light."

Which she did, and Mr. Dillwyn, seeing he could not find his own way, was obliged to accept her services and see her trip up the stairs before him. At the door she handed him the light and ran down again. There was a fire here too—a wood fire; blazing hospitably, and throwing its cheery light upon a wide, pleasant, country room, not like what Mr. Dillwyn was accustomed to, but it seemed the more hospitable. Nothing handsome there; no articles of luxury (beside the fire); the reflection of the blaze came back from dark old-fashioned chairs and chests of drawers, dark chintz hangings to windows and bed, white counterpane and napery, with a sonsy, sober, quiet air of comfort; and the air was fresh and sweet as air should be, and as air can only be at a distance from the smoke of many chimneys and the congregated habitations of many human beings. I do not think Mr. Dillwyn spent much attention upon these details; yet he felt himself in a sound, clear, healthy atmosphere, socially as well as physically; also had a perception that it was very far removed from that in which he had lived and breathed hitherto. How simply that girl had lighted him up the stairs, and given him his brass candlestick at the door of his room! What *à plomb* could have been more perfect! I do not mean to imply that Mr. Dillwyn knew the candlestick was brass; I am afraid there was a glamour over his eyes which made it seem golden.

He found Mrs. Barclay seated in a very thoughtful attitude before her fire, when he came down again; but just then the door of the other room was opened, and they were called in to tea.

The family were in rather gala trim. Lois, as I said, wore indeed only a dark print dress, with her white fichu over it; but Charity had put on her best silk, and Madge had stuck two golden chrysanthemums in her dark hair (with excellent effect), and Mrs. Armadale was stately in her best cap. Alas! Philip Dillwyn did not know what any of them had on. He was placed next to Mrs. Armadale, and all supper time his special attention, so far as appeared, was given to the old lady. He talked to her, and he served her, with an easy, pleasant grace, and without at all putting himself forward or taking the part of the distinguished stranger. It was simply good will and good breeding; however, it produced a great effect.

"The air up here is delicious!" he remarked, after he had attended to all the old lady's immediate wants, and applied himself to his own supper. "It gives one a tremendous appetite."

"I allays like to see folks eat," said Mrs. Armadale. "After one's done the gettin' things ready, I hate to have it all for nothin'."

"It shall not be for nothing this time, as far as I am concerned."

"Ain't the air good in New York?" Mrs. Armadale next asked.

"I do not think it ever was so sweet as this. But when you crowd a million or so of people into room that is only enough for a thousand, you can guess what the consequences must be."

"What do they crowd up so for, then?"

"It must be the case in a great city."

"I don't see the sense o' that," said Mrs. Armadale. "Ain't the world big enough?"

"Far too big," said Mr. Dillwyn. "You see, when people's time is very valuable, they cannot afford to spend too much of it in running about after each other."

"What makes their time worth any more'n our'n?"

"They are making money so fast with it."

"And is *that* what makes folks' time valeyable?"

"In their opinion, madam."

"I never could see no use in havin' much money," said the old lady.

"But there comes a question," said Dillwyn. "What is 'much'?"

"More'n enough, I should say."

"Enough for what? That also must be settled."

"I'm an old-fashioned woman," said the old lady, "and I go by the old-fashionedst book in the world. That says, 'we brought nothing into this world, and we can carry nothing out; therefore, having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.'"

"But, again, what sort of food, and what sort of raiment?" urged the gentleman pleasantly. "For instance; would you be content to exchange this delicious manufacture,—which seems to me rather like ambrosia than common food,—for some of the black bread of Norway? with no qualification of golden butter? or for Scotch oatmeal bannocks? or for sour corn cake?"

"I would be quite content, if it was the Lord's will," said the old lady. "There's no obligation upon anybody to have it *sour*."

Mr. Dillwyn laughed gently. "I can fancy," he said, "that you never would allow such a dereliction in duty. But, beside having the bread sweet, is it not allowed us to have the best we can get?"

"The best we can *make*," answered Mrs. Armadale; "I believe in everybody doin' the best he kin with what he has got to work with; but food ain't worth so much that we should pay a large price for it."

The gentleman's eye glanced with a scarcely perceptible movement over the table at which he was sitting. Bread, indeed, in piles of white flakiness; and butter; but besides, there was the cold ham in delicate slices, and excellent-looking cheese, and apples in a sort of beautiful golden confection, and cake of superb colour and texture; a pitcher of milk that was rosy sweet, and coffee rich with cream. The glance that took all this in was slight and swift, and yet the old lady was quick enough to see and understand it.

"Yes," she said, "it's all our'n, all there is on the table. Our cow eats our own grass, and Madge, my daughter, makes the butter and the cheese. We've raised and cured our own pork; and the wheat that makes the bread is grown on our ground too; we farm it out on shares; and it is ground at a mill about four miles off. Our hens lay our eggs; it's all from home."

"But suppose the case of people who have no ground, nor hens, nor pork, nor cow? they must buy."

"Of course," said the old lady; "everybody ain't farmers."

"I am ready to wish I was one," said Dillwyn. "But even then, I confess, I should want coffee and tea and sugar—as I see you. do."

"Well, those things don't grow in America," said Mrs. Armadale.

"And spice don't, neither, mother," observed Charity.

"So it appears that even you send abroad for luxuries," Mr. Dillwyn went on. "And why not? And the question is, where shall we stop? If I want coffee, I must have money to buy it, and the better the coffee

the more money; and the same with tea. In cities we must buy all we use or consume, unless one is a butcher or a baker. May I not try to get more money, in order that I may have better things? We have got round to our starting-point."

"'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,'" Mrs.
Armadale said quietly.

"Then where is the line?—Miss Lois, you are smiling. Is it at my stupidity?"

"No," said Lois. "I was thinking of a lunch—such as I have seen it—in one of the great New York hotels."

"Well?" said he, without betraying on his own part any recollection; "how does that come in? By way of illustrating Mrs. Armadale, or me?"

"I seem to remember a number of things that illustrate both," said Lois; "but as I profited by them at the time, it would be ungrateful in me to instance them now."

"You profited by them with pleasure, or otherwise?"

"Not otherwise. I was very hungry."

"You evade my question, however."

"I will not. I profited by them with much pleasure."

"Then you are on my side, as far as I can be said to have a side?"

"I think not. The pleasure is undoubted; but I do not know that that touches the question of expediency."

"I think it does. I think it settles the question. Mrs. Armadale, your granddaughter confesses the pleasure; and what else do we live for, but to get the most good out of life?"

"What pleasure does she confess?" asked the old lady, with more eagerness than her words hitherto had manifested.

"Pleasure in nice things, grandmother; in particularly nice things; that had cost a great deal to fetch them from nobody knows where; and pleasure in pretty things too. That hotel seemed almost like the halls of Aladdin to my inexperienced eyes. There is certainly pleasure in a wonderfully dainty meal, served in wonderful vessels of glass and china and silver, and marble and gold and flowers to help the effect. I could have dreamed myself into a fairy tale, often, if it had not been for the people."

"Life is not a fairy tale," said Mrs. Armadale somewhat severely.

"No, grandmother; and so the humanity present generally reminded me.
But the illusion for a minute was delightful."

"Is there any harm in making it as much like a fairy tale as we can?"

Some of the little courtesies and hospitalities of the table came in here, and Mr. Dillwyn's question received no answer. His eye went round the table. No, clearly these people did not live in fairyland, and as little in the search after it. Good, strong, sensible, practical faces; women that evidently had their work to do, and did it; habitual energy and purpose spoke in every one of them, and purpose *attained*. Here was no aimless dreaming or fruitless wishing. The old lady's face was sorely weather-beaten, but calm as a ship in harbour. Charity was homely, but comfortable. Madge and Lois were blooming in strength and activity, and as innocent apparently of any vague, unfulfilled longings as a new-blown rose. Only when Mr. Dillwyn's eye met Mrs. Barclay's he was sensible of a different record. He half sighed. The calm and the rest were not there.

The talk rambled on. Mr. Dillwyn made him self exceedingly pleasant; told of things he had seen in his travels, things and people, and ways of life; interesting even Mrs. Armadale with a sort of fascinated interest, and gaining, he knew, no little share of her good-will. So, just as the meal was ending, he ventured to bring forward the old subject again.

"You will pardon me, Mrs. Armadale," he began,—"but you are the first person I ever met who did not value money."

"Perhaps I am the first person you ever met who had something better."

"You mean—?" said Philip, with a look of inquiry. "I do not understand."

"I have treasure in heaven."

"But the coin of that realm is not current here?—and we are *here*."

"That coin makes me rich now; and I take it with me when I go," said the old lady, as she rose from the table.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNDER AN UMBRELLA.

Mrs. Barclay returned to her own room, and Mr. Dillwyn was forced to follow her. The door was shut between them and the rest of the household. Mrs. Barclay trimmed her fire, and her guest looked on absently. Then they sat down on opposite sides of the fireplace; Mrs. Barclay smiling inwardly, for she knew that Philip was impatient; however, nothing could be more sedate to all appearance than she was.

"Do you hear how the wind moans in the chimney?" she said. "That means rain."

"Rather dismal, isn't it?"

"No. In this house nothing is dismal. There is a wholesome way of looking at everything."

"Not at money?"

"It is no use, Philip, to talk to people about what they cannot understand."

"I thought understanding on that point was universal."

"They have another standard in this family for weighing things, from that which you and I have been accustomed to go by."

"What is it?"

"I can hardly tell you, in a word. I am not sure that I can tell you at all. Ask Lois."

"When can I ask her? Do you spend your evenings alone?"

"By no means! Sometimes I go out and read 'Rob Roy' to them. Sometimes the girls come to me for some deeper reading, or lessons."

"Will they come to-night?"

"Of course not! They would not interfere with your enjoyment of my society."

"Cannot you ask Lois in, on some pretext?"

"Not without her sister. It is hard on you, Philip! I will do the best for you I can; but you must watch your opportunity."

Mr. Dillwyn gave it up with a good grace, and devoted himself to Mrs. Barclay for the rest of the evening. On the other side of the wall separating the two rooms, meanwhile a different colloquy had taken place.

"So that is one of your fine people?" said Miss Charity. "Well, I don't think much of him."

"I have no doubt he would return the compliment," said Madge.

"No," said Lois; "I think he is too polite."

"He was polite to grandmother," returned Charity. "Not to anybody else, that I saw. But, girls, didn't he like the bread!"

"I thought he liked everything pretty well," said Madge.

"When's he goin'?" Mrs. Armadale asked suddenly.

"Monday, some time," Madge answered. "Mrs. Barclay said 'until Monday.' What time Monday I don't know."

"Well, we've got things enough to hold out till then," said Charity, gathering up her dishes. "It's fun, too; I like to set a nice table."

"Why, grandmother?" said Lois. "Don't you like Mrs. Barclay's friend?"

"Well enough, child. I don't want him for none of our'n."

"Why, grandmother?" said Madge.

"His world ain't our world, children, and his hopes ain't our hopes—if the poor soul has any. 'Seems to me he's all in the dark."

"That's only on one subject," said Lois. "About everything else he knows a great deal; and he has seen everything."

"Yes," said Mrs. Armadale; "very like he has; and he likes to talk about it; and he has a pleasant tongue; and he is a civil man. But there's one thing he hain't seen, and that is the light; and one thing he don't know, and that is happiness. And he may have plenty of money—I dare say he has; but he's what I call a poor man. I don't want you to have no such friends."

"But grandmother, you do not dislike to have him in the house these two days, do you?"

"It can't be helped, my dear, and we'll do the best for him we can. But I don't want *you* to have no such friends."

"I believe we should go out of the world to suit grandmother," remarked Charity. "She won't think us safe as long as we're in it."

The whole family went to church the next morning. Mr. Dillwyn's particular object, however, was not much furthered. He saw Lois, indeed, at the breakfast table; and the sight was everything his fancy had painted it. He thought of Milton's

"Pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure"—

only the description did not quite fit; for there was a healthy, sweet freshness about Lois which gave the idea of more life and activity, mental and bodily, than could consort with a pensive character. The rest fitted pretty well; and the lines ran again and again through Mr. Dillwyn's head. Lois was gone to church long before the rest of the family set out; and in church she did not sit with the others; and she did not come home with them. However, she was at dinner. But immediately after dinner Mrs. Barclay with drew again into her own room, and Mr. Dillwyn had no choice but to accompany her.

"What now?" he asked. "What do you do the rest of the day?"

"I stay at home and read. Lois goes to Sunday school."

Mr. Dillwyn looked to the windows. The rain Mrs. Barclay threatened had come; and had already begun in a sort of fury, in company with a wind, which drove it and beat it, as it seemed, from all points of the compass at once. The lines of rain-drops went slantwise past the windows, and then beat violently upon them; the ground was wet in a few minutes; the sky was dark with its thick watery veils. Wind and rain were holding revelry.

"She will not go out in this weather," said the gentleman, with conviction which seemed to be agreeable.

"The weather will not hinder her," returned Mrs. Barclay.

"*This* weather?"

"No. Lois does not mind weather. I have learned to know her by this time. Where she thinks she ought to go, or what she thinks she ought to do, there no hindrance will stop her. It is good you should learn to know her too, Philip."

"Pray tell me,—is the question of 'ought' never affected by what should be legitimate hindrances?"

"They are never credited with being legitimate," Mrs. Barclay said, with a slight laugh. "The principle is the same as that old soldier's who said, you know, when ordered upon some difficult duty, 'Sir, if it is possible, it shall be done; and if it is impossible, it *must* be done!'"

"That will do for a soldier,", said Dillwyn. "At what o'clock does she go?"

"In about a quarter of an hour I shall expect to hear her feet pattering softly through the hall, and then the door will open and shut without noise, and a dark figure will shoot past the windows."

Mr. Dillwyn left the room, and probably made some preparations; for when, a few minutes later, a figure all wrapped up in a waterproof cloak did pass softly through the hall, he came out of Mrs. Barclay's room and confronted it; and I think his overcoat was on.

"Miss Lois! you cannot be going out in this storm?"

"O yes. The storm is nothing—only something to fight against."

"But it blows quite furiously."

"I don't dislike a wind," said Lois, laying her hand on the lock of the door.

"You have no umbrella?"

"Don't need it. I am all protected, don't you see? Mr. Dillwyn, *you* are not going out?"

"Why not?"

"But you have nothing to call you out?"

"I beg your pardon. The same thing, I venture to presume, that calls you out,—duty. Only in my case the duty is pleasure."

"You are not going to take care of me?"

"Certainly."

"But there's no need. Not the least in the world."

"From your point of view."

He was so alertly ready, had the door open and his umbrella spread, and stood outside waiting for her, Lois did not know how to get rid of him. She would surely have done it if she could. So she found herself going up the street with him by her side, and the umbrella warding off the wind and rain from her face. It was vexatious and amusing. From her face! who had faced Sharnpuashuh storms ever since she could remember. It is very odd to be taken care of on a sudden, when you are accustomed, and perfectly able, to take care of your self. It is also agreeable.

"You had better take my arm, Miss Lois," said her companion. "I could shield you better."

"Well," said Lois, half laughing, "since you are here, I may as well take the good of it."

And then Mr. Dillwyn had got things as he wanted them.

"I ventured to assume, a little while ago, Miss Lois, that duty was taking you out into this storm; but I confess my curiosity to know what duty could have the right to do it. If my curiosity is indiscreet, you can rebuke it."

"It is not indiscreet," said Lois. "I have a sort of a Bible class, in the upper part of the village, a quarter of a mile beyond the church."

"I understood it was something of that kind, or I should not have asked. But in such weather as this, surely they would not expect you?"

"Yes, they would. At any rate, I am bound to show that I expect them."

"*Do* you expect them, to come out to-day?"

"Not all of them," Lois allowed. "But if there would not be one, still
I must be there."

"Why?—if you will pardon me for asking."

"It is good they should know that I am regular and to be depended on. And, besides, they will be sure to measure the depth of my interest in the work by my desire to do it. And one can do so little in this world at one's best, that one is bound to do all one can."

"All one can," Mr. Dillwyn repeated.

"You cannot put it at a lower figure. I was struck with a word in one of Mrs. Barclay's books—'the Life and Correspondence of John Foster,'—'Power, to its very last particle, is duty.'"

"But that would be to make life a terrible responsibility."

"Say noble—not terrible!" said Lois.

"I confess it seems to me terrible also. I do not see how you can get rid of the element of terribleness."

"Yes,—if duty is neglected. Not if duty is done."

"Who does his duty, at that rate?"

"Some people *try*," said Lois.

"And that trying must make life a servitude."

"Service—not servitude!" exclaimed Lois again, with the same wholesome, hearty ring in her voice that her companion had noticed before.

"How do you draw the line between them?" he asked, with an inward smile; and yet Mr. Dillwyn was earnest enough too.

"There is more than a line between them," said Lois. "There is all the distance between freedom and slavery." And the words recurred to her, "I will walk at liberty, *for I seek thy precepts;*" but she judged they would not be familiar to her companion nor meet appreciation from him, so she did not speak them. "*Service*," she went on, "I think is one of the noblest words in the world; but it cannot be rendered servilely. It must be free, from the heart."

"You make nice distinctions. Service, I suppose you mean, of one's fellow creatures?"

"No," said Lois, "I do not mean that. Service must be given to God. It will work out upon one's fellow-creatures, of course."

"Nice distinctions again," said Mr. Dillwyn.

"But very real! And very essential."

"Is there not service—true service—that is given wholly to one's needy fellows of humanity? It seems to me I have heard of such."

"There is a good deal of such service," said Lois, "but it is not the true. It is partial, and arbitrary; it ebbs and flows, and chooses; and is found consorting with what is not service, but the contrary. True service, given to God, and rising from the love of him, goes where it is sent and does what it is bidden, and has too high a spring ever to fail. Real service gives all, and is ready for everything."

"How much do you mean, I wonder, by 'giving all'? Do you use the words soberly?"

"Quite soberly," said Lois, laughing.

"Giving all what?"

"All one's power,—according to Foster's judgment of it."

"Do you know what that would end in?"

"I think I do. How do you mean?"

"Do you know how much a man or a woman would give who gave *all* he had?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"What would be left for himself?"

Lois did not answer at once; but then she stopped short in her walk and stood still, in the midst of

rain and wind, confronting her companion. And her words were with an energy that she did not at all mean to give them.

"There would be left for him—all that the riches and love of God could do for his child."

Mr. Dillwyn gazed into the face that was turned towards him, flushed, fired, earnest, full of a grand consciousness, as of a most simple unconsciousness,—and for the moment did not think of replying. Then Lois recollected herself, smiled at herself, and went on.

"I am very foolish to talk so much," she said. "I do not know why I do. Somehow I think it is your fault, Mr. Dillwyn. I am not in the habit, I think, of holding forth so to people who ought to know better than myself."

"I am sure you are aware that I was speaking honestly, and that I do *not* know better?" he said.

"I suppose I thought so," Lois answered. "But that does not quite excuse me. Only—I was sorry for you, Mr. Dillwyn."

"Thank you. Now, may I go on? The conversation can hardly be so interesting to you as it is to me."

"I think I have said enough," said Lois, a little shyly.

"No, not enough, for I want to know more. The sentence you quoted from Foster, if it is true, is overwhelming. If it is true, it leaves all the world with terrible arrears of obligation."

"Yes," Lois answered half reluctantly,—"duty unfulfilled *is* terrible. But, not 'all the world,' Mr. Dillwyn."

"You are an exception."

"I did not mean myself. I do not suppose I do all I ought to do. I do try to do all I know. But there are a great many beside me, who do better."

"You agree then, that one is not bound by duties *unknown?*"

Lois hesitated. "You are making me talk again, as if I were wise," she said. "What should hinder any one from knowing his duty, Mr. Dillwyn."

"Suppose a case of pure ignorance."

"Then let ignorance study."

"Study what?"

"Mr. Dillwyn, you ought to ask somebody who can answer you better."

"I do not know any such somebody."

"Haven't you a Christian among all your friends?"

"I have not a friend in the world, of whom I could ask such a question with the least hope of having it answered."

"Where is your minister?"

"My minister? Clergyman, you mean? Miss Lois, I have been a wanderer over the earth for years. I have not any 'minister.'"

Lois was silent again. They had been walking fast, as well as talking fast, spite of wind and rain; the church was left behind some time ago, and the more comely and elegant part of the village settlement.

"We shall have to stop talking now," Lois said, "for we are near my place."

"Which is your place?"

"Do you see that old schoolhouse, a little further on? We have that for our meetings. Some of the boys put it in order and make the fire for me."

"You will let me come in?"

"You?" said Lois. "O no! Nobody is there but my class."

"You will let me be one of them to-day? Seriously,—I am going to wait to see you home; you will not let me wait in the rain?"

"I shall bid you go home," said Lois, laughing.

"I am not going to do that."

"Seriously, Mr. Dillwyn, I do not need the least care."

"Perhaps. But I must look at the matter from my point of view."

What a troublesome man! thought Lois; but then they were at the schoolhouse door, the wind and rain came with such a wild burst, that it seemed the one thing to do to get under shelter; and so Mr. Dillwyn went in with her, and how to turn him out Lois did not know.

It was a bare little place. The sanded floor gave little help or seeming of comfort; the wooden chairs and benches were old and hard; however, the small stove did give out warmth enough to make the place habitable, even to its furthest corners. Six people were already there. Lois gave a rapid glance at the situation. There was no time, and it was no company for a prolonged battle with the intruder.

"Mr. Dillwyn," she said softly, "will you take a seat by the stove, as far from us as you can; and make believe you have neither eyes nor ears? You must not be seen to have either—by any use you make of them. If you keep quite still, maybe they will forget you are here. You can keep up the fire for us."

She turned from him to greet her young friends, and Mr. Dillwyn obeyed orders. He hung up his wet hat and coat and sat down in the furthest corner; placing himself so, however, that neither eyes nor ears should be hindered in the exercise of their vocation, while his attitude might have suggested a fit of sleepiness, or a most indifferent meditation on things far distant, or possibly rest after severe exertion. Lois and her six scholars took their places at the other end of the room, which was too small to prevent every word they spoke from being distinctly heard by the one idle spectator. A spectator in truth Mr. Dillwyn desired to be, not merely an auditor; so, as he had been warned he must not be seen to look, he arranged himself in a manner to serve both purposes, of seeing and not seeing.

The hour was not long to this one spectator, although it extended itself to full an hour and a half. He gave as close attention as ever when a student in college he had given to lecture or lesson. And yet, though he did this, Mr. Dillwyn was not, at least not at the time, thinking much of the matter of the lesson. He was studying the lecturer. And the study grew intense. It was not flattering to perceive, as he soon did, that Lois had entirely forgotten his presence. He saw it by the free unconcern with which she did her work, as well as in the absorbed interest she gave to it. Not flattering, and it cast a little shadow upon him, but it was convenient for his present purpose of observation. So he watched,—and listened. He heard the sweet utterance and clear enunciation, first of all; he heard them, it is true, whenever she spoke; but now the utterance sounded sweeter than usual, as if there were a vibration from some fuller than usual mental harmony, and the voice was of a silvery melody. It contrasted with the other voices, which were more or less rough or grating or nasal, too high pitched or low, and rough-cadenced, as uncultured voices are apt to be. From the voices, Mr. Dillwyn's attention was drawn to what the voices said. And here he found, most unexpectedly, a great deal to interest him. Those rough voices spoke words of genuine intelligence; they expressed earnest interest; and they showed the speakers to be acute, thoughtful, not uninformed, quick to catch what was presented to them, often cunning to deal with it. Mr. Dillwyn was in danger of smiling, more than once. And Lois met them, if not with the skill of a practised logician, with the quick wit of a woman's intuition and a woman's loving sympathy, armed with knowledge, and penetration, and tact, and gentleness, and wisdom. It was something delightful to hear her soft accents answer them, with such hidden strength under their softness; it was charming to see her gentleness and patience, and eagerness too; for Lois was talking with all her heart. Mr. Dillwyn lost his wonder that her class came out in the rain; he only wished he could be one of them, and have the privilege too!

It was impossible but that with all this mental observation Mr. Dillwyn's eyes should also take notice of the fair exterior before them. They would not have been worthy to see it else. Lois had laid off her bonnet in the hot little room; it had left her hair a little loosened and disordered; yet not with what deserved to be called disorder; it was merely a softening and lifting of the rich, full masses, adding to the grace of the contour, not taking from it. Nothing could be plainer than the girl's dress; all the more the observer's eye noted the excellent lines of the figure and the natural charm of every movement and attitude. The charm that comes, and always must come, from inward refinement and delicacy, when combined with absence of consciousness; and which can only be helped, not produced, by any perfection of the physical structure. Then the tints of absolute health, and those low, musical, sensitive tones, flowing on in such sweet modulations—

What a woman was this! Mr. Dillwyn could see, too, the effect of Mrs. Barclay's work. He was sure he could. The whole giving of that Bible lesson betrayed the refinement of mental training and culture; even the management of the voice told of it. Here was not a fine machine, sound and good, yet in need of regulating, and working, and lubricating to get it in order; all that had been done, and the smooth running told how well. By degrees Mr. Dillwyn forgot the lesson, and the class, and the schoolhouse, and remembered but one thing any more; and that was Lois. His head and heart grew full of her. He had been in the grasp of a strong fancy before; a fancy strong enough to make him spend money, and spend time, for the possible attainment of its object; now it was fancy no longer. He had made up his mind, as a man makes it up once for all; not to try to win Lois, but to have her. She, he saw, was as yet ungrazed by any corresponding feeling towards him. That made no difference. Philip Dillwyn had one object in life from this time. He hardly saw or heard Lois's leave-takings with her class, but as she came up to him he rose.

"I have kept you too long, Mr. Dillwyn; but I could not help it; and really, you know, it was your own fault."

"Not a minute too long," he assured her; and he put on her cloak and handed her her bonnet with grave courtesy, and a manner which Lois would have said was absorbed, but for a certain element in it which even then struck her. They set out upon their homeward way, but the walk home was not as the walk out had been. The rain and the wind were unchanged; the wind, indeed, had an added touch of waywardness as they more nearly faced it, going this way; and the rain was driven against them with greater fury. Lois was fain to cling to her companion's arm, and the umbrella had to be handled with discretion. But the storm had been violent enough before, and it was no feature of that which made the difference. Neither was it the fact that both parties were now almost silent, whereas on the way out they had talked incessantly; though it was a fact. Perhaps Lois was tired with talking, seeing she had been doing nothing else for two hours, but what ailed Philip? And what gave the walk its new character? Lois did not know, though she felt it in every fibre of her being. And Mr. Dillwyn did not know, though the cause lay in him. He was taking care of Lois; he had been taking care of her before; but now, unconsciously, he was doing it as a man only does it for one woman in the world. Hardly more careful of her, yet with that indefinable something in the manner of it, which Lois felt even in the putting on of her cloak in the schoolhouse. It was something she had never touched before in her life, and did not now know what it meant; at least I should say her *reason* did not know; yet nature answered to nature infallibly, and by some hidden intuition of recognition the girl was subdued and dumb. This was nothing like Tom Caruthers, and anything she had received from him. Tom had been flattering, demonstrative, obsequious; there was no flattery here, and no demonstration, and nothing could be farther from obsequiousness. It was the delicate reverence which a man gives to only one woman of all the world; something that must be felt and cannot be feigned; the most subtle incense of worship one human spirit can render to another; which the one renders and the other receives, without either being able to tell how it is done. The more is the incense sweet, penetrating, powerful. Lois went home silently, through the rain and wind, and did not know why a certain mist of happiness seemed to encompass her. She was ignorant why the storm was so very beneficent in its action; did not know why the wind was so musical and the rain so refreshing; could not guess why she was sorry to get home. Yet the fact was before her as she stepped in.

"It has done you no harm!" said Mr. Dillwyn, smiling, as he met Lois's eyes, and saw her fresh, flushed cheeks. "Are you wet?"

"I think not at all."

"This must come off, however," he went on, proceeding to unfasten her cloak; "it has caught more rain-drops than you know." And Lois submitted, and meekly stood still and allowed the cloak, very wet on one side, to be taken off her.

"Where is this to go? there seems to be no place to hang it here."

"O, I will hang it up to dry in the kitchen, thank you," said Lois, offering to take it.

"*I* will hang it up to dry in the kitchen,—if you will show me the way. You cannot handle it."

Lois could have laughed, for did she not handle everything? and did wet or dry make any difference to her? However, she did not on this occasion feel like contesting the matter; but with unwonted docility preceded Mr. Dillwyn through the sitting-room, where were Mrs. Armadale and Madge, to the kitchen beyond, where Charity was just putting on the tea-kettle.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Mr. Dillwyn rejoined Mrs. Barclay in her parlour, but he was a less entertaining man this evening than he had been during the former part of his visit. Mrs. Barclay saw it, and smiled, and sighed. Even at the tea-table things were not like last evening. Philip entered into no discussions, made no special attempts to amuse anybody, attended to his duties in the unconscious way of one with whom they have become second nature, and talked only so much as politeness required. Mrs. Barclay looked at Lois, but could tell nothing from the grave face there. Always on Sunday evenings it had a very fair, sweet gravity.

The rest of the time, after tea, was spent in making music. It had become a usual Sunday evening entertainment. Mrs. Barclay played, and she and the two girls sang. It was all sacred music, of course, varied exceedingly, however, by the various tastes of the family. Old hymn and psaulm tunes were what Mrs. Armadale liked; and those generally came first; then the girls had more modern pieces, and with those Mrs. Barclay interwove an anthem or a chant now and then. Madge and Lois both had good voices and good natural taste and feeling; and Mrs. Barclay's instructions had been eagerly received. This evening Philip joined the choir; and Charity declared it was "better'n they could do in the Episcopal church."

"Do they have the best singing in the Episcopal church?" asked Philip absently.

"Well, they set up to; and you see they give more time to it. Our folks won't practise."

"I don't care how folk's voices sound, if their hearts *are* in it," said Mrs. Armadale.

"But you may notice, voices sound better if hearts are in it," said Dillwyn. "That made a large part of the beauty of our concert this evening."

"Was your'n in it?" asked Mrs. Armadale abruptly.

"My heart? In the words? I am afraid I must own it was not, in the way you mean, madam. If I must answer truth."

"Don't you always speak truth?"

"I believe I may say, that *is* my habit," Philip answered, smiling.

"Then, do you think you ought to sing sech words, if you don't mean 'em?"

The question looks abrupt, on paper. It did not sound equally so. Something of earnest wistfulness there was in the old lady's look and manner, a touch of solemnity in her voice, which made the gentleman forgive her on the spot. He sat down beside her.

"Would you bid me not join in singing such words, then?"

"It's not my place to bid or forbid. But you can judge for yourself. Do you set much valley on professions that mean nothing?"

"I made no professions."

"Ain't it professin', when you say what the hymns say?"

"If you will forgive me—I did not say it," responded Philip.

"Ain't singin' sayin'?"

"They are generally looked upon as essentially different. People are never held responsible for the things they sing,—out of church," added Philip, smiling. "Is it otherwise with church singing?"

"What's church singin' good for, then?"

"I thought it was to put the minds of the worshippers in a right state;—to sober and harmonize them."

"I thought it was to tell the Lord how we felt," said the old lady.

"That is a new view of it, certainly."

"*I* thought the words was to tell one how we had ought to feel!" said Charity. "There wouldn't more'n one in a dozen sing, mother, if you had *your* way; and then we should have nice music!"

"I think it would be nice music," said the old lady, with a kind of sober tremble in her voice, which

somehow touched Philip. The ring of truth was there, at any rate.

"Could the world be managed," he said, with very gentle deference; "could the world be managed on such principles of truth and purity? Must we not take people as we find them?"

"Those are the Lord's principles," said Mrs. Armadale.

"Yes, but you know how the world is. Must we not, a little, as I said, take people as we find them?"

"The Lord won't do that," said the old lady. "He will either make them better, or he will cast them away."

"But we? We must deal with things as they are."

"How are you goin' to deal with 'em?"

"In charity and kindness; having patience with what is wrong, and believing that the good God will have more patience yet."

"You had better believe what he tells you," the old lady answered, somewhat sternly.

"But grandmother," Lois put in here, "he *does* have patience."

"With whom, child?"

Lois did not answer; she only quoted softly the words—

"'Plenteous in mercy, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth.'"

"Ay, child; but you know what happens to the houses built on the sand."

The party broke up here, Mrs. Barclay bidding good-night and leaving the dining-room, whither they had all gone to eat apples. As Philip parted from Lois he remarked,—

"I did not understand the allusion in Mrs. Armadale's last words."

Lois's look fascinated him. It was just a moment's look, pausing before turning away; swift with eagerness and intent with some hidden feeling which he hardly comprehended. She only said,—

"Look in the end of the seventh chapter of Matthew."

"Well," said Mrs. Barclay, when the door was closed, "what do you think of our progress?"

"Progress?" repeated Philip vacantly. "I beg your pardon!"—

"In music, man!" said Mrs. Barclay, laughing.

"O!—Admirable. Have you a Bible here?"

"A Bible?" Mrs. Barclay echoed. "Yes—there is a Bible in every room, I believe. Yonder, on that table. Why? what do you want of one now?"

"I have had a sermon preached to me, and I want to find the text."

Mrs. Barclay asked no further, but she watched him, as with the book in his hand he sat down before the fire and studied the open page. Studied with grave thoughtfulness, drawing his brows a little, and pondering with eyes fixed on the words for some length of time. Then he bade her good-night with a smile, and went away.

He went away in good earnest next day; but as a subject of conversation in the village his visit lasted a good while. That same evening Mrs. Marx came to make a call, just before supper.

"How much pork are you goin' to want this year, mother?" she began, with the business of one who had been stirring her energies with a walk in a cool wind.

"I suppose, about as usual," said Mrs. Armadale.

"I forget how much that is; I can't keep it in my head from one year to another. Besides, I didn't know but you'd want an extra quantity, if your family was goin' to be larger."

"It is not going to be larger, as I know."

"If my pork ain't, I shall come short home. It beats me! I've fed 'em just the same as usual,—and the

corn's every bit as good as usual, never better; good big fat yellow ears, that had ought to make a porker's heart dance for joy; and I should think they were sufferin' from continual lowness o' spirits, to judge by the way they *don't* get fat. They're growing real long-legged and slab-sided—just the way I hate to see pigs look. I don' know what's the matter with 'em."

"Where do you keep 'em?"

"Under the barn—just where they always be. Well, you've had a visitor?"

"Mrs. Barclay has."

"I understood 'twas her company; but you saw him?"

"We saw him as much as she did," put in Charity.

"What's he like?"

Nobody answered.

"Is he one of your high-flyers?"

"I don't know what you call high-flyers, aunt Anne," said Madge. "He was a gentleman."

"What do you mean by *that?* I saw some 'gentlemen' last summer at Appledore—and I don't want to see no more. Was he that kind?"

"I wasn't there," said Madge, "and can't tell. I should have no objection to see a good many of them, if he is."

"I heard he went to Sunday School with Lois, through the rain."

"How did you know?" said Lois.

"Why shouldn't I know?"

"I thought nobody was out but me."

"Do you think folks will see an umbrella walkin' up street in the rain, and not look to see if there's somebody under it?"

"*I* shouldn't," said Lois. "When should an umbrella be out walking, but in the rain?"

"Well, go along. What sort of a man is he? and what brings him to Shampuashuh?"

"He came to see Mrs. Barclay," said Madge.

"He's a sort of man you are willin' to take trouble for," said Charity. "Real nice, and considerate; and to hear him talk, it is as good as a book; and he's awfully polite. You should have seen him marching in here with Lois's wet cloak, out to the kitchen with it, and hangin' it up. So to pay, I turned round and hung up his'n. One good turn deserves another, I told him. But at first, I declare, I thought I couldn't keep from laughin'."

Mrs. Marx laughed a little here. "I know the sort," she said. "Wears kid gloves always and a little line of hair over his upper lip, and is lazy like. I would lose all my patience to have one o' them round for long, smokin' a cigar every other thing, and poisonin' all the air for half a mile."

"I think he *is* sort o' lazy," said Charity.

"He don't smoke," said Lois.

"Yes he does," said Madge. "I found an end of cigar just down by the front steps, when I was sweeping."

"I don't think he's a lazy man, either," said Lois. "That slow, easy way does not mean laziness."

"What does it mean?" inquired Mrs. Marx sharply.

"It is nothing to us what it means," said Mrs. Armadale, speaking for the first time. "We have no concern with this man. He came to see Mrs. Barclay, his friend, and I suppose he'll never come again."

"Why shouldn't he come again, mother?" said Charity. "If she's his friend, he might want to see her

more than once, seems to me. And what's more, he *is* coming again. I heard him askin' her if he might; and then Mrs. Barclay asked me if it would be convenient, and I said it would, of course. He said he would be comin' back from Boston in a few weeks, and he would like to stop again as he went by. And do you know *I* think she coloured. It was only a little, but she ain't a woman to blush much; and *I* believe she knows why he wants to come, as well as he does."

"Nonsense, Charity!" said Madge incredulously.

"Then half the world are busy with nonsense, that's all I have to say; and I'm glad for my part I've somethin' better to do."

"Do you say he's comin' again?" inquired Mrs. Armadale.

"He says so, mother."

"What for?"

"Why, to visit his friend Mrs. Barclay, of course."

"She is our friend," said the old lady; "and her friends must be entertained; but he is not *our* friend, children. We ain't of his kind, and he ain't of our'n."

"What's the matter? Ain't he good?" asked Mrs. Marx.

"He's *very* good!" said Madge.

"Not in grandmother's way," said Lois softly.

"Mother," said Mrs. Marx, "you can't have everybody cut out on your pattern."

Mrs. Armadale made no answer.

"And there ain't enough o' your pattern to keep one from bein' lonesome, if we're to have nothin' to do with the rest."

"Better so," said the old lady. "I don't want no company for my chil'en that won't help 'em on the road to heaven. They'll have company enough when they get there."

"And how are you goin' to be the salt o' the earth, then, if you won't touch nothin'?"

"How, if the salt loses its saltness, daughter?"

"Well, mother, it always puzzles me, that there's so much to be said on both sides of things! I'll go home and think about it. Then he ain't one o' your Appledore friends, Lois?"

"Not one of my friends at all, aunt Anne."

So the talk ended. There was a little private extension of it that evening, when Lois and Madge went up to bed.

"It's a pity grandma is so sharp about things," the latter remarked to her sister.

"Things?" said Lois. "What things?"

"Well—people. Don't you like that Mr. Dillwyn?"

"Yes."

"So do I. And she don't want us to have anything to do with him."

"But she is right," said Lois. "He is not a Christian."

"But one can't live only with Christians in this world. And, Lois, I'll tell you what I think; he is a great deal pleasanter than a good many Christians I know."

"He is good company," said Lois. "He has seen a great deal and read a great deal, and he knows how to talk. That makes him pleasant."

"Well, he's a great deal more improving to be with than anybody I know in Shampuashuh."

"In one way."

"Why shouldn't one have the pleasure, then, and the good, if he isn't a

Christian?"

"The pleasanter he is, I suppose the more danger, grandmother would think."

"Danger of what?"

"You know, Madge, it is not my say-so, nor even grandmother's. You know, Christians are not of the world."

"But they must *see* the world."

"If we were to see much of that sort of person, we might get to wishing to see them always."

"By 'that sort of person' I suppose you mean Mr. Dillwyn? Well, I have got so far as that already. I wish I could see such people always."

"I am sorry."

"Why? You ought to be glad at my good taste."

"I am sorry, because you are wishing for what you cannot have."

"How do you know that? You cannot tell what may happen."

"Madge, a man like Mr. Dillwyn would never think of a girl like you or me."

"I am not wanting him to think of me," said Madge rather hotly. "But, Lois, if you come to that, I think I—and you—are fit for anybody."

"Yes," said Lois quietly. "I think so too. But *they* do not take the same view. And if they did, Madge, we could not think of them."

"Why not?—*if* they did. I do not hold quite such extreme rules as you and grandmother do."

"And the Bible."—

"Other people do not think the Bible is so strict."

"You know what the words are, Madge."

"I don't know what the words mean."

Lois was brushing out the thick masses of her beautiful hair, which floated about over her in waves of golden brown; and Madge had been thinking, privately, that if anybody could have just that view of Lois, his scruples—if he had any—would certainly give way. Now, at her sister's last words, however, Lois laid down her brush, and, coming up, laid hold of Madge by the shoulders and gave her a gentle shaking. It ended in something of a romp, but Lois declared Madge should never say such a thing again.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TWO SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Lois was inclined now to think it might be quite as well if something hindered Mr. Dillwyn's second visit. She did not wonder at Madge's evident fascination; she had felt the same herself long ago, and in connection with other people; the charm of good breeding and gracious manners, and the habit of the world, even apart from knowledge and cultivation and the art of conversation. Yes, Mr. Dillwyn was a good specimen of this sort of attraction; and for a moment Lois's imagination recalled that day's two

walks in the rain; then she shook off the impression. Two poor Shampuashuh girls were not likely to have much to do with that sort of society, and—it was best they should not. It would be just as well if Mr. Dillwyn was hindered from coming again.

But he came. A month had passed; it was the beginning of December when he knocked next at the door, and cold and grey and cloudy and windy as it is December's character in certain moods to be. The reception he got was hearty in proportion; fires were larger, the table even more hospitably spread; Mrs. Barclay even more cordial, and the family atmosphere not less genial. Nevertheless the visit, for Mr. Dillwyn's special ends, was hardly satisfactory. He could get no private speech with Lois. She was always "busy;" and at meal-times it was obviously impossible, and would have been impolitic, to pay any particular attention to her. Philip did not attempt it. He talked rather to every one else; made himself delightful company; but groaned in secret.

"Cannot you make some excuse for getting her in here?" he asked Mrs.
Barclay at evening.

"Not without her sister."

"With her sister, then."

"They are very busy just now preparing some thing they call 'apple butter.' It's unlucky, Philip. I am very sorry. I always told you your way looked to me intricate."

Fortune favoured him, however, in an unexpected way. After a day passed in much inward impatience, for he had not got a word with Lois, and he had no excuse for prolonging his stay beyond the next day, as they sat at supper, the door opened, and in came two ladies. Mr. Dillwyn was formally presented to one of them as to "my aunt, Mrs. Marx;" the other was named as "Mrs. Seelye." The latter was a neat, brisk little body, with a capable air and a mien of business; all whose words came out as if they had been nicely picked and squared, and sorted and packed, and served in order.

"Sorry to interrupt, Mrs. Armadale" she began, in a chirruping little voice. Indeed, her whole air was that of a notable little hen looking after her chickens. Charity assured her it was no interruption.

"Mrs. Seelye and I had our tea hours ago," said Mrs. Marx. "I had muffins for her, and we ate all we could then. We don't want no more now. We're on business."

"Yes," said Mrs. Seelye. "Mrs. Marx and I, we've got to see everybody, pretty much; and there ain't much time to do it in; so you see we can't choose, and we just come here to see what you'll do for us."

"What do you want us to do for you, Mrs. Seelye?" Lois asked.

"Well, I don't know; only all you can. We want your counsel, and then your help. Mr. Seelye he said, Go to the Lothrop girls first. I didn't come *first*, 'cause there was somebody else on my way here; but this is our fourth call, ain't it, Mrs. Marx?"

"I thought I'd never get you away from No. 3," was the answer.

"They were very much interested,—and I wanted to make them all understand—it was important that they should all understand—"

"And there are different ways of understanin'," added Mrs. Marx; "and there are a good many of 'em —the Hicks's, I mean; and so, when we thought we'd got it all right with one, we found somebody else was in a fog; and then *he* had to be fetched out."

"But we are all in a fog," said Madge, laughing. "What are you coming to? and what are we to understand?"

"We have a little plan," said Mrs. Seelye.

"It'll be a big one, before we get through with it," added her coadjutor. "Nobody'll be frightened here if you call it a big one to start with, Mrs. Seelye. I like to look things in the face."

"So do we," said Mrs. Armadale, with a kind of grim humour,—"if you will give us a chance."

"Well, it's about the children," said Mrs. Seelye.

"Christmas—" added Mrs. Marx.

"Be quiet, Anne," said her mother. "Go on, Mrs. Seelye. Whose children?"

"I might say, they are all Mr. Seelye's children," said the little lady, laughing; "and so they are in a way, as they are all belonging to his church. He feels he is responsible for the care of 'em, and he *don't* want to lose 'em. And that's what it's all about, and how the plan came up."

"How's he goin' to lose 'em?" Mrs. Armadale asked, beginning now to knit again.

"Well, you see the other church is makin' great efforts; and they're goin' to have a tree."

"What sort of a tree? and what do they want a tree for?"

"Why, a fir tree!"—and, "Why, a Christmas tree!" cried the two ladies who advocated the "plan," both in a breath.

"Mother don't know about that," Mrs. Marx went on. "It's a new fashion, mother,—come up since your day. They have a green tree, planted in a tub, and hung with all sorts of things to make it look pretty; little candles especially; and at night they light it up; and the children are tickled to death with it."

"In-doors?"

"Why, of course in-doors. Couldn't be out-of-doors, in the snow."

"I didn't know," said the old lady; "I don't understand the new fashions. I should think they would burn up the house, if it's in-doors."

"O no, no danger," explained Mrs. Seelye. "They make them wonderfully pretty, with the branches all hung full with glass balls, and candles, and ribbands, and gilt toys, and papers of sugar plums—cornucopia, you know; and dolls, and tops, and jacks, and trumpets, and whips, and everything you can think of,—till it is as full as it can be, and the branches hang down with the weight; and it looks like a fairy tree; and then the heavy presents lie at the foot round about and cover the tub."

"I should think the children would be delighted," said Madge.

"I don't believe it's as much fun as Santa Claus and the stocking," said Lois.

"No, nor I," said Mrs. Barclay.

"But we have nothing to do with the children's stockings," said Mrs. Seelye. "They may hang up as many as they like. That's at home. This is in the church."

"O, in the church! I thought you said it was in the house—in people's houses," said Charity.

"So it is; but *this* tree is to be in the church."

"What tree?"

"La! how stupid you are, Charity," exclaimed her aunt. "Didn't Mrs. Seelye tell you?—the tree the other church are gettin' up."

"Oh—" said Charity. "Well, you can't hinder 'em, as I see."

"Don't want to hinder 'em! What should we hinder 'em for? But we don't want 'em to get all our chil'en away; that's what we're lookin' at."

"Do you think they'd go?"

"Mr. Seelye's afraid it'll thin off the school dreadful," said Mr. Seelye's helpmate.

"They're safe to go," added Mrs. Marx. "Ask children to step in and see fairyland, and why shouldn't they go? I'd go if I was they. All the rest of the year it ain't fairyland in Shampuashuh. I'd go fast enough."

"Then I don't see what you are goin' to do about it," said Charity, "but to sit down and count your chickens that are left."

"That's what we came to tell you," said the minister's wife.

"Well, tell," said Charity. "You haven't told yet, only what the other church is going to do."

"Well, we thought the only way was for us to do somethin' too."

"Only not another tree," said Lois. "Not that, for pity's sake."

"Why not?" asked the little minister's wife, with an air of being somewhat taken aback. "Why haven't we as good a right to have a tree as they have?"

"*Right*, if you like," said Lois; "but right isn't all."

"Go on, and let's hear your wisdom, Lois," said her aunt. "I s'pose you'll say first, we can't do it."

"We can do it, perhaps," said Lois; "but, aunt Anne, it would make bad feeling."

"That's not our look-out," rejoined Mrs. Marx. "We haven't any bad feeling."

"No, not in the least," added Mrs. Seelye. "*We* only want to give our children as good a time as the others have. That's right."

"'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory,'" Mrs. Armadale's voice was here heard to say.

"Yes, I know, mother, you have old-fashioned ideas," said Mrs. Marx; "but the world ain't as it used to be when you was a girl. Now everybody's puttin' steam on; and churches and Sunday schools as well as all the rest. We have organs, and choirs, and concerts, and celebrations, and fairs, and festivals; and if we don't go with the crowd, they'll leave us behind, you see."

"I don't believe in it all!" said Mrs. Armadale.

"Well, mother, we've got to take the world as we find it. Now the children all through the village are all agog with the story of what the yellow church is goin' to do; and if the white church don't do somethin', they'll all run t'other way—that you may depend on. Children are children."

"I sometimes think the grown folks are children," said the old lady.

"Well, we ought to be children," said Mrs. Seelye; "I am sure we all know that. But Mr. Seelye thought this was the only thing we could do."

"There comes in the second difficulty, Mrs. Seelye," said Lois. "We cannot do it."

"I don't see why we cannot. We've as good a place for it, quite."

"I mean, we cannot do it satisfactorily. It will not be the same thing.
We cannot raise the money. Don't it take a good deal?"

"Well, it takes considerable. But I think, if we all try, we can scare it up somehow."

Lois shook her head. "The other church is richer than we are," she said.

"That's a fact," said Charity.

Mrs. Seelye hesitated. "I don't know," she said,—"they have one or two rich men. Mr. Georges—"

"O, and Mr. Flare," cried Madge, "and Buck, and Setterdown; and the
Ropers and the Magnuses."

"Yes," said Mrs. Seelye; "but we have more people, and there's none of 'em to call poor. If we get 'em interested—and those we have spoken to are very much taken with the plan—very much; I think it would be a great disappointment now if we were to stop; and the children have got talking about it. I think we can do it; and it would be a very good thing for the whole church, to get 'em interested."

"You can always get people interested in play," said Mrs. Armadale.
"What you want, is to get 'em interested in work."

"There'll be a good deal of work about this, before it's over," said Mrs. Seelye, with a pleased chuckle. "And I think, when they get their pride up, the money will be coming."

Mrs. Marx made a grimace, but said nothing.

"'When pride cometh, than cometh shame,'" said Mrs. Armadale quietly.

"O yes, some sorts of pride," said the little minister's wife briskly; "but I mean a proper sort. We don't want to let our church go down, and we don't want to have our Sunday school thinned out; and I can tell you, where the children go, there the fathers and mothers will be going, next thing."

"What do you propose to do?" said Lois. "We have not fairly heard yet."

"Well, we thought we'd have some sort of celebration, and give the school a jolly time somehow. We'd dress up the church handsomely with evergreens; and have it well lighted; and then, we would have a Christmas tree if we could. Or, if we couldn't, then we'd have a real good hot supper, and give the children presents. But I'm afraid, if we don't have a tree, they'll all run off to the other church; and I think they're going already, so as to get asked. Mr. Seelye said the attendance was real thin last Sabbath."

There followed an animated discussion of the whole subject, with every point brought up again, and again and again. The talkers were, for the most part, Charity and Madge, with the two ladies who had come in; Mrs. Armadale rarely throwing in a word, which always seemed to have a disturbing power; and things were taken up and gone over anew to get rid of the disturbance. Lois sat silent and played with her spoon. Mrs. Barclay and Philip listened with grave amusement.

"Well, I can't sit here all night," said Charity at last, rising from behind her tea-board. "Madge and Lois,—just jump up and put away the things, won't you; and hand me up the knives and plates. Don't trouble yourself, Mrs. Barclay. If other folks in the village are as busy as I am, you'll come short home for your Christmas work, Mrs. Seelye."

"It's the busy people always that help," said the little lady propitiatingly.

"That's a fact; but I don't see no end o' this to take hold of. You hain't got the money; and if you had it, you don't know what you want; and if you did know, it ain't in Shampuashuh; and I don't see who is to go to New York or New Haven, shopping for you. And if you had it, who knows how to fix a Christmas tree? Not a soul in our church."

Mrs. Barclay and her guest withdrew at this point of the discussion. But later, when the visitors were gone, she opened the door of her room, and said,

"Madge and Lois, can you come in here for a few minutes? It is business."

The two girls came in, Madge a little eagerly; Lois, Mrs. Barclay fancied, with a manner of some reserve.

"Mr. Dillwyn has something to suggest," she began, "about this plan we have heard talked over; that is, if you care about it's being carried into execution."

"I care, of course," said Madge. "If it is to be done, I think it will be great fun."

"If it is to be done," Lois repeated. "Grandmother does not approve of it; and I always think, what she does not like, I must not like."

"Always?" asked Mr. Dillwyn.

"I try to have it always. Grandmother thinks that the way—the best way—to keep a Sunday school together, is to make the lessons interesting."

"I am sure she is right!" said Mr. Dillwyn.

"But to the point," said Mrs. Barclay. "Lois, they will do this thing, I can see. The question now is, do you care whether it is done ill or well?"

"Certainly! If it is done, I should wish it to be as well done as possible. Failure is more than failure."

"How about ways and means?"

"Money? O, if the people all set their hearts on it, they could do it well enough. But they are slow to take hold of anything out of the common run they are accustomed to. The wheels go in ruts at Shampuashuh."

"Shampuashuh is not the only place," said Philip. "Then will you let an outsider help?"

"Help? We would be very glad of help," said Madge; but Lois remarked,
"I think the church ought to do it themselves, if they want to do it."

"Well, hear my plan," said Mr. Dillwyn. "I think you objected to two rival trees?"

"I object to rival anythings," said Lois; "in church matters especially."

"Then I propose that no tree be set up, but instead, that you let Santa
Claus come in with his sledge."

"Santa Claus!" cried Lois. "Who would be Santa Claus?"

"An old man in a white mantle, his head and beard covered with snow and fringed with icicles; his dress of fur; his sledge a large one, and well heaped up with things to delight the children. What do you think?"

Madge's colour rose, and Lois's eye took a sparkle; both were silent.
Then Madge spoke.

"I don't see how that plan could be carried out, any more than the other. It is a great deal *better*, it is magnificent; but it is a great deal too magnificent for Shampuashuh."

"Why so?"

"Nobody here knows how to do it."

"I know how."

"You! O but,—that would be too much—"

"All you have to do is to get the other things ready, and let it be known that at the proper time Santa Claus will appear, with a well-furnished sled. Sharp on time."

"Well-furnished!—but there again—I don't believe we can raise money enough for that."

"How much money?" asked Dillwyn, with an amused smile.

"O, I can't tell—I suppose a hundred dollars at least."

"I have as much as that lying useless—it may just as well do some good. It never was heard that anybody but Santa Claus furnished his own sled. If you will allow me, I will take care of that."

"How splendid!" cried Madge. "But it is too much; it wouldn't be right for us to let you do all that for a church that is nothing to you."

"On the contrary, you ought to encourage me in my first endeavours to make myself of some use in the world. Miss Madge, I have never, so far, done a bit of good in my life."

"O, Mr. Dillwyn! I cannot believe that. People do not grow useful so all of a sudden, without practice," said Madge, hitting a great general truth.

"It is a fact, however," said he, half lightly, and yet evidently meaning what he said. "I have lived thirty-two years in the world—nearly thirty-three—without making my life of the least use to anybody so far as I know. Do you wonder that I seize a chance?"

Lois's eyes were suddenly lifted, and then as suddenly lowered; she did not speak.

"I can read that," he said laughingly, for his eyes had caught the glance. "You mean, if I am so eager for chances, I might make them! Miss Lois, I do not know how."

"Come, Philip," said Mrs. Barclay, "you are making your character unnecessarily bad. I know you better than that. Think what you have done for me."

"I beg your pardon," said he. "Think what you have done for me. That score cannot be reckoned to my favour. Have no scruples, Miss Madge, about employing me. Though I believe Miss Lois thinks the good of this undertaking a doubtful one. How many children does your school number?"

"All together,—and they would be sure for once to be all together!—there are a hundred and fifty."

"Have you the names?"

"O, certainly."

"And ages—proximately?"

"Yes, that too."

"And you know something, I suppose, about many of them; something about their families and conditions?"

"About *all* of them?" said Madge. "Yes, indeed we do."

"Till Mrs. Barclay came, you must understand," put in Lois here, "we had nothing, or not much, to study besides Shampuashuh; so we studied that."

"And since Mrs. Barclay came?—" asked Philip.

"O, Mrs. Barclay has been opening one door after another of knowledge, and we have been peeping in."

"And what special door offers most attraction to your view, of them all?"

"I don't know. I think, perhaps, for me, geology and mineralogy; but almost every one helps in the study of the Bible."

"O, do they!" said Dillwyn somewhat dryly.

"I like music best," said Madge.

"But that is not a door into knowledge," objected Lois.

"I meant, of all the doors Mrs. Barclay has opened to us."

"Mrs. Barclay is a favoured person."

"It is we that are favoured," said Madge. "Our life is a different thing since she came. We hope she will never go away." Then Madge coloured, with some sudden thought, and she went back to the former subject. "Why do you ask about the children's ages and all that, Mr. Dillwyn?"

"I was thinking— When a thing is to be done, I like to do it well. It occurred to me, that as Santa Claus must have something on his sledge for each one, it might be good, if possible, to secure some adaptation or fitness in the gift. Those who would like books should have books, and the right books; and playthings had better not go astray, if we can help it; and perhaps the poorer children would be better for articles of clothing.—I am only throwing out hints."

"Capital hints!" said Lois. "You mean, if we can tell what would be good for each one—I think we can, pretty nearly. But there are few *poor* people in Shampuashuh, Mr. Dillwyn."

"Shampuashuh is a happy place."

"This plan will give you an immensity of work, Mr. Dillwyn."

"What then?"

"I have scruples. It is not fair to let you do it. What is Shampuashuh to you?"

"It might be difficult to make that computation," said Mr. Dillwyn dryly. "Have no scruples, Miss Lois. As I told you, I have nothing better to do with myself. If you can make me useful, it will be a rare chance."

"But there are plenty of other things to do, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois.

He gave her only a glance and smile by way of answer, and plunged immediately into the business question with Madge. Lois sat by, silent and wondering, till all was settled that could be settled that evening, and she and Madge went back to the other room.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN OYSTER SUPPER.

"Hurrah!" cried Madge, but softly—"Now it will go! Mother! what do you think? Guess, Charity! Mr. Dillwyn is going to take our Sunday school celebration on himself; he's going to do it; and we're to have, not a stupid Christmas tree, but Santa Claus and his sled; and he'll be Santa Claus! Won't it be fun?"

"Who'll be Santa Claus?" said Charity, looking stupefied.

"Mr. Dillwyn. In fact, he'll be Santa Claus and his sled too; he'll do the whole thing. All we have got to

do is to dress the children and ourselves, and light up the church."

"Will the committees like that?"

"Like it? Of course they will! Like it, indeed! Don't you see it will save them all expense? They'll have nothing to do but dress up and light up."

"And warm up too, I hope. What makes Mr. Dillwyn do all that? I don't just make out."

"I'll tell you," said Madge, shaking her finger at the others impressively. "He's after Mrs. Barclay. So this gives him a chance to come here again, don't you see?"

"After Mrs. Barclay?" repeated Charity. "I want to know!"

"I don't believe it," said Lois. "She is too old for him."

"She's not old," said Madge. "And he is no chicken, my dear. You'll see. It's she he's after. He's coming next time as Santa Claus, that's all. And we have got to make out a list of things—things for presents,—for every individual girl and boy in the Sunday school; there's a job for you. Santa Claus will want a big sled."

"*Who* is going to do *what?*" inquired Mrs. Armadale here. "I don't understand, you speak so fast, children."

"Mother, instead of a Christmas tree, we are going to have Santa Claus and his sled; and the sled is to be heaped full of presents for all the children; and Mr. Dillwyn is going to do it, and get the presents, and be Santa Claus himself."

"How, *be* Santa Claus?"

"Why, he will dress up like Santa Claus, and come in with his sled."

"Where?"

"In the church, grandmother; there is no other place. The other church have their Sunday-school room you know; but we have none."

"They are going to have their tree in the church, though," said Charity; "they reckon the Sunday-school room won't be big enough to hold all the folks."

"Are they going to turn the church into a playhouse?" Mrs. Armadale asked.

"It's for the sake of the church and the school, you know, mother. Santa Claus will come in with his sled and give his presents,—that is all. At least, that is all the play there will be."

"What else will there be?"

"O, there'll be singing, grandma," said Madge; "hymns and carols and such things, that the children will sing; and speeches and prayers, I suppose."

"The church used to be God's house, in my day," said the old lady, with a concerned face, looking up from her knitting, while her fingers went on with their work as busily as ever.

"They don't mean it for anything else, grandmother," said Madge. "It's all for the sake of the school."

"Maybe they think so," the old lady answered.

"What else, mother? what else should it be?"

But this she did not answer.

"What's Mr. Dillwyn got to do with it?" she asked presently.

"He's going to help," said Madge. "It's nothing but kindness. He supposes it is something good to do, and he says he'd like to be useful."

"He hain't no idea how," said Mrs. Armadale, "Poor creatur'! You can tell him, it ain't the Lord's work he's doin'."

"But we cannot tell him that, mother," said Lois.

"If the people want to have this celebration,—and they will,—hadn't we better make it a good one? Is

it really a bad thing?"

"The devil's ways never help no one to heaven, child, not if they go singin' hymns all the way."

"But, mother!" cried Madge. "Mr. Dillwyn ain't a Christian, maybe, but he ain't as bad as that."

"I didn't mean Mr. Dillwyn, dear, nor no one else. I meant theatre work."

"*Santa Claus*, mother?"

"It's actin', ain't it?"

The girls looked at each other.

"There's very little of anything like acting about it," Lois said.

"'Make straight paths for your feet'!" said Mrs. Armadale, rising to go to bed. "'Make straight paths for your feet,' children. Straight ways is the shortest too. If the chil'en that don't love their teachers wants to go to the yellow church, let 'em go. I'd rather have the Lord in a little school, than Santa Claus in a big one."

She was leaving the room, but the girls stayed her and begged to know what they should do in the matter of the lists they were engaged to prepare for Mr. Dillwyn.

"You must do what you think best," she said. "Only don't be mixed up with it all any more than you can help, Lois."

Why did the name of one child come to her lips and not the other? Did the old lady's affection, or natural acuteness, discern that Mr. Dillwyn was *not* drawn to Shampuashuh by any particular admiration of his friend Mrs. Barclay? Had she some of that preternatural intuition, plain old country woman though she was, which makes a woman see the invisible and hear the inaudible? which serves as one of the natural means of defence granted to the weaker creatures. I do not know; I do not think she knew; however, the warning was given, and not on that occasion alone. And as Lois heeded all her grandmother's admonitions, although in this case without the most remote perception of this possible ground to them, it followed that Mr. Dillwyn gained less by his motion than he had hoped and anticipated.

The scheme went forward, hailed by the whole community belonging to the white church, with the single exception of Mrs. Armadale. It went forward and was brought to a successful termination. I might say, a triumphant termination; only the triumph was not for Mr. Dillwyn, or not in the line where he wanted it. He did his part admirably. A better Santa Claus was never seen, nor a better filled sled. And genial pleasantness, and wise management, and cool generalship, and fun and kindness, were never better represented. So it was all through the consultations and arrangements that preceded the festival, as well as on the grand occasion itself; and Shampuashuh will long remember the time with wonder and exultation; but it was Madge who was Mr. Dillwyn's coadjutor and fellow-counsellor. It was Madge and Mrs. Barclay who helped him in all the work of preparing and ticketing the parcels for the sled; as well as in the prior deliberations as to what the parcels should be. Madge seemed to be the one at hand always to answer a question. Madge went with him to the church; and in general, Lois, though sympathizing and curious, and interested and amused, was very much out of the play. Not so entirely as to make the fact striking; only enough to leave Mr. Dillwyn disappointed and tantalized.

I am not going into a description of the festival and the show. The children sang; the minister made a speech to them, not ten consecutive words of which were listened to by three-quarters of the people. The church was filled with men, women, and children; the walls were hung with festoons and wreaths, and emblazoned with mottoes; the anthems and carols followed each other till the last thread of patience in the waiting crowd gave way. And at last came what they were waiting for—Santa Claus, all fur robes and snow and icicles, dragging after him a sledge that looked like a small mountain with the heap of articles piled and packed upon it. And then followed a very busy and delightful hour and a half, during which the business was—the distribution of pleasure. It was such warm work for Santa Claus, that at the time he had no leisure for thinking. Naturally, the thinking came afterwards.

He and Mrs. Barclay sat by her fire, resting, after coming home from the church. Dillwyn was very silent and meditative.

"You must be glad it is done, Philip," said his friend, watching him, and wishing to get at his thoughts.

"I have no particular reason to be glad."

"You have done a good thing."

"I am not sure if it is a good thing. Mrs. Armadale does not think so."

"Mrs. Armadale has rather narrow notions."

"I don't know. I should be glad to be sure she is not right. It's discouraging," he added, with half a smile;—"for the first time in my life I set myself to work; and now am not at all certain that I might not just as well have been idle."

"Work is a good thing in itself," said Mrs. Barclay, smiling.

"Pardon me!—work for an end. Work without an end—or with the end not attained—it is no better than a squirrel in a wheel."

"You have given a great deal of pleasure."

"To the children! For ought I know, they might have been just as well without it. There will be a reaction to-morrow, very likely; and then they will wish they had gone to see the Christmas tree at the other church."

"But they were kept at their own church."

"How do I know that is any good? Perhaps the teaching at the other school is the best."

"You are tired," said Mrs. Barclay sympathizingly.

"Not that. I have done nothing to tire me; but it strikes me it is very difficult to see one's ends in doing good; much more difficult than to see the way to the ends."

"You have partly missed your end, haven't you?" said Mrs. Barclay softly.

He moved a little restlessly in his chair; then got up and began to walk about the room; then came and sat down again.

"What are you going to do next?" she asked in the same way.

"Suppose you invite them—the two girls—or her alone—to make you a visit in New York?"

"Where?"

"At any hotel you prefer; say, the Windsor."

"O Philip, Philip!"—

"What?—You could have pleasant rooms, and be quite private and comfortable; as much as if you were in your own house."

"And what should we cost you?"

"You are not thinking of *that?*" said he. "I will get you a house, if you like it better; but then you would have the trouble of a staff of servants. I think the Windsor would be much the easiest plan."

"You *are* in earnest!"

"In earnest!" he repeated in surprise. "Have you ever questioned it? You judge because you never saw me in earnest in anything before in my life."

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Barclay. "I always knew it was in you. What you wanted was only an object."

"What do you say to my plan?"

"I am afraid they would not come. There is the care of the old grandmother; they would not leave everything to their sister alone."

"Tempt them with pictures and music, and the opera."

"The opera! Philip, she would not go to a theatre, or anything theatrical, for any consideration. They are very strict on that point, and Sunday-keeping, and dancing. Do not speak to her of the opera."

"They are not so far wrong. I never saw a decent opera yet in my life."

"Philip!" exclaimed Mrs. Barclay in the greatest surprise. "I never heard you say anything like that before."

"I suppose it makes a difference," he said thoughtfully, "with what eyes a man looks at a thing. And dancing—I don't think I care to see her dance."

"Philip! You are extravagant."

"I believe I should be fit to commit murder if I saw her waltzing with anybody."

"Jealous already?" said Mrs. Barclay slyly.

"If you like.—Do you see her as I see her?" he asked abruptly.

There was a tone in the last words which gave Mrs. Barclay's heart a kind of constriction. She answered with gentle sympathy, "I think I do."

"I have seen handsomer women," he went on;—"Madge is handsomer, in a way; you may see many women more beautiful, according to the rules; but I never saw any one so lovely!"

"I quite agree with you," said Mrs. Barclay.

"I never saw anything so lovely!" he repeated. "She is most like—"

"A white lily," said Mrs. Barclay.

"No, that is not her type. No. As long as the world stands, a rose just open will remain the fairest similitude for a perfect woman. It's commonness cannot hinder that. She is not an unearthly Dendrobium, she is an earthly rose—

'Not too good
For human nature's daily food,'

—if one could find the right sort of human nature! Just so fresh, unconscious, and fair; with just such a dignity of purity about her. I cannot fancy her at the opera, or dancing."

"A sort of unapproachable tea-rose?" said Mrs. Barclay, smiling at him, though her eyes were wistful.

"No," said he, "a tea-rose is too fragile. There is nothing of that about her, thank heaven!"

"No," said Mrs. Barclay, "there is nothing but sound healthy life about her; mental and bodily; and I agree with you, sweet as ever a human life can be. In the garden or at her books,—hark! that is for supper."

For here there came a slight tap on the door.

"Supper!" cried Philip.

"Yes; it is rather late, and the girls promised me a cup of coffee, after your exertions! But I dare say everybody wants some refreshment by this time. Come!"

There was a cheery supper table spread in the dining-room; coffee, indeed, and Stoney Creek oysters, and excellently cooked. Only Charity and Madge were there; Mrs. Armadale had gone to bed, and Lois was attending upon her. Mr. DilIwyn, however, was served assiduously.

"I hope you're hungry! You've done a load of good this evening, Mr.
Dillwyn," said Charity, as she gave him his coffee.

"Thank you. I don't see the connection," said Philip, with an air as different as possible from that he had worn in talking to Mrs. Barclay in the next room.

"People ought to be hungry when they have done a great deal of work,"
Madge explained, as she gave him a plate of oysters.

"I do not feel that I have done any work."

"O, well! I suppose it was play to you," said Charity, "but that don't make any difference. You've done a load of good. Why, the children will never be able to forget it, nor the grown folks either, as far as that goes; they'll talk of it, and of you, for two years, and more."

"I am doubtful about the real worth of fame, Miss Charity, even when it lasts two years."

"O, but you've done so much *good!*" said the lady. "Everybody sees now that the white church can hold her own. Nobody'll think of making disagreeable comparisons, if they have fifty Christmas trees."

"Suppose I had helped the yellow church?"

Charity looked as if she did not know what he would be at. Just then in came Lois and took her place at the table; and Mr. Dillwyn forgot all about rival churches.

"Here's Mr. Dillwyn don't think he's done any good, Lois!" cried her elder sister. "Do cheer him up a little. I think it's a shame to talk so. Why, we've done all we wanted to, and more. There won't a soul go away from our church or school after this, now they see what we can do; and I shouldn't wonder if we got some accessions from the other instead. And here's Mr. Dillwyn says he don't know as he's done any good!"

Lois lifted her eyes and met his, and they both smiled.

"Miss Lois sees the matter as I do," he said. "These are capital oysters. Where do they come from?"

"But, Philip," said Mrs. Barclay, "you have given a great deal of pleasure. Isn't that good?"

"Depends—" said he. "Probably it will be followed by a reaction."

"And you have kept the church together," added Charity, who was zealous.

"By a rope of sand, then, Miss Charity."

"At any rate, Mr. Dillwyn, you *meant* to do good," Lois put in here.

"I do not know, Miss Lois. I am afraid I was thinking more of pleasure, myself; and shall experience myself the reaction I spoke of. I think I feel the shadow of it already, as a coming event."

"But if we aren't to have any pleasure, because afterwards we feel a little flat,—and of course we do," said Charity; "everybody knows that. But, for instance, if we're not to have green peas in summer, because we can't have 'em any way but dry in winter,—things would be very queer! Queerer than they are; and they're queer enough already."

This speech called forth some merriment.

"You think even the dry remains of pleasure are better than nothing!" said Philip. "Perhaps you are right."

"And to have those, we *must* have had the green reality," said Lois merrily.

"I wonder if there is any way of keeping pleasure green," said Dillwyn.

"Vain, vain, Mr. Dillwyn!" said Mrs. Barclay. "*Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe!* don't you know? Solomon said, I believe, that all was vanity. And he ought to know."

"But he didn't know," said Lois quickly.

"Lois!" said Charity—"it's in the Bible."

"I know it is in the Bible that he said so," Lois rejoined merrily.

"Was he not right, then?" Mr. Dillwyn asked.

"Perhaps," Lois answered, now gravely, "if you take simply his view."

"What was his view? Won't you explain?"

"I suppose you ain't going to set up to be wiser than Solomon, at this time of day," said Charity severely. But that stirred Lois's merriment again.

"Explain, Miss Lois!" said Dillwyn.

"I am not Solomon, that I should preach," she said.

"You just said you knew better than he," said Charity. "How you should know better than the Bible, I don't see. It's news."

"Why, Charity, Solomon was not a good man."

"How came he to write proverbs, then?"

"At least he was not always a good man."

"That don't hinder his knowing what was vanity, does it?"

"But, Lois!" said Mrs. Barclay. "Go back, and tell us your secret, if you have one. How was Solomon's view mistaken? or what is yours?"

"These things were all given for our pleasure, Mrs. Barclay."

"But they die—and they go—and they fade," said Mrs. Barclay.

"You will not understand me," said Lois; "and yet it is true. If you are Christ's—then, 'all things are yours;... the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come: all are yours.' There is no loss, but there comes more gain."

"I wish you'd let Mr. Dillwyn have some more oysters," said Charity; "and, Madge, do hand along Mrs. Barclay's cup. You mustn't talk, if you can't eat at the same time. Lois ain't Solomon yet, if she does preach. You shut up, Lois, and mind your supper. My rule is, to enjoy things as I go along; and just now, it's oysters."

"I will say for Lois," here put in Mrs. Barclay, "that she does exemplify her own principles. I never knew anybody with such a spring of perpetual enjoyment."

"She ain't happier than the rest of us," said the elder sister.

"Not so happy as grandmother," added Madge. "At least, grandmother would say so. I don't know."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BREAKING UP.

Mr. Dillwyn went away. Things returned to their normal condition at Shampuashuh, saving that for a while there was a great deal of talk about the Santa Clans doings and the principal actor in them, and no end of speculations as to his inducements and purposes to be served in taking so much trouble. For Shampuashuh people were shrewd, and did not believe, any more than King Lear, that anything could come of nothing. That he was *not* moved by general benevolence, poured out upon the school of the white church, was generally agreed. "What's we to him?" asked pertinently one of the old ladies; and vain efforts were made to ascertain Mr. Dillwyn's denomination. "For all I kin make out, he hain't got none," was the declaration of another matron. "I don't b'lieve he's no better than he should be." Which was ungrateful, and hardly justified Miss Charity's prognostications of enduring fame; by which, of course, she meant good fame. Few had seen Mr. Dillwyn undisguised, so that they could give a report of him; but Mrs. Marx assured them he was "a real personable man; nice and plain, and takin' no airs. She liked him first-rate."

"Who's he after? Not one o' your gals?"

"Mercy, no! He, indeed! He's one of the high-flyers; he won't come to Shampuashuh to look for a wife. 'Seems to me he's made o' money; and he's been everywhere; he's fished for crocodiles in the Nile, and eaten his luncheon at the top of the Pyramids of Egypt, and sailed to the North Pole to be sure of cool lemonade in summer. *He* won't marry in Shampuashuh."

"What brings him here, then?"

"The spirit of restlessness, I should say. Those people that have been everywhere, you may notice, can't stay nowhere. I always knew there was fools in the world, but I *didn't* know there was so many of 'em as there be. He ain't no fool neither, some ways; and that makes him a bigger fool in the end; only I don't know why the fools should have all the money."

And so, after a little, the talk about this theme died out, and things settled down, not without some of the reaction Mr. Dillwyn had predicted; but they settled down, and all was as before in Shampuashuh. Mr. Dillwyn did not come again to make a visit, or Mrs. Marx's aroused vigilance would have found some ground for suspicion. There did come numerous presents of game and fruit from him, but they

were sent to Mrs. Barclay, and could not be objected against, although they came in such quantities that the whole household had to combine to dispose of them. What would Philip do next?—Mrs. Barclay queried. As he had said, he could not go on with repeated visits to the house. Madge and Lois would not hear of being tempted to New York, paint the picture as bright as she would. Things were not ripe for any decided step on Mr. Dillwyn's part, and how should they become so? Mrs. Barclay could not see the way. She did for Philip what she could by writing to him, whether for his good or his harm she could not decide. She feared the latter. She told him, however, of the sweet, quiet life she was leading; of the reading she was doing with the two girls, and the whole family; of the progress Lois and Madge were making in singing and drawing and in various branches of study; of the walks in the fresh sea-breezes, and the cosy evenings with wood fires and the lamp; and she told him how they enjoyed his game, and what a comfort the oranges were to Mrs. Armadale.

This lasted through January, and then there came a change. Mrs. Armadale was ill. There was no more question of visits, or of studies; and all sorts of enjoyments and occupations gave place to the one absorbing interest of watching and waiting upon the sick one. And then, that ceased too. Mrs. Armadale had caught cold, she had not strength to throw off disease; it took violent form, and in a few days ran its course. Very suddenly the little family found itself without its head.

There was nothing to grieve for, but their own loss. The long, weary earth-journey was done, and the traveller had taken up her abode where there is

"The rest begun,
That Christ hath for his people won."

She had gone triumphantly. "Through God we shall do valiantly"—being her last—uttered words. Her children took them as a legacy, and felt rich. But they looked at her empty chair, and counted themselves poorer than ever before. Mrs. Barclay saw that the mourning was deep. Yet, with the reserved strength of New England natures, it made no noise, and scarce any show.

Mrs. Barclay lived much alone those first days. She would gladly have talked to somebody; she wanted to know about the affairs of the little family, but saw no one to talk to. Until, two or three days after the funeral, coming home one afternoon from a walk in the cold, she found her fire had died out; and she went into the next room to warm herself. There she saw none of the usual inmates. Mrs. Armadale's chair stood on one side the fire, unoccupied, and on the other side stood uncle Tim Hotchkiss.

"How do you do, Mr. Hotchkiss? May I come and warm myself? I have been out, and I am half-frozen."

"I guess you're welcome to most anything in this house, ma'am,—and fire we wouldn't grudge to anybody. Sit down, ma'am;" and he set a chair for her. "It's pretty tight weather."

"We had nothing like this last winter," said Mrs. Barclay, shivering.

"We expect to hev one or two snaps in the course of the winter," said Mr. Hotchkiss. "Shampuashuh ain't what you call a cold place; but we expect to see them two snaps. It comes seasonable this time. I'd raythe hev it now than in March. My sister—that's gone,—she could always tell you how the weather was goin' to be. I've never seen no one like her for that."

"Nor for some other things," said Mrs. Barclay. "It is a sad change to feel her place empty."

"Ay," said uncle Tim, with a glance at the unused chair,—"it's the difference between full and empty. 'I went out full, and the Lord has brought me back empty', Ruth's mother-in-law said."

"Who is Ruth?" Mrs. Barclay asked, a little bewildered, and willing to change the subject; for she noticed a suppressed quiver in the hard features. "Do I know her?"

"I mean Ruth the Moabitess. Of course you know her. She was a poor heathen thing, but she got all right at last. It was her mother-in-law that was bitter. Well—troubles hadn't ought to make us bitter. I guess there's allays somethin' wrong when they do."

"Hard to help it, sometimes," said Mrs. Barclay.

"She wouldn't ha' let you say that," said the old man, indicating sufficiently by his accent of whom he was speaking. "There warn't no bitterness in her; and she had seen trouble enough! She's out o' it now."

"What will the girls do? Stay on and keep the house here just as they have done?"

"Well, I don' know," said Mr. Hotchkiss, evidently glad to welcome a business question, and now taking a chair himself. "Mrs. Marx and me, we've ben arguin' that question out, and it ain't decided. There's one big house here, and there's another where Mrs. Marx lives; and there's one little family, and here's another little family. It's expensive to scatter over so much ground. They had ought to come to Mrs. Marx, or she had ought to move in here, and then the other house could be rented. That's how the thing looks to me. It's expensive for five people to take two big houses to live in. I know, the girls have got you now; but they might not keep you allays; and we must look at things as they be."

"I must leave them in the spring," said Mrs. Barclay hastily.

"In the spring, must ye!"

"Must," she repeated. "I would like to stay here the rest of my life; but circumstances are imperative. I must go in the spring."

"Then I think that settles it," said Mr. Hotchkiss. "I'm glad to know it. That is! of course I'm sorry ye're goin'; the girls be very fond of you."

"And I of them," said Mrs. Barclay; "but I must go."

After that, she waited for the chance of a talk with Lois. She waited not long. The household had hardly settled down into regular ways again after the disturbance of sickness and death, when Lois came one evening at twilight into Mrs. Barclay's room. She sat down, at first was silent, and then burst into tears. Mrs. Barclay let her alone, knowing that for her just now the tears were good. And the woman who had seen so much heavier life-storms, looked on almost with a feeling of envy at the weeping which gave so simple and frank expression to grief. Until this feeling was overcome by another, and she begged Lois to weep no more.

"I do not mean it—I did not mean it," said Lois, drying her eyes. "It is ungrateful of me; for we have so much to be thankful for. I am so glad for grandmother!"—Yet somehow the tears went on falling.

"Glad?"—repeated Mrs. Barclay doubtfully. "You mean, because she is out of her suffering."

"She did not suffer much. It is not that. I am so glad to think she has got home!"

"I suppose," said Mrs. Barclay in a constrained voice, "to such a person as your grandmother, death has no fear. Yet life seems to me more desirable."

"She has entered into life!" said Lois. "She is where she wanted to be, and with what she loved best. And I am very, very glad! even though I do cry."

"How can you speak with such certain'ty, Lois? I know, in such a case as that of your grandmother, there could be no fear; and yet I do not see how you can speak as if you knew where she is, and with whom."

"Only because the Bible tells us," said Lois, smiling even through wet eyes. "Not the *place;* it does not tell us the place; but with Christ. That they are; and that is all we want to know.

'Beyond the sighing and the weeping.'

—It makes me gladder than ever I can tell you, to think of it."

"Then what are those tears for, my dear?"

"It's the turning over a leaf," said Lois sadly, "and that is always sorrowful. And I have lost—uncle Tim says," she broke off suddenly, "he says,—can it be?—he says you say you must go from us in the spring?"

"That is turning over another leaf," said Mrs. Barclay.

"But is it true?"

"Absolutely true. Circumstances make it imperative. It is not my wish.
I would like to stay here with you all my life."

"I wish you could. I half hoped you would," said Lois wistfully.

"But I cannot, my dear. I cannot."

"Then that is another thing over," said Lois. "What a good time it has been, this year and a half you have been with us! how much worth to Madge and me! But won't you come back again?"

"I fear not. You will not miss me so much; you will all keep house together, Mr. Hotchkiss tells me."

"*I* shall not be here," said Lois.

"Where will you be?" Mrs. Barclay started.

"I don't know; but it will be best for me to do something to help along. I think I shall take a school somewhere. I think I can get one."

"A *school*, my dear? Why should you do such a thing?"

"To help along," said Lois. "You know, we have not much to live on here at home. I should make one less here, and I should be earning a little besides."

"Very little, Lois!"

"Very little will do."

"But you do a great deal now towards the family support. What will become of your garden?"

"Uncle Tim can take care of that. Besides, Mrs. Barclay, even if I could stay at home, I think I ought not. I ought to be doing something—be of some use in the world. I am not needed here, now dear grandmother is gone; and there must be some other place where I am needed."

"My dear, somebody will want you to keep house for him, some of these days."

Lois shook her head. "I do not think of it," she said. "I do not think it is very likely; that is, anybody *I* should want. But if it were true," she added, looking up and smiling, "that has nothing to do with present duty."

"My dear, I cannot bear to think of your going into such drudgery!"

"Drudgery?" said Lois. "I do not know,—perhaps I should not find it so. But I may as well do it as somebody else."

"You are fit for something better."

"There is nothing better, and there is nothing happier," said Lois, rising, "than to do what God gives us to do. I should not be unhappy, Mrs. Barclay. It wouldn't be just like these days we have passed together, I suppose;—these days have been a garden of flowers."

And what have they all amounted to? thought Mrs. Barclay when she was left alone. Have I done any good—or only harm—by acceding to that mad proposition of Philip's? Some good, surely; these two girls have grown and changed, mentally, at a great rate of progress; they are educated, cultivated, informed, refined, to a degree that I would never have thought a year and a half could do. Even so! *have* I done them good? They are lifted quite out of the level of their surroundings; and to be lifted so, means sometimes a barren living alone. Yet I will not think that; it is better to rise in the scale of being, if ever one can, whatever comes of it; what one is in oneself is of more importance than one's relations to the world around. But Philip?—I have helped him nourish this fancy—and it is not a fancy now—it is the man's whole life. Heigh ho! I begin to think he was right, and that it is very difficult to know what is doing good and what isn't. I must write to Philip—

So she did, at once. She told him of the contemplated changes in the family arrangements; of Lois's plan for teaching a district school; and declared that she herself must now leave Shampuashuh. She had done what she came for, whether for good or for ill. It was done; and she could no longer continue living there on Mr. Dillwyn's bounty. *Now* it would be mere bounty, if she stayed where she was; until now she might say she had been doing his work. His work was done now, her part of it; the rest he must finish for himself. Mrs. Barclay would leave Shampuashuh in April.

This letter would bring matters to a point, she thought, if anything could; she much expected to see Mr. Dillwyn himself appear again before March was over. He did not come, however; he wrote a short answer to Mrs. Barclay, saying that he was sorry for her resolve, and would combat it if he could; but felt that he had not the power. She must satisfy her fastidious notions of independence, and he could

only thank her to the last day of his life for what she had already done for him; service which thanks could never repay. He sent this letter, but said nothing of coming; and he did not come.

Later, Mrs. Barclay wrote again. The household changes were just about to be made; she herself had but a week or two more in Shampuashuh; and Lois, against all expectation, had found opportunity immediately to try her vocation for teaching. The lady placed over a school in a remote little village had suddenly died; and the trustees of the school had considered favourably Lois's application. She was going in a day or two to undertake the charge of a score or two of boys and girls, of all ages, in a wild and rough part of the country; where even the accommodations for her own personal comfort, Mrs. Barclay feared, would be of the plainest.

To this letter also she received an answer, though after a little interval. Mr. Dillwyn wrote, he regretted Lois's determination; regretted that she thought it necessary; but appreciated the straightforward, unflinching sense of duty which never consulted with ease or selfishness. He himself was going, he added, on business, for a time, to the north; that is, not Massachusetts, but Canada. He would therefore not see Mrs. Barclay until after a considerable interval.

Mrs. Barclay did not know what to make of this letter. Had Philip given up his fancy? It was not like him. Men are fickle, it is true; but fickle in his friendships she had never known Mr. Dillwyn to be. Yet this letter said nothing of love, or hope, or fear; it was cool, friendly, business-like. Mrs. Barclay nevertheless did not know how to believe in the business. *He* have business! What business? She had always known him as an easy, graceful, pleasure-taker; finding his pleasure in no evil ways, indeed; kept from that by early associations, or by his own refined tastes and sense of honour; but never living to anything but pleasure. His property was ample and unencumbered; even the care of that was not difficult, and did not require much of his time. And now, just when he ought to put in his claim for Lois, if he was ever going to make it; just when she was set loose from her old ties and marking out a new and hard way of life for herself, he ought to come; and he was going on business to Canada! Mrs. Barclay was excessively disgusted and disappointed. She had not, indeed, all along seen how Philip's wooing could issue successfully, if it ever came to the point of wooing; the elements were too discordant, and principles too obstinate; and yet she had worked on in hope, vague and doubtful, but still hope, thinking highly herself of Mr. Dillwyn's pretensions and powers of persuasion, and knowing that in human nature at large all principle and all discordance are apt to come to a signal defeat when Love takes the field. But now there seemed to be no question of wooing; Love was not on hand, where his power was wanted; the friends were all scattered one from another—Lois going to the drudgery of teaching rough boys and girls, she herself to the seclusion of some quiet seaside retreat, and Mr. Dillwyn—to hunt bears?—in Canada.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LUXURY.

So they were all scattered. But the moving and communicating wires of human society seem as often as any way to run underground; quite out of sight, at least; then specially strong, when to an outsider they appear to be broken and parted for ever.

Into the history of the summer it is impossible to go minutely. What Mr. Dillwyn did in Canada, and how Lois fought with ignorance and rudeness and prejudice in her new situation, Mrs. Barclay learned but very imperfectly from the letters she received; so imperfectly, that she felt she knew nothing. Mr. Dillwyn never mentioned Miss Lothrop. Could it be that he had prematurely brought things to a decision, and so got them decided wrong? But in that case Mrs. Barclay felt sure some sign would have escaped Lois; and she gave none.

The summer passed, and two-thirds of the autumn.

One evening in the end of October, Mrs. Wishart was sitting alone in her back drawing-room. She was suffering from a cold, and coddling herself over the fire. Her major-domo brought her Mr. Dillwyn's name and request for admission, which was joyfully granted. Mrs. Wishart was denied to ordinary visitors; and Philip's arrival was like a benediction.

"Where have you been all summer?" she asked him, when they had talked awhile of some things nearer home.

"In the backwoods of Canada."

"The backwoods of Canada!"

"I assure you it is a very enjoyable region."

"What *could* you find to do there?"

"More than enough. I spent my time between hunting—fishing—and studying."

"Studying what, pray? Not backwoods farming, I suppose?"

"Well, no, not exactly. Backwoods farming is not precisely in my line."

"What is in your line that you could study there?"

"It is not a bad place to study anything;—if you except, perhaps, art and antiquity."

"I did not know you studied anything *but* art."

"It is hardly a sufficient object to fill a man's life worthily; do you think so?"

"What would fill it worthily?" the lady asked, with a kind of dreary abstractedness. And if Philip had surprised her a moment before, he was surprised in his turn. As he did not answer immediately, Mrs. Wishart went on.

"A man's life, or a woman's life? What would fill it worthily? Do you know? Sometimes it seems to me that we are all living for nothing."

"I am ready to confess that has been the case with me,—to my shame be it said."

"I mean, that there is nothing really worth living for."

"*That* cannot be true, however."

"Well, I suppose I say so at the times when I am unable to enjoy anything in my life. And yet, if you stop to think, what *does* anybody's life amount to? Nobody's missed, after he is gone; or only for a minute; and for himself—There is not a year of *my* life that I can remember, that I would be willing to live over again."

"Apparently, then, to enjoy is not the chief end of existence. I mean, of this existence."

"What do we know of any other? And if we do not enjoy ourselves, pray what in the world should we live for?"

"I have seen people that I thought enjoyed themselves," Philip said slowly.

"Have you? Who were they? I do not know them."

"You know some of them. Do you recollect a friend of mine, for whom you negotiated lodgings at a far-off country village?"

"Yes, I remember. They took her, didn't they?"

"They took her. And I had the pleasure once or twice of visiting her there."

"Did she like it?"

"Very much. She could not help liking it. And I thought those people seemed to enjoy life. Not relatively, but positively."

"The Lothrops!" cried Mrs. Wishart. "I can not conceive it. Why, they are very poor."

"That made no hindrance, in their case."

"Poor people, I am afraid they have not been enjoying themselves this year."

"I heard of Mrs. Armadale's death."

"Yes. O, she was old; she could not be expected to live long. But they are all broken up."

"How am I to understand that?"

"Well, you know they have very little to live upon. I suppose it was for that reason Lois went off to a distance from home to teach a district school. You know,—or *do* you know?—what country schools are, in some places; this was one of the places. Pretty rough; and hard living. And then a railroad was opened in the neighbourhood—the place became sickly—a fever broke out among Lois's scholars and the families they came from; and Lois spent her vacation in nursing. Then got sick herself with the fever, and is only just now getting well."

"I heard something of this before from Mrs. Barclay."

"Then Madge went to take care of Lois, and they were both there. That is weeks and weeks ago,—months, I should think."

"But the sick one is well again?"

"She is better. But one does not get up from those fevers so soon. One's strength is gone. I have sent for them to come and make me a visit and recruit."

"They are coming, I hope?"

"I expect them here to-morrow."

Mr. Dillwyn had nearly been betrayed into an exclamation. He remembered himself in time, and replied with proper self-possession that he was very glad to hear it.

"Yes, I told them to come here and rest. They must want it, poor girls, both of them."

"Then they are coming to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"By what train?"

"I believe, it is the New Haven train that gets in about five o'clock.
Or six. I do not know exactly."

"I know. Now, Mrs. Wishart, you are not well yourself, and must not go out. I will meet the train and bring them safe to you."

"You? O, that's delightful. I have been puzzling my brain to know how I should manage; for I am not fit to go out yet, and servants are so unsatisfactory. Will you really? That's good of you!"

"Not at all. It is the least I can do. The family received me most kindly on more than one occasion; and I would gladly do them a greater service than this."

At two o'clock next day the waiting-room of the New Haven station held, among others, two very handsome young girls; who kept close together, waiting for their summons to the train. One of them was very pale and thin and feeble-looking, and indeed sat so that she leaned part of her weight upon her sister. Madge was pale too, and looked somewhat anxious. Both pairs of eyes watched languidly the moving, various groups of travellers clustered about in the room.

"Madge, it's like a dream!" murmured the one girl to the other.

"What? If you mean this crowd, *my* dreams have more order in them."

"I mean, being away from Esterbrooke, and off a sick-bed, and moving, and especially going to—where we are going. It's a dream!"

"Why?"

"Too good to be true. I had thought, do you know, I never should make a visit there again."

"Why not, Lois?"

"I thought it would be best not. But now the way seems clear, and I can take the fun of it. It is clearly right to go."

"Of course! It is always right to go wherever you are asked."

"O no, Madge!"

"Well,—wherever the invitation is honest, I mean."

"O, that isn't enough."

"What else? supposing you have the means to go. I am not sure that we have that condition in the present instance. But if you have, what else is to be waited for?"

"Duty—" Lois whispered.

"O, bother duty! Here have you gone and almost killed yourself for duty."

"Well,—supposing one does kill oneself?—one must do what is duty."

"That isn't duty."

"O, it may be."

"Not to kill yourself. You have almost killed yourself, Lois."

"I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could. You make duty a kind of iron thing."

"Not iron," said Lois; she spoke slowly and faintly, but now she smiled. "It is golden!"

"That don't help. Chains of gold may be as hard to break as chains of iron."

"Who wants them broken?" said Lois, in the same slow, contented way.
"Duty? Why Madge, it's the King's orders!"

"Do you mean that you were ordered to go to that place, and then to nurse those children through the fever?"

"Yes, I think so."

"I should be terribly afraid of duty, if I thought it came in such shapes. There's the train!—Now if you can get downstairs—"

That was accomplished, though with tottering steps, and Lois was safely seated in one of the cars, and her head pillowed upon the back of the seat. There was no more talking then for some time. Only when Haarlem bridge was past and New York close at hand, Lois spoke.

"Madge, suppose Mrs. Wishart should not be here to meet us? You must think what you would do."

"Why, the train don't go any further, does it?"

"No!—but it goes back. I mean, it will not stand still for you. It moves away out of the station-house as soon as it is empty."

"There will be carriages waiting, I suppose. But I am sure I hope she will meet us. I wrote in plenty of time. Don't worry, dear! we'll manage."

"I am not worrying," said Lois. "I am a great deal too happy to worry."

However, that was not Madge's case, and she felt very fidgety. With Lois so feeble, and in a place so unknown to her, and with baggage checks to dispose of, and so little time to do anything, and no doubt a crowd of doubtful characters lounging about, as she had always heard they did in New York; Madge did wish very anxiously for a pilot and a protector. As the train slowly moved into the Grand Central, she eagerly looked to see some friend appear. But none appeared.

"We must go out, Madge," said Lois. "Maybe we shall find Mrs.
Wishart—I dare say we shall—she could not come into the cars—"

The two made their way accordingly, slowly, at the end of the procession filing out of the car, till Madge got out upon the platform. There she uttered an exclamation of joy.

"O Lois!—there's Mr. Dillwyn?"

"But we are looking for Mrs. Wishart," said Lois.

The next thing she knew, however, somebody was carefully helping her down to the landing; and then, her hand was on a stronger arm than that of Mrs. Wishart, and she was slowly following the stream of people to the front of the station-house. Lois was too exhausted by this time to ask any questions; suffered herself to be put in a carriage passively, where Madge took her place also, while

Mr. Dillwyn went to give the checks of their baggage in charge to an expressman. Lois then broke out again with,

"O Madge, it's like a dream!"

"Isn't it?" said Madge. "I have been in a regular fidget for two hours past, for fear Mrs. Wishart would not be here."

"I didn't *fidget*," said Lois, "but I did not know how I was going to get from the cars to the carriage. I feel in a kind of exhausted Elysium!"

"It's convenient to have a man belonging to one," said Madge.

"Hush, pray!" said Lois, closing her eyes. And she hardly opened them again until the carriage arrived at Mrs. Wishart's, which was something of a drive. Madge and Mr. Dillwyn kept up a lively conversation, about the journey and Lois's condition, and her summer; and how he happened to be at the Grand Central. He went to meet some friends, he said coolly, whom he expected to see by that train.

"Then we must have been in your way," exclaimed Madge regretfully.

"Not at all," he said.

"But we hindered you from taking care of your friends?"

"No," he said indifferently; "by no means. They are taken care of."

And both Madge and Lois were too simple to know what he meant.

At Mrs. Wishart's, Lois was again helped carefully out and carefully in, and half carried up-stairs to her own room, whither it was decided she had better go at once. And there, after being furnished with a bowl of soup, she was left, while the others went down to tea. So Madge found her an hour afterwards, sunk in the depths of a great, soft easy-chair, gazing at the fanciful flames of a kennel coal fire.

"O Madge, it's a dream!" Lois said again languidly, though with plenty of expression. "I can't believe in the change from Esterbrooke here."

"It's a change from Shampuashuh," Madge returned. "Lois, I didn't know things could be so pretty. And we have had the most delightful tea, and something—cakes—Mrs. Wishart calls *wigs*, the best things you ever saw in your life; but Mr. Dillwyn wouldn't let us send some up to you."

"Mr. Dillwyn!"—

"Yes, he said they were not good for you. He has been just as pleasant as he could be. I never saw anybody so pleasant. I like Mr. Dillwyn *very* much."

"Don't!" said Lois languidly.

"Why?"

"You had better not."

"But why not? You are ungrateful, it seems to me, if you don't like him."

"I like him," said Lois slowly; "but he belongs to a different world from ours. The worlds can't come together; so it is best not to like him too much."

"How do you mean, a different world?"

"O, he's different, Madge! All his thoughts and ways and associations are unlike ours—a great way off from ours; and must be. It is best as I said. I guess it is best not to like anybody too much."

With which oracular and superhumanly wise utterance Lois closed her eyes softly again. Madge, provoked, was about to carry on the discussion, when, noticing how pale the cheek was which lay against the crimson chair cushion, and how very delicate the lines of the face, she thought better of it and was silent. A while later, however, when she had brought Lois a cup of gruel and biscuit, she broke out on a new theme.

"What a thing it is, that some people should have so much silver, and other people so little!"

"What silver are you thinking of?"

"Why, Mrs. Wishart's, to be sure. Who's else? I never saw anything like it, out of Aladdin's cave. Great urns, and salvers, and cream-jugs, and sugar-bowls, and cake-baskets, and pitchers, and salt-cellars. The salt-cellars were lined with something yellow, or washed, to hinder the staining, I suppose."

"Gold," said Lois.

"Gold?"

"Yes. Plated with gold."

"Well I never saw anything like the sideboard down-stairs; the sideboard and the tea-table. It is funny, Lois, as I said, why some should have so much, and others so little."

"We, you mean? What should we do with a load of silver?"

"I wish I had it, and then you'd see! You should have a silk dress, to begin with, and so should I."

"Never mind," said Lois, letting her eyelids fall again with an expression of supreme content, having finished her gruel. "There are compensations, Madge."

"Compensations! What compensations? We are hardly respectably dressed, you and I, for this place."

"Never mind!" said Lois again. "If you had been sick as I was, and in that place, and among those people, you would know something."

"What should I know?"

"How delightful this chair is;—and how good that gruel, out of a china cup;—and how delicious all this luxury! Mrs. Wishart isn't as rich as I am to-night."

"The difference is, she can keep it, and you cannot, you poor child!"

"O yes, I can keep it," said Lois, in the slow, happy accent with which she said everything to-night;—"I can keep the remembrance of it, and the good of it. When I get back to my work, I shall not want it."

"Your work!" said Madge.

"Yes."

"Esterbrooke!"

"Yes, if they want me."

"You are never going back to that place!" exclaimed Madge energetically. "Never! not with my good leave. Bury yourself in that wild country, and kill yourself with hard work! Not if I know it."

"If that is the work given me," said Lois, in the same calm voice.
"They want somebody there, badly; and I have made a beginning."

"A nice beginning!—almost killed yourself. Now, Lois, don't think about anything! Do you know, Mrs. Wishart says you are the handsomest girl she ever saw!"

"That's a mistake. I know several much handsomer."

"She tried to make Mr. Dillwyn say so too; and he wouldn't."

"Naturally."

"It was funny to hear them; she tried to drive him up to the point, and he wouldn't be driven; he said one clever thing after another, but always managed to give her no answer; till at last she pinned him with a point-blank question."

"What did he do then?"

"Said what you said; that he had seen women who would be called handsomer."

The conversation dropped here, for Lois made no reply, and Madge recollected she had talked enough.

CHAPTER XL.

ATTENTIONS.

It was days before Lois went down-stairs. She seemed indeed to be in no hurry. Her room was luxuriously comfortable; Madge tended her there, and Mrs. Wishart visited her; and Lois sat in her great easy-chair, and rested, and devoured the delicate meals that were brought her; and the colour began gently to come back to her face, in the imperceptible fashion in which a white Van Thol tulip takes on its hues of crimson. She began to read a little; but she did not care to go down-stairs. Madge told her everything that went on; who came, and what was said by one and another. Mr. Dillwyn's name was of very frequent occurrence.

"He's a real nice man!" said Madge enthusiastically.

"Madge, Madge, Madge!—you mustn't speak so," said Lois. "You must not say 'real nice.'"

"I don't, down-stairs," said Madge, laughing. "It was only to you. It is more expressive, Lois, sometimes, to speak wrong than to speak right."

"Do not speak so expressively, then."

"But I must, when I am speaking of Mr. Dillwyn. I never saw anybody so nice. He is teaching me to play chess, Lois, and it is such fun."

"It seems to me he comes here very often."

"He does; he is an old friend of Mrs. Wishart's, and she is as glad to see him as I am."

"Don't be too glad, Madge. I do not like to hear you speak so."

"Why not?"

"It was one of the reasons why I did not want to accept Mrs. Barclay's invitation last winter, that I knew he would be visiting her constantly. I did not expect to see him *here* much." Lois looked grave.

"What harm in seeing him, Lois? why shouldn't one have the pleasure? For it is a pleasure; his talk is so bright, and his manner is so very kind and graceful; and *he* is so kind. He is going to take me to drive again."

"You go to drive with Mrs. Wishart. Isn't that enough?"

"It isn't a quarter so pleasant," Madge said, laughing again. "Mr. Dillwyn talks, something one likes to hear talked. Mrs. Wishart tells me about old families, and where they used to live, and where they live now; what do I care about old New York families! And Mr. Dillwyn lets *me* talk. I never have anything whatever to say to Mrs. Wishart; she does it all."

"I would rather have you go driving with her, though."

"Why, Lois? That's ridiculous. I like to go with Mr. Dillwyn."

"Don't like it too well."

"How can I like it too well?"

"So much that you would miss it, when you do not have it any longer."

"Miss it!" said Madge, half angrily. "I might *miss* it, as I might miss any pleasant thing; but I could stand that. I'm not a chicken just out of the egg. I have missed things before now, and it hasn't killed me."

"Don't think I am foolish, Madge. It isn't a question of how much you can stand. But the men like—like this one—are so pleasant with their graceful, smooth ways, that country girls like you and me might easily be drawn on, without knowing it, further than they want to go."

"He does not want to draw anybody on!" said Madge indignantly.

"That's the very thing. You might think—or I might think—that pleasant manner means something;

and it don't mean anything."

"I don't want it to 'mean anything,' as you say; but what has our being country girls to do with it?"

"We are not accustomed to that sort of society, and so it makes, I suppose, more impression. And what might mean something to others, would not to us. From such men, I mean."

"What do you mean by 'such men'?" asked Madge, who was getting rather excited.

"Rich—fashionable—belonging to the great world, and having the ways of it. You know what Mr. Dillwyn is like. It is not what we have in Shainpuashuh."

"But, Lois!—what are you talking about? I don't care a red cent for all this, but I want to understand. You said such a manner would mean nothing to *us*."

"Yes."

"Why not to us, as well as anybody else?"

"Because we are nobodies, Madge."

"What do you mean?" said the other hotly.

"Just that. It is quite true. You are nobody, and I am nobody. You see, if we were somebody, it would be different."

"If you think—I'll tell you what, Lois! I think you are fit to be the wife of the best man that lives and breathes."

"I think so myself," Lois returned quietly.

"And I am."

"I think you are, Madge. But that makes no difference. My dear, we are nobody."

"How?"—impatiently. "Isn't our family as respectable as anybody's? Haven't we had governors and governors, of Massachusetts and Connecticut both; and judges and ministers, ever so many, among our ancestors? And didn't a half-dozen of 'em, or more, come over in the 'Mayflower'?"

"Yes, Madge; all true; and I am as glad of it as you are."

"Then you talk nonsense!"

"No, I don't," said Lois, sighing a little. "I have seen a little more of the world than you have, you know, dear Madge; not very much, but a little more than you; and I know what I am talking about. We are unknown, we are not rich, we have none of what they call 'connections.' So you see I do not want you to like too much a person who, beyond civility, and kindness perhaps, would never think of liking you."

"I don't want him to, that's one thing," said Madge. "But if all that is true, he is meaner than I think him; that's what I've got to say. And it is a mean state of society where all that can be true."

"I suppose it is human nature," said Lois.

"It's awfully mean human nature!"

"I guess there is not much true nobleness but where the religion of Christ comes in. If you have got that, Madge, be content and thankful."

"But nobody likes to be unjustly depreciated."

"Isn't that pride?"

"One must have some pride. I can't make religion *everything*, Lois. I was a woman before I was a Christian."

"If you want to be a happy woman, you will let religion be everything."

"But, Lois!—wouldn't *you* like to be rich, and have pretty things about you?"

"Don't ask me," said Lois, smiling. "I am a woman too, and dearly fond of pretty things. But, Madge, there is something else I love better," she added, with a sudden sweet gravity; "and that is, the will of my God. I would rather have what he chooses to give me. Really and truly; I would *rather* have that."

The conversation therewith was at an end. In the evening of that same day Lois left her seclusion and came down-stairs for the first time. She was languid enough yet to be obliged to move slowly, and her cheeks had not got back their full colour, and were thinner than they used to be; otherwise she looked well, and Mrs. Wishart contemplated her with great satisfaction. Somewhat to Lois's vexation, or she thought so, they found Mr. DilIwyn down-stairs also. Lois had the invalid's place of honour, in a corner of the sofa, with a little table drawn up for her separate tea; and Madge and Mr. Dillwyn made toast for her at the fire. The fire gave its warm light, the lamps glittered with a more brilliant illumination; ruddy hues of tapestry and white gleams from silver and glass filled the room, with lights and shadows everywhere, that contented the eye and the imagination too, with suggestions of luxury and plenty and sheltered comfort. Lois felt the shelter and the comfort and the pleasure, with that enhanced intensity which belongs to one's sensations in a state of convalescence, and in her case was heightened by previous experiences. Nestled among cushions in her corner, she watched everything and took the effect of every detail; tasted every flavour of the situation; but all with a thoughtful, wordless gravity; she hardly spoke at all.

After tea, Mr. Dillwyn and Madge sat down to the chess-board. And then Lois's attention fastened upon them. Madge had drawn the little table that held the chessmen into very close proximity to the sofa, so that she was just at Lois's hand; but then her whole mind was bent upon the game, and Lois could study her as she pleased. She did study Madge. She admired her sister's great beauty; the glossy black hair, the delicate skin, the excellent features, the pretty figure. Madge was very handsome, there was no doubt; Mr. Dillwyn would not have far to look, Lois thought, to find one handsomer than herself was. There was a frank, fine expression of face, too; and manners thoroughly good. They lacked some of the quietness of long usage, Lois thought; a quick look or movement now and then, or her eager eyes, or an abrupt tone of voice, did in some measure betray the country girl, to whom everything was novel and interesting; and distinguished her from the half *blasé*, wholly indifferent air of other people. She will learn that quietness soon enough, thought Lois; and then, nothing could be left to desire in Madge. The quietness had always been a characteristic of Lois herself; partly difference of temperament, partly the sweeter poise of Lois's mind, had made this difference between the sisters; and now of course Lois had had more experience of people and the world. But it was not in her the result of experience, this fair, unshaken balance of mind and manner which was always a charm in her. However, this by the way; the girl herself was drawing no comparisons, except so far as to judge her sister handsomer than herself.

From Madge her eye strayed to Mr. Dillwyn, and studied him. She was lying back a little in shadow, and could do it safely. He was teaching Madge the game; and Lois could not but acknowledge and admire in him the finished manner she missed in her sister. Yes, she could not help admiring it. The gentle, graceful, easy way, in which he directed her, gave reproofs and suggestions about the game, and at the same time kept up a running conversation with Mrs. Wishart; letting not one thing interfere with another, nor failing for a moment to attend to both ladies. There was a quiet perfection about the whole home picture; it remained in Lois's memory for ever. Mrs. Wishart sat on an opposite sofa knitting; not a long blue stocking, like her dear grandmother, but a web of wonderful hues, thick and soft, and various as the feathers on a peacock's neck. It harmonized with all the rest of the room, where warmth and colour and a certain fulness of detail gave the impression of long-established easy living. The contrast was very strong with Lois's own life surroundings; she compared and contrasted, and was not quite sure how much of this sort of thing might be good for her. However, for the present here she was, and she enjoyed it. Then she queried if Mr. Dillwyn were enjoying it. She noticed the hand which he had run through the locks of his hair, resting his head on the hand. It was well formed, well kept; in that nothing remarkable; but there was a certain character of energy in the fingers which did not look like the hand of a lazy man. How could he spend his life so in doing nothing? She did not fancy that he cared much about the game, or much about the talk; what was he there for, so often? Did he, possibly, care about Madge? Lois's thoughts came back to the conversation.

"Mrs. Wishart, what is to be done with the poor of our city?" Mr.
Dillwyn was saying.

"I don't know! I wish something could be done with them, to keep them from coming to the house. My cook turns away a dozen a day, some days."

"Those are not the poor I mean."

"They are poor enough."

"They are to a large extent pretenders. I mean the masses of solid poverty which fill certain parts of

the city—and not small parts either. It is no pretence there."

"I thought there were societies enough to look after them. I know I pay my share to keep up the societies. What are they doing?"

"Something, I suppose. As if a man should carry a watering-pot to Vesuvius."

"What in the world has turned *your* attention that way? I pay my subscriptions, and then I discharge the matter from my mind. It is the business of the societies. What has set you to thinking about it?"

"Something I have seen, and something I have heard."

"What have you heard? Are you studying political economy? I did not know you studied anything but art criticism."

"What do you do with your poor at Shampuashuh, Miss Madge?"

"We do not have any poor. That is, hardly any. There is nobody in the poorhouse. A few—perhaps half a dozen—people, cannot quite support themselves. Check to your queen, Mr. Dillwyn."

"What do you do with them?"

"O, take care of them. It's very simple. They understand that whenever they are in absolute need of it, they can go to the store and get what they want."

"At whose expense?"

"O, there is a fund there for them. Some of the better-off people take care of that."

"I should think that would be quite too simple," said Mrs. Wishart, "and extremely liable to abuse."

"It is never abused, though. Some of the people, those poor ones, will come as near as possible to starving before they will apply for anything."

Mrs. Wishart remarked that Shampuashuh was altogether unlike all other places she ever had heard of.

"Things at Shampuashuh are as they ought to be," Mr. Dillwyn said.

"Now, Mr. Dillwyn," cried Madge, "I will forgive you for taking my queen, if you will answer a question for me. What is 'art criticism'?"

"Why, Madge, you know!" said Lois from her sofa corner.

"I do not admire ignorance so much as to pretend to it," Madge rejoined. "What is art criticism, Mr. Dillwyn?"

"What is art?"

"That is what I do not know!" said Madge, laughing. "I understand criticism. It is the art that bothers me. I only know that it is something as far from nature as possible."

"O Madge, Madge!" said Lois again; and Mr. Dillwyn laughed a little.

"On the contrary, Miss Madge. Your learning must be unlearnt. Art is really so near to nature—Check!—that it consists in giving again the facts and effects of nature in human language."

"Human language? That is, letters and words?"

"Those are the symbols of one language."

"What other is there?"

"Music—painting—architecture—— I am afraid, Miss Madge, that is check-mate?"

"You said you had seen and heard something, Mr. Dillwyn," Mrs. Wishart now began. "Do tell us what. I have neither seen nor heard anything in an age."

Mr. Dillwyn was setting the chessmen again.

"What I saw," he said, "was a silk necktie—or scarf—such as we wear.

What I heard, was the price paid for making it."

"Was there anything remarkable about the scarf?"

"Nothing whatever; except the aforesaid price."

"What *was* the price paid for making it?"

"Two cents."

"Who told you?"

"A friend of mine, who took me in on purpose that I might see and hear, what I have reported."

"*Two cents*, did you say? But that's no price!"

"So I thought."

"How many could a woman make in a day, Madge, of those silk scarfs?"

"I don't know—I suppose, a dozen."

"A dozen, I was told, is a fair day's work," Mr. Dillwyn said. "They do more, but it is by working on into the night."

"Good patience! Twenty-five cents for a hard day's work!" said Mrs. Wishart. "A dollar and a half a week! Where is bread to come from, to keep them alive to do it?"

"Better die at once, I should say," echoed Madge.

"Many a one would be glad of that alternative, I doubt not," Mr. Dillwyn went on. "But there is perhaps an old mother to be taken care of, or a child or two to feed and bring up."

"Don't talk about it!" said Mrs. Wishart. "It makes me feel blue."

"I must risk that. I want you to think about it. Where is help to come from? These are the people I was thinking of, when I asked you what was to be done with our poor."

"I don't know why you ask me. *I* can do nothing. It is not my business."

"Will it do to assume that as quite certain?"

"Why yes. What can I do with a set of master tailors?"

"You can cry down the cheap shops; and say why."

"Are the dear shops any better?"

Mr. Dillwyn laughed. "Presumably! But talking—even your talking—will not do all. I want you to think about it."

"I don't want to think about it," answered the lady. "It's beyond *me*. Poverty is people's own fault. Industrious and honest people can always get along."

"If sickness does not set in, or some father, or husband, or son does not take to bad ways."

"How can I help all that?" asked the lady somewhat pettishly. "I never knew you were in the benevolent and reformatory line before, Mr. Dillwyn. What has put all this in your head?"

"Those scarfs, for one thing. Another thing was a visit I had lately occasion to make. It was near midday. I found a room as bare as a room could be, of all that we call comfort; in the floor a small pine table set with three plates, bread, cold herrings, and cheese. That was the dinner for a little boy, whom I found setting the table, and his father and mother. The parents work in a factory hard by, from early to late; they have had sickness in the family this autumn, and are too poor to afford a fire to eat their dinner by, or to make it warm, so the other child, a little girl, has been sent away for the winter. It was frostily cold the day I was there. The boy goes to school in the afternoon, and comes home in time to light up a fire for his father and mother to warm themselves by at evening. And the mother has all her housework to do after she comes home."

"That's better than the other case," said Mrs. Wishart.

"But what could be done, Mr. Dillwyn?" said Lois from her corner. "It seems as if something was

wrong. But how could it be mended?"

"I want Mrs. Wishart to consider of that."

"I can't consider it!" said the lady. "I suppose it is intended that there should be poor people always, to give us something to do."

"Then let us do it."

"How?"

"I am not certain; but I make a suggestion. Suppose all the ladies of this city devoted their diamonds to this purpose. Then any number of dwelling-houses could be put up; separate, but so arranged as to be warmed by steam from a general centre, at a merely nominal cost for each one; well ventilated and comfortable; so putting an end to the enormity of tenement houses. Then a commission might be established to look after the rights of the poor; to see that they got proper wages, were not cheated, and that all should have work who wanted it. So much might be done."

"With no end of money."

"I proposed to take the diamonds of the city, you know."

"And why just the diamonds?" inquired Mrs. Wishart. "Why don't you speak of some of the indulgences of the men? Take the horses—or the wines—"

"I am speaking to a lady," said Dillwyn, smiling. "When I have a man to apply to, I will make my application accordingly."

"Ask him for his tobacco?" said Mrs. Wishart.

"Certainly for his tobacco. There is as much money spent in this city for tobacco as there is for bread."

Madge exclaimed in incredulous astonishment; and Lois asked if the diamonds of the city would amount to very much.

"Yes, Miss Lois. American ladies are very fond of diamonds; and it is a common thing for one of them to have from ten thousand to twenty thousand or thirty thousand dollars' worth of them as part of the adornment of her pretty person at one time."

"Twenty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds on at once!" cried Madge.
"I call that wicked!"

"Why?" asked Mr. Dillwyn, smiling.

"There's no wickedness in it," said Mrs. Wishart. "How should it be wicked? You put on a flower; and another, who can afford it, puts on a diamond. What's the difference?"

"My flower does not cost anybody anything," said Madge.

"What do my diamonds cost anybody?" returned Mrs. Wishart.

Madge was silent, though not because she had nothing to say; and at this precise moment the door opened, and visitors were ushered in.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHESS.

There entered upon the scene, that is, a little lady of very gay and airy manner; whose airiness, however, was thoroughly well bred. She was accompanied by a tall, pleasant-looking man, of somewhat dreamy aspect; and they were named to Lois and Madge as Mrs. and Mr. Burrage. To Mr. Dillwyn they were not named; and the greet ing in that quarter was familiar; the lady giving him a nod, and the gentleman an easy "Good evening." The lady's attention came round to him again as soon as she was seated.

"Why, Philip, I did not expect to find you. What are you doing here?"

"I was making toast a little while ago."

"I did not know that was one of your accomplishments."

"They said I did it well. I have picked up a good deal of cooking in the course of my travels."

"In what part of the world did you learn to make toast?" asked the lady, while a pair of lively eyes seemed to take note rapidly of all that was in the room; rapidly but carefully, Lois thought. She was glad she herself was hidden in the shadowy sofa corner.

"I believe that is always learned in a cold country, where people have fire," Mr. Dillwyn answered the question.

"These people who travel all over get to be insufferable!" the little lady went on, turning to Mrs. Wishart; "they think they know everything; and they are not a bit wiser than the rest of us. You were not at the De Large's luncheon,—what a pity! I know; your cold shut you up. You must take care of that cold. Well, you lost something. This is the seventh entertainment that has been given to that English party; and every one of them has exceeded the others. There is nothing left for the eighth. Nobody will dare give an eighth. One is fairly tired with the struggle of magnificence. It's the battle of the giants over again, with a difference."

"It is not a battle with attempt to destroy," said her husband.

"Yes, it is—to destroy competition. I have been at every one of the seven but one—and I am absolutely tired with splendour. But there is really nothing left for any one else to do. I don't see how one is to go any further—without the lamp of Aladdin."

"A return to simplicity would be grateful," remarked Mrs. Wishart. "And as new as anything else could be."

"Simplicity! O, my dear Mrs. Wishart!—don't talk of simplicity. We don't want simplicity. We have got past that. Simplicity is the dream of children and country folks; and it means, eating your meat with your fingers."

"It's the sweetest way of all," said Dillwyn.

"Where did you discover that? It must have been among savages.
Children—country folks—*and* savages, I ought to have said."

"Orientals are not savages. On the contrary, very far exceeding in politeness any western nation I know of."

"You would set a table, then, with napkins and fingers! Or are the napkins not essential?"

"C'est selon," said Dillwyn. "In a strawberry bed, or under a cherry tree, I should vote them a nuisance. At an Asiatic grandee's table you would have them embroidered and perfumed; and one for your lap and another for your lips."

"Evidently they are long past the stage of simplicity. Talking of napkins we had them embroidered—and exquisitely—Japanese work; at the De Larges'. Mine had a peacock in one corner; or I don't know if it was a peacock; it was a gay-feathered bird—"

"A peacock has a tail," suggested Mr. Dillwyn.

"Well, I don't know whether it had a tail, but it was most exquisite; in blue and red and gold; I never saw anything prettier. And at every plate were such exquisite gifts! really elegant, you know. Flowers are all very well; but when it comes to jewellery, I think it is a little beyond good taste. Everybody can't do it, you know; and it is rather embarrassing to *nous autres*."

"Simplicity *has* its advantages," observed Mr. Dillwyn.

"Nonsense, Philip! You are as artificial a man as any one I know."

"In what sense?" asked Mr. Dillwyn calmly. "You are bound to explain, for the sake of my character, that I do not wear false heels to my boots."

"Don't be ridiculous! You have no need to wear false heels. *Art* need not be *false*, need it?"

"True art never is," said Mr. Dillwyn, amid some laughter.

"Well, artifice, then?"

"Artifice, I am afraid, is of another family, and not allied to truth."

"Well, everybody that knows you knows you are true; but they know, too, that if ever there was a fastidious man, it is you; and a man that wants everything at its last pitch of refinement."

"Which desirable stage I should say the luncheon you were describing had not reached."

"You don't know. I had not told you the half. Fancy!—the ice floated in our glasses in the form of pond lilies; as pretty as possible, with broad leaves and buds."

"How did they get it in such shapes?" asked Madge, with her eyes a trifle wider open than was usual with them.

"O, froze it in moulds, of course. But you might have fancied the fairies had carved it. Then, Mrs. Wishart, there was an arrangement of glasses over the gas burners, which produced the most silver sounds of music you ever heard; no chime, you know, of course; but a most peculiar, sweet, mysterious succession of musical breathings. Add to that, by means of some invisible vaporizers, the whole air was filled with sweetness; now it was orange flowers, and now it was roses, and then again it would be heliotrope or violets; I never saw anything so refined and so exquisite in my life. Waves of sweetness, rising and falling, coming and going, and changing; it was perfect."

The little lady delivered herself of this description with much animation, accompanying the latter part of it with a soft waving of her hand; which altogether overcame Philip's gravity, and he burst into a laugh, in which Mr. Burrage presently joined him; and Lois and Madge found it impossible not to follow.

"What's the matter, Philip?" the lady asked.

"I am reminded of an old gentleman I once saw at Gratz; he was copying the Madonna della Seggia in a mosaic made with the different-coloured wax heads of matches."

"He must have been out of his head."

"That was the conclusion I came to."

"Pray what brought him to your remembrance just then?"

"I was thinking of the different ways people take in the search after happiness."

"And one worth as much as another, I suppose you mean? That is a matter of taste. Mrs. Wishart, I see *your* happiness is cared for, in having such charming friends with you. O, by the way!—talking of seeing,—*have* you seen Dulles & Grant's new Persian rugs and carpets?"

"I have been hardly anywhere. I wanted to take Madge to see Brett's
Collection of Paintings; but I have been unequal to any exertion."

"Well, the first time you go anywhere, go to Dulles & Grant's. Take her to see those. Pictures are common; but these Turkish rugs and things are not. They are the most exquisite, the most odd, the most delicious things you ever saw. I have been wanting to ruin myself with them ever since I saw them. It's high art, really. Those Orientals are wonderful people! There is one rug—it is as large as this floor, nearly,—well, it is covered with medallions in old gold, set in a wild, irregular design of all sorts of Cashmere shawl colours—thrown about anyhow; and yet the effect is rich beyond description; simple, too. Another,—O, that is very rare; it is a rare Keelum carpet; let me see if I can describe it. The ground is a full bright red. Over this run palm leaves and little bits of ruby and maroon and gold mosaic; and between the palm leaves come great ovals of olive mixed with black, blue, and yellow; shading off into them. I *never* saw anything I wanted so much."

"What price?"

"O, they are all prices. The Keelum carpet is only fifteen hundred—but my husband says it is too much. Then another Persian carpet has a centre of red and white. Round this a border of palm leaves. Round these another border of deliciously mixed up warm colours; warm and rich. Then another border of palms; and then the rest of the carpet is in blended shades of dark dull red and pink, with olive flowers thrown over it. O, I can't tell you the half. You must go and see. They have immensely wide

borders, all of them; and great thick, soft piles."

"Have you been to Brett's Collection?"

"Yes."

"What is there?"

"The usual thing. O, but I haven't told you what I have come here for to-night."

"I thought it was, to see me."

"Yes, but not for pleasure, this time," said the lively lady, laughing. "I had business—I really do have business sometimes. I came this evening, because I wanted to see you when I could have a chance to explain myself. Mrs. Wishart, I want you to take my place. They have made me first directress of the Forlorn Children's Home."

"Does the epithet apply to the place? or to the children?" Mr. Dillwyn asked.

"Now I *cannot* undertake the office," Mrs. Burrage went on without heeding him. "My hands are as full as they can hold, and my head fuller. You must take it, Mrs. Wishart. You are just the person."

"I?" said Mrs. Wishart, with no delighted expression. "What are the duties?"

"O, just oversight, you know; keeping things straight. Everybody needs to be kept up to the mark. I cannot, for our Reading Club meets just at the time when I ought to be up at the Home."

The ladies went into a closer discussion of the subject in its various bearings; and Mr. Dillwyn and Madge returned to their chess play. Lois lay watching and thinking. Mr. Burrage looked on at the chess-board, and made remarks on the game languidly. By and by the talk of the two ladies ceased, and the head of Mrs. Burrage came round, and she also studied the chess-players. Her face was observant and critical, Lois thought; oddly observant and thoughtful.

"Where did you get such charming friends to stay with you, Mrs.
Wishart? You are to be envied."

Mrs. Wishart explained, how Lois had been ill, and had come to get well under her care.

"You must bring them to see me. Will you? Are they fond of music? Bring them to my next musical evening."

And then she rose; but before taking leave she tripped across to Lois's couch and came and stood quite close to her, looking at her for a moment in what seemed to the girl rather an odd silence.

"You aren't equal to playing chess yet?" was her equally odd abrupt question. Lois's smile showed some amusement.

"My brother is such an idle fellow, he has got nothing better to do than to amuse sick people. It's charity to employ him. And when you are able to come out, if you'll come to me, you shall hear some good music. Good-bye!"

Her brother! thought Lois as she went off. Mr. Dillwyn, *her* brother!
I don't believe she likes Madge and me to know him.

Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey Burrage drove away in silence for a few minutes; then the lady broke out.

"There's mischief there, Chauncey!"

"What mischief?" the gentleman asked innocently.

"Those girls."

"Very handsome girls. At least the one that was visible."

"The other's worse. *I* saw her. The one you saw is handsome; but the other is peculiar. She is rare. Maybe not just so handsome, but more refined; and *peculiar*. I don't know just what it is in her; but she fascinated me. Masses of auburn hair—not just auburn—more of a golden tint than brown—with a gold *reflet*, you know, that is so lovely; and a face—"

"Well, what sort of a face?" asked Mr. Burrage, as his spouse paused.

"Something between a baby and an angel, and yet with a sort of sybil look of wisdom. I believe she put one of Domenichino's sybils into my head; there's that kind of complexion—"

"My dear," said the gentleman, laughing, "you could not tell what complexion she was of. She was in a shady corner."

"I was quite near her. Now that sort of thing might just catch Philip."

"Well," said the gentleman, "you cannot help that."

"I don't know if I can or no!"

"Why should you want to help it, after all?"

"Why? I don't want Philip to make a mis-match."

"Why should it be a mis-match?"

"Philip has got too much money to marry a girl with nothing."

Mr. Burrage laughed. His wife demanded to know what he was laughing at? and he said "the logic of her arithmetic."

"You men have no more logic in action, than we women have in speculation. I am logical the other way."

"That is too involved for me to follow. But it occurs to me to ask, Why should there be any match in the case here?"

"That's so like a man! Why shouldn't there? Take a man like my brother, who don't know what to do with himself; a man whose eye and ear are refined till he judges everything according to a standard of beauty;—and give him a girl like that to look at! I said she reminded me of one of Domenichino's sybils —but it isn't that. I'll tell you what it is. She is like one of Fra Angelico's angels. Fancy Philip set down opposite to one of Fra Angelico's angels in flesh and blood!"

"Can a man do better than marry an angel?"

"Yes! so long as he is not an angel himself, and don't live in Paradise."

"They do not marry in Paradise," said Mr. Burrage dryly. "But why a fellow may not get as near a paradisaical condition as he can, with the drawback of marriage, and in this mundane sphere,—I do not see."

"Men never see anything till afterwards. I don't know anything about this girl, Chauncey, except her face. But it is just the way with men, to fall in love with a face. I do not know what she is, only she is nobody; and Philip ought to marry somebody. I know where they are from. She has no money, and she has no family; she has of course no breeding; she has probably no education, to fit her for being his wife. Philip ought to have the very reverse of all that. Or else he ought not to marry at all, and let his money come to little Phil Chauncey."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked the gentleman, seeming amused.

But Mrs. Burrage made no answer, and the rest of the drive, long as it was, was rather stupid.

CHAPTER XLII.

RULES.

The next day Mr. Dillwyn came to take Madge to see Brett's Collection of Paintings. Mrs. Wishart declared herself not yet up to it. Madge came home in a great state of delight.

"It was so nice!" she explained to her sister; "just as nice as it could be. Mr. Dillwyn was so pleasant; and told me everything and about everything; about the pictures, and the masters; I shouldn't have known what anything meant, but he explained it all. And it was such fun to see the people."

"The people!" said Lois.

"Yes. There were a great many people; almost a crowd; and it *did* amuse me to watch them."

"I thought you went to see the paintings."

"Well, I saw the paintings; and I heard more about them than I can ever remember."

"What was there?"

"O, I can't tell you. Landscapes and landscapes; and then Holy Families; and saints in misery, of one sort or another; and battle-pieces, but those were such confusion that all I could make out was horses on their hind-legs; and portraits. I think it is nonsense for people to try to paint battles; they can't do it; and, besides, as far as the fighting goes, one fight is just like another. Mr. Dillwyn told me of a travelling showman, in Germany, who travelled about with the panorama of a battle; and every year he gave it a new name, the name of the last battle that was in men's mouths; and all he had to do was to change the uniforms, he said. He had a pot of green paint for the Prussians, and red for the English, and blue, I believe, for the French, and so on; and it did just as well."

"What did you see that you liked best?"

"I'll tell you. It was a little picture of kittens, in and out of a basket. Mr. Dillwyn didn't care about it; but I thought it was the prettiest thing there. Mrs. Burrage was there."

"Was she?"

"And Mr. Dillwyn does know more than ever anybody else in the world, I think. O, he was so nice, Lois! so nice and kind. I wouldn't have given a pin to be there, if it hadn't been for him. He wouldn't let me get tired; and he made everything amusing; and O, I could have sat there till now and watched the people."

"The people! If the pictures were good, I don't see how you could have eyes for the people."

"'The proper study of mankind is *man*,' my dear; and I like them alive better than painted. It was fun to see the dresses; and then the ways. How some people tried to be interested—"

"Like you?"

"What do you mean? I *was* interested; and some talked and flirted, and some stared. I watched every new set that came in. Mr. DilIwyn says he will come and take us to the Philarmonic, as soon as the performances begin."

"Madge, it is *better* for us to go with Mrs. Wishart."

"She may go too, if she likes."

"And it is *better* for us not to go with Mr. DilIwyn, more than we can help."

"I won't," said Madge. "I can't help going with him whenever he asks me, and I am not going any other time."

"What did Mrs. Burrage say to you?"

"Hm!— Not much. I caught her looking at me more than once. She said she would have a musical party next week, and we must come; and she asked if you would be well enough."

"I hope I shall not."

"That's nonsense. Mr. Dillwyn wants us to go, I know."

"That is not a reason for going."

"I think it *is*. He is just as good as he can be, and I like him more than anybody else I ever saw in my life. I'd like to see the thing he'd ask me, that I wouldn't do."

"Madge, Madge!"

"Hush, Lois; that's nonsense."

"Madge you trouble me very much."

"And that's nonsense too."

Madge was beginning to get over the first sense of novelty and strangeness in all about her; and, as she overcame that, a feeling of delight replaced it, and grew and grew. Madge was revelling in enjoyment. She went out with Mrs. Wishart, for drives in the Park and for shopping expeditions in the city, and once or twice to make visits. She went out with Mr. Dillwyn, too, as we have seen, who took her to drive, and conducted her to galleries of pictures and museums of curiosities; and finally, and with Mrs. Wishart, to a Philharmonic rehearsal. Madge came home in a great state of exultation; though Lois was almost indignant to find that the place and the people had rivalled the performance in producing it. Lois herself was almost well enough to go, though delicate enough still to allow her the choice of staying at home. She was looking like herself again; yet a little paler in colour and more deliberate in action than her old wont; both the tokens of a want of strength which continued to be very manifest. One day Madge came home from going with Mrs. Wishart to Dulles & Grant's. I may remark that the evening at Mrs. Burrage's had not yet come off, owing to a great storm the night of the music party; but another was looming up in the distance.

"Lois," Madge delivered herself as she was taking off her wrappings, "it is a great thing to be rich!"

"One needs to be sick to know how true that is," responded Lois. "If you could guess what I would have given last summer and fall for a few crumbs of the comfort with which this house is stacked full—like hay in a barn!"

"But I am not thinking of comfort."

"I am. How I wanted everything for the sick people at Esterbrooke. Think of not being able to change their bed linen properly, nor anything like properly!"

"Of course," said Madge, "poor people do not have plenty of things. But
I was not thinking of *comfort*, when I spoke."

"Comfort is the best thing."

"Don't you like pretty things?"

"Too well, I am afraid."

"You cannot like them too well. Pretty things were meant to be liked. What else were they made for? And of all pretty things—O, those carpets and rugs! Lois, I never saw or dreamed of anything so magnificent. I *should* like to be rich, for once!"

"To buy a Persian carpet?"

"Yes. That and other things. Why not?"

"Madge, don't you know this was what grandmother was afraid of, when we were learning to know Mr. Dillwyn?"

"What?" said Madge defiantly.

"That we would be bewitched—or dazzled—and lose sight of better things; I think 'bewitched' is the word; all these beautiful things and this luxurious comfort—it is bewitching; and so are the fine manners and the cultivation and the delightful talk. I confess it. I feel it as much as you do; but this is just what dear grandmother wanted to protect us from."

"*What* did she want to protect us from?" repeated Madge vehemently. "Not Persian carpets, nor luxury; we are not likely to be tempted by either of them in Shampuashuh."

"We might *here*."

"Be tempted? To what? I shall hardly be likely to go and buy a fifteen-hundred-dollar carpet. And it was *cheap* at that, Lois! I can live without it, besides. I haven't got so far that I can't stand on the floor, without any carpet at all, if I must. You needn't think it."

"I do not think it. Only, do not be tempted to fancy, darling, that there is any way open to you to get such things; that is all."

"Any way open to me? You mean, I might marry a rich man some day?"

"You might think you might."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because, dear Madge, you will not be asked. I told you why. And if you were,—Madge, you would not, you *could* not, marry a man that was not a Christian? Grandmother made me promise I never would."

"She did not make me promise it. Lois, don't be ridiculous. I don't want to marry anybody at present; but I like Persian carpets, and nothing will make me say I don't. And I like silver and gold; and servants, and silk dresses, and ice-cream, and pictures, and big houses, and big mirrors, and all the rest of it."

"You can find it all in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, in the description of the city Babylon; which means the world."

"I thought Babylon was Rome."

"Read for yourself."

I think Madge did not read it for herself, however; and the days went on after the accustomed fashion, till the one arrived which was fixed for Mrs. Chauncey Burrage's second musical party. The three ladies were all invited. Mrs. Wishart supposed they were all going; but when the day came Lois begged off. She did not feel like going, she said; it would be far pleasanter to her if she could stay at home quietly; it would be better for her. Mrs. Wishart demurred; the invitation had been very urgent; Mrs. Burrage would be disappointed; and, besides, she was a little proud herself of her handsome young relations, and wanted the glory of producing them together. However, Lois was earnest in her wish to be left at home; quietly earnest, which is the more difficult to deal with; and, knowing her passionate love for music, Mrs. Wishart decided that it must be her lingering weakness and languor which indisposed her for going. Lois was indeed looking well again; but both her friends had noticed that she was not come back to her old lively energy, whether of speaking or doing. Strength comes back so slowly, they said, after one of those fevers. Yet Madge was not satisfied with this reasoning, and pondered, as she and Mrs. Wishart drove away, what else might be the cause of Lois's refusal to go with them.

Meanwhile Lois, having seen them off and heard the house door close upon them, drew up her chair before the fire and sat down. She was in the back drawing-room, the windows of which looked out to the river and the opposite shore; but the shutters were closed and the curtains drawn, and only the interior view to be had now. So, or any way, Lois loved the place. It was large, roomy, old-fashioned, with none of the stiffness of new things about it; elegant, with the many tokens of home life, and of a long habit of culture and comfort. In a big chimney a big wood fire was burning quietly; the room was softly warm; a brilliant lamp behind Lois banished even imaginary gloom, and a faint red shine came from the burning hickory logs. Only this last illumination fell on Lois's face, and in it Lois's face showed grave and troubled. She was more like a sybil at this moment, looking into confused earthly things, than like one of Fra Angelico's angels rejoicing in the clear light of heaven.

Lois pulled her chair nearer to the fire, and bent down, leaning towards it; not for warmth, for she was not in the least cold; but for company, or for counsel. Who has not taken counsel of a fire? And Lois was in perplexity of some sort, and trying to think hard and to examine into herself. She half wished she had gone to the party at Mrs. Burrage's. And why had she not gone? She did not want, she did not think it was best, to meet Mr. Dillwyn there. And why not, seeing that she met him constantly where she was? Well, *that* she could not help; this would be voluntary; put ting herself in his way, and in his sister's way. Better not, Lois said to herself. But why, better not? It would surely be a pleasant gathering at Mrs. Burrage's, a pleasant party; her parties always were pleasant, Mrs. Wishart said; there would be none but the best sort of people there, good talking and good music; Lois would have liked it. What if Mr. Dillwyn were there too? Must she keep out of sight of him? Why should she keep out of sight of him? Lois put the question sharply to her conscience. And she found that the answer, if given truly, would be that she fancied Mr. Dillwyn liked her sister's society better than her own. But what then? The blood began to rush over Lois's cheeks and brow and to burn in her pulses. *Then*, it must be that she herself liked *his* society—liked him—yes, a little too well; else what harm in his preferring Madge? O, could it be? Lois hid her face in her hands for a while, greatly disturbed; she was very much afraid the case was even so.

But suppose it so; still, what of it? What did it signify, whom Mr. Dillwyn liked? to Lois he could never be anything. Only a pleasant acquain'tance. He and she were in two different lines of life, lines that never cross. Her promise was passed to her grandmother; she could never marry a man who was not a Christian. Happily Mr. Dillwyn did not want to marry her; no such question was coming up for decision. Then what was it to her if he liked Madge? Something, because it was not liking that would end in anything; it was impossible a man in his position and circumstances should choose for a wife one in hers. If he could make such a choice, it would be Madge's duty, as much as it would be her own, to refuse him. Would Madge refuse? Lois believed not. Indeed, she thought no one could refuse him, that had not unconquerable reasons of conscience; and Madge, she knew, did not share those which were so

strong in her own mind. Ought Madge to share them? Was it indeed an absolute command that justified and necessitated the promise made to her grandmother? or was it a less stringent thing, that might possibly be passed over by one not so bound? Lois's mind was in a turmoil of thoughts most unusual, and most foreign to her nature and habit; thoughts seemed to go round in a whirl. And in the midst of the whirl there would come before her mind's eye, not now Tom Caruthers' face, but the vision of a pair of pleasant grey eyes at once keen and gentle; or of a close head of hair with a white hand roving amid the thick locks of it; or the outlines of a figure manly and lithe; or some little thing done with that ease of manner which was so winning. Sometimes she saw them as in Mrs. Wishart's drawing-room, and sometimes at the table in the dear old house in Shampuashuh, and sometimes under the drip of an umbrella in a pouring rain, and sometimes in the old schoolhouse. Manly and kind, and full of intelligence, filled with knowledge, well-bred, and noble; so Lois thought of him. Yet he was not a Christian, therefore no fit partner for Madge or for any one else who was a Christian. Could that be the absolute fact? Must it be? Was such the inevitable and universal conclusion? On what did the logic of it rest? Some words in the Bible bore the brunt of it, she knew; Lois had read them and talked them over with her grandmother; and now an irresistible desire took possession of her to read them again, and more critically. She jumped up and ran up-stairs for her Bible.

The fire was down in her own room; the gas was not lit; so she went back to the bright drawing-room, which to-night she had all to herself. She laid her book on the table and opened it, and then was suddenly checked by the question—what did all this matter to her, that she should be so fiercely eager about it? Dismay struck her anew. What was any un-Christian man to her, that her heart should beat so at considering possible relations between them? No such relations were desired by any such person; what ailed Lois even to take up the subject? If Mr. Dillwyn liked either of the sisters particularly, it was Madge. Probably his liking, if it existed, was no more than Tom Caruthers', of which Lois thought with great scorn. Still, she argued, did it not concern her to know with certain'ty what Madge ought to do, in the event of Mr. Dillwyn being not precisely like Tom Caruthers?

CHAPTER XLIII.

ABOUT WORK.

The sound of the opening door made her start up. She would not have even a servant surprise her so; kneeling on the floor with her face buried in her hands on the table. She started up hurriedly; and then was confounded to see entering—Mr. Dillwyn himself. She had heard no ring of the door-bell; that must have been when she was up-stairs getting her Bible. Lois found her feet, in the midst of a terrible confusion of thoughts; but the very inward confusion admonished her to be outwardly calm. She was not a woman of the world, and she had not had very much experience in the difficult art of hiding her feelings, or *acting* in any way; nevertheless she was a true woman, and woman's blessed—or cursed?—instinct of self-command came to her aid. She met Mr. Dillwyn with a face and manner perfectly composed; she knew she did; and cried to herself privately some thing very like a sea captain's order to his helmsman—"Steady! keep her so." Mr. Dillwyn saw that her face was flushed; but he saw, too, that he had disturbed her and startled her; that must be the reason. She looked so far from being delighted, that he could draw no other conclusion. So they shook hands. She thought he did not look delighted either. Of course, she thought, Madge was not there. And Mr. Dillwyn, whatever his mood when he came, recognized immediately the decided reserve and coolness of Lois's manner, and, to use another nautical phrase, laid his course accordingly.

"How do you do, this evening?"

"I think, quite well. There is nobody at home but me, Mr. Dillwyn."

"So I have been told. But it is a great deal pleasanter here, even with only one-third of the family, than it is in my solitary rooms at the hotel."

At that Lois sat down, and so did he. She could not seem to bid him go away. However, she said—

"Mrs. Wishart has taken Madge to your sister's. It is the night of her music party."

"Why did not Mrs. Wishart take you?"

"I thought—it was better for me to stay at home," Lois answered, with a little hesitation.

"You are not afraid of an evening alone!"

"No, indeed; how could I be? Indeed, I think in New York it is rather a luxury."

Then she wished she had not said that. Would he think she meant to intimate that he was depriving her of a luxury? Lois was annoyed at herself; and hurried on to say something else, which she did not intend should be so much in the same line as it proved. Indeed, she was shocked the moment she had spoken.

"Don't you go to your sister's music parties, Mr. Dillwyn?"

"Not universally."

"I thought you were so fond of music"—Lois said apologetically.

"Yes," he said, smiling. "That keeps me away."

"I thought,"—said Lois,—"I thought they said the music was so good?"

"I have no doubt they say it. And they mean it honestly."

"And it is not?"

"I find it quite too severe a tax on my powers of simulation and dissimulation. Those are powers you never call in play?" he added, with a most pleasant smile and glance at her.

"Simulation and dissimulation?" repeated Lois, who had by no means got her usual balance of mind or manner yet. "Are those powers which ought to be called into play?"

"What are you going to do?"

"When?"

"When, for instance, you are in the mood for a grand theme of Handel, and somebody gives you a sentimental bit of Rossini. Or when Mendelssohn is played as if 'songs without words' were songs without meaning. Or when a singer simply displays to you a VOICE, and leaves music out of the question altogether."

"That is hard!" said Lois.

"What is one to do then?"

"It is hard," Lois said again. "But I suppose one ought always to be true."

"If I am true, I must say what I think."

"Yes. If you speak at all."

"What will *they* think then?"

"Yes," said Lois. "But, after all, that is not the first question."

"What is the first question?"

"I think—to do right."

"But what *is* right? What will people think of me, if I tell them their playing is abominable?"

"You need not say it just with those words," said Lois. "And perhaps, if anybody told them the truth, they would do better. At any rate, what they think is not the question, Mr. Dillwyn."

"What is the question?" he asked, smiling.

"What the Lord will think."

"Miss Lois, do you never use dissimulation?"

Lois could not help colouring, a little distressed.

"I try not," she answered. "I dare say I do, sometimes. I dare not say I do not. It is very difficult for a woman to help it."

"More difficult for a woman than for a man?"

"I do not know. I suppose it is."

"Why should that be?"

"I do not know—unless because she is the weaker, and it may be part of the defensive armour of a weak animal."

Mr. Dillwyn laughed a little.

"But that is _dis_simulation," said Lois. "One is not bound always to say all one thinks; only never to say what one does not think."

"You would always give a true answer to a question?"

"I would try."

"I believe it. And now, Miss Lois, in that trust, I am going to ask you a question. Do you recollect a certain walk in the rain?"

"Certainly!" she said, looking at him with some anxiety.

"And the conversation we held under the umbrella, without simulation or dissimulation?"

"Yes."

"You tacitly—perhaps more than tacitly—blamed me for having spent so much of my life in idleness; that is uselessly, to all but myself."

"Did I?"

"You did. And I have thought about it since. And I quite agree with you that to be idle is to be neither wise nor dignified. But here rises a difficulty. I think I would like to be of some use in the world, if I could. But I do not know what to set about."

Lois waited, with silent attention.

"My question is this: How is a man to find his work in the world?"

Lois's eyes, which had been on his face, went away to the fire. His, which had been on the ground, rose to her face.

"I am in a fog," he said

"I believe every one has his work," Lois remarked.

"I think you said so."

"The Bible says so, at any rate."

"*Then* how is a man to find his work?" Philip asked, half smiling; at the same time he drew up his chair a little nearer the fire, and began to put the same in order. Evidently he was not going away immediately, and had a mind to talk out the subject. But why with her? And was he not going to his sister's?—

"If each one has, not only his work but his peculiar work, it must be a very important matter to make sure he has found it. A wheel in a machine can do its own work, but it cannot take the part of another wheel. And your words suppose an exact adjustment of parts and powers."

"The Bible words," said Lois.

"Yes. Well, to my question. I do not know what I ought to do, Miss
Lois. I do not see the work to my hand. How am I ever to be any wiser?"

"I am the last person you should ask. And besides,—I do not think anybody knows enough to set another his appointed task."

"How is he to find it, then?"

"He must ask the One who does know."

"Ask?—*Pray*, you mean?"

"Yes, pray. He must ask to be shown what he ought to do, and how to do it. God knows what place he is meant to fill in the world."

"And if he asks, will he be told?"

"Certainly. That is the promise. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him*.'"

Lois's eyes came over to her questioner at the last words, as it were, setting a seal to them.

"How will he get the answer? Suppose, for instance, I want wisdom; and I kneel down and pray that I may know my work. I rise from my prayer,—there is no voice, nor writing, nor visible sign; how am I the wiser?"

"You think it will *not* be given him?" Lois said, with a faint smile.

"I do not say that. I dare not. But how?"

"You must not think that, or the asking will be vain. You must believe the Lord's promise."

Lois was warming out of her reserve, and possibly Mr. Dillwyn had a purpose that she should; though I think he was quite earnest with his question. But certainly he was watching her, as well as listening to her.

"Go on," he said. "How will the answer come to me?"

"There is another condition, too. You must be quite willing to hear the answer."

"Why?"

"Else you will be likely to miss it. You know, Mr. Dillwyn,—you do *not* know much about housekeeping things,—but I suppose you understand, that if you want to weigh anything truly, your balance must hang even."

He smiled.

"Well, then,—Miss Lois?"

"The answer? It comes different ways. But it is sure to come. I think one way is this,—You see distinctly one thing you ought to do; it is not life-work, but it is one thing. That is enough for one step. You do that; and then you find that that one step has brought you where you can see a little further, and another step is clear. That will do," Lois concluded, smiling; "step by step, you will get where you want to be."

Mr. Dillwyn smiled too, thoughtfully, as it were, to himself.

"Was it *so* that you went to teach school at that unlucky place?—what do you call it?"

"It was not unlucky. Esterbrooke. Yes, I think I went so."

"Was not that a mistake?"

"No, I think not."

"But your work there was broken up?"

"O, but I expect to go back again."

"Back! There? It is too unhealthy."

"It will not be unhealthy, when the railroad is finished."

"I am afraid it will, for some time. And it is too rough a place for you."

"That is why they want me the more."

"Miss Lois, you are not strong enough."

"I am very strong!" she answered, with a delicious smile.

"But there is such a thing—don't you think so?—as fitness of means to ends. You would not take a silver spade to break ground with?"

"I am not at all a silver spade," said Lois. "But if I were; suppose I had no other?"

"Then surely the breaking ground must be left to a different instrument."

"That won't do," said Lois, shaking her head. "The instrument cannot choose, you know, where it will be employed. It does not know enough for that."

"But it made you ill, that work."

"I am recovering fast."

"You came to a good place for recovering," said Dillwyn, glancing round the room, and willing, perhaps, to leave the subject.

"Almost too good," said Lois. "It spoils one. You cannot imagine the contrast between what I came from—and *this*. I have been like one in dreamland. And there comes over me now and then a strange feeling of the inequality of things; almost a sense of wrong; the way I am cared for is so very different from the very best and utmost that could be done for the poor people at Esterbrooke. Think of my soups and creams and ices and oranges and grapes!—and there, very often I could not get a bit of fresh beef to make beef-tea; and what could I do without beef-tea? And what would I not have given for an orange sometimes! I do not mean, for myself. I could get hardly anything the sick people really wanted. And here—it is like rain from the clouds."

"Where does the 'sense of wrong' come in?"

"It seems as if things *need* not be so unequal."

"And what does your silver spade expect to do there?"

"Don't say that! I have no silver spade. But just so far as I could help to introduce better ways and a knowledge of better things, the inequality would be made up—or on the way to be made up."

"What refining measures are you thinking of?—beside your own presence and example."

"I was certainly not thinking of *that*. Why, Mr. Dillwyn, knowledge itself is refining; and then, so is comfort; and I could help them to more comfort, in their houses, and in their meals. I began to teach them singing, which has a great effect; and I carried all the pictures I had with me. Most of all, though, to bring them to a knowledge of Bible truth is the principal thing and the surest way. The rest is really in order to that."

"Wasn't it very hard work?"

"No," said Lois. "Some things were hard; but not the work."

"Because you like it."

"Yes. O, Mr. Dillwyn, there is nothing pleasanter than to do one's work, if it is work one is sure God has given."

"That must be because you love him," said Philip gravely. "Yet I understand, that in the universal adjustment of things, the instrument and its proper work must agree." He was silent a minute, and Lois did not break the pause. If he would think, let him think, was her meaning. Then he began again.

"There are different ways. What would you think of a man who spent his whole life in painting?"

"I should not think that could be anybody's proper life-work."

"I think it was truly his, and he served God in it."

"Who was he?"

"A Catholic monk, in the fifteenth century."

"What did he paint? What was his name?"

"His name was Fra Angelico—by reason of the angelic character which belonged to him and to his paintings; otherwise Fra Giovanni; he was a monk in a Dominican cloister. He entered the convent when he was twenty years old; and from that time, till he was sixty-eight, he served God and his generation by painting."

Lois looked somewhat incredulous. Mr. Dillwyn here took from one of his pockets a small case,

opened it and put it in her hands. It was an excellent copy of a bit of Fra Angelico's work.

"That," he said as he gave it her, "is the head of one of Fra Angelico's angels, from a group in a large picture. I had this copy made for myself some years ago—at a time when I only dimly felt what now I am beginning to understand."

Lois scarce heard what he said. From the time she received the picture in her hands she lost all thought of everything else. The unearthly beauty and purity, the heavenly devotion and joy, seized her heart as with a spell. The delicate lines of the face, the sweet colouring, the finished, perfect handling, were most admirable; but it was the marvellous spiritual love and purity which so took possession of Lois. Her eyes filled and her cheeks flushed. It was, so far as painting could give it, the truth of heaven; and that goes to the heart of the human creature who perceives it. Mr. Dillwyn was watching her, meanwhile, and could look safely, secure that Lois was in no danger of finding it out; and while she, very likely, was thinking of the distance between that angel face and her own, Philip, on the other hand, was following the line of his sister's thought, and tracing the fancied likeness. Like one of Fra Angelico's angels! Yes, there was the same sort of grave purity, of unworldly if not unearthly spiritual beauty. Truly the rapt joy was not there, nor the unshadowed triumph; but love,—and innocence,—and humility,—and truth; and not a stain of the world upon it. Lois said not one word, but looked and looked, till at last she tendered the picture back to its owner.

"Perhaps you would like to keep it," said he, "and show it to your sister."

He brought it to have Madge see it! thought Lois. Aloud—

"No—she would enjoy it a great deal more if you showed it to her;—then you could tell her about it."

"I think you could explain it better."

As he made no motion to take back the picture, Lois drew in her hand again and took a further view. How beautiful was the fair, bright, rapt, blissful face of the angel!—as if, indeed, he were looking at heaven's glories.

"Did he—did the painter—always paint like this?"

"Always, I believe. He improved in his manner as he went on; he painted better and better; but from youth to age he was incessantly doing the one thing, serving God with his pencil. He never painted for money; that is, not for himself; the money went into the church's treasury. He did not work for fame; much of his best work is upon the walls of the monks' cells, where few would see it. He would not receive office. He lived upon the Old and New Testaments, and prayer; and the one business of his life was to show forth to the world what he believed, in such beautiful wise that they might be won to believe it too."

"That is exactly the work we have to do,—everybody," said Lois, lifting her eyes with a bright light in them. "I mean, everybody that is a Christian. That is it;—to show forth Christ, and in such wise that men may see and believe in him too. That is the word in Philippians—'shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' I did not know it was possible to do it in painting—but I see it is. O, thank you for showing me this!—it has done me good."

Her eyes were glistening as she gave him the picture again. Philip put it in security, in silence, and rose up.

"Well," said he, "now I will go and hear somebody play the 'Carnival of Venice,' as if it were all rattle and no fun."

"Is that the way they play it?"

"It is the way some people play it. Good night."

The door closed after him, and Lois sat down alone before the fire again.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHOOSING A WIFE.

She did not open her Bible to go on with the investigation Mr. Dillwyn had broken off. Now that he had just been with her in proper person, an instinct of scared modesty fled from the question whether or no he were a man whom a Christian woman might marry. What was it to her? Lois said to herself; what did it concern her, whether such a marriage were permissible or no? Such a question would never come to her for decision. To Madge, perhaps? But now the other question did ask for consideration;—Why she winced at the idea that it might come to Madge? Madge did not share her sister's scruple; Madge had not made the promise Lois had made; if Mr. Dillwyn asked her, she would accept him, Lois had little doubt. Perhaps he would ask her; and why, why did Lois wish he would not? For she perceived that the idea gave her pain. Why should it give her pain? For herself, the thing was a fixed fact; whatever the Bible said—and she knew pretty well what it said—for *her*, such a marriage was an impossibility. And why should she think about it at all? nobody else was thinking about it. Fra Angelico's angel came back to her mind; the clear, unshadowed eyes, the pure, glad face, the separateness from all earth's passions or pleasures, the lofty exaltation above them. So ought she to be. And then, while this thought was warmest, came, shutting it out, the image of Mr. Dillwyn at the music party; what he was doing there, how he would look and speak, how Madge would enjoy his attentions, and everything; and Lois suddenly felt as if she herself were very much alone. Not merely alone now, to-night; she had chosen this, and liked it; (did she like it?)—not now, but all through her life. It suddenly seemed to Lois as if she were henceforth to be always alone. Madge would no doubt marry—somebody; and there was no home, and nobody to make home for Lois. She had never thought of it before, but now she seemed to see it all quite clearly. Mrs. Barclay's work had been, to separate her, in a certain way, from her family and her surroundings. They fitted together no longer. Lois knew what they did not know; she had tastes which they did not share, but which now were become part of her being; the society in which she had moved all her life till two years, or three years, ago, could no longer content her. It was not inanimate nature, her garden, her spade and her wheelbarrow, that seemed distasteful; Lois could have gone into that work again with all her heart, and thought it no hardship; it was the mental level at which the people lived; the social level, in houses, tables, dress, and amusements, and manner; the aesthetic level of beauty, and grace, and fitness, or at least the perception of them. Lois pondered and revolved this all till she began to grow rather dreary. Think of the Esterbrooke school, and of being alone there! Rough, rude, coarse boys and girls; untaught, untamed, ungovernable, except by an uncommon exertion of wisdom and will; long days of hard labour, nights of common food and sleep, with no delicate arrangements for either, and social refreshment utterly out of the question. And Madge away; married, perhaps, and travelling in Europe, and seeing Fra Angelico's paintings. Then the angel's face recurred to Lois, and she pulled herself up. The angel's face and the painter's history both confronted her. On one hand, the seraphic purity and joy of a creature who knew no will but God's will; on the other hand, the quiet, patient life, which had borne such fruits. Four hundred years ago, Fra Angelico painted; and ever since his work had been bearing witness to God's truth and salvation; was even at that minute teaching and admonishing herself. What did it signify just *how* her own work should be done, if only it were like work? What matter whether rough or smooth, alone or in company? Where the service is to be done, there the Master puts his servant; what the service is, he knows; for the servant, all that he has to take care of is, that step by step he follow where he is led, and everywhere, and by all means in his power, that he show forth Christ to men. Then something like that angel's security would be with him all the way, and something like that angel's joy be at the end of it. The little picture had helped and comforted Lois amazingly, and she went to bed with a heart humbled and almost contented.

She went, however, in good time, before Madge could return home; she did not want to hear the outflow of description and expatiation which might be expected. And Madge indeed found her so seemingly sleepy, that she was forced to give up talking and come to bed too. But all Lois had gained was a respite. The next morning, as soon as they were awake, Madge began.

"Lois, we had a grand time last night! You were so stupidly asleep when I came home, I couldn't tell you. We had a beautiful time! O Lois, Mrs. Burrage's house is just magnificent!"

"I suppose so."

"The floors are all laid in patterns of different coloured woods—a sort of mosaic—"

"Parquetry."

"What?—I call it mosaic, with centre-pieces and borders,—O, elegant! And they are smooth and polished; and then carpets and rugs of all sorts are laid about; and it's most beautiful. She has got one of those Persian carpets she was telling about, Lois."

"I dare say."

"And the walls are all great mirrors, or else there is the richest sort of drapery—curtains, or

hangings; and the prettiest painted walls. And O, Lois, the flowers!—"

"Where were they?"

"Everywhere! On tables, and little shelves on the wall—"

"Brackets."

"O, well!—shelves they *are*, call them what you like; and stands of plants and pots of plants—the whole place was sweet with the smell, and green with the leaves, and brilliant with the flowers—"

"Seems to have been brilliant generally."

"So it was, just *brilliant*, with all that, and with the lights, and with the people."

"Were the people brilliant too?"

"And the playing."

"O,—the playing!"

"Everybody said so. It wasn't like Mrs. Barclay's playing."

"What was it like?"

"It looked like very hard work, to me. My dear, I saw the drops of sweat standing on one man's forehead;—he had been playing a pretty long piece," Madge added, by way of accounting for things. "I never saw anything like it, in all my life!"

"Like what?—sweat on a man's forehead?"

"Like the playing. Don't be ridiculous."

"It is not I," said Lois, who meanwhile had risenn and was getting dressed. Madge was doing the same, talking all the while. "So the playing was something to be *seen*. What was the singing?"

Madge stood still, comb in hand. "I don't know!" she said gravely. Lois could not help laughing.

"Well, I don't," Madge went on. "It was so queer, some of it, I did not know which way to look. Some of it was regular yelling, Lois; and if people are going to yell, I'd rather have it out-of-doors. But one man—I think he thought he was doing it remarkably well—the goings up and down of his voice—"

"Cadences—"

"Well, the cadences if you choose; they made me think of nothing but the tones of the lions and other beasts in the menagerie. Don't you know how they roar up and down? first softly and then loud? I had everything in the world to do not to laugh out downright. He was singing something meant to be very pathetic; and it was absolutely killing."

"It was not all like that, I suppose?"

"No. There was some I liked. But nothing one-half so good as your singing a hymn, Lois. I wish you could have been there to give them one. Only you could not sing a hymn in such a place."

"Why not?"

"Why, because! It would be out of place."

"I would not go anywhere where a hymn would be out of place."

"That's nonsense. But O, how the people were dressed, Lois! Brilliant!
O you may well say so. It took away my breath at first"

"You got it again, I hope?"

"Yes. But O, Lois, it *is* nice to have plenty of money."

"Well, yes. And it is nice *not* to have it—if the Lord makes it so."

"Makes *what* so? You are very unsympathetic this morning, Lois! But if you had only been there. O Lois, there were one or two fur rugs—fur skins for rugs,—the most beautiful things I ever saw. One was a leopard's skin, with its beautiful spots; the other was white and thick and fluffy—I couldn't find out

what it was."

"Bear, maybe."

"Bear! O Lois—those two skins finished me! I kept my head for a while, with all the mosaic floors and rich hangings and flowers and dresses,—but those two skins took away the little sense I had left. They looked so magnificent! so luxurious."

"They are luxurious, no doubt."

"Lois, I don't see why some people should have so much, and others so little."

"The same sort of question that puzzled David once."

"Why should Mrs. Burrage have all that, and you and I have only yellow painted floors and rag carpets?"

"I don't want 'all that.'"

"Don't you?"

"No."

"I do."

"Madge, those things do not make people happy."

"It's all very well to say so, Lois. I should like just to try once."

"How do you like Mrs. Burrage?"

Madge hesitated a trifle.

"She is pleasant,—pretty, and clever, and lively; she went flying about among the people like a butterfly, stopping a minute here and a minute there, but I guess it was not to get honey but to give it. She was a little honeyfied to me, but not much. I don't—think"—(slowly) "she liked to see her brother making much of me."

Lois was silent.

"He was there; I didn't tell you. He came a little late. He said he had been here, and as he didn't find us he came on to his sister's."

"He was here a little while."

"So he said. But he was so good, Lois! He was *very* good. He talked to me, and told me about things, and took care of me, and gave me supper. I tell you, I thought madam his sister looked a little askance at him once or twice. I *know* she tried to get him away."

Lois again made no answer.

"Why should she, Lois?"

"Maybe you were mistaken."

"I don't think I was mistaken. But why should she, Lois?"

"Madge, dear, you know what I told you."

"About what?"

"About that; people's feelings. You and I do not belong to this gay, rich world; we are not rich, and we are not fashionable, and we do not live as they live, in any way; and they do not want us; why should they?"

"We should not hurt them!" said Madge indignantly.

"Nor be of any use or pleasure to them."

"There isn't a girl among them all to compare with you, as far as looks go."

"I am afraid that will not help the matter," said Lois, smiling; but then she added with earnest and almost anxious eagerness,

"Madge, dear, don't think about it! Happiness is not there; and what God gives us is best. Best for you and best for me. Don't you wish for riches!—or for anything we haven't got. What we have to do, is to live so as to show forth Christ and his truth before men."

"Very few do that," said Madge shortly.

"Let us be some of the few."

"I'd like to do it in high places, then," said Madge. "O, you needn't talk, Lois! It's a great deal nicer to have a leopard skin under your feet than a rag-carpet."

Lois could not help smiling, though something like tears was gathering.

"And I'd rather have Mr. Dillwyn take care of me than uncle Tim Hotchkiss."

The laughter and the tears came both more unmistakeably. Lois felt a little hysterical. She finished dressing hurriedly, and heard as little as possible of Madge's further communications.

It was a few hours later, that same morning, that Philip Dillwyn strolled into his sister's breakfast-room. It was a room at the back of the house, the end of a suite; and from it the eye roved through half-drawn *portières* and between rows of pillars, along a vista of the parquetted floors Madge had described to her sister; catching here the glitter of gold from a picture frame, and there a gleam of white from a marble figure, through the half light which reigned there. In the breakfast-room it was bright day; and Mrs. Burrage was finishing her chocolate and playing with bits of dry toast, when her brother came in. Philip had hardly exchanged greetings and taken his seat, when his attention was claimed by Mrs. Burrage's young son and heir, who forthwith thrust himself between his uncle's knees, a bat in one hand, a worsted ball in the other.

"Uncle Phil, mamma says her name usen't to be Burrage—it was your name?"

"That is correct."

"If it was your name once, why isn't it your name now?"

"Because she changed it and became Burrage."

"What made her be Burrage?"

"That is a deep question in mental philosophy, which I am unable to answer, Chauncey."

"She says, it's because she married papa."

"Does not your mother generally speak truth?"

Young Philip Chauncey seemed to consider this question; and finally waiving it, went on pulling at a button of his uncle's coat in the energy of his inquiries.

"Uncle Phil, you haven't got a wife?"

"No."

"Why haven't you?"

"An old cookery book says, 'First catch your hare.'"

"Must you catch your wife?"

"I suppose so."

"How do you catch her?"

But the answer to this most serious inquiry was met by such a burst of laughter on the part of both the older persons in the room, that Phil had to wait; nothing daunted, however, returned to the charge.

"Uncle Phil, if you had a wife, what would her name be?"

"If ever I have one, Chauncey, her name will be—"

But here the speaker had very nearly, in his abstraction, brought out a name that would, to say the least, have astonished his sister. He caught himself up just in time, and laughed.

"If ever I have one, her name will be mine."

"I did not know, last night, but you had chosen the lady to whom you intended to do so much honour," his sister observed coolly, looking at him across her chocolate cup.

"Or who I hoped would do me so much honour. What did you think of my supposed choice?" he asked with equal coolness.

"What could I think, except that you were like all other men—distraught for a pretty face."

"One might do worse," observed Philip, in the same tone, while that of his sister grew warmer.

"Some men,—but not you, Philip?"

"What distinguishes me from the mass?"

"You are too old to be made a fool of."

"Old enough to be wise, certainly."

"And you are too fastidious to be satisfied with anything short of perfection; and then you fill too high a position in the world to marry a girl who is nobody."

"So?"—said Philip, using, which it always vexed his sister to have him do, the half questioning, half admiring, wholly unattackable German expression. "Then the person alluded to seemed to you something short of perfection?"

"She is handsome," returned his sister; "she has a very handsome face; anybody can see that; but that does not make her your equal."

"Humph!—You suppose I can find that rare bird, my equal, do you?"

"Not there."

"What's the matter with her?"

"She is simply nobody."

"Seems to say a good deal," responded Philip. "I do not know just *what* it says."

"You know as well as I do! And she is unformed; unused to all the ways of the world; a mere novice in society."

"Part of that is soon mended," said Philip easily. "I heard your uncle, or Burrage's uncle, old Colonel Chauncey, last night declaring that there is not a girl in the city that has such manners as one of the Miss Lothrops; manners of 'mingled grace and dignity,' he said."

"That was the other one."

"That was the other one."

"*She* has been in New York before?"

"Yes."

"That was the one that Tom Caruthers was bewitched with?"

"Have you heard *that* story?" said Mr. Dillwyn dryly.

"Why shouldn't I hear it?"

"No reason, that I know. It is one of the 'ways of the world' you referred to, to tell everything of everybody,—especially when it is not true."

"Isn't that story true?"

"It has no inherent improbability. Tom is open to influences, and—" He stopped.

"I know it is true; for Mrs. Caruthers told me herself."

"Poor Tom!"—

"It was very good for him, that the thing was put an end to. But *you*—you should fly at higher game

than Tom Caruthers can strike, Philip."

"Thank you. There was no occasion for your special fear last night. I am in no danger there. But I know a man, Jessie,—a man I think much of, too,—who *is* very much drawn to one of those ladies. He has confessed as much to me. What advice shall I give him? He is a man that can please himself; he has abundant means, and no ties to encumber him."

"Does he hold as high a position as you?"

"Quite."

"And may pretend to as much?"

"He is not a man of pretensions. But, taking your words as they mean, I should say, yes."

"Is it any use to offer him advice?"

"I think he generally hears mine—if he is not too far gone in something."

"Ah!—Well, Philip, tell him to think what he is doing."

"O, I *have* put that before him."

"He would make himself a great goose."

"Perhaps I ought to have some arguments wherewith to substantiate that prophecy."

"He can see the whole for himself. Let him think of the fitness of things. Imagine such a girl set to preside over his house—a house like this, for instance. Imagine her helping him receive his guests; sitting at the head of his table. Fancy it; a girl who has been accustomed to sanded floors, perhaps, and paper window-shades, and who has fed on pumpkins and pork all her life."

Mr. Dillwyn smiled, as his eye roved over what of his sister's house was visible from where he sat, and he remembered the meal-times in Shampuashuh; he smiled, but his eye had more thought in it than Mrs. Burrage liked. She was watching him.

"I cannot tell what sort of a house is in question in the present case," he said at length. "Perhaps it would not be a house like this."

"It *ought* to be a house like this."

"Isn't that an open question?"

"No! I am supposing that this man, your friend— Do I know him?"

"Do you not know everybody? But I have no permission to disclose his name."

"And I do not care for it, if he is going to make a *mésalliance;* a marriage beneath him. Such marriages turn out miserably. A woman not fit for society drags her husband out of it; a woman who has not refined tastes makes him gradually coarse; a woman with no connections keeps him from rising in life; if she is without education, she lets all the best part of him go to waste. In short, if he marries a nobody he becomes nobody too; parts with all his antecedents, and buries all his advantages. It's social ruin, Philip! it is just ruin."

"If this man only does not prefer the bliss of ruining himself!"—said her brother, rising and lightly stretching himself. Mrs. Burrage looked at him keenly and doubtfully.

"There is no greater mistake a man can make, than to marry beneath him," she went on.

"Yes, I think that too."

"It sinks him below his level; it is a weight round his neck; people afterwards, when he is mentioned say,—'*He married such a one, you know;*' and, '*Didn't he marry unfortunately?*'—He is like depreciated coin. It kills him, Philip, politically."

"And fashionably."

"O, fashionably! of course."

"What's left to a man when he ceases to be fashionable?"

"Well, of course he chooses a new set of associates."

"But if Tom Caruthers had married as you say he wanted to marry, his wife would have come at once into his circle, and made one of it?"

"Provided she could hold the place."

"Of that I have no doubt."

"It was a great gain to Tom that he missed."

"The world has odd balances to weigh loss and gain!" said Philip.

"Why, Philip, in addition to everything else, these girls are *religious;*—not after a reasonable fashion, you know, but puritanical; prejudiced, and narrow, and stiff."

"How do you know all that?"

"From that one's talk last night. And from Mrs. Wishart."

"Did *she* say they were puritanical?"

"Yes. O yes! they are stiff about dancing and cards; and I had nearly laughed last night at the way Miss—what's her name?—opened her eyes at me when I spoke of the theatre."

"She does not know what the theatre is," said Philip.

"She thinks she does."

"She does not know the half."

"Philip," said Mrs. Burrage severely and discontentedly, "you are not agreeing with me."

"Not entirely, sister."

"You are as fond of the theatre, or of the opera, as anybody I know."

"I never saw a decent opera in my life."

"Philip!"

"Nor did you."

"How ridiculous! You have been going to the opera all your life, and the theatre too, in half a dozen different countries."

"Therefore I claim to know of what I speak. And if I had a wife—" he paused. His thoughts made two or three leaps; the vision of Lois's sweet, pure dignity came before him, and words were wanting.

"What if you had a wife?" asked his sister impatiently.

"I would rather she would be anything but a 'fast' woman."

"She needn't be 'fast'; but she needn't be precise either."

There was something in Philip's air or his silence which provoked Mrs. Burrage. She went on with some heat, and defiantly.

"I have no objection to religion, in a proper way. I always teach Chauncey to make the responses."

"Make them yourself?"

"Of course."

"Do you mean them?"

"Mean them!"—

"Yes. Do you mean what you say? When you have said, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners'—did you feel guilty? or miserable?"

"Miserable!"—

"Yes. Did you feel miserable?"

"Philip, I have no idea what you are driving at, unless you are defending these two precise, puritanical young country-women."

"A little of that," he said, smiling, "and a little of something else."

He had risen, as if to go. His sister looked at him, vexed and uncertain. She was proud of her brother, she admired him, as almost people did who knew Mr. Dillwyn. Suddenly she changed her tactics; rose up, and coming to him laid both her hands on his shoulders so that she could raise herself up to kiss him.

"Don't *you* go and be foolish!" she said. "I will forgive your friend,
Philip, but I will not forgive you!"

CHAPTER XLV.

DUTY.

The days of December went by. Lois was herself again, in health; and nothing was in the way of Madge's full enjoyment of New York and its pleasures, so she enjoyed them to the full. She went wherever Mrs. Wishart would take her. That did not involve any very outrageous dissipation, for Mrs. Wishart, though fond of society, liked it best in moderation. Moderate companies and moderate hours suited her. However, Madge had enough to content her new thirst for excitement and variety, especially as Mr. Dillwyn continually came in to fill up gaps in her engagements. He took her to drive, or to see various sights, which for the country-bred girl were full of enchantment; and he came to the house constantly on the empty evenings.

Lois queried again and again what brought him there? Madge it must be; it could hardly be the society of his old friend Mrs. Wishart. It was not her society that he sought. He was general in his attentions, to be sure; but he played chess with Madge, he accompanied Madge's singing, he helped Madge in her French reading and Italian pronunciation, and took Madge out. He did none of these things with Lois. Truly Lois had been asked, and would not go out either alone or with her sister in Mr. Dillwyn's carriage or in Mr. Dillwyn's convoy. And she had been challenged, and invariably declined, to sing with them; and she did not want to learn the game of chess, and took no help from anybody in her studies. Indeed, Lois kept herself persistently in the background, and refused to accompany her friends to any sort of parties; and at home, though she must sit down-stairs in the evening, she withdrew from the conversation as much as she could.

"My dear," said Mrs. Wishart, much vexed at last, "you do not think it is *wicked* to go into society, I hope?"

"Not for you. I do not think it would be right for me."

"Why not, pray? Is this Puritanism?"

"Not at all," said Lois, smiling.

"She is a regular Puritan, though," said Madge.

"It isn't that," Lois repeated. "I like going out among people as well as Madge does. I am afraid I might like it too well."

"What do you mean by 'too well'?" demanded her protectress, a little angrily.

"More than would be good for me. Just think—in a little while I must go back to Esterbrooke and teaching; don't you see, I had better not get myself entangled with what would unfit me for my work?"

"Nonsense! That is not your work."

"You are *never* going back to that horrid place!" exclaimed Madge.

But they both knew, from the manner of Lois's quiet silence, that their positions would not be maintained.

"There's the more reason, if you are going back there by and by, why you should take all the advantage you can of the present," Mrs. Wishart added. Lois gave her a sweet, grateful look, acknowledging her tenderness, but not granting her conclusions. She got away from the subject as soon as she could. The question of the sisters' return home had already been broached by Lois; received, however, by Mrs. Wishart with such contempt, and by Madge with such utter disfavour, that Lois found the point could not be carried; at least not at that time; and then winter began to set in, and she could find no valid reason for making the move before it should be gone again, Mrs. Wishart's intention being unmistakeable to keep them until spring. But how was she going to hold out until spring? Lois felt herself very uncomfortable. She could not possibly avoid seeing Mr. Dillwyn constantly; she could not always help talking to him, for sometimes he would make her talk; and she was very much afraid that she liked to talk to him. All the while she was obliged to see how much attention he was paying to Madge, and it was no secret how well Madge liked it; and Lois was afraid to look at her own reasons for disliking it. Was it merely because Mr. Dillwyn was a man of the world, and she did not want her sister to get entangled with him? her sister, who had made no promise to her grandmother, and who was only bound, and perhaps would not be bound, by Bible commands? Lois had never opened her Bible to study the point, since that evening when Mr. Dillwyn had interrupted her. She was ashamed to do it. The question ought to have no interest for her.

So days went by, and weeks, and the year was near at an end, when the first snow came. It had held off wonderfully, people said; and now when it came it came in earnest. It snowed all night and all day; and slowly then the clouds thinned and parted and cleared away, and the westering sun broke out upon a brilliant world.

Lois sat at her window, looking out at it, and chiding herself that it made her feel sober. Or else, by contrast, it let her know how sober she was. The spectacle was wholly joy-inspiring, and so she had been wont to find it. Snow lying unbroken on all the ground, in one white, fair glitter; snow lying piled up on the branches and twigs of trees, doubling them with white coral; snow in ridges and banks on the opposite shore of the river; and between, the rolling waters. Madge burst in.

"Isn't it glorious?" said Lois. "Come here and see how black the river is rolling between its white banks."

"Black? I didn't know anything was black," said Madge. "Here is Mr. Dillwyn, come to take me sleigh-riding. Just think, Lois!—a sleigh ride in the Park!—O, I'm so glad I have got my hood done!"

Lois slowly turned her head round. "Sleigh-riding?" she said. "Are you going sleigh-riding, and with Mr. Dillwyn?"

"Yes indeed, why not?" said Madge, bustling about with great activity. "I'd rather go with him than with anybody else, I can tell you. He has got his sister's horses—Mrs. Burrage don't like sleighing—and Mr. Burrage begged he would take the horses out. They're gay, but he knows how to drive. O, won't it be magnificent?"

Lois looked at her sister in silence, unwilling, yet not knowing what to object; while Madge wrapped herself in a warm cloak, and donned a silk hood lined with cherry colour, in which she was certainly something to look at. No plainer attire nor brighter beauty would be seen among the gay snow-revellers that afternoon. She flung a sparkling glance at her sister as she turned to go.

"Don't be very long!" Lois said.

"Just as long as he likes to make it!" Madge returned. "Do you think *I* am going to ask him to turn about, before he is ready? Not I, I promise you. Good-bye, hermit!"

Away she ran, and Lois turned again to her window, where all the white seemed suddenly to have become black. She will marry him!—she was saying to herself. And why should she not? she has made no promise. *I* am bound—doubly; what is it to me, what they do? Yet if not right for me it is not right for Madge. *Is* the Bible absolute about it?

She thought it would perhaps serve to settle and stay her mind if she went to the Bible with the question and studied it fairly out. She drew up the table with the book, and prayed earnestly to be taught the truth, and to be kept contented with the right. Then she opened at the well-known words in 2 Corinthians, chap. vi.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"—

"Yoked together." That is, bound in a bond which obliges two to go one way and pull in one draught. Then of course they *must* go one way; and which way, will depend upon which is strongest. But cannot a good woman use her influence to induce a man who is also good, only not Christian, to go the right

way?

Lois pondered this, wishing to believe it. Yet there stood the command. And she remembered there are two sides to influence; could not a good man, and a pleasant man, only not Christian, use his power to induce a Christian woman to go the wrong way? How little she would like to displease him! how willingly she would gratify him!—And then there stands the command. And, turning from it to a parallel passage in 1 Cor. vii. 39, she read again the directions for the marriage of a Christian widow; she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, "*only in the Lord*." There could be no question of what is the will of God in this matter. And in Deut. vii. 3, 4, she studied anew the reasons there given. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods."

Lois studied these passages with I cannot say how much aching of heart. Why did her heart ache? It was nothing to her, surely; she neither loved nor was going to love any man to whom the prohibition could apply. Why should she concern herself with the matter? Madge?— Well, Madge must be the keeper of her own conscience; she would probably marry Mr. Dillwyn; and poor Lois saw sufficiently into the workings of her own heart to know that she thought her sister very happy in the prospect. But then, if the question of conscience could be so got over, *why* was she troubled? She would not evade the inquiry; she forced herself to make it; and she writhed under the pressure and the pain it caused her. At last, thoroughly humbled and grieved and ashamed, she fled to a woman's refuge in tears, and a Christian's refuge in prayer; and from the bottom of her heart, though with some very hard struggles, gave up every lingering thought and wish that ran counter to the Bible command. Let Madge do what Madge thought right; she had warned her of the truth. Now her business was with herself and her own action; and Lois made clean work of it. I cannot say she was exactly a happy woman as she went down-stairs; but she felt strong and at peace. Doing the Lord's will, she could not be miserable; with the Lord's presence she could not be utterly alone; anyhow, she would trust him and do her duty, and leave all the rest.

She went down-stairs at last, for she had spent the afternoon in her own room, and felt that she owed it to Mrs. Wishart to go down and keep her company. O, if Spring were but come! she thought as she descended the staircase,—and she could get away, and take hold of her work, and bring things into the old train! Spring was many weeks off yet, and she must do different and harder work first, she saw. She went down to the back drawing-room and laid herself upon the sofa.

"Are you not well, Lois?" was the immediate question from Mrs. Wishart.

"Yes, ma'am; only not just vigorous. How long they are gone! It is growing late."

"The sleighing is tempting. It is not often we have such a chance. I suppose everybody is out. *You* don't go into the air enough, Lois."

"I took a walk this morning."

"In the snow!—and came back tired. I saw it in your face. Such dreadful walking was enough to tire you. I don't think you half know how to take care of yourself."

Lois let the charge pass undisputed, and lay still. The afternoon had waned and the sun gone down; the snow, however, made it still light outside. But that light faded too; and it was really evening, when sounds at the front door announced the return of the sleighing party. Presently Madge burst in, rosy and gay as snow and sleigh-bells could make anybody.

"It's glorious!" she said. "O, we have been to the Park and all over. It's splendid! Everybody in the world is out, and we saw everybody, and some people we saw two or three times; and it's like nothing in all the world I ever saw before. The whole air is full of sleigh-bells; and the roads are so thick with sleighs that it is positively dangerous."

"That must make it very pleasant!" said Lois languidly.

"O, it does! There's the excitement, you know, and the skill of steering clear of people that you think are going to run over you. It's the greatest fun I ever saw in my life. And Mr. Dillwyn drives beautifully."

"I dare say."

"And the next piece of driving he does, is to drive you out."

"I hardly think he will manage that."

"Well, you'll see. Here he is. She says she hardly thinks you will, Mr. Dillwyn. Now for a trial of power!"

Madge stood in the centre of the room, her hood off, her little plain cloak still round her; eyes sparkling, cheeks rosy with pleasure and frosty air, a very handsome and striking figure. Lois's eyes dwelt upon her, glad and sorry at once; but Lois had herself in hand now, and was as calm as the other was excited. Then presently came Mr. DilIwyn, and sat down beside her couch.

"How do you do, this evening?"

His manner, she noticed, was not at all like Madge's; it was quiet, sober, collected, gentle; sleighing seemed to have wrought no particular exhilaration on him. Therefore it disarmed Lois. She gave her answer in a similar tone.

"Have you been out to-day?"

"Yes—quite a long walk this morning."

"Now I want you to let me give you a short drive."

"O no, I think not."

"Come!" said he. "I may not have another opportunity to show you what you will see to-day; and I want you to see it."

He did not seem to use much urgency, and yet there was a certain insistance in his tone which Lois felt, and which had its effect upon her, as such tones are apt to do, even when one does not willingly submit to them. She objected that it was late.

"O, the moon is up," cried Madge; "it won't be any darker than it is now."

"It will be brighter," said Philip.

"But your horses must have had enough."

"Just enough," said Philip, laughing, "to make them go quietly. Miss Madge will bear witness they were beyond that at first. I want you to go with me. Come, Miss Lois! We must be home before Mrs. Wishart's tea. Miss Madge, give her your hood and cloak; that will save time."

Why should she not say no? She found it difficult, against that something in his tone. He was more intent upon the affirmative than she upon the negative. And after all, why *should* she say no? She had fought her fight and conquered; Mr. Dillwyn was nothing to her, more than another man; unless, indeed, he were to be Madge's husband, and then she would have to be on good terms with, him. And she had a secret fancy to have, for once, the pleasure of this drive with him. Why not, just to see how it tasted? I think it went with Lois at this moment as in the German story, where a little boy vaunted himself to his sister that he had resisted the temptation to buy some ripe cherries, and so had saved his pennies. His sister praised his prudence and firmness. "But now, dear Hercules," she went on, "now that you have done right and saved your pennies, now, my dear brother, you may reward yourself and buy your cherries!"

Perhaps it was with some such unconscious recoil from judgment that Lois acted now. At any rate, she slowly rose from her sofa, and Madge, rejoicing, threw off her cloak and put it round her, and fastened its ties. Then Mr. Dillwyn himself took the hood and put it on her head, and tied the strings under her chin. The start this gave her almost made Lois repent of her decision; he was looking into her face, and his fingers were touching her cheek, and the pain of it was more than Lois had bargained for. No, she thought, she had better not gone; but it was too late now to alter things. She stood still, feeling that thrill of pain and pleasure where the one so makes the other keen, keeping quiet and not meeting his eyes; and then he put her hand upon his arm and led her down the wide, old-fashioned staircase. Something in the air of it all brought to Lois's remembrance that Sunday afternoon at Shampuashuh and the walk home in the rain; and it gave her a stricture of heart. She put the manner now to Madge's account, and thought within herself that if Madge's hood and cloak were beside him it probably did not matter who was in them; his fancy could do the rest. Somehow she did not want to go to drive as Madge's proxy. However, there was no helping that now. She was put into the sleigh, enveloped in the fur robes; Mr. Dillwyn took his place beside her, and they were off.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Certinaly Madge had not said too much, and the scene was like witchery. The sun was down, but the moon was up, near full, and giving a white illumination to the white world. The snow had fallen thick, and neither sun nor wind had as yet made any impression upon it; the covering of the road was thick and well beaten, and on every exposed level surface lay the white treasure piled up. Every twig and branch of the trees still held its burden; every roof was blanketed; there had been no time yet for smoke and soil to come upon the pure surfaces; and on all this fell the pale moon rays, casting pale shadows and making the world somehow look like something better than itself. The horses Mr. Dillwyn drove were fresh enough yet, and stepped off gaily, their bells clinking musically; and other bells passed them and sounded in the nearer and further distance. Moreover, under this illumination all less agreeable features of the landscape were covered up. It was a pure region of enchanted beauty to Lois's sense, through which they drove; and she felt as if a spell had come upon her too, and this bit of experience were no more real than the rest of it. It was exquisitely and intensely pleasant; a bit of life quite apart and by itself, and never to be repeated, therefore to be enjoyed all she could while she had it. Which thought was not enjoyment. Was she not foolish to have come?

"Are you comfortable?" suddenly Mr. Dillwyn's voice came in upon these musings.

"O, perfectly!" Lois answered, with an accentuation between delight and desperation.

And then he was silent again; and she went on with her musings, just that word having given them a spur. How exquisite the scene was! how exquisite everything, in fact. All the uncomelinesses of a city suburb were veiled under the moonlight; nothing but beauty could be seen; here were points that caught the light, and there were shadows that simply served to set off the silvery whiteness of the moon and the snow; what it was that made those points of reflection, or what lay beneath those soft shadows, did not appear. The road was beaten smooth, the going was capital, the horses trotted swiftly and steadily, Lois was wrapped in soft furs, and the air which she was breathing was merely cold enough to exhilarate. It was perfection. In truth it was so perfect, and Lois enjoyed it so keenly, that she began to be vexed at herself for her enjoyment. Why should Mr. Dillwyn have got her out? all this luxury of sense and feeling was not good for her; did not belong to her; and why should she taste at all a delight which must be so fleeting? And what had possessed him to tie her hood strings for her, and to do it in that leisurely way, as if he liked it? And why did *she* like it? Lois scolded and chid herself. If he were going to marry Madge ever so much, that gave him no right to take such a liberty; and she would not allow him such liberties; she would keep him at a distance. But was she not going to a distance herself? There would be no need.

The moonlight was troubled, though by no cloud on the ethereal firmament; and Lois was not quite so conscious as she had been of the beauty around her. The silence lasted a good while; she wondered if her neighbour's thoughts were busy with the lady he had just set down, to such a degree that he forgot to attend to his new companion? Nothing could be more wide of the truth; but that is the way we judge and misjudge one another. She was almost hurt at his silence, before he spoke again. The fact is, that the general axiom that a man can always put in words anything of which his head and heart are both full, seems to have one exception. Mr. Dillwyn was a good talker, always, on matters he cared about, and matters he did not care about; and yet now, when he had secured, one would say, the most favourable circumstances for a hearing, and opportunity to speak as he liked, he did not know how to speak. By and by his hand came again round Lois to see that the fur robes were well tucked in about her. Something in the action made her impatient.

"I am very well," she said.

"You must be taken care of, you know," he said; to Lois's fancy he said it as if there were some one to whom he must be responsible for her.

"I am not used to being taken care of," she said. "I have taken care of myself, generally."

"Like it better?"

"I don't know. I suppose really no woman can say she likes it better.
But I am accustomed to it."

"Don't you think I could take care of you?"

"You *are* taking capital care of me," said Lois, not knowing exactly how to understand him. "Just now it is your business; and I should say you were doing it well."

"What would you say if I told you that I wanted to take care of you all your life?"

He had let the horses come to a walk; the sleigh-bells only tinkled softly; no other bells were near. Which way they had gone Lois had not considered; but evidently it had not been towards the busy and noisy haunts of men. However, she did not think of this till a few minutes afterwards; she thought now that Mr. Dillwyn's words regarded Madge's sister, and her feeling of independence became rigid.

"A kind wish,—but impracticable," she answered.

"Why?"

"I shall be too far off. That is one thing."

"Where are you going to be?—Forgive me for asking!"

"O yes. I shall be keeping school in New England somewhere, I suppose; first of all, at Esterbrooke."

"But if I had the care of you—you would not be there?"

"That is my place," said Lois shortly.

"Do you mean it is the place you prefer?"

"There is no question of preference. You know, one's work is what is given one; and the thing given me to do, at present, seems to be there. Of course I do prefer what my work is."

Still the horses were smoothly walking. Mr. Dillwyri was silent a moment.

"You did not understand what I said to you just now. It was earnest."

"I did not think it was anything else," said Lois, beginning to wish herself at home. "I am sure you meant it, and I know you are very good; but—you cannot take care of me."

"Give me your reasons," he said, restraining the horses, which would have set off upon a quicker pace again.

"Why, Mr. Dillwyn, it is self-evident. You would not respect me if I allowed you to do it; and I should not respect myself. We New England folks, if we are nothing else, we are independent."

"So?—" said Mr. Dillwyn, in a puzzled manner, but then a light broke upon him, and he half laughed. —"I never heard that the most rampant spirit of independence made a wife object to being dependent on her husband."

"A wife?" said Lois, not knowing whether she heard aright.

"Yes," said he. "How else? How could it be else? Lois, may I have you, to take care of the rest of my life, as my very own?"

The short, smothered breath with which this was spoken was intelligible enough, and put Lois in the rarest confusion.

"Me?—" was all she could ejaculate.

"You, certainly. I never saw any other woman in my life to whom I wished to put the question. You are the whole world to me, as far as happiness is concerned."

"I?—" said Lois again. "I thought—"

"What?"

She hesitated, and he urged the question. Lois was not enough mistress of herself to choose her words.

"I thought—it was somebody else."

"Did you?—Who did you think it was?"

"O, don't ask me!"

"But I think I must ask you. It concerns me to know how, and towards whom, my manner can have misled you. Who was it?"

"It was not—your manner—exactly," said Lois, in terrible embarrassment. "I was mistaken."

"How could you be mistaken?"

"I never dreamed—the thought never entered my head—that—it was I."

"I must have been in fault then," said he gently; "I did not want to wear my heart on my sleeve, and so perhaps I guarded myself too well. I did not wish to know anybody else's opinion of my suit till I had heard yours. What is yours, Lois?—what have you to say to me?"

He checked the horses again, and sat with his face inclined towards her, waiting eagerly, Lois knew. And then, what a sharp pain shot through her! All that had gone before was nothing to this; and for a moment the girl's whole nature writhed under the torture. She knew her own mind now; she was fully conscious that the best gift of earth was within her grasp; her hands were stretched longingly towards it, her whole heart bounded towards it; to let it go was to fall into an abyss from which light and hope seemed banished; there was everything in all the world to bid her give the answer that was waited for; only duty bade her not give it. Loyalty to God said no, and her promise bound her tongue. For that minute that she was silent Lois wrestled with mortal pain. There are martyrs and martyrdoms now-a-days, that the world takes no account of; nevertheless they have bled to death for the cause, and have been true to their King at the cost of all they had in the world. Mr. Dillwyn was waiting, and the fight had to be short, though well she knew the pain would not be. She must speak. She did it huskily, and with a fierce effort. It seemed as if the words would not come out.

"I have nothing to say, Mr. Dillwyn,—that you would like to hear," she added, remembering that her first utterance was rather indefinite.

"You do not mean that?" he said hurriedly.

"Indeed I do."

"I know," he said, "you never say anything you do not mean. But *how* do you mean it, Lois? Not to deny me? You do not mean *that?*"

"Yes," she said. And it was like putting a knife through her own heart when she said it. O, if she were at home! O, if she had never come on this drive! O, if she had never left Esterbrooke and those sick-beds!—But here she was, and must stand the question; and Mr. Dillwyn had not done.

"What reason do you give me?"—and his voice grated now with pain.

"I gave none," said Lois faintly. "Don't let us talk about it! It is no use. Don't ask me anything more!"

"One question I must. I must know it. Do you dislike me, Lois?"

"Dislike? O no! how should I dislike you?" she answered. There was a little, very slight, vibration in her voice as she spoke, and her companion discerned it. When an instrument is very high strung, a quite soft touch will be felt and answered, and that touch swept all the strings of Mr. Dillwyn's soul with music.

"If you do not dislike me, then," said he, "what is it? Do you, possibly *like* me, Lois?"

Lois could not prevent a little hesitation before she answered, and that, too, Philip well noted.

"It makes no difference," she said desperately. "It isn't that. Don't let us talk any more about it! Mr. Dillwyn, the horses have been walking this great while, and we are a long way from home; won't you drive on?"

He did drive on then, and for a while said not a word more. Lois was panting with eagerness to get home, and could not go fast enough; she would gladly have driven herself, only not quite such a fresh and gay pair of horses. They swept along towards a region that she could see from afar was thicker set with lights than the parts where they were. Before they reached it, however, Mr. Dillwyn drew rein again, and made the horses walk gently.

"There is one question still I must ask," he said; "and to ask it, I must for a moment disobey your commands. Forgive me; but when the happiness of a whole life is at stake, a moment's pain must be borne—and even inflicted—to make sure one is not suffering needlessly a far greater evil. Miss Lois, you never do anything without a reason; tell me your reason for refusing me. You thought I liked some one else; it is not that; I never have liked any one else. Now, what is it?"

"There is no use in talking," Lois murmured. "It is only pain."

"Necessary pain," said he firmly. "It is right I should know, and it must be possible for you to tell me. Say that it is because you cannot like me well enough—and I shall understand that."

But Lois could not say it; and the pause, which embarrassed her terribly, had naturally a different effect upon her companion.

"It is *not* that!" he cried. "Have you been led to believe something false about me, Lois?—Lois?"

"No," she said, trembling; the pain, and the difficulty of speaking, and the struggle it cost, set her absolutely to trembling. "No, it is something *true*." She spoke faintly, but he listened well.

"*True!* What is it? It is not true. What do you mean, dear?"

The several things which came with the intonations of this last question overset the remnant of Lois's composure. She burst into tears; and he was looking, and the moonlight was full in her face, and he could not but see it.

"I cannot help it," she cried; "and you cannot help it. It is no use to talk about it. You know—O, you know—you are not a Christian!"

It was almost a cry at last with which she said it; and the usually self-contained Lois hid her face away from him. Whether the horses walked or trotted for a little while she did not know; and I think it was only mechanical, the effort by which their driver kept them at a foot pace. He waited, however, till Lois dropped her hands again, and he thought she would attend to him.

"May I ask," he then said, and his voice was curiously clear and composed,—"if that is your *only* objection to me?"

"It is enough!" said Lois smotheredly, and noticing at the same time that ring in his voice.

"You think, one who is a Christian ought never to marry another who is not a Christian?"

"No!" she said, in the same way, as if catching her breath.

"It is very often done."

She made no reply. This was a most cruel discussion, she thought. Would they never reach home? And the horses walking! Walking, and shaking their heads, with soft little peals of the bells, like creatures who had at last got quiet enough to like walking.

"Is that all, Lois?" he asked again; and the tone of his voice irritated her.

"There need not be anything more," she answered. "That is enough. It is a barrier for ever between us; you cannot overcome it—and I cannot. O, do make the horses go! we shall never get home! and don't talk any more."

"I will let the horses go presently; but first I must talk a little more, because there is something that must be said. That *was* a barrier, a while ago; but it is not now. There is no need for either of us to overcome it or try to overcome it, for it does not exist. Lois, do you hear me? It does not exist."

"I do not understand," she said, in a dazed kind of way, turning towards him. "What does not exist?"

"That barrier—or any barrier—between you and me."

"Yes, it does. It *is* a barrier. I promised my dear grandmother—and if I had not promised her, it would be just the same, for I have promised to obey God; and he forbids it."

"Forbids what?"

"Forbids me, a Christian, to have anything to do with you, who are not a Christian. I mean, in that way."

"But, Lois—I am a Christian too."

"You?" she said, turning towards him.

"Yes."

"What sort of a one?"

Philip could not help laughing at the naïve question, which, however, he perfectly understood.

"Not an old one," he said; "and not a good one; and yet, Lois, truly an honest one. As you mean the word. One whose King Christ is, as he is yours; and who trusts in him with the whole heart, as you do."

"You a Christian!" exclaimed Lois now, in the greatest astonishment.
"When did it happen?"

He laughed again. "A fair question. Well, it came about last summer.
You recollect our talk one Sunday in the rain?"

"O yes!"—

"That set me to thinking; and the more I saw of you,—yes, and of Mrs. Armadale,—and the more I heard of you from Mrs. Barclay, the more the conviction forced itself upon my mind, that I was living, and had always lived, a fool's life. That was a conclusion easily reached; but how to become wise was another matter. I resolved to give myself to the study till I had found the answer; and that I might do it uninterruptedly, I betook myself to the wilds of Canada, with not much baggage beside my gun and my Bible. I hunted and fished; but I studied more than I did either. I took time for it too. I was longing to see you; but I resolved this subject should be disposed of first. And I gave myself to it, until it was all clear to me. And then I made open profession of my belief, and took service as one of Christ's declared servants. That was in Montreal."

"In Montreal!"

"Yes."

"Why did you never say anything about it, then?"

"I am not accustomed to talking on the subject, you know. But, really, I had a reason. I did not want to seem to propitiate your favour by any such means; I wished to try my chances with you on my own merits; and that was also a reason why I made my profession in Montreal. I wanted to do it without delay, it is true; I also wanted to do it quietly. I mean everybody shall know; but I wished you to be the first."

There followed a silence. Things rushed into and over Lois's mind with such a sweep and confusion, that she hardly knew what she was thinking or feeling. All her positions were knocked away; all her assumptions were found baseless; her defences had been erected against nothing; her fears and her hopes were alike come to nought. That is, *bien entendu*, her old fears and her old hopes; and amid the ruins of the latter new ones were starting, in equally bewildering confusion. Like little green heads of daffodils pushing up above the frozen ground, and fair blossoms of hepatica opening beneath a concealing mat of dead leaves. Ah, they would blossom freely by and by; now Lois hardly knew where they were or what they were.

Seeing her utterly silent and moveless, Mr. Dillwyn did probably the wisest thing he could do, and drove on. For some time the horses trotted and the bells jingled; and by too swift approaches that wilderness of lights which marked the city suburb came nearer and nearer. When it was very near and they had almost entered it, he drew in his reins again and the horses tossed their heads and walked.

"Lois, I think it is fair I should have another answer to my question now."

"What question?" she asked hurriedly.

"You know, I was so daring as to ask to have the care of you for the rest of your natural life—or of mine. What do you say to it?"

Lois said nothing. She could not find words. Words seemed to tumble over one another in her mind,—or thoughts did.

"What answer are you going to give me?" he asked again, more gravely.

"You know, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois stammeringly, "I never thought,—I never knew before,—I never had any notion, that—that—that you thought so."—

"Thought *so?*—about what?"

"About me."

"I have thought so about you for a great while."

Silence again. The horses, being by this time pretty well exercised, needed no restraining, and walked for their own pleasure. Everything with Lois seemed to be in a whirl.

"And now it becomes necessary to know what you think about me," Mr. Dillwyn went on, after that pause.

"I am very glad—" Lois said tremulously.

"Of what?"

"That you are a Christian."

"Yes, but," said he, half laughing, "that is not the immediate matter in hand. What do you think of me in my proposed character as having the ownership and the care of you?"

"I have never thought of you so," Lois managed to get out. The words were rather faint, heard, however, as Mr. Dillwyn's hand came just then adjusting and tucking in her fur robes, and his face was thereby near hers.

"And now you *do* think of me so?—What do you say to me?"

She could not say anything. Never in her life had Lois been at a loss and wrecked in all self-management before.

"You know, it is necessary to say something, that I may know where I stand. I must either stay or go. Will you send me away? or keep me 'for good,' as the children say?"

The tone was not without a touch of grave anxiety now, and impatient earnestness, which Lois heard well enough and would have answered; but it seemed as if her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth. Mr. Dillwyn waited now for her to speak, keeping the horses at a walk, and bending down a little to hear what she would say. One sleigh passed them, then another. It became intolerable to Lois.

"I do not want to send you away," she managed finally to say, trembling.

The words, however, were clear and slow-spoken, and Mr. Dillwyn asked no more then. He drove on, and attended to his driving, even went fast; and Lois hardly knew how houses and rocks and vehicles flew past them, till the reins were drawn at Mrs. Wishart's door. Philip whistled; a groom presently appeared from the house and took the horses, and he lifted Lois out. As they were going up the steps he asked softly,

"Is that *all* you are going to say to me?"

"Isn't it enough for to-night?" Lois returned.

"I see you think so," he said, half laughing. "I don't; but, however—Are you going to be alone to-morrow morning, or will you take another sleigh ride with me?"

"Mrs. Wishart and Madge are going to Mme. Cisco's *matinée*."

"At what o'clock?"

"They will leave here at half-past ten."

"Then I will be here before eleven."

The door opened, and with a grip of her hand he turned away.

CHAPTER XLVII.

PLANS.

Lois went along the hall in that condition of the nerves in which the feet seem to walk without stepping on anything. She queried what time it could be; was the evening half gone? or had they possibly not done tea yet? Then the parlour door opened.

"Lois!—is that you? Come along; you are just in time; we are at tea. Hurry, now!"

Lois went to her room, wishing that she could any way escape going to the table; she felt as if her

friend and her sister would read the news in her face immediately, and hear it in her voice as soon as she spoke. There was no help for it; she hastened down, and presently perceived to her wonderment that her friends were absolutely without suspicion. She kept as quiet as possible, and found, happily, that she was very hungry. Mrs. Wishart and Madge were busy in talk.

"You remember Mr. Caruthers, Lois?" said the former;—"Tom Caruthers, who used to be here so often?"

"Certainly."

"Did you hear he had made a great match?"

"I heard he was going to be married. I heard that a great while ago."

"Yes, he has made a very great match. It has been delayed by the death of her mother; they had to wait. He was married a few months ago, in Florence. They had a splendid wedding."

"What makes what you call a 'great match'?" Madge asked.

"Money,—and family."

"I understand money," Madge went on; "but what do you mean by 'family,' Mrs. Wishart?"

"My dear, if you lived in the world, you would know. It means name, and position, and standing. I suppose at Shampuashuh you are all alike—one is as good as another."

"Indeed," said Madge, "you are much mistaken, Mrs. Wishart. We think one is much better than another."

"Do you? Ah well,—then you know what I mean, my dear. I suppose the world is really very much alike in all places; it is only the names of things that vary."

"In Shampuashuh," Madge went on, "we mean by a good family, a houseful of honest and religious people."

"Yes, Madge," said Lois, looking up, "we mean a little more than that. We mean a family that has been honest and religious, and educated too, for a long while—for generations. We mean as much as that, when we speak of a good family."

"That's different," said Mrs. Wishart shortly.

"Different from what you mean?"

"Different from what is meant here, when we use the term."

"You *don't* mean anything honest and religious?" said Madge.

"O, honest! My dear, everybody is honest, or supposed to be; but we do not mean religious."

"Not religious, and only supposed to be honest!" echoed Madge.

"Yes," said Mrs. Wishart. "It isn't that. It has nothing to do with that. When people have been in society, and held high positions for generation after generation, it is a good family. The individuals need not be all good."

"Oh—!" said Madge.

"No. I know families among the very best in the State, that have been wicked enough; but though they have been wicked, that did not hinder their being gentlemen."

"Oh—!" said Madge again. "I begin to comprehend."

"There is too much made of money now-a-days," Mrs. Wishart went on serenely; "and there is no denying that money buys position. *I* do not call a good family one that was not a good family a hundred years ago; but everybody is not so particular. Not here. They are more particular in Philadelphia. In New York, any nobody who has money can push himself forward."

"What sort of family is Mr. Dillwyn's?"

"O, good, of course. Not wealthy, till lately. They have been poor, ever since I knew the family; until

the sister married Chauncey Burrage, and Philip came into his property."

"The Caruthers are rich, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"And now the young one has made a great match? Is she handsome?"

"I never heard so. But she is rolling in money."

"What else is she?" inquired Madge dryly.

"She is a Dulcimer."

"That tells me nothing," said Madge. "By the way you speak it, the word seems to have a good deal of meaning for you."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Wishart. "She is one of the Philadelphia
Dulcimers. It is an old family, and they have always been wealthy."

"How happy the gentleman must be!"

"I hope so," said Mrs. Wishart gravely. "*You* used to know Tom quite well, Lois. What did you think of him?"

"I liked him," said Lois. "Very pleasant and amiable, and always gentlemanly. But I did not think he had much character."

Mrs. Wishart was satisfied; for Lois's tone was as disengaged as anything could possibly be.

Lois could not bring herself to say anything to Madge that night about the turn in her fortunes. Her own thoughts were in too much agitation, and only by slow degrees resolving themselves into settled conclusions. Or rather, for the conclusions were not doubtful, settling into such quiet that she could look at conclusions. And Lois began to be afraid to do even that, and tried to turn her eyes away, and thought of the hour of half-past ten next morning with trembling and heart-beating.

It came with tremendous swiftness, too. However, she excused herself from going to the *matinée*, though with difficulty. Mrs. Wishart was sure she ought to go; and Madge tried persuasion and raillery. Lois watched her get ready, and at last contentedly saw the two drive off. That was good. She wanted no discussion with them before she had seen Mr. Dillwyn again; and now the coast was clear. But then Lois retreated to her own room up-stairs to wait; she could not stay in the drawing-room, to be found there. She would have so much time for preparation as his ring at the door and his name being brought up-stairs would give her. Preparation for what? When the summons came, Lois went down feeling that she had not a bit of preparation.

Philip was standing in the middle of the floor, waiting for her; and the apparition that greeted him was so unexpected that he stood still, feasting his eyes with it. He had always seen Lois calm, collected, moving and speaking with frank independence, although with perfect modesty. Now?—how was it? Eyes cast down, colour coming and going; a look and manner, not of shyness, for she came straight to him, but of the most lovely maidenly consciousness; of all things, that which a lover would most wish to see. Yet she came straight to him, and as he met her and held out his hand, she put hers in it.

"What are you going to say to me this morning, Lois?" he said softly; for the pure dignity of the girl was a thing to fill him with reverence as well as with delight, and her hand seemed to him something sacred.

Her colour stirred again, but the lowered eyelids were lifted up, and the eyes met his with a most blessed smile in them.

"I am very happy, Mr. Dillwyn," she said.

Everybody knows how words fail upon occasion; and on this occasion the silence lasted some considerable time. And then Philip put Lois into one of the big easy-chairs, and went down on one knee at her feet, holding her hand. Lois tried to collect her spirits to make remonstrance.

"O, Mr. Dillwyn, do not stay there!" she begged.

"Why not? It becomes me."

"I do not think it becomes you at all," said Lois, laughing a little nervously,—"and I am sure it does

not become me."

"Mistaken on both points! It becomes me well, and I think it does not become you ill," said he, kissing the hand he held. And then, bending forward to carry his kiss from the hand to the cheek,—"O my darling, how long I have waited for this!"

"Long?" said Lois, in surprise. How pretty the incredulity was on her innocent face.

"Very long!—while you thought I was liking somebody else. There has never been any change in me, Lois. I have been patiently and impatiently waiting for you this great while. You will not think it unreasonable, if that fact makes me intolerant of any more waiting, will you?"

"Don't keep that position!" said Lois earnestly.

"It is the position I mean to keep all the rest of my life!"

But that set Lois to laughing, a little nervously no doubt, yet so merrily that Philip could not but join in.

"Do I not owe everything to you?" he went on presently, with tender seriousness. "You first set me upon thinking. Do you recollect your earliest talk to me here in this room once, a good while ago, about being *satisfied?*"

"Yes," said Lois, suddenly opening her eyes.

"That was the beginning. You said it to me more with your looks than with your words; for I saw that, somehow, you were in the secret, and had yourself what you offered to me. *That* I could not forget. I had never seen anybody 'satisfied' before."

"You know what it means now?" she said softly.

"To-day?— I do!"

"No, no; I do not mean to-day. You know what I mean!" she said, with beautiful blushes.

"I know. Yes, and I have it, Lois. But you have a great deal to teach me yet."

"O no!" she said most unaffectedly. "It is you who will have to teach me."

"What?"

"Everything."

"How soon may I begin?"

"How soon?"

"Yes. You do not think Mrs. Wishart's house is the best place, or her company the best assistance for that, do you?"

"Ah, please get up!" said Lois.

But he laughed at her.

"You make me so ashamed!"

"You do not look it in the least. Shall I tell you my plans?"

"Plans!" said Lois.

"Or will you tell me your plans?"

"Ah, you are laughing at me! What do you mean?"

"You were confiding to me your plans of a little while ago; Esterbrooke, and school, and all the rest of it. My darling!—that's all nowhere."

"But,"—said Lois timidly.

"Well?"

"*That* is all gone, of course. But—"

"You will let me say what you shall do?"

"I suppose you will."

"Your hand is in all my plans, from henceforth, to turn them and twist them what way you like. But now let me tell you my present plans. We will be married, as soon as you can accustom your self to the idea. Hush!—wait. You shall have time to think about it. Then, as early as spring winds will let us, we will cross to England."

"England?" cried Lois.

"Wait, and hear me out. There we will look about us a while and get such things as you may want for travelling, which one can get better in England than anywhere else. Then we will go over the Channel and see Paris, and perhaps supplement purchases there. So work our way—"

"Always making purchases?" said Lois, laughing, though she caught her breath too, and her colour was growing high.

"Certainly, making purchases. So work our way along, and get to Switzerland early in June—say by the end of the first week."

"Switzerland!"

"Don't you want to see Switzerland?"

"But it is not the question, what I might like to see."

"With me it is."

"As for that, I have an untirable appetite for seeing things. But—but," and her voice lowered, "I can be quite happy enough on this side."

"Not if I can make you happier on the other."

"But that depends. I should not be happy unless I was quite sure it was right, and the best thing to do; and it looks to me like a piece of self-indulgence. We have so much already."

The gentle manner of this scruple and frank admission touched Mr. Dillwyn exceedingly.

"I think it is right," he said. "Do you remember my telling you once about my old house at home?"

"Yes, a little."

"I think I never told you much; but now you will care to hear. It is a good way from this place, in Foster county, and not very far from a busy little manufacturing town; but it stands alone in the country, in the midst of fields and woods that I used to love very much when I was a boy. The place never came into my possession till about seven or eight years ago; and for much longer than that it has been neglected and left without any sort of care. But the house is large and old-fashioned, and can be made very pretty; and the grounds, as I think, leave nothing to be desired, in their natural capabilities. However, all is in disorder, and needs a good deal of work done up on it; which must be done before you take possession. This work will require some months. Where can we be better, meanwhile, than in Switzerland?"

"Can the work be done without you?"

"Yes."

He waited a bit. The new things at work in Lois's mind made the new expression of manner and feature a most delicious study to him. She had a little difficulty in speaking, and he was still and watched her.

"I am afraid to talk about it," she said at length,

"Why?"

"I should like it so much!"—

"Therefore you doubt?"

"Yes. I am afraid of listening just to my own pleasure."

"You shall not," said he, laughing. "Listen to mine. I want to see your eyes open at the Jung Frau, and Mont Blanc."

"My eyes open easily at anything," said Lois, yielding to the laugh;—"they are such ignorant eyes."

"Very wise eyes, on the contrary! for they know a thing when they see it."

"But they have seen so little," said Lois, finding it impossible to get back to a serious demeanour.

"That sole defect in your character, I propose to cure."

"Ah, do not praise me!"

"Why not? I used to rejoice in the remembrance that you were not an angel but human. Do you know the old lines?—

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

Only 'wiles' you never descend to; 'blame' is not to be thought of; if you forbid praise, what is left to me but the rest of it?"

And truly, what with laughter and some other emotions, tears were not far from Lois's eyes; and how could the kisses be wanting?

"I never heard you talk so before!" she managed to say.

"I have only begun."

"Please come back to order, and sobriety."

"Sobriety is not in order, as your want of it shows."

"Then come back to Switzerland."

"Ah!—I want you to go up the AEggischhorn, and to stand on the Görner Grät, and to cross a pass or two; and I want you to see the flowers."

"Are there so many?"

"More than on a western prairie in spring. Most people travel in Switzerland later in the season, and so miss the flowers. You must not miss them."

"What flowers are they?"

"A very great many kinds. I remember the gentians, and the forget-me-nots; but the profusion is wonderful, and exceedingly rich. They grow just at the edge of the snow, some of them. Then we will linger a while at Zermatt and Chamounix, and a mountain *pension* here and there, and so slowly work our way over into Italy. It will be too late for Rome; but we will go, if you like it, to Venice; and then, as the heats grow greater, get back into the Tyrol."

"O, Mrs. Barclay had beautiful views from the Tyrol; a few, but very beautiful."

"How do you like my programme?"

"You have not mentioned glaciers."

"Are you' interested in glaciers?"

"*Very* much."

"You shall see as much of them as you can see safely from terra firma."

"Are they so dangerous?"

"Sometimes."

"But you have crossed them, have you not?"

"Times enough to make me scruple about your doing it."

"I am very sure-footed."

He kissed her hand, and inquired again what she thought of his programme.

"There is no fault to be found with the programme. But—"

"If I add to it the crossing of a glacier?"

"No, no," said Lois, laughing; "do you think I am so insatiable? But—"

"Would you like it all, my darling?"

"Like it? Don't speak of liking," she said, with a quick breath of excitement. "But—"

"Well? But—what?"

"We are not going to live to ourselves?" She said it a little anxiously and eagerly, almost pleadingly.

"I do not mean it," he answered her, with a smile. "But as to this journey my mind is entirely clear. It will take but a few months. And while we are wandering over the mountains, you and I will take our Bibles and study them and our work together. We can study where we stop to rest and where we stop to eat; I know by experience what good times and places those are for other reading; and they cannot be so good for any as for this."

"Oh! how good!" said Lois, giving a little delighted and grateful pressure to the hand in which her own still lay.

"You agree to my plans, then?"

"I agree to—part. What is that?"—for a slight noise was heard in the hall.—"O Philip, get up!—get up!—there is somebody coming!"

Mr. Dillwyn rose now, being bidden on this wise, and stood confronting the doorway, in which presently appeared his sister, Mrs. Burrage. He stood quiet and calm to meet her; while Lois, hidden by the back of the great easy-chair, had a moment to collect herself. He shielded her as much as he could. A swift review of the situation made him resolve for the present to "play dark." He could not trust his sister, that if the truth of the case were suddenly made known to her, she would not by her speech, or manner, or by her silence maybe, do something that would hurt Lois. He would not risk it. Give her time, and she would fit herself to her circumstances gracefully enough, he knew; and Lois need never be told what had been her sister-in-law's first view of them. So he stood, with an unconcerned face, watching Mrs. Burrage come down the room. And she, it may be said, came slowly, watching him.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

I have never described Mr. Dillwyn; and if I try to do it now, I am aware that words will give to nobody else the image of him. He was not a beauty, like Tom Caruthers; some people declared him not handsome at all, yet they were in a minority. Certainly his features were not according to classical rule, and criticism might find something to say to every one of them; if I except the shape and air of the face and head, the set of the latter, and the rich hair; which, very dark in colour, massed itself thick and high on the top of the head, and clung in close thick locks at the sides. The head sat nobly upon the shoulders, and correspondent therewith was the frank and manly expression of the face. I think irregular features sometimes make a better whole than regular ones. Philip's eyes were not remarkable, unless for their honest and spirited outlook; his nose was neither Roman nor Grecian, and his mouth was rather large; however, it was somewhat concealed by the long soft moustache, which he wore after the fashion of some Continentals (*N. B.*, *not* like the French emperor), carefully dressed and with points turning up; and the mouth itself was both manly and pleasant. Altogether, the people who

denied Mr. Dillwyn the praise of beauty, never questioned that he was very fine-looking. His sister was excessively proud of him, and, naturally thought that nothing less than the best of everything—more especially of womankind—was good enough for him. She was thinking this now, as she came down the room, and looking jealously to see signs of what she dreaded, an entanglement that would preclude for ever his having the best. Do not let us judge her hardly. What sister is not critical of her brother's choice of a wife? If, indeed, she be willing that he should have a wife at all. Mrs. Burrage watched for signs, but saw nothing. Philip stood there, calmly smiling at her, not at all flustered by her appearance. Lois saw his coolness too, and envied it; feeling that as a man, and as a man of the world, he had greatly the advantage of her. She was nervous, and felt flushed. However, there is a power of will in some women which can do a great deal, and Lois was determined that Mr. Dillwyn should not be ashamed of her. By the time it was needful for her to rise she did rise, and faced her visitor with a very quiet and perfectly composed manner. Only, if anything, it was a trifle *too* quiet; but her manner was other wise quite faultless.

"Philip!—" said Mrs. Burrage, advancing—"Good morning—Miss Lothrop.
Philip, what are you doing here?"

"I believe you asked me that question once on a former occasion. Then, I think, I had been making toast. Now, I have been telling Miss Lothrop my plans for the summer, since she was so good as to listen."

"Plans?" repeated Mrs. Burrage. "What plans?" She looked doubtfully from one to the other of the faces before her. "Does he tell you his plans, Miss Lothrop?"

"Won't you sit down, Mrs. Burrage?" said Lois. "I am always interested when anybody speaks of Switzerland."

"Switzerland!" cried the lady, sinking into a chair, and her eyes going to her brother again. "You are not talking of *Switzerland* for next summer?"

"Where can one be better in summer?"

"But you have been there ever so many times!"

"By which I know how good it will be to go again."

"I thought you would spend the summer with me!"

"Where?" he asked, with a smile.

"Philip, I wish you would dress your hair like other people."

"It defies dressing, sister," he said, passing his hand over the thick mass.

"No, no, I mean your moustache. When you smile, it gives you a demoniac expression, which drives me out of all patience. Miss Lothrop, would he not look a great deal better if he would cut off those Hungarian twists, and wear his upper lip like a Christian?"

This was a trial! Lois gave one glance at the moustache in question, a glance compounded of mingled horror and amusement, and flushed all over. Philip saw the glance and commanded his features only by a strong exertion of will, remaining, however, to all seeming as impassive as a judge.

"You don't think so?" said Mrs. Burrage. "Philip, why are you not at that picture sale this minute, with me?"

"Why are you not there, let me ask, this minute without me?"

"Because I wanted you to tell me if I should buy in that Murillo."

"I can tell you as well here as there. What do you want to buy it for?"

"What a question! Why, they say it is a genuine Murillo, and no doubt about it; and I have just one place on the wall in my second drawing-room, where something is wanting; there is one place not filled up, and it looks badly."

"And the Murillo is to fill up the vacant space?"

"Yes. If you say it is worth it."

"Worth what?"

"The money. Five hundred. But I dare say they would take four, and perhaps three. It is a real Murillo, they say. Everybody says."

"Jessie, I think it would be extravagance."

"Extravagance! Five hundred dollars for a Murillo! Why, everybody says it is no price at all."

"Not for the Murillo; but for a wall panel, I think it is. What do you say, Miss Lothrop, to panelling a room at five hundred dollars the panel?"

"Miss Lothrop's experience in panels would hardly qualify her to answer you," Mrs. Burrage said, with a polite covert sneer.

"Miss Lothrop has experience in some other things," Philip returned immoveably. But the appeal put Lois in great embarrassment.

"What is the picture?" she asked, as the best way out of it.

"It's a St. Sebastian," Mrs. Burrage answered shortly.

"Do you know the story?" asked Philip. "He was an officer in the household of the Roman emperor, Diocletian; a Christian; and discovered to be a Christian by his bold and faithful daring in the cause of truth. Diocletian ordered him to be bound to a tree and shot to death with arrows, and that the inscription over his head should state that there was no fault found in him but only that he was a Christian. This picture my sister wants to buy, shows him stripped and bound to the tree, and the executioner's work going on. Arrows are piercing him in various places; and the saint's face is raised to heaven with the look upon it of struggling pain and triumphing faith together. You can see that the struggle is sharp, and that only strength which is not his own enables him to hold out; but you see that he will hold out, and the martyr's palm of victory is even already waving before him."

Lois's eyes eagerly looked into those of the speaker while he went on; then they fell silently. Mrs. Burrage grew impatient.

"You tell it with a certain *goût*," she said. "It's a horrid story!"

"O, it's a beautiful story!" said Lois, suddenly looking up.

"If you like horrors," said the lady, shrugging her shoulders. "But I believe you are one of that kind yourself, are you not?"

"Liking horrors?" said Lois, in astonishment.

"No, no, of course! not that. But I mean, you are one of that saint's spiritual relations. Are you not? You would rather be shot than live easy?"

Philip bit his lip; but Lois answered with the most delicious simplicity,—

"If living easy implied living unfaithful, I hope I would rather be shot." Her eyes looked, as she spoke, straight and quietly into those of her visitor.

"And I hope I would," added Philip.

"*You?*" said his sister, turning sharp upon him. "Everybody knows you would!"

"But everybody does not know yet that I am a fellow-servant of that Sebastian of long ago; and that to me now, faithful and unfaithful mean the same that they meant to him. Not faithfulness to man, but faithfulness to God—or unfaithfulness."

"Philip!—"

"And as faithfulness is a word of large comprehension, it takes in also the use of money," Mr. Dillwyn went on smiling; "and so, Jessie, I think, you see, with my new views of things, that five hundred dollars is too much for a panel."

"Or for a picture, I suppose!" said Mrs. Burrage, with dry concentrated expression.

"Depends. Decidedly too much for a picture not meant to be looked at?"

"Why shouldn't it be looked at?"

"People will not look much at what they cannot understand."

"Why shouldn't they understand it?"

"It is a representation of giving up all for Christ, and of faithfulness unto death. What do the crowds who fill your second drawing-room know about such experience?"

Mrs. Burrage had put the foregoing questions dryly and shortly, examining her brother while he spoke, with intent, searching eyes. She had risen once as if to go, and now sat down again. Lois thought she even turned pale.

"Philip!—I never heard you talk so before. What do you mean?"

"Merely to let you know that I am a Christian. It is time."

"You were always a Christian!"

"In name. Now it is reality."

"You don't mean that you—*you!*—have become one of those fanatics?"

"What fanatics?"

"Those people who give up everything for religion, and are insane upon the subject."

"You could not have described it better, than in the first half of your speech. I have given up everything for religion. That is, I have given myself and all I have to Christ and his service; and whatever I do henceforth, I do only in that character and in that interest. But as to sanity,"—he smiled again,—"I think I was never sane until now."

Mrs. Burrage had risen for the second time, and her brother was now standing opposite to her; and if she had been proud of him a little while before, it was Lois's turn now. The calm, clear frankness and nobleness of his face and bearing made her heart fairly swell with its gladness and admiration; but it filled the other woman's heart with a different feeling.

"And this is you, Philip Dillwyn!" she said bitterly. "And I know you; what you have said you will stand to. Such a man as you! lost to the world!"

"Why lost to the world, Mrs. Burrage?" said Lois gently. She had risen too. The other lady faced her.

"Without more knowledge of what the world is, I could hardly explain to you," she said, with cool rudeness; the sort of insolence that a fine lady can use upon occasion when it suits her. Philip's face flushed, but he would not make the rudeness more palpable by seeming to notice it.

"I hope it is the other way," he said. "I have been an idle man all my life hitherto, and have done nothing except for myself. Nobody could be of less use to the world."

"And what are you going to do now?"

"I cannot tell. I shall find out. I am going to study the question."

"And is Miss Lothrop your teacher?"

The civil sneer was too apparent again, but it did not call up a flush this time. Philip was too angry. It was Lois that answered, and pleasantly,—

"She does not even wish to be that."

"Haven't you taught him already?" asked the lady, with prompt inquisition.

"Yes," said Philip.

Lois did colour now; she could not deny the fact, nor even declare that it had been an unintentional fact; but her colour was very pretty, and so was the sort of deprecating way in which she looked at her future sister-in-law. Not disarmed, Mrs. Burrage went on.

"It is a dangerous office to take, my dear, for we women never can keep it. We may think we stand on an eminence of wisdom one day; and the next we find we have to come down to a very lowly place, and sit at somebody else's feet, and receive our orders. I find it rather hard sometimes. Well, Philip,—will you go on with the lesson I suppose I have interrupted? or will you have the complaisance to go with me to see about the Murillo?"

"I will certainly stay."

"Rather hard upon me, after promising me last night you would go."

"I made no such promise."

"Indeed you did, begging your pardon. Last night, when you came home with the horses, I told you of the sale, and asked you if you would go and see that I did not get cheated."

"I have no recollection of it."

"And you said you would with pleasure."

"*That* is no longer possible, Jessie. And the sale would be over before we could get to it," he added, looking at his watch.

"Shall I leave you here, then?" said the lady, with a mingling of disagreeable feelings which found indescribable expression.

"If Miss Lothrop will let me be left. You forget, it depends upon her permission."

"Miss Lothrop," said the lady, offering her hand to Lois with formal politeness, "I do not ask you the question, for my brother all his life has never been refused anything he chose to demand. Pardon me my want of attention; he is responsible for it, having upset all my ideas with his strange announcements. Good-bye!"

Lois curtseyed silently. In all this dialogue, the contrast had been striking between the two ladies; for the advantage of manner had been on the side, not of the experienced woman of the world, but of the younger and simpler and country-bred little Shampuashuh woman. It comes to this; that the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians gives one the very soul and essence of what in the world is called good breeding; the kernel and thing itself; while what is for the most part known in society is the empty shell, simulating and counterfeiting it only. Therefore he in whose heart that thirteenth chapter is a living truth, will never be ill-bred; and if he possesses besides a sensitive and refined nature, and is free of self-consciousness, and has some common sense to boot, he has all the make-up of the veriest high-breeding. Nothing could seem more unruffled, because nothing could be more unruffled, than Lois during this whole interview; she was even a little sorry for Mrs. Burrage, knowing that the lady would be very sorry herself afterwards for what she had done; and Lois meant to bury it in perfect oblivion. So her demeanour was free, simple, dignified, most graceful; and Philip was penetrated with delight and shame at once. He went with his sister to put her in her carriage, which was done with scarce any words on either part; and then returned to the room where he had left Lois. She was still standing beside her chair, having in truth her thoughts too busy to remember to sit down. Philip's action was to come straight to her and fold his arms round her. They were arms of caressing and protection at once; Lois felt both the caressing and the protecting clasp, as something her life had never known before; and a thrill went through her of happiness that was almost mingled with awe.

"My darling!"—said Philip—"will you hold me responsible? Will you charge it all upon me?—and let me make it good as best I can?"

"O Philip, there is nothing to charge!" said Lois, lifting her flushed face, "fair as the moon," to meet his anxious eyes. "Do not think of it again. It is perfectly natural, from her point of view. You know, you are very much Somebody; and I—am Nobody."

The remainder of the interview may be left unreported.

It lasted till the two ladies returned from the *matinée*. Mrs. Wishart immediately retained Mr. Dillwyn for luncheon, and the two girls went up-stairs together.

"How long has that man been here?" was Madge's disrespectful inquiry.

"I don't know."

"What did he come for?"

"I suppose—to see me."

"To see *you!* Did he come to take you sleigh-riding again?"

"He said nothing about sleigh-riding."

"The snow is all slush down in the city. What did he want to see you for, then?" said Madge, turning round upon her sister, while at the same time she was endeavouring to extricate her head from her bonnet, which was caught upon a pin.

"He had something to say to me," Lois answered, trembling with an odd sort of excitement.

"What?—Lois, not *that?*" cried Madge, stopping with her bonnet only half off her head. But Lois nodded; and Madge dropped herself into the nearest chair, making no further effort as regarded the bonnet.

"Lois!—What did you say to him?"

"What could I say to him?"

"Why, two or three things, *I* should think. If it was I, I should think so."

"There can be but one answer to such a question. It must be yes or no."

"I am sure that's two to choose from. Have you gone and said yes to that man?"

"Don't you like him?" said Lois, with a furtive smile, glancing up at her sister now from under lowered eyelids.

"Like him! I never saw the man yet, that I liked as well as my liberty."

"Liberty!"

"Yes. Have you forgotten already what that means? O Lois! have you said yes to that man? Why, I am always afraid of him, every time I see him."

"*Afraid* of him?"

"Yes. I get over it after he has been in the room a while; but the next time I see him it comes back. O Lois! are you going to let him have you?"

"Madge, you are talking most dreadful nonsense. You never were afraid of anybody in your life; and of him least of all."

"Fact, though," said Madge, beginning at her bonnet again. "It's the way his head is set on his shoulders, I suppose. If I had known what was happening, while I was listening to Mme. Cisco's screeching!"—

"You couldn't have helped it."

"And now, now, actually you belong to somebody else! Lois, when are you going to be married?"

"I don't know."

"Not for a great while? Not *soon*, at any rate?"

"I don't know. Mr. Dillwyn wishes—"

"And are you going to do everything he wishes?"

"As far as I can," said Lois, with again a rosy smile and glance.

"There's the call to luncheon!" said Madge. "People must eat, if they're ever so happy or ever so unhappy. It is one of the disgusting things about human nature. I just wish he wasn't going to be here. Well—come along!"

Madge went ahead till she reached the drawing-room door; there she suddenly paused, waved herself to one side, and let Lois go in before her. Lois was promptly wrapped in Mrs. Wishart's arms, and had to endure a most warm and heartfelt embracing and congratulating. The lady was delighted. Meanwhile Madge found herself shaking hands with Philip.

"You know all about it?" he said, looking hard at her, and holding her hand fast.

"If you mean what Lois has told me—"

"Are not you going to wish me joy?"

"There is no occasion—for anybody who has got Lois," said Madge. And then she choked, pulled her hand away, and broke down. And when Lois got free from Mrs. Wishart, she saw Madge sitting with her head in her hands, and Mr. Dillwyn bending over her. Lois came swiftly behind and put both arms softly around her sister.

"It's no use!" said Madge, sobbing and yet defiant. "He has got you, and I haven't got you any longer. Let me alone—I am not going to be a fool, but to be asked to wish him joy is too much." And she broke away and ran off.

Lois could have followed her with all her heart; but she had herself habitually under better control than Madge, and knew with fine instinct what was due to others. Her eyes glistened; nevertheless her bearing was quiet and undisturbed; and a second time to-day Mr. Dillwyn was charmed with the grace of her manner. I must add that Madge presently made her appearance again, and was soon as gay as usual; her lucubrations even going so far before the end of luncheon as to wonder *where* Lois would hold her wedding. Will she fetch all the folks down here? thought Madge. Or will everybody go to Shampuashuh?

With the decision, however, the reader need not be troubled.

CHAPTER XLIX.

ON THE PASS.

Only one incident more need be told. It is the last point in my story.

The intermediate days and months must be passed over, and we skip the interval to the summer and June. It is now the middle of June. Mr. Dillwyn's programme had been successfully carried out; and, after an easy and most festive journey from England, through France, he and Lois had come by gentle stages to Switzerland. A festive journey, yes; but the expression regards the mental progress rather than the apparent. Mr. Dillwyn, being an old traveller, took things with the calm habit of use and wont; and Lois, new as all was to her, made no more fussy demonstration than he did. All the more delicious to him, and satisfactory, were the sparkles in her eyes and the flushes on her cheeks, which constantly witnessed to her pure delight or interest in something. All the more happily he felt the grasp of her hand sometimes when she did not speak; or listened to the low accents of rapture when she saw something that deserved them; or to her merry soft laugh at something that touched her sense of fun. For he found Lois had a great sense of fun. She was altogether of the most buoyant, happy, and enjoying nature possible. No one could be a better traveller. She ignored discomforts (truly there had not been much in that line), and she laughed at disappointments; and travellers must meet disappointments now and then. So Mr. Dillwyn had found the journey giving him all he had promised himself; and to Lois it gave—well Lois's dreams had never promised her the quarter.

So it had come to be the middle of June, and they were in Switzerland. And this day, the sixteenth, found them in a little wayside inn near the top of a pass, snowed up. So far they had come, the last mile or two through a heavy storm; and then the snow clouds had descended so low and so thick, and gave forth their treasures of snow-flakes so confusedly and incessantly, that going on was not to be thought of. They were sheltered in the little inn; and that is nearly all you could say of it, for the accommodations were of the smallest and simplest. Travellers were not apt to stop at that little hostelry for more than a passing refreshment; and even so, it was too early in the season for many travellers to be expected. So there were Philip and his wife now, making the best of things. Mr. Dillwyn was coaxing the little fire to burn, which had been hastily made on their arrival; but Lois sat at one of the windows looking out, and every now and then proclaiming her enjoyment by the tone in which some innocent remark came from her lips.

"It is raining now, Philip."

"What do you see in the rain?"

"Nothing whatever, at this minute; but a little while ago there was a kind of drawing aside of the thick curtain of falling snow, and I had a view of some terribly grand rocks, and one glimpse of a most wonderful distance."

"Vague distance?" said Philip, laughing. "That sounds like looking off into space."

"Well, it was. Like chaos, and order struggling out of its awful beginnings."

"Don't unpractically catch cold, while you are studying natural developement."

"I am perfectly warm. I think it is great fun to be kept here over night. Such a nice little place as it is,

and such a nice little hostess. Do you notice how neat everything is? O Philip!—here is somebody else coming!"

"Coming to the inn?"

"Yes. O, I'm afraid so. Here's one of these original little carriages crawling along, and it has stopped, and the people are getting out. Poor storm-stayed people, like ourselves."

"They will come to a fire, which we didn't," said Philip, leaving his post now and placing himself at the back of Lois's chair, where he too could see what was going on in front of the house. A queer little vehicle had certainly stopped there, and somebody very much muffled had got out, and was now helping a second person to alight, which second person must be a woman; and she was followed by another woman, who alighted with less difficulty and less attention, though she had two or three things to carry.

"I pity women who travel in the Alps with their maids!" said Mr.
Dillwyn.

"Philip, that first one, the gentleman, had a little bit—just a little bit—the air of your friend, Mr. Caruthers. He was so muffled up, one could not tell what he was like; but somehow he reminded me of Mr. Caruthers."

"I thought Tom was *your* friend?"

"Friend? No. He was an acquain'tance; he was never my friend, I think."

"Then his name raises no tender associations in your mind?"

"Why, no!" said Lois, with a gay little laugh. "No, indeed. But I liked him very well at one time; and I —*think*—he liked me."

"Poor Tom!"

"Why do you say that?" Lois asked merrily. "He is not poor; he has married a Dulcimer. I never can hear her name without thinking of Nebuchadnezzar's image! He has forgotten me long ago."

"I see you have forgotten him," said Dillwyn, bending down till his face was very near Lois's.

"How should I not? But I did like him at one time, quite well. I suppose I was flattered by his attentions, which I think were rather marked. And you know, at that time I did not know you."

Lois's voice fell a little; the last sentence being given with a delicate, sweet reserve, which spoke much more than effusion. Philip's answer was mute.

"Besides," said Lois, "he is a sort of man that I never could have liked beyond a certain point. He is a weak character; do you know it, Philip?"

"I know it. I observe, that is the last fault women will forgive in a man."

"Why should they?" said Lois. "What have you, where you have not strength? It is impossible to love where you cannot respect. Or if you love, it is a poor contemptible sort of love."

Philip laughed; and just then the door opened, and the hostess of the inn appeared on the threshhold, with other figures looming dimly behind her. She came in apologizing. More storm-bound travellers had arrived—there was no other room with a fire ready—would monsieur and madame be so gracious and allow the strangers to come in and get warm and dry by their fire? Almost before she had finished her speech the two men had sprung towards each other, and "Tom!"—"Philip DilIwyn!"—had been cried in different tones of surprised greeting.

"Where did you come from?" said Tom, shaking his friend's hand. "What a chance! Here is my wife. Arabella, this is Mr. Dillwyn, whose name you have heard often enough. At the top of this pass!—"

The lady thus addressed came in behind Tom, throwing off her wrappings, and throwing each, or dropping it as it was taken off, into the hands of her attendant who followed her. She appeared now to be a slim person, of medium height, dressed very handsomely, with an insignificant face, and a quantity of light hair disposed in a mysterious manner to look like a wig. That is, it looked like nothing natural, and yet could not be resolved by the curious eye into bands or braids or any defined form of fashionable art or artifice. The face looked fretted, and returned Mr. Dillwyn's salutation discontentedly. Tom's eye meanwhile had wandered, with an unmistakeable air of apprehension, towards the fourth member of the party; and Lois came forward now, giving him a frank greeting, and holding out her hand. Tom

bowed very low over it, without saying one word; and Philip noted that his eye shunned Lois's face, and that his own face was all shadowed when he raised it. Mr. Dillwyn put himself in between.

"May I present my wife, Mrs. Caruthers?"

Mrs. Caruthers gave Lois a look, swift and dissatisfied, and turned to the fire, shivering.

"Have we got to stay here?" she asked querulously.

"We couldn't go on, you know," said Tom. "We may be glad of any sort of a shelter. I am afraid we are interfering with your comfort, Philip; but really, we couldn't help it. The storm's awful outside. Mrs. Caruthers was sure we should be overtaken by an avalanche; and then she was certain there must be a crevasse somewhere. I wonder if one can get anything to eat in this place?"

"Make yourself easy; they have promised us dinner, and you shall share with us. What the dinner will be, I cannot say; but we shall not starve; and you see what a fire I have coaxed up for you. Take this chair, Mrs. Caruthers."

The lady sat down and hovered over the fire; and Tom restlessly bustled in and out. Mr. DilIwyn tended the fire, and Lois kept a little in the background. Till, after an uncomfortable interval, the hostess came in, bringing the very simple fare, which was all she had to set before them. Brown bread, and cheese, and coffee, and a common sort of red wine; with a bit of cold salted meat, the precise antecedents of which it was not so easy to divine. The lady by the fire looked on disdainfully, and Tom hastened to supplement things from their own stores. Cold game, white bread, and better wine were produced from somewhere, with hard-boiled eggs and even some fruit. Mrs. Caruthers sat by the fire and looked on; while Tom brought these articles, one after another, and Lois arranged the table. Philip watched her covertly; admired her lithe figure in its neat mountain dress, which he thought became her charmingly; admired the quiet, delicate tact of her whole manner and bearing; the grace with which she acted and spoke, as well as the pretty deftness of her ministrations about the table. She was taking the part of hostess, and doing it with simple dignity; and he was very sorry for Tom. Tom, he observed, would not see her when he could help it. But they had to all gather round the table together and face each other generally.

"This is improper luxury for the mountains," Dillwyn said.

"Mrs. Caruthers thinks it best to be always provided for occasions.
These small houses, you know, they can't give you any but small fare."

"Small fare is good for you!"

"Good for *you*," said Tom,—"all right; but my—Arabella cannot eat things if they are *too* small. That cheese, now!—"

"It is quite passable."

"Where are you going, Philip?"

"Bound for the AEggischhorn, in the first place."

"You are never going up?"

"Why not?" Lois asked, with her bright smile. Tom glanced at her from under his brows, and grew as dark as a thundercloud. *She* was ministering to Tom's wife in the prettiest way; not assuming anything, and yet acting in a certain sort as mistress of ceremonies. And Mrs. Caruthers was coming out of her apathy every now and then, and looking at her in a curious attentive way. I dare say it struck Tom hard. For he could not but see that to all her natural sweetness Lois had added now a full measure of the ease and grace which come from the habit of society, and which Lois herself had once admired in the ladies of his family. "Ay, even *they* wouldn't say she was nobody now!" he said to himself bitterly. And Philip, he saw, was so accustomed to this fact, that he took it as a matter of course.

"Where are you going after the AEggischhorn?" he went on, to say something.

"We mean to work our way, by degrees, to Zermatt."

"*We* are going to Zermatt," Mrs. Caruthers put in blandly. "We might travel in company."

"Can you walk?" asked Philip, smiling.

"Walk!"

"Yes. We do it on foot."

"What for? Pray, pardon me! But are you serious?"

"I am in earnest, if that is what you mean. We do not look upon it in a serious light. It's rather a jollification."

"It is far the pleasantest way, Mrs. Caruthers," Lois added.

"But do you travel without any baggage?"

"Not quite," said Lois demurely. "We generally send that on ahead, except what will go in small satchels slung over the shoulder."

"And take what you can find at the little inns?"

"O yes; and fare very well."

"I like to be comfortable!" sighed the other lady. "Try that wine, and see how much better it is."

"Thank you, no; I prefer the coffee."

"No use to ask *her* to take wine," growled Tom. "I know she won't. She never would. She has principles. Offer it to Mr. Dillwyn."

"You do me the honour to suppose me without principles," said Philip dryly.

"I don't suppose you hold *her* principles," said Tom, indicating Lois rather awkwardly by the pronoun rather than in any more definite way. "You never used."

"Quite true; I never used. But I do it now."

"Do you mean that you have given up drinking wine?"

"I have given it up?" said Philip, smiling at Tom's air, which was almost of consternation.

"Because she don't like it?"

"I hope I would give up a greater thing than that, if she did not like it," said Philip gravely. "This seems to me not a great thing. But the reason you suppose is not my reason."

"If the reason isn't a secret, I wish you'd mention it; Mrs. Caruthers will be asking me in private, by and by; and I do not like her to ask me questions I cannot answer."

"My reason is,—I think it does more harm than good."

"Wine?"

"Wine, and its congeners."

"Take a cup of coffee, Mr. Caruthers," said Lois; "and confess it will do instead of the other thing."

Tom accepted the coffee; I don't think he could have rejected anything she held out to him; but he remarked grumly to Philip, as he took it,—

"It is easy to see where you got your principles!"

"Less easy than you think," Philip answered. "I got them from no living man or woman, though I grant you, Lois showed me the way to them. I got them from the Bible, old friend."

Tom glared at the speaker.

"Have you given up your cigars too?"

Mr. Dillwyn laughed out, and Lois said somewhat exultantly,

"Yes, Mr. Caruthers."

"I am sure I wish you would too!" said Tom's wife deploringly to her husband. "I think if anything's horrid, it's the after smell of tobacco."

"But the *first* taste of it is all the comfort a fellow gets in this world," said Tom.

"No fellow ought to say that," his friend returned.

"The Bible!" Tom repeated, as if it were a hard pill to swallow.
"Philip Dillwyn quoting *that* old authority!"

"Perhaps I ought to go a little further, and say, Tom, that my quoting it is not a matter of form. I have taken service in the Christian army, since I saw you the last time. Now tell me how you and Mrs. Caruthers come to be at the top of this pass in a snow-storm on the sixteenth of June?"

"Fate!" said Tom.

"We did not expect to have a snow-storm, Mr. Dillwyn," Mrs. Caruthers added.

"But you might," said Philip. "There have been snow-storms everywhere in Switzerland this year."

"Well," said Tom, "we did not come for pleasure, anyhow. Never should dream of it, until a month later. But Mrs. Caruthers got word that a special friend of hers would be at Zermatt by a certain day, and begged to meet her; and stay was uncertain; and so we took what was said to be the shortest way from where the letter found us. And here we are."

"How is the coffee, Mr. Caruthers?" Lois asked pleasantly. Tom looked into the depths of his coffee cup, as if it were an abstraction, and then answered, that it was the best coffee he had ever had in Switzerland; and upon that he turned determinately to Mr. Dillwyn and began to talk of other things, unconnected with Switzerland or the present time. Lois was fain to entertain Tom's wife. The two women had little in common; nevertheless Mrs. Caruthers gradually warmed under the influence that shone upon her; thawed out, and began even to enjoy herself. Tom saw it all, without once turning his face that way; and he was fool enough to fancy that he was the only one. But Philip saw it too, as it were without looking; and delighted himself all the while in the gracious sweetness, and the tender tact, and the simple dignity of unconsciousness, with which Lois attended to everybody, ministered to everybody, and finally smoothed down even poor Mrs. Caruthers' ruffled plumes under her sympathizing and kindly touch.

"How soon will you be at Zermatt?" the latter asked. "I wish we could travel together! When do you expect to get there?"

"O, I do not know. We are going first, you know, to the AEggischhorn. We go where we like, and stay as long as we like; and we never know beforehand how it will be."

"But so early!—"

"Mr. Dillwyn wanted me to see the flowers. And the snow views are grand too; I am very glad not to miss them. Just before you came, I had one. The clouds swept apart for a moment, and gave me a wonderful sight of a gorge, the wildest possible, and tremendous rocks, half revealed, and a chaos of cloud and storm."

"Do you like that?"

"I like it all," said Lois, smiling. And the other woman looked, with a fascinated, uncomprehending air, at the beauty of that smile.

"But why do you walk?"

"O, that's half the fun," cried Lois. "We gain so a whole world of things that other people miss. And the walking itself is delightful."

"I wonder if I could walk?" said Mrs. Caruthers enviously. "How far can you go in a day? You must make very slow progress?"

"Not very. Now I am getting in training, we can do twenty or thirty miles a day with ease."

"Twenty or thirty miles!" Mrs. Caruthers as nearly screamed as politeness would let her do.

"We do it easily, beginning the day early."

"How early? What do you call early?"

"About four or five o'clock."

Mrs. Caruthers looked now as if she were staring at a prodigy.

"Start at four o'clock! Where do you get breakfast? Don't you have breakfast? Will the people give you

breakfast so early? Why, they would have to be up by two."

Tom was listening now. He could not help it.

"O, we have breakfast," Lois said. "We carry it with us, and we stop at some nice place and take rest on the rocks, or on a soft carpet of moss, when we have walked an hour or two. Mr. Dillwyn carries our breakfast in a little knapsack."

"Is it *nice?*" enquired the lady, with such an expression of doubt and scruple that the risible nerves of the others could not stand it, and there was a general burst of laughter.

"Come and try once," said Lois, "and you will see."

"If you do not like such fare," Philip went on, "you can almost always stop at a house and get breakfast."

"I could not eat dry food," said the lady; "and you do not drink wine.
What *do* you drink? Water?"

"Sometimes. Generally we manage to get milk. It is fresh and excellent."

"And without cups and saucers?" said the astonished lady. Lois's "ripple of laughter" sounded again softly.

"Not quite without cups; I am afraid we really do without saucers. We have an unlimited tablecloth, you know, of lichen and moss."

"And you really enjoy it?"

But here Lois shook her head. "There are no words to tell how much."

Mrs. Caruthers sighed. If she had spoken out her thoughts, it was too plain to Lois, she would have said, "I do not enjoy anything."

"How long are you thinking to stay on this side of the water?" Tom asked his friend now.

"Several months yet, I hope. I want to push on into Tyrol. We are not in a hurry. The old house at home is getting put into order, and till it is ready for habitation we can be nowhere better than here."

"The old house? *your* house, do you mean? the old house at Battersby?"

"Yes."

"You are not going *there?* for the winter at least?"

"Yes, we propose that. Why?"

"It is I that should ask 'why.' What on earth should you go to live *there* for?"

"It is a nice country, a very good house, and a place I am fond of, and
I think Lois will like."

"But out of the world!"

"Only out of your world," his friend returned, with a smile.

"Why should you go out of our world? it is *the* world."

"For what good properties?"

"And it has always been your world," Tom went on, disregarding this question.

"I told you, I am changed."

"But does becoming a Christian *change* a man, Mr. Dillwyn?" Mrs.
Caruthers asked.

"So the Bible says."

"I never saw much difference. I thought we were all Christians."

"If you were to live a while in the house with that lady," said Tom darkly, "you'd find your mistake. What in all the world do you expect to do up there at Battersby?" he went on, turning to his friend.

"Live," said Philip. "In your world you only drag along existence. And we expect to work, which you never do. There is no real living without working, man. Try it, Tom."

"Cannot you work, as you call it, in town?"

"We want more free play, and more time, than town life allows one."

"Besides, the country is so much pleasanter," Lois added.

"But such a neighbourhood! you don't know the neighbourhood—but you *do*, Philip. You have no society, and Battersby is nothing but a manufacturing place—"

"Battersby is three and a half miles off; too far for its noise or its smoke to reach us; and we can get society, as much as we want, and *what* we want; and in such a place there is always a great deal that might be done."

The talk went on for some time; Mrs. Caruthers seeming amazed and mystified, Tom dissatisfied and critical. At last, being informed that their own quarters were ready, the later comers withdrew, after agreeing that they would all sup together.

"Tom," said Mrs. Caruthers presently, "whom did Mr. Dillwyn marry?"

"Whom did he marry?"

"Yes. Who was she before she married?"

"I always heard she was nobody," Tom answered, with something between a grunt and a groan.

"Nobody! But that's nonsense. I haven't seen a woman with more style in a great while."

"Style!" echoed Tom, and his word would have had a sharp addition if he had not been speaking to his wife; but Tom was before all things a gentleman. As it was, his tone would have done honour to a grisly bear somewhat out of temper.

"Yes," repeated Mrs. Caruthers. "You may not know it, Tom, being a man; but *I* know what I am saying; and I tell you Mrs. Dillwyn has very distinguished manners. I hope we may see a good deal of them."

Meanwhile Lois was standing still where they had left her, in front of the fire; looking down meditatively into it. Her face was grave, and her abstraction for some minutes deep. I suppose her New England reserve was struggling with her individual frankness of nature, for she said no word, and Mr. Dillwyn, who was watching her, also stood silent. At last frankness, or affection, got the better of reserve; and, with a slow, gentle motion she turned to him, laying one hand on his shoulder, and sinking her face upon his breast.

"Lois! what is it?" he asked, folding his arms about her.

"Philip, it smites me!"

"What, my darling?" he said, almost startled. And then she lifted up her face and looked at him.

"To know myself so happy, and to see them so unhappy. Philip, they are not happy,—neither one of them!"

"I am afraid it is true. And we can do nothing to help them."

"No, I see that too."

Lois said it with a sigh, and was silent again. Philip did not choose to push the subject further, uncertain how far her perceptions went, and not wishing to give them any assistance. Lois stood silent and pondering, still within his arms, and he waited and watched her. At last she began again.

"We cannot do *them* any good. But I feel as if I should like to spend my life in making people happy."

"How many people?" said her husband fondly, with a kiss or two which explained his meaning. Lois laughed out.

"Philip, *I* do not make you happy."

"You come very near it."

"But I mean— Your happiness has something better to rest on. I should like to spend my life bringing happiness to the people who know nothing about being happy."

"Do it, sweetheart!" said he, straining her a little closer. "And let me help."

"Let you help!—when you would have to do almost the whole. But, to be sure, money is not all; and money alone will not do it, in most cases. Philip, I will tell you where I should like to begin."

"Where? I will begin there also."

"With Mrs. Barclay."

"Mrs. Barclay!" There came a sudden light into Philip's eyes.

"Do you know, she is not a happy woman?"

"I know it."

"And she seems very much alone in the world."

"She is alone in the world."

"And she has been so good to us! She has done a great deal for Madge and me."

"She has done as much for me."

"I don't know about that. I do not see how she could. In a way, I owe her almost everything. Philip, you would never have married the woman I was three years ago."

"Don't take your oath upon that," he said lightly.

"But you would not, and you ought not."

"There is a counterpart to that. I am sure you would not have married the man I was three years ago."

At that Lois laid down her face again for a moment on his breast.

"I had a pretty hard quarter of an hour in a sleigh with you once!" she said.

Philip's answer was again wordless.

"But about Mrs. Barclay?" said Lois, recovering herself.

"Are you one of the few women who can keep to the point?" said he, laughing.

"What can we do for her?"

"What would you like to do for her?"

"Oh— Make her happy!"

"And to that end—?"

Lois lifted her face and looked into Mr. Dillwyn's as if she would search out something there. The frank nobleness which belonged to it was encouraging, and yet she did not speak.

"Shall we ask her to make her home with us?"

"O Philip!" said Lois, with her face all illuminated,—"would you like it?"

"I owe her much more than you do. And, love, I like what you like."

"Would she come?"

"If she could resist you and me together, she would be harder than I think her."

"I love her very much," said Lois thoughtfully, "and I think she loves me. And if she will come—I am almost sure we *can* make her happy."

"We will try, darling."

"And these other people—we need not meet them at Zermatt, need we?"

"We will find it not convenient."

Neither at Zermatt nor anywhere else in Switzerland did the friends again join company. Afterwards, when both parties had returned to their own country, it was impossible but that encounters should now and then take place. But whenever and wherever they happened, Tom made them as short as his wife would let him. And as long as he lives, he will never see Mrs. Philip Dillwyn without a clouding of his face and a very evident discomposure of his gay and not specially profound nature. It has tenacity somewhere, and has received at least one thing which it will never lose.

THE END

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Typographical errors silently corrected:

Chapter 5: =but you see the month= replaced by =but you see, the month=

Chapter 8: =a Father unto you= replaced by =a father unto you=

Chapter 10: =want to know did you= replaced by =want to know, did you=

Chapter 11: =you see it if off= replaced by =you see, it is off=

Chapter 18: =vier augen= replaced by =vier Augen=

Chapter 20: =will come of it!'= replaced by =will come of it!=

Chapter 21: =bon goût= replaced by =bon goût=

Chapter 21: =children!= replaced by =children!"=

Chapter 22: =Aubigne= replaced by =Aubigné=

Chapter 30: =heavy eyelids."= replaced by =heavy eyelids.=

Chapter 34: =compliment, said= replaced by =compliment," said=

Chapter 35: =chapter of Matthew.= replaced by =chapter of Matthew."=

Chapter 39: =come hear and rest= replaced by =comes here and rest=

Chapter 42: =mankind is man,'" my dear; "and= replaced by =mankind is man,' my dear; and=

Chapter 44: =your hare'= replaced by =your hare.'=

Chapter 47: =not become me.= replaced by =not become me."=

Chapter 47: =might like to see.= replaced by =might like to see."=

Chapter 48: =certain gout= replaced by =certain goût=

Chapter 48: =use of money,= replaced by =use of money,"=

Chapter 48: =and so, Jessie= replaced by ="and so, Jessie=

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