GRACE AGUILAR

HOME INFLUENCE: A TALE FOR MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

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Aguilar G.

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Содержание

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TO MRS. HERBERT TOWNSHEND BOWEN.

My Dear Friend,

Independent of the personal feelings which urged the dedication of this unpretending volume to you, I know few to whom a story illustrative of a mother's solemn responsibilities, intense anxiety to fulfill them, and deep sense of the Influence of Home could, with more justice, be tendered. Simple as is the actual narrative, the sentiments it seeks to illustrate, are so associated with you – have been so strengthened from the happy hours of unrestrained intercourse I have enjoyed with you – that, though I ought, perhaps, to have waited until I could have offered a work of far superior merit to a mind like yours, I felt as if no story of mine could more completely belong to you. Will you, then, pardon the *unintentional* errors which I fear you, as an earnest Protestant, *may* discern, and accept this little work as a slight tribute of the warm affection and sincere esteem with which you have been so long regarded by

Your truly attached Friend,

GRACE AGUILAR.

PREFACE

The following story will, the author trusts, sufficiently illustrate its title to require but few words in the way of preface. She is only anxious to impress two facts on the minds of her readers. The one – that having been brought before the public principally as the author of Jewish works, and as an explainer of the Hebrew Faith, some Christian mothers might fear that the present Work has the same tendency, and hesitate to place it in the hands of their children. She, therefore, begs to assure them, that as a simple domestic story, the characters in which are all Christians, believing in and practicing that religion, all *doctrinal* points have been most carefully avoided, the author seeking only to illustrate the spirit of true piety, and the virtues always designated as the Christian virtues thence proceeding. Her sole aim, with regard to Religion, has been to incite a train of serious and loving thought toward God and man, especially toward those with whom He has linked us in the precious ties of parent and child, brother and sister, master and pupil.

The second point she is desirous to bring forward is her belief, that in childhood and youth the *spoken* sentiment is one of the safest guides to individual character; and that if, therefore, she have written more conversation than may appear absolutely necessary for the elucidation of "Home Influence," or the interest of the narrative, it is from no wish to be diffuse, but merely to illustrate her own belief. Sentiment is the vehicle of THOUGHT, and THOUGHT the origin of ACTION. Children and youth have very seldom the power to evince character by action, and scarcely if ever understand the mystery of thought; and therefore their unrestrained conversation may often greatly aid parents and teachers in acquiring a correct idea of their natural disposition, and in giving hints for the mode of education each may demand.

Leaving the beaten track of works written for the young, the author's aim has been to assist in the education of the HEART, believing that of infinitely greater importance than the mere instruction of the MIND, for the bright awakening of the latter, depends far more on the happy influences of the former than is generally supposed.

The *moral* of the following story the author acknowledges is addressed to mothers only, for on them so much of the responsibility of Home Influence devolves. On them, more than on any other, depends the well-doing and happiness, or the error and grief, not of childhood alone, but of the far more dangerous period of youth. A Preface is not the place to enter on their mission. The author's only wish is to *aid* by the thoughts, which in some young mothers, anxious and eager to perform their office, her story *may* excite. To daughters also, she hopes it may not be found entirely useless, for on them rests so much of the happiness of home, in the simple thought of, and attention to those little things which so bless and invigorate domestic life. Opportunities to evince the more striking virtues woman may never have, but for the cultivation and performance of the lesser, they are called upon each day.

Clapton, *January, 1847.*

MEMOIR OF GRACE AGUILAR

Grace Aguilar was born at Hackney, June 2d, 1816. She was the eldest child and only daughter of Emanuel Aguilar, one of those merchants descended from the Jews of Spain, who, almost within the memory of man, fled from persecution in that country, and sought and found an asylum in England.

The delicate frame and feeble health observable in Grace Aguilar throughout her life displayed itself from infancy; from the age of three years, she was almost constantly under the care of some physician, and, by their advice, annually spending the summer months by the sea, in the hope of rousing and strengthening a naturally fragile constitution. This want of physical energy was, however, in direct contrast to her mental powers, which developed early and readily. She learned to read with scarcely any trouble, and, when once that knowledge was gained, her answer, when asked what she would like for a present, was, invariably, "A book," which was read, re-read, and preserved with a care remarkable in so young a child. With the exception of eighteen months passed at school, her mother was her sole instructress, and both parents took equal delight in directing her studies and facilitating her personal inspection of all that was curious and interesting in the various counties of England to which they resorted for her health.

From the early age of seven she commenced keeping a journal, which was continued with scarce any intermission throughout her life. In 1825 she visited Oxford, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, Ross, and Bath, and though at that time but nine years old, her father took her to Gloucester and Worcester cathedrals, and also to see a porcelain and pin manufactory, &c., the attention and interest she displayed on these occasions affording convincing proof that her mind was alive to appreciate and enjoy what was thus presented to her observation. Before she had completed her twelfth year, she ventured to try her powers in composition, and wrote a little drama, called Gustavus Vasa, never published, and only here recorded as being the first germ of what was afterward to become the ruling passion.

In September, 1828, the family went to reside in Devonshire for the health of Mr. Aguilar, and there a strong admiration for the beauties and wonders of nature manifested itself: she constantly collected shells, stones, sea-weed, mosses, &c., in her daily rambles; and, not satisfied with admiring their beauty, sedulously procured whatever little catechisms or other books on those subjects she could purchase or borrow, eagerly endeavoring, by their study, to increase her knowledge of their nature and properties.

When she had attained the age of fourteen, her father commenced a regular course of instruction for his child, by reading aloud while she was employed in drawing, needle-work, &c. History was selected, that being the study which now most interested her, and the first work chosen was Josephus.

It was while spending a short time at Tavistock, in 1830, that the beauty of the surrounding scenery led her to express her thoughts in verse. Several small pieces soon followed her first essay, and she became extremely fond of this new exercise and enjoyment of her opening powers, yet her mind was so well regulated that she never permitted herself to indulge in original composition until her duties and her studies were all performed.

Grace Aguilar was extremely fond of music; she had learned the piano from infancy, and in 1831 commenced the harp. She sang pleasingly, preferring English songs, and invariably selecting them for the beauty or sentiment of the words; she was also passionately fond of dancing, and her cheerful, lively manners in the society of her young friends would scarcely have led any to imagine how deeply she felt and pondered upon the serious and solemn subjects which afterward formed the labor of her life. She seemed to enjoy all, to enter into all, but a keen observer would detect the hold that sacred and holy principle ever exercised over her lightest act and gayest hour. A sense of

duty was apparent in the merest trifle, and her following out of the divine command of obedience to parents was only equaled by the unbounded affection she felt for them. A wish was once expressed by her mother that she should not waltz, and no solicitation could afterward tempt her. Her mother also required her to read sermons, and study religion and the Bible regularly; this was readily submitted to, first as a task, but afterward with much delight; for evidence of which we can not do better than quote her own words, in one of her religious works:

"This formed into a habit, and persevered in for a life, would in time, and without labor or weariness, give the comfort and the knowledge that we seek; each year it would become lighter and more blessed; each year we should discover something we knew not before, and, in the valley of the shadow of death, feel to our heart's core that the Lord our God is Truth." —*Women of Israel*, vol. ii., p. 43.

Nor did Grace Aguilar only study religion for her own personal observance and profit. She embraced its *principles* (the principles of all creeds) in a widely-extended and truly liberal sense. She carried her practice of its holy and benevolent precepts into every minutiæ of her daily life, doing all the good her limited means would allow, finding time in the midst of her own studies, and most varied and continual occupations, to work for and instruct her poor neighbors in the country, and, while steadily venerating and adhering to her own faith, neither inquiring nor heeding the religious opinions of the needy whom she succored or consoled. To be permitted to help and comfort she considered a privilege and a pleasure; she left the rest to God; and thus, bestowing and receiving blessings and smiles from all who had the opportunity of knowing her, her young life flowed on in an almost uninterrupted stream of enjoyment, until she had completed her nineteenth year.

Alas! the scene was soon to change, and trials awaited that spirit which, in the midst of sunshine, had so beautifully striven to prepare itself a shelter from the storm. The two brothers of Miss Aguilar, whom she tenderly loved, left the paternal roof to be placed far from their family at school. Her mother's health necessitated a painful and dangerous operation; and from that time, for several years, alternate hopes and fears, through long and dreary watchings beside the sick-bed of that beloved mother, became the portion of her gifted child. But even this depressing and arduous change in the duties of her existence did not suspend her literary pursuits and labors. She profited by all the intervals she could command, and wrote the tale of the "Martyr," the "Spirit of Judaism," and "Israel Defended;" the latter translated from the French at the earnest request of a friend, and printed only for private circulation. The "Magic Wreath," a little poetical work, and the first our authoress ever published, dedicated to the Right Honorable the Countess of Munster, also appeared about this time.

In the spring of 1835, Grace Aguilar was attacked with measles, and never afterward recovered her previous state of health, suffering at intervals with such exhausting feelings of weakness as to become, without any visible disease, really alarming.

The medical attendants recommended entire rest of mind and body; she visited the sea, and seemed a little revived, but anxieties were gathering around her horizon, to which it became evidently impossible her ardent and active mind could remain passive or indifferent, and which recalled every feeling, every energy of her impressible nature into action. Her elder brother, who had long chosen music as his profession, was sent to Germany to pursue his studies; the younger determined upon entering the sea-service. The excitement of these changes, and the parting with both, was highly injurious to their affectionate sister; and her delight, a few months after, at welcoming the sailor boy returned from his first voyage, with all his tales of danger and adventure, and his keen enjoyment of the path of life he had chosen, together with her struggles to do her utmost to share his walks and companionship, contributed yet more to impair her inadequate strength.

The second parting was scarcely over ere her father, who had long shown symptoms of failing health, became the victim of consumption. He breathed his last in her arms; and the daughter, while sorrowing over all she had lost, roused herself once more to the utmost, feeling that she was the sole comforter beside her remaining parent. Soon after, when her brother again returned finding the death

of his father he resolved not to make his third voyage as a midshipman, but endeavor to procure some employment sufficiently lucrative to prevent his remaining a burden upon his widowed mother. Long and anxiously did he pursue this object, his sister, whose acquaintance with literary and talented persons had greatly increased, using all her energy and influence in his behalf, and concentrating all the enthusiastic feelings of her nature in inspiring him with patience, comfort, and hope, as often as they failed him under his repeated disappointments. At length his application was taken up by a powerful friend, for her sake; she had the happiness of succeeding, and saw him depart at the very summit of his wishes. Repose, which had been so long necessary, seemed now at hand; but her nerves had been too long and too repeatedly overstrung, and when this task was done the worn and weary spirit could sustain no more, and sank under the labor that had been imposed upon it.

Severe illness followed; and though it yielded, after a time, to skillful remedies and tender care, her excessive languor and severe headaches continued to give her family and friends great uneasiness.

During all these demands upon her time, her thoughts, and her health, however, the ruling passion neither slumbered nor slept. She completed the Jewish Faith, and also prepared Home Influence for the press, though very unfit to have taxed her powers so far. Her medical attendant became urgent for total change of air and scene, and again strongly interdicted *all* mental exertion; a trip to Frankfort, to visit her elder brother, was therefore decided on. In June, 1847, she set out, and bore the journey without suffering nearly so much as might have been expected. Her hopes were high, her spirits raised; the novelty and interest of her first travels on the Continent gave her, for a very transient period, a gleam, as it were, of strength. For a week or two she appeared to rally; then, again, every exertion became too much for her, every stimulating remedy seemed to exhaust her. She was ordered from Frankfort to try the baths and mineral waters of Schwalbach, but without success. After a stay of six weeks, and persevering with exemplary patience in the treatment prescribed, she was one night seized with alarming convulsive spasms, so terrible that her family removed her the next morning with all speed back to Frankfort, to the house of a family of most kind friends, where every attention and care was lavishly bestowed.

In vain. She took to her bed the very day of her arrival, and never rose from it again; she became daily weaker, and in three weeks from that time her sufferings ceased forever. She was perfectly conscious to within less than two hours before her death, and took an affectionate leave of her mother and brother. Speech had been a matter of difficulty for some time previous, her throat being greatly affected by her malady; but she had, in consequence, learned to use her fingers in the manner of the deaf and dumb, and almost the last time they moved it was to spell upon them, feebly, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

She was buried in the cemetery of Frankfort, one side of which is set apart for the people of her faith. The stone which marks the spot bears upon it a butterfly and five stars, emblematic of the soul in heaven, and beneath appears the inscription,

> "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." – Prov., ch. xxxi., v. 31.

And thus, 16th of September, 1847, at the early age of thirty-one, Grace Aguilar was laid to rest; the bowl was broken, the silver cord was loosed. Her life was short, and checkered with pain and anxiety, but she strove hard to make it useful and valuable, by employing diligently and faithfully the talents with which she had been endowed. Nor did the serious view with which she ever regarded earthly existence induce her to neglect or despise any occasion of enjoyment, advantage, or sociality which presented itself. Her heart was ever open to receive, her hand to give.

Inasmuch as she succeeded to the satisfaction of her fellow-beings, let them be grateful; inasmuch as she failed, let those who perceive it deny her not the meed of praise for her endeavor to open the path she believed would lead mankind to practical virtue and happiness, and strive to

carry out the pure philanthropic principles by which she was actuated, and which she so earnestly endeavored to diffuse.

October, 1849.

PART I.
THE SISTERS

CHAPTER I.
A LAUNCH. – A PROMISE. – A NEW RELATION

In a very beautiful part of Wales, between the northern boundaries of Glamorgan and the southeastern of Carmarthenshire, there stood, some twenty or thirty years ago, a small straggling village. Its locality was so completely concealed that the appearance of a gentleman's carriage, or, in fact, any vehicle superior to a light spring-cart, was of such extremely rare occurence as to be dated, in the annals of Llangwillan, as a remarkable event, providing the simple villagers with amusing wonderment for weeks.

The village was scattered over the side of a steep and rugged hill; and on the east, emerging from a thick hedge of yews and larches, peeped forth the picturesque old church, whose tin-coated spire, glittering in the faintest sunshine, removed all appearance of gloom from the thick trees, and seemed to whisper, whatever darkness lingered round, light was always shining there. The churchyard, which the yews and larches screened, was a complete natural garden, from the lowly cottage flowers, planted by loving hands over many a grassy grave, and so hallowed that not a child would pluck them, however tempted by their luxuriance and beauty. A pretty cottage, whose white walls were covered with jasmine, roses, and honeysuckle, marked the humble residence of the village minister, who though in worldly rank only a poor curate, from his spiritual gifts deserved a much higher grade.

A gurgling stream ran leaping and sparkling over the craggy hill till it formed a deep, wide bed for itself along the road leading to the nearest town, embanked on one side by a tall leafy hedge, and on the other by rich grass and meadow flowers. By the side of this stream groups of village children were continually found, sometimes reaching for some particular flower or insect, or floating pieces of wood with a twig stuck upright within them as tiny fleets; but this amusement had given place the last ten days to the greater excitement of watching the progress of a miniature frigate, the workmanship of a young lad who had only very lately become an inmate of the village. All had been at length completed, sails, ropes, and masts, with a degree of neatness and beauty, showing not only ingenuity but observation; and one lovely summer evening the ceremony of launching took place. For a few minutes she tottered and reeled amid the tiny breakers, then suddenly regained her equilibrium and dashed gallantly along. A loud shout burst from the group, from all save the owner, a beautiful boy of some twelve years, who contented himself with raising his slight figure to its full height, and looking proudly and triumphantly round him. One glance would suffice to satisfy that his rank in life was far superior to that of his companions, and that he condescended from circumstances, not from choice, to mingle with them. So absorbed was the general attention that the very unusual sound of carriage-wheels was unremarked until close beside them, and then so astounding was the sight of a private carriage and the coachman's very simple question if that road led to the village, that all hung back confused. The owner of the little vessel, however, answered proudly and briefly in the affirmative. "And can you direct me, my good boy," inquired a lady, looking from the window, and smiling kindly at the abashed group "to the residence of Mrs. Fortescue, it is out of the village, is it not?"

"Mrs. Fortescue!" repeated the boy eagerly and gladly, and his cap was off his head in a moment, and the bright sunshine streamed on a face of such remarkable beauty, and withal so familiar, that though the lady bent eagerly forward to address him, emotion so choked her voice that the lad was enabled to reply to her inquiry, and direct the coachman to the only inn of the village, and they had driven off before words returned.

The boy looked eagerly after them, then desiring one of his companions to meet the lady at the inn, and guide her to the cottage, caught up his little vessel, and darted off across some fields which led by a shorter cut to the same place.

It was a very humble dwelling, so surrounded by hills that their shadow always seemed to overhang it: yet within, the happy temper of a poor widow and her daughter kept up a perpetual sunshine. Three weeks previous to the evening we have mentioned, a lady and two children had arrived at Llangwillan, unable to proceed farther from the severe indisposition of the former. They were unattended, and the driver only knew that their destination was Swansea; he believed they had been shipwrecked off Pembroke, and that the poor lady was very ill when she commenced her journey, but the curious inquiries of the villagers could elicit nothing more. Mr. Myrvin, with characteristic benevolence, devoted himself to insuring, as far as he could, the comfort of the invalid; had her removed from the inn to Widow Morgan's cottage, confident that there she would at least be nursed with tenderness and care, and so near him as to permit his constant watchfulness. But a very few days too sadly convinced him, not only that her disease was mortal, but that his presence and gentle accents irritated instead of soothed. Ill-temper and self-will seemed to increase with the weakness, which every day rendered her longing to continue her journey more and more futile. It was some days before she could even be persuaded to write to the relative she was about to seek, so determined was she that she would get well; and when the letter was forwarded, and long before an answer could have been received (for twenty years ago there were no railroads to carry on epistolary communication as now), fretfulness and despondency increased physical suffering, by the determined conviction that she was abandoned, her children would be left uncared for. In vain Mr. Myrvin assured her of the impossibility yet to receive a reply, that the direction might not even have been distinct enough, for her memory had failed her in dictating it; she knew she was deserted, she might have deserved it, but her Edward was innocent, and it was very hard on him. As self-will subsided in physical exhaustion, misery increased. A restless torturing remembrance seemed to have taken possession of her, which all the efforts of the earnest clergyman were utterly ineffectual to remove. She would not listen to the peace he proffered, and so painfully did his gentle eloquence appear to irritate instead of calm, that he desisted, earnestly praying, that her sister might answer the letter in person, and by removing anxiety prepare the mind for better thoughts.

One object alone had power to bring something like a smile to that altered but still most beautiful countenance, conquer even irritation, and still create intervals of pleasure – it was her son, the same beautiful boy we have already noticed, and whose likeness to herself was so extraordinary that it would have been almost too feminine a beauty, had it not been for the sparkling animated expression of every feature, and the manly self-possession which characterized his every movement. That he should be his mother's idol was not very surprising, for the indiscreet and lavish indulgence which had been his from birth, had not yet had power to shake his doating fondness for his mother, or interfere with her happiness by the visible display of the faults which her weakness had engendered. Caressingly affectionate, open-hearted, generous, and ever making her his first object, perhaps even a more penetrating mother would have seen nothing to dread but all to love. His uncontrolled passion at the slightest cross, his haughty pride and indomitable will toward all save her, but increased her affection. And when he was with her, which he was very often, considering that a sick close room would have been utterly repugnant to him had it not contained his mother, Mrs. Fortescue was actually happy. But it was a happiness only increasing her intensity of suffering when her son was absent. Hide it from herself as she might, the truth would press upon her that she was dying, and her darling must be left to the care of relations indeed, but utter strangers to him, and unlikely to treat him as she had done. She knew that he had, what strict disciplinarians, as she chose to regard her sister and her husband, would term and treat as serious faults, while she felt them actually virtues; and agony for him in the dread of what he might be called upon to endure, would deluge her pillow with passionate tears, and shake her slight frame as with convulsion.

The day we have mentioned, Edward had been absent longer than usual, and toward evening Mrs. Fortescue awoke from a troubled sleep to brood over these thoughts, till they had produced their usual effect in tears and sobs, the more painful to witness from the increasing physical incapacity to struggle with them.

A little girl, between ten and eleven years old, was seated on a low wooden stool, half concealed by the coarse curtain of the bed, employed in sewing some bright gilt buttons on a blue jacket. It seemed hard work for those small, delicate hands; but she did not look up from her task till roused by the too familiar sound of her mother's suffering, and then, as she raised her head, and flung back the heavy and somewhat disordered ringlets, the impulse seemed to be to spring up and try to soothe, but a mournful expression quickly succeeded, and she sat several minutes without moving. At length, as Mrs. Fortescue's sobs seemed almost to suffocate her, the child gently bent over her, saying, very timidly, "Dear mamma, shall I call widow Morgan, or can I get any thing for you?" and, without waiting for a reply, save the angry negative to the first question, she held a glass of water to her mother's lips and bathed her forehead. After a few minutes Mrs. Fortescue revived sufficiently to inquire where Edward was.

"He has gone down to the stream to launch his little frigate, mamma, and asked me to fasten these buttons on his jacket, to make it look like a sailor's meanwhile; I do not think he will be very long now."

Mrs. Fortescue made no rejoinder, except to utter aloud those thoughts which had caused her previous paroxysm, and her little girl, after a very evident struggle with her own painful timidity, ventured to say:

"But why should you fear so much for Edward, dear mamma? Every body loves him and admires him, so I am sure my aunt and uncle will."

"Your aunt may for my sake, but she will not love or bear with his childish faults as I have done; and your uncle is such a harsh, stern man, that there is little hope for his forbearance with my poor Edward. And he is so frank and bold, he will not know how even to conceal his boyish errors, and he will be punished, and his fine spirit broken, and who will be there to shield and soothe him!"

"I may be able sometimes, mamma, and indeed, indeed, I will whenever I can," replied her child, with affecting earnestness. "I love him so very, very much, and I know he is so much better than I am, that it will be very easy to help him whenever I can."

"Will you promise me, Ellen, will you really promise me to shield him, and save him from harshness whenever it is in your power," exclaimed Mrs. Fortescue, so eagerly, that she half raised herself, and pressed Ellen to her with an appearance of affection so unusual, and a kiss so warm, that that moment never passed from the child's mind, and the promise she gave was registered in her own heart, with a solemnity and firmness of purpose little imagined by her mother, who when she demanded it, conceived neither its actual purport nor extent; she only felt relieved that Edward would have some one by him, to love him and enable him to conceal his errors, if he should commit any.

Had she studied and known the character of Ellen as she did that of her son, that promise would perhaps never have been asked; nor would she so incautiously and mistakenly have laid so great a stress upon *concealment*, as the only sure means of guarding from blame. From her childhood Mrs. Fortescue had been a creature of passion and impulse, and maternity had unhappily not altered one tittle of her character. In what manner, or at what cost, Ellen might be enabled to keep that promise, never entered her mind. It had never been her wont, even in days of health, to examine or reflect, and present weakness permitted only the morbid indulgence of one exaggerated thought.

For several minutes she lay quite silent, and Ellen resumed her seat and work, her temples throbbing, she knew not why, and a vain longing to throw her arms round her mother's neck, and entreat her only for one more kiss, one other word of love; and the consciousness that she dared not, caused the hot tears to rush into her eyes, and almost blind her, but she would not let them fall, for

she had learned long ago, that while Edward's tears only excited soothing and caresses, hers always called forth irritation and reproof.

"Joy, joy! Mother, darling!" exclaimed an eager voice, some minutes afterward, and Edward bounded into the room, and throwing himself by his mother's side, kissed her pale cheek again and again. "Such joy! My ship sailed so beautifully, I quite longed for you to see it, and you will one day when you get well and strong again; and I know you will soon now, for I am sure aunt Emmeline will very soon come, and then, then, you will be so happy, and we shall all be happy again!"

Mrs. Fortescue pressed him closer and closer to her, returning his kisses with such passionate fondness, that tears mingled with them, and fell upon his cheek.

"Don't cry, mamma, dear! indeed, indeed, my aunt will soon come. Do you know I think I have seen her and spoken to her, too?"

"Seen her, Edward? You mean you have dreamed about her, and so fancy you have seen her;" but the eager, anxious look she fixed upon him evinced more hope than her words.

"No, no, mamma; as we were watching my ship, a carriage passed us, and a lady spoke to me, and asked me the way to the cottage where you lived, and I am sure it is aunt Emmeline from her smile."

"It can not be," murmured his mother, sadly; "unless – " and her countenance brightened. "Did she speak to you, Edward, as if she knew you, recognized you, from your likeness to me?"

"No, mamma, there was no time, the carriage drove off again so quickly; but, hush! I am sure I hear her voice down stairs," and he sprung up from the bed and listened eagerly. "Yes, yes, I am right, and she is coming up; no, it's only widow Morgan, but I am sure it is my aunt by your face," he added, impatiently, as Mrs. Morgan tried by signs to beg him to be more cautious, and not to agitate his mother. "Why don't you let her come up?" and springing down the whole flight of stairs in two bounds, he rushed into the little parlor, caught hold of the lady's dress, and exclaimed, "You are my aunt, my own dear aunt; do come up to mamma, she has been wanting you so long, so very long, and you will make her well, dear aunt, will you not?"

"Oh, that I may be allowed to do so, dear boy!" was the painfully agitated reply, and she hastened up the stairs.

But to Edward's grief and astonishment, so little was he conscious of his mother's exhausted state, the sight of his aunt, prepared in some measure as she was, seemed to bring increase of suffering instead of joy. There was a convulsive effort for speech, a passionate return of her sister's embrace, and she fainted. Edward in terror flung himself beside her, entreating her not to look so pale, but to wake and speak to him. Ellen, with a quickness and decision, which even at that moment caused her aunt to look at her with astonishment, applied the usual restoratives, evincing no unusual alarm, and a careless observer might have said, no feeling; but it was only a momentary thought which Mrs. Hamilton could give to Ellen, every feeling was engrossed in the deep emotion with which she gazed on the faded form and altered face of that still beloved though erring one: who, when she had last beheld her, thirteen years previous, was bright, buoyant, lovely as the boy beside them. Her voice yet, more than the proffered remedies, seemed to recall life, and after a brief interval the choking thought found words.

"My father! my father! Oh, Emmeline I know that he is dead! My disobedience, my ingratitude for all his too indulgent love, killed him – I know it did. But did he curse me, Emmeline? did all his love turn to wrath, as it ought to have done? did – "

"Dearest Eleanor," replied Mrs. Hamilton, with earnest tenderness, "dismiss such painful thoughts at once; our poor father did feel your conduct deeply, but he forgave it, would have received your husband, caressed, loved you as before, had you but returned to him; and so loved you to the last moment, that your name was the last word upon his lips. But this is no subject for such youthful auditors," she continued, interrupting herself, as she met Edward's bright eyes fixed wonderingly upon her face, and noticed the excessive paleness of Ellen's cheek. "You look weary, my love," she

said, kindly, drawing her niece to her, and affectionately kissing her. "Edward has made his own acquaintance with me, why did you not do so too? But go now into the garden for a little while, I am sure you want fresh air, and I will take your place as nurse mean while. Will you trust me?"

And the kind smile which accompanied her words gave Ellen courage to return her kiss, but she left the room without speaking. Edward required more persuasion; and the moment he was permitted he returned, seated himself on a stool at his aunt's feet, laid his head on her lap, and remained for nearly an hour quite silent, watching with her the calm slumbers which had followed the agitating conversation between them. Mrs. Hamilton was irresistibly attracted toward him, and rather wondered that Ellen should stay away so long. She did not know that Edward had spent almost the whole of that day in the joyous sports natural to his age, and that it had been many weary days and nights since Ellen had quitted her mother's room.

CHAPTER II.
GLIMPSES INTO A CHILD'S HEART. – A DEATHBED

On leaving the cottage, Ellen hastily traversed the little garden, and entered a narrow lane, leading to Mr. Myrvin's dwelling. Her little heart was swelling high within her, and the confinement she had endured, the constant control she exercised for fear she should add to her mother's irritation, combined with the extreme delicacy of natural constitution, had so weakened her, as to render the slightest exertion painful. She had been so often reproved as fretful and ill-tempered, whenever in tears, that she always checked and concealed them. She had been so frequently told that she did not know what affection was, that she was so inanimate and cold, that though she did not understand the actual meaning of the words, she believed she was different to any one else, and was unhappy without knowing why. Compared with her brother, she certainly was neither a pretty nor an engaging child. Weakly from her birth, her residence in India had increased constitutional delicacy, and while to a watchful eye the expression of her countenance denoted constant suffering, the heedless and superficial observer would condemn it as peevishness, and so unnatural to a young child, that nothing but confirmed ill-temper could have produced it. The soft, beautifully-formed black eye was too large for her other features, and the sallowness of her complexion, the heavy tresses of very dark hair, caused her to be remarked as a very plain child, which in reality she was not. Accustomed to hear beauty extolled above every thing else, beholding it in her mother and brother, and imagining it was Edward's great beauty that always made him so beloved and petted, an evil-disposed child would have felt nothing but envy and dislike toward him. But Ellen felt neither. She loved him devotedly; but that any one could love her, now that the only one who ever had – her idolized father – was dead, she thought impossible.

Why her heart and temples beat so quickly as she left her mother's room – why the promise she had so lately made should so cling to her mind, that even her aunt's arrival could not remove it – why she felt so giddy and weak as to render walking painful, the poor child could not have told, but, unable at length to go farther, she sat down on a grassy bank, and believing herself quite alone, cried bitterly. Several minutes passed and she did not look up, till a well-known voice inquired: —

"Dear Ellen, what is the matter? What has happened to grieve you so to-day? won't you tell me?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do not know, dear Arthur; I only feel – feel – as if I had not so much strength as I had a few days ago – and, and I could not help crying."

"You are not well, Ellen," replied her companion, a fine lad of sixteen, and Mr. Myrvin's only son. "You are looking paler than I ever saw you before; let me call my father. You know he is always pleased when he sees you, and he hoped you would have been to us before to-day; come with me to him now."

"No, Arthur, indeed I can not; he will think I have forgotten all he said to me the last time I saw him, and, indeed, I have not – but I – I do not know what is the matter with me to-day."

And, in spite of all her efforts to restrain them, the tears would burst forth afresh; and Arthur, finding all his efforts at consolation ineffectual, contented himself with putting his arm round her and kissing them away. A few minutes afterward his father appeared.

"In tears, my dear Ellen!" he said, kindly; "your mother is not worse, I hope?"

"I do not know, sir," replied the child, as well as her tears would permit; "she has been very ill just now, for her faint was longer than usual."

"Did any thing particular occasion it?"

"I think it was seeing my aunt. Mamma was very much agitated before and afterward."

"Mrs. Hamilton has arrived then! I am rejoiced to hear it," replied Mr. Myrvin, gladly. Then sitting down by Ellen, he took one of her hands in his, and said, kindly, "Something has grieved my

little girl this evening; I will not ask what it is, because you may not like to tell me; but you must not imagine evils, Ellen. I know you have done, and are doing, the duty of a good, affectionate child, nursing your suffering mother, bearing with intervals of impatience, which her invalid state occasions, and giving up all your own wishes to sit quietly by her. I have not seen you, my child, but I know those who have, and this has pleased me, and, what is of much more consequence, it proves you have not forgotten all I told you of your Father in Heaven, that even a little child can try to love and serve Him."

"But have you not told me those who are good are always happy?" inquired Ellen; "then I can not be good, though indeed I try to be so, for I do not think I am happy, for I can never laugh and sing and talk as Edward does."

"You are not in such strong health as your brother, my dear little girl, and you have had many things to make you unhappy, which Edward has not. But you must try and remember that even if it please God that sometimes you should be more sorrowful than other children, He loves you notwithstanding. I am sure you have not forgotten the story of Joseph that I told you a few Sundays ago. God so loved him, as to give him the power of foretelling future events, and enabling him to do a great deal of good, but when he was taken away from his father and sold as a slave and cast into prison among cruel strangers, he could not have been very happy, Ellen. Yet still, young as he was, little more than a child in those days, and thrown among those who did not know right from wrong, he remembered all that his father had taught him, and prayed to God, and tried to love and obey Him; and God was pleased with him, and gave him grace to continue good, and at last so blessed him, as to permit him to see his dear father and darling brother again."

"But Joseph was his father's favorite child," was Ellen's sole rejoinder; and the tears which were checked in the eagerness with which she had listened, seemed again ready to burst forth. "He must have been happy when he thought of that."

"I do not think so, my dear Ellen," replied Mr. Myrvin, more moved than he chose to betray, "for being his father's favorite first excited the dislike and envy of his brothers, and caused them to wish to send him away. There was no excuse indeed for their conduct; but perhaps if Joseph had always remained near his father he might have been spoiled by too great indulgence, and never become as good as he afterward was. Perhaps in his solitary prison he might even have regretted that his father had not treated them all alike, as then the angry feelings of his brothers would not have been called forth. So you see, being a favorite will not always make us happy, Ellen. It is indeed very delightful to be loved and caressed, and if we try to do our duty and love as much as we can, even if we are not sure of being loved at first, we may be quite certain that we shall be loved and happy at last. Do you understand me, my child?"

The question was almost needless, for Ellen's large eyes had never moved from his face, and their expression was so full of intelligence and meaning, that the whole countenance seemed lighted up. "Then do you think mamma will recover?" she eagerly exclaimed; "will she ever love me? – oh, if I thought so, I could never, never be naughty again!"

"She will love you, my dear Ellen," replied Mr. Myrvin, now visibly affected, "I can not, I dare not tell you that she will recover to love you on earth, but if indeed it be God's will that she should go to Him, she will look down on you from Heaven and love you far more than she has done yet, for she will know then how much you love her."

"And will she know if I do all she wishes – if I love and help Edward?" asked Ellen, in a low, half-frightened voice; and little did Mr. Myrvin imagine how vividly and how indelibly his reply was registered in the child's memory.

"It is a question none can answer positively, Ellen, but it is my own firm belief, that the beloved ones we have lost are permitted to watch over and love us still, and that they see us, and are often near us, though we can not see them. But even to help Edward," he continued somewhat anxiously, "you must not be tempted – "

He was interrupted by the appearance of a stranger, who addressing him courteously, apologized for his intrusion, and noticing the children, inquired if both were his.

Mr. Myrvin replied that he could only lay claim to one; the little girl was Miss Fortescue.

"And my name is Hamilton, so I think I have an uncle's privilege," was the reply; and Ellen, to her astonishment, received an affectionate embrace from the unknown relative, whom her mother's ill-judged words had taught her actually to dread. Mr. Myrvin gladly welcomed him, and, in the interest of the conversation which followed, forgot the lesson he had been so anxious to impress upon Ellen. Arthur accompanied her to the garden gate, and the gentlemen soon afterward entered the cottage together.

Days merged into weeks, and still Mrs. Fortescue lingered; but her weakness increasing so painfully from alternate fever and exhaustion that to remove her was impossible. It was the first time that Mrs. Hamilton had ever been separated from her children, and there were many disagreeables attendant on nursing a beloved invalid in that confined cottage; and with only those little luxuries and comforts that could be procured (and even these were obtained with difficulty, for the nearest town was twenty miles distant), but not a selfish or repining thought entered Mrs. Hamilton's mind. It was filled with thankfulness, not only that she was permitted thus to tend a sister, whom neither error, nor absence, nor silence could estrange from her heart, but that she was spared long enough for her gentle influence and enduring love to have some effect in changing her train of thought, calming that fearful irritability, and by slow degrees permitting her to look with resignation and penitent hope to that hour which no human effort could avert. That Mr. Myrvin should seek Mrs. Hamilton's society and delight in conversing with her, Mrs. Fortescue considered so perfectly natural, that the conversations which took place in her sick room, whenever she was strong enough to bear them, excited neither surprise nor impatience. Different as she was, willfully as she had always neglected the mild counsels and example of her sister, the years of separation and but too often excited self-reproach had fully awakened her to Mrs. Hamilton's superiority. She had never found any one at all like her – so good and holy, yet so utterly unassuming; and the strong affection, even the deep emotion in one usually so controlled, with which her sister had met her, naturally increased these feelings.

"Ah, you and Emmeline will find much to converse about," had been her address to Mr. Myrvin, on his first introduction to Mrs. Hamilton. "Talk as much as you please, and do not mind me. With Emmeline near me, I can restrain irritability which must have frightened you away. I know she is right. Oh, would to God I had always been like her!" and the suffering betrayed in the last words was a painful contrast with the lightness of her previous tone.

Mr. Myrvin answered soothingly, and for the first time his words were patiently received. From listening listlessly, Mrs. Fortescue, by slow degrees, became interested in the conversations between him and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, and so a change in sentiments was gradually wrought, which by any other and harsher method of proceeding would have been sought for in vain.

One evening as Mrs. Hamilton sat watching the faded countenance of her patient, and recalling those days of youth and buoyancy, when it seemed as if neither death nor care could ever have assailed one so bright and lovely, Edward, before he sought his favorite stream, threw his arms round her neck, and pressed his rosy lips on her cheek, as thus to wish her good-by.

"He will repay you for all your care, dearest Emmeline," his mother said, with a heavy sigh, as he left the room; "I know he has what you and your husband will think faults, but, oh, for my sake, do not treat him harshly; his noble spirit will be broken if you do!"

"Dearest Eleanor, dismiss all such fears. Am I not a mother equally with yourself? and do you think when your children become mine I shall show any difference between them and my own? You would trust me even in former years, surely you will trust me now?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do; you were always kind and forbearing with me, when I little deserved it. But my poor Edward, it is so hard to part with him, and he loves me so fondly!" and a few natural tears stole down her cheek.

"And he shall continue to love you dearest Eleanor; and oh, believe me, all that you have been to him I will be. I have won the devoted affection of all my own darlings, and I do not fear to gain the love of yours; and then it will be an easy task to make them happy as my own."

"Edward's love you will very quickly obtain, if it be not yours already; but Ellen you will have more trouble with. She is a strange, cold, unlovable child."

"Are the dispositions of your children so unlike? I should not have fancied Ellen cold; she is timid, but that I thought would wear off when she knew me better."

"It is not timidity; I never knew her otherwise than cold and reserved from her birth. I never could feel the same toward her as I did toward Edward, and therefore there must be something in Ellen to prevent it."

Mrs. Hamilton did not think so, but she answered gently, "Are you quite sure, my dear Eleanor, that you have equally studied the characters of both your children? because you know there are some cases which require more study and carefulness than others."

"I never was fond of studying any thing, Emmeline, as you may remember," replied Mrs. Fortescue, painfully trying to smile, "and therefore I dare say I have not studied my children as you have yours. Besides, you know I always thought, and still think, the doctrine of mothers forming the characters of their children, and all that good people say about the importance of early impressions, perfectly ridiculous. The disposition for good or bad, loving or unloving, is theirs from the moment of their birth, and what human efforts can alter that? Why, the very infancy of my children was different; Edward was always laughing, and animated, and happy; Ellen fretful and peevish, and so heavy that she never seemed even to know when I entered the room, while Edward would spring into my arms, and shout and laugh only to see me. Now what conduct on my part could have done this? Surely I was justified in feeling differently toward such opposite dispositions; and I know I never made more difference between them than – than papa did between us, Emmeline, and I have had greater reason to be partial; you were always better than I was."

She ceased, from exhaustion, but the flush which had risen to her temples, and the trembling hands evinced the agitation always called for by the mention of her father, which Mrs. Hamilton, with earnest tenderness, endeavored to soothe.

"I must speak, Emmeline," she continued, natural impetuosity for the moment regaining ascendency; "how did I repay my fond father's partiality? his too great indulgence? Did I not bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Did I not throw shame and misery upon him by my conduct to the ill-fated one he had chosen for my husband? Did I not? – oh, my God, my God! Death may indeed be merciful! – my Edward might do the same by me!" and, shuddering violently, she hid her face on her sister's bosom.

It was long before Mrs. Hamilton could calm that fearful agitation, long before her whispered words of heavenly hope, and peace, and pardon – if indeed she believed – could bring comfort; but they did at length, and such fearful paroxysms returned at longer and longer intervals, and at length ceased, in the deep submission and clinging trust to which she was at last permitted to attain. Though Mrs. Hamilton was detained six weeks at Llangwillan, her devoted attendance on her sister prevented any thing more than occasional observation of the children so soon about to be committed to her care. That Edward was most engaging, and riveted her affection at once, and that Ellen was unlike any child she had ever known or seen, she could not but feel, but she was not one to decide on a mere feeling. Her present mournful task prevented all actual interference with them, except the endeavor by kindly notice to win their confidence and love. His mother's illness and his uncle's presence, besides, for the present, his perfect freedom with regard to employment, had deprived Edward of all inclination to rebel or exert his self-will, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton both felt that he certainly had fewer faults, than was generally the consequence of unlimited indulgence. Whether Ellen's extreme attention to her mother, her silent but ever ready help when her aunt required it, proceeded from mere cold duty, or really had its origin in affection, Mrs. Hamilton could not satisfactorily decide. Her sister had avowed

partiality, but that neglect and unkindness could have been shown to such an extent by a mother as to create the cold exterior she beheld, was so utterly incomprehensible, so opposed to every dictate of maternal love, which she knew so well, that she actually could not even imagine it. She could believe in the possibility of a preference for one child more than another, but not in utter neglect and actual dislike. She could imagine that Ellen's love for her mother might be less warm than Edward's, believing, as she did, that a parent must call for a child's affection, not be satisfied with leaving all to Nature; but if it were not love that dictated Ellen's conduct, it was strange and almost unnatural, and so unpleasing, that so young a child should have such an idea of duty. But these were only passing thoughts; cost what trouble it might, Mrs. Hamilton determined she would understand her niece as she did her own children.

But though to her Ellen was a riddle, to her sister Nature was resuming her sway, too late, alas! for all, save the mother's own reproaches. Her weakness had become such that days would pass when speech, save a few whispered words, was impossible; but she would gaze upon her child, as hour after hour she would sit by the bed, resisting all Edward's entreaties, and sometimes even her aunt's to go and play, and long to fold her to her heart, and confess she had been cruelly unjust, and that she did love her now almost as much as Edward, but she was much too weak to do more than feel. And Ellen remained unconscious of the change, except that now and then, as she would bring her nourishment or bend over to bathe her forehead, her mother would, as if involuntarily, kiss her cheek and murmur some caressing word. And Ellen longed to cling to her neck and say how much she loved her, but she did not dare and she would hurry out of the room to conceal her tears, instead of returning the caress, thus unhappily confirming the idea of natural coldness.

Even the comfort of sitting by her mother was at length denied her. Mrs. Fortescue became so alarmingly and painfully ill, that Mrs. Hamilton felt it an unnecessary trial for her children to witness it, especially as they could be no comfort to her, for she did not know them. The evening of the fourth day she recovered sufficiently to partake of the sacrament with her sister and Mr. Hamilton, and then entreat that her children might be brought to her. She felt herself, what the physician had imparted to her sister, that the recovery of her senses would in all human probability be followed in a few hours by death, and her last thoughts were on them.

Edward, full of glee at being permitted to see her again, bounded joyfully into the room, but the fearful change in that beloved face so startled and terrified him, that he uttered a loud cry, and throwing himself beside her, sobbed upon her bosom. Mrs. Fortescue was fearfully agitated, but she conjured her sister not to take him from her, and her heavy eyes wandered painfully round the room in search of Ellen.

"Come to me, Ellen, I have done you injustice, my sweet child," she murmured in a voice that Ellen never in her life forgot, and she clung to her in silent agony. "I have not done my duty to you, I know – I feel I have not, and it is too late now to atone. I can only pray God to bless you, and raise you up a kinder parent than I have been! Bless, bless you both." Faintness overpowered her, and she lay for several minutes powerless, in Mrs. Hamilton's arms. Edward, in passionate grief, refused to stir from the bed; and Ellen, almost unconsciously, sunk on her knees by Mr. Myrvin.

"My own sister, bless you – for all you have been to me – all you will be to my children – may they repay you better than I have done, Emmeline! You are right, there is but one hope, our Saviour, for the sinner – it is mine – " were the broken sentences that, in a voice which was scarcely audible, and uttered at long intervals, escaped Mrs. Fortescue's lips, and then her head sunk lower on Mrs. Hamilton's bosom, and there was a long, long silence, broken only by Edward's low and half-suffocated sobs. And he knew not, guessed not, the grief that was impending. He only felt that his mother was worse, not better, as he had believed she would and must be, when his aunt arrived. He had never seen death, though Ellen had and he had passionately and willfully refused either to listen or to believe in his uncle's and Mr. Myrvin's gentle attempts to prepare him for his loss. Terrified at the continued silence, at the cold heavy feel of his mother's hand, as, when Mr. Myrvin and the widow

gently removed her from the still-supporting arm of Mrs. Hamilton, it fell against his, he started up, and clinging to his aunt, implored her to speak to him, to tell him why his mother looked so strange and white, her hand felt so cold, and why she would not speak to and kiss him, as she always did, when he was grieved.

Mrs. Hamilton raised her head from her husband's shoulder, and struggling with her own deep sorrow, she drew her orphan nephew closer to her, and said, in a low, earnest voice, "My Edward, did you not hear your mother pray God to bless you?"

The child looked at her inquiringly.

"That good God has taken her to Himself, my love; He has thought it better to remove her from us, and take her where she will never know pain nor illness more."

"But she is lying there," whispered Edward, in a frightened voice, and half hiding his face in his aunt's dress, "she is not taken away. Why will she not speak to me?"

"She can not speak, my sweet boy! the soul which enabled her to speak, and smile, and live, was God's gift, and it has pleased Him to recall it."

"And will she never, never speak to me again? will she never kiss me – never call me her own darling, beautiful Edward again?" he almost screamed in passionate grief, as the truth at length forced itself upon him. "Mamma, mamma, my own dear, pretty, good mamma, oh! do not go away from me – or let me go with you – let me die too; no one will love me and kiss me as you have done." And even the natural awe and terror of death gave way before his grief; he clung to the body of his mother so passionately, so convulsively, that it required actual force to remove him. And for hours his aunt and sister watched over and tried to soothe and comfort him in vain; he would only rouse himself angrily to ask Ellen how she could know what he felt; she had never loved their mother as he had – she did not know what he had lost – she could not feel as he did, and then relapse into tears and sobs. Ellen did not attempt reply. She thought, if it were such pain to her to lose her mother, who had only the last few weeks evinced affection for her, it must indeed be still more suffering to him; and though his angry words grieved and hurt her (for she knew she did love her mother most fondly, her idea of her own extreme inferiority acquitted her unconsciously of all injustice toward her, and made her believe that she had loved Edward best only because he was so much better than herself), his very grief caused her to love and admire him still more, and to believe that she really did not feel as much as he did. And yet before they quitted Llangwillan, which they did the second day after Mrs. Fortescue's funeral, Edward could laugh and talk as usual – except when any object recalled his mother; and poor Ellen felt that though she had fancied she was not happy before, she was much more unhappy now. Her fancy naturally vivid, and rendered more so from her having been left so much to herself, dwelt morbidly on all that had passed in her mother's illness, on every caress, every unusual word of affection, and on Mr. Myrvin's assurance that she would love her in Heaven; the promise she had made to love and help Edward returned to her memory again and again, and each time with the increased determination to keep it solemnly. It was not for her mother's sake alone, and connected only with her; perhaps, had it not been for the careful instructions of her father, whom, as we shall presently see, she had cause almost to idolize, Ellen might have become indifferent to her mother and envious of Edward. But his repeated instructions, under all circumstances to love, cherish, and obey her mother had been indelibly engraved, and heightened natural feeling. She believed that to keep the promise, which had so evidently pleased her mother, would be also obeying her father, and this double incentive gave it a weight and consequence, which, could Mrs. Hamilton have known it, would have caused her great anxiety, and urged its removal. But Ellen had been too long accustomed to hide every thought and feeling to betray that which, child as she was, she believed sacred between herself and her mother. Mrs. Hamilton watched her in silence, and trusted to time and care to do their work; and by enabling her to understand her character, permit her to guide it rightly.

The morning of their intended departure was bright and sunny, and before even widow Morgan was moving, Ellen had quitted her little bed and was in the churchyard by her mother's grave. She sat

there thinking so intently, that she did not know how time passed, till she was roused by her favorite Arthur Myrvin's voice.

"Up so early, Ellen, why, I thought I should have been first, to show you I had not forgotten my promise." And he displayed some choice flower-roots, which he commenced planting round the grave.

"Dear Arthur, how very kind you are; but you look so sad – what is the matter? Does not Mr. Myrvin like you to do this – pray don't, then."

"No, no, Ellen, my father said I was right, and that he would take care of the flowers also himself. I am only sorry you are going away, and to live so differently to what we do – you will quite forget me."

"Indeed, indeed I shall not, dear Arthur; I can never forget those who have been so kind to me as you and dear Mr. Myrvin. I would much rather stay here always with you, than go among strangers again, but I heard my aunt say last night, that perhaps Mr. Myrvin would let you come and see us sometimes – and you will like that, will you not?" Arthur did not seem quite sure whether he would like it or not; but they continued talking till his task was completed, and Arthur, at Ellen's earnest request, for she suddenly feared her aunt would be displeased at her having staid out so long, returned with her to the cottage; the silent kiss, however, which she received, when Arthur explained what had detained them, reassured her, and bound her yet closer to the kind relative, whom, if timidity had permitted, she would already have so loved.

The novelty of his situation, the rapid and pleasant movement of his uncle's carriage, the idea of the new relations he was about to meet, and an unconfessed but powerful feeling of his own increased consequence in being so nearly connected with wealth and distinction, all had their effect upon Edward, and his eye sparkled and his cheek glowed, as if all sorrow had entirely passed away; not that he had ceased to think of his mother, for the least reference to her would fill his eyes with tears and completely check his joy – but still delight predominated. Ellen felt more and more the wish to shrink into her self, for the farther they left Llangwillan, the more painfully she missed Mr. Myrvin and his son, and the more she shrunk from encountering strangers. Edward she knew would speedily find companions to love, and to be loved by, and he would think still less of her. Her aunt would soon be surrounded by her own children, and then how could she expect to win her love? And Ellen looked intently and silently out from the carriage-window – her uncle believed on the many-flowered hedge and other objects of interest by which they passed – his wife imagined to hide a tear that trembled in her eyes, but which she had determined should not fall.

CHAPTER III.
RETROSPECTION. – THE LOWLY SOUGHT. – THE HAUGHTY FOILED

In order clearly to understand the allusions of the previous chapters, and the circumstances which had formed the different characters of Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Fortescue, it will be necessary to take a retrospective glance on their early lives. Should it be uninteresting to the more youthful of our readers, we will beg them to proceed at once to "Traits of Character," but to their elder relatives, we hope the matter will prove of sufficient interest to obtain perusal.

Emmeline and Eleanor Manvers were the daughters of Lord Delmont, a nobleman whose title and rank were rather burdensome than otherwise, from the want of sufficient means to keep them up as inclination and position warranted. Lady Delmont, whose energetic yet gentle character would have greatly ameliorated the petty vexations of her husband, died when Emmeline was only seven, Eleanor five, and Charles, her only boy an infant of but three years old. A widow lady, Mrs. Harcourt by name, had been selected by Lady Delmont, in her last illness, as instructress and guardian of her daughters. Her wishes, always laws to her doating husband, were promptly fulfilled, and Mrs. Harcourt, two months after her friend's death, assumed the arduous and responsible duties for which her high character well fitted her.

With Emmeline, though there were naturally some faults to correct, an indolence and weakness to overcome, and apparently no remarkable natural aptitude for acquirement, her task was comparatively easy, for her pupil had the capabilities, not only of affection but of reverence, to a very great extent, and once loving and respecting Mrs. Harcourt, not a command was neglected nor a wish unfulfilled. Eleanor, on the contrary, though so gifted that teaching might have been a complete labor of love – by self-will, violent passions, and a most determined want of veneration, even, of common respect, a resolute opposition from her earliest years to the wishes of Mrs. Harcourt, because she was merely a governess, so much her inferior in rank, rendered the task of education one of the most difficult and painful that can be conceived – increased from the injudicious partiality of Lord Delmont. It was not indeed the culpable negligence and dislike which Eleanor afterward displayed toward her own, but originating in the fancy that Mrs. Harcourt was unjust, and Emmeline was her favorite. Lord Delmont was one of those unfortunately weak, irresolute characters, that only behold the surface of things, and are therefore utterly incapable of acting either with vigor or judgment. When he did venture into the precincts of his daughters' apartments, he generally found Eleanor in sobs and tears, and Emmeline quietly pursuing her daily duties. That Mrs. Harcourt often entreated his influence with her younger pupil, to change her course of conduct, he never remembered longer than the time her expostulations lasted. Once or twice indeed he did begin to speak seriously, but Eleanor would throw her arms round his neck and kiss him, call him every endearing name, and beg him not to look so much like grave, cross Mrs. Harcourt, or she should think she had indeed no one to love her; and her beautiful eyes would swell with tears, and her voice quiver, so that her gratified father would forget all his reproof, and give her some indulgence to make up for the injustice and harshness she encountered in the school-room. Her power once thus experienced, of course, was never resigned. Her father's appearance in their study was always the signal for her tears, which she knew would confirm all his ideas of Mrs. Harcourt's unjust partiality.

And this idea was strengthened as they grew older, and masters for various accomplishments somewhat lightened Mrs. Harcourt's actual labors. Emmeline's steady application, and moderate abilities were lost sight of in the applause always elicited by her younger sister; whose natural gifts alike in music, languages, and drawing had full play, directly she was released, even in part, from the hated thralldom of her governess. – Lord Delmont had been accustomed to hear Eleanor's beauty

extolled, and now the extraordinary versatility and brilliancy of her talents became the theme of every tongue. Professors are naturally proud of a pupil who does them more than justice, and Miss Eleanor Manvers was in consequence held up in very many families, whom Lord Delmont only casually knew, and spoken of by very many again to him, knowing his weak point, and thus seeking to curry favor. Mrs. Harcourt was the only one from whom he never heard Eleanor's praises, and the only one, who spoke in praise of Emmeline. It must then be willful blindness on her part; and the father felt indignant, but in spite of himself had too much real respect for her, individually, to do more than redouble his indulgence to Eleanor. Emmeline could not complain of her father's neglect, for he was both kind and affectionate to her; but she did sometimes wish she could be quite sure that he loved her as much as her sister; and her deep affections, unsuspected by her father, rejected and laughed at by Eleanor, twined themselves closer and closer round Mrs. Harcourt, and her brother Charles, on whom she actually doted, and who returned her affection with one quite as fond and warm as a happy, laughter-loving, frank-hearted boy had it in his power to bestow; yet even his holidays were times of as much suffering as joy to his sister, from the violent quarrels which were continually taking place between him and Eleanor. Emmeline, happy in herself and Mrs. Harcourt's companionship, could endure Eleanor's determined supremacy, and, except where her conscience disapproved, yielded to her. But this could not be expected from Charles, who, despite his elder sister's gentle entreaties, would stand up for what he called her rights, and declare that, when he was at home, Miss Eleanor should not lord it over the whole family. Eleanor would of course quarrel first with him and then appeal to her father, who without hearing the case would give her right, and harshly condemn Charles, whose high spirit revolted; and unable to bear with his father's weakness of character, as he ought to have done, would answer disrespectfully; and words succeeded words till Charles in a desperate passion would seek Emmeline's chamber, and his father, though he actually deeply loved and was very proud of his son, wished that the holidays were over, and Charles safe again at school.

Trifling as domestic disputes may seem in description, they never fail in their painful reality to banish all lasting happiness. Emmeline could bear that her father should prefer Eleanor to herself, but that he should be unjust to her darling Charles, and that Charles should increase this evil by dispute and self-will, tried her severely, and obliged her often and often to fly to the solitude of her own chamber, lest her temper also should fail, and, to defend her brother, she should forget her duty to her father. But with her, Mrs. Harcourt's lessons had indeed been blessed. The spirit of true, heartfelt piety, which she had sought to instill into her youthful charge, even more by the example of her daily life than by precepts, had become Emmeline's, young as she still was, and enabled her not only to bear up against the constant petty annoyances of her home, but the heavy trial sustained in the death of Mrs. Harcourt, just as she was looking forward to her entrance into the gay world, under her maternal guardianship, and her parting with her brother, who, not two months afterward, left her to fulfill his darling wish of going to sea.

At eighteen, then, Emmeline Manvers became the mistress of her father's establishment, and had to encounter alone, not only the suffering of bereavement – in which, though Lord Delmont sincerely respected Mrs. Harcourt, he could not sympathize, and at which, after the first shock and momentary remorse for her own conduct to so true a friend, Eleanor, if she did not actually rejoice, felt so very greatly relieved as to be irritated and angry at Emmeline's quiet sorrow – but the separation from her brother and all the cares and disagreeables of such strict economy at home, as would permit the sustaining a proper position in society, so that the necessity of economy should not even be suspected. It was this regard of appearances which so chafed and pained Emmeline's upright and independent spirit. Not that Lord Delmont, even for appearances, would go beyond his income; but still there were obliged concealments and other petty things which his daughter could not bear. Mrs. Harcourt's trial – a widow, compelled not only to teach for a subsistence, but to part with her only child, who had been adopted by a married sister, living in Italy – appeared to Emmeline's ideas of truth and honor preferable to appearing richer than they really were. But on this subject, even less

than on any other, she knew there was no chance of sympathy, and so she devoted all the energies of her matured and well-regulated mind to correcting the evil as much as it lay in her individual power; and in the year which her earnest entreaties prevailed on her father to permit her remaining in quiet retirement, before she entered the world, Lord Delmont was astonished at the greater comfort and increase of dignity which pervaded his establishment. He never had chosen Mrs. Harcourt to interfere with his household concerns, believing that he conducted them himself, when in reality he was completely governed by his housekeeper and steward. Mrs. Harcourt's penetration had seen and regretted this, and had endeavored so to guide and instruct Emmeline, that when she became old enough to claim her right as mistress, the evil should be remedied. Could she have looked down on the child of her love, she would indeed have rejoiced at the beautiful fruition of her labors. Lord Delmont was not astonished and delighted only, a feeling of respect toward his gentle, his truthful child entered his heart, such as he had experienced toward none, save her mother. Emmeline would indeed have thought all her toils repaid, could she have known this, but the very feeling prevented the display of that caressing affection he still lavished on Eleanor, and the tears of his elder girl often fell thick and fast from the painful longing for one similar caress, one evidence on his part, that, though neither so beautiful, nor talented, nor engaging as Eleanor, she could yet minister to his comfort and increase his happiness.

But Emmeline's strong feeling of religion, while it enabled her to bear up against care and the constant and most painful feeling of loneliness, rendered the trial of beholding her sister's willful course of error, if possible, still more severe. She knew that all her affectionate counsels were worse than useless, that though Eleanor could be even caressingly affectionate when it served her purpose, would even listen to her at the moment of suffering from some too hasty impulse, she had no lasting influence. And this became more and more evident as Eleanor became the almost constant companion of the Marchioness Lascelles, their only female relative. It was the evil influence of this lady which had so increased Eleanor's natural repugnance to Mrs. Harcourt's gentle sway, that for full two years before the latter's death the flattery of Lady Lascelles and Eleanor's passionate entreaties had prevailed on Lord Delmont to permit his daughter being more with her than with her sister and governess. Lady Lascelles was a woman of the world, utterly heartless, highly distinguished, and supremely fashionable. At her house all the ton of the beau monde congregated, and scandal, frivolity, and *esprît* were the prevailing topics, diversified with superficial opinions of the literature, arts, and politics of the day, and various sentimental episodes, which the lady of the house endured for the sake of variety. Here Eleanor, even at fourteen, was made a popular idol; her extreme beauty, her vivacity, her talents, her sharpness of repartee, all were admired, extolled, and encouraged. At seventeen she was introduced and initiated into all the mysteries of an ultra-fashionable life, and very speedily added to her other accomplishments all the arts of a finished and heartless coquette.

With Lady Lascelles for her chaperon, it was not very surprising that Emmeline Manvers shrunk in pain and dread from her introduction into society; but yet she knew her social duties too well to refuse, and, by an affectation of superior sanctity, which of course would have been the charge leveled against her, throw a sneer upon those holy feelings and spiritual principles which had become part of her very being. She entered into society, but the isolation to a heart like hers of the coteries of Lady Lascelles and her friends, was indeed most painful, and aggravated by the constant dread which the contemplation of Eleanor's reckless career could not but occasion.

But Emmeline's trial of loneliness was happily not of very long duration. At a ball, which was less exclusive than the assemblages of Lady Lascelles, the attention of both sisters was attracted to a young nan, by name Arthur Hamilton – Eleanor, from his distinguished appearance and extreme reserve, Emmeline, by the story attached to his name. His father had so distinguished himself in the amelioration of the peasantry and working classes in various parts of England, in addition to various services of a private and confidential nature from the home government to the courts abroad, that a viscountcy was offered to his acceptance. The message from royalty reached him on his death-

bed, and though, from the faint and flickering accents with which he replied to the intended honor, it seemed as if he declined it, it was attributed to the natural feelings of a dying man, seeing the utter nothingness of earthly honors, and the title was generously proposed to his son. But Arthur Hamilton had not been the pupil and friend of his father in vain. With a calm dignity and uncompromising independence, he declared that he had neither claim nor heirship to the reward of his father's services; that he believed his parent would himself have refused it, preferring the honorable distinction of being an untitled English gentleman, to the unvalued honor of a newly-created lordship. He respectfully thanked the government for the honor they intended, but decisively refused it – that his dearest inheritance was his father's name.

Of course this most extraordinary decision was canvassed again and again in the fashionable world, meeting there with very little appreciation, because it sprang from much higher feelings than the world could comprehend. By many he was imagined very little removed from insane – by others as actuated by some ulterior motive, which would be sure to display itself some day – by all regarded with curiosity – by some few with earnest, quiet, heartfelt admiration: and of this number was not only Emmeline Manvers, but her father; who, though weak and yielding, was not worldly, and could admire honorable independence, even while some of his friends succeeded in persuading him that in this case it nearly reached romance.

Arthur Hamilton was a star creating a sensation; it signified little to Eleanor Manvers why or wherefore, but she fully resolved to conquer him and chain him, as she had already done innumerable others, victim to her charms. His very reserve deepened her ardent longing, and the difficulty only strengthened her resolution, but she tried in vain; for the first time she was completely and entirely foiled, and she disliked him accordingly – a dislike increasing to actual abhorrence – when the truth at length forced itself upon her, that he admired, conversed with, evidently sought the society of her sister, whom she chose to charge with deceit and underhand dealing, with all the violence of angry passion and mortified defeat.

Emmeline bore the storm calmly, for her conscience perfectly acquitted her. She was not indeed indifferent to Arthur Hamilton, but she had tried hard to prevent the ascendency of affection, for she had heard that he still mourned the loss of a beloved one to whom he had been for many years engaged. And deep was her thankful joy, and unexpected indeed the intensity of her happiness, when six months after their first introduction he related to her the heavy trial of his early life, and concluded by asking her if she could indeed accept a heart which had so loved another, but which was now entirely her own, and happier than he had once believed it ever could be. The very frankness of his avowal increased the feelings of reverence and regard he had already inspired, and to the great delight, and no little pride of Lord Delmont, his elder daughter, who had been by Lady Lascelles' coterie so overlooked and neglected, who had been by many for years considered a mere foil to the beauty and talent of her younger sister, was united before she was twenty, to a man who – however his high principles might have excited laughter as high-flown romance, his unbending integrity and dislike of the pleasures and amusements, but too often the sole pursuit of the wealthy, exposed him to the charge of severity and eccentricity – was yet sought, and his connection deemed a most desirable *partie* by all and every family who had marriageable daughters.

CHAPTER IV.
RETROSPECTIVE. – EFFECTS OF COQUETRY. – OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE

Eleanor's unfounded dislike toward Arthur Hamilton did not decrease when he became her brother-in-law; she chose to believe that he had injured her by being the only one who had remained proof against all the fascinations she had thrown in his way. Even in her childhood, if any one chanced to notice Emmeline more than herself, it was considered a mortal offense, and the person who had so offended was scarcely spoken to again. Therefore that Emmeline should be married before herself, and to the man she intended to captivate, but *not to love*, or wed, was an offense visited upon her sister by the withdrawal of her speech for six months, and on Mr. Hamilton by an insulting haughtiness of demeanor toward him, at which he only smiled; and, to her extreme annoyance, she found that even as she had failed to fascinate, she equally failed to offend. He *would* speak to her, *would* treat her with courtesy, and the quiet familiarity of an older relative – and more, actually remonstrate with her conduct whenever he thought it wrong. It was the recollection of this time, yet more than actual present feeling, which had occasioned the mistaken impressions she had infused into both her children, of the extreme severity and harshness of their uncle, thoughtlessly indeed, for the present was always all to her, and if she did think that they might one day be under his charge, she little imagined the unhappiness and mischief which their supposition of his unbending sternness might engender.

To Emmeline, the change in her young life was so marvelous, so complete – care, anxiety, loneliness, that sinking of the whole frame and heart, from the absence of appreciation and social kindness, had so departed, leaving in their stead such an intensity of quiet domestic happiness, that it was long before her full heart could believe it reality, and rest secure. She had always longed for one to reverence, to cling to, and her husband gave her room for both. As his betrothed, even before their marriage, she had been introduced to very different society to that of the marchioness; she beheld him reverenced, loved, appealed to by the wisest and the best men, often older than himself. That this man should so love, cherish, and actually reverence her – no wonder that under the magic of such feelings her character matured, displaying such engaging and unsuspected qualities, that even her husband often looked at her with astonishment, playfully asking her if she could be the same calm, almost too quiet, and seemingly too cold Emmeline Manvers whom he had first seen. Her very talents, which had seemed worthless, compared to her sister's, were called forth by her husband. She found that her voice and her touch on either piano or harp, could give him exquisite pleasure, and this once discovered, she made such improvement as almost to surprise herself. She found the sketches taken from the various lovely spots in the vicinity of their noble seat, and in which Devonshire abounds, delighted him, and when Eleanor did visit Oakwood, she was astounded at the various beautiful drawings, which evinced the employment of that leisure which she had declared must be even to the quiet Emmeline a horrid bore.

To Lord Delmont the change in his daughter was much more astonishing than to her husband. He was very often at Oakwood (particularly when a little grandson was added to the happy party), for his home under Eleanor's extravagant and heedless management had lost all the comfort that Emmeline had bestowed. He had begun, too, to discover that his darling, his still favorite Eleanor, was not faultless. Emmeline's generous assistance and determination to spare her father all discomfort had concealed Eleanor's personal extravagance from him; but after her marriage, as Eleanor's fashionable amusements increased, so did the quantity and amount of her bills, which, as the young lady did not seem inclined to settle them, were sent to her father. Lord Delmont was painfully startled, and with his usual want of judgment spoke to Eleanor at the very moment that he felt most angry; unaccustomed to reproof from him, she retorted with equal passion, and a violent altercation ensued, which ended in

Eleanor ordering the carriage and driving to Lady Lascelles, declaring she could not think of returning home, till her father had sufficiently recovered his senses for her to do so in safety.

The interference of Emmeline at length succeeded in restoring peace, but Lord Delmont's eyes had been rudely opened, and, as is unhappily too often the case with those weak characters where over-indulgence of childhood, has occasioned those annoyances of ungoverned youth, he became irritable and sometimes even harsh with Eleanor, which conduct threw her still more with Lady Lascelles. As to joining society with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, when they were in London, Eleanor would not hear of it. But to her sister's great joy, and some surprise, she accepted an invitation to Oakwood a short time after little Percy's birth; and, still more surprising, condescended to make herself agreeable. The London season had tired her, and she thought she might just as well be dull on the banks of the Dart in August and September as in some stupid watering-place. Mr. Hamilton, despite her dislike, which she cared not to avow, she found could be at least very entertaining; her father was more like his former self, her sister far more delightful and lovely than she ever thought she could be, and her nephew certainly a pretty little plague. Then Mr. Hamilton had a beautiful horse entirely for her use, and she rode exceedingly well, and was greatly admired. She was seized with an exploring mania, and dragged Emmeline to every old ruin and dark wood within ten miles of Oakwood. Altogether the impression she left behind her, after a two months' visit, was such as to ease Mrs. Hamilton's great anxiety, more especially as it appeared from certain private conversations, that her affections were for the first time really engaged, and Emmeline had always fondly hoped that when that should be the case, Eleanor would become a very different person. Alas! penetrative as she was, she had not yet learned her sister's character; simply because utter heartlessness in any woman she could not comprehend.

Her visit to her father in London, in the winter, removed all their rising hopes, and caused such increased and intense anxiety, as so to injure her already delicate health that her husband bore her back to Oakwood a full month before they had originally intended. Whether or not Eleanor loved Lord Fitzclair, it was impossible to determine; but that he devotedly, passionately loved her, was only too evident, not only to the world, but to herself; and this once confirmed, she left no method untried to torment, and so, as she declared, to try if his affections were worth having. He was half an Italian, and had inherited all the strong, fierce passions of that country, without one atom of self-control. Mr. Hamilton knew him well, far better than he knew himself, and conjured him to withdraw from the society of one who could never make him happy, and whose capricious conduct was so likely to render him desperate and miserable: he reasoned, entreated in vain. "She only wants to try the strength of my love," was his sole reply; "and were she to torment health and life away, it will never change – she will be mine yet."

And to the astonishment of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, two months afterward he proposed in form, and actually was accepted, with the sole condition that their engagement should be kept secret till it should please Eleanor to name the wedding day, which could not be at least for six or eight months.

This engagement might have eased anxiety, but the condition increased it, especially, as instead of coming to Oakwood, as Emmeline had asked and hoped, the latter part of the summer and autumn was to be spent in Cheltenham with a very gay party, in which Eleanor was still of course the star. Mrs. Hamilton entered the nursery one morning earlier than usual, for her infant had not been well the night before, and she had already experienced the care as well as the joy of a mother. Her babe was better, and as he lay smilingly and happily in her lap, and watched the eager movements of his brother, she was only sensible of pleasure. The nurse had arranged the chairs in a long line, that Master Percy might, with their help, walk the whole length of the large and airy room. The feat mightily pleased the little gentleman, who, having acquired the venerable age of fifteen months, liked better to feel his feet than crawl on the floor, or be carried about on any limbs but his own. Every two or three paces he stood nearly alone, and burst into a loud merry laugh, which was always echoed by a crow of joy from his little brother.

"Take care, Percy, love, don't fall and frighten mamma," said his young mother, who was watching him with such pleasure as to send for his father to share it. When her son, to prove how well he obeyed her commands to take care, stood for a second without any support, and then ran quite alone across the room, and with a yet louder laugh hid his rosy face in her lap. Mrs. Hamilton fondly kissed the little nestling head, and at that moment her husband entered the room. "Dearest Arthur," she eagerly exclaimed, "I was actually foolish enough to send for you. Herbert seems quite well; I was, it seems, needlessly alarmed, and Percy has this moment – " She stopped in sudden terror, for there was an expression on her husband's countenance of such unusual agitation, that though he tried to smile when he heard her words, she could not conquer her alarm, more than to say, in a caressing voice to her little boy —

"Will not Percy run to papa, and ask him why he looks so sad?"

The child looked up in her face, and then, as his father held out his arms to him, let go his mother's dress, and obeyed her. Mr. Hamilton caught him to his heart, held him for above a minute, kissed him fondly, and left the nursery without uttering a single word.

"Let me take Master Herbert, ma'am," said the head nurse respectfully, for she saw that her mistress's unexpressed alarm had nearly overpowered her; and in a few minutes Emmeline was with her husband, whose agitation was so excessive, that even his wife's presence, for the moment, had scarcely power to calm him.

The tale was soon told. Eleanor's conduct since her engagement had been such as to excite the displeasure, not of her father alone, but actually of the marchioness; who, though a weak and worldly woman, had yet some idea of propriety. As a near relation of Lord Delmont, Eleanor's engagement with Lord Fitzclair was of course told to her, and again and again she warned her that she was going too far, and might lose her lover before she was aware of it; but Eleanor only laughed at her, and at last won her over to the belief that it was certainly better to cure Fitzclair of his jealous tendency *before* marriage than afterward. Lord Delmont's reproofs she was wont to silence, by invariably making them the signal of mortifying and annoying Lord Fitzclair still more than usual. Yet still at times she relented, and so strengthened the love she had excited, so enhanced her own fascinations, that all the agony he had endured and was still, he knew, to endure, by an incomprehensible contradiction, riveted her power and hastened his own doom. Weak in all things but his love, he could not demand as his actual right the publication of their engagement. Eleanor vowed if he did till she permitted him, she would have nothing more to say to him. She knew, though she did not say it, that once made known, a chain would be thrown round her actions, which she did not choose to endure. And father, lover, and friend, all feeling she was wrong, and the first and last repeatedly telling her so, had yet neither of them the resolution to contend with her, and compel the proper course.

A month of their visit to Cheltenham so passed, when Eleanor's attention was arrested by a new actor on the scene. She had begun to tire of her present satellites, and a young military captain, whose furlough from India had just expired, and whose pale face, somewhat melancholy expression, and very elegant figure, presented a new subject for conquest impossible to be resisted; and it was unhappily, only too easily achieved. She made no secret of her admiration, speaking of him in such terms to her intended husband as to excite anew every jealous feeling. It was easy for Captain Fortescue to discover Fitzclair was his rival; but believing himself decidedly the object of Eleanor's preference, he increased his attentions, little imagining the storm he was exciting, the more fearful from its determined suppression. Lord Delmont interfered several times, not only by reproaches to Eleanor, but by determined coldness to her new suitor. Finding at length that her encouragement actually neared a criminal extent, and after a desperately stormy interview, he solemnly declared that if she did not dismiss Captain Fortescue at once, he would shame her in the face of the whole world, by proclaiming her engagement with the young marquis. Eleanor in equal anger, declared that if he threatened, so too could she; and if he tormented her any more she would prevent all publication of her engagement, by herself snapping it asunder, and pledging her faith to Captain Fortescue. This

was too much even for Lord Delmont. Declaring if she did so, a father's heaviest malediction should fall on her head, he hastily left her; and Eleanor very composedly went to prepare for an excursion on horseback with Fortescue, Fitzclair and others.

When Lord Delmont's passions were once roused, even his ordinarily slender judgment entirely forsook him, and he did that which at another time, knowing Fitzclair as he did, he would have shrunk from. He sought him, while still exasperated, upbraided him for his weakness in permitting Eleanor's unprincipled conduct, and warned him that, if he did not adopt some strong measures to prevent it, he would certainly lose her entirely.

The young man heard him without reply; but his face grew livid, and he clenched his hand till the blood started from the nails, and in this mood of concentrated passion joined the riding party. The exercise itself is, to some temperaments, unusually exciting, and the determined coldness of Eleanor to himself, and the eagerly-received devotion of Fortescue, maddened him. He demanded an interview with her on their return home, struggled to speak calmly, expostulated, and, finally, reproached. Eleanor, already irritated; and, beyond all, that her lover, in general so obsequious and humble, should dare to call her to account for mere amusement, combined with the recollection of Captain Fortescue's flattering vows and willing homage, excited her to an extent of which she was herself unconscious, inasmuch as she firmly believed, whatever she might say then, a few soft words would speedily obliterate. She told him that really his jealous temperament was beyond all endurance; that he certainly must intend her to despise and abhor him; and that the contrast he presented to Captain Fortescue was such as to make her most heartily wish to put an end to their engagement, as she felt quite sure it must only end in misery for both; and, without waiting for a reply, she haughtily brushed by him, and disappeared.

Of the extent of Fitzclair's passion Eleanor had not the least idea, and this is saying a great deal, for she generally exaggerated her own power. She believed she had inflicted pain, but not as much as he deserved; and determined that she would torment him yet more at the ball that evening. But to her extreme mortification, he did not appear, and there was a vague dread on her spirits as she retired for the night, which prevented any thing like rest. His absence had excited surprise in all, especially Lady Lascelles, who knew that to leave Eleanor entirely to the attentions of young Fortescue was so unprecedented as to bode no good. But the wildest conjectures were far from reality. The very next morning all Cheltenham was thrown into the most painful excitement by the incomprehensible and most extraordinary fact of the suicide of Lord Fitzclair; by what occasioned, plunged into such mystery that nothing but sudden aberration of mind was imagined, a belief justified by the very peculiar temperament and manners of the young nobleman during his sojourn with them. His will, a valuable present, with a few lines of regard to his faithful attendant, and a letter addressed to Arthur Hamilton, Esq., were the sole evidences that the awful deed had not been committed without some preparation; but as that was often the case with madness itself, it excited no remark.

The state of Eleanor's mind when these awful tidings were communicated to her, which they were by her father, in his agitation and anger, without the least preparation, we leave our readers to imagine. Hardened, heartless, willful as she was, she was still a woman, and a very young one, and till Captain Fortescue appeared, had loved, as far as it was in her nature, Lord Fitzclair. To believe that she had nothing to do with his miserable end was an attempt so vain and hollow, that even she shrunk from the hopeless struggle to realize it; remorse in all its torturing, unmitigated anguish took possession of her, but instead of leading her to penitence, and thence the hope of peace, it urged her to a course of action from which she imagined there was no withdrawing; and which must in time, by removing her from all painful associations, lessen her present misery.

For three days and nights she never quitted her own apartment, and then joined her usual circles without the smallest evidence of the internal agony which was still hers. It was very easy to displace paleness by artificial roses, and her gay smiles and joyous sallies were tempered only by a judiciously-expressed horror when the late event was discussed before her, supposed natural to one who had

known him so intimately; but the hours of loneliness which followed this conduct in society were terrible indeed. By a strange contrariety of feeling, her better nature longed for Emmeline, and her artificial, which had, alas! only too forcibly become her natural self, felt as if she would leave the kingdom rather than encounter the mild, sorrowful glance of those penetrating eyes.

Lord Delmont was himself in a most pitiable condition; even minor evils had always been great to him, and the effect of this, the wish to take Eleanor away from Captain Fortescue's increased and annoying attentions, and yet the dread that doing so would connect her with Fitzclair's death, so distracted him as to render him really ill – information which instantly brought Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton to Cheltenham.

Some young wives and mothers might have felt it hard that their domestic enjoyment should so continually have been disturbed and annoyed from the faults of others; but Emmeline had been accustomed to trace every thing that created personal suffering to the highest source, and feel that it was good for her, or it would not be; a conviction that enabled her to bear with and still to love the erring one that was the visible cause of pain.

Eleanor was at a gay ball the night of her arrival, and Mrs. Hamilton requested she might not be informed of it till the following day. About half an hour before her usual hour of rising after such scenes, she entered her sister's room. All around her lay the ornaments of the previous evening, looking so strange, gaudy, and faded in the darkened room, and judged by the calmer feelings of the morning. A sensation of intense depression crept over Emmeline as she gazed, increasing as she looked on the face of the sleeper, which, divested of its unnatural bloom, looked so fearfully wan and haggard. Her beautiful hair lay in tangled masses on her damp brow, and as Emmeline gently tried to remove it, Eleanor started and awoke.

"Is it already time to get up?" she said languidly, and only half unclosing her eyes; "I feel as if I had not slept at all. Am I dreaming?" she added, starting up, "or have I slept in one place, and awoke in another? Am I at Oakwood?"

"No, dearest Eleanor; will you not welcome me to Malvern House?"

The voice, the look, seemed to thrill through her; her temples were throbbing, her heart weighed down, as it always was when she first awoke, with an undefinable sense of guilt and pain; she tried to be cold, proud, reserved, but it would not do, and she suddenly flung her arms round her sister's neck, and burst into agonized tears.

It was a most unexpected greeting, and Mrs. Hamilton argued hopefully from it. Alas! the unwonted softening only lasted one brief half hour. She left her at Eleanor's entreaty while dressing, and when she returned, though the reckless girl told her with a half smile that she was ready for her lecture, for she could only have come from Oakwood to give her one; and that however severe her words might be, she could not alter her tone, that must be kind, in spite of herself. Yet Emmeline could not succeed in convincing her how wrongly, how cruelly she had acted. Eleanor would persist that she was not in the least to blame, and that poor Fitzclair's fearful end was only owing to his own violent passions; in fact, that he must have been out of his mind, and that, though it was certainly very dreadful, she had perhaps escaped a very terrible doom; but speak as she might, Emmeline was not deceived as to the agony she was actually enduring. Finding, however, that all her gentle efforts were useless, that even the perusal of Fitzclair's brief lines to her husband – which Eleanor insisted on seeing, and in which he deplored his madness in not having followed his advice, and flown from her presence, and bade him take his forgiveness to her, and say, that the means he had adopted would, he trusted, dissolve their engagement to her satisfaction – had no effect, save in causing her to turn so deadly pale, that her sister was convinced nothing but an almost supernatural effort of pride preserved her from fainting. She desisted; hoping against hope that Eleanor would yet repent and become a different being. She knew harshness would only harden, and so she tried to prevail on her father to treat her as usual, but this Lord Delmont could not do. It is strange how often we find those parents who have been over-indulgent to childhood, unusually harsh to the faults of youth. Weak characters, also,

when driven to anger, are always more violent than firmer ones; and, certainly, Eleanor's continued haughtiness and coldness, as if she were the injured one, did not tend to calm him.

And his angry feelings were unfortunately but too soon aggravated by a proposal in form from Captain Fortescue for the hand of Eleanor. Without a moment's delay he dispatched a decided and almost insulting refusal to the young soldier, and then sought his daughter, and vented on her the anger and vexation which overpowered him, upbraiding her not only with the death of Fitzclair, but for having dared so to encourage young Fortescue as to give him courage for his audacious proposal. To his astonishment, he was heard without any attempt at reply; but he would have been startled, could he have seen the pallid cheek, compressed lip, and clenched hand with which, when he had left her, Eleanor muttered —

"Father, if it be sin to leave you, be it on your own head. I would have wedded with your consent, had you permitted it; but now my destiny is fixed. There is no peace in England: at least let me be spared the agony of breaking another loving heart."

Nearly three weeks rolled on, and Eleanor's extraordinary submission, and even in some degree withdrawal from society (for which Mrs. Hamilton's arrival was a good excuse), caused her father's irritation against her almost entirely to subside. That she passed several hours each day apart from her sister, excited no surprise. Emmeline was thankful even for her change of deportment, but nothing confidential ever again passed between them. That reports were floating about, connecting the names of Miss Manvers and the late Lord Fitzclair, seemed little heeded by Eleanor, though they caused natural vexation to her family. About this time an invitation arrived for Eleanor from a lady of rank, slightly known to her father, and living ten miles from Cheltenham in a beautiful villa, at which she expected a select party of fashionables to ruralize for a week or two. There was nothing in the note to excite the dread that weighed on Mrs. Hamilton's spirits, as Eleanor carelessly threw it to her for her perusal, but she would not express it, as Lord Delmont seemed inclined that Eleanor should accept it, knowing that the lady was much too exclusive for Captain Fortescue to join her guests, and believing that Eleanor's apparent indifference to the visit originated from that cause. Telling her he was so gratified by her having devoted so many evenings to her sister, he added, she had his full consent to go if she liked, as he could better spare her than when Emmeline returned to Oakwood. She quietly thanked him, but evinced no particular pleasure.

The day before her intended departure, the sisters were sitting together, and little Percy, who now ran firmly without any falls, was playing about the room. He had already displayed a high spirit and passionate temper, with their general accompaniment, self-will, even in trifles, that Mrs. Hamilton felt would render her task a trying one; but she was as firm as she was gentle, and faced the pain of contradicting her darling bravely: —

"Do not touch that, Percy, love," she said, as her little boy stretched out his hand toward a beautiful but fragile toy, that stood with other nick-nacks on a low table. The child looked laughingly and archly toward her, and withdrew his hand, but did not move from the table.

"Come here, Percy, you have not played with these pretty things for a long time;" and she took from her work-box some gayly colored ivory balls, which had been his favorite playthings, but just at present they had lost their charm, and the young gentleman did not move.

Mrs. Hamilton knelt down by him, and said quietly:

"My Percy will not disobey mamma, will he?"

"Me want that;" he replied, in the pretty coaxing tone of infancy; and he twined his little round arms caressingly round her neck.

Mrs. Hamilton felt very much tempted to indulge him, but she resisted it.

"But that is not a fit plaything for you, love; besides, it is not mine, and we must not touch what is not ours. Come and see if we can not find something just as pretty, that you may have."

And after some minutes' merry play in her lap his mother hoped he had forgotten it; but the little gentleman was not, he thought, to be so governed. The forbidden plaything was quietly grasped, and he seated himself on the ground, in silent but triumphant glee.

Surprised at his sudden silence, Mrs. Hamilton looked toward him. It was his first act of decided disobedience, and she knew she must not waver. Young as he was, he had already learned to know when she was displeased, and when she desired him very gravely to give her the toy, he passionately threw it down, and burst into a violent fit of crying. His nurse took him struggling from the room, and Mrs. Hamilton quietly resumed her work; but there was such an expression of pain in her countenance, that Eleanor exclaimed,

"Emmeline! I have been watching you for the last half hour, and I can not comprehend you. Do explain yourself."

"I will if I can;" and Mrs. Hamilton looked up, and smiled.

"Why would you not let that poor little Percy have that toy?"

"Because it would have been encouraging his touching or taking every thing he sees, whether proper for him or not."

"But he could not understand that."

"Not now, perhaps; but I wish him to know that when I speak, he must obey me. It is, I think, a mistaken doctrine, that we ought to give children a *reason* for all we desire them to do. Obedience can then never be prompt, as it ought to be. And, in fact, if we wait until they are old enough to understand the reasons for a command, the task will be much more difficult, from the ascendency which willfulness may already have obtained."

"But then why were you so cruel as to send the poor child up-stairs? Was it not enough to take the toy from him?"

"Not quite; for him to remember that he must not touch it again."

"And do you really think he will not?"

"I can only hope so, Eleanor; but I must not be disheartened if he do. He is an infant still, and I can not expect him to learn such a difficult lesson as obedience in one, two, or six lessons."

"And will he love you as much as if you had given it to him?"

"Not at the moment, perhaps, but when he is older he will love me more. And it is that hope which reconciles me to the pain which refusing to indulge him costs me now."

"And voluntarily you will bear the pain which had almost brought tears into the eyes of the severe and stoical Mrs. Hamilton!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"It was a foolish weakness, my dear Eleanor, for which my husband would have chidden me; but there must be pain to a mother if called upon to exert authority, when inclination so strongly points to indulgence."

"Well, if ever I have any thing to do with children, I certainly shall not be half as particular as you are, Emmeline. I really can not imagine what harm gratifying myself and Percy could possibly have done."

"If ever you have children, my dear Eleanor, may you have strength of mind and self-control sufficient to forget self, and refuse the gratification of the present moment for the welfare of future years!"

Mrs. Hamilton spoke impressively, and something, either in her words or tone, caused the blood to rush into Eleanor's cheeks, and she hastily walked to the window; then, as abruptly returning, she kissed her sister, a very rare token of affection, and declaring she was much too good for her to understand, quitted the room.

The following day, dressed for her visit, and only waiting for the carriage, Eleanor, accompanied by Mrs. Hamilton and her little boys, entered the same apartment. Though not in general fond of nursing, Eleanor had taken Herbert in her arms, and was playing with him with unusual fondness; Percy, who had not seen the tempting plaything since his banishment the preceding day, the moment

his eye caught it, to the astonishment of Eleanor, ran up to his mother, and lisping, "Me no touch that – Percy good boy now," held up his little face lovingly to hers, and with a very pardonable feeling of delight, Mrs. Hamilton lifted him up and covered him with kisses. The feelings which thrilled through Eleanor at that moment she might indeed have found it difficult to explain, but she was so conscious of a change of countenance as to hide her face on Herbert's head. It might have been obedience and disobedience brought so suddenly and strangely in contrast – and who were the actors? an infant and herself. For a minute she recovered, stricken with sudden and agonized remorse; but it was too late, she had gone too far, and the announcement of the carriage was a relief from that bitter moment of painful indecision. Placing her baby nephew in his nurse's arms, she said, caressingly, "Will not Percy give Lina some of those kisses as well as mamma?" The child threw one little arm round her neck, and the other round that of his mother, and then burst into a merry laugh at thus seeing himself as it were a link between them. Never had it seemed to Eleanor that she had loved and admired her sister as she did at that moment; all the neglect, unkindness, she had shown her, all the sarcasm and satire, of which, either before or behind her, she had so often made her the victim, combined with an intense, but how painfully vain longing to have resembled her in the remotest degree, rather than be the character which had never before appeared so degraded, so hateful – almost overpowered her – a convulsive sob escaped her as she clasped Emmeline in a close embrace, and almost choked her hurried good-by! Lord Delmont and Mr. Hamilton were in the hall, and the former was surprised and delighted at the warmth with which his usually reckless child returned his kiss and farewell; the carriage drove off leaving unusual hope and cheerfulness behind it. Alas! in one short fortnight every rising hope was blighted, Emmeline's momentary dread fulfilled, and Lord Delmont experiencing, in all its agony,

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
To have a thankless child"

CHAPTER V.
A HEART AND HOME IN ENGLAND.
– A HEART AND HOME IN INDIA

From the moment Arthur Hamilton returned to Cheltenham with the painful intelligence that he had arrived at Leith only in time to witness the departure of the beautiful vessel which contained Captain Fortescue and the exquisitely lovely bride who had, it seemed, turned the heads of all the usually quiet Scotsmen who had seen her, Lord Delmont gradually sunk. The agony of losing her forever – for so he regarded her departure for, and residence in India for an indeterminate time – conquered every other feeling. Her conduct had caused emotions of anguish far too deep for the relieving sensation of anger. The name of the lady from whose house and by whose connivance she had eloped, he was never heard to breathe; but, if ever casually mentioned before him, every feature would become convulsed, and he would instantly leave the room. Often and often he accused his own harshness as the cause of driving her from him, and then came, with overwhelming bitterness, the thought that if he lately had been harsh, surely the recollection of all the indulgent fondness he had shown demanded some gratitude in return. If she had but written, had but expressed one wish for his continued love, one regret for his present pain! But no letter came, and the contending but all-depressing emotions so completely undermined a constitution never very strong, and already worn by care, that when another and still heavier trial came, he sunk at once beneath it.

Though Eleanor had been his favorite, his feelings of pride and hope had greatly centered in his son, whose career, in five years' active service on board a man-of-war, had been such as to raise him already to a lieutenancy, and excite every gratifying emotion, not only in his immediate family, but in a large circle of admiring friends. Mrs. Hamilton's love for her brother had naturally increased, strong as it always had been, even in childhood – and the visits which Charles had been enabled to make to Oakwood, brief in duration as they were compelled to be, had always been fraught with heartfelt, joyous happiness, not only to herself but to her husband. The pain and anxiety attendant on Eleanor's elopement, and the dread of its effects on Lord Delmont, had for two or three months been the sole subject of thought; but at length, and, like a fearful flash bringing a new sorrow to light, it pressed upon them that it was long after the period that intelligence of Charles ought to have been received. Still hoping against hope, not only the Delmont family, but all who had friends and relatives on board the Leander, imagined that she might have drifted from her course, or been engaged on some secret and distant expedition, but that intelligence concerning her would and must soon come. Alas! after months of agonizing suspense, information was received that several planks and masts, bearing evidence of fire as well as water, and some sea-chests, bearing names, only too soon recognized as those of some of the Leander's crew, had been cast off the coast of Barbary, and there could be no more doubt that death or slavery – that fearful slavery which the bombardment of Algiers had so displayed to European eyes – was the portion of all those beloved ones, for whom so many aching hearts and eyes had watched and wept in vain. It was a trial so terrible that Mrs. Hamilton felt at first as if even submission had departed from her; and she could almost have rebelled in spirit against the inscrutable decree, that had consigned one so free from vice and evil, so full of happiness and worth, to a doom so terrible. Much as she had loved and reverenced her husband before, she seemed never to have felt his worth and tenderness till then. It was his sympathy, his strength, that recalled her to a sense of her duty, and gave her power to endure, by a realization once more of that submissiveness to a Father's will, which had never before failed her. But time, though it softened the first anguish, had no power over the memories of this brother, not even when the increasing cares and joys of maternity so fully engrossed her, that the present and the future of her children appeared to have banished all of her own past.

Lord Delmont did not survive the mournful tidings of the certain wreck of the Leander above two months; but his released spirit did not meet that of his son. Charles was not dead. He toiled as a slave long years in living death, before there was even a partial amelioration of his sufferings. But no tidings of him ever came, a young child of three years old, a distant branch of the Manvers family, became Lord Delmont.

Years rolled on, and Mrs. Hamilton's lot was so full of tranquil happiness, so fraught with the innumerable daily joys of a loving wife and devoted mother, that her prayer was ever rising for guidance, and gratitude, that prosperity might not unfit her for the dark days of trial and adversity, when they should come. That she had cares as well as joys could not be otherwise, when so intensely anxious to bring up her children with more regard to their spiritual and moral welfare, than even the cultivation of their intellect. She was one of those who thought still more of the training of the heart than of the mind, believing that were the first properly awakened, the latter would need little incitement to exertion. Two girls had been the sole addition to her family.

One other wish, and one of many years' standing, Mrs. Hamilton had it in her power to fulfill. From childhood she had been accustomed to think of Lucy Harcourt as one, to whom it might one day be in her power to return the heavy debt of gratitude she owed her mother; she had been accustomed to correspond with her from very early years; Mrs. Harcourt delighting in creating a mutual interest between her pupil and the child from whom circumstances had so sadly separated her. When therefore an event of a very painful nature to Miss Harcourt's individual feelings compelled her – as the only hope of regaining peace, and strengthening her for the arduous duty of instruction, which she knew, as a single woman, was her sole source of independent subsistence – she had no scruple in accepting that friendship which Mrs. Hamilton had so warmly proffered. A very few days of personal intercourse sufficed for mutual conviction, that correspondence had not deceived in the favorable impressions of either. Miss Harcourt found, indeed, the friend her aching spirit needed; and Mrs. Hamilton, long before the months of repose which she had insisted should forestall the commencement of exertion were over, rejoiced in the conviction that the daughter of her beloved and regretted friend was indeed well-fitted for that position in her family – her helper in the moral and intellectual training of her daughters – which her vivid fancy had often pictured as so filled. They were indeed but infants when Miss Harcourt arrived; but Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton found means to overrule the honorable scruples which, on the part of Lucy, seemed at first against their plan, and in her gradually returning health and peace, Mrs. Hamilton not only rejoiced, but felt gratefully thankful that the wish of so many years' standing, and which had seemed so little likely to be fulfilled, was absolutely accomplished, and she could prove how deeply she had loved and mourned her truly maternal friend. It is astonishing how often, if an earnest, heartfelt desire for the gratification of some good feeling or for the performance of some good deed be steadily and unvaryingly held before us, without any regard to its apparent impossibility, its accomplishment is at length obtained. It is supposed to be only done so in books, but this is a mistaken supposition, arising from the simple fact of individuals so often forgetting their own past, and failing steadily to pursue one object, regardless of the lapse of years. If they looked into themselves more often and more carefully, if they sought consistency in desire and pursuit, they would often be startled at their connection, and that it is not so useless to *wish* and *seek*, when both are of such a nature as can be based on and strengthened by prayer, as it may seem. Human life presents as many startling connections and contingencies as romance – only, as the *actors* not the *observers* of this world's busy scene, we can not trace them as we do in books.

The thought of Eleanor was the only dark shade in Mrs. Hamilton's life. She had written to her often, but communication with India was not then what it is now, and her letters might not have reached their destination; especially as being in active service, Captain Fortescue was himself constantly changing his quarters. Whatever the cause (for Eleanor's letters, Mrs. Hamilton thought, might also have miscarried), she heard nothing of her till the hurried epistle commenced by her sister, and finished by Mr. Myrvin, brought the startling intelligence that she was a widow and dying, unable

to reach Oakwood, where she had hoped at least to have sufficient strength to bring her children, and implore for them protection and love and conjuring Mrs. Hamilton to come to her without delay. The letter, imperfectly directed, had been days on its journey, and it was with the most melancholy forebodings Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had started for Llangwillan.

But though it was not till many years after Edward and Ellen Fortescue became inmates of her family that Mrs. Hamilton became acquainted with all the particulars of their childhood, it is necessary that our readers should be rather more enlightened; otherwise the character of Ellen may be to them as unnatural and as incomprehensible as it was to her aunt.

That Eleanor could realize true happiness in a marriage entered into only because she could not bear the torture of her own thoughts, and her constant dread of the world's contumely, was not likely. At first, indeed, it was a very delightful thing to find herself the object not only of devotion to her husband (whom, could she entirely have forgotten Fitzclair, she might have really loved), but a still more brilliant star in India than she had even been in England. Though Captain Fortescue was often engaged in marches and countermarches, where Eleanor sometimes, though very rarely, accompanied him, still there were intervals of rest for him in the larger cities, where his wife ever shone pre-eminent. For the first three or four years, the pride he felt in seeing her so universally admired, in the greater attention he received for her sake, compensated for, or concealed the qualities, which, as a soldier's wife, he had fondly believed she would possess. But as his health, always delicate, became more and more undermined, and compelled him to relinquish society, at least in a great measure, and to look for the quiet pleasures of domestic life, he found, and bitter was that first awakening, that his wishes, his comfort, were of no importance. She could not resign the pleasures of society – of still being enabled to pursue the dangerous amusement of her girlhood (though so guardedly that not a rumor against her ever found breath), for the dullness of her home. Yet still he loved her; and when Eleanor, with all the fascinating playfulness of her former self, would caress and try to persuade him to go out with her, and not sit moping at home, and that if he would, she would behave just as he liked, and if he did not care to see her surrounded, as she knew she was, by red coats, she would dismiss them all, and devote herself to him – but indeed she could not stay at home – he would feel that it would be cruel indeed to chain such a being to his side, and sometimes make the exertion (for which he was little fitted) to accompany her; at others, with kind words and indulgent love, permit her to follow her own wishes, and remain alone. But little did he think the real reason that Eleanor could not rest in quiet at home. The recollection of Lord Fitzclair was at such times so fearfully vivid, that the very agony she had endured when first told of his fearful end would return in all its intensity; the thought: Had her father really cursed her for her disobedience, and was it that forever hovering round her, preventing any thing like lasting happiness. And yet, by a strange contradiction, while the idea of her father's curse shook her whole frame at times with convulsive sobs, pride, that most fatal ingredient of her character, utterly prevented all attempt on her part to communicate with her relations. She said, as they had made no effort to conciliate, she would not; and yet the longing for Emmeline sometimes became actually painful.

Eleanor was never intended for the heartless, reckless being she had tried to become. It was a constant and most terrible struggle between the good and evil parts of her nature, and though the evil triumphed – in the determination that nothing should change her course of action, nothing compel her to acknowledge she had ever been in the wrong, and was really not the perfect creature which flattery was ever ready to pour into her ear – the good had yet so much power as to make her miserable, by the conviction, that she was not what she might have been – that she never could be happy – that every pleasure was hollow, every amusement vain. Again and again the memories of Emmeline's gentle, sustaining, ever active piety would come before her, as if beseeching her to seek the only fount of peace; but so terrible was the self-reproach, the anguish which the thought called up, that she always turned from it with a shudder, resolved that religion was never meant for such as herself, and that its restrictions should never enter her mind, or its dictates pass her lips.

With the awakening intelligence of her son, however, there seemed one pleasure not wholly hollow – one enjoyment without the shadow of alloy; and she grasped it with an avidity and a constancy, that in a character generally so wavering and inconsistent was almost incredible. That her son was from his earliest infancy the image of herself, might have added strength to the feeling; but the intense love, almost idolatry, she felt toward him, increasing with his growth, did much toward banishing the unpleasant feelings of remorse and home-sickness. She devoted herself to her boy, not judiciously indeed, for she was not one to practice self-denial in education; and as Edward's disposition was not one to cause her annoyance, even from over-indulgence, there was not even the check of his ill-temper or rudeness toward herself, to whisper the fearful evil she was engendering.

What was the emotion which had so riveted her to her son, it might have been difficult to ascertain; it could scarcely have been the mere instinct of maternity, for then it would have extended to her daughter; but as complete as was her indulgence to Edward, so was her neglect of Ellen.

Colonel Fortescue (for he had gradually attained that rank) had borne, without complaint, neglect of himself; nay, it had not had power in the least degree to diminish his love, though it might have awakened him to the consciousness that his wife was indeed not perfect. Her devotion to Edward, even undertaking the toilsome task of instruction, had delighted him; for, at first, having been much from home, he was not conscious of the lonely fate of his little girl; but when the truth became evident, that she was an object almost of dislike – that she was left entirely to the tender mercies of a hireling, and Eleanor only alluded to her, to contrast her peevishness and stupidity with Edward's happiness and intellect, all the father was roused within him, and, for the first time, he felt and expressed serious displeasure. He acknowledged that his son might, indeed, be superior in beauty and talent, but he would not allow that Ellen's affections were less warm, or her temper less capable of guidance. To him, and to all who had in the least attended to childhood, Ellen's face, even from infancy, expressed not ill-temper, but suffering. Continually ill, for she inherited her father's constitution, the poor little infant was constantly crying or fretful; which Eleanor; never having known what illness was, attributed at once to a naturally evil temper which annoyed her. The nurse, as ignorant as she was obsequious, adopted the same opinion; and, before she was even three years old, harshness, both by nurse and mother, had been constantly used, to make Ellen as good a child as her brother.

In vain did the colonel, when he became aware of this treatment, remonstrate that it was the illness of the poor child – neither obstinacy nor ill-temper: his wife would not understand him, and at length he sternly and peremptorily declared, that as she had her will with Edward, he would have his with Ellen, and that no chastisement should be inflicted. If she did wrong, he was to be told of it, and if necessary he would reprove her, but he would allow no other interference. Mrs. Fortescue made not the least objection, believing that as her husband had thus taken her in charge, she was exonerated from all blame if she left her entirely to him.

Only too quickly did the poor child discover that the lovely being whom she called mother, and whom she loved so fondly, had no love, no caress for her. Repeated punishment, though it had only extended to her fifth year, had completely crushed the gentle, tender spirit, that had required such judicious nursing; and combined with physical suffering, instead of deadening the feelings, as in some dispositions it would have done, had rendered them morbidly acute – an effect which constant loneliness naturally deepened. Her father's love and caresses had caused her to cling to him so passionately, that every word he said, every request he made her, was treasured and thought upon, when he was away from her, with a tenacity many would have fancied unnatural in a child. He taught her, though his heart often bled as he did so (for what claim had her mother upon the feelings he sought to inculcate), to love, honor, and obey her mother in all things; that if she did so, she would be as happy as Edward in time, and Ellen, though she did not understand him, obeyed; but Colonel Fortescue little imagined the evil which was accruing from these very natural lessons.

Ellen learned to believe that, as her mother never noticed her, except in accounts of anger or irritation, it must be her own fault. She longed to be beautiful and buoyant as Edward; and that she

was neither, marked her in her own young mind as so inferior, it was no wonder her mother could not caress or love her. Had Edward presumed on his favoritism, and been unkind or neglectful, she might, perhaps, have envied more than she loved him; but his disposition was naturally so noble, so open-hearted, so generous, that he always treated her with affection, and would share with her his playthings and sweets, even while he could not but believe her in all things his inferior; and that as such, of course, her wishes could never cross with his. Poor child, she scarcely knew what it was to wish, except that she might cling to her mother as she did to her father, and that she could but be good and beautiful enough to win her love! The lesson of concealment of every feeling is but too easily and too early learned. Tears do not flow even from childhood, when always rudely checked, and angrily reproved. Affection can not display itself unless called forth; and so the very outward seeming of children is more in a parent's hand than mere superficial observers may believe: and Mrs. Fortescue blamed and disliked the cold inanimate exterior which she had never tried to warm.

Ellen's extreme difficulty in acquiring knowledge, compared with Edward's extraordinary quickness, only confirmed her painful conviction of her great inferiority, the impossibility of her ever winning love – and the consequent increased intensity of her affection for her father and brother, who loved her notwithstanding. That the child herself could not have defined these sensations is true, but that they had existence, even before she was nine years old, and that they influenced many years of her after-life, causing error and suffering, and rendering Mrs. Hamilton's task one of pain and difficulty, before these mistaken influences could be eradicated, is equally so. The power over early years is so immense, its responsibility so extensive, its neglect or abuse may indeed make the earnest thinker tremble; less, perhaps, for the actual amount of general evil, for that circumstances in after life are sometimes graciously permitted to avert, but for individual suffering and individual joy – and especially is this the case in the training of girls. More enduring in their very fragility than boys, they may be compared to those precious metals which fire and water and pressure have no power to break, but simply to draw out to a thinner and thinner thread, dwindling more and more, but to its last spider-woven fineness capable of tenuity and vitality. While boys, like men, are often crushed at once – the frame of the one and the spirit of the other equally unable to endure.

CHAPTER VI.
DOMESTIC DISCORD AND ITS END

The displeasure of her husband, his reproaches for her conduct to Ellen, by causing some degree of annoyance, increased Mrs. Fortescue's feelings of dislike toward the object who had caused it, and this was soon afterward heightened by self-reproach.

A malignant fever broke out in the British settlement where Colonel Fortescue was stationed; his wife and children were with him, and, dreadfully alarmed, Eleanor determined to remove with her children to some less unhealthy spot. The colonel willingly consented; but before their hasty preparations were concluded Ellen sickened. Alarm for Edward, however, so engrossed the mother, that she appeared incapable of any other thought. In vain Colonel Fortescue urged that his son would be safe with the friends who had promised to take charge of him, and who were on the point of leaving the city; that there were none on whom he could depend so to tend the little sufferer as not to require a guiding head, and she knew how impossible it was for him to be with his child as his heart prompted. He urged, entreated, commanded in vain, Mrs. Fortescue was inexorable. She declared that the idea of her son being away from her at such a time would drive her mad; and as for duty, one child demanded her care as much as another; that her husband might not care about thus exposing her to infection, but she really thought, for Edward's sake, it was her duty to take care of herself. It might be nothing to the colonel or Ellen whether she lived or died, but to Edward it was a great deal; and so as she must choose between them, she would go with him who loved her best, and who would be miserable without her. The haughty, angry tone with which she spoke, the unjust taunt, roused every indignant feeling, and Colonel Fortescue said more in that moment of irritation than he could have believed possible. But it only awakened the cold, sustaining pride which Eleanor always called to her aid when conscience smote her, and she departed with her son, hardening every better feeling, and rousing anger against her husband and child to conquer the suffering of self-reproach. But when many miles from the city of death, and there were no fears for Edward, anxiety and wretchedness so assailed her, that pride itself gave way. To communicate with the infected city was difficult, and very infrequent, and again and again did she wish that she had remained.

During the continuance of Ellen's illness her father's anguish was indeed terrible. Every leisure moment he spent by her side, moistening her parched lips, bathing her burning forehead, and listening to the plaintive accents of delirium with an acuteness of suffering, that injured his own health more than he had the least idea of. The attendants were really both kind and skillful, but the colonel fancied, when he was not with her, she was neglected, and in still greater suffering; and the struggle between his duties and his child was almost more than he could bear. He had never been a religious man – never known what it was to pray, except in the public services of his regiment, but now prayer, earnest, heartfelt, poured from him, and the thankfulness to God, which so overpowered him, when she was pronounced out of danger, as to compel him to weep like a child, planted a sense of a Father's infinite love and infinite compassion within him, which was his sole sustainer the short remainder of his life.

Eleanor's letters, few as they were, had in some degree softened his anger toward her; but as he beheld the ravages of disease on his poor child's face and form, rendering her still less attractive than she had been, and perceived that bodily weakness had extended to her mind, and often and often forced tears from her eyes and momentary complainings, he trembled lest Eleanor should find still more to dislike and reprove; and often his heart bled as Ellen would ask with tears, for her dear mamma, adding, plaintively, "Mamma never kisses me or loves me as she does Edward; but I like to be near her, and look at her dear beautiful face, and wish I was good and pretty enough for her to love me. Why does she never come to me? – and why may I not go to her?"

And what could the colonel reply, except that her mother feared Edward would take the infection, and therefore she was obliged to go with him to some place of safety? And his child was

satisfied, repeating so fondly her delight that her dear, dear Edward had been saved from being as ill as she was, that her father clasped her closer and closer to his heart, feeling the intrinsic beauty of a disposition that, instead of repining that she was left alone to suffer, could rejoice that her brother had been spared.

Colonel Fortescue obtained a few weeks' leave, that he might take his child to the sea-side as recommended, ere she joined her mother. And alone with him, gradually regaining a moderate degree of strength, Ellen was very happy; but such bright intervals were indeed few and far between. There was no change in her mother's conduct toward her, when reunited. Her heart had, indeed, risen to her lips as she again beheld the child so nearly lost; and had she followed impulse, she would have clasped her in her arms and wept over her, but that would have seemed tacitly to acknowledge that she had been wrong, and had suffered from it; and so she refrained, causing suffering to herself, anguish to her child, and pain to her husband, all from that fell demon, pride. She only chose to remember that it was Ellen who had been the cause of her husband's anger – Ellen, the constant subject of contention between them – Ellen, always causing the pang of self-reproach: and so how was it possible that she could love her?

About a year after Ellen's dangerous illness, when she was nearly ten, and Edward just eleven, Colonel Fortescue was ordered to take command of some troops to be stationed at a fort, whose vicinity to some hostile natives rendered it rather a post of danger. The wives and children of the officers were permitted to accompany them, if they wished it, and, except in the colonel's own family, there had been no hesitation in their choice. The colonel was strangely and painfully depressed as with some vague dread, and all his affection for his wife had returned with such force as to make him shrink in unusual suffering from the idea of leaving her; and conquering reluctance, for he felt as if she would not accede, he implored her to accompany him, confessing he felt ill and unhappy, and shrank from a separation. His wife looked at him with astonishment; he had never asked nor thought of such a thing before, she said, in their many brief partings, and she really could not understand him. The place was decidedly unhealthy, and Edward must not be exposed to its malaria; besides which, she had promised him to go to a juvenile ball, which was given by an English family of rank, in a fortnight's time, and she could not possibly disappoint him; and why her husband should wish for her in such a place she could not imagine, but she knew she should die of terror before she had been there a week. Not a word did the colonel utter in reply, but he felt as if an ice-bolt had struck his heart and frozen it at once. He fixed his eyes upon her, with a strange, sad, reproaching look, which haunted her till her death, and turning from her, sought the room where Ellen was preparing her lessons for the joyful hour when he could attend to her. As she sprung toward him with a cry of glee, he clasped her to his bosom, without the power of uttering a sound, save a groan so deep and hollow, that the child's unusual glee was checked, and she clung to him in terror; and when he could tell her that he was about to leave her, and for an indefinite time, her passionate grief seemed almost to comfort him, by its strong evidence of her childish love.

"Let me go with you, papa, dear papa! oh! I will be so good – I will not give you any trouble, indeed, indeed I will not. Pray, pray, take me with you, dear, dear papa?" And she looked in his face so beseechingly, that the colonel had no strength to resist, and fondly kissing her, he promised that if Mrs. Cameron would permit her to join her little family, she should go with him: and, to Ellen's intense thankfulness, the permission was willingly accorded.

Mrs. Fortescue had indeed replied, when her husband briefly imparted his intention, that he certainly must intend Ellen to be ill again, by exposing her to such an unhealthy climate; and that if she were, he must not be angry if she refused to go and nurse her, as it would be all his weak indulgence, and no fault of hers. The colonel made no answer, and irritated beyond measure at his manner, Eleanor parted from her husband in coldness and in pride.

The fortnight passed, and Mrs. Fortescue felt as if her own youth were indeed renewed, the longings for universal admiration again her own; but now it was only for her son, and her triumph was

complete; many and lovely were the youthful beings called together on that festive night, seeming as if England had concentrated her fairest and purest offspring in that far distant land; but Edward, and his still lovely mother, outshone them all. That she was herself admired as much, if not more, than she had ever been in her palmy days of triumph, Eleanor scarcely knew; her every feeling was centered in her boy, and consequently the supercilious haughtiness which had so often marred her beauty in former days was entirely laid aside, and maternal pride and pleasure gratified to the utmost, added a new charm to her every movement and every word. She heard the universal burst of admiration which greeted her, as to oblige Edward she went through a quadrille with him, and never in her whole career had she felt so triumphant, so proud, so joyous. During the past fortnight she had often been tormented by self-reproach, and her husband's look had disagreeably haunted her; but this night not a fleeting thought of either the colonel or Ellen entered her mind, and her pleasure was complete.

Tired with dancing, and rather oppressed with the heat, Eleanor quitted the crowded ball-room, and stood for a few minutes quite alone in a solitary part of the verandah, which, covered with lovely flowers, ran round the house. The music in the ball-room sounded in the distance as if borne by the night breeze in softened harmony over the distant hills. The moon was at the full, and lit up nearly the whole garden with the refulgence of a milder day. At that moment a cold chill crept over the heart and frame of Eleanor, causing her breath to come thick and gaspingly. Why, she knew not, for there was nothing visible to cause it, save that, in one part of the garden, a cluster of dark shrubs, only partly illuminated by the rays of the moon, seemed suddenly to have assumed the shape of a funeral bier, covered with a military pall. At the same moment the music in the ball-room seemed changed to the low wailing plaint and muffled drums, the military homage to some mighty dead. And if it were indeed but excited fancy, it had a strange effect, for Eleanor fainted on the marble floor.

That same afternoon Colonel Fortescue, with some picked men, had set off to discover the track of some marauding natives, who for some days had been observed hovering about the neighborhood. Military ardor carried him farther than he intended, and it was nearly night, when entering a narrow defile, a large body of the enemy burst upon them, and a desperate contest ensued. The defile was so hemmed in with rock and mountain, that though not very distant from the fort, the noise of the engagement had not been distinguished. Captain Cameron was quietly sitting with his wife and elder children, awaiting without any forebodings the return of the colonel. Though it was late, Ellen's fears had been so visible, that Mrs. Cameron could not send her to bed; the child seemed so restless and uneasy that the captain had tried to laugh her out of her cowardice, as he called it, declaring that her father would disown her if she could not be more brave. Hasty footsteps were at length heard approaching, and Ellen started from her seat and sprung forward, as the door opened; but it was not the colonel, only a sergeant, who had accompanied him, and whose face caused Captain Cameron to exclaim, in alarm, "How now, Sergeant Allen, returned, and alone; what has chanced?"

"The worst those brown devils could have done!" was the energetic reply. "We've beaten them, and we will beat them again, the villains! but that will not bring *him* back – captain – captain – the colonel's down!"

The captain started from his chair, but before he could frame another word, Ellen had caught hold of the old man's arm, and wildly exclaimed, "Do you mean – do you mean, pray tell me, Sergeant Allen! – Have the natives met papa's troop, and have they fought? – and – is he hurt – is he killed?" The man could not answer her – for her look and tone, he afterward declared to his comrades, went through his heart, just for all the world like a saber cut; and for the moment neither Captain nor Mrs. Cameron could address her. The shock seemed to have banished voice from all, save from the poor child principally concerned.

"Stay with me, my dear Ellen!" Mrs. Cameron at length said, advancing to her, as she stood still clinging to the sergeant's arm: "the captain will go and meet your father, and if he be wounded, we will nurse him together, dearest! Stay with me."

"No, no, no!" was the agonized reply; "let me go to him, he may die before they bring him here, and I shall never feel his kiss or hear him bless me again. He told me he should fall in battle – oh! Mrs. Cameron, pray let me go to him?"

And they who knew all which that father was to his poor Ellen, could not resist that appeal. The sergeant said the colonel was not dead, but so mortally wounded they feared to move him. It was a fearful scene. Death in its most horrid form was all around her; her little feet were literally deluged in blood, and she frequently stumbled over the dusky forms and mangled and severed limbs that lay on the grass, but neither sob nor cry escaped her till she beheld her father. His men had removed him from the immediate scene of slaughter, and tried to form a rough pallet of military cloaks, but the ghastly countenance, which the moon's light rendered still more fixed and pallid, the rigidity of his limbs, all seemed to denote they had indeed arrived too late, and that terrible stillness was broken by the convulsed and passionate sobs of the poor child, who, flinging herself beside him, besought him only to open his eyes, to look upon her once more, to call her his darling, and kiss her once, only once again: and it seemed as if her voice had indeed power to recall the fluttering soul. The heavy eyes did unclose, the clenched hand relaxed to try and clasp his child, and he murmured feebly —

"How came you here, my poor darling Ellen? are friends here? – is that Cameron's voice?" The captain knelt down by him and convulsively pressed his hand, but he could not speak.

"God bless you, Cameron! Take my poor child to her mother – implore her – to – and it is to-night, this very night – she and my boy are happy – and I – and my poor Ellen – " A fearful convulsion choked his voice, but after a little while he tried to speak again —

"My poor child, I have prepared you for this; but I know you must grieve for me. Take my blessing to your brother, tell him to protect – love your mother, darling! she must love you at last – a ring – my left hand – take it to her – oh! how I have loved her – God have mercy on her – on my poor children!" He tried to press his lips again on Ellen's cheek and brow, but the effort was vain – and at the very moment Mrs. Fortescue had stood transfixed by some unknown terror, her husband ceased to breathe.

It was long before Ellen rallied from that terrible scene. Even when the fever which followed subsided, and she had been taken, apparently perfectly restored to health, once more to her mother and brother, its recollection so haunted her, that her many lonely hours became fraught with intense suffering. Her imagination, already only too morbid, dwelt again and again upon the minutest particular of that field of horror; not only her father, but the objects which, when her whole heart was wrapped in him, she seemed not even to have seen. The ghastly heaps of dead, the severed limbs, the mangled trunks, the gleaming faces all fixed in the distorted expressions with which they died – the very hollow groans and louder cry of pain which, as she passed through the field, had fallen on her ear unheeded, returned to the poor child's too early awakened fancy so vividly, that often and often it was only a powerful though almost unconscious effort that prevented the scream of fear. Her father's last words were never forgotten; she would not only continue to love her mother because he had desired her to do so, but because *he had so loved her*, and on her first return home this seemed easier than ever to accomplish. Mrs. Fortescue, tortured by remorse and grief, had somewhat softened toward the child who had received the last breath of her husband; and could Ellen have overcome the reserve and fear which so many years of estrangement had engendered, and given vent to the warmth of her nature, Mrs. Fortescue might have learned to know, and knowing, to love her – but it was then too late.

So torturing were Mrs. Fortescue's feelings when she recalled the last request of her husband, and her cruel and haughty refusal; when that which had seemed so important, a juvenile ball – because not to go would disappoint Edward – became associated with his fearful death, and sunk into worse than nothing – she had parted with him in anger, and it proved forever; – that even as England had become odious to her, twelve years before, so did India now; and she suddenly resolved to quit it, and return to the relatives she had neglected so long, but toward whom she now yearned more than ever.

She thought and believed such a complete change would and must bring peace. Alas! what change will remove the torture of remorse?

Though incapable of real love, from her studied heartlessness, it was impossible for her to have lived twelve years with one so indulgent and fond as Colonel Fortescue, without realizing some degree of affection, and his unexpected and awful death roused every previously dormant feeling so powerfully, that she was astonished at herself, and in her misery believed that the feeling had only come, to add to her burden – for what was the use of loving now? and determined to rouse herself, she made every preparation for immediate departure, but she was painfully arrested. The selfish mother had fled from the couch of her suffering child, and now a variation of the same complaint laid her on a bed of pain. It was a desperate struggle between life and death; but she rallied, and insisted on taking her passage for England some weeks before her medical attendant thought it advisable. The constant struggle between the whisperings of good and the dominion of evil, which her whole life had been, had unconsciously undermined a constitution naturally good; and when to this was added a malignant disease, though brief in itself, the seeds of a mortal complaint were planted, which, ere the long voyage was concluded, had obtained fatal and irremediable ascendency, and occasioned those sufferings and death which in our first chapters we described.

To Edward, though the death of his father had caused him much childish grief, still more perhaps from sympathy with the deep suffering of his mother, than a perfect consciousness of his own heavy loss, the *manner* in which he died was to him a source of actual pride. He had always loved the histories of heroes, military and naval, and gloried in the idea that his father had been one of them, and died as they did, bravely fighting against superior numbers, and in the moment of a glorious victory. He had never seen death, and imagined not all the attendant horrors of such a one; and how that Ellen could never even hear the word without shuddering he could not understand, nor why she should always so painfully shrink from the remotest reference to that night, which was only associated in his mind with emotions of pleasure. In the tedious voyage of nearly six months (for five-and-twenty years ago the voyage from India to England was not what it is now), the character of Edward shone forth in such noble coloring as almost to excuse his mother's idolatry, and win for him the regard of passengers and crew. Captain Cameron had impressed on his mind that he now stood in his father's place to his mother and sister; and as the idea of protecting is always a strong incentive to manliness in a boy, however youthful, Edward well redeemed the charge, so devoting himself not only to his mother, but to Ellen, that her affection for him redoubled, as did her mistaken idea of his vast superiority.

His taste had always pointed to the naval in preference to the military profession, and the voyage confirmed it. Before he had been a month on board he had become practically an expert sailor – had learned all the technical names of the various parts of a ship, and evinced the most eager desire for the acquirement of navigation. Nor did he fail in the true sailor spirit, when, almost within sight of England, a tremendous storm arose, reducing the vessel almost to a wreck, carrying her far from her destined moorings, and compelling her, after ten days' doubt whether or not she would reach land in safety, to anchor in Milford Haven, there to repair her injuries, ere she could be again seaworthy.

The passengers here left her, and Mrs. Fortescue, whose illness the terrors of the storm had most alarmingly increased, was conveyed to Pembroke in an almost exhausted state; but once on land she rallied, resolved on instantly proceeding to Swansea, then cross to Devonshire, and travel direct to Oakwood, where she had no doubt her sister was. But her temper was destined to be tried still more. The servant who had accompanied her from India, an Englishwoman, tired out with the fretful impatience of Mrs. Fortescue during the voyage, and disappointed that she did not at once proceed to London, demanded her instant discharge, as she could not stay any longer from her friends. The visible illness of her mistress might have spared this unfeeling act, but Eleanor had never shown feeling or kindness to her inferiors, and therefore, perhaps, had no right to expect them. Her suppressed anger and annoyance so increased physical suffering, that had it not been for her children she must have

sunk at once; but for their sakes she struggled with that deadly exhaustion, and set off the very next morning, without any attendant, for Swansea. They were not above thirty miles from this town when, despite her every effort, Mrs. Fortescue became too ill to proceed. There was no appearance of a town or village, but the owners of a half-way house, pitying the desolate condition of the travelers, directed the postboy to the village of Llangwillan; which, though out of the direct road and four or five miles distant, was yet the nearest place of shelter. And never in her whole life had Mrs. Fortescue experienced such a blessed sensation of physical relief, as when the benevolent exertions of Mr. Myrvin had installed her in widow Morgan's humble dwelling, and by means of soothing medicine and deep repose in some degree relieved the torture of a burning brain and aching frame. Still she hoped to rally, and obtain strength sufficient to proceed; and bitter was the anguish when the hope was compelled to be relinquished. – With all that followed, our readers are already acquainted, and we will, therefore, at once seek the acquaintance of Mrs. Hamilton's own family, whose "Traits of Character" will, we hope, illustrate other and happier home influences than those of indiscreet indulgence and culpable neglect.

PART II.
TRAITS OF CHARACTER

CHAPTER I.
YOUTHFUL COLLOQUY – INTRODUCING CHARACTER

The curtains were drawn close, the large lamp was on the table, and a cheerful fire blazing in the grate; for though only September, the room was sufficiently large, and the evenings sufficiently chill, for a fire to add greatly to its aspect of true English comfort. There were many admirable pictures suspended on the walls, and well-filled book-cases, desks, and maps, stands of beautiful flowers, and some ingenious toys, all seeming to proclaim the apartment as the especial possession of the young party who were this evening busily engaged at the large round table which occupied the centre of the room. They were only four in number, but what with a large desk piled with books and some most alarming-sized dictionaries, which occupied the elder of the two lads, the embroidery frame of the elder girl, the dissected map before her sister, and two or three books scattered round the younger boy, the table seemed so well filled that Miss Harcourt had quietly ensconced herself in her own private little corner, sufficiently near to take an interest, and sometimes join in the conversation of her youthful charge; but so apart as to be no restraint upon them, and to enable her to pursue her own occupations of either reading, writing, or working uninterruptedly. Could poor Mrs. Fortescue have glanced on the happy group, she certainly might have told her sister, with some show of justice, that there was such an equal distribution of interesting and animated expression (which is the great beauty of youth), that she could not have known the trial of having such a heavy, dull, unhappy child as Ellen. Mrs. Hamilton, indeed, we rather think, would not have considered such a trial, except as it proved ill-health and physical pain in the little sufferer; and, perhaps her increased care and tenderness (for such with her would have been the consequence of the same cause which had created her sister's neglect) might have removed both the depression of constant but impalpable illness, and the expression of heaviness and gloom. Certain it is, that her own Herbert had, with regard to delicate health, given her more real and constant anxiety than Eleanor had ever allowed herself to experience with Ellen; but there was nothing in the boy's peculiarly interesting countenance to denote the physical suffering he very often endured. Care and love had so surrounded his path with blessings, that he was often heard to declare, that he never even wished to be as strong as his brother, or to share his active pleasures, he had so many others equally delightful. Whether it was his physical temperament, inducing a habitude of reflection and studious thought much beyond his years, or whether the unusually gifted mind worked on the frame, or the one combined to form the other, it would be as impossible to decide with regard to him as with hundreds of others like him; but he certainly seemed, not only to his parents, but to their whole household, and to every one who casually associated with him, to have more in him of heaven than earth; as if indeed he were only lent, not given. And often, and often his mother's heart ached with its very intensity of love, causing the unspoken dread – how might she hope to retain one so faultless, and yet so full of every human sympathy and love! The delicate complexion, beautiful color of his cheeks and lips, and large soft, very dark blue eye, with its long black lash, high, arched brow, shaded by glossy chestnut hair, were all so lit up with the rays of mind, that though his face returned again and again to the fancy of those who had only once beheld it, they could scarcely have recalled a single feature, feeling only the almost angelic expression of the whole.

His brother, as full of mirth and mischief, and as noisy and laughter-loving as Herbert was quiet and thoughtful, made his way at once, winning regard by storm, and retaining it by his frank and generous qualities, which made him a favorite with young and old. Even in his hours of study, there

was not the least evidence of reflection or soberness. As a child he had had much to contend with, in the way of passion, pride, and self-will; but his home influence had been such a judicious blending of indulgence and firmness on the part of both his parents, such a persevering inculcation of a strong sense of duty, religious and moral, that at fifteen his difficulties had been all nearly overcome; and, except when occasional acts of thoughtlessness and hasty impulse lured him into error and its painful consequences, he was as happy and as good a lad as even his anxious mother could desire.

The elder of his two sisters resembled him in the bright, dark, flashing eye, the straight intellectual brow, the rich dark brown hair and well-formed mouth; but the expression was so different at present, that it was often difficult to trace the likeness that actually existed. Haughtiness, and but too often ill-temper, threw a shade over a countenance, which when happy and animated was not only attractive then, but gave a fair promise of great beauty in after years. The disposition of Caroline Hamilton was in fact naturally so similar to that of her aunt, Mrs. Fortescue, that Mrs. Hamilton's task with her was not only more difficult and painful in the present than with any of the others, but her dread of the future at times so overpowering, that it required all her husband's influence to calm her, by returning trust in Him, who had promised to answer all who called upon Him, and would bless that mother's toils which were based on, and looked up alone, to His influence on her child, and guidance for herself.

The blue-eyed, fair-haired, graceful, little Emmeline, not only the youngest of the family, but, from her slight figure, delicate, small features, and childish manner, appearing even much younger than she was, was indeed a source of joy and love to all, seeming as if sorrow, except for others, could not approach her. She had indeed much that required a carefully guiding hand, in a yielding weakness of disposition, indolent habit in learning, an unrestrained fancy, and its general accompaniment, over-sensitiveness of feeling, but so easily guided by affection, and with a disposition so sweet and gentle, that a word from her mother was always enough. Mrs. Hamilton had little fears for her, except, indeed, as for the vast capability of individual suffering which such a disposition engendered, in those trials which it was scarcely possible she might hope to pass through life without. There was only one safeguard, one unfailing comfort, for a character like hers, and that was a deep ever-present sense of religion, which untiringly, and yet more by example than by precept, her parents endeavored to instill. Greatly, indeed, would both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton have been astonished, had they been told that the little girl, Ellen Fortescue, who to both was such an enigma, and who was seemingly in all things so utterly unlike their Emmeline, was in natural disposition *exactly the same*; and that the vast difference in present and future character simply arose from the fact, that the early influences of the one were sorrow and neglect, and of the other, happiness and love.

"I wonder whether mamma and papa will really come home to-night;" observed Caroline, after several minutes of unbroken silence, all seemingly so engrossed in their own occupations as to have no inclination to speak. "And if they do, I wish we could know the exact time, I do so hate expecting and being disappointed."

"Then neither wonder nor expect, my sage sister," replied Percy, without, however, raising his head or interrupting his writing; "and I will give you two capital reasons for my advice. Firstly, wonder is the offspring of ignorance, and has two opposite effects on my sex and on yours. With us it is closely connected with philosophy, for we are told in 'wonder all philosophy begins, in wonder it ends, and adoration fills up the interspace;' but with you, poor weak creatures, the only effect it produces is increased curiosity, of which you have naturally a more than adequate supply. Secondly, if you begin to wonder and expect, and speculate as to the ayes and noes of a contingency to-night, you will not cease talking till mamma really does appear; and then good-by to my theme, for to write while your tongue is running, is impossible. So pray, take my advice, on consideration that you have had as good a sermon from me as my reverend brother Herbert can ever hope to give."

"I do not think mamma and papa will be quite satisfied if he do not give us a much better one, even the very first time he attempts it;" rejoined Emmeline, with a very arch look at her brother.

"What, you against me, Miss Emmy! and beginning to talk too. You forget what an important personage I am, during papa's absence especially; and that as such, I am not to be insulted with impunity. So here goes – as a fresh exercise for your patience!" And he mingled all the fixed and unfixed parts of her map in most bewildering confusion, regardless of her laughing entreaty to let them alone.

"You have tried a very bad way to keep me quiet, Percy," continued Caroline; "you must either explain why wonder may not equally have the same good effect on us as on you, or retract your words entirely. You know you would not have expressed such a contemptuous opinion, if mamma had been present."

"My mother is such a very superior person, that when she is present her superiority extends over her whole sex, Caroline; even you are safe, because, as her child, it is to be hoped that one of these days you may be something like her: exactly, I do not expect – two such woman as my mother can not exist."

"As if your opinion were of such importance, Percy," replied Caroline haughtily; "it really is very little consequence to me whether you think me like mamma or not."

"It is to me, though," rejoined Emmeline, earnestly; "I would rather be like mamma than like any body else, and I should like Percy to think I was, because then he would love me still more."

"Bravo, my little Em.; spoken almost as well as I could myself, and, as a reward, as soon as this most annoying piece of erudition is accomplished, I will help you with your map why, you silly little thing, you have put Kamschatka as the terra firma of South America; no doubt that ice and snow would be very welcome there, but how the Americans would stare to see the fur-clad Kamschatkans such near neighbors. That's it, go on, puzzle away till I can help you. And you Miss Caroline, retain your contempt of my opinion, and may you never repent it."

"I thought you told me not to talk, Percy," replied his sister; "and I should like to know who is talking the most, you or I? You will not finish what you are doing before the bell rings for prayers, if you go on in this way."

"That proves how little you know the extent of my powers. I have only to make a clean copy of these learned reflections. Why, in the name of all the gods, were there such provokingly clever people as Seneca, Cicero, Pliny, and a host of others! or, if they must be wise, why did they not burn all the written wisdom, instead of leaving it as a means of torture in the hands of learned pedagogues, yclept schoolmasters, and as a curse on those poor unfortunates whose noddles are not wise enough to contain it."

"I should be very sorry if all the ancient authors were thus annihilated," observed Herbert, looking up from his book with a bright smile. "I should lose a great deal of enjoyment even now, and still more by-and-by, when I know more."

"Ay, but my dear fellow, your head is not quite so like a sieve as mine. Yours receives, contains, digests, and sends forth the matter improved by your own ideas; but as for mine, the matter undoubtedly enters, but runs out again, and only leaves behind that which is too large and gross to pass through. No, no, Bertie, your head and mine are not related even in the twentieth degree of consanguinity, however nearly connected their masters may be. Hush! not a word; I have only one line more; what a wise man that was to be sure, who said 'Otiosum esse quam nihil agere' – better to be idle than doing nothing. Don't shake your head and laugh, Emmy. Vale: never did I say good-by so willingly. Hurrah! mamma and papa may come home when they like now. Cast your eyes over it Herbert; just tell me if it look correct, and then vale books – vale pens – vale desk for to-night!" He placed his writing on his brother's open bunk, threw his dictionary and grammar high in air, and dexterously caught them as they fell, piled up his books, closed his desk, and then, with a comical sigh of relief, flung himself full length on a sofa.

"Now that you have finished your task, Percy, perhaps you will have the kindness to inform us why at this time of the evening you have been writing Latin?" inquired Caroline.

"And open my wound afresh! However, it is quite right that Miss Harcourt should know that, if I am ill from over-study to-morrow, it is her doing."

"Mine!" answered Miss Harcourt, laughing; "pray explain yourself, young man, for I am so perfectly innocent as not even to understand you."

"Did you not this morning give me a message to Lady Helen Grahame?"

"I did; you passed her house on your way to Mr. Howard's."

"Well, then, if you had not given me the message, much as I felt disinclined to pore over musty books and foolscap paper, from the extreme loveliness of the morning, I should have nerved myself to go straight on to the Rectory. Lady Helen was not visible, so I tarried, believing your message of vital importance, and Annie came to me – by-the-by, what a little woman that child is; Emmeline, you are a baby to her. I wonder she condescends to associate with you."

"I do not think she is at all fond of me – Caroline is her friend," replied Emmeline; "but what can Annie have to do with your Latin?"

"A great deal – for she talked and we walked, and time walked too, and by the time I had seen Lady Helen, it was two hours later than I ought to have been with Mr. Howard. On I went, feeling not particularly comfortable; but though it is clear logic that if Miss Harcourt had not sent me to Lady Helen's I should not have been led into temptation, I was magnanimous enough not to mention her, but to lay the whole blame of my non-appearance, on my own disinclination for any study but that of nature. Mr. Howard looked grave and sorrowful – I wish to heaven he was more like any other schoolmaster; that look and tone of his are worse than any rod! – and to redeem my lost time in the morning, I was desired to write a Latin theme on a letter of Pliny's this evening. And now that I have satisfied all your inquiries, please satisfy mine. Is there any chance of mamma's coming home to-night?"

"Every probability," replied Miss Harcourt. "It only depends on your cousin, who is so very delicate, that if she were too fatigued, Mr. Hamilton would remain at Exeter to-night, and proceed here early to-morrow."

"Well, my little cousin, though I have not the pleasure of knowing you, I hope you will be so kind as to let mamma come on to-night, for we have been too long without her, and I long to resign to papa his robes of office, for they sit mightily like borrowed plumes upon me. Mamma writes of Ellen and Edward – I wonder what they are like! Come, Tiny, paint them for me – your fertile fancy generally fills up the shadow of a name."

"I can not, Percy, for I am afraid my pictures would not be agreeable."

"Not agreeable!" repeated Percy and Miss Harcourt together. "Why not?"

Emmeline hesitated, then answered ingenuously, "We are so very, very happy together, that I do not feel quite sure that I am glad my cousins are going to live with us."

"What! are you afraid I shall love Ellen more than you, Emmy?" exclaimed her brother, starting up and sitting on her chair; "do not be alarmed, Tiny; no cousin shall take your place."

"Indeed I am not afraid of that, Percy, dear," she replied, looking so fondly in his face, that he gave her a hearty kiss. "I can not tell why I should feel half sorry that they are coming, but I am quite sure I will do all I can to make them happy."

"You could not do otherwise if you were to try, Tiny. Come, Caroline, what say you? We have all been thinking about them, so we may as well give each other the benefit of our thoughts."

"Suppose I do not feel inclined to do so?"

"Why we must all believe you are ashamed of them," replied Percy quickly, "and if you are, I know who has made you so. I would lay any wager, the whole time you have been with Lady Helen Grahame, since mamma has been away, she has been talking of nothing else – look, look, she is blushing – I am right."

"And if she did," replied Caroline, very much provoked, "she said nothing that I am ashamed of repeating. She knew my aunt before she went to India, and I am sure if her children are like her, they will be no agreeable additions to our family."

"Bravo, Caroline! you really are an apt pupil; Lady Helen's words and manner completely! but you may have one comfort; children are not always like their parents, and if they are as unlike Lady Helen's description of my poor aunt (which by the way she had no right to give, nor you to listen to) as you are at this moment unlike mamma, we shall get on capitally, and need have no fears about them."

"Percy you are intolerably disagreeable!"

"Because I speak the sad, sober truth? Caroline, do pray, get rid of that dawning ill temper, before mamma comes; it will not be a pleasant welcome home."

"I am not ill-tempered, Percy: I suppose I may have my own opinion of Ellen and Edward, as well as all of you," replied his sister angrily.

"But do not let it be an unkind one, without knowing them, dear Caroline," observed Herbert gently; "it is so very difficult to get rid of a prejudice when once it has entered our minds, even when we know and feel that it is a wrong one. I am sure if we only thought how sad it is that they have neither father nor mother to love them, and are coming all among strangers – born in a strange land too – we should find quite enough to think kindly about, and leave all wonder as to what they will be like, till we know them. I dare say we shall often have to bear and forbear, but that we have to do with each other, and it will only be one brother and sister more."

"Brother and sister! I am sure I shall not think of them so, Herbert, however you may. My father might have been a nobleman, and who knows any thing of theirs?"

"Caroline, how can you be so ridiculous!" exclaimed Percy, with a most provoking fit of laughter. "Their father served and died for his king – as our grandfather did; and had he lived might have been offered a title too – and their mother – really I think you are very insulting to mamma: her sister's children I should imagine quite as high in rank as ourselves!"

"And even if they were not – what would it signify?" rejoined Herbert. "Dear Caroline, pray do not talk or think so; it makes me feel so sorry, for I know how wrong it is – we might have been in their place."

"I really can not fancy any thing so utterly impossible," interrupted Caroline, "so you may spare the supposition, Herbert."

"It is no use, Bertie; you must bring the antipodes together, before you and Caroline will think alike," interposed Percy, perceiving with regret the expression of pain on his brother's face, and always ready to guard him either from physical or mental suffering, feeling instinctively that, from his extraordinary mind and vivid sense of duty, he was liable to the latter, from many causes which other natures would pass unnoticed.

Miss Harcourt did not join the conversation. It had always been Mrs. Hamilton's wish that in their intercourse with each other, her children should be as unrestrained as if they had been alone. Had Caroline's sentiments received encouragement, she would have interfered; but the raillery of Percy and the earnestness of Herbert, she knew were more likely to produce an effect than any thing like a rebuke from herself, which would only have caused restraint before her in future. It was through this perfect unrestraint that Mrs. Hamilton had become so thoroughly acquainted with the several characters of her children. That Caroline's sentiments caused her often real pain was true, but it was far better to know them, and endeavor to correct and remove them, by causing education to bear upon the faults they revealed, than to find them concealed from her by the constant fear of words of reproof.

To remove Herbert's unusual seriousness, Percy continued, laughingly —

"Miss Harcourt, what are your thoughts on this momentous subject? It is no use asking Herbert's, we all know them without his telling us; but you are almost the principally concerned of the present party, for Ellen will bring you the trouble of another pupil."

"I shall not regret it, Percy; but only shall rejoice if I can in any way lessen your mother's increased charge. As for what your cousins will be like, I candidly tell you, I have scarcely thought about it. I have no doubt we shall find them strange and shy at first; but we must do all we can to make them feel they are no strangers."

"And now, then, it only remains for the right honorable me to speak; and really Emmy and Herbert and you have told my story, and left me nothing. I do not know whether I am pleased or not, but I am very sorry for them; and it will be capital if this Master Edward turns out a lad of spirit and mischief, and not over-learned or too fond of study – one, in fact, that I can associate with, without feeling such a painful sensation of inferiority as I do when in company with my right reverend brother."

"Dear Percy, do not call me reverend," said Herbert, appealingly: "I feel it almost a mockery now, when I am so very far from being worthy to become a clergyman."

"You are a good fellow, Bertie; and I will not tease you, if I can help it – but really I do not mean it for mockery; you know, or ought to know, that you are better now than half the clergymen who have taken orders, and as much superior to me in goodness as in talent."

"Indeed I know no such thing, Percy; I am not nearly so strong in health as you are, and am therefore, naturally more fond of quiet pleasures: and as for talent, if you were as fond of application as of frolic, you would leave me far behind."

"Wrong, Bertie, quite wrong! but think of yourself as you please, I know what every body thinks of you. Hush! is that the sound of a carriage, or only the wind making love to the old oaks?"

"The wind making love, Percy!" repeated Emmeline, laughing; "I neither hear that, nor the carriage wheels kissing the ground."

"Well done, Tiny! my poetry is beaten hollow; but there – there – I am sure it is a carriage!" and Percy bounded from the table so impetuously as nearly to upset it, flung back the curtain, and looked eagerly from the window.

Herbert closed his book to listen; Emmeline left her nearly-completed map, and joined Percy; Caroline evidently tried to resume serenity, but, too proud to evince it, industriously pursued her work, breaking the thread almost every time that she drew out the needle.

"It is nothing, Percy; how could you disappoint us so?" said Herbert, in a tone of regret.

"My good fellow, you must be deaf – listen! nearer and louder – and, look there, Emmeline, through those trees, don't you see something glimmering? that must be the lamp of the carriage."

"Nonsense, Percy, it is a glowworm."

"A glowworm! why, Em., the thought of seeing mamma has blinded you. What glowworm ever came so steadily forward? No! there is no mistake now. Hurrah, it is the carriage; here Robert, Morris, Ellis, all of you to the hall! to the hall! The carriage is coming down the avenue." And with noisy impatience, the young gentleman ran into the hall, assembled all the servants he had named, and others too, all eager to welcome the travelers; flung wide back the massive door, and he and Herbert both were on the steps several minutes before the carriage came in sight.

CHAPTER II.
THREE ENGLISH HOMES, AND THEIR INMATES

If more than the preceding conversation were needed to reveal the confidence and love with which Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were regarded by their children, the delight, the unrestrained expressions of affection, with which by every one of the young party they were received, would have evinced it still more clearly. Herbert was very speedily on his favorite seat, a low stool at his mother's feet. Emmeline, for that one half hour at least, assumed her still unresigned privilege, as the youngest and tiniest, to quietly slip in her lap; Percy was talking to his father, making Edward perfectly at home, saying many kind words to Ellen, and caressing his mother, all almost at the same moment. Caroline was close to her father, with her arm round his neck; and Miss Harcourt was kindly disrobing Ellen from her many wraps, and making her lie quietly on a sofa near her aunt; who, even in that moment of delightful reunion with her own, had yet time and thought, by a few judicious words, to remove the undefinable, but painful sensation of loneliness, which was creeping over the poor child as she gazed on her bright, happy-looking cousins; and thought if to her own mother Edward's beauty and happiness had made him so much more beloved than herself, what claim could she have on her aunt? Ellen could not have said that such were the thoughts that filled her eyes with tears, and made her heart so heavy; she only knew that much as she had loved her aunt during the journey, her kiss and kind words at that moment made her love her more than ever.

Never had there been a happier meal at Oakwood than the substantial tea which was speedily ready for the travelers. So much was there to hear and tell: Percy's wild sallies; Caroline's animated replies (she had now quite recovered her temper); Herbert's gentle care of Ellen, by whom he had stationed himself (even giving up to her his usual seat by his mother); Emmeline's half shy, half eager, efforts to talk to her cousins; Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton's earnest interest, all combined, long before the meal was concluded, to make Edward feel perfectly at his ease, and very happy, and greatly to remove Ellen's unacknowledged dread. The time passed so quickly, that there was a general start when the prayer bell sounded, though it was nearly two hours after the usual time.

"Are you prepared for to-night, my boy?" Mr. Hamilton asked of Herbert, as they rose to adjourn to the library, where, morning and evening, it had been the custom of the Hamilton family for many generations, to assemble their whole household for family devotion.

"Yes, papa; I was not quite sure whether you would arrive to-night."

"Then I will not resume my office till to-morrow, Herbert, that I may have the gratification of hearing you officiate," replied his father, linking his son's arm in his, and affectionately glancing on the bright blush that rose to the boy's cheek.

There was a peculiar sweetness in Herbert Hamilton's voice, even in speaking; and as he read the service of the lessons for the evening, adding one or two brief explanations when necessary, and more especially when reading, or rather praying, the beautiful petitions appropriated to family worship, there was an earnest solemnity of tone and manner, presenting a strange contrast, yet beautiful, combining with the boyish form and youthful face, on which the lamp, suspended over the reading-desk shed such a soft and holy light. The occasional prayer which was added to the usual evening service, was always chosen by the reader; and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were surprised and affected at the earnestness with which their almost angel boy selected and read over one peculiarly bearing on the events of that evening; the introduction of their orphan relatives, for compassion and blessing on them, and grace for increased kindness and forbearance in their intercourse with one another – Miss Harcourt, his brother and sisters, knew well to what he alluded, and all but one responded with earnestness and truth. Caroline could not enter into Herbert's feelings even at that moment: it was a great effort to prevent a feeling of irritation, believing that he directly pointed at her, and determining that as neither he nor any one else had any right to interfere with her private thoughts, and that they

could do harm to none while confined to her own breast, she resolved not to overcome them, and so could not join with any fervor in the prayer.

To Edward all was strange. While the graces of his body and mind had been most sedulously cultivated, he had never been taught even the public ordinances of religion, much less its inward spirit. His mother had often and often felt a pang of reproach, at thus neglecting that which an inward voice would whisper was most essential; but she was wont to silence the pang by the determined idea, that she was neither worthy nor able to give him such solemn lessons, and that it would come by instinct to him in after years. There was time enough for him to think of such things. He had been now and then to church, but it was a mere form, regarded as a weary duty, from which he escaped whenever he could. The present scene, then, completely bewildered him. He had always fancied himself superior to any of the boys he had associated with; but as he looked at and listened to Herbert, who seemed at most only two years older than himself, he became sensible of a very strange and disagreeable, but a very decided feeling of inferiority: and then, too, it was so incomprehensible the servants all joining them, a class of people whom in India he had been taught so to consider his inferiors, that even to speak with them was a species of degradation; and he was destined to be still more surprised, for before they left the library, he heard his aunt and uncle address them all, and say a few kind words, and make inquiries after their families to each.

To Ellen that evening service recalled some of Mr. Myrvin's instructions, and seemed to help her to realize those new thoughts and feelings, which she had learned, for the first time, in Wales. Her father had, indeed, the last year of his life tried to give her some ideas of religion; but having only so very lately begun to think seriously himself, he felt diffident and uncertain of his own powers, and so left an impression more of awe toward the subject than of love, which to a disposition such as Ellen's was unfortunate.

A very short time sufficed for Percy and Emmeline to introduce their cousins to all the delights and mysteries of their dear old home: and Oakwood Hall was really a place for imagination to revel in. It was a large castelated mansion, fraught with both the associations of the past, and the comforts of the present. The injuries which the original mansion had received during the civil war of Charles I., had, when the family returned at the Restoration, caused much of the old house to be pulled down, and replaced with larger rooms, and greater conveniences for a modern dwelling-house, retaining, however, quite sufficient of the past to throw interest around it.

The wings were still flanked with turrets, which were Percy's and Emmeline's delight; and the many stair-cases, leading into all sorts of nooks and corners – and the small and most uncomfortable rooms, because some of them happened to be hung with tapestry, and had those small narrow windows sunk in deep recesses – were pronounced by both far more enjoyable than the beautiful suite of rooms forming the center of the mansion, and the dwelling of the family. These were only saved from being disagreeably modern – Percy would declare – by their beautiful richly-polished oaken panels, and by the recesses which the large windows still formed, making almost a room by themselves. The hall, too, with its superb sweep of staircase and broad carved oaken balustrade, leading to a gallery above, which opened on the several sleeping apartments, and thus permitting the full height of the mansion, from base to roof, to be visible from the hall. Tho doors visible in the gallery opened mostly on dressing-rooms, or private sitting-rooms, which led to the large, airy sleeping-rooms, to which the servants had access by back stair-cases leading from their hall; and so leaving the oaken staircase and gallery entirely to the use of the family, and of many a game of noisy play had that gallery been the scene. There had been a beautiful little chapel adjoining the mansion, but it was mercilessly burned to the ground by the infatuated Puritans, and never restored; the venerable old church of the village henceforth serving the family of the hall.

Situated on the banks of the Dart, whose serpentine windings gave it the appearance of a succession of most lovely lakes, Nature had been so lavish of her beauties in the garden and park, especially in the magnificent growth of the superb oaks, from which the estate took its name, that

it was not much wonder Mrs. Hamilton, always an intense lover of nature, should have become so attached to her home, as never to feel the least inclination to leave it. She did not wish her girls to visit London till a few months before Caroline was old enough to be introduced, to give them then finishing masters; and to that time she of course always looked, as demanding from her part of the year to be spent in town. The career of Eleanor, the recollections of the frivolity and error into which her own early youth had been thrown, had given her not only a distaste, but an actual dread of London for her girls, till such principles and associations had been instilled which would enable them to pass through the ordeal of successive seasons without any change of character or feeling. Her sons, since their tenth year, had more than once accompanied their father to the metropolis; but though these visits were always sources of enjoyment, especially to Percy, they never failed to return with unabated affection to their home, and to declare there was no place in England like it.

Mr. Hamilton, though in neither profession nor business, was far from being an idle man. His own estate was sufficiently large, and contained a sufficient number of dependents, for whose mortal and immortal welfare he was responsible, to give him much employment; and in addition to this, the home interests and various aspects of his country were so strongly entwined with his very being – that, though always refusing to enter Parliament, he was the prompter and encourager of many a political movement, having for its object amelioration of the poor, and improvement of the whole social system; closely connected with which, as he was, they gave him neither public fame nor private emolument. He acted in all things from the same single-hearted integrity and high honor which caused him to refuse the title proffered to his father. Her husband's connection with many celebrated characters, and her own correspondence, and occasional visits from her friends to Oakwood, prevented Mrs. Hamilton's interest from too complete concentration in her home, as, in her first retirement, many feared. She had, too, some friends near her, whose society gave her both pleasure and interest; and many acquaintances who would have visited more than she felt any inclination for, had she not had the happy power of quietly pursuing her own path, and yet conciliating all.

The Rev. William Howard had accepted Mr. Hamilton's eagerly-proffered invitation to become his rector, and undertake the education of his boys, from very peculiar circumstances. He had been minister of a favorite church in one of the southern towns, and master of an establishment for youths of high rank, in both which capacities he had given universal satisfaction. The reprehensible conduct of some of his pupils, carried on at first so secretly as to elude his knowledge, at length became so notorious as to demand examination. He had at first refused all credence, but when proved, by the confused replies of all, and half confession of some, he briefly and emphatically laid before them the enormity of their conduct, and declared that, as confidence was entirely broken between them, he would resign the honor of their education, refusing to admit them any longer as members of his establishment. In vain the young men implored him to spare them the disgrace of such an expulsion; he was inexorable.

This conduct, in itself so upright, was painted by the smarting offenders in such colors, that Mr. Howard gradually but surely found his school abandoned, and himself so misrepresented, that a spirit less self-possessed and secure in its own integrity must have sunk beneath it. But he had some true friends, and none more active and earnest than Mr. Hamilton. A very brief residence at Oakwood Rectory removed even the recollection of the injustice he had experienced; and he himself, as pastor and friend, proved a treasure to high and low. Ten other youths, sons of the neighboring gentry, became his pupils, their fathers gladly following in Mr. Hamilton's lead.

About a mile and a half across the park was Moorlands, the residence of Lady Helen Grahame, whose name had been so often mentioned by the young Hamiltons. Her husband Montrose Grahame, had been Arthur Hamilton's earliest friend, at home, at college, and in manhood. Lady Helen the youngest daughter of a marquis, had been intimate with Emmeline and Eleanor Manvers from childhood, and had always admired and wished to resemble the former, but always failed, she believed,

from being constituted so differently; others might have thought from her utter want of energy and mental strength. The marriage at first appeared likely to be a happy one, but it was too soon proved the contrary. Grahame was a man of strict, perhaps severe principles; his wife, though she never did any thing morally wrong, scarcely knew the meaning of the word. Provoked with himself for his want of discrimination, in imagining Lady Helen so different to the being she really was; more than once discovering she did not speak the exact truth, or act with the steady uprightness he demanded, his manner became almost austere; and, in consequence, becoming more and more afraid of him, Lady Helen sunk lower and lower in his esteem.

Two girls and a boy were the fruits of this union. Lady Helen had made a great many excellent resolutions with regard to their rearing and education, which she eagerly confided to Mrs. Hamilton, but when the time of trial came, weakness and false indulgence so predominated, that Grahame, to counteract these evil influences, adopted a contrary extreme, and, by a system of constant reserve and severity, became an object of as much terror to his children as he was to his wife. But he did not pursue this conduct without pain, and never did he visit Oakwood without bitter regret that his home was not the same.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had often tried to alter the aspect of affairs at Moorlands; the former, by entreating Grahame to be less severe; the latter, by urging Lady Helen to a firmer mode of conduct. But those friendly efforts were as yet entirely useless. Grahame became a member of Parliament, which took his family to London for five or six months in the year – a particularly agreeable change to Lady Helen, who then associated with her sisters, whose families were conducted much on the same fashion as her own, but unfortunately only increasing the discomfort of Moorlands when they returned to it. And this was the more to be regretted, from the fact that both Grahame and his wife were full of good intentions, and had the one been more yielding, and the other more firm, there might have been no small share of happiness for both.

But heavy as Lady Helen thought her trial in the want of her husband's confidence and love, and which she had greatly brought upon herself, it was light in comparison with that of Mrs. Greville, another near neighbor and valued friend of Mrs. Hamilton. She had loved and married a man whose winning manners and appearance, and an ever-varying flow of intelligent conversation, had completely concealed, till too late, his real character. Left at a very early age his own master, with a capital estate and large fortune; educated at a very large public school, at which he learned literally nothing but vice, and how effectually to conceal it; courted and flattered wherever he went, he became vain, overbearing, and extravagant; with no pursuit but that of gambling in all its varieties, even hunting and shooting could not be thoroughly enjoyed without some large bets depending on the day's sport: his thoughts from boyhood were so completely centered in self, that he had affection for nothing else. He had indeed fancied he loved Jessie Summers, when he had so successfully wooed her; but the illusion was speedily dispelled, and repeatedly he cursed his folly for plaguing himself with a wife. His first child, too, was a girl and that annoyed him still more; and when, the next year, a boy was granted, he certainly rejoiced, but it was such rejoicing as to fill his wife's heart with an agony of dread; for he swore he would make his boy as jovial a spirit as himself, and that her namby-pamby ideas should have nothing to do with him.

It was indeed a difficult and painful task Mrs. Greville had to perform. Though her husband would spend weeks and even months at a time away, the impressions she so earnestly and prayerfully sought to instill into her son's heart were, or appeared to be, completely destroyed by her husband's interference the whole time of his sojourn at his home. It was his pleasure to thwart her every plan, laugh at her fine notions, make a mockery of all that was good, and holy, and self denying; and all in the presence of his children; succeeding in making Alfred frequently guilty of disrespect and unkindness, but failing entirely with Mary, who, though of such a fragile frame and gentle spirit that her father's visits almost always caused her a fit of illness, so idolized her suffering but never murmuring mother, that she only redoubled her attention and respect whenever she saw her more

tried than usual. This conduct, of course, only made her an object, equally with her mother, of her father's sneers and taunts, but she bore it with the true spirit of a martyr. Suffering was doing for her what Herbert Hamilton was naturally – making her spiritual and thoughtful far beyond her years, and drawing her and Herbert together with such a bond of mutual reverence and sympathy, that to talk to him was her greatest consolation, and to endeavor to lessen her sorrows one of his dearest pleasures.

Alfred was not naturally an evil-disposed boy, and when his father was from home seldom failed either in respect or obedience. Mrs. Greville possessed the rather rare combination of extreme submissiveness with a natural dignity and firmness, which enabled her to retain the reverence and sympathy of her friends and her household, without once stooping to receive their pity. It was generally supposed by those who did not know her personally, that she was one of those too soft and self-denying characters who bring on themselves the evils they deplore; but this in Mrs. Greville's case was a very great mistake. It was impossible to associate even casually with her, without feeling intuitively that she suffered deeply, but the emotion such conviction called was respect alone.

As anxious and as earnest a parent as Mrs. Hamilton herself, Mrs. Greville failed not to inculcate the good in both her children, and still more forcibly, when they became old enough to observe, by example than by precept. But with Alfred there must have been an utter hopelessness as to the fruit of her anxious labors, had she not possessed that clinging, single-hearted trust which taught her that no difficulty should deter from a simple duty, and that nothing was too hard for Him who – if He saw that she shrunk not from the charge and responsibility which, in permitting her to become a mother, he had given, and did all she could to counteract those evil influences, for the removal of which she had no power – would, in His own good time, reward, if not on earth – with Him in Heaven; and so untiringly, as unmurmuringly, she struggled on.

CHAPTER III.
HOME SCENE. – VISITORS. – CHILDISH MEDITATIONS

The part of the day which to Emmeline Hamilton was the happiest of all, was that in which she and Caroline, and now, of course, Ellen, were with their mother alone. Not that she particularly liked the very quiet employment of plain work, which was then their usual occupation, but that she could talk without the least restraint, either about her lessons, or her pleasures, or her thoughts, and the stories or histories she had been reading, and if she thought wrong no one ever corrected her so delightfully so impressively as "mamma." The mornings, from three to four hours, according as their age and studies required, were always under the control of Miss Harcourt, with such visits from Mrs. Hamilton as gave an increased interest to exertion, and such interruption only as permitted their practice and lessons in music, which three times a week Mrs. Hamilton had as yet herself bestowed. The dressing-bell always rung at half-past three, and dinner was at four, to allow the lads return from Mr. Howard's, whose daily lessons commenced at nine and concluded at three. From half-past one to half-past three, in the very short days, was devoted to recreation, walking, or driving, and in the longer, to Emmeline's favorite time – an hour at work with her mother, and the remainder to the preparation of lessons and exercises for the next day, which in the winter occupied from five to six. From six to seven in the same generally gloomy season they read aloud some entertaining book with their mother and Miss Harcourt, and seven was the delightful hour of a general reunion at tea, and signal for such recreation till nine as they felt inclined for; their brothers having been employed for Mr. Howard part of the time between dinner and tea, with sufficient earnestness to enjoy the rest and recreation afterward, quite as buoyantly and gladly as their sisters; and many a merry dance enlivened their winter evenings.

In the summer, of course, this daily routine was frequently varied by most delightful excursions in the country. Mrs. Hamilton earnestly longing to implant a love of Nature and all its fresh, pure associations in the minds of her children while yet young, knowing that once obtained, the pleasures of the world would be far less likely to obtain too powerful dominion. That which the world often terms romance, she felt to be a high, pure sense of poetry in the Universe and in Man, which she was quite as anxious to instill as many mothers to root out. She did not believe that to cultivate the spiritual needed the banishment of the matter of fact; but she believed, that to infuse the latter with the former would be their best and surest preventive against all that was low and mean; their best help in the realization of a constant unfailing piety. For the same reason she cultivated a taste for the beautiful, not only in her girls, but in her boys – and beauty, not in arts and nature alone, but in character. She did not allude to beauty of merely the high and striking kind, but to the lowly virtues, struggles, faith, and heroism in the poor – their forbearance and kindness to one another – marking something to admire, even in the most rugged and surly, that at first sight would seem so little worthy of notice. It was gradually, and almost unconsciously, to accustom her daughters to such a train of thought and sentiment, that she so particularly laid aside one part of the day to have them with her alone; ostensibly, it was to give part of their day to working for the many poor, to whom gifts of ready-made clothing are sometimes much more valuable than money; but the *education* of that one hour she knew might, for the right cultivation of the heart, do more than the mere *teaching* of five or six, and that education, much as she loved and valued Miss Harcourt, she had from the first resolved should come from her alone.

To Emmeline this mode of life was so happy, she could not imagine any thing happier. But Caroline often and often envied her great friend Annie Grahame, and believed that occasional visits to London would make her much happier than remaining all the year round at Oakwood, and only with her own family. She knew the expression of such sentiments would meet no sympathy at home, and certainly not obtain their gratification, so she tried to check them, except when in company with

Annie and Lady Helen; but her mother knew them, and, from the discontent and unhappiness they so often engendered in her child, caused her both pain and uneasiness. But she did not waver in her plans, because only in Emmeline they seemed to succeed: nor did she, as perhaps some over-scrupulous mothers would have done, check Caroline's association with Miss Grahame. She knew that those principles must be indeed of little worth, which could only actuate in retirement, and when free from temptation. That to prevent intimacy with all, except with those of whom she exactly approved, would be impossible, if she ever meant her daughters to enter the world; and therefore she endeavored so to obtain their unrestrained confidence and affection, as to be regarded, both now and when they were young women, as their first, best, and truest friend; and that end obtained, intimacies with their young companions, however varied their character, she felt would do no permanent harm.

"Dear, dear mamma!" exclaimed Emmeline, one morning about a week after her parents' return, and dropping her work to speak more eagerly, "you can not think how delightful it does seem to have you at home again; I missed this hour of the day so very much; I did not know how much I loved it when I always had it, but when you were away, every time the hour came I missed you, and longed for you so much that – I am afraid you will think me very silly – I could not help crying."

"Why, how Percy must have laughed at you, Emmy!"

"Indeed, he did not, mamma; I think he felt half inclined to cry too, the first day or two that he came home from Mr. Howard's, and could not rush up into your dressing-room, as he always does. He said it was a very different thing for you to go from home, than for him to go to London, and he did not like it at all; nor Herbert, nor Caroline, neither; though they did not say so much about it."

"I did not miss mamma after the first, quite so much as you did, Emmeline," replied her sister, ingenuously; "because when Lady Helen returned from London, she made me go there so often, and as I know you never refuse me that indulgence, mamma, and Miss Harcourt did not object, I was glad to do so."

"I have only one objection my dear Caroline, and I think you know what that is."

"That whenever I am with Annie I think and wish more about going to London, mamma; I am afraid I do; but indeed I try to think that you must know what is better for me, and try not to be discontented, though sometimes I know I do not succeed," and her eyes filled with tears.

"I am satisfied that you endeavor to trust my experience, my love; I am quite aware of all the difficulties you have to encounter in doing so, and therefore your most trifling conquest of self is a great source of comfort to me. I myself should feel that the pain of increased discontent, and so of course increased difficulty in conquering its constant accompaniment, ill temper, would more than balance the pleasure of Annie's society, and so not indulge in the one so often at the expense of the other; but of that you are yourself the best judge, and you know in such a case I always permit you to be a free agent. But what has become of Mary, Emmeline? I begged Mrs. Greville to let you be as much together as possible during my absence; did not her society afford you some pleasure?"

"Oh, yes, mamma, a great deal; but unfortunately Mr. Greville was at home almost all the time you were away, and poor Mary could not often leave her mother, and I don't feel as if it were quite right for me to go so often there, when he is at home. I am sure Mrs. Greville and Mary must both feel still more uncomfortable when any one is there to see how unkind he is, and hear the cruel things he says. Oh, how I do wish I could make poor Mary more happy!"

"She would tell you that affection is a great comfort to her, Emmy."

"Yours and Herbert's may be, mamma, because you are both so much better and wiser than I am; but I can do so little, so very little."

"You can be and are a great source of interest to her, my dear; and when we wish very much to make another person happy, you may be quite sure that the most trifling act gives pleasure; but Ellen looks very much as if she would like to know who this Mary is, that is so tried – suppose you tell her."

Emmeline eagerly obeyed, painting her friend in such glowing colors, that Ellen felt, however tried she might be, a person so good and holy must be happy, notwithstanding; besides, to be loved

so by Mrs. Hamilton and Herbert, discovered to her mind such superior qualities, that she almost wondered how Emmeline could speak of her so familiarly, and think of her as her own particular friend. But the conversation on her, and then on other topics, so interested her, that she was almost as sorry as her cousin, when it was interrupted by a visit from Lady Helen Grahame and her daughter.

"Returned at length, dearest Emmeline!" was the former's lively greeting, and evincing far more warmth of manner than was usual to her. "Do you know, the banks of the Dart have seemed so desolate without their guardian spirit, that the very flowers have hung their heads, and the trees are withered?"

"I rather think the change of season, and not my absence, has been the cause of these melancholy facts," replied Mrs. Hamilton, in the same tone; "but even London will not change your kind thoughts for me, Helen."

"Nay, I must follow the example of my neighbors, rich and poor, whom you may appeal to as to the fact of your absence causing terrible lamentation; ask this naughty little girl too, who scarcely ever came to see me, because she had so many things to do to please mamma; but forgive me," she added, more seriously, as she glanced on the deep mourning of her friend, and indeed of all the group; "what a cold, heartless being you must believe me to run on in this way, when there has been so sad a cause for your absence – poor Eleanor!"

"I trust we may say happy Eleanor, my dear Helen; mercy has indeed been shown to her and to me – but we will talk of this another time. Annie," she continued, addressing Miss Grahame, who was already deep in conversation with Caroline, "I have another little girl to introduce to you, whom I hope you will be as friendly with as with Caroline and Emmeline."

The young lady turned round at the words, but her sole notice of Ellen, who had come timidly forward, was a haughty stare, a fashionable courtesy, and a few unintelligible words, which caused Emmeline to feel so indignant, that it was with difficulty she kept silence, and made Ellen so uncomfortable, that it was with even more than her usual shyness, she received Lady Helen's proffered hand.

"And why not introduce her to me too, Emmeline? I knew your mother when she was little older than you are, my dear; so I hope you will learn to know and to like me as fast as you can."

Ellen might have found courage to reply for there was an interest attached to all who had known her mother; but as she raised her eyes to speak, she again encountered Annie's rude and disagreeable stare, and the words died on her lips. The young party were, however, soon all in the garden, for Mrs. Hamilton never made any scruple in dismissing her children, when she wished to speak on subjects she did not choose them to hear; and she was anxious so to relate Eleanor's illness and change of sentiment, as to remove the impressions which her early career had left on Lady Helen's memory.

"It must be nearly time for my brothers to be returning; shall we go and look for them, Ellen? I dare say Edward will have a great deal to tell you," was Emmeline's affectionate address, as Annie and Caroline turned in a different direction; and generally judging others by herself, she thought that being Edward's first day of regular attendance on Mr. Howard, Ellen would like to know all about it as soon as possible, and they proceeded accordingly.

"Well, how do you like your new cousins, what are they like?" inquired Miss Grahame, the moment she had Caroline entirely to herself.

"Edward I think I may like very much; he is so affectionate and so good-natured, and as merry and full of fun as Percy. And he is so handsome, Annie, I think even you would admire him."

"Then altogether he must be very unlike his sister. I never saw a girl so plain, and I am sure she looks as if no fun could exist near her."

"Mamma says we must remember how short a time has elapsed since poor aunt's death, and also that Ellen is not strong enough to be very lively."

"That does not at all account for her looking cross. I am sure she has nothing to be ill-tempered about; there are few girls in her situation who would have made one of your family, as she will be. Mamma said it would be a very anxious thing for Mrs. Hamilton."

"Mamma did seem to think so," replied Caroline, thoughtfully; "but I fancy you are wrong, Annie. Ellen has not yet given any proof of ill-temper."

"She has had no time, my dear; but no one can be deceived by such a face. My cousin, Lady Adelaide Maldon, told me she could always judge people by their faces. But do you like her as well as her brother, Caroline?"

"Ask me that question this day month, my dear Annie; I can not answer you now, for I really do not know. I certainly do not see any thing particularly striking in her yet – I do not understand her; she is so dreadfully shy or timid, and so very inanimate, one can not tell whether she is pleased or sorry. To tell you the real truth, I am afraid I shall not like her."

"Why afraid?"

"Because mamma would be so sorry were she to know it. I know she wishes us to love one another."

"Nonsense, Caroline. Mrs. Hamilton can not be so unreasonable as to expect you to love every body alike."

"Mamma is never unreasonable," replied Caroline, with spirit; "and I do wish, Annie, you would treat Ellen exactly as you do us."

"Indeed, I shall not. What is Colonel Fortescue's daughter to me? Now don't be angry, Caroline, you and I are too old friends to quarrel for nothing: I shall certainly hate Ellen altogether, if she is to be a subject of dispute. Come, look kind again;" and the caress with which she concluded restored Caroline's serenity, and other subjects were discussed between them.

Annie Grahame was a few months younger than Caroline Hamilton (who was nearly thirteen,) but from having been emancipated from the nursery and school-room at a very early age, and made her mother's companion and confidant in all her home vexations – very pretty and engaging – she was very much noticed, and her visits to her titled relations in London, by causing her to imitate their fashionable manners, terms of speech, thoughts on dress, and rank, &c., made her a woman many years before her time; and though to Lady Helen's family and to Lady Helen herself this made her still more agreeable, from becoming so very companionable; to Mrs. Hamilton, and to all, in fact, who loved childhood for childhood's sake, it was a source of real regret, as banishing all the freshness and artlessness and warmth which ought to have been the characteristics of her age. Her father was the only one of her own family who did not admire – and so tried to check – this assumption of fine ladyism, on the part of his daughter; but it was not likely he could succeed, and he only estranged from him the affections of his child.

Annie Grahame had a great many fashionable acquaintances in London, but she still regarded Caroline Hamilton as her favorite friend. Why, she could not exactly tell, except that it was so very, very delightful to have some one in the country to whom she could dilate on all the pleasures of London, display her new dresses, new music, drawings, work, &c. (not however considering it at all necessary to mention that her work and drawings were only *half* her own, and Caroline was much too truthful herself to imagine it, and her mother too anxious to retain that guileless simplicity to enlighten her, as she was well capable of doing). Annie's quick eye discovered that at such times Caroline certainly envied her, and she imagined she must be a person of infinite consequence to excite such a feeling, and this was such a pleasant sensation, that she sought Caroline as much as possible during their stay at Moorlands. Of Mrs. Hamilton, indeed, she stood in such uncomfortable awe, though that lady never addressed her except in kindness, that as she grew older, it actually became dislike; but this only increased her intimacy with Caroline, whom she had determined should be as unlike her mother as possible; and as this friendship was the only one of his daughter's sentiments which gave Mr. Grahame unmixed satisfaction, he encouraged it by bringing them together as often as he could.

Emmeline and Ellen, meanwhile, had pursued their walk in silence, both engrossed with their own thoughts (for that children of eleven years, indeed, of any age, do not think, because when asked what they are thinking about, their answer is invariably "Nothing," is one of those mistaken notions which modern education is, we hope, exploding). Emmeline was so indignant with Annie that she felt more sure than ever that she did not and could never like her. "She is always talking of things mamma says are of such little consequence, and is so proud and contemptuous, and I am afraid she does not always tell the exact truth. I wonder if it is wrong to feel so toward her; one day when I am quite alone with mamma, I will ask her," was the tenor of her meditations.

But Ellen, though Annie's greeting had caused her to shrink still more into herself, and so produced pain, was not thinking only of her. The whole of that hour's intimate association with Mrs. Hamilton had puzzled her; she had doted on her father – she was sure she loved her aunt almost as dearly, but could she ever have given words to that affection as Emmeline had done, and as Edward always did? and so, perhaps, after all, she did not feel as they did, though the wish was so strong to caress her aunt, and sit as close and lovingly by her as Herbert and Emmeline and even Edward did, that its very indulgence seemed to give her pain. Then Caroline's confession too – could she ever have had courage to confess the indulgence of a feeling which she knew to be wrong – and all her aunt had said both to Caroline and Emmeline so fastened on her mind as to make her head ache, and she quite started when a loud shout sounded near them.

"It is only Percy," said Emmeline laughing; "I dare say he and Edward are running a race or having some sort of fun." And so they were; laughing, shouting, panting, they came full speed, darting in and out the trees in every variety of mathematical figures their ingenuity could frame; but as soon as Percy's restless eye discovered Emmeline, he directed his course toward her, exclaiming, "Holla, Edward, stop running for to-day: come here, and let us be sober. Why, Tiny, what brings you and Ellen out now? It is not your usual time."

"Ellen, Ellen, I have had such a happy day; I like Mr. Howard more than ever (he had only seen him twice before.) I am sure I shall get on with him, and he will teach me astronomy and navigation too, so I shall not be ashamed to go to sea next year; I shall learn so much first."

"Let me walk home with you, dear Edward, and do tell me every thing you have done and are going to do," asked Ellen, clinging to his arm, and looking in his face with such an expression that there was little trace of ill-temper. Emmeline meanwhile had made her brother a party in her indignation against Annie's pride, which he termed insolence, vowing he would make her feel it. And as they came in sight of her and Caroline, he called out to Ellen, who, all her timidity returning, tried to draw Edward into another walk.

"Not there, not there, Miss Nelly, you are not going to cut me in that fashion. You have talked quite enough to Edward and must now come to me. Edward, there's mamma; off with you to tell your tale of delight to her." And Edward did not wait a second bidding, leaving Ellen to Percy, who threw his arm affectionately round her, and began talking to her so amusingly that she could not help laughing, and so devoted did he appear to her, that he had only time to greet Miss Grahame, with a very marked and polite bow, and passed on. He wished to provoke, and he succeeded, for Annie was always particularly pleased when the handsome, spirited Percy Hamilton paid her any attention, and that he should be so devoted to his little pale, disagreeable-looking cousin, as not even to give her a word, annoyed her as much as he desired.

Edward's hasty progress to his aunt was slightly checked at seeing a stranger with her, but when he was introduced he made his bow with so much of his mother's grace, that, combined with the extraordinary likeness, and her feelings already interested in Mrs. Hamilton's account of her sister's sufferings and death, Lady Helen could not for the moment speak except to exclaim, "Oh, how that look recalls the past! I could almost fancy poor Eleanor herself stood before me."

"Did you – did you know my mother madam?" said Edward, with so much eagerness that his cheeks crimsoned and his voice trembled. – "Were you one of mamma's" – but he could not finish the sentence, and leaning his head against his aunt, he burst into tears.

"Poor child!" said Lady Helen pityingly, as Mrs. Hamilton pressed him closer to her, and stooped down to kiss his forehead without speaking; and that sudden and unexpected display of feeling contrasted with Ellen's painful shyness, stamped at once and indelibly Lady Helen's opinion of the two orphans.

CHAPTER IV.
VARIETIES

A few days more brought Mrs. Greville and Mary to welcome their friends, and Ellen had again the pain of being introduced to strangers; but this time it was only the pain of her own shyness, for could she have overcome that feeling, she might have felt even pleasure. As it was, the gentle voice and manner with which Mrs. Greville addressed her, and the timid yet expressive glance of Mary, told of such sympathy and kindness, that she felt attracted toward both, and could quite enter into Emmeline's enthusiastic admiration of her friend; not, however, believing it possible that she herself could ever be worthy to win Mary's regard. Taught from such a very early age to believe herself so far inferior to Edward, such characters as Herbert and Mary appeared to her so exalted, that it was quite impossible they could ever think of her; the constant little acts of unobtrusive kindness that her cousin showed her, she attributed to his extreme goodness, not from the most trifling merit in herself. She did indeed love him very dearly, the best next to her aunt; but so much of reverence mingled with it, that she was almost more reserved with him than with the others. But Herbert was naturally reserved himself in words, and so he did not think any thing about it, except to wish and endeavor to make his little cousin happier than she seemed.

When contrasting Mary Greville with Annie Grahame, as she was rather fond of doing, Emmeline became so afraid she was disliking the latter more than she ought to do, that she never rested till she made an opportunity to confess all her feelings to her mother, and beg her to tell her if they were very wrong, and if she ought to like her.

"I am not so unconscionable as to expect you to like every one with whom you associate, my dear little girl," replied her mother, fondly, for there was something in Emmeline's guileless confidence irresistibly claiming love. "All we have to do when we find nothing that exactly sympathizes with our own feelings, or our own ideas of right and wrong, is to try and find out some reason for their being so different; some circumstance that may have exposed them to greater temptations and trials, for you know I have often told you pleasure and amusements, if too much indulged in, are a much greater trial to some than sorrow and pain. Now Annie has had a great many more temptations of this kind than you or Mary, and we can not expect one so very young entirely to resist them."

"Do you mean, mamma, her going out so much in London?"

"Yes, love; she is very much noticed, and so perhaps thinks a little more of appearance and dress and pleasure than is quite necessary."

"But Lady Helen need not take her out so much, if she did not like. Do you think she is quite right to do so?" asked Emmeline, very thoughtfully.

"We must never pronounce judgment on other people's actions, my little girl. I think it better not to interrupt your present quiet and I hope happy life, and therefore I do not take you or Caroline to London; but Mr. Grahame is obliged to be there for several months, and Lady Helen very naturally would not like to be separated either from him or her children. And then she has such a large family, and Annie so many young relations, that you see Lady Helen could not keep her children quite as free from temptation as I do mine, and we should be more sorry for Annie than blame her individually, however we may not like her faults. Do you understand me, my dear?"

"Oh, yes, mamma, and I am so glad I took courage to tell you all I felt. I am afraid I have encouraged many unkind thoughts about her, and I am quite sorry now, for I see she can not help them as much as I thought she could. I do not think I could ever make her my friend, but I will try very much not to dislike and avoid her."

"And that is all that is required of you, my love. When I tell you that our Father in Heaven commands us to love one another, and to avoid all unkindness in thought and deed, I do not mean that He desires us to love all alike, because He knew it would be neither for our happiness nor good

that it should be so, but only to prevent the too great influence of prejudice and dislike. We might think such feelings can do no harm, because only confined to our own minds, but they would be sure gradually to lead us to taking pleasure in listening to their dispraise, and joining in it, and to seeing and talking only of their faults, forgetting that if we had been circumstanced exactly as they are, we might have been just the same: and this is the feeling David condemns in one of the Psalms we read this morning. Are you tired of listening to me, dearest, or shall we read it over again together?"

Emmeline's only answer was to run eagerly for her little Bible, and with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes listen to her mother, as she turned to the fifteenth Psalm, and reading it through, particularly pointed out the third verse, and so explained it, as easily and happily to satisfy her child as to the Divine authority for all that she had said, and to stamp them still more forcibly on her memory.

"And now I do not mean to talk to you any more, my darling," she said, kissing the little earnest face upturned to hers. "You have heard quite enough to think about, and I am sure you will not forget it, so go and play; Ellen must be wondering what has become of you." And again full of glee, the happy child bounded away, exclaiming, as she did so, "Poor Annie, I am glad I am not exposed to such temptations, for I am sure I should not be able to resist them either."

But though any one who had seen her the next half hour might have fancied that a serious thought or sober task could not approach her, neither the conversation nor the Psalm was forgotten; with Herbert's explanatory assistance, she not only found the Psalm, but committed it to memory; and the second Sunday after her conversation with her mother, repeated it so correctly and prettily to her father, as to give her the delight of his caressing approbation. Learning correctly by rote was always her greatest trial, for her vivid fancy and very versatile powers occasioned her actual lessons to be considered such drudgery, as to require a great effort on her part to retain them. The sense, indeed, if she understood it, she learned quickly enough; but she preferred her own language to any one's else, and Mrs. Hamilton had some difficulty in making her understand that in time of study she required *correctness*, and not fancy; and that the attention which was necessary to conquer the words as well as the sense of the lesson, was much more important and valuable, however disagreeable it might seem, than the facility of changing the language to something prettier than the original.

When, therefore, as in the present case, she voluntarily undertook, and conquered really a difficult task for a little lively girl, her parents had no scruple in giving the only reward she cared for – their approbation. It was in the bestowal of praise Mrs. Hamilton was compelled to be almost painfully guarded. She found that the least expression of unusual approbation caused Caroline to relax in her efforts, thinking she had done quite enough, and perniciously increasing her already too exalted ideas of herself. While to Emmeline it was the most powerful incentive to a continuance in improvement, and determined conquest of her faults. There was constantly a dread on the mother's heart, that Caroline would one day accuse her of partiality, from the different measure of her approbation which she was compelled to bestow; and yet painful as it was to persevere under such an impression, the future welfare of both was too precious to be risked for the gratification of the present.

She was watching with delight Emmeline's unrestrained enjoyment of her father's caresses and lively conversation, in which Percy as usual joined – for Tiny, as he chose to call her, was his especial pet and plaything – when she was startled by a low and evidently suppressed sob near her; Ellen was bending over a book of Bible-stories which Herbert had lent her, and her long ringlets completely concealed her face; Miss Harcourt and Caroline both looked up surprised, but a rapid sign from Mrs. Hamilton prevented their making any remark. Herbert fixed his eyes pityingly on his little cousin as if wishing but not liking to address her. Edward was the only one of the party who moved. He was busily engaged in examining a large Noah's ark, and speculating as to its resemblance to a ship, and its powers of floating, but after a few minutes' apparent thought he left it, and sitting down on Ellen's chair, put his arm round her, and begged her to find a picture of Noah's ark, and see if it were at all like the toy. Cheered by his affection, she conquered with a strong effort the choking in her throat, and turned to the page, and tried to sympathize in his wonder if it really were like the vessel

in which Noah was saved, and where he could have put all the animals. Mrs. Hamilton joined them, and without taking more notice of Ellen's very pale cheeks and heavy eyes, than gently to put back the thick tresses that seemed to annoy her by their weight, gave them so much interesting information on the subject, and so delighted Edward with allowing him to drag down several books from the library to find out all they said about it, that two hours slipped away quite unconsciously; and Ellen's very painful feeling had been so soothed, that she could smile, and join Emmeline in making all the animals walk in grand procession to their temporary dwelling.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.