Cooper James Fenimore

Tales for Fifteen

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Содержание

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INTRODUCTION

On 1 February 1823 Charles Wiley published in New York *The Pioneers*, a new book by the author of *The Spy*; by noon he had sold 3,500 copies – a record-making sale by the bookselling standards of the time. On 26 June, almost five months later, Wiley quietly offered, as we know from a notice in The Patriot, a New York newspaper, "*Tales for Fifteen, or Imagination and Heart*, an original work in one volume, by Jane Morgan, price 75c." The actual author was the author of *The Spy*; and the two stories, "Imagination" and "Heart," were obviously imitations of Mrs. Amelia Opie's popular moral tales, published, as the paper cover noted, when *The Spy* was in its fourth edition, *The Pioneers* in its third, and *The Pilot* in press. The sale was so small that only four copies are known to be extant. Why, one may ask, did James Cooper, who was in 1823 a writer of national and international reputation, publish this volume of imitative stories for adolescent girls, even though his identity was carefully concealed?

According to Cooper's own account, *Tales for Fifteen* was written and given to Charles Wiley as a gesture of friendship to help the publisher out of financial difficulties. This explanation was echoed by the novelist's daughter Susan in a letter reprinted from the Cooperstown *Freeman's Journal* in *The Critic* on 12 October 1889. It is true that Wiley was having financial troubles in 1823, and Cooper undoubtedly gave him the proceeds from *Tales for Fifteen*; but to suppose, as full acceptance of this explanation requires, that Cooper reverted, even momentarily, to the repudiated literary models of his first book *Precaution* after the phenomenal success of *The Spy* would be to infer in him an almost total want of critical judgment and common sense. The real explanation, which Cooper might have been embarrassed to furnish and which the chronology of publication has obscured, lies in a hitherto unsuspected phase of the curious story of Cooper's entrance to authorship.

Cooper wrote Andrew Thompson Goodrich, his first publisher, on 31 May 1820, that *Precaution* had been preceded by an experimental effort to write a short moral tale. Mrs. Opie's *Simple Tales* (1807) and *Tales of Real Life* (1813) would have been among the obvious models. Finding the tale "swell to a rather unwieldy size," Cooper explained, "I destroy'd the manuscript and changed it to a novel." *Precaution*, which was completed on 12 June 1820, was probably written within a month; and before the novel had begun its tortuous way through the press, Cooper commenced the writing of *The Spy*. By 28 June he had completed "about sixty pages," presumably manuscript pages; and as the writing proceeded and his enthusiasm for the new work mounted, his expectations for the success of *Precaution* diminished. He wrote Goodrich on 12 July: "The 'Spy' goes on slowly and will not be finish'd until late in the fall – I take more pains with it – as it is to be an American novel professedly." In fact, The Spy was completed only a short time before its publication in New York on 22 December 1821.

During the eighteen months between the inception and publication of *The Spy* Cooper saw *Precaution* through the press, joined the New York literary circle which frequented Charles Wiley's bookshop, transferred his publishing business to Wiley, wrote three or four long book reviews for his friend Charles K. Gardner's *Literary and Scientific Repository*, finished *The Spy*, and commenced *The Pioneers*. While the period was, thus, not devoid of literary activity, it was, as the 1831 Preface to *The Spy* confessed, a period of acute uncertainty. Having discovered his literary talent, Cooper had yet to discover how to use it profitably, had indeed to be reassured of its true direction. He could not afford to write at all unless he could make his new profession pay handsomely. *Precaution* had been a deliberate attempt to produce a bestseller, and it succeeded only moderately. As the Preface

to the first edition of *The Spy* indicates, Cooper experienced severe self-doubts and self-questionings about this experiment. For an extended period, most probably during the first six months of 1821, he abandoned work on *The Spy*, which had been noticed as in press in the January issue of the *Repository*, fearing that the book could not succeed. It was almost certainly during this time that he conceived and partly executed another literary project of which *Tales for Fifteen* is the abortive remains.

As Cooper's hopes for *The Spy* faded, his confidence in the viability of the type of imitative writing he had attempted in *Precaution* appears to have revived. *Precaution* was reviewed in a most laudatory manner in the *Repository* for January 1821, and the comment accompanying the notice of publication in the *Repository* was: "We only regret that the scene of this novel was not laid in America." Whether Cooper persuaded himself or allowed himself to be persuaded by Wiley, Gardner, and other friends, he seems to have decided that his mistake in *Precaution* was not so much the choice of models as the choice of setting. Why not employ an American setting and continue his imitation of the British women? During 1820 Wiley, Goodrich, and William B. Gilley had jointly published a collection of Mrs. Opie's stories called *Tales of the Heart*; apparently they found it profitable. Accordingly, Cooper planned a series of stories which Wiley noticed as in press in the *Repository* for May 1822 and which he described as "*American Tales*, by a Lady, viz. Imagination – Heart – Matter – Manner – Matter and Manner. 2 vols. 18 mo. Wiley and Halsted, New York." A briefer announcement had appeared earlier, in the October 1821 issue of the *Repository*, although *The Spy*, which was certainly in press, was not noticed. In his letter of 7 January 1822 congratulating Cooper on the great success of *The Spy*, Wiley observed: "You speak of being engaged about 'the Pioneer.' – Have you forgotten 'the American Tales,' which were commenced by a certain lady a long time ago?"

What happened, evidently, was that Cooper's interest in *The Spy* had revived with such force that he had gone on to complete that book and to begin *The Pioneers*. Wiley's problem was then to persuade his reluctant author to complete a work in which he had lost interest but which was in press. Wiley was not successful. The three final tales, "Manner," "Matter," and "Manner and Matter," were never written. Eventually the publisher prevailed on Cooper to bring "Heart," the second of the stories, to a hurried conclusion. The author, probably happy to settle the matter, then wrote a coy Preface alluding mysteriously to "unforeseen circumstances" which had prevented the completion of the series, and gave the two stories to Wiley on the condition that their authorship be concealed. Thus *The American Tales* became *Tales for Fifteen*. A more eloquent criticism by the author could hardly be wished.

When Cooper permitted "Imagination" and "Heart" to be reprinted in 1841, he was again conferring a favor on a publisher. Towards the close of 1840 George Roberts, publisher and proprietor of the *Boston Notion*, subtitled without exaggeration "The Mammoth Sheet of the World," sent Cooper a circular letter in the hand of a clerk to request a short contribution suitable for his new publication, *Roberts' Semi-Monthly Magazine*. Normally, Cooper refused all such requests: but he was under the erroneous impression that Roberts had forwarded to him some Danish translations of his works which Longfellow had sent to America for him a few years before. Remembering these early stories, he replied to Roberts on 2 January 1841: "Some fifteen or twenty years since my publisher became embarrassed, and I wrote two short tales to aid him. He printed them, under the title of *Tales for Fifteen*, by Jane Morgan. One of these stories, rather a feeble one I fear, was called Heart – the other Imagination. This tale was written one rainy day, half asleep and half awake, but I retain rather a favorable impression of it. If you can find a copy of the book, you might think Imagination worth reprinting, and I suppose there can *now* be no objection to it. It would have the freshness of novelty, and would be American enough, Heaven knows. It would fill three or four of your columns."

Cooper owned no copy of *Tales for Fifteen*; but the resourceful publisher found a copy in New York, and "Imagination" filled almost the whole of the front page (approximately 60 by 34-1/2 inches) of the *Boston Notion* on 30 January 1841. It was reprinted in what was apparently a second edition of *Roberts' Semi-Monthly Magazine* for 1 and 15 February 1841 and in London in William Hazlitt's

Romanticist and Novelist's Library. A subsequent request brought permission for the reprinting of "Heart," which appeared in the *Boston Notion* for 13 and 20 March 1841 and in *Roberts' Semi-Monthly Magazine* for 1 and 15 April 1841. Roberts expressed his gratitude by defending Cooper in his paper from the charge of aristocratic bias which some New York journalists had brought against *Home As Found*. Doubtless the publisher would have been pleased to find other American writers sufficiently democratic to provide free copy.

Tales for Fifteen owes most of its interest today to its crucial position in the Cooper canon. The literary value of "Imagination" and "Heart," as their author realized, is slight. They were essentially experiments in which he sought to deploy indigenous materials within the conventions of British domestic fiction. "Imagination," with its sprightly observation of American middle-class vulgarities, betrays a satiric awareness that Cooper did later develop; but "Heart" is a forced sentimental indulgence of a sort he never permitted by preference in later works, though he sometimes tolerated it as a concession to feminine readers. For Cooper the chief significance of these stories was that they demonstrated forcibly, if demonstration was necessary, that neither the characteristic materials nor the characteristic forms employed by the British women were congenial to his imagination. His failure was altogether fortunate; for had *The American Tales* been completed and published instead of *The Spy*, Cooper's career and the course of much of American literature might have been different.

First editions of *Tales for Fifteen* are the rarest of all Cooper "firsts." The four copies presently known are in the Cooper Collection of the Yale University Library, the American Antiquarian Society, the J. K. Lilly Collection of Indiana University, and the New York Society Library.

James Franklin Beard

PREFACE

When the author of these little tales commenced them, it was her intention to form a short series of such stories as, it was hoped, might not be entirely without moral advantage; but unforeseen circumstances have prevented their completion, and, unwilling to delay the publication any longer, she commits them to the world in their present unfinished state, without any flattering anticipations of their reception. They are intended for the perusal of young women, at that tender age when the feelings of their nature begin to act on them most insidiously, and when their minds are least prepared by reason and experience to contend with their passions.

"Heart" was intended for a much longer tale, and is unavoidably incomplete; but it is unnecessary to point out defects that even the juvenile reader will soon detect. The author only hopes that if they do no good, her tales will, at least, do no harm.

IMAGINATION

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note,
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

"Do – do write to me often, my dear Anna!" said the weeping Julia Warren, on parting, for the first time since their acquaintance, with the young lady whom she had honoured with the highest place in her affections. "Think how dreadfully solitary and miserable I shall be here, without a single companion, or a soul to converse with, now you are to be removed two hundred miles into the wilderness."

"Oh! trust me, my love, I shall not forget you now or ever," replied her friend, embracing the other slightly, and, perhaps, rather hastily for so tender an adieu; at the same time glancing her eye on the figure of a youth, who stood in silent contemplation of the scene. "And doubt not but I shall soon tire you with my correspondence, especially as I more than suspect it will be subjected to the criticisms of Mr. Charles Weston." As she concluded, the young lady curtisied to the youth in a manner that contradicted, by its flattery, the forced irony of her remark.

"Never, my dear girl!" exclaimed Miss Warren with extreme fervour. "The confidence of our friendship is sacred with me, and nothing, no, nothing, could ever tempt me to violate such a trust. Charles is very kind and very indulgent to all my whims, but he never could obtain such an influence over me as to become the depositary of my secrets. Nothing but a friend, like yourself, can do that, my dear Anna."

"Never! Miss Warren," said the youth with a lip that betrayed by its tremulous motion the interest he took in her speech – "never includes a long period of time. But," he added with a smile of good-humoured pleasantry, "if admitted to such a distinction, I should not feel myself competent to the task of commenting on so much innocence and purity, as I know I should find in your correspondence."

"Yes," said Anna, with a little of the energy of her friend's manner, "you may with truth say so, Mr. Weston. The imagination of my Julia is as pure as – as – " but turning her eyes from the countenance of Julia to that of the youth, rather suddenly, the animated pleasure she saw delineated in his expressive, though plain features, drove the remainder of the speech from her recollection.

"As her heart!" cried Charles Weston with emphasis.

"As her heart, Sir," repeated the young lady coldly.

The last adieus were hastily exchanged, and Anna Miller was handed into her father's gig by Charles Weston in profound silence. Miss Emmerson, the maiden aunt of Julia, withdrew from the door, where she had been conversing with Mr. Miller, and the travellers departed. Julia followed the vehicle with her eyes until it was hid by the trees and shrubbery that covered the lawn, and then withdrew to her room to give vent to a sorrow that had sensibly touched her affectionate heart, and in no trifling degree haunted her lively imagination.

As Miss Emmerson by no means held the good qualities of the guest, who had just left them, in so high an estimation as did her niece, she proceeded quietly and with great composure in the exercise of her daily duties; not in the least suspecting the real distress that, from a variety of causes, this sudden separation had caused to her ward.

The only sister of this good lady had died in giving birth to a female infant, and the fever of 1805 had, within a very few years of the death of the mother, deprived the youthful orphan of her remaining parent. Her father was a merchant, just commencing the foundations of what would, in time, have been a large estate; and as both Miss Emmerson and her sister were possessed of genteel independencies, and the aunt had long declared her intention of remaining single, the fortune of Julia, if not brilliant, was thought rather large than otherwise. Miss Emmerson had been educated immediately after the war of the revolution, and at a time when the intellect of the women of this country by no means received that attention it is thought necessary to bestow on the minds of the future mothers of our families at the present hour; and when, indeed, the country itself required too much of the care of her rulers and patriots to admit of the consideration of lesser objects. With the best of hearts and affections devoted to the welfare of her niece, Miss Emmerson had early discovered her own incompetency to the labour of fitting Julia for the world in which she was to live, and shrunk with timid modesty from the arduous task of preparing herself, by application and study, for this sacred duty. The fashions of the day were rapidly running into the attainment of accomplishments among the young of her own sex, and the piano forte was already sending forth its sonorous harmony from one end of the Union to the other, while the glittering usefulness of the tambour-frame was discarded for the pallet and brush. The walls of our mansions were beginning to groan with the sickly green of imaginary fields, that caricatured the beauties of nature; and skies of sunny brightness, that mocked the golden hues of even an American sun. The experience of Miss Emmerson went no further than the simple evolutions of the country dance, or the deliberate and dignified procession of the minuet. No wonder, therefore, that her faculties were bewildered by the complex movements of the cotillion: and, in short, as the good lady daily contemplated the improvements of the female youth around her, she became each hour more convinced of her own inability to control, or in any manner to superintend, the education of her orphan niece. Julia was, consequently, entrusted to the government of a select boarding-school; and, as even the morals of the day were, in some degree, tinctured with the existing fashions, her mind as well as her manners were absolutely submitted to the discretion of an hireling. Notwithstanding this willing concession of power on the part of Miss Emmerson, there was no deficiency in ability to judge between right and wrong in her character; but the homely nature of her good sense, unassisted by any confidence in her own powers, was unable to compete with the dazzling display of accomplishments which met her in every house where she visited; and if she sometimes thought that she could not always discover much of the useful amid this excess of the agreeable, she rather attributed the deficiency to her own ignorance than to any error in the new system of instruction. From the age of six to that of sixteen, Julia had no other communications with Miss Emmerson than those endearments which neither could suppress, and a constant and assiduous attention on the part of the aunt to the health and attire of her niece.

Miss Emmerson had a brother residing in the city of New-York, who was a man of eminence at the bar, and who, having been educated fifty years ago, was, from that circumstance, just so much superior to his successors of his own sex by twenty years, as his sisters were the losers from the same cause. The family of Mr. Emmerson was large, and, besides several sons, he had two daughters, one of whom remained still unmarried in the house of her father. Katherine Emmerson was but eighteen months the senior of Julia Warren; but her father had adopted a different course from that which was ordinarily pursued with girls of her expectations. He had married a woman of sense, and now reaped the richest blessing of such a connexion in her ability to superintend the education of her daughter. A mother's care was employed to correct errors that a mother's tenderness could only discover; and in the place of general systems, and comprehensive theories, was substituted the close and rigorous watchfulness which adapted the remedy to the disease; which studied the disposition; and which knew the failings or merits of the pupil, and could best tell when to reward, and how to punish. The consequences were easily to be seen in the manners and character of their daughter. Her accomplishments, even where a master had been employed in their attainment, were naturally

displayed, and suited to her powers. Her manners, instead of the artificial movements of prescribed rules, exhibited the chaste and delicate modesty of refinement, mingled with good principles – such as were not worn in order to be in character as a woman and a lady, but were deeply seated, and formed part, not only of her habits, but, if we may use the expression, of her nature also. Miss Emmerson had good sense enough to perceive the value of such an acquaintance for her ward; but, unfortunately for her wish to establish an intimacy between her nieces, Julia had already formed a friendship at school, and did not conceive her heart was large enough to admit two at the same time to its sanctuary. How much Julia was mistaken the sequel of our tale will show.

So long as Anna Miller was the inmate of the school, Julia was satisfied to remain also, but the father of Anna having determined to remove to an estate in the interior of the country, his daughter was taken from school; and while the arrangements were making for the reception of the family on the banks of the Gennessee, Anna was permitted to taste, for a short time, the pleasures of the world, at the residence of Miss Emmerson on the banks of the Hudson.

Charles Weston was a distant relative of the good aunt, and was, like Julia, an orphan, who was moderately endowed with the goods of fortune. He was a student in the office of her uncle, and being a great favourite with Miss Emmerson, spent many of his leisure hours, during the heats of the summer, in the retirement of her country residence.

Whatever might be the composure of the maiden aunt, while Julia was weeping in her chamber over the long separation that was now to exist between herself and her friend, young Weston by no means displayed the same philosophic indifference. He paced the hall of the building with rapid steps, cast many a longing glance at the door of his cousin's room, and then seated himself with an apparent intention to read the volume he held in his hands; nor did he in any degree recover his composure until Julia re-appeared on the landing of the stairs, moving slowly towards their bottom, when, taking one long look at her lovely face, which was glowing with youthful beauty, and if possible more charming from the traces of tears in her eyes, he coolly pursued his studies. Julia had recovered her composure, and Charles Weston felt satisfied. Miss Emmerson and her niece took their seats quietly with their work at an open window of the parlour, and order appeared to be restored in some measure to the mansion. After pursuing their several occupations for some minutes with a silence that had lately been a stranger to them, the aunt observed —

"You appear to have something new in hand, my love. Surely you must abound with trimmings, and yet you are working another already?"

"It is for Anna Miller," said Julia with a flush of feeling.

"I was in hopes you would perform your promise to your cousin Katherine, now Miss Miller is gone, and make your portion of the garments for the Orphan Asylum," returned Miss Emmerson gravely.

"Oh! cousin Katherine must wait. I promised this trimming to Anna to remember me by, and I would not disappoint the dear girl for the world."

"It is not your cousin Katherine, but the Orphans, who will have to wait; and surely a promise to a relation is as sacred as one to an acquaintance."

"Acquaintance, aunt!" echoed the niece with displeasure. "Do not, I entreat you, call Anna an acquaintance merely. She is my friend – my very best friend, and I love her as such."

"Thank you, my dear," said the aunt dryly.

"Oh! I mean nothing disrespectful to yourself, dear aunt," continued Julia. "You know how much I owe to you, and ought to know that I love you as a mother."

"And would you prefer Miss Miller to a mother, then?"

"Surely not in respect, in gratitude, in obedience; but still I may love her, you know. Indeed, the feelings are so very different, that they do not at all interfere with each other – in my heart at least."

"No!" said Miss Emmerson, with a little curiosity – "I wish you would try and explain this difference to me, that I may comprehend the distinctions that you are fond of making."

"Why, nothing is easier, dear aunt!" said Julia with animation. "You I love because you are kind to me, attentive to my wants, considerate for my good; affectionate, and – and – from habit – and you are my aunt, and take care of me."

"Admirable reasons!" exclaimed Charles Weston, who had laid aside his book to listen to this conversation.

"They are forcible ones I must admit," said Miss Emmerson, smiling affectionately on her niece; "but now for the other kind of love."

"Why, Anna is my friend, you know," cried Julia, with eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "I love her, because she has feelings congenial with my own; she has so much wit, is so amusing, so frank, so like a girl of talents – so like – like every thing I admire myself."

"It is a pity that one so highly gifted cannot furnish herself with frocks," said the aunt, with a little more than her ordinary dryness of manner, "and suffer you to work for those who want them more."

"You forget it is in order to remember me," said Julia, in a manner that spoke her own ideas of the value of the gift.

"One would think such a friendship would not require any thing to remind one of its existence," returned the aunt.

"Why! it is not that she will forget me without it, but that she may have something by her to remind her of me – " said Julia rapidly, but pausing as the contradiction struck even herself.

"I understand you perfectly, my child," interrupted the aunt, "merely as an unnecessary security, you mean."

"To make assurance doubly sure," cried Charles Weston with a laugh.

"Oh! you laugh, Mr. Weston," said Julia with a little anger; "but I have often said, you were incapable of friendship."

"Try me!" exclaimed the youth fervently. "Do not condemn me without a trial."

"How can I?" said Julia, laughing in her turn. "You are not a girl."

"Can girls then only feel friendship?" inquired Charles, taking the seat which Miss Emmerson had relinquished.

"I sometimes think so," said Julia, with her own good-humoured smile. "You are too gross – too envious – in short, you never see such friendships between men as exist between women."

"Between girls, I will readily admit," returned the youth. "But let us examine this question after the manner of the courts – "

"Nay, if you talk law I shall quit you," interrupted the young lady gaily.

"Certainly one so learned in the subject need not dread a cross-examination," cried the youth, in her own manner.

"Well, proceed," cried the lady. "I have driven aunt Margaret from the field, and you will fare no better, I can assure you."

"Men, you say, are too gross to feel a pure friendship; in the first place, please to explain yourself on this point."

"Why I mean, that your friendships are generally interested; that it requires services and good offices to support it."

"While that of women depends on – "

"Feeling alone."

"But what excites this feeling?" asked Charles with a smile.

"What? why sympathy – and a knowledge of each other's good qualities."

"Then you think Miss Miller has more good qualities than Katherine Emmerson," said Weston.

"When did I ever say so?" cried Julia in surprise.

"I infer it from your loving her better, merely," returned the young man with a little of Miss Emmerson's dryness.

"It would be difficult to compare them," said Julia after a moment's pause. "Katherine is in the world, and has had an opportunity of showing her merit; that Anna has never enjoyed. Katherine is certainly a most excellent girl, and I like her very much; but there is no reason to think that Anna will not prove as fine a young woman as Katherine, when put to the trial."

"Pray," said the young lawyer with great gravity, "how many of these bosom, these confidential friends can a young woman have at the same time?"

"One, only one – any more than she could have two lovers," cried Julia quickly.

"Why then did you find it necessary to take that one from a set, that was untried in the practice of well-doing, when so excellent a subject as your cousin Katherine offered?"

"But Anna I know, I feel, is every thing that is good and sincere, and our sympathies drew us together. Katherine I loved naturally."

"How naturally?"

"Is it not natural to love your relatives?" said Julia in surprise.

"No," was the brief answer.

"Surely, Charles Weston, you think me a simpleton. Does not every parent love its child by natural instinct?"

"No: no more than you love any of your amusements from instinct. If the parent was present with a child that he did not know to be his own, would instinct, think you, discover their vicinity?"

"Certainly not, if they had never met before; but then, as soon as he knew it to be his, he would love it from nature."

"It is a complicated question, and one that involves a thousand connected feelings," said Charles. "But all love, at least all love of the heart, springs from the causes you mentioned to your aunt – good offices, a dependence on each other, and habit."

"Yes, and nature too," said the young lady rather positively; "and I contend, that natural love, and love from sympathy, are two distinct things."

"Very different, I allow," said Charles; "only I very much doubt the durability of that affection which has no better foundation than fancy."

"You use such queer terms, Charles, that you do not treat the subject fairly. Calling innate evidence of worth by the name of fancy, is not candid."

"Now, indeed, your own terms puzzle me," said Charles, smiling. "What is innate evidence of worth?"

"Why, a conviction that another possesses all that you esteem yourself, and is discovered by congenial feelings and natural sympathies."

"Upon my word, Julia, you are quite a casuist on this subject. Does love, then, between the sexes depend on this congenial sympathy and innate evidence?"

"Now you talk on a subject that I do not understand," said Julia, blushing; and, catching up the highly prized work, she ran to her own room, leaving the young man in a state of mingled admiration and pity.

CHAPTER II

An anxious fortnight was passed by Julia Warren, after this conversation, without bringing any tidings from her friend. She watched, with feverish restlessness, each steam-boat that passed the door on its busy way towards the metropolis, and met the servant each day at the gate of the lawn on his return from the city; but it was only to receive added disappointments. At length Charles Weston good-naturedly offered his own services, laughingly declaring, that his luck was never known to fail. Julia herself had written several long epistles to Anna, and it was now the proper time that some of these should be answered, independently of the thousand promises from her friend of writing regularly from every post-office that she might pass on her route to the Gennessee. But the happy moment had arrived when disappointments were to cease. As usual, Julia was waiting with eager impatience at the gate, her lovely form occasionally gliding from the shrubbery to catch a glimpse of the passengers on the highway, when Charles appeared riding at a full gallop towards the house; his whole manner announced success, and Julia sprang into the middle of the road to take the letter which he extended towards her.

"I knew I should be successful, and it gives me almost as much pleasure as yourself that I have been so," said the youth, dismounting from his horse and opening the gate that his companion might pass.

"Thank you – thank you, dear Charles," said Julia kindly. "I never can forget how good you are to me – how much you love to oblige not only me, but every one around you. Excuse me now. I have this dear letter to read: another time, I will thank you as I ought."

So saying, Julia ran into the summer-house, and fastening its door, gave herself up to the pleasure of reading a first letter. Notes and short epistles from her aunt, with divers letters from Anna written slyly in the school-room and slipped into her lap, she was already well acquainted with; but of real, genuine letters, stamped by the post-office, rumpled by the mail-bags, consecrated by the steam-boat, this was certainly the first. This, indeed, was a real letter: rivers rolled, and vast tracts of country lay, between herself and its writer, and that writer was a friend selected on the testimony of innate evidence. It was necessary for Julia to pause and breathe before she could open her letter; and by the time this was done, her busy fancy had clothed both epistle and writer with so much excellence, that she was prepared to peruse the contents with a respect bordering on enthusiasm: every word must be true – every idea purity itself. That our readers may know how accurately sixteen and a brilliant fancy had qualified her to judge, we shall give them the letter entire.

> My dearest love,
>
> "Oh, Julia! here I am, and such a place! – no town, no churches, no Broadway, nothing that can make life desirable; and, I may add, no friend – nobody to see and talk with, but papa and mamma, and a house full of brothers and sisters. You can't think how I miss you, every minute more and more; but I am not without hopes of persuading pa to let me spend the winter with your aunt in town. I declare it makes me sick every time I think of her sweet house in Park-place. If ever I marry, and be sure I will, it shall be a man who lives in the city, and next door to my Julia. Oh! how charming that would be. Each of us to have one of those delightful new houses, with the new-fashioned basement stories; we would run in and out at all hours of the day, and it would be so convenient to lend and borrow each other's things. I do think there is no pleasure under heaven equal to that of wearing things that belong to your friend. Don't you remember how fond I was of wearing your clothes at school, though you were not so fond of changing as myself; but that was no wonder, for pa's stinginess kept me so shabbily dressed, that I was ashamed to let you be seen in them. Oh, Julia! I shall never forget those happy hours; nor you neither. Apropos – I

hope you have not forgot the frock you promised to work for me, to remember you by. I long for it dreadfully, and hope you will send it before the river shuts. I suppose you and Charles Weston do nothing but ride round among those beautiful villas on the island, and take comfort. I do envy you your happiness, I can tell you; for I think any beau better than none, though Mr. Weston is not to my taste. I am going to write you six sheets of paper, for there is nothing that I so delight in as communing with a friend at a distance, especially situated as I am without a soul to say a word to, unless it be my own sisters. Adieu, my ever, ever beloved Julia – be to me as I am to you, a friend indeed, one tried and not found wanting. In haste, your
"ANNA.

"Gennessee, June 15, 1816.

"P. S. Don't forget to jog aunt Emmerson's memory about asking me to Park-place.

"P. S. June 25th. Not having yet sent my letter, although I am sure you must be dying with anxiety to hear how we get on, I must add, that we have a companion here that would delight you – a Mr. Edward Stanley. What a delightful name! and he is as delightful as his name: his eye, his nose, his whole countenance, are perfect. In short, Julia, he is just such a man as we used to draw in our conversation at school. He is rich, and brave, and sensible, and I do nothing but talk to him of you. He says, he longs to see you; knows you must be handsome; is sure you are sensible; and feels that you are good. Oh! he is worth a dozen Charles Westons. But you may give my compliments to Mr. Weston, though I don't suppose he ever thinks it worth his while to remember such a chick as me. I should like to hear what he says about me, and I will tell you all Edward Stanley says of you. Once more, adieu. Your letters got here safe and in due season. I let Edward take a peep at them."

The first time Julia read this letter she was certainly disappointed. It contained no descriptions of the lovely scenery of the west. The moon had risen and the sun had set on the lakes of the interior, and Anna had said not one word of either. But the third and fourth time of reading began to afford more pleasure, and at the thirteenth perusal she pronounced it charming. There was evidently much to be understood; vacuums that the fancy could easily fill; and, before Julia had left the summer-house, the letter was extended, in her imagination, to the promised six sheets. She walked slowly through the shrubbery towards the house, musing on the contents of her letter, or rather what it might be supposed to contain, and unconsciously repeating to herself in a low tone —

"Young, handsome, rich, and sensible – just as we used to paint in our conversation. Oh, how delightful!"

"Delightful indeed, to possess all those fine qualities; and who is the happy individual that is so blessed?" asked Charles Weston, who had been lingering in the walks with an umbrella to shield her on her return from an approaching shower.

"Oh!" said Julia, starting, "I did not know you were near me. I have been reading Anna's sweet letter," pressing the paper to her bosom as she spoke.

"Doubtless you must be done by this time, Julia, and," pointing to the clouds, "you had better hasten to the house. I knew you would be terrified at the lightning all alone by yourself in that summer-house, so I came to protect you."

"You are very good, Charles, but does it lighten?" said Julia in terror, and hastening her retreat to the dwelling.

"Your letter must have interested you deeply not to have noticed the thunder – you, who are so timid and fearful of the flashes."

"Foolishly fearful, you would say, if you were not afraid of hurting my feelings, I know," said Julia.

"It is a natural dread, and therefore not to be laughed at," answered Charles mildly.

"Then there is natural fear, but no natural love, Mr. Charles; now you are finely caught," cried Julia exultingly.

"Well, be it so. With me fear is very natural, and I can almost persuade myself love also."

"I hope you are not a coward, Charles Weston. A cowardly man is very despicable. I could never love a cowardly man," said Julia, laughing.

"I don't know whether I am what you call a coward," said Charles gravely; "but when in danger I am always afraid."

The words were hardly uttered before a flash of lightning, followed instantly by a tremendously heavy clap of thunder, nearly stupified them both. The suddenness of the shock had, for a moment, paralyzed the energy of the youth, while Julia was nearly insensible. Soon recovering himself, however, Charles drew her after him into the house, in time to escape a torrent of rain. The storm was soon over, and their natural fear and surprise were a source of mirth for Julia. Women are seldom ashamed of their fears, for their fright is thought to be feminine and attractive; but men are less easy under the imputation of terror, as it is thought to indicate an absence of manly qualities.

"Oh! you will never make a hero, Charles," cried Julia, laughing heartily. "It is well you chose the law instead of the army as a profession."

"I don't know," said the youth, a little nettled, "I think I could muster courage to face a bullet."

"But remember, that you shut your eyes, and bent nearly double at the flash – now you owned all this yourself."

"At least he was candid, and acknowledged his infirmities," said Miss Emmerson, who had been listening.

"I think most men would have done as I did, at so heavy and so sudden a clap of thunder, and so very near too," said Charles, striving to conceal the uneasiness he felt.

"When apprehension for Julia must have increased your terror," said the aunt kindly.

"Why, no – I rather believe I thought only of myself at the moment," returned Charles; "but then, Julia, you must do me the justice to say, that instantly I thought of the danger of your taking cold and drew you into the house."

"Oh! you ran from another clap," said Julia, laughing till her dark eyes flashed with pleasure, and shaking her head until her glossy hair fell in ringlets over her shoulders; "you will never make a hero, Charles."

"Do you know any one who would have behaved better, Miss Warren?" said the young man angrily.

"Yes – why – I don't know. Yes, I have heard of such an one, I think," answered Julia, slightly colouring; "but, dear Charles, excuse my laughter," she continued, holding out her hand; "if you are not a hero, you are very, very, good."

But Charles Weston, at the moment, would rather be thought a hero than very, very, good; he, therefore, rose, and affecting a smile, endeavoured to say something trifling as he retired.

"You have mortified Charles," said Miss Emmerson, so soon as he was out of hearing.

"I am sure I hope not," said Julia, with a good deal of anxiety; "he is the last person I would wish to offend, he is so very kind."

"No young man of twenty is pleased with being thought no hero," returned the aunt.

"And yet all are not so," said Julia.

"I hardly know what you mean by a hero; if you mean such men as Washington, Greene, or Warren, all are surely not so. These were heroes in deeds, but others may be equally brave."

"I mean by a hero, a man whose character is unstained by any low or degenerate vices, or even feelings," said Julia, with a little more than her ordinary enthusiasm; "whose courage is as natural as

it is daring; who is above fear, except of doing wrong; whose person is an index of his mind, and whose mind is filled with images of glory; that's what I call a hero, aunt."

"Then he must be handsome as well as valiant," said Miss Emmerson, with a smile that was hardly perceptible.

"Why that is – is – not absolutely material," replied Julia, blushing; "but one would wish to have him handsome too."

"Oh! by all means; it would render his virtues more striking. But I think you intimated that you knew such a being," returned Miss Emmerson, fixing her mild eyes on Julia in a manner that denoted great interest.

"Did I," said Julia, colouring scarlet; "I am sure – I have forgotten – it must be a mistake, surely, dear aunt."

"Very possibly I misunderstood you, my dear," said Miss Emmerson, rising and withdrawing from the room, in apparent indifference to the subject.

Julia continued musing on the dialogue which had passed, and soon had recourse to the letter of her friend, the postscript of which was all, however, that she thought necessary to read: on this she dwelt until the periods were lengthened into paragraphs, each syllable into words, and each letter into syllables. Anna Miller had furnished the outlines of a picture, that the imagination of Julia had completed. The name of Edward Stanley was repeated internally so often that she thought it the sweetest name she had ever heard. His eyes, his nose, his countenance, were avowed to be handsome; and her fancy soon gave a colour and form to each. He was sensible; how sensible, her friend had not expressly stated; but then the powers of Anna, great as they undoubtedly were, could not compass the mighty extent of so gigantic a mind. Brave, too, Anna had called him. This she must have learnt from acts of desperate courage that he had performed in the war which had so recently terminated; or perhaps he might have even distinguished himself in the presence of Anna, by some exploit of cool and determined daring. Her heart burned to know all the particulars, but how was she to inquire them. Anna, dear, indiscreet girl, had already shown her letters, and her delicacy shrunk from the exposure of her curiosity to its object. After a multitude of expedients had been adopted and rejected as impracticable, Julia resorted to the course of committing her inquiries to paper, most solemnly enjoining her friend never to expose her weakness to Mr. Stanley. This, thought Julia, she never could do; it would be unjust to me, and indelicate in her. So Julia wrote as follows, first seeking her own apartment, and carefully locking the door, that she might devote her whole attention to friendship, and her letter.

"Dearest Anna,

"Your kind letter reach'd me after many an anxious hour spent in expectation, and repays me ten-fold for all my uneasiness. Surely, Anna, there is no one that can write half so agreeably as yourself. I know there must be a long – long – epistle for me on the road, containing those descriptions and incidents you promised to favour me with: how I long to read them, and to show them to my aunt Margaret, who, I believe, does not suspect you to be capable of doing that which I know, or rather feel, you can. Knowing from any thing but feeling and the innate evidence of our sympathies, seems to me something like heresy in friendship. Oh, Anna! how could you be so cruel as to show my letters to any one, and that to a gentleman and a stranger? I never would have served you so, not even to good Charles Weston, whom I esteem so highly, and who really wants neither judgment nor good nature, though he is dreadfully deficient in fancy. Yet Charles is a most excellent young man, and I gave him the compliments you desired; he was so much flattered by your notice that he could make no reply, though I doubt not he prized the honour as he ought. We are all very happy here, only for the absence of my Anna; but so long as miles of weary roads and endless rivers run between us, perfect happiness can never reign in the

breast of your Julia. Anna, I conjure you by all the sacred delicacy that consecrates our friendship, never to show this letter, unless you would break my heart: you never will, I am certain, and therefore I will write to my Anna in the unreserved manner in which we conversed, when fate, less cruel than at present, suffered us to live in the sunshine of each other's smiles. You speak of a certain person in your letter, whom, for obvious reasons, I will in future call *Antonio*. You describe him with the partiality of a friend; but how can I doubt his being worthy of all that you say, and more – sensible, brave, rich, and handsome. From his name, I suppose, of course, he is well connected. What a constellation of attractions to centre in one man! But you have not told me all – his age, his family, his profession; though I presume he has borne arms in the service of his country, and that his manly breast is already covered with the scars of honour. Ah! Anna, "he jests at scars who never felt a wound." But, my dear creature, you say that he talks of me: what under the sun can you find to say of such a poor girl as myself? Though I suppose you have, in the fondness of affection, described my person to him already. I wonder if he likes black eyes and fair complexion. You can't conceive what a bloom the country has given me; I really begin to look more like a milk-maid than a lady. Dear, good aunt Margaret has been quite sick since you left us, and for two days I was hardly out of her room; this has put me back a little in colour, or I should be as ruddy as the morn. But nothing ought ever to tempt me to neglect my aunt, and I hope nothing ever will. Be assured that I shall beg her to write you to spend the winter with us, for I feel already that without you life is a perfect blank. You indeed must have something to enliven it with a little in your new companions, but here is nobody, just now, but Charles Weston. Yet he is an excellent companion, and does every thing he can to make us all happy and comfortable. Heigho! how I do wish I could see you, my Anna, and spend one sweet half hour in the dear confidence of mutual sympathy. But lie quiet, my throbbing heart, the day approaches when I shall meet my friend again, and more than receive a reward for all our griefs. Ah! Anna, never betray your Julia, and write to me *fully*, *confidingly*, and often.

"Yours, with all the tenderness of friendship that is founded on mutual sympathy, congenial souls, and innate evidence of worth.
"JULIA."

"P. S. I should like to know whether Antonio has any scars in his face, and what battles he was in. Only think, my dear, poor Charles Weston was frightened by a clap of thunder – but Charles has an excellent heart."

This letter was written and read, sealed and kissed, when Miss Emmerson tapped gently at the door of her niece and begged admission. Julia flew to open it, and received her aunt with the guileless pleasure her presence ever gave her. A few words of introductory matter were exchanged, when, being both seated at their needles again, Miss Emmerson asked —

"To whom have you been writing, my love?"

"To my Anna."

"Do you recollect, my child, that in writing to Miss Miller, you are writing to one out of your own family, and whose interests are different from yours?"

"I do not understand you, aunt," cried Julia in surprise.

"I mean that you should be guarded in your correspondence – tell no secrets out" —

"Tell no secrets to my Anna!" exclaimed the niece in a species of horror. "That would be a death-blow to our friendship indeed."

"Then let it die," said Miss Emmerson, coolly; "the affection that cannot survive the loss of such an excitement, had better be suffered to expire as soon as possible, or it may raise false expectations."

"Why, dear aunt, in destroying confidence of this nature, you destroy the great object of friendship. Who ever heard of a friendship without secrets?"

"I never had a secret in my life," said Miss Emmerson simply, "and yet I have had many a friend."

"Well," said Julia, "yours must have been queer friends; pray, dear aunt, name one or two of them."

"Your mother was my friend," said Miss Emmerson, with strong emotion, "and I hope her daughter also is one."

"Me, my beloved aunt!" cried Julia, throwing herself into the arms of Miss Emmerson and bursting into tears; "I am more than a friend, I am your child – your daughter."

"Whatever be the name you give it, Julia, you are very near and dear to me," said the aunt, tenderly kissing her charge: "but tell me, my love, did you ever feel such emotion in your intercourse with Miss Miller?"

It was some time before Julia could reply; when, having suppressed the burst of her feelings, she answered with a smile —

"Oh! that question is not fair. You have brought me up; nursed me in sickness; are kind and good to me; and the idea that you should suppose I did not love you, was dreadful – But you know I do."

"I firmly believe so, my child; it is you that I would have know what it is that you love: I am satisfied for myself. I repeat, did Anna Miller ever excite such emotions?"

"Certainly not: my love to you is natural; but my friendship for Anna rests on sympathy, and a perfect knowledge of her character."

"I am glad, however, that you know her so well, since you are so intimate. What testimony have you of all this excellence?"

"Innate evidence. I see it – I feel it – Yes, that is the best testimony – I feel her good qualities. Yes, my friendship for Anna forms the spring of my existence; while any accident or evil to you would afflict me the same as if done to myself – this is pure nature, you know."

"I know it is pleasing to learn it, come from what it will," said the aunt, smiling, and rising to withdraw.

CHAPTER III

Several days passed after this conversation, in the ordinary quiet of a well regulated family. Notwithstanding the house of Miss Emmerson stood in the midst of the numberless villas that adorn Manhattan Island, the habits of its mistress were retiring and domestic. Julia was not of an age to mingle much in society, and Anna had furnished her with a theme for her meditations, that rather rendered her averse from the confusion of company. Her mind was constantly employed in canvassing the qualities of the unseen Antonio. Her friend had furnished her with a catalogue of his perfections in gross, which her active thoughts were busily arranging into form and substance. But little practised in the world or its disappointments, the visionary girl had already figured to herself a person to suit these qualities, and the animal was no less pleasing, than the moral being of her fancy. What principally delighted Julia in these contemplations on the acquaintance of Anna, was the strong inclination he had expressed to know herself. This flattered her tendency to believe in the strength of mutual sympathy, and the efficacy of innate evidence of merit. In the midst of this pleasing employment of her fancy, she received a second letter from her friend, in answer to the one we have already given to our readers; it was couched in the following words:

"My own dear Julia, my Friend,

"I received your letter with the pleasure I shall always hear from you, and am truly obliged to you for your kind offer to make interest with your aunt to have me spend the next winter in town. To be with you, is the greatest pleasure I have on earth; besides, as I know I can write to you as freely as I think, one can readily tell what a tiresome place this must be to pass a winter in. There are, absolutely, but three young men in the whole county who can be thought in any manner as proper matches for us; and one had no chance here of forming such an association as to give a girl an opportunity of meeting with her congenial spirit, so that I hope and trust your desire to see me will continue as strong as mine will ever be to see my Julia. You say that I have forgotten to give you the description of our journey and of the lakes that I promised to send you. No, my Julia, I have not forgotten the promise, nor you; but the thought of enjoying such happiness without your dear company, has been too painful to dwell upon. Of this you may judge for yourself. Our first journey was made in the steam-boat to Albany; she is a moving world. The vessel ploughs through the billowy waters in onward progress, and the soul is left in silent harmony to enjoy the change. The passage of the Highlands is most delightful. Figure to yourself, my Julia, the rushing waters, lessening from their expanded width to the degeneracy of the stagnant pool – rocks rise on rocks in overhanging mountains, until the weary eye, refusing its natural office, yields to the fancy what its feeble powers can never conquer. Clouds impend over their summits, and the thoughts pierce the vast abyss. Ah! Julia, these are moments of awful romance; how the soul longs for the consolations of friendship. Albany is one of the most picturesque places in the world; situated most delightfully on the banks of the Hudson, which here meanders in sylvan beauty through meadows of ever-green and desert islands. Words are wanting to paint the melancholy beauties of the ride to Schenectady, through gloomy forests, where the silvery pine waves in solemn grandeur to the sighings of Eolus, while Boreas threatens in vain their firm-rooted trunks. But the lakes! Ah! Julia – the lakes! The most beautiful is the Seneca, named after a Grecian king. The limpid water, ne'er ruffled by the rude breathings of the wind, shines with golden tints to the homage of the rising sun, while the light bark gallantly lashes the surge, rocking before the propelling gale, and forcibly brings to the appalled mind the

fleeting hours of time. But I must pause – my pen refuses to do justice to the subject, and the remainder will furnish us hours of conversation during the tedious moments of the delightful visit to Park-Place. You speak of Antonio – dear girl, with me the secret is hallowed. He is yet here; his whole thoughts are of Julia – from my description only, he has drawn your picture, which is the most striking in the world; and nothing can tear the dear emblem from his keeping. He called here yesterday in his phaeton, and insisted on my riding a few short miles in his company: I assented, for I knew it was to talk of my friend. He already feels your worth, and handed me the following verses, which he begged me to offer as the sincere homage of his heart. He intends accompanying my father and me to town next winter – provided I go.

"Oh! charming image of an artless fair,
"Whose eyes, with lightning, fire the very soul;
"Whose face portrays the mind, and ebon hair
"Gives grace and harmony unto the whole.

"In vain I gaze entranc'd, in vain deplore
"The leagues that roll between the maid and me;
"Lonely I wander on the desert shore,
"And Julia's lovely form can never see.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.