

THE LEPROSY OF MIRIAM.

BY

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DEDICATION.

To my friend K. S. P., whose never-ceasing helpfulness in the world of her environment counts her as one who "hath done what she could," and makes her an inspiration for those who are doing what she would.

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FOREWORD.

IN the Jewish history of the Old Testament is found a people which has come out from an environment made hateful by generations of bondage, and has set its face toward a promised land of freedom.

This journey of the Children of Israel illustrates the progress of the human soul, which is to outgrow the bondage of the flesh and reach the freedom of the spirit. It is typical of the individual and universal development recognized to-day as the continuity of evolution, which, crossing the line of demarcation between shapes and souls, is to some time bring the highest species of the genus Man.

In this journey the people, though they have "triumphed gloriously," are halted for a season through what befalls Miriam. For having "spoken against" Moses, she is stricken with leprosy and shut out from the camp, "and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again."

The progress of the human race is limited by the development and position of its women. Naturally the perceptive and intuitive half of Man, woman's prerogative and possibilities have been obscured by the masculine intellect. Stimulated partly by the inherent vitality of her own nature and by the force of masculine

example, she has taken the forward strides which have produced the typical nineteenth century product—the intellectually developed woman, self-reliant, positive, forceful.

She is strongly *en evidence* to-day, a factor in the body politic to be reckoned with, not ignored. She is no religionist, because she sees the mistake of being a mere emotionalist. She is becoming—has become agnostic. Failing to recognize that part of our dual nature which is the true leader to higher things, and because of her intellectual ambition—"speaking against Moses"—she has been smitten with the leprosy of scientific (?) materialism. And thus she is "as one dead" because not alive to her own higher nature and true office.

Truly, the people may not journey further till she is received in again. Past glories were good, present glories are better, the best are yet to come. Foreshadowings are with us. The sixth sense which marks a higher species is beginning to appear. It is feminine, and it pertains to the "divine womanly which ever leads us on." The intellectual womanly, blind to the divine, halts us in the wilderness.

URSULA N. GESTEFELD.

CHAPTER I.

A HUMMING rustling crowd filled the fashionable church of Benton. It was within a few minutes of the time appointed for the marriage ceremony.

Friends of the bride weighed and measured friends of the bridegroom. Friends of the bridegroom surveyed and criticized the friends of the bride. Permeating the general expectation was a parry-and-thrust atmosphere perfumed with the aroma which always clings around a wedding.

In one of the pews far enough from the altar to mark its occupants as related to the contracting parties socially rather than by blood, was seated a man who surveyed the scene with well-bred indifference and an occasional raising of the eyebrows as remarks intended for the speakers' neighbors reached his ear from different directions.

"She was just dying for him, you know, long before—"

"Her family were much opposed to the match, and—"

"He seems to almost worship her, but—"

"I've seen most of her trousseau and it does not compare with—"

"She's one of the sweetest girls I know, and I do hope—"

"Papa does not believe he'll ever amount to much, and—"

The organ began to breathe soft strains into the conglomerate atmosphere, a precursor of that harmony which is to survive discord, unnoticed by many in their eager vivisection even as the grand purpose and order which underlie the turmoil and froth of our daily life unfold unheeded. The strains swelled louder and he turned with the rest toward the door through which the bridal party was to enter, in time to see the bride upon her guardian's arm.

His gaze followed her and her attendants as they took their places before the altar. The exhortations and injunctions of the marriage ceremony fell upon deaf ears, the sense of hearing, with most of those present, being absorbed in that of sight and curiosity.

From the distance the bride was an enchanting statue of white mystery. Those near by saw the flush upon her cheek and the tremulousness of her delicate mouth which revealed her repressed emotion, the solemnity which overspread her face as the impressive tones of the officiating clergyman resounded in the sanctuary.

In marked contrast to his bride were the attitude and expression of the bridegroom. His face wore a look as near triumph as a sense of his surroundings allowed, an almost exultant satisfaction which seemed less like the recognition of a developed and strong manhood than the temporary impulse of a child.

As they turned from the altar to retrace their steps, wedded husband and wife, the gazer in the pew looked at him intently, the corners of his mouth drawn down-

ward with a contemptuous expression, his right hand clenched, his whole form suggestive of the animal's instinct to spring upon its prey.

Half-way down the aisle, as if drawn by the other's compelling gaze, the bridegroom looked directly in his face. His look and manner at once lost a little of their inflation. He glanced straight before him and seemed to impulsively hasten his steps.

At the same moment his bride, though she had not raised her eyes, came almost to a standstill, giving her the appearance of endeavoring to hold him back as she leaned upon his arm. The flush left her face, she turned pale and seemed to keep herself from falling only by clinging to him.

It was but an instant however. Even while her husband looked at her wonderingly she went on as before. Those near enough saw that her step seemed uncertain and that she breathed almost pantingly.

The incident was so quickly come and gone it was noticed by very few. The husband helped his wife into the carriage waiting at the door, others were quickly filled with her attendants and the church was soon emptied of the waiting throng.

The man in the pew was one of the last to emerge and the carriages had already disappeared in the distance. He stood a moment upon the sidewalk looking idly at the guests as they departed in various directions. Then he stooped and picked up something which lay at his feet. It was a spray of the lily-of-the-valley, crushed and bruised, its freshness trampled out under the passing feet. It was the bride's flower. He laid it in the palm of his hand and looked at it. Its

sweetness stole over him, battered and dying as it was.

"Its rough usage but liberates its fragrant soul," he said half aloud.

"Bah! What of it?" he ejaculated, suddenly flinging it from him and walking away. He had gone but a few steps when a gentleman walking rapidly in the same direction came up with him.

"How are you, Everett?" with a friendly slap on the shoulder. "Been to the wedding?" with a jerk of the head in a backward direction.

"Yes," answered the other briefly.

"Who is she?"

"Emma Haines."

"A prize?"

"An embodied mistake. She has married a man to save him."

CHAPTER II.

EVERETT LONG at thirty-three had exhausted the pleasures of life and was left with only its endurance. He had "got through" with everything else. He knew the world, men, women, and things. What more? What more was there to know?

On the morning following the wedding he sat at the window in his snug bachelor apartments, newspaper fallen unheeded to the floor, idly gazing upon the walls and richly draped windows opposite. He turned with a languid expectation as the bell announced a visitor, but his face lighted up with genuine pleasure as a gentleman entered the room.

"More than glad to see you, Paul," he said as he went quickly forward to meet him. "It seems an age since you were here."

A greater contrast than the two men presented as they stood together could not well be imagined. Everett Long physically left little to be desired. Tall, straight, muscular, with a face full of suggestion of what it might be could but the light of an awakened soul shine through it, he grasped the hand of a man who did not reach to his shoulder and who let go of one crutch supporting himself with the other as he received the greeting.

Shrunken, misshapen he stood there, seemingly so

fragile a child running against him in play would have felled him to the floor, looking up at Long with a smile. His face was a revelation and a perplexity. Seeing it alone one would have been unable to determine whether it belonged to a man or a woman, for, guiltless of beard, it combined a man's strength and dominance with a woman's gentleness and beauty.

His hair was a golden glory waving back from a noble brow and showering upon his shoulders in loosely curling locks that clung lovingly around his neck. His eyes lifted to the face above him were soft and clear as a limpid pool under the kiss of a June sun. His curved spine spoke of past pain and suffering of which his glorious face gave no hint. No suspicion of melancholy or morbid self-consciousness clung to him. One lost sight of the hunchback in looking at the mingled peace and power of his face.

"I've tried to look you up once or twice," continued Long, "but never succeeded in finding you. Why didn't you come before?"

"You have not needed me," replied Paul Masters gently, and his voice did not belie his face. Sweet and sympathetic it yet had a resonance suggestive of something held in reserve, and his words had a particular distinctness though his tone was low.

"That means that you thought the time had come around again for one of your sermons, eh! Oh! Paul! Paul! Save your powder! I am not worth it," returned his host as he drew forward a particularly easy chair and took his guest's crutches from his hands.

"You are worth all the means at my command for your salvation, Everett," replied Paul Masters as he

settled into the capacious chair, looking so diminutive by contrast as to be almost extinguished. Only his glorious head stood out from the dark background, beauty framed in obscurity.

"One would think to hear you, Paul, that you were a religious exhorter of the first water, and yet you never give me the pill of religion in the apple-sauce of friendship. Your views are as queer as your liking for me. They are equally a puzzle."

"All puzzles are simple when you understand them," said his companion. "I love you."

There was a quiet steadfastness in his tone, more impressive than wordy protestations could have been, as he gazed serenely in the other's face.

A wave of feeling passed over it, breaking up its studied indifference, as Everett Long responded heartily:

"I really believe you do, Paul. You have stood by me for years when you had nothing to gain by it and I abused your friendship. You have nursed me when I was ill, helped me out of scrapes when I was well, opened your pocket-book when I needed it and, best of all, you have never bored me with a goodness whose reward was a seat in Heaven."

His friend did not reply and a silence fell between them.

"Tell me," said Paul Masters at last, "what has occurred since I saw you last. The money was paid you all right, wasn't it?"

"Yes, no trouble whatever. And your advice has had some effect at last. I have invested it securely and do not mean to spend more than the income it yields.

Perhaps, too, my recollection of past experiences was keen enough to determine my action. I did not quite enjoy being reduced to a ten-dollar note." There was a trace of bitterness in his tone. "However, that's past and gone. This legacy has come in good time and I appreciate its value more than I would formerly have done."

"It has come to you as all things will to all men—when it is best for them to have them; not always when they want them," replied Paul. "You have learned, I think, that money is for use, not abuse. So much experience has done for you."

"Humph!" returned his companion as he rose from his chair and began to pace the floor. "Experience is a sorry jade. For every sugar-plum she pours you out more than one dose of wormwood."

"Experience is the angel of revelation to those who have need of her," said Paul Masters quietly. But a light glowed in his face which made it as a sun in the cloud of his surroundings. "The time will yet come when you will be thankful in your soul for every part of it, even while you regret some of it."

Everett Long smiled half sadly, half ironically.

"You have more faith in my possibilities and future than I have," he said.

"Because I know your possibilities and you as yet do not," replied Paul Masters quickly. "You have enjoyed the sense-man while I have studied the higher one. Were you at the wedding yesterday?"

The other walked more rapidly. "Yes," he replied briefly.

His visitor watched him silently for a moment.

"By G—d! I have committed many a bad act but never a mean one!" he burst out suddenly.

"So much the better for you," replied Paul quietly. "You will have to take the consequences of only your own acts."

"Well! I am able to take them!" said Everett, throwing his head back haughtily. "I will never seek to throw them upon any one else."

Paul looked at him fixedly until he returned his gaze.

"Remember that!" Everett said. "I may yet remind you of it."

Neither spoke for a moment, during which Everett continued to pace the floor and Paul seemed to be pondering something. Then:

"Come here, my friend, will you not, and sit by me?" he said. "I cannot 'sermonize' for such a walking whirlwind."

It would have struck an observer as curious, the ready obedience Everett Long showed his diminutive friend. With strength enough to have carried him with one hand, he seemed to yield to a superior strength at a word. He came at once and seated himself beside Paul, who laid his hand on his knee.

"You are not suffering so much from disappointed love, Everett, as you are smarting under a mixed sense of unfairness toward yourself, contempt for him and an angry pity for her. Experience has not yet become revelation for you. I will not rouse your anger by telling you that it is better as it is—you will yet tell me that—but rather try to show you what use you may make of what you have passed through. First, look

back over your life. What had you to offer her in return for what she had to give?"

"Don't I know that!" broke out Everett Long. "Was it not because I knew that the smirch of my own life made it unfair to seek connection with hers, that I waited and held aloof when I might—I think I might—have won her? And he knew it—the cur—and stepped in and drew her to him, not because he loved her, but because he thought I did, and then boasted of his success, using her name in company where his tongue should have rotted first. I hope that his days will be torment and his nights torture—"

"Stop!" said Paul sternly. "Now you are unworthy of yourself. He has his future before him. He will have quite enough to do to meet it. You need not make it harder for him. 'Thoughts are things' and once created run their course. I repeat, what is called a disappointment in love does not apply to you now. Underlying the outer man who has lived for and through the senses you have a fine strong nature with high instincts and noble impulses. The divinity in you is bursting its prison-house and will not be held captive much longer. It was this nature, attracted by a sweet lovable woman, which compelled you to look upon the outer man and recognize the difference between him and her; which showed you the unfairness of taking advantage of her innocence, born of her ignorance. The very honesty and simplicity which attracted you—both through the recognition of your higher nature and the contrast they offered to what you were most used to—made it easy for Walter Hemmingway to win her. He *could not* act as you did any more than you

could do as he has done. He followed his bent as you did yours. His awakening is to come and through pain."

His companion made a motion as though to interrupt him, but Paul went steadily on.

"You loved—because really you have affinity with—certain qualities in her. Good little woman as she is, she would not have called out the best in you. That your best must be active is for you a vital necessity. Your past tribulations have been a war with yourself because you were never satisfied in your excesses. They were great because your nature is great. There is nothing mediocre about you. When your soul spoke you were always self-condemned. She is a good but a weak woman, weak because she lives in her affections which are strong. He is weak morally, so weak he is not wicked but worse. He is a moral idiot. Their married life will be a scourge for her, but the means for her development as well. For him it will be a pastime, a forgotten fact, an irritating impediment, or a temporary refuge, as his experiences multiply themselves. You are a strong man, you need a strong woman. You will have her when you are worthy of her."

He paused as if to give his companion opportunity for reply. None came. The young man's head had dropped forward and he seemed to be thinking deeply while the fierceness in his face died away.

"Every one has his ideal," continued Paul Masters, "but the ideal of your awakened manhood will not be Emma Haines. You have become disgusted with excess, impatient with moral faults your finer nature in-

stinctively spurns. You are groping vaguely and blindly after something which begins to draw you another way. Everett Long!" and he spoke impressively, looking earnestly in Everett's face the while, "you have reached an important period in your life. Yesterday's experience was the closing incident in a series which has brought you to it. On your choice now, more than you realize depends. I have waited for this and am here to help you. If you will set free this struggling god within you, if you will serve him as he will serve you, you will have a hard but glorious road before you; up hill, therefore an ascension. At every step you may score a victory, leaving the possibility of defeat further and further behind you."

His listener was breathing quickly, he had forsaken his drooping attitude, and while a tenseness seemed to pervade his whole form a tremor played about his mouth and nostrils.

"It seems," he began, and his voice had lost its defiant ring, "as if I remember something I cannot remember. Such a strange sensation!"

Paul smiled quietly.

"That which is immortal by its own nature may be covered, but never extinguished," he said. "Some time it will speak. Be quiet a moment."

The young man seemed to struggle under the influence of a strong emotion. He was like a turbulent sea within, where tossing waves made confusion and turmoil and there was nothing firm and sure to sustain him. Gradually something seemed to make itself heard through the storm, a voice and yet not a voice, a message, faint but growing more distinct as he list-

ened, an impression rather than words—"Self-mastery is the secret of power."

Self-mastery! Power! Something within him seemed to spring suddenly into life. A new ambition stirred him. An eagerness, he hardly knew for what, routed his old indifference. He heard his friend's voice saying:

"And now that you have made your choice, let us—"

"How do you know that I have made my choice?" interrupted Everett.

Paul smiled again. "I will leave the question with you. Have you not?" and he looked at him inquiringly.

A moment's hesitancy, a perceptible inward struggle, and Everett Long held out his hand.

"Help me!" he said as appealingly as a child.

Paul Masters grasped it in both his own and Everett looking in his face was almost awed by what he felt rather than saw. He seemed on the verge of a discovery, a new world was opening to him. Its threshold was a sanctuary and his friend the ministering priest. A solemnity stole over him, he had a sense of consecration and baptism, undefined at first, but which deepened as they sat a few moments in silence.

Paul was the first to speak.

"Two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time, you know," he said. "As all feeling is associated with thought you must try to change your thoughts, that you may have different feelings. By cultivating certain thoughts, you may dislodge others you have entertained and the feelings they engender. Walter Hemmingway is not your enemy and you

must not consider him such. You must have no enemies. You must become able to act toward him as you would toward one who had never wronged you. You owe this to yourself because you are able to do it. You are always able to do the right and noble thing under all circumstances; and you are capable of more than this if you will only recognize the possibility. You are able to think the right and noble thought under all circumstances."

"I have heard you say before this morning that 'thoughts are things,'" said Everett as Paul paused, "but I begin to see now what you mean."

He was quiet, even gentle, a marked contrast to his former manner.

"To build a new life one must lay its foundation. Thoughts make acts," Paul continued, "therefore it is not the acts but the thoughts that now need watching. Deadly, revengeful thoughts are murderous ones and can slay as surely, if more slowly, as a keen-edged knife. Such thoughts directed toward any one passive enough to—"

"Was that the matter yesterday?" interrupted Everett hastily. "As they came down the aisle on their way out of the church I felt such a contemptuous rage as I looked at him—but No! that could not be, for I did not feel it toward her."

"What occurred yesterday?" asked Paul.

"Just before she reached the door she turned pale and swayed as if she might fall. It was only an instant but I noticed it."

"You had been thinking all the while they stood at the altar and for some time before as you have ex-

pressed yourself to me this morning, had you not?" asked Paul.

His companion nodded.

"And as they retraced their steps you were mentally concentrated upon them to the exclusion of all else. Your intense nature gave a force to the thought you sent toward them, a projectile which entered where there was not sufficient resistance to prevent. He was less affected, consciously, than she."

Everett Long looked at the speaker half incredulously.

"Do you mean to say that her attack of faintness, or whatever it was, was caused by my thoughts?" he asked.

"If you had taken a pistol and shot her down, would it not have been merely the instrument through which you executed your thought?" replied Paul Masters. "If it is possible for thought to act on others without the medium of a visible instrument—as you will some time know—could not the kind of thought prompting such an act affect her or another unpleasantly?"

Everett did not reply and the speaker continued earnestly:

"As a thinking being you are a centre of force in the universe. From the moment you begin to recognize this fact you are responsible for the use of your power. You are done with the past. All that remains for you is what you have brought out of it. Its only value is what you have learned from it. To-day you are born again, and the new man is to grow from his infancy to his maturity by overcoming the consequences of his past acts."

He reached for his crutches and rose from his chair.

"I will see you again in a few days. Meanwhile keep yourself from revengeful, even unkind thoughts as you would keep your hand from the pistol or the knife. You can do this only by cultivating better ones. At present this is the way you must feed the new-born and it is your part of the work."

Left alone a few minutes later, Everett Long walked to the mirror and gazed intently. "Only the instrument?" he said half aloud. Minutes passed and still he stood there. Again came that inner sound which was not sound.

"Crucifixion is resurrection. Be your own redeemer."

He felt a gentle glow at some inward centre which seemed to spread in waves, accompanied by a tingling sensation as if a new life were flowing into his body. Finally, raising his hand he drew with his finger a cross in the air over the image reflected in the mirror.

CHAPTER III.

THROUGH the doors opening upon the street a crowd was pouring from one of the large halls of Benton.

"Admirable!" "Exceptionally fine!" "Quite an extraordinary production!" "A remarkably gifted woman!" was heard from all sides.

A curious observer would have been told that a meeting of the large and influential "Society for Mutual Help and Improvement," which had been addressed by Miss Miriam Hartwell, a prominent member, had just been dismissed. He might have heard a good natured looking cabman standing by the curb say to his brother cabby:

"It beats all what a crowd there is to them meetin's when that there lady speaks."

"Yes. Ther wimmin is gittin there sure 'nough. Hi! there! Drat yer! Take care er yer own dinner!" as the cab horse who had his oats, as some people have honors, thrust upon him, tossed his head the better to get the dinner at the bottom of the canvas bag fastened over it. A shower of oats between the back of the cabby's neck and his collar, which worked their own way to a more intimate acquaintance with the rest of his anatomy, interrupted temporarily the masculine view of "wimmin gittin there."

"That's her now!" said cabby number one as he administered a friendly rub and slap to the other's back.

The crowd had dissipated as a lady, a little in advance of another who evidently accompanied her, emerged from the central exit. Tall and erect in figure, her gait as she crossed the wide sidewalk to a waiting carriage confirmed the promise of her face. She was a worthy specimen of the nineteenth century species—the advanced woman. Here was no timidity, hesitation, or need of protection. She knew what she wanted to do and was conscious of her ability to do it. Her whole aspect conveyed the impression that she was sufficient unto herself.

A gentleman stepped forward as she reached her carriage.

"Allow me to congratulate you on your effort of this morning, Miss Hartwell," he said as he assisted her and her companion.

"Oh! Good-morning, Mr. Long!" she replied. "I saw you in the audience. Our subject was a most interesting one, was it not?"

"Exceedingly so, as was the manner in which you handled it."

"I believe you have not met my sister, Mr. Long. Sarah, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Everett Long."

Sarah Hartwell was a marked contrast to her sister, not so much in appearance as in the impression she made on one, or rather in the lack of strong impression made on first meeting her. This much he observed as he stood at the carriage door exchanging the common-places incidental to an introduction.

"Remember our Friday evenings, Mr. Long!" called Miss Hartwell as they drove away. "We shall always be glad to see you."

Everett Long walked slowly down the street. He had changed greatly even in the year since the morning conversation with his friend Paul Masters which had been fraught with so much to him. More of the underlying possibilities of his nature had come to the surface and erased in a degree the impress his former life had made. His intellect, always active, was working in a new direction, no longer devising ways and means for carrying out undisciplined impulse; no longer acting as the tool of the sense-nature, but as the faithful and respected servant of its growing master.

He had had many a battle with his old self, battles which had left him scarred. Former friends—he had called them friends—had first laughed, then sneered, then dropped him. Companionable no longer, they left him to such companionship as he could find in his ideals, his efforts, his aspirations; left him to that loneliness all awakened souls must experience when surrounded by the spiritually dead, but in which Paul Masters' faithful service was the bright star that ever showed him the way.

He observed that the times when he was most depressed and discouraged were the times he either saw or heard from Paul; when he questioned if there were a divinity, as Paul called it, within him, and if it were worth while to live and struggle if he could end it all. But then there surged within him such a protest, such an uprising as it were from some hidden deep in his nature, an almost audible "Are you sure that death

ends all?" that he, half in despair and half in hope, resumed his efforts again.

Paul's injunction, "Live to your best, not your least, for you are able to do it," was a tonic to him. He never heard Paul mourn over his past, express fear for his present, or anxiety for his future. He was always confident and serene, always sure of his friend's ability to achieve whatever he appointed for himself. Never once did he say to him, "You are liable to fall." It was always, "You are able to stand."

He kept his resolve to spend no more than his income and began to read and study, to take some interest in the pressing questions of the day. From living to himself alone, he began to notice how other people lived, to feel sympathy for their privations, a connection with humanity which impelled him to closer inspection of its burdens and needs.

He walked slowly along, meditating on what he had heard that morning—"The Relation of Education to the Progress of a Community." How admirably Miss Hartwell had filled the position assigned her! How clearly she had defined what education must be and traced the progress of a people under intellectual stimulus! How logical were her arguments, how remarkable her reasoning power! What an exceptional woman she was! How different from those with whom his former mode of life had brought him in contact!

"How are you, Long?"

He looked up at Walter Hemmingway, who, standing before him with his wife, went on in a hail-fellow-well-met sort of way, "Have not seen you for an age! Why don't you come and look us up?"

Since that wedding day Everett Long had met his former associate but seldom. At first the old rage and contempt swelled within him, but he had come to see, as Paul Masters had taught him, that thoughts harm or help those toward whom they are directed and that every thought brings its harvest to the sower of the seed. He had begun to see the act of Walter Hemmingway as the impulse of a weak vain nature rather than the premeditated plan of an intentional enemy; and this perception added to the other enabled him to meet him with a reserved courtesy which limited their intercourse to ordinary salutations. Emma he had not met at all.

She stood before him now holding out her hand with a smile, looking at him with a gentle persuasiveness as she said :

“Pray give us convincing proof that our friendship is not merely a memory.”

He was constrained to acknowledge the manifest desire for future intercourse, he could not repel the husband's advances in the presence of his wife. She could not know, even if she might guess, of his former feelings toward her, for he had never expressed them. A fool had rushed in where he had feared to tread. In that incomprehensibly short space of time which is no time he reviewed the past and reached the present to find that there was really no reason, in the light of his present views and consciousness, why he should not meet them as he did others; not as friends—for friendship was growing to have a deep significance for him—but as members of the same human family whose well-being was involved in his own.

With a cordial pressure of Emma's hand and a courteous response to her husband's invitation he left them committed to an indefinite call upon them.

"How he has changed!" said Emma. "He seems so much older in some way; and yet it is barely a year since I saw him. Did you notice it, Walter?"

Her husband did not seem to hear her. He was ruminating as he walked along, and his mental pictures did not seem to be altogether pleasant ones. His wife laid her hand on his arm.

"What? He older? I suppose so. It's a natural consequence of living. I did not notice. Say, Emma, you go on home. I will be up in time to take you for a drive this afternoon. I want to see some one."

His wife did not at once reply. She stopped, as had he, her hand still upon his arm. A mixed emotion showed itself in her face, the wish that he should not leave her, the doubt of his return at the appointed time, and the desire not to offend him by expressing either.

"Will you surely—" she began timidly, but was cut short by his signal to a car-driver.

"Here you are, dear!" he said, drawing her from the sidewalk as the car stopped. She stepped on silently, pressing her lips closely together—they would have trembled otherwise—and did not even look after him as he continued on his way.

Emma Hemmingway was more than a year older in experience than Emma Haines had been. She was learning many things, had learned one—she could not rely upon her husband's word. A promise with him was something that did not necessitate a performance.

It was an expedient, handy on occasion, with no endurance beyond it except to carry out his own desires. While she knew this fact, knew that it was a fact, her heart refused to acknowledge it. That always found excuses, reasons why he did this and did not do the other. It sternly refused to look upon the growing revelation of character in her husband and hugged to it instead the ideal she had married.

That afternoon she sat by the window where she could see him as he came down the street. She was dressed for the promised drive and wore a more cheerful face. One of the resolves made on the eve of her wedding, which she had striven faithfully to keep, was that her husband should never see her cry; he should see only a pleasant face. For, she argued to herself, a man's home must be pleasant for him, something more than a place to stay in, if he shall be content to remain in it. And how can he be contented if he is to see a discontented, worried, or crying wife?

So she had striven bravely to put her own feelings so far in the background that they should never come within his line of vision when they were of a kind likely to be disagreeable to him.

"A wife's duty is to consider her husband in all things before herself," was her motto.

She sat at the window, a book in her hand, which she read at intervals, till the fading daylight told her the time for driving was past. She busied herself with needlework—such a dainty bit of fine white flannel and embroidery!—till the clock showed her the near approach of the dinner-hour. She listened for his quick run up the steps, worked a little, listened again, then

gave orders that dinner should wait as Mr. Hemmingway had not yet come home.

She waited a half-hour, an hour, an hour and a half, and then attempted to eat her dinner alone, that she might release the servants from the delay imposed upon them. Attempted, for, try as she would, her heart was too full to allow her to eat.

She resumed her work, her listening, till the hands of the clock in their slow dragging away from the hour of ten had nearly reached eleven. "I will wait till the clock strikes," she said to herself.

The clock struck. He had not come. She went upstairs to their room and prepared slowly for bed. The last flicker of cheerfulness she had kept to the front all the evening, dying down at intervals only to flash with renewed brightness as she thought she heard his step, died out altogether as she laid her head upon her pillow. Tears stole gently down her face as she lay in the semi-darkness waiting, listening, hoping, till the clock struck twelve.

He had not come. Burying her face in the pillow she sobbed aloud.

CHAPTER IV.

WALTER HEMMINGWAY was roused the next morning by his wife's gentle hand on his face and loving voice as she said, "Walter! Walter! Wake up! It is very late, and a man is down-stairs who declares he will not go away until he has seen you."

"Eh? What? D—n you! Let— Oh! Is it you, Emma? What's the matter?"

She had shrunk back from the bed, the color coming and going in her face, as he struck out wildly with one arm. More than once that morning she had gone to see if he were not about to waken. She had noticed his heavy breathing, his loosely dropping jaw, the flushed, almost mottled appearance of his face, the indescribable and repulsive odor which clung about him and permeated the room.

She had struggled not only to repress but to expel the fear which possessed her, making excuses, inventing reasons for his late home-coming the previous evening and the stupor rather than sleep which was so prolonged in the morning. The possibilities suggested by what she saw were put resolutely one side by what she wanted to believe.

Had not Walter promised to forsake his old ways, solemnly promised to give up his pleasures, to use wine

only in moderation as social duties demanded it of him, to be a model husband and family man if she would only marry and help him?

Had he not assured her again and again that he would do anything to win her, that never such a husband lived as he would be to her, never such a home was known as they would have together?

Had he not declared on his knees at her feet that he would die if she did not marry and help him? He could not live without her! She was his life, his soul, his salvation, his all. With her he was everything, without her he was nothing.

How he loved her! He could not fail to be what she expected of him, what he had promised to be! It was simply impossible.

"There is nothing the matter," she replied, her voice quavering suspiciously, "only it is the middle of the forenoon and this man insists on seeing you."

He muttered something under his breath. "Who is he anyway?"

"I do not know. When I asked his name he said it did not matter, but to tell you he must see you."

"Well, tell him I am sick and in bed. I do not know who it is and I do not want to see him anyway."

His wife stepped quickly forward and leaned over him anxiously.

"What is it, dear? How do you feel? Shall I—"

"Oh! It's nothing much!" he interrupted her impatiently. "I shall be all right when I have pulled myself together. Do go down and get rid of him." And rolling over he pulled the bedclothes about him, showing his determination to remain where he was.

She hesitated a moment, began to speak, checked herself and slowly left the room.

In a few minutes she returned. Her husband did not move. Reluctantly she again approached the bed.

"Walter dear! I'm sorry to disturb you, but he has sat down in the hall and declares he will not go without seeing you if he has to wait until to-morrow morning."

With a smothered oath Walter Hemmingway threw back the bedclothes and sat up.

"I suppose I shall have to go down and settle him," he said. "I should think, though, you might get rid of any one I don't want to see."

Emma felt a pang which sent a sudden weakness through and through her. Had she not done her best to save her husband annoyance?

Noting her silence as he dressed, he seemed to awake more fully to the situation.

"I declare, Emma," he exclaimed, "I have been a home-body for so long that a little fun with the boys uses me up. I met my old friend Hal Smith, who is just back from a trip abroad, as I was about coming home to dinner last night. He stepped from the car into my arms, almost, as I was waiting to step on. He couldn't come up with me, for he had to make a train early in the evening, so I took dinner downtown with him and then looked up some of our mutual friends. The evening was gone before I knew it, and I really did not get home till twelve o'clock. You were sleeping soundly as a baby when I came, dear, and I took good care not to disturb you. You don't mind, do you? Give me a kiss."

She threw her arms around his neck.

"N—o, not much, Walter," she replied. "I am glad you enjoyed yourself, though I wish you could have brought him home with you. But—was it not later than twelve o'clock when you came? I had not gone to sleep then."

She looked earnestly in his face and he seemed to feel uncomfortable under her inspection. Kissing her hastily he turned and began to look for something, opening one drawer after another.

"Hadn't you? It was pretty near that. Where are my turnover collars? Can't stand a choker this morning!" and he rummaged industriously.

Emma took them out almost from under his hand.

"Oh! There they are!" he continued. "What should I do without you, little woman?"

She smiled, rather faintly in spite of her effort to be cheery, and helped him till he was ready to go downstairs. As they descended she felt rather than saw the start he gave as his eyes fell upon the man waiting below.

"Just see if breakfast is ready for me, will you, Emma?" he said as they reached the hall.

She went away at once, hearing nothing of what passed between them, Walter carefully closing the door after her.

In a few minutes he came to the dining-room, sitting down to the table and talking, in a busy bustling sort of way, of everything and nothing at the same time. She poured his coffee and hovered around him lovingly while he rattled on. Had she the inclination he gave her no opportunity of speaking.

"That girl does not cook as well as she used to," he said, as he pushed his beefsteak from him. "Another cup, dear. No, I won't have any eggs. Just give me a piece of that toast. By Jove! It is awful late! I must be off. What are you going to do to-day?"

He hardly seemed to hear her answer as he looked at his watch and pushed back his chair. He had scarcely touched the toast, had eaten a mere nothing, but he had drank three cups of strong coffee.

She followed him to the hall. He continued to talk while putting on his coat.

"Now good-by, little one! Take care of yourself and I'll be up bright and early to-night. There! There's two kisses for you instead of your regular allowance."

He turned back as he stood on the step, saying as he shut the door:

"Say, Emma, if that man comes here again tell him I have gone out of the city and you don't know when I will be at home."

She stood silent for a moment after he had left her and then went slowly up-stairs to her own room.

Who could that man have been? What did he want with her husband? How dared he be so dictatorial? Why did Walter seem to want to get away from her? Why had he told her he got home at twelve o'clock? She was awake till long after twelve. Had he—could he have told her a lie? No! Oh, no! How could she think such a thing? How dared she? Her husband could not—

Suddenly she remembered that he had said nothing of the promised drive. He had met his friend only as

he was about to come home to dinner. Could he—have—forgotten her?

The tears welled to her eyes—she was safe, for he was gone. “What should I do if he should forget me quite?” she said to herself. A desolateness began to creep over her, a paralyzing feeling that seemed to check the beating of her heart, that made her breathing fainter and fainter.

She roused herself by a vigorous effort. What was she doing? Making herself miserable by suppositions. A sensible thing to do, truly. Her husband was—her husband. He could not do *anything* mean, deceitful, or wicked. He was impulsive, warm-hearted, generous. He might make mistakes in judgment, though even that was doubtful. He *must* know about everything better than she. What a goose she was to sit there and cry over her own imaginings! Men could not be like women and remember every little word and thing. They had too busy lives, too much crowded upon them. He would explain everything to her satisfaction when he had more time. Of course he would. She had better attend to her household duties and see that everything was just as he liked to have it when he came home.

She went down-stairs and busied herself. She sang at her work. She read for a time when everything was in order. The book did not interest her.

She had settled everything satisfactorily. Why did her heart ache?

CHAPTER V.

"You will have to attend to that, Sarah. I have an important essay to prepare and I cannot be distracted by these petty details. See that Ann does not meddle with my desk when she cleans my room, won't you? I am going down to the public Library to get some statistics I need."

Miriam Hartwell stood in the hall bonneted and gloved, her hand on the door-knob as she spoke. Her sister carefully adjusted the folds of her mantle as she passed out.

"Good-by, dear," she said.

"Good-by, Sarah. If I should not return by luncheon-time, keep some warm for me. And do see that it is not allowed to dry by being kept. I detest unsuccessful things of all kinds."

Sarah Hartwell closed the door and went up-stairs. It was a bright, genial day in October, cool without being cold. Her own room, which adjoined her sister's, looked very inviting with the warm sunshine streaming in and flooding it with a subtle vitality. Beside her work-basket lay a newly arrived magazine, its leaves still uncut. She looked at it longingly a moment, but passed into her sister's room and began carefully to move and dust the contents of her writing-table.

She worked busily till everything was restored clean and whole to its original place; worked hour after hour in many and devious ways with many and devious things pertaining to the care of a household. Late in the forenoon she tapped softly at a door at the end of the upper hall, opening it gently.

It was a large room that was revealed, at the back of the house and overlooking a small but well-kept garden. In the bay-window in an invalid chair was seated a man who turned his face toward her as she entered. It was wan and worn as if with pain, and framed in scanty white hair. The hand he held out to her as she approached was the hand of a student, of a mental rather than a physical worker.

"You have been very busy, my child, have you not?"

"A little more than usual, father," she replied, smoothing his hair lovingly.

"I have not yet seen Miriam," he continued. "Where is she?"

"She has gone to the Library to get material for the work upon which she is engaged."

A sparkle came in his eye and a slight flush to his face.

"She will do it well," he said, "excellently well. Your sister is a very superior woman, my child."

"Yes, father, she is," Sarah replied heartily.

"Did you see this letter from Professor Dobbinson in reference to that last article of hers in the 'Rational Age'? He admires it exceedingly and pays me the compliment of saying her ability must be in part the result of my example and training. Well! Perhaps!" he continued musingly as Sarah read the letter.

"You know," he went on, "I have always believed it a monstrous wrong that our former system of education should include so much for young men and so little for young women; that the training of the intellect should be given almost entirely to our boys. Fortunately of late years that wrong has been largely righted and your sister has been able to afford proof that intellectual ability is not confined to the masculine sex. I would not be afraid to match her with many of its leaders," he concluded triumphantly.

"She could stand the comparison without loss, I am sure, father," assented Sarah. "But I came to see if there was any special dish you would like for your luncheon to-day."

He pondered a moment. "I believe I could eat a little broiled chicken if you will prepare it. Maria is apt to scorch it somewhere and the least touch spoils it. You look tired, though," looking up into her face. "Are you tired, my child?"

"I am never too tired to do something for you, father dear," she replied gently, as with a parting pat she left the room.

"A good child! A good child!" he mused half aloud as she went.

Dr. Hartwell was a retired physician and a confirmed invalid. Having been in his years of activity a very successful practitioner, he had established a reputation which led to his still being frequently consulted by his professional brethren and had accumulated means sufficient to live in comfort with his two daughters.

He was a widower, his wife having died some years previous. He had been a specialist in his practice

and, curiously enough, he suffered from the same disordered organ he had professed to restore to harmony—the stomach. A studious man, enthusiastic in his profession and in all intellectual culture and attainment, he had afforded his daughters opportunities to excel in scholarship which they had not neglected. He had made them, especially Miriam, intellectual companions. She had shown greater eagerness and aptitude than her sister, and her father's pride in her was not ill deserved. She was one of the leading women of Benton, taking precedence of many whose wealth and family connections were far beyond hers.

Sarah soon returned with a servant bearing the tray containing her father's luncheon. The chicken was broiled to perfection, the accompanying jelly quivered suggestively in its cut-glass dish, the toast was a delicate golden brown and buttered to the edges, the silver was shining its thanks for the labor bestowed upon it, the linen was fine and white and showed signs of careful laundering.

She remained with him while he ate, waiting upon him so unobtrusively, and chatting so entertainingly, that before he was aware of it he had eaten nearly all she had provided.

"Really, I am afraid I have eaten too much!" he said as the tray was removed and his reading-table took its place.

"Oh, no, father!" said Sarah cheerily. "You were really hungry to-day and you will suffer no harm I am sure. Now I am going to leave you to take your nap and then by and by I will come and read to you Dr. Patterson's last article on the brain."

She brought another cushion for his head, covered him carefully with a light but warm silken slumber-robe, drew down the shades and stole carefully out of the room.

Passing her own door again she hesitated a moment—the magazine had not been touched—but went on down-stairs. She must make sure that Miriam's luncheon was ready to be served at a moment's notice, for her sister did not like to wait, and that it did not reach the state which was sure to call forth her displeasure. Miriam worked hard—she was so ambitious—and expected ample provision for her creature comforts. She had too much to accomplish to give her own time and attention to trivial things.

It was Miriam's reception evening also, and she must see that the flowers were sure to be ready, the tea things properly arranged, and the table on the very spot where Miriam wanted it, and— Oh! Maria had burned the wafers this week and she must send, or go herself, to Whitney's and get some. Miriam would never have forgiven her if she had forgotten it, or at least not for a long time.

It was of no use, she could get no leisure for herself to-day, there was too much to be done.

An hour later she was sitting with her sister while she partook of her late luncheon. Miriam did not like to eat alone.

"I saw Walter Hemmingway on the street this morning," she was saying, "and he looked not at all as he did six months ago. I wonder if he is behaving himself now?"

"I hope so, for his wife's sake at least," replied Sarah.

Miriam's face took on a severe expression.

"Why did she marry him? She knew what he had been. Whatever comes she has no one to blame but herself."

"She loved him very dearly and thought that he loved her so well he would be different if she were his wife. She felt that she could save him," said Sarah gently.

"Well, she will probably have what so many women experience who marry foolishly or 'all for love,' a life of dependence and mortification spent in making apologies for her husband. I do not see why women will be so foolish as to live in their emotions instead of using the reason that would save them from such a fate. Hearts are good things to have, but brains are better, for hearts are continually getting people into difficulties. This chocolate is altogether too thick, Sarah. I wish you would remember that I like it thinner. Can't you sew the lace in the sleeves of my brown silk this afternoon? I want to wear it this evening."

Sarah did not answer at once.

"I'll try to do it," she said finally.

"I met Paul Masters this morning, also," Miriam continued. "He came into the Library while I was there. He is such an interesting man to talk to, though he has some very strange ideas and his views on many subjects are far from sound, I think. He is too much of an idealist and facts are what we want. They have value, while theories are generally untenable and improbable. Why have you placed that jelly so far away? That will do. I wonder if Everett Long will come to-night? He is really quite an entertaining conversationalist, for he always gets away from the dead level

of small talk. Now I am going up-stairs"—rising as she spoke—"and please see that I am not disturbed for at least two hours."

Sarah heard the bolt turn in the lock as Miriam closed her door. She remained seated in the high-backed dining-chair, her relaxed attitude indicating weariness. She seemed unconscious of the frequent glances of the maid who was clearing the table.

"Why don't you go up-stairs and take a nap, Miss Sarah?" said Ann at last. "You've been at it all the morning and must be beat out."

She opened her eyes and raised her head. A soft light shone in them, while a gentle smile played over her face.

"By and by, Ann," she said as she rose. "I am going to father's room now. If any one calls for Miss Miriam you will come to me and not disturb her. And please try to keep the house as quiet as possible. Doors will shut hard sometimes if we do not watch them, won't they?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'll remember," replied Ann.

But when she reached the kitchen she relieved her mind to Maria, the cook.

"I vow to gracious! if it isn't a shame the way Miss Sarah has to wait on her sister! She hadn't ought 'er be so good: she's jest imposed upon."

Maria nodded with a tempered approval. "Miss Miriam's a smart 'un though," she said.

"Smart! Humph!" ejaculated Ann as she went to a closet. "Nobody says she isn't, but there's things in this world better than smart, I'm thinkin'. O Lord! I forgot!" this, as the door shut loudly behind her, emphasizing her opinions.

CHAPTER VI.

"No, I do not think so. The time has largely gone by when women are considered less attractive because they have found they are fitted for something more than the drudgery of household routine and the care of a family."

Miriam Hartwell's head was very erect as she spoke. Everett Long was seated beside her, and his look as it rested upon her coincided with her view. They had been considering the progress to be made toward the highest civilization and woman's share in the work which helped it forward.

The room was well filled and conversation was animated. Miriam Hartwell desired to draw around her people who had something to talk about instead of those who make conversation, and she generally succeeded in whatever she undertook. As she said, she "hated failures."

Everett Long thought her very attractive. He felt something in her to which he was akin. Her independence, her ability, her freedom from the small affectations of the average woman appealed to him. Her confidence in her own power communicated itself to him and he found himself watching her every movement and listening for her every word.

Dr. Hartwell was comfortably installed at one side

of the room. His fatherly pride was quite visible as he marked the deference paid his eldest daughter. Men whom he knew as scholars and eminent in different lines, men of national and international reputation, conversed with her as an equal, not as with most women. There was no palpable letting down to a level below their own, but instead, the natural exchange of comrade with comrade.

Sarah was near her father, quietly attentive to his possible wants and to the comfort of the guests, bearing but little part in the animated discussions which followed each other as differing views were presented. But if any one seemed to be out of the direct wave and a little lost in the highly intellectual atmosphere of the room, he found her at his side and his incipient uneasiness soon disappeared. He found himself speaking fluently to a most interested listener, and when she left him he was not overburdened with a sense of her intellectual superiority.

She rose and moved toward the door as some one entered. A glad expectation was in her face as Paul Masters advanced to meet her. Only a low word or two was spoken as they for a moment clasped hands, a strange salutation.

"How are you thinking?" from him.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law," from her.

A light shot from their eyes, met, mingled, and faded as he passed on to greet Miss Hartwell.

She looked more regal than ever as she received and welcomed him, the contrast between her commanding figure and his own operating particularly to her advantage.

It was surprising to mark the result when Paul Masters became one of a company. Whatever the subject under consideration, little by little the interest centred in him and the various members found themselves listening first with polite attention, and later with an intense absorption which for the time shut out all remembrance of his physical imperfections and recognized only the charm of his face and voice, the power of his words.

They found themselves lifted into an atmosphere and a region hitherto unknown to them and following him as the guide who was leading to new and newer beauties and wonders. He transported them out of their every-day selves, and they met these with something like a shock when they took them up again.

He was an idealist, some of them said, with the explanation which does not explain, but is the refuge of the intellectualists who admit nothing but "facts."

In spite of his physical defects he impressed them with a sense of power, though many would have but hesitatingly so named their impression. The outer man contradicted it too palpably.

Everett came to him as he sat down. Paul looked up in his face as he took his hand. "Well?" he said.

Everett smiled. "Yes. It is well with me," he replied.

They conversed for a few minutes, when Paul stopped in the middle of a sentence to listen.

"The atomic theory is the most valuable aid to scientific investigation of the nature of matter this age has furnished," some one was saying.

"Undoubtedly!" replied Miss Hartwell. "But we

must not forget that this aid is as yet theory only and not proven fact. Professor Dolbear is very careful to say that it is inferential knowledge only."

A commendatory rustle pervaded the room as one learned professor nodded to another learned professor in approval.

"Miss Hartwell takes nothing for granted," said the first.

"Quite different from the rest of her sex," assented the other.

"The basic atom being defined as a 'whirling ring of ether in the ether,'" continued Miriam, "the existenece of the ether and the nature of its properties must first be established."

"But this view of the nature of the atom accounts for all material phenomena," said Professor Latham.

"Possibly, so far as our present range of observation is concerned," she replied quickly. "I am quite in favor of it. It interests me exceedingly. But I wish to see it demonstrated as fact."

"It seems to me," spoke up a young man eagerly from the other side of the room, who had read Professor Dolbear's book and saw a chance to demonstrate that fact, "he has shown conclusively that all phenomena are, as he says, reducible to nothing more mysterious than a push and a pull."

"Do you find the impetus for the push and the pull?" asked Paul Masters.

"The old question again," said Miriam, "and still unanswerable."

"Or only still unanswered?—for you," he replied quietly.

"But I am open to conviction!" she exclaimed, turning toward him. "I am ready to accept whatever is proved to be true."

"My daughter always maintains the scientific attitude of mind," said Dr. Hartwell.

"When *you* determine the nature of the proof?" said Paul so gently as to rob his words of all offensiveness and without seeming to hear her father's words.

"When it is of the kind accepted by all great minds, past and present," replied Miriam firmly. "When it confronts me as visible fact."

"May there not be a kind which is recognized by all great souls, past and present?" continued Paul Masters. "A kind which confronts them as visible fact?"

No one spoke.

"Possibly. I am acquainted with only one kind of a laboratory," she said finally.

Sarah was looking at her sister with a yearning expression in her eyes which changed to confidence as she caught Paul's glance.

"Professor Dolbear says," he went on, "most phenomena are so highly complex that one can never be quite sure he is dealing with all the factors until experiment proves it. May it not be possible that we are possessed of senses and powers, lying dormant for lack of cultivation, which enter as factors into the demonstration of the nature of the causes of phenomena? That the way of proof is open to us if we become able to recognize and follow it?"

Some of his listeners looked at each other as much as to say, "There he goes again!"

"Of course we may suppose this and work accord-

ing to the supposition if one thinks it worth his while," said Miriam. "But it seems to me a dangerous practice and likely to end in self-deception. Emotion and imagination are unsafe leaders and it is better to follow in the footsteps of those intellectual giants who have accomplished so much for us."

"By all means, so long as this course satisfies," replied Paul, while most of the listeners nodded approvingly. "I know that many here are in sympathy with this theory of the nature of matter. So am I. I only wish to know more. If there be this all-pervasive medium called ether, which is not atomic in structure, presents no friction to bodies moving through it, and is not subject to the law of gravitation, and compels by this nature another designation than matter; if a vortex ring of this ether is the basic atom, atoms composing molecules and molecules making up visible bodies differing from each other according to the rates and modes of motion, how is this vortex ring formed in the ether?"

He paused for a reply, but no one answered.

"The author under discussion says, '*Imagine*, then, that vortex rings were in some way formed in the ether, constituted of the ether.' All the rest follows. It seems to me that even here much depends on the imagination."

"But this is the scientific use of the imagination," said Professor Latham quickly. "Granting the vortex ring, the conclusions are sound."

"It seems to me," returned Paul quietly, "that imagination remains imagination whoever uses it; and that what you denominate its scientific use is but its

permissible employment by the scientific investigator in framing an hypothesis which will account for facts he cannot deny, but which he cannot satisfactorily connect with anterior causes. It seems a little odd that the scientific caution which warns against the dangers of imagination should employ it, and even then not in a definite way. The atomic theory has, from the consistent scientific point of view, a fatal weakness in its foundation. 'Some way' allows very wide range of speculation. As a scientific man you cannot admit this theory correct until it has been shown how the vortex ring is formed. Meantime your only resource is the continued exercise of your imagination."

They looked at each other and at Professor Latham, who appeared to be thinking deeply and did not reply.

"He is right," finally said Miriam, who had given Paul undivided attention.

"Why is it not equally permissible," he continued, "to assume powers within our own common nature, which, if developed and brought into conscious connection with physical phenomena, will supply the evidence now lacking, because they constitute some of the factors involved?"

Everett listened with absorbing interest. Since he had made his choice as to whom he would serve, whether his best or his least, he had felt the development in himself of much which was formerly unknown to him. He could have given no names or qualities to inward facts as yet too intangible to be formulated and labeled. But he had proof of their reality.

"Of course it is," spoke up the young man from the

other side of the room. "Any one can see that your proposition is as fair as the other." And then seeing all eyes turned in his direction he blushed painfully and subsided.

Glancing toward Sarah, Everett was surprised. With her eyes fixed on Paul's face her own glowed as from an inward sun. A flash of recognition passed between them as Paul looked at her for a moment, as if she not only knew the truth of what his words suggested, but far more; as if their minds were in such perfect accord she was his silent corroborative witness.

"There is a missing link in this atomic theory yet to be supplied," assented Miriam with a graceful inclination of her head in the direction of the blushing young man. "Who can furnish it?"

Again Paul looked at Sarah, who returned his glance with one half beseeching as she drew farther back in her chair.

"Perhaps your sister might suggest a clew to it," he said. "I have found her views very interesting."

All eyes were turned to her, in some astonishment plainly visible. While the regular visitors at Dr. Hartwell's all knew and liked her, she had been so overshadowed by her brilliant sister that when topics like the present were under discussion their interest had centred in Miriam. Paul continued to look at her encouragingly as she hesitated, noting her sister's wondering glance.

"Come! Give us the benefit of your idea, my child," said her father.

"I have thought that among others two of Professor Dolbear's statements helped in this direction," she be-

gan. "If 'every kind of phenomena is the result of the transfer of some kind of motion from one body to another,' and if 'motion is the antecedent of motion,' it seems to me that the whirling ring of ether in the ether is the result of the transfer of motion, and there must be an antecedent motion as a cause for the vortex ring. This brings us working by induction to a primal motion, one which is its own cause."

"In other words, a causeless cause?" asked Professor Latham.

"Yes."

"Do you mean God, Sarah?" demanded Miriam, with an air of readiness to dispose of the whole matter at once.

"If you choose to so apply the term," she answered steadily.

"With all due deference to your and every one's belief in a God, one which I wish I was able to share, I can find no convincing proof to sustain it. This clew but again leads us to the unknowable, it seems to me," and Miriam leaned back in her chair as if it were not worth while to discuss the matter further.

"I was not speaking of a belief, but of a logical necessity," said Sarah. "To call the great First Cause, God, does not mean necessarily a personal being dwelling in a locality called heaven and ruling all things by His own fiat; but rather that No-thing which is the beginning of all things, answering approximately to the mathematical point."

"Then one does not need to be a religionist to accept this view of God?" asked Everett.

"Perhaps not after the orthodox manner," interrupted Miriam before Sarah could answer. "But religionists of any kind are sure to be one-sided in their views."

"How is it with intellectualists?" asked Everett impulsively. "May not the realm of physics, with what it indicates even more than what it includes, bear a relation to our emotional as well as to our rational nature? One quite worth our while to cultivate and understand if we can?"

"Oh! Yes! If we can!" she said. "But the rational must always lead, otherwise we shall mistake feeling for demonstration. The glory of this nineteenth century is the recognition accorded to reason and intellectual research which marks all true progress, and the opening vision of women to this fact. Their saintly piety belongs to a bygone—an undeveloped age."

And the flush upon her cheeks, the sparkle in her eyes as she spoke, together with her regal carriage, made her most attractive in the eye of Everett Long, suggesting the Miriam of old. Might she not be the prophetess of the new age whom the women would follow as they sang their song of victory?

His was not the only admiring glance directed toward her. That subtlest of all flattery, intellectual homage, was accorded her from every man in the room; that sweetest of all incense, women's admiration for a woman, as well. Only her sister and Paul Masters seemed to stand outside the charmed circle. Could it be pity that Everett Long detected in the glance they bent upon her?

The conversation became more general, and after a few moments of thoughtfulness he rose and seated himself at Sarah's side.

"The question at issue seems to have lost interest for our friends," he said, "but what you have said seems very suggestive to me. I should like to follow it further. Can you form that conception of first cause which will enable you by logical deduction to reach and account for the varying phenomena of nature?"

"Yes," she replied quietly.

"Such cause must be infinite, it seems to me; and I do not see how a finite being can comprehend it," he said.

"Neither do I," she replied. "But I can see that it is possible to apprehend it sufficiently to draw logical conclusions. We may apprehend through the woman in ourselves while the man in us vainly waits for his comprehension."

He was more than surprised now, he was perplexed. What did she mean? She remained silent and seemed waiting for him to continue the conversation if he chose.

"Would you give me a brief outline of your idea?" he said finally.

"Most gladly," she replied, turning toward him cordially. "But let me first ask you a few questions. Can anything be evolved which is not involved?"

"As an abstraction, no."

"What is called the varying phenomena of nature is the orderly unfolding to view of that which was potential or hidden, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Then it is all involved in something which does not appear except as it is manifested?"

He nodded thoughtfully.

"We deal with a series of effects which involve operative causes, do we not?"

He nodded again.

"Now think a moment of the words 'cause' and 'motion.' Your concept of the first, as well as of the second, will include action, for it is the nature of cause to produce."

"You are right," he said.

"All the effects we see, which we weigh, measure, and analyze, are 'modes of motion,' the results of 'transfer of energy,' or the products of operative causes which are related to others more remote, possibly; but all must be involved in first cause, the primal antecedent motion."

"At present, I can neither admit nor deny your conclusion," he said thoughtfully. "Your reasoning appears to be sound."

"Think of first cause as intelligence," she went on. "No! Not as the product of brain"—as he seemed about to interrupt her. "Intelligence is infinite. Not mine, nor yours, which are limited at present. It is infinite in its possibilities, or in what it involves. It is that circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. It has two aspects for us, the passive and active; or, what it is in itself, and what it *does* because of what it is. The action of first cause, or the operation of intelligence, is the primal, the antecedent motion; the 'push' of the infinite which compels not only

the phenomenon of nature, but that of individual being and the recognition of both. The action in its continuity becomes the 'pull' through this developing recognition in ourselves. What infinite intelligence is, is the unknown which gradually becomes the known through what it does, the process being the orderly evolution of what is involved in it; that evolution which is the gradual manifestation of God. The action of Infinite Mind, Primal Force, Creative Energy, Antecedent Motion—call it what you will—is the Word which is to be made flesh. You and I, as this evolution goes on, are to embody it. We are to become the living Word."

Her tone had gradually become lower and lower, so that what she said was inaudible to those about them even while its intensity thrilled him. He seemed conscious of a curious change. She was far away from him. Her voice seemed to come from a distance and to have a rhythmic vibration. She was looking down upon him from a far-off height. Colors seemed to radiate from her and play about her, meeting, separating, darting, melting, till they merged the one in the other, and a pure white light, dazzling in its radiance, shut her from view.

"Will you take a cup of tea with me, Mr. Long?"

What was that crash? Was it only some one speaking to him? Miriam Hartwell stood beside him.

"You look as if you had been dreaming," she said. "Have my sister's transcendental physics carried you out of yourself?"—with a smile fully one-half ironical.

"I quite believe it," he said with a slightly puzzled expression as he looked from one to the other. "May I trespass on your kindness still further, Miss Sarah,"

he continued, as if he had not heard Miriam's invitation, as indeed he had not, "and ask you to come down to particulars and show me how the vortex ring is to be accounted for with your theory?"

The color flashed to Miriam's face, and her eyes, always brilliant, fairly glittered as with a hardly perceptible shrug of the shoulders she turned away and walked to the other side of the room.

Sarah hesitated a moment.

"If this view of the nature of first cause is altogether new to you," she said finally, "I doubt if I can tell you so as to be clearly understood. I would rather not appear dogmatic, but without time for careful and systematic deduction I fear I cannot help it.

"If we accept mind, intelligence, as first cause—the abstract—its direct effect would be its concrete expression. If these terms are synonymous with consciousness, this concrete expression is individualized consciousness—individualized as related to its cause, universal as related to its own effects. Hence it would fill and include all space. This is the ether of modern science, which cannot be described in the terms we employ for matter, as it must precede matter in the order from first cause down to visible phenomena. Being the product of action or motion, which is ceaseless, it must possess motion as a transfer from its cause. This motion, in form, must be round or a ring. The circle is the symbol of that which is ceaseless. Is it very obscure? Do I tire you?" she asked suddenly, looking at him as if she would not be surprised were he to appear bored.

"No, indeed not," he answered quickly. "Pray go on."

“What mind is, is expressed by the ether. What mind does, is expressed in the ether. It pushes from and pulls to itself. The divine energy goes forth in expression, it returns in manifestation. As it goes forth it differentiates, reaching its highest differentiation at the point where its return begins. The vortex ring, as the basic atom of the visible world, is the motion of infinite mind transferred to that individualized consciousness which is universal for all souls or selfs. The differentiation we see as the physical universe is but the objectivity of its inherent possibilities.

“The world of matter is but the extremity of the ‘push’ and the point in the sequence involved in mind where the ‘pull’ begins. ‘The only variable factor is motion.’ Mind is forever the same. Its immediate product, the ether, is always the same. Its secondary product, the vortex ring or basic atom, is always the same because always sustained in the ether by the antecedent motion, which, potentially, includes all forms of motion. Its form *appears* as the ring. The forms included in that form, due to the relation between cause and effect, *appear* as the ‘three primary modes’ of the atom. Their compounds and interrelations *appear* as the physical universe. That which does not thus appear is greater than all. And ‘it doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ But to be ‘the image of God’ includes everything, potentially. Do you realize what this means?”

He shook his head half doubtfully, half sadly.

“Indeed I do not—cannot. Who does?”

“Who indeed!” she replied. “Were it so we should have god-men instead of blind human souls. But it is

to be." And she raised her head as if she already felt the dignity of an inborn divinity.

"Where did you get these ideas, Miss Sarah?" he asked abruptly.

"Where they and more are always to be found," she answered quietly. "From the within. Pardon me," she continued, rising from her chair as he was about to speak; "my father needs me." And she left him before he could utter the thanks upon his lips.

When the guests had departed and Sarah had gone up-stairs to her own room after giving the careful oversight necessary below, she found the door leading to her sister's room closed. It usually stood open at night or whenever Miriam, not being engaged in work at her desk, might need her sister's friendly offices.

She stood for a moment as if undecided what to do, then prepared for bed. Shutting off the gas she went to the window and leaning far out inhaled the crisp night air. Raising her head she looked yearningly into the starlit expanse above, motionless, as if waiting for something. Slowly a look of perfect peace and rest overspread her face.

In the next room Miriam was walking up and down with a perplexed expression. "What is the matter with me?" she said to herself. "I have determined on my course, and have always been able to rule out of mind whatever interfered with my ambition."

Drawing the curtains aside she looked out at the distant lights of the city, listening to the hum and stir which the darkness of night could not entirely extinguish.

"There is nothing like power," she mused. "Noth-

ing can take its place. I crave it, I long for it, I will have it!" And her thought took expression on her body in an attitude of command. "What are the domestic joys"—and her lip curled—"which content the undeveloped woman, compared to it? I will be no man's housekeeper and nursery maid. I will be the peer of any man in the intellectual world. I will help to shape the mind and mold the thought of the coming generations. My name shall live!"

CHAPTER VII.

“'ERE's yer 'Shouter'! 'Rattler'! mornin' 'Plunger'! All ther news fer two cents!”

Following the voice a grimy paw was thrust through the car door to make room for a still more grimy face.

Everett Long beckoned to the boy, who shuffled unsteadily along the jolting car to where he sat. As he paid for his paper and settled back preparatory to reading it, his attention was again drawn to the boy, who was endeavoring fruitlessly to make change for his next neighbor.

“Give us change fer a nick, mister?” said he, evidently encouraged in his request by a look at Everett's face.

He produced the desired change, looking at him more intently as he did so. “Of whom does that boy remind me?” he mused. “I have seen eyes like his before.”

Suddenly a wave of color passed over his face and, receding, left a saddened expression in its place. He unfolded his paper and began to read only to be interrupted by some one falling and an exchange of oaths at the other end of the car. The boy was picking himself up, shielding his head with one arm as if he expected a blow, while he muttered as loudly as he dared:

"Can't yer take care o' yer feet?"

"Can't you get out of a car without stepping on some one?" returned Walter Hemmingway, who was sitting near the door, impatiently.

Everett noticed that he looked heavy-eyed, was somewhat unsteady of hand, and that a coarsening redness was increasing in his face and neck. Poor girl! he said to himself, as his thoughts reverted to Emma. Paul had been right when he told him he was not really in love with her. He had kept his promise and called upon them, more than once, and found that his pulse beat in her presence as calmly as ever, that his only feeling was one of sympathy and compassion.

He was clearer-eyed than formerly and could see that her clinging affection would not have satisfied him later on—that he would have felt a lack in her. Miriam Hartwell was so different! so strong and courageous!

A spring by the conductor at the end of the car and a scream were simultaneous. Everett was the first to jump from it as it stopped, and helped the conductor lift the boy from the ground.

"The wheels have passed over his foot," he said as he bent over him and tried to stop the flow of blood. A policeman near by sent in a call for an ambulance, which soon came clanging up the street.

"Is he seriously injured?" he asked of the surgeon as the boy was lifted in and made as comfortable as possible.

"Looks like it," returned the other in a matter-of-fact way as he sprang to his seat in the rear.

Ascertaining to what hospital the boy would be car-

ried, in the afternoon he went to inquire the extent of his injuries. While the child was not particularly attractive—rather the contrary, he would say—he felt in some way drawn to him, could not get him out of his thoughts. It was because of the accident probably, he said to himself. He found the decision of the examining physicians to be that the boy would recover, although he would always be lame. Asking if he could see him, he was shown to the ward where he lay and where he found Paul Masters sitting by the cot.

“Why, Paul! How do you come to be here?” he asked surprised. “I need not ask though,” he added. “You are usually to be found with those who need help.”

As Paul looked up at him, Everett noted, as he had often done before, the steady light in his deep blue eyes.

“I have had an interest in this little fellow for some time,” Paul said.

The boy took slight notice of them as they looked at him and conversed in low tones. He was stupefied by the opiates which had been given him to deaden his pain. Now and then he attempted to move, and muttered half-inaudible profanity as he found himself unable.

As the two friends withdrew, Everett stopped to ask the attendant to do all that was possible for the child's comfort, as he would be responsible for the expense involved, and followed Paul from the building.

“Let us sit down for a while in the park,” said the latter as he led the way in that direction.

“Did you see the announcement of Miss Hartwell's newly acquired dignity in this morning's ‘Plunger’?” asked Everett as they sat down.

"Not yet," replied Paul. "What is it?"

"She has been admitted to membership in the 'Athenian Circle' — the first woman to be accorded that honor. Only men of unusual prominence in the intellectual world have found it possible to become members."

Paul remained silent.

"You do not seem surprised," continued Everett.

"No. I expect she will reach the height of her ambition."

"She is a grand woman," said Everett as he straightened himself and drew a deep, full breath. "Happy the man who wins her."

"Do you think so?" said Paul with a quiet smile.

"Why, surely you agree with me!" returned Everett as he looked searchingly at his companion.

"It depends upon the man," replied Paul. "She is not the woman for you."

The blood surged to Everett's face. "Pardon me!" he said a little stiffly. "I cannot hear you speak of her in this way. I asked her yesterday to be my wife."

"I know it," said Paul without seeming to notice the change. "She told you, while acknowledging an interest in you above most men she had met, she did not wish to marry as it would interfere with the career she had marked out for herself. And you, while assuring her to the contrary, begged her to reconsider her decision and give you her answer a fortnight hence."

Everett stared at his friend in blank astonishment.

"How did you know that?" he demanded finally. "Surely, she did not—"

"Certainly not," replied Paul, placing a soothing

hand upon his friend's shoulder. "Miss Hartwell is a strong woman. She is able to settle personal matters for herself without seeking help from others."

"Then how in the name of all that's mysterious did you know this?" said Everett again.

"One has but to have a strong interest in another and be a keen observer to see and know much," replied Paul. "It requires no exceptional perception to know what a woman like Miss Hartwell would do under given circumstances. Then there is another way. Thought is creative. Every one carries with him a personal atmosphere filled with his thought creations. One skilled in a kind of knowledge ignored by physicists can see and read them."

While Paul was speaking Everett did not take his eyes from his face. He had learned much from him, had for Paul great respect and affection; but this! Another thought struck him. If it was true, one able to see and read thought creations would be the most dangerous kind of a spy.

Paul smiled. "Have no fears, my friend," he said. "The obligations of friendship are sacred. Moreover, one who possesses this power in its higher form, who looks down upon this thought world from a height beyond, is incapable of abusing it."

Everett had said nothing. Here was proof that thoughts could be seen and read, for Paul had answered his own at the moment.

"Let us return to our subject," continued Paul after a pause, as Everett remained silent. "I repeat, Miss Hartwell is not the woman for your wife, grand woman as she is. But I must wait for you to prove this. You

cannot—and should not—accept and act upon my declaration. I wish to speak to you of another matter. Do you know who that boy whom we have just left is?”

“No.”

“He is your son!”

A shock as of electricity passed through Everett Long and left him speechless for the moment, in which two sparrows on the ground near him, quarreling over a diminutive worm, seemed the only things in the world claiming his attention.

“My son!” he said at last feebly, as the power of speech struggled back to consciousness.

“Yes.”

The blood rushed through his veins with redoubled velocity after the check it had received. His son! It could not be possible! Incidents in his past life rose upon the plane of his mental vision, passed quickly, and were gone. He turned upon Paul finally as he sprang to his feet, and said:

“What do you mean? Speak out, and quickly!”

“He is Helen Mathers’ son and yours.”

Helen Mathers! Swiftly memory brought before him the time of his early manhood, when he was a man in the strength of his impulses and desires, and a boy in his ability or wish to control them. During a summer’s outing at a country village where she had spent the season with her mother—a weak and fashionable woman who consoled herself for the temporary social burial necessitated by her husband’s financial reverses with novel-reading and white wrappers, to the neglect of her daughter—he had met her; met her too often, he remembered. He had left the place first and had never

seen her since. He had even forgotten her till—yes! It was her eyes of which the boy's had reminded him that morning in the ear.

God in heaven! What ghost from that past he was learning to abhor was come to confront him now?

He sank to his seat again as if lacking strength to stand, but grasped its iron arm and braced himself quickly.

"Go on," he said in a constrained voice. He did not see Paul's glance as it was bent upon him, full of yearning tenderness like a mother's for her dearly loved child when it suffers, and with whom she would so gladly change places if she could.

"After you left Grovedale," and Paul's voice as he went on was gentle, though firm and purposeful, "her mother awoke to the situation to which she seemed blind while you were there. Its consequences were forced upon her. She went away with her daughter and they did not return to their home for nearly a year. It was given out that they were traveling for the benefit of Mrs. Mathers' health, who, while not seriously ill, was unequal to the demands of social life in the city. This excuse was accepted in good faith even by Mr. Mathers, who had all he could do to supply the funds. The winter after their return Helen was brought out and married at the close of the season."

Paul paused, but as Everett's eyes continued to question he went on:

"They were living in a distant city under assumed names when the child was born. It was placed with strangers, and its support was paid for till after Helen and her mother left the place, which they did secretly

as soon as she was able to travel. The boy grew up anyway, anyhow, uncared for and abused till he drifted to Benton, where he has been for nearly a year. He belongs to no one, and no one belongs to him. You see plenty of his kind in every large city. He is the product of his environment—and of his begetting.”

Paul observed his companion intently as he uttered the last words. Everett's head fell forward. He covered his face with his hands and remained silent. For a time neither moved. Paul had an air of waiting—waiting with peace and confidence for something. His face was serene, his eyes looked out into space as his head rested against the back of the seat. It hardly came above it when he sat as erect as his slight frame would allow.

So small! So weak! So powerless!

So great! So strong! So powerful!

Everett heard the beating of his own heart as it thumped and labored within him. Once, even a short two years ago, he would have but little heeded such an announcement. It was the way of the world, common enough, he would have said. But now it was a revelation. He could not turn lightly from what it showed him. The man born since then, though very immature, could not fail to see through such sophistry. With him was active a sense dormant in the old man—the sense of justice.

“As a man soweth, so shall he reap.”

It did not occur to him to question the truth of Paul's announcement. He knew him too well. He groaned aloud. A wave of feeling passed over Paul's face, but he did not speak.

"I cannot do it! I cannot do it!" exclaimed Everett suddenly, straightening himself with his hand clenched on his knee.

A glory lit up Paul's face which made it shine as a star; a light which suggested the same remoteness. Taking the clenched hand in both his own he said quietly but very distinctly, "You are able to do whatever your own conviction of right demands."

Everett turned upon him with some of his former fierceness. "You ask too much! It is more than human nature can perform!"

"I ask of you nothing. You ask it of yourself. Your higher nature demands it of you," replied Paul.

"Why should this fall altogether on me? I was not alone to blame," exclaimed Everett after another pause. And then ashamed of having even for a moment seemed to shelter himself behind a woman, he continued, "No! Let it rest with me!" only to burst out a moment later as his thoughts reverted to Miriam Hartwell and the possible consequences to himself if he did what his conscience forced upon him as his duty to the boy:

"But what can I do? My God! What shall I do?"

He turned toward Paul appealingly, while his face quivered with his strong emotion.

"Let us first review the circumstances as calmly as possible," said the latter. "When barely twenty, a child in your power of self-control, you met this girl four years younger than yourself, under circumstances which threw you together for companionship and without frequent oversight. The seduction—to call it such—was mutual; was without intention on either side.

There was no wickedness, no premeditated plan. Your relation was the natural result of sex-magnetism unrestrained by the moral nature which had not sufficiently developed. You had both heard, in a general, indefinite way, of the unlawfulness of such relation, as all young people do; but you had never been taught the naturalness of your own impulses, the dignity of their right fulfillment, and the dangers of ignorance.

"She was as innocent as most ignorant girls are, but she was full of vigor and health and mistook the attraction you had for her for love. Equally, hers for you was love also, as love appeared to you at that time. Your strong dominant nature was too much for her more feeble one; for hers was an exceedingly sensuous temperament, the legitimate product of her parentage, not strong enough to withstand natural attraction when undefended by moral integrity. You flowed together as naturally as two streams, the barrier between them being removed, become one. It was nature pure and simple, for though outwardly you were both veneered with that conventionalism which accompanies our civilization, inwardly you were both on the animal plane of existence.

"The mistake you made will be repeated till men and women learn that marriage is not the legalized opportunity for self-indulgence regardless of results, thus begetting offspring who are the living incarnation of this indulgence; till parents learn that education of the young begins instead of ends with knowledge of their own natures and their consequences, physiological as well as moral. But the sin of ignorance bears fruit equally with the wilful sin. You have both to pluck

and eat it, for law is inexorable. Her line of life has led away from yours. You know nothing of her, and at present have no responsibility regarding her. But yours has led you directly to this boy, the product of his parents' passion before they had time to know the meaning of love.

"Everett Long! You have changed much in the last year and a half. Then you said to me you were able to bear the consequences of your own acts. You would never seek to throw them upon another." Everett started. "You are no longer the man of impulse, living for the moment. Your eyes are opening to the grand meaning of life, to that continuity which leads you to a region dazzling in its possibilities. You are able to answer your own question. What will you do? What ought you to do?"

Paul's voice ceased, but many rang in Everett's ears, some mockingly, some mournfully, but all persistently: "What will you do?"

"I ought to take him from his present conditions and provide him with better, and I will; especially as he is likely to be crippled for life," he replied finally.

"Any man without others depending upon him for support could do that," said Paul. "Is he entitled to nothing more?"

Everett started to speak, but remained silent as if aware of the uselessness of reply.

"Every child born into this world," continued Paul, "is entitled to parents as long as these wear the flesh. This one is the product of your pleasure. Is it right, is it manly to leave its consequences with him while you avoid them? You can care for and educate him—

yes. But then you will have done your least, not your best. You can, if you will, give him a father."

"But what would that mean for me?" exclaimed Everett. "How can I stand before the world as the father of an illegitimate son?"

"Is it the fact or not?"

Everett folded his arms across his heaving chest as if to hold it within bounds, and did not reply.

"Which is more to be regretted of the two," continued Paul—and now there was a touch of sternness in his voice—"the fact, or the world's knowledge of it?"

"O Paul!" said his companion appealingly, "the fact, of course. I know that. But it cannot be altered. Present circumstances can be dealt with. Even if I could bring myself to do this, the consequences of his illegitimacy will remain. He will have no mother."

"But their weight will be lightened," returned Paul. "A father's protection will save him much that otherwise he must experience, and give him the benefit of example. A man's example is good, but a father's is better."

Slowly, in spite of his natural resistance to it, Everett Long's conviction of duty was increasing. The right, the noble thing, was coming home to him with added force as he pictured the boy's probable future. He could place him where he would have good moral training with his education, and physical care. But who would have the interest in him that a parent would have? Could money supply what only this relation afforded? More, as a matter of strict justice, of equity rather than human law, to what was the child entitled

by his birth? Through his own self-indulgence the boy was here. What were his rights?

He could not evade these questions, though his own hopes of the future were menaced by them. But were they so seriously menaced after all? Suddenly a new one sprang up within him. If Miriam Hartwell on second thought should consider his proposal favorably, as he hoped and believed very probable, would she not recognize the justice of such action as his conscience demanded of him? He had told her frankly of his past, she could not accuse him of deception. Would she not coöperate with him in the performance of his duty? She was such a grand woman! The ordinary woman would not, could not, do this. But she!

As he meditated, varying expressions passed over Paul's face; sympathy, hopefulness, assurance, followed by sadness as Everett reached his conclusions.

"You know my hopes and wishes, Paul," said Everett finally, turning toward him. "I must let the matter wait till I have seen Miss Hartwell. I owe her this."

"You owe her this," repeated Paul assentingly after a moment's thought. "And now let me tell you of my great joy over one victory you have gained. You have not once thought of concocting a story to legitimize the child, thereby making the performance of your duty toward him easier. While this could readily be done—'a secret marriage,' and all the rest of it—you have not applied this salve to your conscience under the plea that it would be better for the child. My friend! of whom I travail in birth till the divine be formed in you"—and he placed both hands affectionately on

Everett's shoulders—"you are making progress in the fulfilling of your destiny, that destiny which is involved in your origin. We come from, we go to, the eternal. Existence is growth. Experience furnishes the conditions. Whatever comes to you, be not bowed under it. Stand above it, upheld by your potential divinity. You are able to accomplish all right things."

A peculiar influence seemed to steal over him, as had often happened when he listened to Paul as he gave expression to his thoughts. Although at first quieted and stilled, his senses of hearing and touch seemed to be extended. He came out of bounds. He came into, he flowed into all things about him, a consciousness entering into the vibrating life of all objects. He partook of their life, their energy. He felt with them. He could hear their feelings. He became one with them. He was not himself and yet he was himself, but a different self, one that overflowed former barriers. He seemed to belong to a universal pulsating rhythm which he could see, hear, smell, and taste, which increased in volume till—

"Let us go," Paul was saying, standing before him.

He rose to his feet with a curious "coming back" feeling, which, however, dissipated in a moment. He said no word, but, grasping Paul's hand for an instant, he turned and left him. He carried with him a consciousness of power.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE up-stairs shutters of Walter Hemmingway's house were closed to keep out the slanting rays of the afternoon sun. In the front chamber from whose windows his wife could look down the street—the hours and hours of watching and waiting—Emma lay, white and weak.

In the next room sat a motherly nurse with a pillow on her lap. Sarah Hartwell was bending over it, an expression of awe in her face, tempered with a pitying sweetness as she held her hands to her bosom to keep back the falling lace of her dress.

"It is too fragile to touch," she said in the nurse's ear.

Her companion nodded. "What c'n ye expect?" she said under her breath. "Hasn't the poor thing been worried to death all these months? A nice father he is! Hasn't been home sence yesterday mornin' and couldn't be found when he was sent for."

"What!" exclaimed Sarah.

"Sh! Jest push that door to, won't ye? I hadn't ought to be tellin' this, but you are a good friend o' hers and 't won't go no further. The poor thing was took early yesterday afternoon when she was alone in the house but fer her help, Mary Ann, who run fer me. I saw how things was goin' and sent fer the doctor, but

didn't send fer 'er husband, thinkin' he'd be home to dinner, which was time enough. But he never come, and when we sent fer him in the evenin' he couldn't be found, an' 'tain't the first time it's happened neither, I'll be bound."

She stopped abruptly, nodding her head violently, with her lips shut tightly together, as if there were much more she could tell were she disposed.

"There now! There now!" she crooned with a cradle-like motion of her knees as the infant set up a feeble wail.

"Do you think it will live, Mrs. Cranch?" asked Sarah.

"The Lord knows!" replied the nurse. "You never can tell. I've seen worse 'n this come up strong an' hearty, an' then again it's right the other way. Lots on 'em grow up a purpose to punish their parents, I'm thinkin'."

Placing the infant on a couch in a remote corner of the room, she tiptoed carefully to Emma's door and looked in.

"Who is with you?" asked a weak voice.

"Only Miss Sarah. You must drink your cup of gruel now. What?"—bending to hear something Emma was whispering. "No, not yet. Oh, come now! Do! jest a few swallows!" as she turned her face from her with quivering lips.

But Emma lay very still with closed eyes, and Mrs. Cranch, after hesitating a moment, went again to the other room. She met Sarah's inquiring glance with a whispered, "You go in an' see her a minute. It'll comfort her."

Sarah went noiselessly to the bedside and bent over the young mother. Emma did not seem to notice her, but great tears began to roll from under the closed eyelids. Sarah took the feeble hand and carried it caressingly to her own face, imprinting upon it a tender kiss. She saw the brave effort Emma made in spite of her weakness to hide her sorrow, as she turned her face toward her and tried to smile.

"Have you seen my baby?"

"Yes, dear." And Sarah lovingly stroked the hand she held.

"Is she like her father?"

"I think she will have her father's brown eyes instead of your blue ones," replied Sarah. "But Mrs. Cranch will send me away if I allow you to talk," she added gently as she saw the searching expression in Emma's eyes fixed on her face. "Let me sit by you quietly for a few minutes."

She noticed that Emma seemed to feel no alarm, only sorrow, at her husband's absence from home, and sighed within herself at this confirmation of Mrs. Cranch's opinion.

"How a woman whose affections are centred upon some man can suffer!" she mused.

"Sarah! What does it all mean?" whispered Emma. "Life is so hard!"

"It means that we are learning to know ourselves, dear. To know what is possible to us through our weakness and through our strength."

"I suppose God wills it," Emma sighed and remained quiet.

Sarah sat silently by her, thinking of the grand

purpose being wrought out through human suffering. Her thoughts mounted to planes above it, beyond a God who could purposely afflict men, to where she could look down upon it and see its relation to that which is higher.

There were realms upon realms of light, of joy, of glory, infinite in comparison with the petty threescore and ten years constituting the all in all for so many, who, having eyes, could not see.

There the infinite potentialities of finite being, first quickened by the agonized throbbings of a mortal heart, unfolded in all the beauty and power of selflessness and service.

There the agony became aspiration, the woe, worship, the weakness, strength, the suffering, a saving power.

There the divine alchemy transmuted the mortal into the immortal, the human into the divine.

There? Here. Here, in the world, traveling in the road of self-knowledge, "the King's Highway," traveling through *on our own feet*, turning aside neither to the right nor the left.

Here, where the only way out of suffering was the way up.

Here, where the way up was revealed to us through the recognition of our own godlike powers.

Here, where the hammer-strokes of misfortune fell thick and fast till we woke through pain from the sleep of sense-consciousness.

Here, where, our appeals to a far-off Deity failing to bring relief, we woke to the divinity entombed in humanity.

Here, where the crucifixion of the mortal brings the resurrection of the immortal.

Here, where he who has put all things under his feet knows that he lives forever.

Here, where the thorns of mortal loves and longings—ah! God! the smart of them!—became the victorious crown of waiting divinity.

When she came down from this mount of transfiguration her face shone.

She turned toward the bed. Emma was sleeping quietly. The look of suffering had disappeared from her face. It was as placid as a child's. She passed to the other room. The baby was sleeping also, and Mrs. Cranch's head had fallen forward on her breast as she sat in a capacious rocking-chair. Sarah heard the rattle of a key in the door below. Moving swiftly and silently forward she closed the door of the room and began to descend the stairs.

As Walter Hemmingway shut the front door behind him and turned toward the staircase, he stopped suddenly, his foot upon the bottom step. Was it a vision?

Above him stood a woman's form clothed in floating white, one hand raised warningly, the other resting lightly on the balustrade, a golden halo playing round her head and shining through her wavy hair. And what a peculiar light in her face!

He waited as she descended toward him, passing below the ray of light from a window above the staircase.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" he said. "Glad to see you, Miss Sarah. How's Emma? By Jove! it was unfortunate that I had to go out of town suddenly last

night. A new client with large interests involved—he went on rapidly without giving her an opportunity to speak. “A man in my profession never knows—”

He stopped suddenly as he looked in her eyes. His own fell. He saw the uselessness of subterfuge. Her glance pierced him through.

“Your wife is very weak. She is sleeping quietly now. Mrs. Cranch and the baby are in the blue room. You had better go up as noiselessly as possible.”

Her tone was low, her words few, but there was something about her which seemed to scorch and wither him. She stood aside, and he passed her without once raising his eyes.

She went on to the kitchen to confer with Mary Ann and assure her of help in the management of the household while Emma was incapacitated. Before long she heard Mrs. Cranch—whose tread the good woman tried in vain to make light—running rapidly down the stairs.

“Oh! Miss Sarah! Miss Sarah!” she said breathlessly as she reached the kitchen door. “The baby’s dead!”

Crash went a pitcher Mary Ann was filling with ice-water as she sent up a wail and dropped into the nearest chair.

“Hush!” said Sarah sternly.

“Dear! dear! the poor thing!” went on the nurse. “It hadn’t life enough to breathe long. I’m afeard for Mrs. Hemmingway. She’s that clingin’, poor child, that I don’t know—” and she shook her head mournfully

“Have you told them?” asked Sarah.

“No, I didn’t dare. He kem up an’ jest glanced at the child over his shoulder like and went into her

room. When I went to see to it, it was gone—God rest its soul.”

Sarah left the room and Mrs. Cranch followed her up-stairs. She bent over the little stranger, not with sadness, but as one who knows. The tiny lamp had been lighted but for a moment and had burned itself out. Sympathy was for those who needed it, not for the child.

She heard their voices in the next room—Walter’s coaxing, explanatory, Emma’s pleading and tearful. She was so weak now she could not help crying.

“He’ll make her worse,” whispered the nurse excitedly.

“Go in with this milk for Mrs. Hemmingway,” said Sarah. And as Emma’s husband turned from the bedside to make room for Mrs. Cranch, she beckoned to him from the door. He came at once, but avoided her eye.

“The child is dead,” she said briefly. “You must help your wife to bear it.”

He went to the couch where the child lay. “Poor little mite,” he said as he bent over it. “Why should it have been so feeble, I wonder? It’s too bad, but Emma would have found it a great care if it had lived. She’ll take its death very much to heart though, I suppose. Hadn’t you better tell her?” and he looked at Sarah for an instant, only to look away again and bend over the child as a refuge from what he saw in her face.

“What is the matter?” came Emma’s feeble voice from the next room.

“Jest drink the rest o’ this an’ I’ll go an’ see,” replied the nurse.

Sarah hesitated. She knew—was she not a woman?—that Emma would crave her husband's presence and sympathy, would turn to him as her all in all more than ever now. And from whose lips could the announcement come with less power to crush an already suffering heart than his?

"Come with me and I will tell her," she said, moving toward the door.

He started to follow her, stopped, turned back, went noiselessly out of the room and down the stairs.

"I cannot bear to see suffering," he said to himself. "I'll come back when she has gotten over the shock of it."

As Sarah approached Emma's bedside and saw the mingled alarm and expectation in her eyes, knowing without looking back that Walter Hemmingway was not with her, she opened within her own soul that door which leads to the infinite—to that great reservoir of life, of strength, of power, of love, which can never be exhausted but is always sufficient for our mortal needs; opened it that the healing and saving stream might flow through her to the suffering one who knew it not and yet needed it so sorely.

The world of love for one, to the exclusion of the many, which seems to us so vast and entrancing, proves its limitations when we wound ourselves by striking unawares against the hedge of thorns that bounds it. The fair gardens and flowering plains, the verdure-clad mountains which lift themselves to where the "I Am that I Am" reigns supreme, are the unknown and the undesired for us as we endeavor to bind our wounds and turn back to new experiences.

Only when the thorns remain to rankle in the flesh, only when they are plucked out by the strong hand of their master, do we live in the two worlds, loving with the love which is God, mediators for the Most High.

The sun had set and a gathering twilight filled the room as, taking Emma's hands in hers, she said gently, "The little bud has gone to blossom where it is always sunshine, Emma dear. Help it with your love."

Emma looked at her for a moment as if she did not comprehend her. She saw Mrs. Cranch wipe her eyes furtively with her apron. "My baby is dead?" she said inquiringly, catching her breath.

"Yes, Emma," said Sarah.

"Walter!"

The agonized cry rang through the chamber and then all was still.

"She's fainted," exclaimed Mrs. Cranch, running for water. "Here, put this on her face and slap her hands while I go and send her husband for the doctor. He'll pay for this sometime or other or I'm mistaken," she muttered as she hurried down-stairs.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER days of battle with himself, days whose hours seemed marked one by one with his very life-blood oozing from open wounds, Everett Long's sense of duty and justice won the day. He was compelled by its very strength, which wrestled with him and would not let him go, to acknowledge it ruler over worldly policy and expediency, to feel that he could better face an adverse public opinion than his own self-condemnation.

His pulse beat rapidly as he sat in the parlor of her father's residence awaiting Miriam Hartwell. Had a harder task ever been allotted to a man than this he was about to perform? Tell the woman he wished to make his wife that he had an illegitimate son whom he was about to acknowledge and care for in all respects as if he had been born in lawful wedlock, making only such explanations to the world as the simple truth afforded—nothing more?

The impulse to go while there was yet time and write his explanation rose up within him; but again came the thought, "I am able to do my best, not my least," and he turned to that inner support which Paul had taught him to seek and find. He turned to that underlying potential nature in which is the seed of all power, of all achievement, waiting to be fructified through the

spoken word. "Dominion is mine. It is not in the condition or circumstance," he said to himself.

He heard a step upon the stairs and Miss Hartwell entered the room. His heart gave a mighty bound and then seemed to stand still. But no trace of this appeared in his face as he stood awaiting her.

She came toward him with a new graciousness tempering her usually reserved manner and extended her hand. He took it in both his own, holding it for an instant before he relinquished it, and said gently, "I did not mean to come until the expiration of the fortnight, but since I saw you last I have learned some things which compel a certain course of action on my part, and which you should know also, that you may judge to what extent your promised decision shall be influenced by them."

She looked at him with a surprised expression, seemed about to speak, checked herself, and sat down facing him without a word. Standing before her with a manner so composed she little knew the effort it cost him, he told her all, offering no excuse for himself, shading none of the facts. As he ceased speaking and awaited her reply with a quiet dignity which commanded respect, a deep regret, even shame, for the deeds he felt himself obliged to make known to her was plainly apparent.

While he spoke varying expressions passed over Miriam's face, which finally assumed the judicial aspect of a judge on the bench.

"It seems to me," she said, "you have reached your most extraordinary conclusion as to your course of action on very insufficient evidence. How do you

know this boy is your son? You seem to have accepted Paul Masters' statement without a question."

"I have indeed," replied Everett gravely. "I know him so well that it had not occurred to me to question its truth. I am quite sure he will be able to give me a satisfactory explanation."

"You have great confidence in him," she said coldly.

"And not without reason," he assented eagerly, raising his head, which had been bowed before her; and the color flashed to his face as his eye brightened. "He has been everything to me—counselor, comforter, example, brother, friend tried and proven."

A shadow passed across her face. "With such a friend one need hardly feel the lack of other companionship," she said.

There was a tinge of irony in her tone which escaped him, but which a jealous woman would have understood.

"Miss Hartwell—Miriam," he burst out impulsively, taking a step forward. "I long with all my being for the companionship, the love of a woman. I have but one aim, to live my life henceforth nobly, reverently, unselfishly, placing my duty before my desire, making the most of every faculty and power I possess, achieving all it is possible to achieve in this world with right intention and honest endeavor. The woman who could hold this aim with me, who could overlook that past which I deeply regret—how deeply none but myself can know—who could stand beside me as a comrade and yet above me as that more than myself, continually drawing me higher, should have the love of my heart,

the service of my life, the adoration of my soul. Can you—will you—”

He hesitated, and stopped with his hand stretched toward her.

“For such a woman would you give up your purpose to publicly acknowledge this child your son?” she asked, looking at him intently and enunciating each word with a particular distinctness.

His arm fell. His face showed an inward struggle. He turned from her and walked to the other side of the room. What could he not do for the woman he loved, for the woman who loved him,—that was right? A conflict raged in him which he had thought fought and won. Perhaps he had everything to gain by relinquishing his purpose, perhaps everything to lose by holding to it. Why should he take this extreme position, when men all about him, good men too, failed to see its necessity? Why should the error of an undisciplined youth fall so severely upon the head of the man struggling upward? Was his load not heavy enough, the accompanying compensation little enough? Must his life be one prolonged strife without rest?

What? Breaking through the noise of the battle came that far-off voice he had heard before in time of need. Was it Paul’s voice?

“Live to your best, not your least. You are able.”

He felt a new vitality coursing through him. He *was* able.

He came back to her—she had not taken her eyes from him—and his voice, though firm, was as gentle as a woman’s as he said, “It would be very hard to refuse

anything to the woman I loved; but should she ask that which was incompatible with my sense of right and conviction of duty I should be obliged to refuse her request, suffering with her in the refusal."

With a gesture of impatience Miriam sat erect.

"Listen to me, Everett Long," she said impetuously, and there was a dangerous sparkle in her eyes, a rigidity about her mouth. "You are in danger of becoming fanatical through excess of sentiment. Let us review this whole matter impartially. I am, at all events, your friend, and must point out the danger which threatens you.

"So far as your past life is concerned, it is neither better nor worse than that of most men. Were I like most women I should grieve over it with you, were I not too greatly shocked to mingle my tears with yours. But I am too unsentimental—for which I am devoutly thankful—to be ignorant, or to pretend to be ignorant, of the way men live, of the way they are tacitly allowed to live. While I regret the latitude allowed them and their use of it, I am accustomed to deal with facts as they are rather than as they should be.

"Your present and future, then, are what are to be considered, and the present specially in its bearing upon the future. You are a rising man. You have great ability. You have most of the requirements for a leader and are gaining the rest. Such men are not so plentiful as to deprive you of necessary opportunity. I believe you capable of reaching a high position in the world. You need only the stimulus of ambition, for you have plenty of determination. The fact that you are the father of an illegitimate child will not injure

you so long as it is known only by the few and appears to be but a rumor.

"But acknowledge it as true, proclaim the fact by putting the child in the position of your acknowledged son, and you ruin every prospect you now have. And what will the boy gain? Without this acknowledgment he can have all needed care, be educated and trained for whatever future he seems best fitted to fill. He need have no real lack unsupplied. Is it worth while to jeopardize your own future, all that makes life worth the living, for the sake of a mere sentiment which is productive of no real or lasting good?

"Put the past behind you and do not insist upon making its dead corpse the drag upon your living present. Success is all a man needs to compel that recognition, that homage, which the world is slow to accord until it is compelled. Put everything from you that interferes with it. Bend every energy to the making of a name which shall live after you."

She had risen to her feet as she proceeded, and stood before him drawn to her full height, her eyes glowing, her breast heaving, her form and attitude regal, indomitable. She seemed a goddess newly descended from Olympus, or a woman warrior capable of leading vast armies through storm and strife to victory; a fitting representative of her own ideal of the coming woman.

His eye kindled as he looked upon her. She stirred his blood. He felt a desire to do all and to dare all if but her eyes might rest upon him while he labored, her arms sometimes enfold him, her heart but keep alive the fire in his own. Her first words had de-

pressed and chilled him, but her last had roused something he had not felt before.

He was about to stretch his arms toward her when again the inner voice, breaking through some obstruction, repeated its note of warning. "Live to your best!" The impulse died out as he seemed to hear again the pulsating rhythm, becoming one with it as on that day in the park when he sat by Paul's side.

He was out of the room, out of the world yet in it; out of all limitation and one with the great pulse of all worlds, which rose and fell and rose and fell with a music and a majesty indescribable. He was more than it, he was less than it, he was it. Suddenly a minor tone, faint at first, swelling louder and louder, moaned and sobbed in his ears—a wail of passion, of sorrow, of despair.

There she was before him! Where had he been? She showed no surprise, as if waiting in vain for an answer. Instead, the last word seemed to have just left her lips. He was growing more accustomed to these sudden experiences—an hour compressed into a brief instant of time. But the desire to follow her to victory, to death if need be, had gone. He saw the worldly wisdom in her words, felt the danger of its allurements, which led him away from the path he must follow if he should live to his best.

"I feel the force of what you say," he replied, and his tone was as before. "I know that expediency instead of right rules in the world, that we allow it to masquerade in the other's garments and convince ourselves of its rectitude. Perhaps I am without ambition, as once I seemed to be without a conscience. I do not

know. But I feel that I cannot turn from that which is nobler to that which is least, for the sake of what is called success.

"Make a name that shall live after me?" and his fine eyes, bent on hers, held something which caught her with a sudden wonder. "I live, and perhaps shall live when names are forgotten and gone. Listen to me," he said appealingly, with a sudden change of manner. "For years I lived for the day, caring naught for yesterday or to-morrow. I lived for enjoyment only. I do not think I was intentionally regardless of the claims of my fellow-men, of a higher ideal than the gratification of the senses. I was thoughtless, careless, had no family ties, did as I saw other men do.

"But the time came when I began to question my mode of life, question myself; when a vague dissatisfaction haunted me. Then was the time when Paul Masters proved his worth as a man, his value to me as a friend. He showed me myself as I was and as I might be. He taught me the necessity of cleansing the within as well as the without. He showed me that all act was the expression of thought, and that I must be pure in thought if I would be pure in life; that we are members of one body, and that no one can truly rise without helping others to rise also. He gave me no doctrinal religion, but he gave me a God-like ideal and taught me how to reach it. He never told me I must believe, but, 'You must see and do.'

"For the last two years I have tried, with many a failure, to do according to what I see. This course I must continue. I cannot—I dare not—turn aside from it. And yet I am weak when I should be strong. My

heart cries out for love. Help me to reach my ideal!" and again he stretched his arms toward her imploringly.

She leaned toward him for an instant as if drawn in spite of herself. Her face softened, her mouth trembled, her eyes were dewy. She was not the warrior, she was the woman. But even as she swayed as if about to fall into his arms, she caught herself, her face assumed its expression of a set purpose, the tenderness vanished from her eyes.

She seemed conscious of having experienced a moment of temptation and weakness, and to feel resentment at the possibility. Her voice and aspect were as judicial as before when she said:

"Of course you must form your own decision in this matter and act accordingly. Freedom of choice and action is essential. The well-meant advice of friends should not be allowed to check it. I shall think you mistaken if you carry out your present intention, and that the time will come when you will see reason to be a far safer guide than sentiment. You will find that you have unnecessarily made yourself a target for ridicule and reproach. Men whose lives have been no better than your own will laugh at you, those who have been more moral will condemn you, women, if they do not openly denounce, will avoid you.

"You will ruin your future utterly; the high position you might reach, you are able to reach, will be closed to you. The position of your wife would be one insupportable to me. I am ambitious. I admit it, I glory in it," and she raised herself proudly. "I never could be content with the narrow confines of 'woman's

sphere' or 'sacrifice all for love.' My nature demands a name and a place in the world. Women have been too long content with mediocrity in themselves and an inferior position as compared to men.

"I mean to demonstrate their higher possibilities in my own person; to stimulate them to such endeavor as shall place them shoulder to shoulder with men, carving their way to competence and reputation. Why should they not have both? Not as a reflected glory from the men with whom they are connected, but as their own achievement? I, too, have my conviction of duty, and my inclination goes with it. I mean to help forward that progress which has seemed so long in coming, to march in the van of the new era which recognizes and gives to woman her due in the industrial, the financial, the political, the intellectual world. I hope to live to raise the song of triumph for woman come to her own at last, even through the Red Sea of insurmountable difficulties; for I know, I feel in my soul, that every opposer of woman's progress shall finally be overthrown."

Again she seemed the warrior leader as she paused for an instant, intoxicated with the glory she saw awaiting her, the very incarnation of that victorious womanhood which had battled successfully for its rights. The crown of triumph was already on her brow, the peace-offerings of a conquered foe at her feet.

He looked at her silently with a heavy heart. He foresaw the refusal she was preparing for him. How grand she was! How she stirred him to desire a part in the same battle, a share in the same victory! Help

the world forward? Surely there was no nobler work. And yet—and yet—there was something lacking.

"I have neither time nor inclination for that weakness which many women call love," she went on. "It belongs with their religion, both the consequence of generations of intellectual bondage, and both her foes under the guise of friends. For whatever stands in the path of woman's advancement is her foe. Women suffer for this love of theirs which robs them of their strength, and their intellectual darkness makes them lie content in the dust while men march triumphantly over them.

"When you proposed marriage to me I told you that I did not wish to marry, and you know why. I have marked out a career which I intend to follow to the end. You begged me to take time for consideration and I consented, for—I tell you frankly—you have awakened more response in me than any man I ever met. I set myself to consider carefully the effect our marriage would have on my future. I saw your ability, the growing recognition you are receiving, and the possibilities of your future, especially if you had a wife who, so far from being a check on your efforts, would further them and stimulate your ambition. I saw that such a woman as I am and such a man as I believe you to be could, if united, accomplish more than either singly; and I had nearly determined to give you a favorable answer. But now—"

She hesitated.

"And now?" he said gently and sadly.

She waited a moment. He did not speak.

"Now I am obliged to refuse you," she said firmly,

looking him directly in the face. "Your determination makes it impossible for me to become your wife."

He accepted her decision silently. Only he continued to look at her with a yearning expression in his face, as if something he longed for was fading from sight.

She turned from him abruptly, walked a few steps, came back, and extended her hand.

"While I cannot agree with your view or approve of your course, I have much esteem for you. We remain friends?"

"We remain friends," he replied as he took her hand, bent down, and left a lingering kiss upon it. Then without looking back he left the room.

As he approached the front door it was opened from without and Sarah Hartwell entered.

"Oh! Good-morning, Mr. Long! I hope the door did not strike you. No? You are sure?" as she stood with her hand still on the knob.

Assuring her as he returned her salutation that he was untouched, he passed out, when her quick eye caught the expression of his face.

"You are in trouble," she said very gently. "I am sorry."

He did not reply. He could not. Raising his hat he went quickly down the steps.

She stood thoughtful for a moment. Glancing through the half-open door she saw her sister.

She understood.

CHAPTER X.

THE Hemmingway cottage had a new occupant, a beautiful widow. Much stir and comment had been aroused when she first made her appearance in Benton. No one seemed to know her, and speculation was rife.

So far as her beauty was concerned there was no room for speculation. The male population assented to a man that she was by all odds the handsomest woman one would see in a day's journey, a verdict not altogether agreeable to their sisters and wives. They called upon her, however, when after a few weeks' stay she presented letters of introduction to some of the prominent people of Benton. Then it was known that she came from New York, was rich, had been a widow over a year, and was ordered by her physician to live quietly for a time before resuming the social duties of her own circle.

"Young," said the men; "Older than she looks," said the women; but all agreed that Mrs. Jasper Cunningham was charming and her half-mourning toilettes ravishing. She was received in their inner circle and admired from the distance of the outer one.

Emma had been seriously ill for some weeks after the death of her child. She did not seem able to rally and her husband had proposed a change of air and scene. Combined with his anxiety for her—for he

loved her, as he assured her frequently—was an uneasiness and perplexity which she did not understand, but which she was too weak to do more than wonder over at intervals.

She had remonstrated at first, feeling he could not afford to leave his professional interests in other hands, for he proposed going with her. When he had found it so impossible to give her much of his time while at home, she felt sure they must suffer from his absence; and of late he had seemed to feel the expense of their modest household a tax upon his resources. But he overruled her objections and persuaded her that it was best not to keep up their establishment for a time, but to rent their house—the beautiful little home left by her parents to their only child; for she had been an orphan under the care of a guardian glad to be rid of his responsibility when Walter married her.

Through an agent a tenant had been found, and they had gone away, Emma thankful enough for her husband's companionship to feel little regret at leaving home, he with an air of mingled relief and devotion to his wife which revived the hope in her heart, wearied with the fluctuations between certainty of his safe future and dread of she knew not what.

The man who had insisted so strenuously on seeing her husband the first time he had been at their home had been there frequently since, and Walter had always seen him alone on the plea of "business." She had heard their voices raised in anything but business-like tones, and her husband was always moody and abstracted after his visits. But *her husband* must know better than she. How foolish to worry over what did

not concern her! Walter had unusual ability in his profession. Every one conceded that. "An exceptionally capable man, who will do well if he will only behave himself," her guardian had said. And *of course* he would do right. He could not do otherwise when she was so devoted to him. What should she do if he did not? What if he should cease to love her? She should die. There would be nothing to live for—nothing.

Sarah had been her faithful friend through many weary weeks. Every time she came to her she brought comfort and strength. Even if she only sat by her silently for a little while, Emma felt uplifted, borne above the haunting perplexities of her mental visions. And yet Sarah did not seem a strong woman like her sister. She was so gentle and so placid. She appeared to know nothing of strife, to live always in a world of her own which she carried with her as a protecting armor.

Benton had experienced a decided sensation, a more than nine days' wonder. Everett Long, a growing man in the public esteem, who was being mentioned as a desirable candidate for one of the most important offices in the city, had taken a boy out of the gutter and frankly acknowledged him his son; had placed him in that position and provided him with everything but a mother, admitting when questioned that he had never been married.

Was the man crazy? Of course every one knew that he had formerly sown abundant wild oats, but what man had not? Why should he parade the crop they had borne in people's faces? "D—d fool!" said many of the men, "to ruin his chances so needlessly!"

while many of the women in neighborhood conclave set their faces as a flint against such flagrant immorality.

Others, more lenient, for they had marriageable daughters, deeply regretted he should make it impossible for them to continue to receive him. Many and vigorous were the discussions his conduct provoked, and, curiously enough, it was his present course rather than his past which received the most condemnation.

"How shocking to parade his wickedness so brazenly!" commented the virtuous Bentonians on their way to prayer-meeting. And he had been held up to the youthful visitants persuaded to seek that way of salvation, as a warning example, even while they proclaimed God's grace sufficient for the repentant sinner, whose sins, though scarlet, should be made white as wool.

He had never affiliated with any of the churches, though he had attended services in all of them; and the efforts made by some of the good people with that end in view were now brought to an abrupt conclusion.

Zealous members of the "Society for the Suppression of Vice," who had had an eye upon him as a valuable accession to their ranks, closed it, and opened the other one to see the heinousness of his crime.

A committee from the "Association for Mutual Helpfulness and Improvement," of which he was a prominent member, visited and remonstrated with him. It would have been much wiser to have quietly helped the child and been silent as to his parentage. It was deplorable to have such an odium attached to one of their number.

On all sides he heard—and felt more than he heard—denunciation and disparagement. Sore need had he of Paul's faithful companionship and unwavering confidence in his better self. No other human soul had held out to him an encouraging hand.

Yes! there was one exception. How could he have momentarily forgotten? He was walking with bent head along a quiet path by the river, fighting one of his many battles in the solitude of nature, which he had learned to find helpful.

What was this untamed creature within himself which would not be led in leash? which tore and rended him with its struggles? The height he strove to reach was so far away! The strength he needed for the journey was consumed in this never-ceasing conflict! He was faint and weary and longed for rest. When he seemed to have made a little progress, something was sure to arise, and often from his old past, which brought the strife over again. He was lonely. He would not have the old, and the new rejected him. Was he condemned to struggle and work with the love and loyalty of but one faithful soul?

Some one stood before him, barring the path. He looked up. Sarah Hartwell was gazing upon him with a look he had never seen in a human face but Paul's. How beautiful she was! Was it beauty he saw in her now? He was startled and did not speak. She held both hands toward him and they drew his own to meet them.

"What you have done is brave and noble," she said, and the melody in her voice blended with the murmuring of the trees and the river. "With all my heart I honor you for it," dropped his hands and was gone.

He stood motionless where she had left him. What had happened to him? Where the strife, the noise of conflict? "And there arose a great calm." He felt a stillness, a hush, as of a benediction brooding over him.

He carried its influence with him when he went home to resume his daily duties. For his life now was a series of duties indeed. He had taken the boy to his own home, making him his companion, while he became his child's teacher, thinking it better to follow this course for a time before sending him away to school. It would be easier for the child and for those who might have him under their care if some of the effects of his Ishmaelite life were first removed.

But he found this daily companionship to be a harder tax upon his endurance than he had foreseen. The boy was so unlovely. He seemed to be impelled by the mere brute instinct in its various forms, which gained strength as he thrived physically. He seemed to have no understanding of the relation of parent and child except that his father should produce the supply for all his desires.

And these concerned chiefly his appetite. He ate voraciously, never appearing satisfied, but always craving something he had not yet had. Soap and water possessed no attraction, but were to be avoided by every means in his power. He enjoyed the clothing provided for him and would spend any amount of time arraying himself in one garment after another; but remonstrated in the choicest gutter-snipe profanity when compelled to leave his occupation for a lesson, which, with Everett, was a daily wrestle with a gigantic ignorance, an unwillingness to learn and an infantile mind.

He was very fond of jewelry. Its glitter seemed to have an irresistible attraction for him and he would seize every opportunity to possess himself of the little belonging to his father, regardless of how he obtained it, picking a lock if necessary, an occupation at which he became an expert. Command and reprimand were unheeded by him. To be deprived of some article of food he particularly liked was the only punishment he seemed to feel, for Everett, though sorely tempted, could not bring himself to meet the brute instinct with brute force.

His chief characteristic was cunning, which grew apace. He would devise endless ways and means for carrying out his own purposes and avoiding his father's; and his lameness, which was not excessive, did not seem to prevent the accomplishment.

While the boy seemed to have no desire whatever to learn, he enjoyed music; and here Everett found his first ray of hope. But he soon discovered that the boy's feeling was enjoyment only, on a par with his love of his dinner, and with no inclination to overcome any obstacles that he might be a musician himself; although there was no lack of inclination to get around such as interfered with his own gratification.

Scarcely a day passed but Everett was defeated in some project he had formed for the child's good. There was nothing in the boy to attract him, and after months of endeavor there seemed nothing to encourage him in his efforts, save his conviction of duty and the habit he had cultivated of looking for the best in every one and placing it before the worst.

That good is stronger than evil was to him a vital

truth, one Paul had declared to him again and again before he found himself able to acknowledge it. When his heart sank at some unusually abominable act of the boy's and he felt he could do no more, that with all his unceasing effort the result he obtained was well-nigh unnoticeable, he could only rest in that conviction, sure that in its own time and in its own way, rather than in those we try to compel, it would triumph over all.

Did he love the boy? No and yes. He did not, could not love him because he was his father. This relationship was the natural effect of the causes involved, and could not of itself call up in him a feeling the boy's nature made impossible. That repelled him at every point.

But there was growing within him a feeling, in which the boy had share, as he studied and analyzed that curious compound, human nature. He would not have called it love, and yet it was a pitying and protecting tenderness; an inclination to minimize frailties and faults instead of exalt them; a willingness to take upon himself pain and suffering if he might thus lift them from others; a growing tendency to forget his own desires in the remembrance of the needs and necessities of others; a growing perception of that eternal and changeless truth—that sentiment found so often in the mouth, so seldom in the heart—the brotherhood of humanity.

As time went on the sting of condemnation died out. It was less an effort to meet people and see in their faces their only half-concealed judgment of him. Their opinion of the boy, unequivocally expressed to each other, was incapable of change:

"That child is bad! Bad all through! No good will ever come of *him*."

He was learning more continually of the nature and power of thought; learning to guard his own thoughts, that they might be messengers of "peace on earth, good will toward men," rather than the agents of the lesser human nature venting itself in its own anger over unsatisfied desire. The sum of human misery was heavy enough without his adding to it those mental deposits which generate and prolong it.

He had suffered intensely after his final interview with Miriam. Never before had he asked a woman to be his wife. Never before had he held the ideal of marriage his association with her had formed in him. His own intellectual development, the more vigorous in growth for its late cultivation, refined and modified his former views. He sought the companionship equality alone can give, while he also desired—how fervently only a hungry, aspiring heart can know—that divine womanliness which should shine as the guiding star of his soul, leading him up and on to the heights now veiled in a mysterious but suggestive silence.

With no intention to exaggerate his own efforts and their results, he was conscious of a higher motive than had ever impelled him before in his association with women, and felt himself to be far more worthy of their esteem; and yet he was to be denied what only his awakened manhood could appreciate. The nails of crucifixion were being driven home.

Paul never failed him. He seemed possessed of an inexhaustible store of wisdom from which he drew what exactly suited Everett's needs. He not only knew

much, but he knew that he knew. His confidence was strength, his strength was knowledge, his knowledge was power that never lacked.

What others called his misfortune did not bear that name for him. It had been something to conquer. Taken captive, it became his friend. He knew the way out of bondage, away from those taskmasters who make us "serve with rigor" according to the requirements of our modern Egypt, supplying us with none of the material for the brick with which we build a stable future, yet demanding successful result at every going down of the sun.

When Everett's heart sank and the impulse to effort well-nigh died out, he had but to think of Paul, of his unconquerable will, his never-failing courage and gentle benignity, to have his heart strengthened and impulse quickened, his eye cleared of the obscuring mists which made cloudy phantoms appear opposing obstacles.

He often reviewed the circumstances of their first meeting. Coming home early in the morning as the sun's bright rays began to awaken the sleeping city, after a night spent in what he then termed enjoyment, he was accompanied by a boon companion who, smarting under the consciousness of empty pockets, insinuated that he had been cheated by Everett at the gaming-table.

A few hot words and he had raised his arm to strike down the one who had insulted him, when "Stop!" uttered in a commanding voice which aroused ringing echoes in the quiet street, arrested him.

His companion turned quickly into a side street as

he looked down upon a diminutive figure, which he lost sight of in the wonderful head and face upturned to his.

"Why should I stop?" he demanded after a moment in which he gazed speechlessly.

"Because such an act is unworthy of you," was the calm reply, and the deep blue eyes held his own steadily.

His first thought of unwarrantable interference vanished as he caught their light. It seemed to shine upon him from some far-off height of which he had vague glimpses in his dreams. His passion ebbed and a certain sadness began to take its place.

The stranger without further words started in the opposite direction, and Everett, looking after him for a moment, walked home thoughtfully. After this he saw him frequently. He always received the same steady, penetrating glance, and finally, one day, meeting him in an unfrequented portion of the park, he had approached him and thanked him frankly for what he had done.

Then had commenced a friendship which had increased in strength till now; which was destined to broaden and deepen as their lives flowed nearer and nearer to the measureless sea.

Paul's life of self-denial had contrasted forcibly with his of self-indulgence. He lived in the most simple manner, content where Everett would have felt privation. And yet he was not without means to command more for himself, for he always furnished help for such imperative needs as came to his notice.

He was quite alone; he had told Everett that he had

neither father, mother, brother, nor sister; no relations at all so far as he knew; that his parents dying in his boyhood, he had been early obliged to learn how to live in the within instead of the without; that what would have seemed to others an unbearable existence had become for him a song of praise and thanksgiving.

Always ready to improve opportunities for helpfulness, he became a magnet drawing to him many whose hidden lives became an open scroll to him. Partly from this contact and also partly from the power he had developed of penetrating to the subjective planes of existence, he was possessed of a knowledge of people and their affairs which would have alarmed many had they known of it, and been productive of disastrous consequences had he been capable of abusing it.

He had been a resident for a time in that distant town where Helen Mathers and her mother had made their temporary home, living in their near neighborhood, unknown to them in their seclusion. He had seen them afterward with Mr. Mathers in New York, whom he knew slightly through a business transaction. Everett's confidences had revealed much, and a seemingly chance encounter had again thrown in his way the woman who had brought up the boy—if the no care, scanty sustenance, and frequent abuse could be called "bringing up"—and who, finding him in Benton and earning money as a newsboy, had endeavored to secure a share of it.

CHAPTER XI.

EMMA'S pretty home, under Mrs. Jasper Cunningham's tenancy, took on an air of luxury unknown to it before. She was a woman who enjoyed the good things of life; who, she would have said of herself, could not live without them. If she must for a while longer forego the social pleasures at home from which she had been debarred by her widowhood, she would have at least all the comforts to which she had been accustomed, and such enjoyment as a limited circle of acquaintances in Benton could afford her.

The rich and beautiful Mrs. Cunningham had called upon Miriam, whose growing fame had reached even her ears. With the gracefully expressed hope that her call would not be deemed an intrusion, and an allusion to the attraction of such a woman as too strong to be resisted when in her neighborhood, she had chatted a short half-hour and left with a cordial invitation to the sisters to visit her informally and give her opportunity for further acquaintance.

Dr. Hartwell was much gratified at this token of deference paid his eldest daughter. His pride in her continually increased as she demonstrated more and more the truth of his conviction that women need but the opportunity to, if they choose, compete intellectually successfully with men.

Miriam unbent somewhat from her usual stately dignity and fraternized with Mrs. Cunningham quite affably, accepting her invitation to informal intercourse in good faith. Sarah, while unfailingly courteous, did not seek her further acquaintance so willingly, frequently requiring urging from Miriam to go with her.

"Why are you so reserved with Mrs. Cunningham, Sarah?" she would say. "It is far better worth your while to cultivate her than some of the people to whom you devote so much time and who amount to nothing in particular. You never do seem to have sufficient thought for your interests in the choice of your friends!"

"People affect us differently, you know, Miriam," Sarah would reply in her usual gentle way. She knew by experience that it was useless to argue with her sister.

While together at Mrs. Cunningham's one evening when she was entertaining some of her lately acquired friends, Sarah chanced to be seated with her hostess in a retired corner of the room. She was listening to an animated description of the delights of New York in the "season," and endeavoring to feel an interest in what was evidently the sum of human happiness to her companion, when one of two gentlemen conversing near them mentioned the name of "Long," followed by a remark in a lower tone and evidently intended for the ear of the other only.

Mrs. Cunningham halted in her description abruptly, listened an instant without avail, turned to Sarah, and asked, "Is the Mr. Long they mentioned a resident of Benton?"

"Yes," she replied, "he is."

"Do you know his given name?"

"It is Everett, I believe."

She felt the start which Mrs. Cunningham gave as she heard her reply, and looked at her involuntarily, but turned her eyes at once in another direction when she saw the color come and go in her face, and appeared to be unaware of the widow's effort at unconcern. She began to speak of something else, but was interrupted by Mrs. Cunningham as if she had not heard her.

"How old is he, should you think?"

"He appears to be about thirty-five or six."

"Tell me what you know of him, will you please?"

"He is one of the rising men of our city, and worthy every one's respect and esteem. He is one of the noblest men I ever knew," Sarah replied warmly as a light leaped to her eyes.

"Is he married?"

"No."

The beautiful widow drew a long, tremulous breath. "It is very warm here, do you not think?" and, rising, she went to one of the windows and stood there silently.

Sarah observed her thoughtfully. What an interest she seemed to have in Mr. Long, though she evidently had not heard of what was generally termed—if no stronger expression was used—his unmitigated foolishness!

Ah! the wisdom of this world which was foolishness as compared with a higher. How many of those who condemned him could have acted as he had done? could have found the strength to be true to their best,

to face and endure a merciless public opinion rather than an accusing conscience? How many would have had an accusing conscience?

The way of the world was the way of expediency, with as much personal gratification as could be secured.

The way of the eternal was the "Via Dolorosa" which leads to the blessedness beyond happiness. The journey of him who had courage to pursue it, to tread its flint-strewn surface unallured by the flower-decked paths on either side, was uncheered by companionship. In its appalling loneliness his head must be bared to every storm, his naked feet leave blood behind them. All honor to that pilgrim who as yet was an uncrowned king and whose sought-for kingdom was not of this world!

Mrs. Cunningham did not have her usual reposeful manner the rest of the evening. She seemed distrait, and sometimes returned irrelevant answers to the remarks of her guests. Later in the evening she drew Miriam into a quiet corner.

"Come and tell me something of what you are doing now," she said. "You are such an indomitable worker you make me almost ashamed of myself. How are you succeeding with the 'Woman's Higher Thought League' you are endeavoring to organize?"

"Not so well at present as I had hoped," replied Miriam with a sigh. "Women—some women—are so slow to get out of the old ruts. Their inertia is very discouraging. They have been tied to the priesthood so long, have been taught for so many generations the beauty and womanliness of unquestioning faith, the disastrous consequences of questioning what they are

told, that they view with alarm any effort to stimulate them to this end. The most hopeless slave is the one who does not know he is in bondage."

"But you will yet succeed, I am sure," answered her companion encouragingly. "You always do succeed in whatever you undertake. I never knew a woman like you."

"Not yet, if the women I am endeavoring to rouse to individual thinking agree with the Rev. Mr. Morenaught. He told them last Sunday that the intelligent agnostic was more dangerous to the church than the pronounced infidel," replied Miriam with a cold smile. "Harder even to overcome than the prejudice and bigotry of ignorance is the ill-founded enthusiasm of women who are governed by sentiment. They simply will not see that the progress of the race depends upon woman's advance beyond what they call religion as well as in other directions."

"Well, your splendid example will go a long way toward helping them to see it," returned Mrs. Cunningham consolingly. "By the way, do you know a gentleman in this city by the name of Everett Long?"

A change came over Miriam's face. "Yes," she answered briefly.

"Is he a friend of yours?"

Miriam hesitated.

"I knew him quite well at one time, but I have seen very little of him lately."

"Is he a prominent man here?"

"He has a very undesirable prominence in some respects."

"Why! How? Tell me all about it," said Mrs. Cunningham eagerly.

"It is commonly talked of; I should suppose you would have heard of it," replied Miriam. "He threw away every prospect he had"—and her tone was hard and severe—"by acknowledging openly an illegitimate son, and taking the boy to live with him. What is the matter? Are you ill?"

Mrs. Cunningham's head had fallen back against the chair and the color had left her face. Miriam was about to start up when her companion put forth a detaining hand.

"It is nothing," she said tremulously; "I shall be better in a moment."

Her maid was surprised that evening when her mistress dismissed her much earlier than usual, cutting short the usually elaborate preparations for the night and for the preservation of her beauty.

"Something must have happened to upset her," she confided to the parlor maid. "She says perhaps she'll give up this cottage and go to the sea-shore somewhere. Lord! the more some people have the more they want!"

Two days later the agent through whom Mrs. Cunningham had become a resident of Benton received a visit from his fair patron, who announced her intention of leaving the city.

"Of course I will pay for the full term for which I engaged the house," she said. "But the place does not agree with me as well as I expected. I think I need the air of the sea-shore. It was always a tonic for me," and she smiled engagingly.

Like most men, he found her smile, which made her mouth, if possible, more beautiful than ever, irresistible. Between the effect it had upon him, surprise at

her departure, and relief that there was to be no trouble over the financial part of the situation, he almost stammered as he replied :

"Sorry, indeed, to lose you, Mrs. Cunningham. Your departure will be generally regretted. I was thinking only this morning that you might like the house and Benton well enough to have a permanent residence here. I have just received instructions from Mr. Hemmingway to sell it if possible."

"Indeed!" The lady moved gracefully to the door. "I do not think I wish to purchase it. My preparations will require a few days yet. No, my carriage is not here," as, having accompanied her, he looked inquiringly up and down the street. "My coachman is ill and I came in the car. Is there not a river path near here which leads to our section of the city? Yes? I thought I had heard of one. Oh, no, thank you," as he proposed accompanying her to the entrance of the path. "I can find it readily. It is very quiet and retired, I believe. I think I will walk. I am quite sure I have had hardly enough exercise lately."

And with another charming smile she moved in the direction pointed out to her.

Everett Long was taking one of the solitary walks which soothed and encouraged him. The path by the river owed part of its well-beaten surface to his frequent tread. Often as he had traversed it, he continually found new beauties in the surroundings, new revelations of the relation of nature to man.

How often has the failure of cherished hopes to find their fulfillment in the human world turned the eager seeker to the natural, there to find hitherto unknown

treasures, compensation and consolation for losses and disappointments! The heart's extremity is the soul's opportunity.

His hours of sadness became at times songs of gladness, of rejoicing that, so far, he had been able to make unceasing effort to live to his best. The many voices of nature, unheard by those who have not yet learned to seek her ministrations, sang to him of a soul world thinly veiled by the visible; a veil growing more and more transparent for him as he caught the echoes of the majestic harmonies beyond it.

He was learning to see the meaning of a phrase Paul had quoted to him, which had seemed more than obscure when he heard it first:

"Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears."

He knew—oh, how well!—that when his eyes were filled with the tears of unsatisfied desires and thwarted mortal hopes they were blinded to glories which lie beyond and which must wait for a season; wait till the slowly kindled fire of aspiration should dry the eyes and clear the vision; wait till the god within, feeling the loosening of the fetters binding him, lo! these thousand years, should raise his head and look out serenely at the trials confronting him, knowing their powerlessness and his own might, knowing the end from the beginning.

As he walked his thoughts dwelt upon Sarah Hartwell. Here she had met him when he was bowed beneath the effort to do his duty, and had seemed a heaven-sent messenger.

What an influence seemed to emanate from her, sub-

tle, indefinable, but leaving its results with him when she had gone! She was so gentle and unobtrusive, when in Miriam's presence so overshadowed by her talented sister, he had noticed her but little. He had often thought—and with increasing admiration of her ability—of what she had said to him that evening when he had asked her to explain her views, and of his own curious experience as he listened to her.

What she had said came back to him now and then, each time with added force, a new revelation of meaning. The agnostic "I do not know" was changing for him to "I am finding the way to know." Her words were no longer so enigmatical. He was finding their translation in his own within.

After months of unceasing effort and some modification of the boy's habits, he had sent his son away to school, keeping himself informed of his welfare. It was a great relief, for which he felt self-reproach. "Only that which is overcome helps us on, not that which is avoided," he said to himself.

He saw a lady approaching him as he rounded a bend in the path, and moved to one side to give her more room to pass. As their eyes met, something halted him, seemingly without his own volition.

Who was she?

She, too, had come almost to a stop, but half turned as if undecided whether to go backward or forward. She looked at him again with a startled yet searching expression in her face. He took a step forward, impelled by he knew not what, and "Helen Mathers!" "Everett Long!" burst from their lips simultaneously.

Seventeen years vanished, and he was back again in

the country village where a summer-time had been a fools' paradise for the youth who was yet to learn—and at what cost!—the purpose of life. A dark-haired girl with bewitching brown eyes had been the Eve of that Eden. Truly her desire had been unto him and he had ruled over her.

But this woman who looked into his eyes now—a mingled dread and expectation in her own—could this be that youthful companion who had power to draw him whither she would? And did he now feel only the impulse to leave her, to go away as quickly as he could?

She seemed to take a sudden resolve as they stood facing each other, the lightning-like rush of reminiscence half blinding and deafening them and making every nerve quiver. She held out her hand with a smile which belied the pallor of her face, whitened by the fear still lurking in her eyes, and said, "Are you not glad to see me after all these years?"

He took her hand, noting with that curious analysis which sometimes attends even the strongest emotions that the contact did not thrill him as it once had done. But he did not readily find the words with which to reply to her greeting.

"It is indeed many years since we met," he said finally.

He did not smile. His face was grave as he gently let go her hand.

"Do you live in Benton?" she went on.

The surprise was as yet too great for anything but commonplaces.

"Yes. And you?"

"Oh, I am here temporarily only."

A silence fell between them. Each was waiting for the other. She looked up and down the path, which was visible for some distance from the bend where they stood. No one was in sight. The fear slowly vanished from her eyes. She laid her hand caressingly on his arm.

"Have you nothing to say to me—Everett?"

"Much, Helen. Much, indeed, when I remember the past."

He looked at her still gravely and placed his hand gently over her own.

She was very beautiful, he thought; a dangerous rival for the Helen of old. The brown eyes were soft and melting, the cheeks had retained the rose-flush, the mouth the seductiveness of sixteen. Her form was full and round, with a swelling bust which rose and fell with her still startled breath; her throat was white and firm. She had ripened in the years since they met, but she was still young.

"How have you fared? Well, I hope and believe?"

"Oh, yes! I have nothing of which to complain. I was married at eighteen, and to a kind, indulgent husband."

He moved a little away from her, and her hand dropped from his arm.

"Helen," he said, "in the years that have passed since we separated I have learned something. In my life there has been much to regret, much to redeem. I have made many mistakes and have suffered—shall continue to suffer—their consequences. This is just. I wronged you, not intentionally, but as the result of thoughtless youth. There is nothing I would not

do to atone for it, were atonement in my power. Can you believe me—and forgive me?"

He bowed his head before her; his whole attitude attested his sincerity.

She gave a startled glance up and down the path, moving a little to have the better view in either direction. She seemed relieved as she replied:

"What is past is past. It cannot be recalled. We had better leave it to itself. Do not let us refer to it again. I have only kindly feelings toward you," and the melting eyes for an instant sought his. "If we meet in the future, let us remember only that we are friends. Shall we?" and her little hand was again outstretched to him.

"With all my heart," said Everett, meeting it frankly and looking at her gratefully. "I thank you."

In the distance she saw some one advancing. "Good-by," she said, withdrawing her hand and moving forward.

"Good-by," raising his hat.

He watched her a moment as she walked rapidly but gracefully from him, and then continued his own way. His head was in a whirl, and the ground seemed uncertain under his feet.

CHAPTER XII.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM was alone in her own room. She had given directions that she was not at home and was not to be disturbed, had locked the door, and felt herself secure from interruption. She was in a very perplexed frame of mind and needed uninterrupted opportunity for "thinking it all out."

She was reclining on a luxurious couch heaped high with cushions. She had pulled the pins from her hair, which tumbled unchecked over her shoulders and bust in its nest of lace, half revealed by the unfastened soft silken wrapper she wore. The raised arms, her clasped hands supporting her head, added the alluring witchery of womanhood to the soft seductiveness of childhood. White and smooth and round, they could frame in a world of hitherto only dreamed-of delights.

"How handsome he has grown!" she mused. "I never saw a more distinguished-looking man. But how he has changed! He was so careless and light-hearted, and now he seems grave and reserved. Really, he quite awed me. I wonder—dear me! this couch is not as comfortable as it used to be," and she moved restlessly.

"He used to be very fond of me. I could do with him whatever I wished. I do not think I have lost the power to attract." She looked steadily in the mirror. "No. I am beautiful enough to win any man if I

choose to do it. I wonder if it is worth my while?" She was lost in reverie for a moment.

Suddenly she started to her feet. "Oh, heaven! the child! Can it be—no. It is impossible. He cannot know—"

Her breath came pantingly. She looked furtively about, as if even in the privacy of her room something dangerous to her might be lurking; and then covered her eyes with her hand as though to shut out something she did not wish to see. But she could not close her ears. She heard again across the intervening years the infant wail that had sounded in them but a few brief moments—brief in the new feeling which suddenly sprang up within her, sweet in its short-lived intensity, long in the haunting shame which stood by spectre-like and sternly forbade her to desire aught but silence and flight.

The silence which covered that period of her life—for she had obeyed—had been unbroken till now. Her mother had gone into the invisible with the secret still kept. Her father did not know, no one had ever known. And Everett could not know, for she was ignorant herself of her condition when he went away, to come back in a fortnight. And he never came.

She had forgotten, in the surprise of meeting him, what Miriam had told her about his illegitimate son. She remembered it now, but it could not be. It was quite impossible. Then this must be another! She almost laughed. "O Everett, Everett! yours has been the way of the world after all. No, not the adoption. That *is* a new departure! Strange! How could he do such a thing, I wonder?"

"But he is very handsome. I have half a mind not to go. I wonder what I shall risk by staying? I should like to try my power with him again. It seems to me that as long as he is ignorant of—that, I am safe enough. I never failed with a man yet if I chose to bring him to my feet. There is something immensely fascinating in his dark eyes. What is it? Melancholy? N—no, not that. Oh dear! life is not worth living without some excitement. This is such a slow place; but perhaps—"

Her eyes fell on a diamond bracelet which dazzlingly reflected a sunbeam as it lay on her dressing-table.

"How careless!" as she went to it and picked it up. "I have told Susan repeatedly not to leave one of my jewels in sight."

She held it caressingly in her hand for a moment before opening a door in the side of a bureau, revealing a small but heavy steel box.

"And here is the key in the lock, too! Imbecile!"

She raised the lid and disclosed rings, brooches, pendants, a glistening array, which she patted lovingly as she deposited the bracelet.

"Oh, you darlings! Aren't you superb?"

She could not remember when she did not love gems. As a child they possessed a charm for her, of which her mother had taken advantage. She could be persuaded to do anything by being allowed to wear a necklace or some other ornament for an hour. This childish liking had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength, till it had become a passion with her. Her husband had gratified it most generously, for he was dotingly fond of her; and she carried many of her

treasures with her wherever she went, unable to be parted from them. The loss of a beautiful emerald ring had wrung as bitter tears from her as she had ever shed.

Her thoughts reverted to Everett again, as having locked the box she placed the key where it was not likely to be found except by one who knew its hiding-place.

"Miriam said he was a rising man, sure to be one of the leaders of the time had he not thrown away his chances by his foolishness. Then he has plenty of sentiment for all he was so grave and reserved to-day. He loved me once—and I loved him—then—oh, well! I have seen more of the world since. I thought I never could get over it when he did not come back. There is all the difference in the world between the girl of sixteen and the woman of—thirty; just thirty. I do not intend to be a day older for the next five years. I wonder if he is rich? I did not think of that then. How it used to thrill me when he held my hands and looked at me in that persuasive way of his! Nonsense! The past is past. Why can I not let it alone? It seems to me I am safe enough now. How far above me he seemed with all his gentleness! I have seen unapproachable men before and I have seen them—"

She smiled triumphantly as reminiscences passed before her. She had measured successfully the sword of woman's beauty with the weapon of man's dignity too often to have any timidity now. Only that past! that past! She had said "Let it go" often enough. But it would not go—and stay. She was haunted by the fear that it might rise up at any moment to confront her.

But how could it? There was just enough danger in the prospect to add an exciting element. She was free, rich, young, and beautiful. The more she thought of Everett Long the more she wanted to meet him again, the more her curiosity was aroused to know of his life since that summer in Grovedale—where he had been, what he had done. They were to be friends. Why might she not stay for a while longer?

A sudden thought seemed to strike her. Rising, she went to a desk in one corner of the room. With careful deliberation and many pauses she wrote a note, which she folded and inclosed in an envelope, dipping her pen in the ink ready to address it. Then she be-thought herself that she did not know his address.

"Never mind; I can find that out. The directory will tell me. This will make it easier."

Another was written, which bore the address of the agent she had visited.

"Mrs. Cunningham has exercised her woman's privilege and changed her mind," he said to his assistant when he read it the next day. "They never do know what they want for more than twenty-four hours at a time. Glad of it though. Hope she'll take it into her head to buy the house next. It'll mean something for us. Hemmingway's pretty hard up, I guess."

Everett came home after the meeting in the river path as one in a dream. It was so sudden, so unexpected. Since taking the boy under his protection he had thought of her many times and wondered if he should ever see her again. "It is the unexpected that always happens," he quoted to himself. Happens? Ah, no! He knew better now—knew that nothing

happens, but that the sequence of cause and effect is the immutable law seeming to be chance for the short-sighted mortals unable to read its continuity.

He knew that existence was but sowing and reaping, and that the reaper's astonishment at his harvest was often due to his ignorance of the nature of his seed. He knew that every intermediary between the beginning and the end would be in its own place and he would have to reckon with every one of them.

He looked for no interposition of Divine Providence to produce or remove any. He had no angry wrath to fear, no supplications to make. The law of cause and effect satisfied his reason and fortified his heart and soul. He had but to see and do.

He remembered that he did not know her name—knew of her absolutely nothing. He wondered if he should meet her again; wondered, with a flash of recollection which cut him like a knife, what she would say if she knew he had their child. He had not once thought of the boy while with her—the boy who had her eyes, with a devil in them he had never seen in the mother's.

The complications of their mutual position rushed over him all at once. She had abandoned the child in its tender infancy, had known—presumably—nothing of it, and had not cared to know. Would she care now?

No, she was married. The knowledge would but rouse in her an appalling horror instead of a mother's yearning to look upon her child. Perhaps they would not meet again! And yet future meeting was probable if they could thus come face to face after so many

years. How should he meet her? What should he do? As friends, she had said. And he had assented. Should he, then, not only meet her as a friend, but be to her a friend whether he ever met her again or not?

Clearly. As a friend to her, then, her sincere friend, what should be his course of action? He thought long and carefully, listening for the inner voice which had guided him so wisely; which had never failed to sound its note of warning when he gave it opportunity to be heard.

"Live to your best," came ringing over interminable spaces in the moments when he weighed duty and inclination the one against the other.

He had nothing and she had everything to lose through relationship to the child. His step had been taken; he had faced and was passing through its consequences. He had no right to force unwelcome knowledge on her, no right to show her her duty as his had appeared to him. She had family ties, probably children; he had none. It was only right he should bear his own burdens in silence. She did not live in Benton; she had said she was but stopping there temporarily. It was not probable that she and the boy would ever come together. He wondered what would be the result if they did—if any of the attraction of kinship would be felt by either?

It was the third day since he met her. He had settled and dismissed the questions roused by the meeting, and gone back to his accustomed routine. He read a great deal, studied much, thought more. In the solitude in which he lived since he had placed the boy at school, and which was largely self-imposed—for many

who had either laughed at or denounced him were beginning to manifest a change in their views—he was opening up deeps in his own nature of which formerly he had had no knowledge.

He, too, could say, "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." A world grew up around him in which he had no lack of companionship. It held no sorrow, misery, or crime. It was active, glowing, continually expanding with the mighty rhythm which throbbed everywhere, unseen and unheard with the outer senses. Vista on vista of overwhelming possibilities opened to him as he blended his consciousness with this great pulse of the universe, and which he was learning to do at will. He could look in and through a changing, revolving, ever-developing series of circles, in light, of light, made up of light, their whole essence and substance, and all contained in them, light, light, light. Worlds on worlds, all living, breathing, throbbing light! And colors which were alive, so alive that the variegated forms of the external world were thrice-dead corpses beside them!

In the nineteenth century, in the prosaic city of Benton, in the every-day atmosphere of an apartment where he was surrounded by the common chairs and tables of common every-day life, he was beginning to taste of infinity.

To-day he turned to this inner world, which smiled upon him the more gloriously fair for the darkness of the moment through which he had been feeling his way. Silent and motionless he sat—something sat—with head leaning against the chair, hands—long, strong hands with sensitive finger-tips—lying passive. *He*

was gone, moving, with a freedom and an impetus which continually fed itself, through regions where he was at home, where he belonged, for he was of them.

He came to a great city which lifted its mighty towers and domes far out of sight. He walked through its spaciousness, seeing the whole at every point; order, symmetry, harmony—power in visible form. For it was peopled; peopled with men who were as gods in their majesty and strength, as goddesses in their beauty and tenderness. They trod as conquerors. In their faces were benedictions. From all sides the vast sea of living color vibrated to a central point above, which was veiled in a mellow glow. Whiter and whiter it grew as he gazed upon it, brighter and brighter, more dazzling, more radiant, till there burst forth the sun of that city—the woman of light.

“Man which is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble.”

Man which is born of *the* woman is for eternity and full of power, for he is born King.

He was walking no longer, he was rising toward her, drawn by invisible chords which thrilled with a subtle music, impelled by the very atmosphere of the wonderful city, whose men-gods gazed after him. But the glow began to close over him as she stretched toward him welcoming hands.

“Sorry to disturb you, sir, but the messenger boy is waiting for an answer.”

The servant stood beside him with a note. He looked at it, unable to recognize the handwriting. He broke the seal.

"DEAR EVERETT: We are to be friends. This was our compact. Will you grant a wish of mine? If our next meeting should be in the presence of others will you please appear as if it were our first—as if we were strangers to each other?"

The note bore no date or signature. He pondered a moment. Why not? he said to himself. He wrote a reply:

"It shall be as you desire."

The messenger had but just departed when Paul appeared.

"Old chap! you are as welcome as a spring of water in a thirsty land," said Everett as they clasped hands. Paul's sweet and benignant smile played over his face as he replied:

"May your thirst increase and the supply never fail! How are you thinking?"

"Trying to think up and not down. You have coached me so persistently in that line it ought not to be an effort."

"Good. What do you hear from the boy?"

Everett's face changed. "They write me that he is very hard to control and seems to have little ambition to learn. I fear—"

"Up and not down, Everett," said Paul quickly.

"You are right, Paul. We help no one by seeing his worst, do we? I—I have something to tell you."

"You have seen Helen Mathers," returned Paul composedly.

Used as he was to Paul's wonderful foreknowledge he stared at him.

"Traces of your contact with her are about you still," his friend continued with a slight smile at the stare.

He knew that Paul read books not composed of paper and printers' ink.

"Yes. I met her three days ago, and I have just received a note from her," and Everett gave him a brief account of what had occurred.

Paul mused a few moments without reply.

"My friend," he said at last, "experience is multiplying for you according to the law of growth. You are being tried and proved. Look steadily to the god within. Prepare his way before him and the rest is sure. I could tell you something of the future, but it is better that you should meet it as it comes. I am going away for a time and have come to say good-by."

"Going away!" exclaimed Everett with almost a sinking at his heart. He had not realized how much he depended upon his friend. "I hope it is not for long."

"I cannot say. I may be away for some weeks. But before I go tell me of the result to yourself of this meeting. Do you regret it?"

"No, I do not think I do. I am glad to know that she is happy and prosperous. She bears every appearance of being well cared for and to lack nothing. She must have a kind husband, and she is very beautiful."

"Do you think she would wish to know of the child?"

"Oh no!" replied Everett quickly. "I am sure she would not. I have made up my mind to be silent regarding him."

"That is well. Do you know, Everett, that senti-

ment is changing toward you—that people are learning to admire and value you in spite of what they have termed your Quixotic nonsense?” and Paul looked at him inquiringly.

“You may be right as to the change. I had hardly thought of it. One has his life to live as best he can, whatever the outside view of it.”

“Yes. One has only to keep his mental eye fixed steadfastly on the highest, noblest, and best, to, in time, induce others to see it also. The mental currents we set up bear others in their direction. People are learning to discern. Your efforts have not been altogether in vain for them, while rich for yourself in result. The good we strive for always has double effect: what it brings to us and what it bestows on others. I think you may soon be active in prominent positions here if you choose. One of the officers of the ‘Association for Mutual Helpfulness and Improvement’ asked me the other day if I thought you would accept the presidency were it offered you.”

Everett looked surprised. “I! President! Why, I thought Miss Hartwell filled that office.”

“She has been twice elected and was offered the nomination for the third time. But she does not wish it. She is throwing all her energy at present into her recently organized ‘Woman’s Higher Thought League.’ She has set her heart on bringing women out of what she terms the ‘religious bondage, instituted by that self-styled apostle who allowed his prejudice to foster his ignorance of the nature of woman, her capabilities and necessities.’”

“Will she succeed, do you think?”

"If she has something really better to give them in place of what she takes away, and if—she is the woman to give it."

"You have no doubt of her ability?"

"No. Only of her quality."

Everett looked at Paul silently for a moment. "What do you mean?" he asked finally.

"A certain kind of woman is to be the mother of a new world, a new race, a new religion; a world without sin, a race without guile, a religion without bigotry and intolerance; the world, race, and religion of the spirit, not of the letter, partaking of her pure virginity, sustained by her humanity, vivified by her divinity."

The intensity of Paul's face and voice vibrated a responsive chord in himself as Everett looked at him. Sometimes he understood his friend's utterances but vaguely, but he felt him to be a prophet—to be filled with the spirit of prophecy.

"Not the woman wandering in the wilderness, much as she may witness overthrown, but the woman who is 'visited by the Lord,' is to lead mankind out of bondage. Intellectual freedom is sweet, and vast in its prospects to those who have long been denied it; but it is abject slavery compared to spiritual illumination and the power that goes with it. Miriam Hartwell, though an intellectual giant, is spiritually dead. With her as leader the people will not journey. They will wander in the wilderness 'till the men of war have perished from among the people.' Redemption comes through the woman, but she must be the priestess rather than the warrior, winning her cause first by what she is, afterward by what she does."

Paul did not seem to be talking to Everett, but to have forgotten that he was there and to be thinking aloud.

"I see the coming woman, the woman clothed with the sun. In her right hand is power, in her left hand peace. She is shod with wisdom and crowned with love. She is masculine in her dignity and force, feminine in her gentleness and patience. She is all-conquering in her power, all-winning in her love. She is neither the subject nor the competitor of man. She is beside him as his comrade, before him as his shield, above him as his ideal, around him as the divine virgin of whom he is to be reborn. She holds within her the divine instead of the sensuous conception of man. As woman she conceives, as wife she brings forth, as mother she protects, as leader she defends, as priestess she exalts. 'In her name shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'"

Paul's voice ceased, and swiftly before Everett's vision passed the scene of the previous hour—the wonderful city, the God-like men, the woman of light, who was its sun.

Paul resumed: "To come to the actual, the world is agitated to-day as it has not been for years. New adjustments of old conditions, growing out of old relations, are being compelled on every hand. Progress is the watchword. The pendulum is swinging from the extreme of conservatism to the extreme of radicalism. The time has produced its type. Woman has sprung to the front with an energy and a purpose the more intense for being held so long in check. She is threatened with a danger which always attends reaction.

In the development of her intellectual she is losing sight of her spiritual nature. She is growing brilliant where she should be luminous. She is hardening instead of expanding. She is drawing into herself instead of sending forth from herself. She is losing sight of an end in the means. She is turning a deaf ear to one side of her nature and with a strong hand she is silencing it. She is killing aspiration with ambition. She has given religion for humanitarianism. Self-deceived, she has exchanged sentiment for reputation, determined to win fame. Believing she is working for others, she is working for herself. Intending to live for all, she is living for one. Compelling admiration, she is losing her ministration. Aiming for the high, she is falling below the most high. Seeing the fallacies of what has been called love, she is becoming blind to the real. Hail! the woman of the nineteenth century. All hail! the woman who is yet to come."

Paul rose as he ceased. "You will say as you used to, Everett, that I have been 'sermonizing' again. But you will be spared for a time. Good-by."

"Good-by, Paul," replied Everett as he placed both hands lovingly on the shoulders so far below him and looked into the wonderful eyes. "I wish I were not to be spared. Peace abide with you, and may you be the tower of strength for some other one that you have been to me."

"And with you be peace," said Paul gently.

A moment's silence and the door closed behind him.

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER a short stay at the sea-shore, where the ocean breezes, together with her husband's company, brought a little color to Emma's cheeks, they had gone to a quiet country village where board was to be had at a merely nominal sum, and where Walter settled himself as for an indefinite stay, although newspapers and like necessities for a business man in the city were infrequent.

She wondered sometimes, vaguely, how he could adapt himself so readily to circumstances, only to assure herself with a throb of wifely pride and gratitude that it was for her sake he did it. He was more devoted to her than he had been before the baby came, more thoughtful of her wishes and feelings. He seemed anxious to spare her all exertion, did not encourage even the short excursions to neighboring places which she proposed, but reminded her constantly that she must husband her slowly returning strength, and had better remain quietly where they were.

He went away frequently for two or three days at a time on the plea of "business"—that dreadful "business," which of course had to be attended to, but which deprived her of so much; for when he was away she felt as if she had dropped entirely out of the world. She saw no one but strangers, heard nothing of what

was going on elsewhere. When he was with her she did not mind. He was her all. She could have been content with him on a desert island.

At times he was much preoccupied and seemed anxious—of course about her; and when she would assure him that she was very well and improving all the time, he would rally for a while. Sometimes when he returned after an absence he would be almost hilarious, and at others he seemed tired out, as if he had been working too hard. She made every effort to accommodate herself to his moods, for she had found that with all his love for her—for, of course, he loved her devotedly: he told her so frequently—he would blaze into a sudden anger when she questioned him too much that frightened her.

Once he had brought her papers to sign, and had seemed very impatient when she did not do it immediately, assuring her it was only a matter of form necessary for him in the transaction of some of his business. She felt as if she ought to understand better what it was for, but wrote her name obediently in the place he pointed out. He had kissed and petted her afterward and called her “good girl,” and she had been very happy.

If only he would be like that all the time! Of course he knew what he was about, she assured herself frequently—for there was an anxious feeling at her heart; a feeling without reason, for her husband knew about everything better than she did. A sorry mess she would be likely to make of business. She wondered sometimes that he seemed so frequently short of money, for their expenses were very light and he was

receiving the rent of their home in Benton in addition to the profits of his business.

But he always explained. When he did not return at the time he had told her he would come back, he always had a good reason, the best of reasons. And when he had explained to her she was always so self-condemned because she had felt the least little bit of resentment at his delay. When she could see no possible excuse he always had one, so plain and reasonable—after he had explained—she wondered why she had not thought of it, and vowed to herself that never again—no, never—would she allow such feelings; not the smallest shadow of a doubt but that he was everything her husband should be.

One afternoon on waking from a nap she heard voices down-stairs, her husband's and another she did not recognize. She was preparing to go below when she heard the strange voice raised in loud threatening tones. She could not understand what was said, but the tone frightened her. She could not move for a moment and when she did go down her husband was standing before the door and looking down the road with a scowl on his face, a clenched fist, and muttering something which made her catch her breath.

“O Walter! What is it?” she said.

He controlled himself, seemingly with a great effort, and laughed—his eyes did not laugh—as he replied:

“Oh, nothing! That fool seems to think that because a man is a lawyer he can accomplish impossibilities on demand. I have charge of a matter he wants settled, and it cannot be done just yet.”

As she looked in the same direction she saw a man

who seemèd familiar. Yes, she had seen him before. It was the one who had insisted on seeing Walter before he was up in the morning, and who had been at their home frequently since.

“Why! there is that—”

Her husband cut her short as he turned into the house and drew her after him.

“That is no one you know,” he said. “Did you have a good nap? How long have you been awake?”

When she told him that she had heard their voices but could not understand what was said, he seemed relieved, and explained, as he always did, so satisfactorily, she was surprised and annoyed that the anxious and foreboding feeling at her heart would not leave her.

“You see, Emma, a fellow who knows nothing about the processes of law, the complications and delays, gets wrathful over it all and thinks his lawyer is to blame. This chap, now, threatened me with all sorts of consequences if I did not hasten matters to his satisfaction.”

Emma could not help but feel it a little queer that one of her husband’s clients should follow him to such an out-of-the-way place, but she dismissed the feeling.

“I do not think this place agrees with you any longer,” he said. “You do not look as well as you did.”

Emma assured him she was doing very well indeed; but he insisted he was right, and was going to look for another one. She proposed going back to Benton, but to this he would not listen.

For all Emma’s determined confidence in her hus-

band and in his judgment, she began to long exceedingly for her own home. She rarely heard from Benton. She had received one letter from Sarah, which her husband had given her with an apology for having opened and read it first, as he knew she would not mind. She was very lonesome sometimes, but of course Walter knew what was best.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was as Paul had said. Since Everett had sent his son away to school a decided change had taken place in the conduct of the good citizens of Benton toward him. The illegitimacy of the relation between them was not so prominent and its remembrance was not so alive. His real worth, his straightforward honesty, were beginning to be appreciated. His reserve and dignity had compelled a show of respect, which his true merit, as it came to be known, made sincere.

There was no conflict of opinion as to his intelligence and ability. All agreed that his word was to be depended upon absolutely; and he had proved that he was not afraid to do what he believed to be right, neither would he shirk the consequences of his doing.

People who had formerly condemned him said, "It was very noble in him to do as he did;" and some of those who had inveighed against his immorality admitted that he had done what he could to repair the wrong; especially as the strictest watchfulness failed to reveal further wrong-doing, but, on the contrary, disclosed many an effort on his part with young men to prevent them from making his former mistakes.

A committee from the "Association for Mutual Helpfulness and Improvement" had waited on him with the

request that he would allow himself to be nominated for the presidency, assuring him that he was sure of election since it had come to be known that many of their most valued members, young men, were his devoted adherents.

Realizing the value of a warning word at the right time as to the mistake of "sowing wild oats," which is fostered by general opinion of the difference in nature between young men and young women, in a very quiet way he had organized a class of "Seekers for Self-Knowledge," to which he had given of his time and means without stint. He took pains to find and procure for them the best instructors from the physiological basis, who exploded the old view of "physical necessity" and showed them, instead, "the transformation of energy." He gave ethical culture due emphasis, made them acquainted with the best philosophies ancient and modern, and left them to form their own religious opinions without any bias from himself.

He held before them the motto of his own life—"Live to your best"—and helped them in every way in his power to carry it out. Many a mother agonizing over the recklessness of her son and its dreaded consequences found, when her prayers and entreaties supported by her clergyman were of no avail, that she had reason to thank him for the timely check her boy's career had received. The declared but not yet experienced "wrath of God" often fails where a living, human, "I know, for I have proved," succeeds.

After careful deliberation he had expressed his willingness to serve in the office and had been elected. The Society soon showed evidences of a new vitality.

Applications for membership rapidly increased, and its fame became more than local. What had threatened to be a bone of contention was successfully removed. He had frankly stated his wish that "good moral character" determined by a censorship in the organization should not be the standard of admission, arguing that those who were most in need of help were the ones who should have it, and that all who were led by the name and work done by the Society to seek admission should have the opportunity they sought; that those who should come might be made better and those who were in need not be made worse. He begged them to remember that this was not to be a mutual admiration society, but an instrument for practical service which could be used on any and all lines for the betterment of mankind. It was not to be exclusive, but inclusive, and of any and all material; for there was none but could be utilized for some part of the great whole.

After an animated discussion and some opposition from a few mistaken, but well-meaning, sticklers for "respectability," his view had carried the day. He greatly enjoyed the abundant work and opportunities the position afforded him. He had stored up energy and vigor in his period of comparative seclusion. He was thankful from the depths of his heart for every battle he had fought in the past, for he knew his was no exceptional experience and he was able to feel the needs of others even before they expressed them. Where they stood bewildered and reckless, he had been, and he could point them the way out. As Paul had done for him, he showed them the god in themselves and left them to find the other. He showed

them their inherent, if undeveloped, goodness, and left them to deal with their wickedness.

Sarah Hartwell was one who seconded all his efforts. He found that for her explanation was unnecessary. She always understood; and he was surprised to find, as he came more intimately in contact with people, of what a force she was possessed, what a power she wielded. Every one admired Miriam, but they stood in awe of her. Sarah they loved. They turned to her as naturally as a child to its mother—children, many of them, in their trust and reverence, their need of help and confidence of getting it.

He saw her under all circumstances, some of them very trying ones; and never did he see her lose patience or relax her endeavor to help. Now and then he had been surprised by an unexpected sternness when she was dealing with some feather-bed individuals in whom she was endeavoring to arouse the impulse to stand on their own feet. She was usually gentleness itself, which made her masculine inflexibility the more unexpected. But it always appeared when it was needed.

When he attempted to analyze her nature and character he found himself brought to the conclusion that it was an unusually round, evenly developed one. While it presented no aggressive projections it seemed fortified at every point.

Miriam had softened toward him. For a time after she refused him he could not see her even from a distance without a pang at his heart. More than he realized he had built hopes of a future with her as a companion, and his loneliness seemed the more insupportable when his dream was dissipated. He had solace,

however, in his work for others. He felt their disappointments and forgot his own. He was glad to see a more kindly expression in her eye in place of the cold disapproval which had hurt him so sorely. She even sought his advice and commendation of projects of her own—a new departure for her who had always been sufficient unto herself.

He had attended a reception which had been given her by the Society on her retiring from the presidency, and he thought he had never seen her more regal than on that evening when she stood receiving the compliments and laudation of the admiring throng. Every one pressed about her for at least a look or a word. Many had come a long distance to honor “the most remarkable woman of the day.” The cup her ambition and determination had poured for her was full and running over. At thirty-three she had won fame and power and proved what was possible for a woman. She was a living refutation of the assertion that woman is man’s intellectual inferior.

He had been standing in a quiet corner where he could gaze upon her unobserved, when he became aware of that subdued murmur about him which marks a general observation of one in particular, and some one crossed his line of vision. The ejaculations “How lovely!” “Isn’t she beautiful?” caused him to look more closely. It was Helen who was making her way toward Miriam. Though momentarily startled he was not surprised. He had felt that he should meet her again and he had been schooling himself to be able to carry out her wish and fulfill his promise to meet her as if she were a stranger.

He moved to another part of the room and made no attempt to observe her. But later in the evening as he stood conversing with some one he felt a slight tug at his coat-sleeve. Looking around he saw Helen, the fringe of whose dress had caught on a button, accompanied by Sarah Hartwell, who performed the ceremony of introduction as she helped Mrs. Jasper Cunningham to disentangle it. The incident made the meeting less formal than it would otherwise have been and smoothed the way for him.

"Mrs. Jasper Cunningham!" he exclaimed to himself when they had moved on. "Can she really be Helen?" He had heard of the rich and beautiful widow who had taken Benton by storm and wondered that they had not met before. She was by all odds the most beautiful woman in the room, the most beautiful he had ever seen, he decided. A little overdressed perhaps, at least rather too many jewels according to his critical taste. They became her exceedingly, however, and his thoughts went back to that fair summertime as he remembered her delight when he had given her a ruby scarf-pin she had coveted. He had wondered then that her liking for gems could be such a passion.

A few days afterward she had sent him an invitation to a dinner-party, which he had declined, as that evening belonged to his class of young men, an engagement with which he allowed nothing to interfere. Then she had sent him a note requesting him to give her his first free evening as she wished to consult him on matters concerning the Society he represented. He had gone to her and she had been very sweet and gentle,

receiving him as an old friend but without the slightest reference to the past. She appeared to him as if she had really—as she had said—let it go. She treated him with winning deference, a silent appeal in her beautiful eyes which touched him. She spoke of her loneliness since her husband's death and her need of some interest and occupation which should take her out of herself.

"I fear I have been rather a useless individual," she said, "and I should like to begin to make amends for my negligence."

She asked for detailed information as to the aims and work of the Society and ended by proposing herself as a member willing to furnish substantial financial assistance. She carried out her plan and became very zealous in her championship of the cause, and the members generally became quite devoted to "that lovely Mrs. Cunningham."

Everett was thrown with her continually and it was not long before he found himself visiting at her house as a familiar friend. Throwing himself heart and soul into his work, the past faded more and more till at times he forgot it utterly and knew only that while he held within the secret recesses of his being his own ideal, he was laboring with heart and hand, with brain and pen, to help others form and achieve one that should ennoble and uplift them.

He was continually devising ways and means for practical as well as intellectual effort; for the application of carefully considered theories. He studied the individual bias and tendency of the members and how to make the ability of each operate for the good of the

whole. No one was so insignificant but that sooner or later he was startled out of his self-depreciation by finding that he could do something for some one and that he was necessary for what it was desired to accomplish.

But with all his efforts in the without he never lost sight of the all-important necessity, his own mental attitude, for he knew that here lay the secret of power. He knew that he could not think failure and achieve success, that this law of the individual was the law for the mass. Having a noble aim and a pure motive, this mental attitude made him a center of force for the Society, and made it a center of force in the city.

Such was the growing fame of the organization that delegates from others in all parts of the country came to observe its methods and—if they could—learn the secret of its success; and frequent propositions were made to organize subsidiary societies in other places which should remain in vital connection with the parent-head.

One night after a meeting which both had attended, Sarah observed that her sister was more than usually thoughtful. Miriam had thrown herself into an easy-chair instead of preparing for bed, and for some moments had neither moved nor spoken. As Sarah passed frequently the open door between their rooms she looked tenderly and wistfully at her sister, but she knew better than to interrupt her meditations with a remark.

“Why is it that with all my efforts I cannot rouse women from their apathy—cannot make them see the narrowness and bigotry of their religious views?” she

burst out at last. "They are not entirely content with them, I can see they are not. Their hearts are bigger than their creeds. Women who are fearless in their efforts in philanthropic and ethical work simply will not break away from their churches, but continue to uphold them in spite of their palpable defects. I cannot understand it."

And the deep lines between her brows testified to the knotty nature of the problem.

"I think it is because of what the church represents to women," said Sarah gently. "They cannot do without religion."

"Religion!" repeated Miriam impatiently. "What better religion can any one want than facts? The magnificent discoveries of this age have disproved and rendered worthless the traditions so long cherished as divine truths. I have no patience with that obstinacy which places manifest impossibilities before the demonstrations of science."

"Deep down in the heart of many women, Miriam, there is a discrimination between ecclesiasticism and religion; one which is more feeling than reason. The first they will sometime let go, but the last never. It is a part of their inmost selves, it is their breath of life. It is not formulated, it bears no label, it is not for the outside world, to be analyzed and inspected: It is for themselves. It is their connection with the infinite, that hidden channel through which flows all that redeems and purifies life. They may believe that God is an incomprehensible One containing three persons, that the first man God made was out of the dust, fallen, and redeemed by the blood of God's own Son. But this is

their belief, not their religion. They may not understand their belief, may accept it blindly; but they do *know* their religion. Woman's intuition is sure and steadfast, and the discoveries of modern science will never overthrow it. On the contrary, it will yet prove to be the successful mediator between what, to you, seem opposites."

Sarah spoke with a quiet intensity and even authority which surprised her sister, who for the moment made no reply.

"Everett Long is an atheist," she said finally, "and yet he is having more success with that society than I am with mine."

"No, he is not!" burst from Sarah with a suddenness which made Miriam start. "He is a religious man. He is not a creedist, but he worships the divine wherever he finds it manifest. He is devout in every fibre of his being and responds to the least touch of Deity like a perfectly attuned instrument. You mistake if you think he has no God. He may not accept a doctrinal Deity, or a wrathful Jehovah, for he has risen above them. With the woman in him he has felt after God and found what he sought."

Miriam gazed fixedly at Sarah as she stood before her erect and tense as she had never seen her, her eyes brilliant and far-seeing. They seemed to have changed places for the moment. Sarah turned and went back to her own room. After a little Miriam rose and closed the door.

"How she turned upon me!" she mused. "I did not think she could be so aggressive. But she always was queer. It is surprising what a change has taken place

with Everett Long, both in himself and in people's attitude toward him. He looks so noble and commanding, his very appearance impresses an audience before he has opened his mouth. And his executive ability is something marvelous. He holds every thread of that great organization in one hand and directs it as he will. He does not seem to know how much power he wields. I wonder—if—I made a mistake?"

CHAPTER XV.

HELEN CUNNINGHAM was very well satisfied with herself. She was really doing something for others for the first time in her life. She lost sight of the motive which had actuated her, in the fact. She felt very good and self-denying as she looked over her quarterly expense account and saw how much money she had given away. Not that any need of her own had been unsupplied, but then, she could have had so much with it.

She really enjoyed contact with people so different from those to whom she had been accustomed. Some of them were dreadfully in earnest, so possessed with an idea that they seemed to be utterly indifferent to the luxuries of life. How they did work! Everett, even, did not allow himself any time whatever for his own personal enjoyment. He was always so busy with a new plan to be developed, a new effort to be made. But he seemed very glad of her help and his eye softened when he looked at her.

She was waiting for him now, expecting one of those rare visits she could induce him to make. She was losing none of her beauty. She was an enchanting picture as she sat in a high-backed, carved oaken chair which she affected, and which threw her beautiful head and perfect figure into bold relief. The sweeping dra-

peries of her white robe fell about the gold-embroidered cushion on which reposed her small, exquisitely shod feet. Every line was grace itself. Carelessly thrown over the corner of the chair-back, as if they had dropped from above, was a bunch of long-stemmed Catherine de Mermet roses which nestled on her neck and over her shoulder and arm with telling effect. None knew better than she the power of visual impressions or how to gather and employ her forces to this end.

The picture which met his eye as he came into the room was very gratifying to Everett's esthetic sense. He loved the beautiful in all its forms for its own sake. Helen met him with the half-entreating, half-confiding manner which she always wore for him when no one was about.

"It is so good of you to come, Everett. With all your busy life you never forget your friends. Sit here by me and tell me of your plans."

Nothing loath he placed himself in the cushioned great chair she had indicated and told her of his present efforts to enlarge the scope of his work, his views and hopes for the future. She listened to him as he talked with her head lying against the back of her chair and her face turned to his; listened with an apparent sympathy and appreciation which were very pleasant to him.

Within herself she was wondering at the change from the Everett she used to know, this strong self-sufficient man with the steady commanding eye and yet the gentleness of a woman. He used to be mirthful, even volatile, ready to break into a laugh at the smallest provocation. Now he smiled but rarely. He

was serious but not solemn. He was filled with a tremendous earnestness. But when he did! Ah! One of those smiles was worth the study of how to bring it to his face. He was, as she said, "so good," but she wanted him to be something more to her.

He had kept his promise sacredly. He had never alluded by word or look to the past. He had been what she desired, her friend. He was a new species in her experience. She had never met his kind before. She began to wish that he would speak of it, that the even kindly manner might be broken in some way, even if it were by a storm.

"Tell me of your 'Young People's Search-Light League,' Everett. That is an odd name you have chosen for it."

"I did not choose it. They chose it for themselves," he replied. "I wanted them to form a habit which I feel will be invaluable to them as they grow up; the habit of watching their thoughts. Young people naturally act on impulse, which they are taught they should curb and restrain; but they are not shown the value and necessity of governing their thoughts as the means of ruling their impulses. I try to show them the wisdom of daily self-examination, being their own confessors. They call it 'turning on the search-light.'"

"And do you think one can control his thoughts?" she asked.

"I think we can develop the power of control of them, if we will," he replied. "Thoughts are the food of the soul. Except we control them we do not give it the food best adapted to its growth and development."

She sighed inaudibly and made no reply. He was getting beyond her depth.

"I like boys," she said finally, "and you have some wonderfully bright little fellows in that League."

"Indeed they are," he responded heartily. "Those Gordon boys, for instance. Their mother is so anxious about their education. She has been a widow since they were babies and has struggled on single-handed and alone."

"How unevenly things are divided in this world!" she continued musingly as she gathered up one of the roses which had fallen to her lap. "She has the children and no money, and I have the means and no children. She thinks her position a hard one doubtless, and I think she has a great good fortune denied me. I have always wished I had children."

Everett's heart gave a bound. He had schooled himself so vigorously to silence as to the past, that he sometimes forgot even in her presence that she was the mother of his son. He had put himself in her place so thoroughly, feeling what the knowledge might be to her, the probable dismay and dread which would overwhelm her, that he was firmly resolved she should not be made to suffer through him. When he had found that she was a widow and childless, he had felt, at first, that there was a possibility of her recognition of the child. But this hope, if the thought had ever been definite enough to be a hope, dissipated as he remembered what such a recognition must mean to a woman.

No. They were not fitted for fighting such battles. They had every reason to avoid them. Where a man

might conquer, were he strong enough, they would be overthrown and crushed because of the public opinion which makes a crime in the woman of that which is a mistake in the man.

He had had the curiosity to observe her in her intercourse with children and had never been able to detect any of the "mothering" instinct in her. He could not help but wonder now—"If she knew! If she only knew!"

"I have thought sometimes," she went on, as he did not answer her, "that I would adopt one. But I have been afraid to do it. It would be a great responsibility."

She was devoured with curiosity about his son, whom he never mentioned. Much as she wanted to know of the boy, she had never dared to allude to him. If he would only give her an opportunity by the smallest reference! But no, he was as silent as the grave. She had set her heart, however, on finding out about him. Discreet questioning of others had revealed nothing save that he had been a newsboy there in Benton who had been hurt by a street-car. She wished she could see him, but was not likely to as he was in boarding-school.

"It would be a great responsibility, but also a great pleasure," he replied. "So many children do not have half a chance in the world. Modern civilization owes them a terrible debt and will be sure to suffer in its discharge."

Though he answered quietly, the possibilities stirred by her words moved him profoundly. Only that day he had received a letter from the principal of the school where his son was placed, requesting him to remove

the boy as he found his presence detrimental to the others in his charge. He had been detected in theft and after admonition had repeated the offense, stealing some jewelry belonging to the other pupils. His heart had been heavy as he read this letter. He was willing to do his best for the boy, but was his best sufficient? If the youth only had a mother! He must bring the boy home and—

The hope he had discouraged sprang up again in his heart. Could he not bring them together? Might she not, with this desire stirring in her, be led to take an interest in the boy? If not for his own sake—perhaps—for the father's? For he could not but see that Helen was very tender toward him, that she courted his opinion and deferred to his judgment. He had sometimes felt it unwise to be much with her alone.

He had determined to work in the future, heart and soul, for the general good, and he did not like to find aroused in him, as had sometimes happened in her society, contradictory thoughts and feelings. He had felt afterward as if he had dropped in some way from the plane on which he wished to stand.

But she was very beautiful, very lovely, and very winning now, as she sat facing him with that soft color in her cheek, a wistful confiding look in her eye, and a slight tremulousness of her sweet mouth. This was a different Helen from the one he had known. Might he not risk preferring a request, risk bringing the boy to her? He felt a light touch on his hand. Helen was leaning toward him and had laid her own on his.

“Could you—would you mind—would you let me help you with yours, Everett?”

His heart swelled with mingled emotions till it seemed as if it would burst. But he was thankful. This would make it easier. Mother and child would come together without any violation of his pledge. She had taken the initiative.

He looked at her with eyes kindled by his deeply stirred feelings. Her own were dewy. How irresistible she was, as with her head thrown back and face upraised to his, so very near his own, her breath touched him gently, the perfume of her hair stole over him! He was back in the long ago, when he had held her passionately in his arms and shut out all the world he did not find in her. His pulses throbbed violently as he grasped her hand in both his own and moving slowly nearer and nearer to the bewitching face—how she drew him!—pressed a kiss full upon her sweet curved lips.

She sighed tremulously as with slowly closing eyes her head fell back against her chair.

How had it come about? Even in the partial intoxication of that contact, he felt a slight recoil, a twinge of self-reproach. What was he doing?

She opened her eyes and looked into his. She held her arms toward him—he had dropped her hand—and “Everett!” fell on his ear like the soft summer breeze.

But he was recovering his self-control. With a strong effort at restraint he took her hands again in his, and his tone, a little shaken at first, grew firmer as he said, “With all my heart, Helen, I thank you. I shall be more than glad of your assistance with this boy of mine who has no—who has never known a

mother. I mean to do my full duty by him, but he needs what I cannot give—a woman's influence."

A shade passed over her face, but he did not see it. Her tone was very sweet and gentle as she replied:

"I will gladly do all in my power for him because he is yours, if for no other reason."

But she continued to look at him inquiringly and he felt that it was natural she should expect some explanation in regard to him. But what should he say?

"I did not know that he was my son till two years and a half ago. When I found it out it cost me a great struggle to do what I recognized as my duty. He had only low associations, no opportunities for better ones or for education. I took him to my home as my acknowledged son. Will you forgive me and trust me if I do not tell you any more—now? Perhaps—some time—"

He waited for an answer as he looked at her, almost appealingly, still holding her hands in his own. She was disappointed, but no trace of her feeling appeared as she said, "I will trust you now and always."

Bending his head he gently kissed her hands and released them.

"I am very grateful to you, Helen."

As he rose to his feet she said, "I have not yet told you that I have made it possible to remain in Benton as long as I wish. I have bought this house."

"Bought this house!" he repeated in surprise. "I did not know it was for sale. But I am doubly grateful that I shall not lose you as soon as I had expected."

"Yes. The purchase was completed only yesterday.

The house was offered for less than its real value. I think it a good investment."

Before going to bed that night she reviewed the circumstances of the day.

"I think I have done very well so far. He is coming my way. To think I should have to make all this effort after what he was to me once. I never saw a man so changed! But he cannot resist me. And he is very proud. No, I do not think it is pride. I do not know what it is. He is different from any man I ever knew. I believe I am beginning to care very much for him really. He will tell me all about that boy yet. I wonder if I could really marry him? And with that child? I would not have believed any man could make me think so much about him when he was out of my sight."

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM was expecting a visitor. She had invited Raymond Long to spend the afternoon with her, feeling it wise to follow up the advantage she had gained with his father, immediately. She would use every means to make the boy fond of her and draw him to herself. She was so unused to young people or children she hardly knew how she should entertain him.

She bethought herself of a collection of beautiful colored photographs from Japan which were on a shelf above one of the bookcases in the room. Moving a chair forward she mounted it and reached to get them, but found she could just touch the case containing them with her fingers. She gave a little spring to enable her to grasp them. The impetus given the chair moved it from her, and at the same moment some heavy books dislodged by her hand fell, crushing it against a sharp edge of the bookcase. She could just reach the chair with one foot and did not dare to use her other hand to free the imprisoned one as she had to grasp the side of the bookcase to keep from falling.

She was about to call for help when she heard a laugh behind her. Turning her head she saw a youth of sixteen standing in the door with his hands in his pockets, a mocking expression in his eyes and his strong white teeth gleaming as he laughed at her helplessness, making no motion to assist her.

"Why do you not come and help me instead of standing there!" she exclaimed angrily, all thought of her obligations as hostess swallowed up in the precariousness of her position.

"Because you look so awfully funny spreadin' yourself all over that bookcase," he replied, still laughing, coming slowly toward her as if to longer enjoy the pleasure her situation afforded him.

Her hand hurt her cruelly and she felt the chair slipping slowly from under her. A violent resentment against him flamed up in her. It seemed ages before he finally reached her and pushing the chair forward held it so that she had secure footing and could release her hand. She made no further effort to get the photographs, but stepping down looked ruefully at the broad red mark on her injured hand.

"Say! You don't know how funny you looked!" he repeated.

She gazed at him and saw a handsome face which yet had a strong suggestion of coarseness, a mouth lacking delicacy and firmness and with red sensual lips, bold eyes which also contained an expression of furtiveness. Not one trace of sympathy or indication of any feeling but enjoyment.

"Heartless!" she said to herself. "He's nothing but a handsome animal."

Suddenly he stretched out a finger and touched the rings she wore.

"Ain't they beauties!" he said eagerly, and she noticed that his hand almost quivered like a creature about to pounce upon its prey and there was a covetous gleam in his face.

With the instinct of self-preservation she covered the rings with her other hand while a fierce impulse of resistance flamed up in her, and moved away from him. She disliked him thoroughly, and it was only with a strong effort at self-command that she was able to attempt the discharge of her duties as hostess. But her tender feelings for his father and her own curiosity concerning him stimulated her in this direction.

He was restless, roaming limpingly about the room, seemingly unable to remain long in one place or position, and to have little regard for social amenities or good manners. He picked up and handled indiscriminately whatever attracted his attention, interrupted her as she spoke whenever impulse seized him. He reminded her, in a vague indefinite way, as she studied him, of his father as she had formerly known him; and yet he had not been at all like this boy.

Intent upon finding out all she could she questioned him as to his past.

"How long have you lived in Benton?" she asked.

"Not a long while before my father found me," he replied. "How long have you?"

"Where did you live before?" ignoring his question.

"In— By ginger! That's a mighty pretty knife!" picking up a small jewel-handled stiletto which Helen used as a paper-cutter. "Where'd you get it?"

"I bought it in New York. But you did not answer my question."

"What do you want to know for?" said he, turning and looking at her with an expression of cunning in his face.

She blushed—at his impertinence, she said to herself.

"I am interested in you and your welfare," she replied.

"What for?" he again demanded.

She picked up a fan from the table beside her and fanned herself. Really! He was a most uncomfortable youth to deal with!

"I was thinking of your former life before your father found you. You must have suffered great privation."

"H'm! I was awful hungry sometimes. But I'd rather sell papers now than go to school. I hate school!" and the accompanying scowl emphasized his words.

"But you must have an education. There are many things you need to learn," she remonstrated.

"What does a feller need to learn for? My father's got money enough. I like to do as I've a mind to."

"A thorough savage!" she said to herself. It did not occur to her that the boy had but expressed a desire universal in human nature.

"Do you not want to be like your father?" she asked. "You are fond of him, aren't you?"

"Oh, he's a nice enough sort of a chap." And down went his hands to the depths of his pockets as he stretched out his legs, crossed his feet, and straightened back in his chair. "But he won't let me go out evenings except when I'm with him; and I should think he might give me more money."

"Your father knows what is best for you. You should have confidence in him."

She would have spoken severely but that she still hoped to elicit more information from him. He made no reply.

"Do you—remember your mother?" she ventured after a pause.

"No. Never had any," he answered shortly.

She gave it up. She could not press such questions without rousing his suspicious combativeness. She must wait. He seemed disposed either to be on the alert as if defending himself from something or to be sullen. He brightened up, however, when some refreshments were brought in. Knowing young people's fondness for sweets—which she shared—she had provided some fine confectionery.

He ate greedily; and once as her hand was moving toward a particularly fine *marron glacé* he interposed his own and snatched it quickly, laughing that he had cheated her of it.

As the afternoon wore away and she observed him further she found it difficult to analyze her feeling toward him. He both attracted and repelled her. He was very large of his age, almost a man in his physical proportions, and very active notwithstanding his lameness, which was not pronounced. The shape of his head would have betrayed an intensely sensual nature, one lacking in the higher qualities, had she been able to read the signs. But he had beautiful wavy brown hair, unusually heavy, with golden lights in it, which he continually threw back with an impatient jerk of the head.

There was an ill-concealed recklessness pervading his every look and movement, as if he would act inevitably on impulse, with no effort at self-restraint. Under the surface, which was a thin veneer created by the last three years of his life, was plainly apparent a restless

nature threatening continually to break out of bounds in its efforts for self-gratification. While he repelled he also fascinated her. She did not like him and yet she had a sense of kinship in a curious indefinite way, a feeling as if he were not altogether new and unknown to her, as if what he might say or do next would be portentous for her.

But keeping her object steadily in view, she exerted herself to make the time pass pleasantly for him. He grew more amenable and chatted with her quite freely of his life at school, drawing pictures of some of his teachers and school-fellows which made her laugh heartily and established a kind of fellowship between them. She had a keen sense of the ridiculous herself, the faculty of seeing the absurd and inconsistent in people, which gave her much quiet enjoyment unsuspected by others who looked at the open-eyed innocence of her soft brown eyes. He gave no hint of why he was at home again, however. The indifference he had at first manifested disappeared, and from roaming around the room he was sitting contentedly quite near her.

"Say, you're a mighty handsome woman!" he burst out suddenly with his eyes fastened on her face.

Helen laughed. Even boyish admiration was not to be disdained.

"Thank you!" she said lightly. "I shall be very glad if you approve of me."

But she was beginning to tire of him and was not sorry when the time came for his departure.

"Will you come and see me again?" she asked as he took leave.

"Oh, yes! I don't mind," he replied nonchalantly. "Will you have some more of that candy if I do?"

She promised there should be a full supply, and breathed a great sigh of relief when she was once more alone.

"He is a most unpromising specimen except for his good looks," she said to herself.

But the remembrance of his father's kiss stole over her—that grave, strong man who unbent only to her. It was like a wooing from one whom she had met but lately. For all of the past, she had never known *this* man before.

"Oh, well! We shall see!" and she smiled softly.

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE was a stir in certain circles in Benton. Their own Miriam Hartwell was to make the effort of her life. She was working incessantly for the "Woman's Higher Thought League," throwing all her energies into the endeavor to bring women out of their bondage. How religion had become an intellectual bondage, how women were serving under hard and cruel taskmasters, how necessary for their deliverance was a bold and determined stand against such encroachments, was plain to her.

She had given the great religions of the world careful thought and study; had spent time, money, and labor without stint in the search for and examination of the origin of the Christian Church. She had found much accepted as fact which was only belief—belief without justifiable foundation.

She was convinced that irrefutable proof of the correctness of the life of Jesus as given in the Gospels could not be produced. More—there was good reason to suppose that the character itself was a myth, clothed upon with the hopes and aspirations of a people and a time; good and noble, but not necessarily true. She could see the same ideal in all religions, the same identical ethical teaching. She was sure that women were

pinning their faith and their hopes to a sentiment roused by their own undeveloped natures, a sentiment which the broader intellectuality of men rejected as founded in truth.

And her breast swelled with pride as she reflected that she had been able to reach this vantage-ground and could look down upon the fallacies of—to her—obsolete religion, instead of being held in its toils, to the stultifying of her intellectual nature. She must therefore—her clear vision and conviction compelled—constitute herself a leader and deliverer for women. She must and she would devote herself and everything of which she was capable to their progress.

As the result of her researches she had prepared a careful statement of the history of the Christian religion—supported by historical evidence and by the lack of it, the inconsistencies and contradictions of the Bible, the overwhelming proof of the falsity of religious teachings through the demonstrations of science—which she was to deliver as an address to the combined women's clubs and societies of Benton in the largest hall the city afforded. She knew these would be reinforced by a general attendance of the intelligent population. Her name was sufficient to crowd the hall. Even the opponents of her views respected her power and admired her ability.

If she would have admitted it to herself, she would have said that she was somewhat nervous in the anticipation of this ordeal. For it was an ordeal in view of what she had at stake. She never had failed yet in the accomplishment of what she had undertaken. Her indomitable will and exhaustless energy had carried her

through. Failure was something she could not brook. She never thought of it but it gave her a death-like faintness.

This recent organization whose success was to be the crowning achievement of her life did not grow as she wished to see it, either in numbers or enthusiasm. Sarah's views of the reason why were too unwelcome to be encouraged for a moment. Reason must finally obtain control over a mere sentiment.

The "Association for Mutual Helpfulness and Improvement" meanwhile kept steadily on its way. While Everett worked as vigorously as ever, there were times when he felt some of the old unrest. His desire and energy did not flow so solidly in one direction as before. Some of it seemed to be diverted at times. He was drawn two ways.

Helen was much in his thoughts. He had put from him all expectation of marriage and domestic life in the intention to devote himself to the broader life and larger family of mankind. He honestly desired to be unselfish, to have no individual interest which was not a universal good. He wished to live for others before himself. But Helen's continued interest in the boy modified these views and opened new prospects. He was growing very fond of her, he was compelled to admit to himself.

With the habit of self-analysis he had cultivated he examined his feelings and saw that they varied at different times. When he was away from her he was able to calmly consider the advantages and disadvantages of lifelong association with her. When he was with her the disadvantages faded from view and his desire

for her increased fourfold. It seemed as if that kiss had kindled a fever in his blood which, when with her, he found it hard to control. Why should he? he thought sometimes. Why not clasp her in his arms and enjoy to the full, regardless of the consequences to either, the pleasures her ripe, warm, palpitating beauty would afford him?

But invariably at those moments of threatened madness that inner voice like a distant low-toned bell sounded its warning appeal, "Live to your best." And when it had passed he was surprised, sometimes almost dismayed, to find that he could still be brought under the power of his sense-nature sufficiently to compel a battle with himself. He had thought that victory gained.

At these moments he wished for Paul, who still continued absent. He could turn to no other one. But he knew he must lead and not lean, that he must prove and show the way by walking in it. The clearer vision born of his experience showed him that the bridge to higher possibilities for the race must always be a living one.

Sometimes in an almost rebellious frame of mind he sought justification for the gratification of his impulses. But the rebellion disappeared when he saw nature as a whole, traced that continuity of desire in all her kingdoms which acts as an impetus forward, the universal instinct which unites the sexes throughout the ascent of species up to the human, as much instinct, natural and justifiable, in the human as in those below it. He saw that this continuity of instinct was the necessary corollary of evolution, that evolution which was to bring a yet higher species. For the human, with its

present manifest weaknesses and defects, could not be the highest development of the genus Man.

How? Through transformation of energy—transmutation.

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove.”

By transmuting the unconscious animal instinct into conscious power through self-control.

Where? Where this alchemy alone is possible—with the human species.

When? When experience has brought perception of the aim and meaning of evolution—the development of the divine from the human.

“Ye shall be as gods!”

When on that battle-ground, human nature, the contest between animal instinct welling up and divine impulse flowing down is waged and won, the instinct not killed but ruled.

When as captive instead of ruler it falls into the divine as well as the natural order.

When the animal nature of the human species is thus made to serve as a way-preparer of the divine.

When human dominion of the universal animal impulse makes possible the divine dominion of the universal human.

When manly vigor is no longer the animal instinct intensified and differentiated by the addition of intellect, but is the calm equipoise of focused forces directed by the illuminated will.

Deep down in his soul he knew. With the eye which was unclouded because it did not belong to the sense-nature, which gravitates downward, he began to see the coming man, king, not slave.

After a period of this self-examination, which always resulted in a strengthened aspiration, he was able to consider more calmly his course of action. And if he were with Helen immediately afterward he felt in her a disappointment, a lack. Had he put his feeling into words—he had hardly defined it even for himself—he would have said she did not feed that higher nature which was individually his own. She stimulated, instead, the one he shared in common with other creatures, and roused in him the desire of possession.

His son was to be considered. He must do the best in his power for the boy. If he married Helen, if she would marry him knowing nothing of the boy's history, surely the child's future was made as smooth and as sure as was possible for it to be. He should risk nothing then by telling her the truth, and she would but be the more thankful to stand before others in her relation to the youth as she was in reality. The boy would have his mother, she would have her child, he would have both, and no stain in the eyes of the world would rest upon her. But—

Admirable as this arrangement would be from every point of view but that of his awakened and maturing soul, there was something lacking.

The woman clothed with the sun?

In those rare moments when every clamoring voice in him was stilled, when his whole being went out in adoration to that possible divinity enshrined in his holy of holies, he could conceive of a woman, "the divine womanly." Did this world afford such an one? Should he ever see her in the flesh?

The boy perplexed him. When he thought he could

see signs of filial love, an attachment which was not prompted by the good things of life the youth received from him, something was sure to occur to make him doubtful again if the tie between them was above that level for the boy.

Sarah Hartwell was the only one who seemed able to call out the best in him. The rough restlessness of his manner always disappeared in her presence. He became quiet and respectful, even gentle. His bold eyes softened as he looked at her, and she often found him sitting or standing silently by her when at the social meetings of the Society, which he frequently attended. Her heart went out to him, motherless and lonely, chafing under restraint he did not understand, unable to fraternize with associations foreign to his own ignorantly sensual nature, held back from those toward which he naturally gravitated.

It was a case of a square post in a round hole. His edges and angles had yet to be drawn through experience into conformity to the eternal pattern. She saw in him the infancy of the soul with the maturity of the sense-nature—the feeble infant bound round with the swaddling-clothes of fleshly tendencies, lying in the manger where the beasts feed. She saw that this infant needed mothering that it might outgrow its swaddling-clothes. And out of that heart of love which gave as ceaselessly and as silently as the sunshine falls upon the earth, she ministered to it.

Everett saw the effect she had upon his son—upon every one with whom she had to deal—and was thankful. She had more influence with him than had Helen, of whom he often spoke indifferently. But his defense

of Sarah was instantaneous if he heard of her what he construed as an unfavorable criticism. He sometimes—though never in his father's presence—referred to Helen as "the widder," but Sarah was always "Miss Hartwell," and often, with an almost reverential tone, "that nice Miss Hartwell." His street-Arab manner had been quite effectually toned down. It cropped up at times, but never when with Sarah. He yielded without resistance to her slightest request.

Everett's estimate of her had undergone a great change since he had been thrown more in her company through their common interests and work in the Society. He had always thought her very good and kind, but lacking her sister's force and ability. There was nothing about her to take one by storm, but he was coming to see that she could be a continual revelation.

Much of the good result with individual members he could trace to her influence. High as was the estimation in which she was held by all as they came to know her better, he could not detect in her the smallest trace of egotism. She seemed to be almost unconscious of herself, though keenly alive to the smallest need of others. He did not merely admire her, he was learning to reverence her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN that part of a great city where the narrow streets and tall buildings are alive with a sweating and toiling humanity, on an evening when the heat, which had not disappeared with the sun, added to the labor of the day strengthened the sense of oppression growing in the toilers, a company of them was crowded into an upper rear room which afforded a comparative refuge from the noise of the street.

It was spacious according to their idea of spaciousness, being large enough to hold from fifty to seventy-five persons. It was clean, so clean and orderly as to produce in many of its occupants by the force of suggestion an effort at greater personal tidiness than the treadmill round of their daily duties required of them. It contained but little furniture, but the little was substantial in construction. Benches with backs, to prevent pressure against the wall and consequent soiling, were ranged around the room. A large strong table stood at the upper end, surrounded by comfortable wooden arm-chairs; others were scattered indiscriminately about the room. A bookcase filled with books and a rack containing files of the daily papers completed its furnishings, with the exception of a large stone jug which stood in a shallow pan, surrounded by stone mugs, on a small table in one corner.

Seated at the table in a chair raised sufficiently to bring his face on a level with their own was Paul Masters, surrounded by half a dozen men, varying in age from twenty-two or three years to fifty. Their faces were intensely earnest in expression as they conversed with one another, their voices rising frequently above the conversational point, their words emphasized by a blow of the fist on the table which indicated an immense amount of brute strength precariously under control.

There was a noticeable change, however, both in voice and gesture whenever they addressed Paul; a toning down which bore witness to the superior force operative in him, small and frail as he was. Any of the men in the room could have handled him as a plaything, and yet a word, a look of his was sufficient to check the threatened quarrel arising from heated dispute. The frequenters of this room were of the class which submitted to their superiors in the industrial world, a submission near akin to rebellion. Here and to him they yielded obedience.

Among themselves they knew him as "the Helper." He had come among them when, "out on a strike," some of the more hot-blooded of their number were planning a personal attack on two or three men whom they believed to stand between them and their "rights." At first they had been inclined to resent his proffered advice, while wonder-struck at his knowledge of their intentions and affairs, which compelled them to abandon their project. But disarmed by his fearlessness combined with his physical weakness they were soon won to recognition of his true interest in them and desire that they should have all that was justly their due.

He gave unmistakable evidence of his sympathy with them, and yet he never "took sides." He always looked on both sides of every question, every position, and usually succeeded in showing them something in favor of the one opposed to their own of which they were unaware, or had overlooked. They always found him ready and usually able to give help—not always the financial assistance which some of the more ignorant among them directly requested and indirectly demanded as soon as they saw his interest in them; though there was little material evidence to show that he was much better off in this regard than the more industrious of themselves.

He came and went among them, maintaining the expense of the room which was their common meeting-place, quiet, gentle, resoureeful for them at all times, his cool-headedness and strong sense of justice the oil upon the angry waters of their undeveloped natures smarting under a sense of oppression.

Their curiosity concerning him had disappeared, swallowed up in their growing regard and confidence. They had a certain kind of fear of him which did not interfere with this regard or confidence but rather strengthened it. Not a few of them had been startled by Paul's approaching them privately and advising them not to do what they were thinking of doing, what they had not opened their lips upon to a living being, what, probably, nothing would have induced them at that time to mention. But they also found that they could trust him absolutely, could repose the most intimate confidence in him, which he would keep inviolate.

Among themselves it was becoming a habit to refer

every subject of dispute, every matter upon which individually they were unable to make up their minds, to "the Helper," and he never failed them, never discouraged or seemed tired of them. He did not always say what they wished to hear, but sooner or later they had to confess he was just.

The heated discussion at the table evidently needed cooling. One after another rose and went to the jug in the corner, which soon reached that state of emptiness that brought an exclamation of disappointment from a young fellow who turned it upside down. Going to the oldest man at the table he said a word or two. The other rising left the room with the empty jug, returning in a moment with another which he handed to the disappointed one, saying good-naturedly, "Mind you youngsters drink fair now!"

With a conciliatory grin the young fellow refreshed himself, saying to another waiting his turn, as he smacked his lips, "That isn't bad for beer anyhow!"

"I thought 'twas mighty thin stuff 't first," returned the other, "but I'm gittin' used ter it."

Recognizing the naturalness of thirst and the craving for the social element that goes with "a drink," Paul had provided a constant supply of home-made root-beer for his visitors, for visitors they were. The place was his, not theirs, and he required of them the conduct which accorded with the fact, while he gave them no room for doubt of their welcome. He did not inveigh against tobacco or upbraid them for their use of it; but he let them see it was very unpleasant to him and they had no right to make him uncomfortable when they were his guests. Indirectly, when discussing ways and

means, the needs of their families as well as their own, he brought the needless expense it involved before them, leaving them to deal with the problem as they saw fit.

"I tell yer 'tain't fair that one man should have 'is millions an' 'nuther nothin'. Things orter be evened up!" said one of the men.

"There yer go again, Jim. Yer might's well let up on that 'n' take what yer c'n git," replied another persuasively.

"I'm dommed if I do," returned Jim impetuously. "I'll git all I c'n take."

"Jim's goin' ter be a capiterlist yet 'n' sit in board-meetin's 'n' smoke twenty-five-centers. See!" said a third, and a good-natured laugh went round at this picture of Jim's ambitions.

"'Tain't a question of what I'd do with it," he persisted stoutly. "It's what a man orter have when he works all the time the best he knows how."

"Or when he's willin' ter work an' 'tain't his fault if he don't have none," chimed in a fourth.

"That's it! That's jest it, Bill!" assented one of the older men. "But who's ter blame 'f ther ain't no work fer him to do?"

"It's pollertics! That's just what it is! Pollertics!" broke in another.

"Why don't the guv'nment take care of its citizens?" demanded the one called Bill. "It orter. Here I've got six children 'n' 'nuther comin'. I've thought I had all I c'd do ter feed them, an' sum er workin' too. But I'll manage somehow. Can't the guv'nment?"

A storm of pros and cons, demands and counterde-

mands, raged for a few minutes, when Paul's voice breaking in produced silence.

"You had three dollars more than your regular pay last week, didn't you, Jim, for that extra job you did for your foreman?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you spend it?"

Jim colored, dropped his eyes, and remained silent.

"You 'went on a tear,' as you call it, on Sunday, which lasted most of the night and sent you to your work on Monday with a cut on your face that was not there before."

Jim shifted uneasily in his chair, while the others winked at each other and grinned.

"If you cannot use wisely so small an amount beyond what you have been accustomed to, do you think you are capable of dealing with what would fall to your share were the division made of the world's wealth which you demand?" and Paul looked at him steadily, though kindly.

Jim still remained in a self-convicted silence.

"Moreover," Paul went on, "the share you would each receive would not amount to as much as you suppose. Some of you have now more than you would have then. And no one of you—I think not one of you here—would wish to receive that for which you did not return an equivalent—honest work for an honest dollar."

Chorus of "That's so!" "Yer right!" "Bet yer life!"

"Now then, what do you give for what you get? You give that of which you are capable—no more. You can give no more. Do you always get what it is worth?"

Yes and no. Considered as the best you have to offer, honestly, industriously, faithfully tendered, you do not always receive what your effort and time are worth in consequence. Considered as a commodity in the market, your service is worth the market price—not more. This you receive. The difference between the value you naturally place upon your blood, bone, and sinew converted into labor and the value it has in the market is a great one. To you there is injustice somewhere. To your employers it is simply justice everywhere. They wish they could be generous instead of giving just what labor can command—understand now I am talking from their point of view, which should be considered as well as your own—but they cannot.

“It is a question of dollars and cents, of business, not generosity. They have to sell the products of your labor for the market price, not for the one their generosity—to you their sense of justice—would prompt them to name. They are in business to make money. You labor to make a living. Both are entitled to that for which you work. Neither is entitled to it by unfair means. But one thing is sure. Those who are capable of the labor of the body only will fail to see the financial value of ideas. The man of muscle and the man of brain will continue to be placed in the position of antagonists till both see themselves as members of one body, and their relation to each other through their relation to it. Till then the man of brain will continue to be the monopolist and the man of muscle the one who suffers in consequence.”

“Tain’t fair that Mandergilt should live in a palace an’ spend five thousand dollars on a party when I

hain't got 'nuff to pay my next month's rent," broke in one who had listened attentively.

"'N' he didn't earn his money neither!" added Bill. "He never done anything. He had it stuffed in his pockets afore he was born."

"Who got the money spent on the party, Walker?" said Paul, turning toward the first speaker. "It all went for supplies furnished by tradespeople directly and by the labor of such as you indirectly. Through one channel it flowed into many, coming to the laboring man as the supply for his necessities, rent included. Think of the kinds of labor and number of laborers connected with that five thousand dollars! And as for the palace, would you consider it a great privilege and pleasure to live in it yourself? If you could have it now for the asking, would you take it, to be obliged to live according to its requirements? You know you would not. You could not. There is the question of fitness. Its owner's happiness would be your torment. Only last week when you had to wear a stiff shirt and collar and what you call your 'company manners,' at the 'Working-men's Social,' for a few hours, you were in misery. Imagine what life would be if you had to keep that up all the time."

A roar of laughter at the picture of Sam Walker filling the place of a many-times millionaire interrupted Paul's efforts to show him his hopeless nonconformity to the pattern.

"As to earning his money, Bill," he continued, when the merriment had subsided, "what would you have him do—stand up and say, 'Here! I won't have this money because I did not earn it and my father and

grandfather did. Take it, somebody'? Would you do it if you were in his place? You might be one of the many to step up and take what you could get of it, but would you—think honestly now—give it away for any such reason, or deny yourself what it would bring you? No. You know you would not," as Bill shook his head slowly. "Do not forget what I so often tell you all. Learn to look on both sides of every position, every question. There is some right with every one. You and your class bestow injustice as well as receive it.

"An organic body is one, its members are many. Every member is necessary to the body, however useless some of them may seem to each other. Judged by the immediate results of contact between them, some could well be spared; but judged according to the indirect results to each through the one intermediary, the body, all would suffer through the loss of one, all do suffer through injury to one. The foot is down in the dust, begrimed with the soil of travel, that carries the body along. The hand, as the foot looks up at it, is aloft, free to see and move and enjoy in the unrestricted air. And so the foot says, 'I will no longer work until I can have what the hand has,' thinking that because the hand is further removed from the dust, the sweat, and the soil, it is spared what the other endures unjustly. Ah! But the hand has burdens to carry! Burdens which bring a pain which is the dust and sweat and soil on another plane; burdens which only the hand can carry and the foot could not endure, even as the hand could not endure what the foot discharges nobly. Relativity between the one and the many, my

friends, is the only solution to the problem of right relations between the many. Get your bearings! Learn—try to learn—to see what humanity is as a whole and then your present place in the great plan.”

This evening, as at all times before Paul dismissed them, a great change was apparent in the faces and words of those who conferred with him. They lost much of the careless roughness and unthinking impetuosity habitual to them, became sober and thoughtful. He had great influence because they could not fail to see his fair-mindedness. And some knew another side to him, a yearning, tender, loving one which brooded over them as gently and as constantly as the mother-bird over her young. They had seen in his face, heard in his voice, what had thrilled them as a dreamed-of but never-to-be-experienced love which could see all, endure all, be all for them, asking, expecting no return; one which but grew richer in the growing, deeper in the bestowing, more exhaustless as their needs multiplied. At these times a few words were sufficient to lead them as he would, for, as they said among themselves, “D’yer mind the light in his face?”

When they had all gone Paul still sat in his chair, his head leaning against the back, his hands passive on the arms, his eyes far-seeing because, though looking out, he was looking in. He saw a long road with many windings and turnings, which wound up and up and out of sight. It began in darkness and disappeared in light.

There was a traveler on this road to whom these windings seemed like new paths leading from it. As he came to them and paused to look he always stepped

in, for they were carpeted with grass and flowers and the road was dry and dusty. He saw other travelers enjoying their cool greenness. There he would have companions; in the dry and dusty road he was alone.

But the coolness and the greenness and the companionship faded after a time, and as his eye followed the course of his falling tears he saw that they dropped upon the same dry road. He did not know it, but going on he had come back and was toiling along the path that led up, up out of sight.

Whenever he stepped into those winding ways that looked like new paths, he looked young and straight and vigorous. When he found himself in the old road, he was old and bent and gray till he came to where the darkness at the beginning began to be put out by the light at the end. Then it was the old man who tried the seeming new ways and the young man who pressed vigorously forward with his face toward the light.

And slowly, very slowly he went up while he wandered around. However long he wandered he always went up, for the light drew him and the darkness pushed him on. And as the darkness heaped up against him, pushing him on, Paul saw his own burden-laden back; and as the light drew him further and further he saw his own face.

There was a timid uncertain knock at the door, an appeal for "the Helper," doubt of the help. He did not call "Come in," he went and opened the door.

A woman stood waiting. The darkness was in her face, not the light. It was hard, red, and seamed. It was of the dust of the ground, coarse, and stamped with the likeness of the beast. But over it as a veil was a

yearning, a blind groping, a pitiful helplessness. "An infant crying in the night."

As she hesitated he took her hand and led her to his own chair, taking one beside her. For an hour they talked, her voice rough, broken, uneven, his tones firm, earnest, and tender. And then she had slipped from the chair to the floor and was sitting at his feet, looking up in his face with awe in her own, the likeness of the beast grown fainter, the likeness of the woman come. For where his feet were planted was the mountain of transfiguration.

Magdalen—Madonna. Two sides of one nature. The face of the darkness and the face of the light. Between the two the long, dry, dusty road.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I DO wish Walter would go home."

Emma Hemmingway looked very disconsolate as she sat in a garden chair under a big tree, the profusion of color and bewildering tangle of a real country garden all about her. Her book had fallen unheeded to the ground, her attitude was listless in the extreme. From the cottage not far off came the sounds suggestive of that woman's work which is never done, which is continually swallowed up in the ever-present necessity. Otherwise an occasional wagon passing along the distant road was the only sign of the proximity of human beings.

It was unspeakably dull even when Walter was with her. When he was away it was unbearable. She had remonstrated with him until she was afraid to do it again. He had become very angry, almost violent, answering her as he had never spoken before. She could not understand him now. He was so moody and fitful, sometimes almost hilarious, and again, without any cause as far as she could see, gloomy and depressed. He insisted that she was not well enough to go home. And she had to confess that of late she did not feel as well as she had some weeks before.

She was so homesick—that was why. If she could only go back to her own dear home! Go back—she could fly back! Tears stood in her eyes as she pictured

it to herself, the beautiful cottage, with the lovely little garden she was so proud of, which had been her home so many years. Every nail in it, every foot of ground, was dear, and she longed for it unspeakably. Her husband had suggested the possibility of, living elsewhere—that he might find it advisable for business reasons.

But she would not listen to such a proposition for a moment. She simply could not live anywhere else. It would break her heart. How could he think of such a thing! And how could he have been so cross with her when she said so! Her eyes ran over at the remembrance. What if—if he did not love her as much as formerly! Her heart stopped beating. Anything but that! Anything! Anything!

She must try and persuade him without irritating him. He was so easily irritated now. He had been away for three days and had just come back, and he seemed almost angry when she questioned him about where he had been and what he had done. Oh, dear! Life was hard. It did not grow any easier as one grew older. Walter was sleeping very late this morning. By and by she would make one more effort. She simply must go home. There he was now coming around the corner of the house.

She met him with a smile and a cheerful "Good morning," noticing that he looked very tired. But she would not tell him so—he did not like it.

He threw himself down upon the ground at her side, with his back against the tree, and stretched his arms in a prodigious yawn.

"Warm, isn't it?" he said.

She stroked his hair and patted his face gently.

"I think it is warmer here than where we were before," she replied.

"What have you been doing while I was gone?" he continued, turning his face further toward her. He liked to be petted.

"Oh, nothing much! Reading and sewing. There is nothing to do." And there crept a mournful tone into her voice.

"You've got enough to do to get well."

"But, Walter, I can't get well when I am so homesick!" she burst out impulsively. She could restrain her desire no longer. "I do so long to go home! And I shall be worse if I do not go! I know I shall!"

She looked at him with swimming eyes as he got up from the ground and began to pace impatiently backward and forward, muttering something she did not hear.

"Do, Walter, please go home!" she entreated. "We have been away nearly a year now, and the time seems so long."

He seemed to take a sudden resolution, stopped in his walk, and faced her doggedly.

"It's no use, Emma; we can't go home. I've sold the house."

Sold the house! She looked at him speechlessly. What did he mean?

"I needed money and had to do it."

Needed money! She was conscious only of the echo of his words.

"Don't stare at me so!" he exclaimed impatiently.

Their meaning began to penetrate her consciousness, and a sharp pain smote her.

"Sold the house!" she exclaimed faintly. "You do not really mean it, Walter?"

"Yes, I do mean it," he replied with the air of a man who, having something disagreeable to do, means to get it over with as quickly as possible.

"Why did you sell it?"

"I told you, didn't I, that I had to have money?"

"But—but I don't understand," she continued with quivering lips.

He faced her determinedly.

"See here, Emma. The matter is very simple. I needed money and I had to sell the house to get it. That is all there is to it, and you might as well make the best of it."

His authoritative tone and manner roused a new feeling in her.

"But it is *my* house," she said with an emphasis on the possessive pronoun she had never used in all her married life.

"Can't help that," was his brief comment.

"But how could you sell it, when it is mine?"

"You signed the necessary papers some time ago," he replied, looking beside her, around her, anywhere but at her face.

Swiftly came to her the remembrance of the time when he had brought her some papers with the request for her signature, and his impatience at her delay and inquisitiveness over "a mere matter of form." Had she, without knowing it, given away the home endeared to her by so many associations? Had he allowed—no, compelled her to do it?

A mixture of emotions possessed her. Her home gone, her life narrower than ever without the hope of

returning to it, her trust in her husband shaken, a forlorn helplessness seized her. Why had he—could he have done this? She looked at him as he stood for a moment, then paced restlessly up and down, biting his lips and snapping his fingers nervously. What was the matter? What could it be? Was this her husband? Where then was the money?

“Why did you not tell me the truth when I asked you what those papers meant?” she asked, trying to speak quietly but looking at him reproachfully.

“Because, Emma, you were not well, you would not have understood—women never do understand the exigencies of business. I thought it better you should not know then,” he replied with an air of relief. “I would not have told you now but you give me no peace when I am trying to save you all I can.” And now the reproach was with him.

Her heart smote her. Was she unjust?

“But what have you done with the money?” she asked appealingly.

A disinterested third party would have seen that he was bracing himself as he prepared to reply.

“I got into difficulties through the failure of others to meet payments when they were due. I could not collect what was owing to me fast enough to meet the demands upon me. The whole matter is involved and intricate, and I am sure you would not see all clearly, however carefully I might explain it to you. Can you not have confidence enough in me, Emma, to know that it was best to do as I did, or I would not have done it? You love your husband, don’t you?”

Did she not love him? Was he not her world? *Of course* he knew better than she. Was she not wrong

to feel even a momentary suspicion that all was not as it should be—was not right? If only he had not failed so many times to keep his word—had not made her feel, do what she would, when he went away and she said “Good-by,” that it was very doubtful if he would return when he promised!

She wanted to believe him, to trust him fully, absolutely. Why was it difficult to do it? After all, whatever his faults, he loved her devotedly. No one could be to him what she was. This he had assured her again and again. And had he not gone away with her uncomplainingly when it was for her good to go and let his business interests suffer in consequence?

So she reasoned within herself, swayed between her love and her bitter surprise and disappointment, while he watched her furtively.

“Of course you must have felt it necessary to sell the house, Walter, or you would not have done it,” she began. “I do not suppose I am able to understand all the details of your business affairs, but I think I could understand a great deal if you would explain them to me. It does not matter just now,” she added as she saw the impatient expression come again on his face, “but one thing I do want—must insist upon. I want to go back to Benton. If our home is gone,” and her lips quivered again, “we can hire a house or board for a time.”

“I do not think we had better go back just yet,” he began, but she interrupted him.

“I cannot help it, Walter. I want to go back. I will not stay here any longer.”

She spoke with a decision he had never seen in her before. It both surprised and offended him.

"Hold on, my dear," he said. "Gentleness is a woman's chief charm."

What his remark suggested was the last straw. She broke out in a passionate sobbing.

"There, There, Emma! Don't cry so! It'll all come right. I shall make plenty of money by and by and then I'll buy the place back again. Come! Don't take on this way!"

With much coaxing and petting on his part she finally became calmer when he assured her that in a few weeks at the latest they would go back to Benton. He induced her to go up-stairs and lie down for a while, breathing a sigh of relief as she disappeared within doors.

"Thank Heaven, that's over!" he said to himself. "I've got out of it better than I expected. Hang women, anyhow!"

She laid her head wearily on the pillow. Were they really homeless?

Well! And if so? At least she had him and he was all her own, she was the only woman in the world for him. How often he had assured her of this! She grew more quiet. She was exhausted with the violence of her feelings, the shock she had experienced. Suddenly she was in the church in which she had been married. She was coming down the aisle in her bridal robe and veil, leaning on her newly made husband's arm. The death-like faintness seized her, the sense of falling down, down into darkness and—

She sprang up. The sunshine was streaming into the room, which she saw by the clock she had entered only half an hour before. Had she been asleep? Had that experience been an omen, a prediction of her future life? Was it being fulfilled? Was there such a thing as fate? Was her life to go out in darkness?

CHAPTER XX.

EVERETT sat in Helen's parlor awaiting her. He had reached a momentous decision which gave an added touch of gravity to his expression.

Endeavoring to hold persistently to his desire and intention to do only what was best and right, not allowing himself to be unduly swayed by the charm of Helen's beauty and seductiveness, he had decided that the unity of their three lives through marriage with Helen was the course of action productive of the greatest good to the greatest number.

He intended to propose to her this evening and had no doubt whatever of the result; for, without egotism, he could not help but see that she was his for the asking. In a thousand ways she showed him her preference, the difference between what he was to her and other men. He could have understood this in view of their early relations, but there was more; a tenderness in her intercourse with him which she took no pains to conceal when they were alone, a tenderness which had cost him many a struggle, which assured him he was more to her now than any other could be, even apart from that early experience.

Although his mind was fully made up, another element tinged his feelings, preventing them from being

those of the happy and assured lover. He was not satisfied. Though his reason gave consent and he loved Helen—yes, he was sure he loved her—some part of him, something within him, still clamored. An ideal had grown with him which was so far beyond this marriage. Something sacred and apart from the common ways of men, yet entering into the commonest acts of every-day life. Another world for two in one, the common world for one in two. But it was veiled in the mist of the improbable, the unlikely. Let him cherish it where alone it could exist, in that inner world where he was creator, in whose fair temple he remained the worshiper, the adorer.

He heard Helen's light footfall in the room above. Soon she would descend, the step would be taken, the future faced. A few moments, a few words, a mere breath, and a change of one's whole future life.

For better? For worse? For good always, whate'er the surface. Through mistake the good was found, and it triumphed always.

Up-stairs Helen was preparing to meet her lover. Lover? Yes, he was her lover. She had made up her mind that he should be, and she had never failed when she directed her best efforts to that end. She wondered if she would really marry him when he asked her to—which he was sure to do. Wondered if she could give up what was a breath of life to her, the constantly planned artifice by which she extorted the open admiration that as constantly fed her vanity. For this grave, stern Everett Long would brook no coquetry with other men. He was sure to be very exacting. She was not sure if it would be really worth while. Yet

he was very fascinating. In some queer way, do what she would, he was continually out of her reach.

But one thing she was fully decided upon, she could bear delay no longer. She *would* know about that boy, about his mother. The longer she knew him, the more strangely he affected her. She was drawn to him with a feeling she could not define—like a savage instinct to defend him if one attacked him, and yet she would have treated him as savagely herself if she followed her sometime inclination. He was a boy, nothing but a boy, she told herself, and yet once he had made her flesh creep.

When he was visiting her for a few days during his father's temporary absence from the city, she had come home from a dinner-party late in the evening and found him still up. She had sat with him for a few moments, and he had drawn nearer and nearer to her till he was close beside her, finally putting out his hand toward her. She had thought it was to touch the jewels she wore, for they always seemed to fascinate him, but he had laid it instead upon her bare shoulder, sliding it along with a touch and a look which filled her with a sudden horror and made her spring up with a sharp command to "Go to bed—immediately!" which he had sulkily obeyed.

The vague attraction he had for her, mingled with her aversion and her intensified curiosity—for she had found out from him where he had lived in his childhood, and it was the place vivid in her memory which she wished most of all to forget—made her determined without further delay, this very night even, to know whose child he was. But she must use tact. Everett

was not a man to be driven. So far he had avoided every effort she had made.

Through the richly draped doorway Helen entered and came slowly toward him. Everett thought he had never seen her more lovely. Even in daylight she did not show her age, and in the dim rose-tinted light of the room she was very young and fair. The softly falling clinging white robe she always wore when receiving him showed every line and curve of her beautiful form, giving an added grace to her movements as it trailed after her noiseless step on the rich rug beneath her little golden-sandaled feet. Her only ornament was a jeweled girdle—Everett did not share her liking for a profusion of gems—and a single glowing red rose in her bosom. His blood stirred more quickly as he looked at her and took in both his own her proffered hand.

"If it were possible, you grow more beautiful every day, Helen," he said.

She laughed—a pleased little laugh.

"I like you to think me beautiful, Everett," she said with a slight emphasis on the "you." "I am so glad you have come this evening. I want to consult you upon some investments that are turning out badly. You always have such good advice to give! I do not know what I should do without you."

"All of which I am capable, Helen, is at your service," he replied as he seated himself at her side. She drew the folds of her dress away to make room for his chair close, very close to her own. "What is it?"

She explained her affairs to him unreservedly. She knew she could trust him. He entered into them with

an interest which was unfeigned, considered carefully, and counseled her as wisely as he knew how. She knew that whatever the future relations between them, her interests were safe in his hands; that her own would be her own as his wife as much as if she were single. On the financial side she could appreciate the broadness, the generosity of his nature.

It was a glorious evening without. The light of the full moon streamed into the room and mingled with the semi-darkness Helen so much liked. The perfume of roses laded the air. She was never without them, summer or winter. She liked to surround herself with them, to sink into the dreamland created by her own fancies added to their beguiling. They lulled her into a delicious sensitiveness, wafted her to a region where she knew only love, nothing but a rose-hued, rose-scented, intoxicating love. Not a shadow, not an insufficiency, not a pang. Only a ceaseless soul and body compelling love. Ah! Love was the master passion beside which everything else sank into insignificance.

The time slipped rapidly by and the subtle suggestion of their surroundings, their isolation for the moment, stole over them both. Sweet, maddeningly sweet as it was to her, she did not forget her purpose. Something in her, she did not know what, was too deeply roused. That boy haunted her continually. Yet she thrilled in every fibre as she pressed closer to her companion and looked in his face with a fervor which compelled a response as she murmured, "You are so good to me, Everett! So good!"

He looked down at her, at the exquisite face uplifted

to his, with her head slightly thrown back, which even as he looked sank to his shoulder and remained there.

What a world of delight was in her softly glowing eyes, her ripe sweet mouth, her velvety cheeks, the full voluptuous bust which rose and fell with waves of feeling so near his heart! Her warm breath played over his face; one little hand stole up and lost itself in the waves of his hair.

He could not help it. He threw both arms around her and strained her to him, his lips on hers, drinking up her luscious beauty in one long passionate draught as with a thirst that could never be satiated. She did not stir. She lay in them well content, her arm around his neck, till he finally raised his head and moved as if to place her gently in her chair.

His other self warned him of the necessity of command. He felt more than ever the discretion of his contemplated proposal. He was about to speak, the words were on his lips, when she resisted his motion, drew her arm more tenderly about his neck, turned his face close to her own with her other hand, and whispered in his ear:

"I want to know something so much, Everett! Tell me, won't you? Promise me!" and pressed her lips cooingly to his neck just below.

She was so coaxingly childish, so womanly tender!

He responded readily, "Certainly I will, Helen, if I can."

"Tell me, then, of your child's mother," she continued without stirring. "Whose son is he?"

A pang like a shot went through his heart. She felt him start, but held him the closer. Her question was en-

tirely unexpected. He had not had the faintest idea she would ask this—now. What should he do? He had intended to tell her all afterward. But perhaps he was taking an unfair advantage to keep her in ignorance of her relation to the boy. She had demanded it; he would speak. With a purpose she could not resist he raised her and moved a little from her.

A Delilah—without conscious intent on his part she received a Delilah's reward.

He looked her steadily in the face as he answered in a quiet, penetrating tone, "Your own!"

A cannon had boomed near her and left her stunned, deafened, helpless. Or was it a knife thrust somewhere in her very vitals that deprived her of speech, of breath? She could not move. With hands lying nerveless in her lap she could only look at him, powerless to take her eyes from his face, her own growing white and whiter with the blood driven back to her heart.

A wave of pity broke up its sternness as he saw the horror and dread in her eyes; a desire to comfort her in spite of the revulsion of feeling he experienced as he comprehended her calculation under the guise of an all-compelling tenderness. Slowly and dispassionately, without a suggestion of reproach at her abandonment of the child, he told her the boy's history as he knew it up to the time he had met him, of their meeting in the horse-car and in the hospital, Paul's revelation, and his subsequent procedure.

"When I met you here," he went on, "and you requested me to let the past go as if it never had been, I made up my mind not to tell you of him. I could un-

derstand what the knowledge would be to you. I had no desire to bring you pain, perhaps great suffering. I knew you could have no special affection for him, having never had him with you from his birth. You had far more to lose through acknowledgment of his parentage than I. For me the worst was already over."

He waited a moment, but she did not speak. She moved feebly in her chair as if in a painful position but without strength to change it.

He was about to resume, to assure her of his intention to continue as he had begun, when suddenly, before he could realize what she was about to do, she flung herself on the floor at his feet, clasping his knees in her arms; and in a tone of agonized entreaty, yet hushed as if fearful of being overheard, she exclaimed:

"O Everett! Don't tell! Promise me—swear to me you will never, never tell!"

The reaction had set in and she was nearly frantic. No rush of long-restrained mother-love, no relief from knowing at last the fate of the child she had abandoned; only the fear of exposure, of disgrace for herself.

He attempted to raise her, but she shuddered out of his hands, repeating gaspingly, "Promise me! Promise me!"

"Be quiet, Helen, and listen a moment. Do you not know me well enough to know you have nothing to fear from me?" and he took hold of her shoulders authoritatively. "Let me help you to your chair. I cannot talk with you while you are in this position."

She let him raise her from the floor and remained submissively in the chair in which he placed her. Even

in the excitement and stress of the moment he was struck with the change in her. She had aged ten years in five minutes. Even the rose-tinted light could not hide it. The sculptor Fear had carved lines in her beautiful face with a few instantaneous strokes that successfully banished its soft witchery. Tears were rolling down her cheeks, which she made no effort to wipe away. Her abject misery touched him. But he had lost all desire to sit close to her, to take her in his arms.

"You need fear nothing from me, Helen," he repeated gently. "For you the future can be what the past has been. I have charged myself with his care and the responsibility which accompanies parentage."

She gave a great sigh of relief as she passed her hand wearily over her brow and hair. Thank God! that danger was past. She knew he would keep his word. Her load began to lighten.

All at once she heard footsteps in her room immediately above them. She had told her maid not to sit up for her, and no one else had a right to be in the room. She glanced at the clock. It was late, nearly twelve. A sudden thought seemed to strike her. With a hasty "Wait a moment" she left the room and ran noiselessly up-stairs.

Some one darted to the window as she reached the door of her chamber, the window which she had always feared might afford an entrance to the room because of the wire trellis by which a honeysuckle grew. A quick glance at the place where her jewels were kept. The door was open and in the hand of the one climbing through the window—great God! it was Raymond

Long!—she saw something glitter. Even as she looked, in that brief instant which is no time, a pendant fell through his fingers to the floor.

With a scream she sprang forward. Her dearly loved treasures were in danger. Their threatened loss swallowed up every other thought, every feeling. She clutched frantically at the hand which held them, tearing his flesh with her nails.

He was balanced on the window-sill, reaching with his disengaged hand for the trellis. The pain, added to his detection and the probable loss of that for which he had risked so much, maddened him, and bending his head quick as a flash he set his teeth in the hand tearing at his own.

Like a wounded tigress she glared at him, struggling to release her hand, her efforts raising his head so that his eyes in turn glared into her own, his lips drawn back in a wolfish snarl as his strong white teeth remained fixed in her flesh. With a quick movement she wound her other hand in his thick wavy hair, twisting it so fiercely he loosened his jaws, and at the same instant she gave him a violent push from her.

With a curse which struck her face with the hiss and venom of a serpent his hand lost its hold of the trellis and he fell. She heard the crash as his head struck the stone flagging below.

It was all done so quickly that though Everett heard the scream and bounded up the stairs he was just in time to see the form disappear from the window-sill while Helen leaned far out with her hands resting upon it.

In one, tightly clenched, was a lock of brown hair,

the other was covered with blood. Scattered over the floor around her were glittering jewels. He sprang to her side.

On the walk below, in the silvery moonlight—the same moonlight which a few moments ago had helped to weave a spell about him—lay his son, his face upturned to their own, silent and motionless. He looked at Helen. She was glaring down upon him with a searching, eager expression as if seeking for something. A moment, one horror-struck moment, and the boy's eyes slowly opened and fixed themselves upon her face.

"Damn you! You've killed—" came in faint tones to their ears, and all was still.

From the window above, the father and mother looked down upon their dead child.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE time was drawing near for the address so many were eager to hear. It would be worth listening to, whatever the views of the listener. Miriam Hartwell had proved her intellectual mastery and wonderful ability too often to leave any doubt with those who knew her of what she could do.

It had been postponed once on account of her illness, something which had never occurred with her before. She prided herself on her robust health and on the fact that she had never yet broken an engagement. The postponement had been a great trial to her. She had found it hard to bear. She found herself unable to bear much that formerly passed unnoticed. Little things fretted her. She was nervous—she who had laughed at “women’s nerves”—depressed, and sometimes filled with forebodings. In some indefinable way the ground on which she had stood securely for so many years seemed slipping from under her feet. She laughed at and rallied herself, only to feel after a time the same loss of energy and depression.

She had experienced a great shock in the death of Raymond Long and the manner of it, which had made a sensation in Benton. He had fallen and been killed in the attempt to rob the beautiful Mrs. Cunningham

of her jewels. Who would have thought that one so young could have been capable of such depravity!

She was very sorry for his father. Indeed she could not get his father out of her mind. Why did her thoughts dwell upon him so continually? Why did she begin to long—yes, long—for his presence, his companionship? Why at times did a sense of desolation creep over her, almost paralyzing her energies? Why did the honors she had gained, for which she had striven so hard, fail to satisfy her? Once she would have thought the position which was hers to-day the height of happiness. And now there was something in it, or something not in it—she did not know which—that almost sickened her. She had coveted power. She had power. And yet she had a vague presentiment that it would fail her when she needed it most; prove insufficient at some crucial period. She would not care so much if he—

Nonsense! She had worked all her life for a certain definite end and it could not fail her. She was getting sentimental. She, of all women! A weakness she despised! Where was the leader now—the deliverer of women from bondage?

So she argued with herself, and the day of the address, which was to be given in the evening, found her with her nerves strung to an unbearable tension. Everything was ready, her manuscript carefully prepared; and word had come that every seat in the hall was sold. What more could a woman want? The simple announcement of her name and subject had been sufficient to sell the house. What a comfortable sum the League would have in its treasury!

As the day wore on she became positively ill. A deadly faintness and nausea seized her, and at six o'clock she could not leave her bed. Her father did all in his power for her, sent for a brother practitioner, but their combined efforts were not sufficient to put her on her feet again. He was almost beside himself. His cherished daughter in whom he took so much pride! He had never seen her like this. And so much depending upon her too. A second postponement might be fatal. The public was apt to be fickle. What was to be done?

Seven o'clock came and there was no avoiding the fact that she would be unable to leave home. There was no help for it—Miriam herself proposed that Sarah should take the manuscript and fill her place as best she could. It would never do to dismiss the assembled audience, and she had taken such pains, the manuscript was perfectly clear, no interpolations or interlinings.

Sarah, it was true, was not accustomed to public speaking, but she was familiar with her sister's line of thought and would be able to read intelligently. It was the best that could be done. Sarah was very reluctant to fill the rôle assigned her. She shrank from publicity, was not in full sympathy with Miriam's views, feared she could not do them justice or fill with any degree of accuracy her sister's place. But she had all sympathy for her and for her father's fear that her sister's usefulness would suffer, and consented to do the best she could.

Accompanied by one of the maids, she went away in the carriage that had come for Miriam, leaving her wrestling with the prostration which had overtaken

her. A crowd was pouring into the main entrance of the hall as she passed it on her way to the one leading to the platform. Some one opened the door as the carriage stopped.

"Why, Paul!" she exclaimed in surprise as she saw his face. "I am so glad to see you! I did not know you had got back!"

He pressed her hands affectionately and helped her to alight as he said, "I arrived only this morning," adding affirmatively, "Your sister is ill."

She did not ask him how he knew this. She knew him.

"Yes," she answered simply. "I am to take her place as best I can."

He went with her to the room adjoining the platform, where one of the most prominent citizens of Benton, who was to make the introductory remarks, and representatives of various organizations, were awaiting her sister. The surprise in their faces as they saw Miriam was not with her changed to disappointment and perplexity when they heard the reason for her absence. Their well-bred attempts to suppress their feelings did not reassure her. But if the proposed arrangement caused them fear for the results, what was their dismay when Sarah suddenly exclaimed, "Where is the manuscript?" when after all her efforts to find it, to which they added their own, and the hurried exit of the prominent citizen to examine the way by which she had come and the carriage as well, had been barren of results?

Sarah tried to think where or how she could have lost it. The carriage door had opened once on the way,

and she had leaned forward and closed it. It must have dropped out then. A strong wind was blowing and there were but few chances it could be found even if it were not already past the advertised hour and the audience manifesting signs of impatience. What was to be done? The prominent citizen was advising the dismissal of the audience as the only thing possible, when Paul said in a low tone to Sarah:

"Go and speak to these people yourself. You have a message for them. You have not sought the opportunity. It has come to you."

She looked at him amazed as if she could not have understood his words.

"I?" she said incredulously.

He returned her look with one of quiet confidence.

"Yes! You!"

"Why, Paul! what do you mean?" she gasped. "You know I never spoke a word in public in my life."

"Well! Why should you not make a beginning?" he replied, still quietly and confidently.

"But I cannot! You know I cannot!" she insisted, while her color came and went rapidly and she trembled at the thought of such temerity on her part.

"I know that you can," he said firmly, taking her trembling hands in his and looking her steadily in the face.

The trembling began to lessen as she felt his strong firm grasp and looked in his eyes. Those standing by exchanged significant looks as they overheard what was said.

"Go before these people," Paul continued, "and tell them first what you see, then what you feel. Have no

thought of how they will receive it, of what they will think of you. Speak what to you is truth and leave the rest."

She grew calmer, as she listened to him, and something suddenly sprang to life within her. She forgot what she was, where she was. She was filled with that which surged and throbbed, which expanded her, which lifted her to where Sarah Hartwell was forgotten. She was a voice, and words were pressing, pushing, to find their way out—living burning words formed and impelled by this new something within her.

"I will go," she said. And her voice was a new voice, deep, intense, thrilling.

The prominent citizen slipped quietly out. He had promised to present Miriam Hartwell to the audience. There his obligation ceased. One after the other of those waiting in the room followed his example on various pretexts and they were left alone. Paul, with a light in his face reflected in her own, went to the door admitting to the platform, opened it, and stood aside for her to pass through.

"You can do it," he said in a low but positive and assured tone as she moved slowly past him.

Sarah was conscious of a hum of astonishment as she advanced to the centre of the platform. All eyes were fixed on her as she stood for an instant silent before them. She had a curious feeling as if that great sea of faces surged up against her where she stood on the shore and then receded. And how still it was! except for that loud knocking somewhere near her. Was it her heart?

With a perfectly composed manner and in well-

chosen words she explained her presence and her sister's absence, Miriam's deep regret, her own loss of the manuscript, and requested them if they wished to go to make an orderly departure, when their money would be refunded. To those who cared to remain she had a few words to say on the subject in hand. She waited a moment to give them an opportunity to withdraw, but the momentary stir and buzz subsided and no one left his seat. She felt that a connecting current had begun to flow between her and them and that she *had* a message to deliver. There was a silent asking, an expectation, a demand for which sprang a supply. She felt Paul's presence beyond the still open door. There was a feeling of comfort in the sense of human support. There were momentary threatenings of the surge of the sea again, but they ceased as she found herself resolving all those faces and heads into one and addressing that one person who wanted to know something to which she had given much thought.

Calmly and dispassionately she sketched an outline of evangelical Christianity, its historical foundation, the reasons for and against the claims made by its adherents, the Bible as divinely inspired, as history, and as a piece of literature. She did not go into the elaborate detail Miriam would have furnished. She had not sufficient knowledge of it. But no one, not even Miriam herself, could have surpassed her in her lack of partisanship or individual bias, her clear analysis of claims and the evidence supporting them, with frank admission of their inefficiency and of the mass of inconsistency and contradiction included in the letter of the Bible.

She gave full credit to the demonstrations of modern science, admitting that proved facts overthrew and demolished many dearly cherished beliefs, tenable no longer, and compelled the Christian to revise them. She was so absolutely fair, without prejudice on either side, so frank in her admissions, that one having no previous knowledge of her would have found it impossible to determine her own opinion. She held the unwavering attention of her audience. They were so still that her voice, untrained as it was, was distinctly audible throughout the hall. It had an effective, penetrating quality, and her dignified yet gentle and composed manner, added to her lawyer-like statement of her case, won their admiration. She had yet to begin to plead.

They looked at one another, surprise plainly visible in their faces, as though saying, "Who would have thought it?" Some well-known materialists and agnostics who had anticipated a rich treat in Miriam's address nodded at each other approvingly. And when Sarah paused for a moment to consider the thread she should follow next, a sharp, quick round of applause greeted her. Their critical examination was over. They accepted and were willing to follow her.

"Admitting the great change which to many means loss," she continued, "this overturn of beliefs sacred to our forefathers as the divine mysteries with which we should not meddle, what remains? Only the cold fiat of the materialist which dissipates into nothingness this warm, glowing, living something that loves and hopes and fears and grows into more and more stately beauty and symmetry? Or the equally cold and possibly as hopeless 'I do not know' that is proof positive

of only misdirected effort to know? Is nothing left but to live our lives from day to day as best we may, believing, fearing, that because our reason rejects what has been taught us as truth there is no truth in what we have been taught? No God, no hereafter, no present, even, differing in kind from that of the creatures we see around us, differing only in the quality we are able to impart to it by our efforts to 'eat, drink, and be merry,' the pleasure we gain by our intellectual destruction of all that raises us above their level?

"No, my friends, more is left. Truth is left. Our puny efforts, puny because we are not able to rise to its level, where alone is telling strength, will never overthrow it. We but strike the air and tire ourselves, even if we are not wounded by the return of our blows. You will ask me the old, old question, 'What is Truth?' It is that which is eternal and infinite in itself because of its nature. Do what we will, therefore, at present, with all honest effort, we cannot have it in its fullness. Each may, nay, must, possess that which is true to him; and his possession will be as much of *the* Truth as he has capacity to receive. This will be his religion. Creeds may go, doctrine and dogma crumble away in the heat and friction of a growing world; but religion will remain, for not one of us can do without it. It is the native air of the soul, to which our intellect is but the vestibule, the atmosphere in which it will come to bud, blossom, and fruit.

"Every one of us has his religion. Every one holds dear, nurtures, and defends that which is truth to him; and every one of us is a worshiper of God when in our words, thoughts, and acts we are loyal to it. Every one

of us has that which no other one can fully comprehend; for the true to us individually can only be individually known. And yet it is fact for which we require no outside proof. Its presenee with us is its own proof. But we continually offer proof, must offer proof, to others through what it does in, with, and for us, and for them through us. Every one is a mediator for the world between the Most High and the most low, through that measure of the infinite we individually include and embody. Every one of us is in connection with that Most High through that measure which is ours. Within ourselves is the open road leading to Deity, the road in which we are all, without exception, traveling, for try as we will, strain, pull, endeavor as we will, to live as the brute lives, that measure of truth we do possess, the aspiration it kindles within us, compels the slow advance to that great whole of which it is a part.

“Who then is the religious man? He who is loyal to the best of which he is capable. Not he who merely believes a creed, for this crystallizes his soul. Not he who believes that some personage in the past is the only Son of God and necessary to his salvation, for he but halts with crutches instead of walking on his own feet. But he who through this loyalty continually expands his capacity to receive and know and prove.”

As she went on there was a curious change in her which many observed and at which they wondered. It seemed as if she had grown taller, had expanded, was filled with a burning energy which fell in showers around her, rousing a response in them, an impulse, a hope, a desire, an effort to rise beyond what they had

felt before. There was something more there, beyond, just out of their reach.

She had grown beautiful, too. She looked commanding, noble. Her whole frame seemed tense with power. She was not Sarah Hartwell, Miriam's quiet gentle sister. She was a woman they had not previously seen or known. Commendation, even admiration was in their faces as they followed her.

"But it is possible to make a mistake. We have made a mistake. This capacity of ours is two-sided, and we have become divided into two classes of worshippers. We have a rational and an intuitional nature, two halves of one whole. Some of us have sought only with the one, others only with the other, and developed, in consequence, only the capacity to find and receive which accords with the one or the other. So we have the men of science and the religious emotion-
alists, embodiments of these natures separated from each other. What we must have, what experience sometime will compel, is their unity. Both these natures are legitimate avenues to truth. It will reach us through both.

"But to the one who sees and receives through one only, what he sees and receives will not accord with what is seen and received through the other. Here has been the battle-ground for centuries, where are still seen decaying corpses and the freshly slain. For 'the cause of science' and 'in the name of religion' blows have been struck which have brought bleeding wounds to those who used the weapons. From the blood-stained soil have sprung up the plants of intellectual pride and prejudice, of religious bigotry and persecu-

tion. The smoke of battle has obscured the sunshine that is yet to bring the blossom Love.

"The man of science fears to trust to his intuitional nature. The religious emotionalist fears to be led astray by his rational nature. But Love casts out fear. And the very first glimpse either gains of the true, the impersonal God who, changeless forever, becomes personal to us, is when he at last, becoming able to look on both sides of one whole, begins to see and feel that Love which dispels all hatred, reconciles all differences, overlooks all mistakes, gathers into one family all mankind.

"Ah, my friends!"—and the light which had been glowing in her face became like a sun sending its beams from afar—"there is a ladder set up on earth whose top reaches Heaven; and from round to round we are all climbing in that grand evolution which brings us finally to consciousness of our own infinite being—to that conscious capacity to see, know, be one with eternal changeless truth, which has slowly evolved through countless ages as the highest species of the genus Man. Dominion is to be ours. Dominion over all things is the birthright of man. Subjection is only the condition of the not yet fully developed soul which is on its way to equality with man; it is the limitation of a species."

They listened with absorbing interest. What was this doctrine? She used no names or labels, referred to no authority past or present, seemed to lean no more in one direction than in another. She appealed straight to something within them instead. She spoke "as one having authority" and no need to seek it.

Observing her and her effect upon her audience one could not have believed she had never spoken in public before. But one would also have seen she was striving for no oratorical effect, had no thought of effect, only to give utterance to what she saw and felt; an utterance clothed with dignity and power through her own self-surrender to that which burned within her.

"A new era is dawning. A great mountain has confronted us, the mountain of ignorance. What are we? Whence came we? Whither go we? To get an open road workmen have attempted to tunnel this mountain. Divided in two bands they have worked from both sides. Unable to see and follow the track each was making they have believed themselves far apart. Catching in the distance the faint ring of each other's tools they have feared, believing it the voices of wild and untamed creatures inhabiting the mountain. But they have worked steadily, undeterred by their fears, and they are coming nearer and nearer together. Though working in opposite directions, they have really worked in one, for they have worked to the same end. The wall yet between, though rock, is thin, and soon they will come face to face and clasp hands, rejoicing that the work they began so far apart has brought them together while it has opened the way for all travelers. The signs of this coming unity between science and religion are on every hand, the time when we shall know even as we are known, because our whole nature is engaged in the search and the proof, instead of a part. And what is woman's place in this work? What is her religion? What is her office to-day?"

She paused, and her listeners hung breathless on her

words. They feared to lose one of them. Her voice had sunk lower and yet they heard her. She stood upon the platform, motionless, yet drawing their inner consciousness in her direction straight as the needle to the magnet.

"She is to be present at the marriage feast where the water of investigation is to be turned into the wine of realization. By what she is, and the work that she does, she is to help forward this unity. For woman is the unifier when she is free. She has been long in physical and intellectual bondage, but she has been born out of it through suffering. She has been purified in the furnace heated seven times hotter for her than for any other because of her affectional nature. She has come forth without even the smell of fire upon her garments, for she is clothed with righteousness.

"She has left in the furnace the ashes of her creeds, yea, even of her mortal hopes and longings. She has brought forth only her religion—the spirit of the Love divine; only the aspirations and ideals of which she is the sanctified mother; only the great heart of pitying tenderness that beats for all even as for the one. The flame has dried up the tears that blinded, destroyed the hand that lacked firmness, the foot that was uncertain, the heart that ached.

"Clear of vision, she sees what is really the office of helpmeet, sees her womanhood as the link between the human and the divine in which both blend. Strong of hand, she will do the will of the highest, not the least, and, undismayed, let it be unto her according to that will. Firm of foot, she will stand in the secret place of the Most High, and at the foot of the cross, held above

its crucifixion, ministering to the crucified. Without pain for her own woes, for they too will have burned themselves out, hers will be the mother-heart which feels, consoles, and protects, even while the immovable foot and the firm hand execute the higher will.

"Oh! Women of to-day!"—and her voice rang through the great auditorium with a thrilling pathos as she stretched her arms toward them—"have you suffered? Have you felt the devouring flame? Have you seen your loves, your hopes, your religion, shrivel and dry and fall in dead ashes at your feet?

"Come out from it new-born! Come forth as the priestess of that more than human love, to bring its message to a waiting world!

"Come forth as the reconciler of the human to the divine, as the purified soul fit to conceive the highest while dwelling with the least!

"Come as the leader, the deliverer of men from the bondage of their own natures!

"Come as that shower of the way who walks before!

"Let a song of rejoicing go up for every pang you have suffered, every tear you have shed. By so much are you redeemed, by so much can you redeem.

"There is none higher than the office you are to fill. Developing and using every faculty and power of your natures, masculine and feminine alike, developing to full fruition every plane of your being, you are to combine in yourselves, and bring to unity in the without, the two halves of that great whole—God-like man.

"You have been knowing through feeling. To-day you are knowing through reason. To-morrow you are to know through the union of both. As you lead all

will follow, for regeneration is through woman. You have the moulding of the future, the making of the race, the redemption of the world in your hands. Your office is that of helpmeet, indeed. As woman, wife, and mother in one, man is your lord, your love, your child."

She stood before them exalted, glorified. She was leading them whither she would, they powerless to resist, though dazzled by the blinding splendor of which she was the open door. The silence was intense. It was the silence of deep feeling. A moment she stood thus with upraised face and arms, seeing only the glory on the other side of the shadow. Then her arms fell and she turned and went swiftly from the platform.

The door had closed behind her before they awoke to the fact that she had finished and gone. Then the spell in which she had held them was broken and a burst of applause, hearty and spontaneous, followed, died away, and was renewed again and yet again. But the door did not open. Her work was done.

She had sunk into a chair and Paul was standing by her holding her hands again in his own. "In that same moment it shall be given you," he said.

There was a noise at the door, and the prominent citizen and those who had been with him came crowding in.

"Let me congratulate you on your remarkable—your truly remarkable effort, Miss Hartwell," he said.

There was a chorus of congratulations, words of praise and well-meant approval, which, while she appreciated their kindly motive, fell harshly on Sarah's ears. They had been open to a heavenly harmony, had

been catching that mighty and majestic rhythm in which this earth and they that dwelt thereon were but an infinitesimal part. She had but spoken what she knew. It, not she, deserved their appreciation.

Only as she listened to them did the first feeling of weariness overtake her. As she stood upon the platform she could have spoken for hours. There was no exhausting the flood that poured into her for those who waited to hear. But these compliments she did not desire. She wanted to go home.

She looked at Paul appealingly. He understood and moved with her toward the door. Some of them accompanied her even down the stairs and to the carriage which waited for her. The prominent citizen was particularly officious. So dear is even a little reflected glory.

But Paul's was the last even as it had been the first encouragement. His words would have been enigmatical to others had they heard them, but to her they were holy. In a low tone he had said, leaning forward after the carriage door was closed and she was about to drive away: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him."

She had made no word of reply, had left him standing on the sidewalk answering the eager questions of her surprised admirers. But driving home in the darkness she asked herself, was she "set"?

Seeing from her girlhood the waiting multitudes, filled with the desire to minister unto them, she had indeed gone up a mountain. She could not feed her own soul with the husks offered in the name of religion.

How then could they feed theirs? They sought here and there on the denominational plains, only to hunger still.

The only way left was the way up—up above their level, up in the free air that encircled the mountain's ruggedness. Only by climbing to where she could have a broader horizon could she see what was invisible on the plains. And so she had climbed, for their sakes as well as for her own.

And was she "set"? Was she so firm and sure, so one with the almighty truth that makes free—that essence which must ever be liberated from the form in which it appears—that she had but to open her mouth to teach those willing to come unto her, willing to climb the same mountain and view the wider horizon?

Was she so wholly surrendered to it, so wholly without a personal ambition, that the Spirit of truth, which guides into all truth, should alone speak when she opened her mouth? For this, only, could teach.

These waiting multitudes had had preaching. Teaching, alone, could meet their needs, and this could be given only when the eye was fixed on the wholeness seen from all sides of the mountain-top.

Had the hour come? She had not sought the opportunity. Were disciples come unto her because they had come unto it? Was she ready? Was she "set"?

CHAPTER XXII.

THE morning papers gave full accounts of the happenings of the previous evening; the full house and intelligent audience, Miss Hartwell's illness which prevented her appearance, the substitution of her sister, the loss of the manuscript, and Sarah Hartwell's address, of which they all spoke respectfully, and some of them with appreciation. But they were all in accord in the terms in which they spoke of her:

"Such astonishing self-possession on a first appearance!"

"A most impressive personality!"

"Such remarkable ability, it is a pity it has not been sooner utilized."

"We are proud to have such gifted sisters as residents of Benton," etc.

Dr. Hartwell beamed like a rising sun, notwithstanding Miriam's continued illness, as he read them. Truly he had every reason to be proud of his children, but even he was astonished. He did not know that his gentle, unselfish, devoted Sarah, so frequently eclipsed by his magnificent Miriam, was capable of such a successful effort. Truly, one might live side by side with others without knowing them.

Though his own work had well-nigh ceased he should live in his children's. He had helped to make them

what they were. Miriam's was the more likely to be lasting. She had the more stable foundation. But Sarah was a dear child.

She was the same loving caretaker and sympathizer this morning, meeting his needs and her sister's as well. She did not seem to even care to read what the papers said of her, but went about her duties as serenely as ever.

Miriam seemed to grow worse as the day wore on, and exhibited a petulance and irritability, especially toward her sister, very unpleasant to see. Her disappointment had been intense. She had staked so much on her intended work of the previous evening! And to be compelled to give it up! She who hated failures! It was the opportunity of a lifetime, and there she was chained in bed, while her sister—

No. She would have nothing. She did not wish to eat or drink. She wished to be let alone.

Everett Long had been one of the listeners the previous evening. He was recovering from the shock of his son's death, had recovered from the surprise and regret of the circumstances preceeding it. He was more than amazed, he was awed, as he went back and reviewed his life and its connection with Helen's, to see how surely, how relentlessly and even rapidly their reaping had followed their sowing. He was no fatalist. He but saw the eternal changeless relation between cause and effect.

"Every seed produces after its own kind."

This was immutable law, yet he—and all men—was the lawgiver, for he could determine the kind of seed he would sow. The harvest was sure, for the vitality

of the seed which caused it to fructify and bring forth was not from him.

The boy had been the legitimate product of his conception, for he had been the seed of selfish enjoyment of animal passion, thoughtlessly, in some measure ignorantly, sown, inheriting and carrying along only those qualities in both their natures which at that time were supremely active, and which had also been the channels through which had been carried along and intensified like qualities in their progenitors till a crisis was reached.

He had no thought of blame for the boy. He was what he had been made. The surface-nature, which had been the embodiment of his inheritance, had but covered the higher, which was not yet roused to resistance and control and was biding its time.

So far from feeling regret for his death—that feeling was only for the manner of it—he had a sense of deep peace. He was thankful, from the very depths of his soul he was thankful, that he had been able to rise to what duty demanded of him. Hard as what it required had been to perform, he would not abate one jot or tittle of his struggle if he could. However great the cost, the results had been worth more than that cost to him.

He could see clearly now what the nature of his feeling toward Helen had been. His never-ceasing desire to do justice to their child, added to the witchery of her beauty and proffered tenderness, had warped his judgment and colored his affection for her according to her own desires. The color was gone. The affection remained.

Never again could she beguile him—and a part of his own nature had assisted in the beguiling—into forgetting to live to his best, into compromising with his least. He was not beyond temptation. Far from it. But she could no longer be the tempter. He would serve her at any and all times as a fellow-traveler along the road where his own feet left footprints. But he would not lie down with her in the dust.

He had gone the previous evening with the expectation of listening again to Miriam Hartwell, whom he had never ceased to admire. Admire? Yes. That was the word. Her never-flagging determination, her boldness in expressing her convictions, her wonderful intellect, compelled his admiration.

His first feeling of disappointment at her non-appearance and sympathy for Sarah were swallowed up in a boundless surprise as he listened to her. Who was this woman? Where had she been that he had never seen, never known her before?

Intellectually she was the peer of her sister. In insight, penetration, intuition, and even power to lift and carry others with her, both head and heart assented she was far, far beyond her sister. What did it all mean, this sudden revelation of something growing right in their midst yet unknown?

It was the hour and the woman come together, the woman who was luminous from within. As he listened to her, the impediments, the stones in the way of living to one's best vanished, and a glorious vista opened before him. Dazzlingly radiant, in it his dreamed-of possibilities were realities.

The woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet.

Not the borrowed light of the intellect the leader and deliverer of the people! No! Never!

The deliverance was accomplished only with the intellect servant instead of master, underfoot because used instead of worshiped; under the feet of the true leader and deliverer, the woman clothed with the sun of spiritual perception, uniting within herself the two great lights and ruling both the spiritual day and the material night.

The time of revelation was come. She was the priestess, indeed; he but the worshiper from afar.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"How many kisses will you give me, little woman, if I will take you back to Benton?"

Walter Hemmingway held his wife on his knee as he rallied her on her pale face and listless manner, which were a continual reproach to him, though he would not acknowledge even to himself that he was the cause of them. Women were so queer. They would persist in making themselves miserable by brooding over what could not be helped.

"O Walter! A thousand! A million!" and she threw her arms delightedly around his neck. "Will you take me back right away?"

She was a dear little thing when she was good—when she stopped fretting and did everything he wanted her to do. He liked to pet her. He always got more than he gave.

"Yes, just as soon as we can pack up and get ready. I had a letter from the agent this morning, who says Mrs. Cunningham has gone away and wants him to rent the house for anything he can get for it. She cannot bear to live in it since that boy who attempted to rob her was killed, and she is willing to sell it for less than she paid. So you see 'it is an ill wind that blows no one good,' eh? We'll buy it back again one of these days."

How delightful! Emma cuddled close to her hus-

band. He was so nice to-day—so different from what he had been lately!

“Walter dear,” she said in an appealing tone, her arm close around his neck, “love me, just love me whether we ever have it or not, won’t you?”

“Why, of course I love you!” and he patted her cheek reassuringly. “Haven’t I trotted around with you to the neglect of my business because I wanted to see you well and strong again?”

Yes, of course he had. What a little goose she was, always wanting to be told what she ought to know without the telling!

“I am sorry for Mrs. Cunningham; aren’t you, Walter? But I cannot be sorry she does not want to live there any longer. I wonder if my garden is as we left it, or if she has changed it all about? What is she like?”

“Don’t know. I’ve never seen her. Thompson says she’s a first-class beauty, a regular stunner.”

“You do want to go back, don’t you, Walter?” and she looked in his face wistfully. She had had so many vague forebodings, so many fears that her husband had some reasons of his own for staying away from Benton, fears to which in her wifely loyalty she had refused to listen.

“Certainly I do—now. By the way, Emma, you remember that man who bothered me so awhile ago?”

Did she not remember? Did not those fears and forebodings start up afresh every time she remembered him? She nodded assent.

“Well, he’s settled where he won’t bother me any more. He’s in the State prison for life.”

"O Walter!" she exclaimed. She was shocked, not only at the fate which had overtaken the man, but at something in her husband's manner as he told her of it.

"Yes. He got into a quarrel with a man and beat him so that he died of his injuries. And I helped to get the evidence that convicted him. I wish it had been the gallows instead!" he half muttered vindictively.

His wife turned cold. "O Walter!" she exclaimed again, more shocked than before.

He realized that he had unwisely given way to his feeling, and recovered his usual manner.

"Well, if a man cannot control himself he has to take the consequences. Come along now and let us begin to pack up our belongings."

In spite of her joy at going back to Benton and into her own house once more—even if it were not her very own, now—a dark shadow seemed to hang over her. She could not get out from under it. It traveled with her and stood waiting at the door as she crossed the threshold again. She felt as if she had lived years since they went away. The garden was changed and the house did not seem the same.

But she was glad to be with her friends, whom she had not seen for so long. Sarah, dear Sarah Hartwell had come to her as soon as she heard that she was at home again. And what a famous woman she had become! All Benton was talking of her. Such a wonderful, such a powerful speaker as she was! Requests to address audiences were flowing in to her from all sides. And Miriam was still ill! What a pity! Such a gifted woman!

She heard all about the dreadful occurrence in her old home. She could not pass the place where Raymond Long fell without a shudder. How Mrs. Cunningham must have felt because she could not save him from falling even if he had stolen her jewels! No wonder she wanted to get away as soon as possible.

And Everett Long! What a grand man he was! He looked much older and his hair was becoming quite gray. But how dignified, how imposing he looked! And yet so gentle when he spoke or smiled. Oh! It was good to be with them all again.

One morning about a week after their return, and when her husband had gone to his office with the parting remark that he had to work harder than ever now to make up for lost time, there was a ring at the door and the maid came to her saying a man was there who would not come in but had a package for her that he must deliver into her own hand.

She went immediately and saw a low-browed ordinary kind of a man who looked at her searchingly and inquired, "Are you Mrs. Hemmingway?"

She answered in the affirmative.

"Then this is for you," handing her a small package carefully sealed and addressed in her name, going away immediately before she could question him as she took it.

Surprised, she held it in her hand and examined it closely. It seemed to contain papers only, was none too clean, and the handwriting was unknown to her. That weight at her heart again!

She went up-stairs to her own room and locked the door. There seemed a menacing stillness around her

like that which precedes a violent thunder-storm. She broke the seals. Some letters fell out of the cover. All but one were in her husband's writing. This one she read first, read—and grew white as if dead.

MRS. HEMMINGWAY: If you want to know the kind of a man your husband is, read the inclosed letters. You will see that they are genuine, for you know his handwriting. He did me a deadly wrong. He ruined my wife, and she's not the only woman he has been intimate with since you married him, let alone what he was before. He thinks he's got me where I can't strike, but this will show him he don't know me. I've bled him all I could and hope this will finish him.

JAMES PUTNAM.

She was sinking away, down, down into a fathomless abyss. But no! it could not be true! It was impossible! Her husband! It might be true of every other husband in the world, but never of hers! Some enemy had plotted against him. She would not read those letters.

With a quick movement she brushed them from her lap to the floor. As she sat looking at them the inky characters seemed to grow into little black serpents thrusting venomous tongues at her. They began to fascinate her, to draw her nearer and nearer. She found one in her hand. She could not help reading it. It had fallen from her hand and another had taken its place—another and another, and she had read them all, four of them.

They were couched in words of tenderness, contained appointments for private meetings with references to

previous ones which left no room for doubt of their nature; and their dates showed them to have been written during the first year of her married life to his "darling," his "only beloved Fanny."

Nearer dead than alive, she staggered feebly to the bed and fell upon it. Everything faded from her, but finally came a consciousness of suffering—one great, consuming, all-absorbing pain which deadened her to the without only to make her more keenly alive to the within. How long she had lain there she did not know, but she heard the maid coming up-stairs. Those letters!

She slid from the bed and crawled to where they lay on the floor, gathered them up and crawled back again, pulled herself up by the bedclothes, and hid them under the pillow as she lay down, her strength spent. She endeavored to command her voice sufficiently to answer the servant's knock in a natural manner, saying she did not wish for luncheon as she had a headache, and desired to be left to sleep quietly through the afternoon.

She listened to her footsteps dying away as, after hesitating a moment, the maid went down-stairs. She wished for nothing in this world but to be left alone till she passed out of it. If only she might go now, right away, before her husband came home! Her husband? She had no husband. Who was this man? What was this man whom out of her great love she had married to save?

The words rang mockingly in her ears. "Married to save! Married to save!" They assumed form, there, out in the room, and with fingers pointed in derision jeered at her.

She could not bear it. She would have given her life—had given her life for him. She could not live without love. He did not love her—had never loved her or he could not have been untrue to her. There was nothing for her but to die. There was nothing for which to live. She was glad her baby was dead. Yes, glad! It was a girl and it would only have lived to suffer. How her head ached! Or was it her heart?

The afternoon wore away and she did not move. Her husband came home to dinner and not seeing her below inquired her whereabouts. He found her door locked and there was no response when he knocked. Repeated knocking and calling were of no avail. Alarmed, he broke in the door. She was lying on the bed unconscious. Dispatching the servant for a physician, he endeavored to restore her, and in moving her about he shoved the pillow to one side, exposing some letters. He picked them up quickly and glanced over them. He understood.

With an oath he thrust them into an inner pocket and continued his efforts, his face flushing and paling by turns. She moaned feebly. She did not seem to recognize him, however, when she opened her eyes, only to close them again and appear as lifeless as before.

"Has your wife experienced any great or sudden shock?" the physician asked as he stood thoughtfully at the bedside after his examination.

Walter hesitated. "No, I know of none," he replied finally. "I found her in this state when I came home. The servant tells me she complained of not feeling well and wanted to be left undisturbed."

They remained with her until she sank into what seemed to be a natural slumber, when the physician

went away with the promise to come again the next morning. After he had gone Walter Hemmingway stole carefully from the room and went to the small library below. Locking the door behind him and lighting the gas, he drew the letters from his pocket and looked them over carefully. His face darkened as he read.

James Putnam had hounded him successfully until he had been put behind the bars. He had thought himself safe then. As for the man's wife—pshaw! What was one woman in an experience so varied as his had been! He would have forgotten her long ago but for that—sneak, her husband.

It was different with Emma. She was his wife and he really cared for her. She ought to know that. She ought to know that he was only like the majority of men. However much he might amuse himself, she was secure in her place as wife. Anyway, what a woman did not know did not hurt her. He was sorry she had found it out. He should probably have hard work to smooth her down.

Lighting one of the letters at the gas-jet he burned them carefully in the grate, poking the ashes cautiously to see that none of the paper was left unconsumed. He breathed a sigh of relief.

"There! So much is disposed of at last. Wish I may get out of the rest of it as easily. Bet I'll never put anything of this kind in black and white again. Why do women—some women—take such things so hard, I wonder?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRY and evade it as she would, Miriam Hartwell had to confess to herself she was utterly miserable.

And yet she had won what she had worked for up to a certain point. Here, where she had staked so much, another had stepped in and carried off the honors. Every visitor who came to the house consoled her in her long illness by sounding her sister's praises—her sister who had lived a quiet humdrum life while she had worked and studied and thought, never sparing herself in her effort to show the world what a woman could be and do.

How she had gloried in compelling the recognition of men, the envy of women! What to her had been the softness and tenderness of what they called love, so she could see in their eyes the gleam of their admiration!

Oh dear! Oh dear! Why was she suffering so? What was her suffering? While she was weak and nervous, with frequent pains in her head, it was not all physical. Her heart—

What! Yes. It was of no use. She had a heart like the rest of humanity; a common every-day heart; and it ached, ached, ached. It was hungry, starving.

She had not seen, had not known. While still active and energetic, anticipating the results to come, she had

turned a deaf ear to its cries, which were but feeble. But now, after two years of illness, lying there or sitting listlessly in her great chair—such a long, long time—she could not close her ears, could not still it.

Was it really worth while after all? All these years of effort, and now this disappointment and pain? Even in the full blaze of her glory there had been haunting shadows. These closed around her now and the light faded, faded, faded.

She saw again Everett Long's face when she had dismissed him, his grave earnest eyes which looked so longingly into her own.

What a fool she had been! She had thrown away the love offered her, for what? He had steadily risen in spite of her prophecy, and she— Oh! if she could only take it all back! He was a kingly man—yes, a king!

She put her hands over her face and rocked to and fro, only to throw her head back again and laugh bitterly. She was safe. She was alone. Not for the world and all it contained would she betray this feeling to others. But she! Miriam Hartwell! to really be miserable because she could no longer be sufficient unto herself! Because she loved—and in vain!

But was it really in vain? Was it even yet too late to win him back? Could she, a mature woman—old woman in comparison with the bloom and freshness of youth—compel herself to try to do this? How she had scorned "woman's wiles"! How she had scorned the woman weak and foolish enough to use them! How young girls secure in the charm of their youth would laugh at her now if they knew!

Bah! What was their love to hers? How could they, young, vain, ignorant, and inexperienced, love—a man! They were attracted by their kind. The man she loved—he was a man and far above them. Year after year, unknown, this love had been growing in her heart, till now, too strong to remain unrecognized, it leaped up and confronted her, demanding its rights. Like some other things, it was the more intense for coming late in life.

Love! What did girls know of love? Yes, she would, she could do anything to win him back.

A gentle tap on the door and Sarah looked cautiously in.

“Oh, Miriam dear! are you up? Shall I bring you a cup of chocolate? And may I not open the shutters a little more and let some of this glorious sunshine into the room?”

She moved forward as she spoke, dropping a gentle kiss on her sister's forehead on her way to the window. Miriam turned her head impatiently to one side.

Sarah took no notice of her sister's rejection of her caress, but moved to the window and opened the shutters. As she turned again and took a step forward she halted suddenly.

Miriam was sitting half crouched in her chair, bending forward with her hands on the arms and one foot advanced as if she were about to spring upon her, such a look of concentrated rage and hate in her face that she had nearly lost resemblance to a human being. Involuntarily Sarah recoiled, wonder-struck at her sister's appearance.

“I hate you! I hate you!” she hissed, and her eyes

fastened on Sarah's face were like those of a wild beast. ' You have stolen my place ! You have taken what belongs to me ! Your sweet looks and words are lies—lies all of them. You are a trickster and a deceiver ! You are a conspirator ! You conspired to rob me of my hard-earned fame and get it for yourself. You never lost my manuscript. If you had lost it, it would have been found. You stole it and— ”

Sarah had stood motionless, so appalled by Miriam's first words she could not stir. But at this charge the indignant blood leaped to her face, and her whole form quivered.

“ Stop ! ” she exclaimed. “ How dare you— ”

Even as she uttered the words a change passed over her. The red flush faded, the quivering ceased. A struggle was perceptible in her face. A moment's silence, and again she raised her eyes and looked calmly at her sister, while her hands, which had momentarily clenched, hung passive at her side.

“ You know that what you say is untrue,” she said quietly, “ and you do not really mean it. Your long illness has given you a distorted view of many things. We will both forget this. You need your chocolate now. I will go and get it.”

Miriam sank back in her chair as her sister left the room, white and nerveless, the sudden energy which had flared up in her gone. Her head fell forward on her breast and a moan broke from her lips. But she tried to draw herself up and wear a haughty look when she heard Sarah's returning footsteps.

All trace of her previous feeling had disappeared when Sarah entered the room, her own well-poised,

steady, reliant self. She placed the chocolate by her sister's side and unobtrusively performed every office her loving nature suggested as helpful and comforting.

Miriam suffered her attentions, seeming not to notice them. Through the long afternoon she pondered, taking no notice of the new books and magazines Sarah placed ready to her hand. She did not go to bed immediately after her early tea, as had for some time been her custom. She still pondered.

In the evening the door-bell rang. Usually she did not notice it, but she caught the sound of a voice that made her heart leap, asking for Miss Sarah Hartwell.

He had not asked for her. Why no, of course not! He knew she was ill.

She heard her sister going down-stairs. She strained her ears to hear what they were saying, but she could not hear. She started up. She would not be ill. She would not stay there in her room weak and helpless, and he in the house.

Her knees trembled under her as she moved about preparing to go down-stairs. She dressed slowly and carefully. She looked in the mirror anxiously. She was haggard, old. If she only had some rouge! But there was none. She had always scorned such follies.

She went toward the door, stepped into the hall, hesitated, then turned back. She was trembling more than when she began to dress. Could she go down? She heard the deep tones of his voice. Yes, she *would* go down.

She descended slowly and carefully, holding to the balustrade. As she appeared at the door Everett Long

rose to his feet. Sarah, turning to see why, saw her sister, and came toward her surprised.

"Why, Miriam dear! I am so glad you feel able to come down. Why did you not tell me and I would have come to help you?"

Everett greeted her cordially as she sank into the easy-chair he drew forward. He was unfeignedly glad to see her, to find her able to leave her room. But although he knew she had been ill for a long time now, during which he had seen her but infrequently, he was surprised to see the change in her. The flush that had been on her cheeks from her exertion, when she first entered the room, faded, leaving a weary look in its place. Her eyes had lost their brilliancy, but he liked them even better so. They were no longer cold; there seemed more feeling in them.

"I was asking Miss Sarah," he said after the greetings incidental to her appearance were exchanged, "for the latest news of Mrs. Hemmingway. I am grieved to hear that there is no prospect of her recovery."

Miriam looked at her sister inquiringly.

"No. Her physician says she will live but a few days longer," replied Sarah. "Since her sudden attack shortly after their return to Benton some time ago she has steadily declined."

"A case of quick consumption, her husband told me when I met him a short time ago," said Everett, "for which the resources of medical science are as yet insufficient," he added musingly.

"It is a case of broken heart," said Miriam, "if we may believe all we hear."

"Broken heart!" exclaimed Everett, looking up quickly. He had heard nothing.

Sarah remained silent.

"Yes," continued Miriam. "While one ordinarily would pay little attention to servants' gossip, Walter Hemmingway's character is so well known it is more generally credited than otherwise it would have been. One of their neighbors told me all about it. It seems a strange man brought a package which he would deliver only into her own hand, the day she was taken ill. And afterward the maid heard her rave about some letters her husband had written to some woman and that he had broken her heart."

"Poor child!" said Everett feelingly. He remembered the day of the wedding, when he had picked up the bride's flower, crushed and broken.

His eyes and Sarah's met. There was in them the quick flash of recognition when two have the same thought. Both were thinking how much harder it is to live with, than to die from sorrow, live till it is conquered and the soul is enriched and ennobled by the suffering.

Miriam saw the look, saw that they understood each other without the need of words; saw an expression in his eyes as he looked at her sister which first choked her with fear and then filled her with renewed rage.

He had never looked at her like that! Never! Never! It was what she wanted, craved, panted—was starving for. Unwittingly she groaned, and her head fell back against her chair. Sarah was at her side in an instant, stooping over her, only to recoil slightly as her sister for an instant looked up in her face.

With a strong effort Miriam controlled herself.

"Yes, it is a pity," she said. "But she knew what

he was when she married him. She was warned. Such a man is not easily made over."

"But do we any of us heed our warnings when they jar with our inclinations?" said Everett. "She loved him—she thought she loved him devotedly, and that he loved her equally. She could see no impossible even if she could see danger, which was doubtful."

He could conceive a love that could save, but only by inciting in the loved one the impulse to save himself. It was savior only as inspirer. His eyes again sought Sarah's. How naturally they turned to her when the highest ideals, the noblest and loftiest thoughts were in his mind! Again the flash of recognition. His thought was her own.

How Miriam dragged through the evening she hardly knew. She remained till Everett Long took his leave, which was early. It fed his soul even to be in the room with Sarah. He was content with little. He was still the worshiper from afar. Within him was no noise, no strife; only a great stillness and peace.

But when Miriam laid her head on her pillow bitter tears wetted it, scalding tears that welled up from her sore and aching heart. She was no longer the conqueror leading women to victory, but one of the suffering rank and file. In vain she reviewed her brilliant achievements, striving to still her pain with the memory of the admiration she had won—which she could still win if she chose.

Ah, but she had had enough of admiration! She wanted love, love, love. She would have it!

She sprang up in bed with hand clenched and eyes dry and burning. Nothing should successfully oppose

her. Nothing! That soft-spoken sister of hers! How did she dare—

Her head was buried in the pillow again, strangling the sobs that half suffocated her.

Morning found her early astir. She had formed a resolution. She had had no sleep. It was not the first night she had lain till daylight with wide-open eyes. Insomnia was slowly but surely threatening her with its terrors.

In the long weary time since she had mingled with the world, the time in which her sister, profiting by her misfortune, had built up a name and reputation for herself, she had thought much of Paul Masters and become convinced that he was possessed of some mysterious power.

She remembered how she had been impressed by his calm confidence in all their intellectual discussions, how he had appeared as possessing a knowledge beyond her ken, a possibility which irritated her even while she refused to admit it as such.

She had heard it said that he knew things before they were going to happen and had laughed at the idea. It *was* funny that after being away for a long time, nobody knew where, he should have appeared the very night her sister went to take her place and incited her to do what she did after losing the manuscript—if she did lose it. She knew all about it, for some of the ladies who had been in the reception-room had told her.

She wanted to know—she could not wait, could not bear it. She had heard of people going to fortune-tellers to hear the future. That was folly, a remnant

of superstition. She might be weak to look to any one, but, thank Heaven! she was without superstition. Paul Masters was an educated, cultivated man, and every one who knew him knew he was always ready to give all the help in his power when help was needed. She was going to see him. She had learned his address from Everett Long the night before. What friends those two men were!

Later in the morning Paul was surprised by a visitor, a lady who came in a cab and sent in her card. "Miss Hartwell," he read in surprise.

He greeted her most cordially as she came in and dropped exhausted in a chair. Before she had spoken a word a shadow passed over his face, passed, and left its accustomed serenity, and also an expression of pity.

"I have come—I want to see you. We are alone?" she said inquiringly.

He noted the trembling of her hands, the alternate flushing and paling of her face, the uncertain look in her eye, which sought his only to look away, here, there, anywhere, and then seek his again.

He assured her they would be uninterrupted and waited quietly for her to make known her errand, while his expression of pity deepened.

"You know," she continued, "that I have been ill some time. I do not recover as I should. Nothing seems to help me. The physicians do not, and I am tired of them. I have heard you say that we can help ourselves both to secure and retain health. Tell me how, will you?"

"By living aright," he said gently after a moment's hesitation.

She made a gesture of impatience.

"Every one knows that. But how do we live aright? That is the question. One can study his eating, drinking, clothing, sleeping, and then fall ill through ignorance of something else. How to live aright is the thing of which we are all most ignorant, it seems to me."

"It is summed up in three words," replied Paul. "Govern your thinking."

"Govern your thinking!" she repeated incredulously. "What do you mean? What has my thinking to do with it?"

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which cometh out of the mouth. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. These are the things which defile a man," said Paul, looking her steadily in the eye.

"Don't quote Bible to me," she cried, starting up impetuously. "I have no use for it. Health of body is purely a physical thing. I am sick of cant and religious twaddle."

"Health of body is inseparable from health of mind," he replied, ignoring the rest. "Can you have a raging fever in mind, fear, confusion, uncertainty, falsehood and hatred, jealousy and deception, and then be strong of body, calm of nerve, perfect in digestion, thorough and regular in all organic functions? Mind and body are a unity. Whatever the quality of the controlling force within, body will manifest it without. There must and will be a likeness between the two. Thoughts poison and disintegrate or regenerate and upbuild. You cannot think hate and live love."

She looked at him with a mingled expression of ridicule and fear. Well she knew the thoughts that rankled within her! But how could he know? And it was too ridiculous to be thought of, anyway. She was only temporizing. She did not like to approach the real object of her visit too suddenly.

"You hold views which to me are peculiar, I know," and she turned her head wearily as it lay against the back of her chair. "I do not say they are without foundation. Many things do not seem to me as they used, not so stable and secure. Do you think I shall recover very soon?" and turning quickly she looked at him keenly.

"I think you can. I do not know if you will," he answered gravely.

She laughed, the better to hide what she was really seeking.

"Why, Mr. Masters! I am surprised! Don't you know you have quite a reputation for being able to read the future? I expected to hear a positive yes or no."

Paul knew she had come to see him with some special object of her own in view which she did not wish to betray. Merely his knowledge of the past and her nature was enough for that conclusion.

"Come, tell me," she went on lightly. "Shall I get the desire of my heart?"

He did not laugh. His gravity deepened. "You will get what we all get, Miss Hartwell—the harvest from the seed we have sown. We can all know the future, for it is sure to be what our use of the present makes it."

"Oh, platitudes! platitudes!" she exclaimed wearily as he ceased. "I have heard that ever since I was born. You do know more than most people do," turning toward him impetuously, her eagerness for satisfaction breaking down her caution and habitual reserve. "I am sure of it. I want something so much, so much I cannot eat or sleep. I cannot rest with this ceaseless gnawing here," and she pressed her hand to her heart while a wild look came into her eyes. "I want to know—I must know—shall I get it? Tell me, shall I get it?"

It was not a request, it was a demand. Paul looked at her compassionately.

"You have accomplished—have conquered so much for yourself, Miss Hartwell, surely you—"

"But this is not like that," she interrupted him. "I would give it all, fame, power, position, for just this one thing I want, just one—just one." And as she covered her face with her hands he saw the tears trickle through her fingers.

It required no necromancy to divine the one thing she wanted. He knew what her life had been and he knew the human heart. Nature's revenge? The soul's balancing of accounts with itself.

Sore indeed must have been the strait which could bring this proud woman to such an exposure of her weakness. Without divination, with only the ordinary review of what he knew, of her connection with Everett, of the change, the development in him, he knew she would not get her desire. His heart ached for her, for the suffering which was inevitable, which he would gladly have lifted from her. But he knew, too, there

was no such thing as vicarious atonement possible on earth or accepted in heaven.

"If you wish me to tell you honestly what I think, Miss Hartwell," and his voice was full of feeling, "and I am not mistaken in my supposition of what you desire, I must say I think you will not get it."

Her hands dropped wearily in her lap and she sat looking hopelessly in his face. A moment and she began to laugh hysterically.

"Why! really! How serious we are! One would think—ha! ha! ha!"

He took her hands firmly in his own.

"Wait a moment. Look at me! At once! Look in my eyes!"

His authoritative tone arrested her and she did as he bade her. In a moment or two she grew quiet and Paul released her hands.

"You have great opportunities, Miss Hartwell," he said, "such as fall to few. Turn your magnificent talents in the right direction and every really good thing will, at some time, come to you. Learn to see the continuity of life and you will see that what you lose now will but fall in fourfold blessings on the pathway of your fellow-men; while all you with a chastened heart and purified soul truly desire will surely in the great forever be yours."

She smiled wanly.

"Thank you. You have been very kind to me," she said. "I think I will go home now," rising to her feet and steadying herself with a hand on the back of the chair. Speaking a moment of indifferent things as if she had dismissed the subject from her own mind, she went away.

Alone in the cab again she clenched her hands till the blood nearly started from the pressure of her nails.

"How could I betray myself in this manner!" she muttered. "How could I do it? If he should ever speak of it—"

She went to bed as soon as she reached home. She was very weak and violent by turns. She would not have Sarah in her room, and to all her father's entreaties begged only to be let alone.

The news went abroad that the nervous prostration from which Miss Hartwell had suffered so long had greatly increased in severity.

CHAPTER XXV.

WALTER HEMMINGWAY had seen his wife slowly fading before his eyes since the day he found her unconscious after receiving the letters he had burned. She had been delirious for a time and had raved about them, of his unfaithfulness, of her broken heart—"broken, broken, broken," she would say, her voice sinking lower and lower till it died away in a faint whisper.

The physician had regarded him suspiciously from the first, and the nurse whom he had been obliged to procure to attend his wife gave him the shortest possible answers to his questions and seemed to avoid speaking to him at all if she could.

Life had not been altogether pleasant for him since, and at times he suffered severely from the twinges of a spasmodic conscience. At others he wondered why he should be punished so severely for what was common enough with men, and cursed his luck at being found out.

He had been relating his woes to some of his associates in a downtown bar-room when "that conceited prig," Everett Long, had passed him, evidently searching for some one, and had stopped short, looking him in the eye with an expression which had silenced his tongue. Everett had said nothing—if he had he would

have knocked him down—but had passed on to a young man drinking at the bar, who had gone away with him shortly after.

He felt like cursing every time he remembered that look. What business was it of his, what he had or had not done? Everett Long had always owed him a grudge for taking Emma away from him, and he probably felt sore yet even if he had turned saint.

She was a nice little thing! But why she needed to take that affair so much to heart he could not understand. The physician had told him she would live but a few days at the longest. It seemed as if when a man was married his troubles were multiplied. It was too bad. She had been very fond of him.

Sitting alone down-stairs listening to the footsteps over his head in his wife's room, he ruminated. He did not know what he should do when it was all over. He would go up-stairs now for a while if Sarah Hartwell were not there. He thought he knew women pretty well, but she was the one woman he could not face. He felt uncomfortable if he were in the room with her, and when she looked at him with those wonderful eyes of hers he wanted to get into some corner, anywhere, out of sight. There would be precious little fun in the world if all women were like her. Thank Heaven! they were not!

There was one he knew—ah! but she was a beauty though!

When in New York some weeks previous he had gone to see Mrs. Cunningham. Emma felt so badly he thought he would see what he could do about buying the house for her. It would cheer her up and help

set things right again. She had received him very graciously, and before he knew it he had been there over two hours and missed a business appointment.

What a glorious creature she was! What a look she gave him when he took leave and she invited him to call and confer with her again about the house! She was sure they could make some arrangement, as she did not care to keep it. He would, too. What a curious scar she had on the back of one of her hands!

He heard the nurse coming rapidly down-stairs.

"You had better come to your wife now, Mr. Hemmingway," she said; "I think she is going fast."

He went slowly up-stairs. Emma was propped up on pillows and seemed to breathe with difficulty. Sarah stepped back as he moved to her bedside.

His wife stretched her hand feebly toward him. He took it in his own with a shudder. How cold it was! What an awful pallor on her face! Such a thin, pinched face! She tried to speak, and he had to bend over her to hear what she said. Was she really so near gone? "Love me—when—I'm—" came in broken whispers.

He fell on his knees beside the bed and buried his face. He could not look at hers. He began to weep. He wished she would not leave him. But the hand he held grew colder and colder, the breath fainter and fainter.

Finally—how long he had knelt there!—came a curious noise in her throat and he heard her breath no longer. He raised his head to look at her and recoiled. She was looking directly at him! Such a terrible look! No. The eyes were staring into his, but she had gone.

He began to sob and call to her to come back and

not leave him alone, but the nurse stepped forward and closed her eyes, saying more gently than she had ever spoken to him before, "You had better leave the poor little thing to us now, Mr. Hemmingway."

He went down-stairs again and threw himself on a couch still weeping. What should he do now? How he should miss her! Poor little Emma! She was always fragile. It had been a terrible strain on his nerves, her long illness. It was pretty hard for a man to see his wife fade away day by day before his eyes.

Two days later they stood about her open grave. Her husband was inconsolable. As the first shovelful of earth fell upon the coffin, he threw himself down beside it and refused to leave it so that the undertaker's assistants could finish their work. Some of those standing by were greatly affected by his distress and endeavored to comfort him. But one woman, a near neighbor, who knew all the affairs of every one in the neighborhood, said loud enough for them to hear:

"Pity he hadn't had some of this feeling a little sooner! Every one knows that she died of a broken heart."

Paul, Sarah, and Everett stood by and heard the remark. They looked at one another. They knew she had died of self-deception.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN less than a year afterward Walter Hemmingway and his new wife, the beautiful widow, Mrs. Cunningham, departed for a prolonged season of travel in Europe. Great was the sensation in Benton when the news arrived, and every scrap of information was seized upon with avidity.

Some of the men said, "Well, he has struck luck! She is as rich as Cræsus."

Some of the women said, "He'll get paid yet for his treatment of his first wife! See if he don't!"

As time passed on rumor after rumor penetrated to Benton. He was living royally and flinging money right and left. He was drinking to excess in spite of his wife's efforts to restrain him. But she evidently did not dare to deprive him of money. He seemed to have some hold over her, and though she often refused she always yielded finally when he looked significantly at the curious scar on the back of one of her hands.

It was said she seemed to almost hate him and at the same time to be very much afraid of him. More than once when she could not get money quickly enough he had taken her jewels and sold them and made her almost frantic. People guessed there was little love lost between them and that he would drink himself to death before long, but not before he had impoverished her, at the rate he was going on.

Dr. Hartwell had passed to that land whose echo of retreating footsteps is caught on this side only by those who have learned how to listen. It was said that, although he had been an invalid for years, his end was hastened by his grief over the sad fate of his brilliant daughter Miriam.

She was hopelessly insane. She was not usually violent and was kept at home in her father's old room. Sarah was her devoted attendant, although there were times when she could not enter her sister's room. Miriam would become excited and rave over what she had stolen from her!

Most of the time she sat quietly in a dark corner of the room, the picture of abject misery. Deep lines were graven in her face, her eyes that once were so bright and daring were faded and blurred with continual weeping, her hair was thin and gray and dry, her tall commanding form feeble and bent.

She would sit for hours moving her head from side to side, tears streaming down her face, her hands lying loose and lifeless in her lap. Or she would throw her arms around herself as if hugging something to her bosom and rocking to and fro would mutter, "Too late! Too late! Too late!" with a monotony that never varied. The best medical advice had been procured for her, but nothing availed.

"Melancholia," the physicians said—"an incurable case."

Paul Masters was the only one who seemed to do her any good. The only spark of interest in anything or any one she ever showed was when he came to see her; and she was always better for days after one of his visits.

Sarah Hartwell had become well known as a speaker and worker for all that tended to help women, to help progress through women. She had frequently been urged to enter and become a minister in the Unitarian Church as the only one liberal enough in its tenets to afford her sufficient scope; and the advantages of connection with some recognized organization had been pressed upon her.

But she had gone quietly on as a "minister at large," as she laughingly called herself, feeling it imperative that, if she should do the best of which she was capable, she must be free even in appearance from all sectarian bias.

Though she half laughed, it was with the deepest reverence that she tried to fill her office as "minister at large," for a minister to her was literally one who ministers, and in any and all ways where the human heart hungers and suffers.

Helping to lift it to where it could see and lay hold with its own hands on the eternal exhaustless supply for every human need, and which is always the same whatever the name by which it is called, was the work she reverently gave herself to do, desiring only that through her it might be said, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SEVEN years had passed—where?—since that conversation with Paul after the wedding which had been the turning-point in Everett's life.

What hopes and fears, what struggles and sufferings, what compensation and peace had come to him! He had proved that the way out is the way up, and that wandering in the wilderness for a season is inevitable. Looking forward it had been dark. Looking backward the whole way was illumined.

Seated with Paul under one of the trees by the river path, he had been reviewing the circumstances of those seven years. Retrospection was something he seldom allowed himself. The "might have been" was touching poetry, but bad doctrine as a stimulus to right living. "Forward" must be his constant impulse and endeavor, having no use for the past but to apply in the present the knowledge gained from its experiences.

"You knew me then, Paul, better than I knew myself," he said.

Paul had changed but little. The same glorious face and head, the same wonderful eyes lit with that soul flame which, once lighted, never dies out but burns perpetually on that altar within, which has always one adoring worshiper.

"I saw your possibilities long before," he said, "but

knew I must wait till the time was ripe. It is quite as important to know when as what to speak. Unconsciously you had received your impetus in the upward direction. 'Every man in his own order,' you know. Not in mine or another's."

Everett looked at him with an affection—passing the love of women? Passing the love of some women, for it was incapable of misjudgment. The bond between them was soul quality. They knew each other.

"Could I have seen the experiences before me, I doubt if I should have had the courage to make the effort to live to my best," Everett continued. "It is better that we cannot read the future till we are able to live it also."

"You would have given up in despair," assented Paul. "But you have had to meet only one thing at a time as it came, and it did not come till you were able to meet it. This will always be the experience of him who proves his nature through his own life instead of demanding the evidence from others. What we are, we find out through what we can accomplish. There is no break between the human and the divine. They blend together."

"Do you think those incidents of which I have told you, those moments of conscious existence beyond the limitations of body, will become common and normal to those who are making right effort?" asked Everett.

"Surely," said Paul, "because they are in themselves natural, not unnatural. They may be uncommon because of the darkness and bondage of the sense-nature. But as the soul awakens and struggles to escape, its own efforts bring it in touch with inner and higher

planes of being where every sense is enlarged and quickened through the wider scope afforded it for exercise. Time and space are but the fixedness of the sense-nature. The soul eludes and defies them, even while using the flesh. Existence is a chain, link within link, ending only with that which is eternal—I AM."

"I wonder—I marvel now, that one can ask doubtfully, 'Is there a soul?'" said Everett musingly after they had been silent for a time. One of the results of their friendship was to be able to keep silence and still commune with each other. "And yet I used to ask the question more than doubtfully, with almost positive conviction there was none."

"There is none for many. It is absolutely non-existent for those who are spiritually dead, though always latent and waiting its development. They speak truly who say they have no evidence. Cultivated intellectuality without accompanying impulse toward the spiritual but multiplies the evidence against the existence of a soul."

Everett's thoughts reverted to Miriam.

"Do you think Miss Hartwell will recover?" he asked.

Paul did not answer for a moment.

"I think, generally speaking," he said finally, "such cases as hers are by no means hopeless, whatever they may be from the medical point of view, but that there are certain contingencies individual to her own which will prevent otherwise possible recovery. I think her continued and determined suppression of her spiritual impulses has resulted in the almost complete separation of the soul—of the higher from the lesser portions of

the personality, while still wearing the flesh. Denied expression it is seeking and finding its own world, while what is left still functions in the visible one. With all her brilliancy and power she has been for years but half alive. The animation yet imparted to that corpse sitting in the darkened room, through the slender thread which still holds it to that which has gone, is being slowly withdrawn; and it will go back to the dust from whence it came. Resurrection and ascension are *from* the dead, not *of* the dead."

Everett felt a momentary sadness, momentary because followed by the sound of the mighty, majestic rhythm—out of discord, order; out of order, harmony; out of harmony, victory. The "survival of the fittest" was no hypothesis, no merely physical fact, but a spiritual truth as well.

Paul turned to him with a smile of benignant sweetness.

"The pains of crucifixion for you, my friend, were severe, but one stage of it is past and the resurrection of that stage has come. You have been new-born—are a new man. Look back, and then at what is opening before you now. Would you have been spared the labor and travail of the birth, if you could?"

"No." •

There was no ecstatic willingness for martyrdom in Everett's reply, only the calm intelligent assent to a seen and felt, therefore doubly proved truth.

"Do you remember what I told you then," Paul continued—"that you needed a strong woman and when you were worthy of her you would have her?"

Everett turned eagerly toward him.

"Do you think—" he began, but Paul went on.

“You did not know then, you could not recognize a strong woman. You had first to struggle and attain. Emma Haines was the woman of your first feeble stirrings through the contrast she offered to your life and associates. Miriam Hartwell was the woman of your awakened and developing intellectual nature. Helen Cunningham was the woman of strife—the combat between your allied ethical and sensuous (not sensual) natures, which your invigorated intellect quickened, and your spiritualized soul. The strong woman is she who can renounce and stand firm; not she who refuses to feel, but who, instead, feels the instincts, the impulses of every part of our composite nature; feels, and rules through her perception, her constantly growing realization of the nothingness of the material as compared to the allness of the spiritual. She is likely to live her mortal life alone, for she can mate only with her kind. Seldom will she find the strong man who is her complement. She sinks the office of wife for one in that of mother for many, of priestess for the race. Inspired herself, she inspires.”

There was a reverence, an exaltation in Paul's voice and manner which made Everett observe him with awe. A hope he had cherished since the time Sarah Hartwell had burst upon him as “the woman clothed with the sun,” but which he had hardly dared to cherish so far above him did she seem, stirred with new life when Paul referred to what he had previously said. But it died again as he went on. With all his soul he revered her. How could he approach her?

Paul leaned forward and placed his hand on his shoulder.

“It is only the new-born, the resurrected man who

knows what love is," he said. "To renounce and stand firm is to receive the baptism where the heavens open and reveal its birthplace. It is not indigenious to the senses. The time has come when you are worthy."

Everett sprang to his feet with the sudden joy that flooded his whole being.

"Dare I ask? Dare I speak?" he said in a hushed, tremulous tone.

"Speak with your soul—she has no need of words—and look for her in the sunrising," replied Paul.

Everett turned and walked a few steps. Had the time really come when he might dare? He faced about again and Paul was disappearing down the path.

He went home, that home which was a sanctuary where he had long worshiped. All night he pondered. He felt unworthiness and yet he knew he had honestly striven to live to his best. Hours passed by and he was not sure. How would she receive him if he dared?

In the darkness surrounding him where he sat a faint light began to glow, brighter and brighter, yet soft and warm, weaving itself into a sphere which at last opened, and he saw the woman of the heavenly city—her face—Sarah's face—and she held out to him welcoming arms.

He sprang forward; the glow faded, and he was in darkness again.

Going to the window he saw the first faint indications of day. With his face toward the east, with his whole soul flowing toward her, he dared. With a love purified in the furnace, he asked that if she found him worthy she would come to him in the river path.

He watched the daylight growing stronger and

stronger. The perfect stillness of the night began to be broken. He left the house and went to the river path.

All was quiet save the stir of nature which comes with the dawn. He stood motionless under a great tree and waited. Just as the sun burst above the horizon he saw her coming toward him, clothed in its radiance. Its first rays illumined her face, her hair, filling her garments with a golden light.

He stretched his arms toward her.

Without a word she came and laid her hands in his.

When the first sun-rays penetrated Paul Masters' room they found him awake, his bed untouched. He was looking out over the tree-tops far, far out beyond the range of physical sight. As the rays shot athwart the wall and touched with a new beauty after their sleep of the night the flowers and shrubs in the garden below, a look of pain passed over his face, passed and was gone, leaving it transformed. It was radiant, glorified.

The messenger is human, the message divine.