

HELEN,

BY THE AUTHORESS OF THE "BACKWOODS OF CANADA."

"COLD, calculating girl! is this your faithful love? Has your disinterested, devoted attachment come to this? But such is woman! Weak, vacillating, but too prudent woman! Oh! that I had never known, never trusted, or never loved you—cruel, cruel Helen!" were the bitter exclamations that broke at intervals from the lips of Frank Neville, as, crushing a letter vehemently between his hands, he paced the narrow limits of his apartment, with hasty and passionate strides. "Had she truly loved me she would have sacrificed friends, family, everything, to have remained near me."

Thus argued the devoted but unreasonable lover of Helen Churchill.

From the cradle upwards misfortune had attended Frank Neville in his progress through life. Early left an orphan, with a scanty provision not sufficient for his maintenance without the continual exertion of his talents, he often found himself slighted and looked down upon by those who possessed neither his attractions of mind nor person. The world was almost to him a solitude till he became acquainted with Helen. She was the belle ideal of all that the vivid imagination of the enthusiast could paint; and if Frank loved the gentle, lovely Helen, with no less tender interest did the affectionate girl return his love. With the romantic feeling of youth, she loved him even better because he was unfortunate; but Helen's parents looked with other eyes upon the matter. They listened with doubt to the sanguine hopes that a few years would place Frank Neville at the head of his profession; they knew how steep the hill of fame was; they were aware how little talent, unaided by money, can effect, where the goal is crowded by so many competitors,—and while they could not but give their testimony to his character for moral worth, they positively refused to accept him as a lover for Helen; and Helen—the dutiful Helen—had promised never to become the wife of Frank Neville, without the sanction of her parents to their union.

Matters were in this train when an unforeseen accident deprived Mr. Churchill of the largest part of his property, reducing his family to a state of comparative indigence. Again Frank's hopes revived, and again he came forward as a suitor. "They shall see at least that my love was disinterested;" but prudence still turned the scale against the lovers, and Frank was again rejected, though not without the assurance that, had he been able to maintain their daughter as she ought to be maintained, no one would sooner have obtained their consent.

Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, now no longer able to live in their former style, resolved on emigrating to the Canadas, where they hoped to realize property for the future support of their large family. This was a fresh blow to the lovers. It was then that the thought suggested itself to Frank that Helen might be induced to remain behind her family in the situation of governess, for which her many accomplishments and amiable qualities ably fitted her. He knew a lady who would be happy to engage her services. But how could Helen resolve on forsaking her parents in their adversity? How could she leave her heart-broken father or her beloved mother, to struggle with the changes and chances that awaited them in their transit to the new world? There, too, were her young brothers and sisters—all looking to her for support and comfort,—and could she forsake them? Besides, Helen shrunk timidly from throwing herself, unprotected, on the mercies of an unkind world. In her letter—the unfortunate epistle that had thrown her lover into such extacies of indignation,—she said:

"Francis—dearest Francis—you cannot doubt the truth of my affection: it has been tried in too many instances—through good report and through bad report—in sickness, in sorrow, and in poverty. I have been faithful when you have found others faithless in the world, and I will never love any one but you. I have sacrificed much to you, and much, very much more would I sacrifice, were I only to be the sufferer; but I hold my duty to my parents as sacred. I cannot add this great sorrow to their present affliction, to desert them in their adversity. If you really love me, you will not blame my determination.

"Let us hope that better and happier days are yet in store for us. To us may be applied that line of Moore's, that you made me sing when last we met:

'Farewell—our love was born in tears,
And nursed 'mid vain regrets;
Like wintry suns it rose in tears,
Like them in tears it sets,
Dear love,
Like them in tears it sets.'

"Farewell, then—perhaps forever! I shall never forget or cease to love you, even though you should forget your faithful but sorrowing

"HELEN."

Such were the words that had caused such bitter feelings in the breast of the too selfish lover. He concluded that Helen did not love him as he de-