

are so *exigentes*, the more you do for them the more they want. When he was beyond her reach, she appeared all devotion to him; now that she can have him any day, he supposes she will keep him philandering after her for ten years before she will make up her mind to take him or to leave him!

Why on earth can't he forget her and have done with it? Hasn't he had enough of women, that the moment he finds he has got out of one scrape with the sex, he must do his best to plunge into another?

So he says, and so he swears, as he marches incontinently up and down the parlor of the "Coach and Horses," wearing out his temper and his shoe-leather to no avail.

At first he resolves he will go over to Cocklebury himself to-night, and try if he can see Irene, but, on second thoughts, he abandons the idea. After her note it would not be kind—it would hardly be gentlemanly to attempt to violate her privacy so soon. He will wait till to-morrow to storm the citadel in person. Meanwhile he goes to bed, sleeps but indifferently, and is up at a most unusual hour for him the next morning, making great havoc (notwithstanding his anxiety) in the breakfast his landlady has provided for him, before he turns out in the cold, frosty air, and takes his way toward Cocklebury.

Irene, too, gets little rest that night. There is nothing like a sore heart or an anxious mind for keeping one awake. It beats green tea hollow. She had sat up till a late hour the evening before, looking over and arranging Tommy's wardrobe, and dropping hot tears upon each little article which she had ordered and planned, if not made with her own hands, before she laid it in the box which is to accompany him upon his journey. And, when every thing is ready for his departure, she crept into bed and took the rosy child into her arms, and watched until dawn, by the flickering night-light, the dark curly head of hair that rose and fell with the heaving of her bosom, only using her free hand every now and then to wipe away the tears that coursed down her face. Her restlessness, perhaps, or the instinctive knowledge that he is watched, makes Tommy wake early. She is generally the one to be roused by his imperative demands for stories or breakfast, and the first thing he does now, as consciousness returns to him, is to pat her cheek with his little hand.

"Mamma, mamma! wake up and tell Tommy-boy about Elisha and the big bears."

But he is surprised to find on this occasion that his mamma does not require to have her eyes violently picked open before she complies with his request, but commences at once, in an unusually low and subdued voice, to relate all his favorite tales, and does not discontinue until the dark January morning has resolved itself into something like daylight, and the child becomes eager to get up and be dressed.

Irene would like to postpone the moment of rising; she feels, with a shudder, that this may be the last time she shall ever hold her adopted darling in her arms, but the young tyrant's orders are imperative; in fact, he won't lie still any longer.

"There are beautiful little ice trees all over the windows, mamma, and I made a nice warm house for three of my snails under a cabbage-leaf yesterday, and I want to see if they're happy and comfortable. Dress me quick, mamma, and let me go into the garden and look for my snails, and if they feel cold I shall bring them all in and warm them by the fire."

She rises languidly and puts a match to her fire, and washes and dresses Muiraven's child as if she had been his nurse-maid. She, who was the belle of the London season, who has been the envied mistress of Fen Court, kneels, shivering in her dressing-gown on that winter's morning, and waits as humbly as a hireling, as lovingly as a mother, on her lover's heir. She buttons up his boots, still muddy from the dirt of yesterday, and carefully wraps over the great-coat and the comforter upon his little chest. And then she takes his chubby cheeks between her hands and kisses them fervently over and over again, and lets him out of the sitting-room door with a caution to Mrs. Wells to see him safe into the garden, and goes back to her bedroom, and cries quietly to herself with her face buried in the pillow.

God only knows what it is for a mother to part with a child, whether hers by right or by adoption. We talk a great deal about the "divine passion," but there is no divinity in an affection based on selfishness; and love, in its ordinary sense (that is, passion), has but one desire—to secure the object for itself. Whereas a mother knows from the commencement that she brings up her child for another. And it is that reason, perhaps, that makes maternal love so generous and expansive that, where it is true, it can afford to extend itself even to those whom its child holds dear. It is the only unselfish love the world can boast of. It is, therefore, the only passion that can claim a title to divinity.