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## THE SCHOOL OF SORROW.

I sat in the school of sorrow;  
The Master was teaching there.  
But my eyes were dim with weeping,  
And my heart oppressed with care.  
Instead of looking upward,  
And seeing His face divine,  
So full of tender compassion,  
For weary hearts like mine.

I thought only of the burden,  
The cross that before me lay;  
The cloud that hung thick above me,  
Darkening the light of day.  
So I could not learn my lesson,  
And say, "Thy will be done;"  
And the Master came not near me,  
As the leaden hours drew on.

At last in despair I lifted  
My streaming eyes above,  
And I saw the Master watching,  
With a look of pitying love.  
To the cross above me He pointed,  
And I thought I heard Him say,  
My child, thou must take thy burden.

And learn thy task to-day.  
"Not how will I tell the reason—  
'Tis enough for thee to know  
That I, the Master, am teaching.  
And appoint thee all thy work;  
Then kneeling, the cross I lifted:  
For one glance of that face divine  
Had given me strength to bear it.  
And say, "Thy will, not mine!"

And so I learned my lesson;  
And through the weary years  
His helping hand sustained me  
And wiped away my tears;  
And ever the golden sunlight  
From the heavenly home streamed down  
Where the school tasks are all ended,  
And the cross is changed for the crown.

## THE POOR GENTLEMAN

### CHAPTER VI.

For some minutes she stood on the door sill; undecided as to what she should do; but by degrees her brow and cheeks began to redden, and the light of resolution shone in her moistened eyes.

"Ought the feeling of respect to restrain me longer?" said she to herself; "shall I let my father die without an effort? No! no! I must know all! I must tear the warm from his heart; I must save him by my love!"

Without a moment further delay, she ran rapidly through three or four chambers, and came to the apartment where her father was seated with his elbows resting on the table and his head buried in his hand. Throwing herself on her knees at his feet, and with hands raised to him in supplication,—

"Have mercy on me, father!" exclaimed she; "have mercy on me! I beseech you on my knees, tell me what is it that distresses you! I must know why it is that my father buries himself in this solitude and seems to fly even from his child!"

"Lenora! thou hast and only treasure that remains to me on earth," replied De Vlierbeck, in a broken voice, with despair in his wild gaze;—"Lenora, thou hast suffered dreadfully, my child, hast thou not? Rest thy poor head in my bosom. A terrible blow, my child, is about to fall on us!"

Lenora did not seem to pay any attention to these remarks; but, disengaging herself from her father's embrace, replied, in firm and decided tones,—

"I have not come here, father, for consolation; but with the unalterable determination to learn the cause of yours suffering. I will not go away without knowing what misfortune it is that has so long deprived me of your love. No matter how much I may venerate you and respect your silence, the sense of duty is greater even than veneration. I must—I will—know the secret of your grief!"

"Thou deprived of thy father's love, exclaimed De Vlierbeck, reproachfully and with surprise;—"my love for thee, my adored child, is precisely the secret of my grief. For ten years I have drained the bitter cup and any prayers have always been unheard!"

"Shall I be unhappy, then?" asked Lenora, without betraying the least emotion.  
"Unhappy, because of the misery that awaits us," replied her father. "The blow that is about to fall on your house destroys all that we possess. We must leave Grinsehof!"

The last words, which plainly confirmed her fears, seemed for a moment to appall the girl; but she repressed her feelings, and answered him, with increased courage,—

"You are not dying this slow death because ill fortune has overtaken you, my father; I know the unconquerable force of your character too well for that. No! your heart is weak and yielding because I have to partake your poverty! Bless you, for your affection! But, tell me, father if I were offered the wealth of the world on condition that I would consent to see you suffer for a single day, what think you I would answer?"

Dumb with surprise, the poor man looked proudly at his daughter, and a gentle pressure of her hand was his sole reply.

"Ah!" continued she, "I would refuse all the treasures of earth and meet poverty without a sigh. And you, father,—if they offered you all the gold of America for your Lenora, what would you do?"

"How can you ask, child," exclaimed her father; "do we sell our hearts' blood for gold?"

"And so," continued the girl, "our Maker has left us that which is dearest to us both in this world, why then should we mourn when we ought to be grateful for his compassionate care. Take heart once more, dear father; no matter what may be future lot,—should we even be forced to take refuge in a hovel,—no thing can harm us as long as we are not separated! Smiles, astonishment, admiration, and love, turns flitted over the worn features of the poor old man, who seemed altogether unnerved and disconcerted by the painful document. At length, after some moments of unbroken silence, he clasped his hands, and, gazing intently into her eyes through hot starting tears,—

"Lenora, Lenora! my child!" he exclaimed, "thou art not of earth!—thou art an angel! The unselfish grandeur of thy soul unmaims me completely!"

She saw she had conquered. The light of courage was rekindled again in her father's hope and his lofty brow was lifted once more under the sentiment of dignity and self-devotion that struggled for life in his suffering heart. Lenora looked at him with a heavenly smile, and exclaimed, rapturously,

"Up! up! father; come to my arms! away with grief! United in each other love, fate itself is powerless in our presence!"

Father and daughter sprang into each other's arms, and for a long while remained speechless, wrapped in a tender embrace; then, seating themselves with their hands interlocked they were silent and absorbed, as if the world and its misery were altogether forgotten.

A new, life—a new and refreshing current of blood—seems to have been suddenly poured into my veins," said Monsieur De Vlierbeck. "Alas, Lenora what a sinner I have been! how wrong I was not to divulge all. But you must pardon me, beloved child; you must pardon me. It was the fear of afflicting you—the hope of finding some means of rescue, of escape—that sealed my lips. I did not know you, my daughter; I did not know the inestimable treasure that God in his mercy had lavished on me! But now you shall know all. I will no longer hide the secret of my conduct and my grief. The fatal hour has come the blow I desired to ward off is about to fall and cannot be turned aside. Are you prepared, dear child, to hear your father's story?"

Lenora, who was delighted to behold the calm and radiant smile that illuminated the face of her heart-broken parent, answered him instantly, in caressing tones,—

"Pour all your woes into my heart dear father, and conceal nothing. The part I have to perform must be based on complete knowledge of every thing and you will feel how much your confidence relieves your burdened soul."

"Take, then, your share of suffering, daughter," replied De Vlierbeck, "and help me to bear my cross. I will disguise nothing. What I am about to disclose is indeed lamentable; yet do not tremble and give way at the recital for, if anything should move you, it must be the story of a father's torture. You will learn now, my child, why Monsieur Denecker has had the hardihood to behave towards us as he has done."

He dropped her hand, but, without averting his eager gaze from her anxious eyes, continued,—

"You were very young, Lenora, but gentle and loving as at present, and your blessed mother found all her happiness centered in your care and comfort. We dwelt in the lands of our

forefathers; nothing disturbed the even tenor of our simple lives; and, by proper economy, our moderate income sufficed to support us in a manner becoming our rank and name.

"I had a younger brother, who was endowed with an excellent heart, but generous to a fault and somewhat imprudent. He lived in town, and married a lady of noble family who was no richer than himself. She was showy in her tastes and habits, and I fear, induced him to increase his revenue by adventurous means. There can be no doubt that he speculated largely in the public funds. But probably you do not understand what this means, my child. It is a species of gambling, by which a man may in a moment gain millions; and yet it is a game that may, with equal rapidity, plunge him into the depths of misery and reduced him as if by magic to the condition of a beggar."

"At first, my brother was remarkably successful and established himself in town in a style of living that was the envy of our wealthiest citizens. He came to see us frequently, bringing you who were his godchild, a thousand beautiful presents, and lavished his affection with testimonials of kindness which were proportioned to his fortune. I spoke to him often about the dangerous character of his adventures, and endeavored to convince him that it was unbecoming a gentleman to risk his property upon the hazards of an hour, but, as continued success emboldened him more and more, the passion for gambling made him deaf to all my appeals, all my advice.

"At last an evil hour came! The luck which had so long favored him became inconstant, he lost a considerable portion of his gains, and saw his fortune, diminishing with every venture. Still, courage did not fail him, but, on the contrary, he seemed to fight madly against fate, with the idle hope of forcing fortune to turn once more in his favor. But, alas, it was a fatal delusion!"

"One night—I tremble as I recall it I was in my chamber and nearly ready to retire; you were already in bed, and your mother was saying her prayers on her knees beside your little couch. A tremendous storm raged without; hail beat in torrents against the windows and the wind howled in the chimneys and swayed the trees as if it was about to blow down the house. The violence of the tempest began to make me some what anxious, when suddenly the door-bell was pulled and the sound of horses heard at the gate. In a moment the summons was answered by one of our servants,—for we kept two then,—and a female rushed into the room, throwing herself in tears at my feet. It was my brother's wife!"

"Trembling with fright, I of course hastened to raise her; but she clung to my knees, begging my assistance: imploring me, by every passionate appeal she could think of, to save her husband's life, and convincing me by her sobs and distraction that some frightful calamity was impending over my brother."

"Your mother joined me eagerly in my efforts to calm the sufferer, and by degrees we managed to extract the cause of her singular conduct and unreasonable visit. My brother—alas—had lost all he possessed, and even more. His wife's story was heart-rending; but its conclusion filled us with more anxiety for her husband than his losses; for overcome by the certainty of a dishonored name haunted by the reflection that law and justice would soon overtake him, my poor brother had made an attempt upon his life. The hand of God had providentially guided his wife to the apartment, where she surprised him at the fatal moment and snatched the deadly instrument from his grasp. He was then locked up in a room, dumb, overcome, bowed down to the earth, and guarded by two faithful friends. If any one on earth could save him, it was surely his brother."

"Such was the wild appeal of my wretched sister in law; who, heedless of the stormy night, had thrown herself into a coach and fled to me, through the tempest, as her only hope for their salvation

There she was at my feet, bathed in tears, sobbing, screaming, beseeching me to accompany her to town. Could I—did I—hesitate. Your tender mother, who saw at once the frightful condition of the family, and sympathized as woman's heart alone can do with misery, eagerly implored me not to loose a moment. Save him, save him exclaimed she; spare nothing; I will consent to every thing proper to do or sacrifice.

"We flew back to town through the storm and darkness. You grow pale, Lenora, at the very thought of it, for it was indeed frightful, and you can never know the impression it made on me; these whitened hairs—whitened before their time—are records of that terrible night. But let me continue.

"It is needless to describe the wild despair in which I found my brother, or to tell you how long I had to wrestle with his spirit in order to force a ray of hope into his soul. There was but one means by which we could save his honor one life; but—oh God—at what a sacrifice. I was obliged to pledge all my property as security for his debts. Nothing could be spared: our ancestral manorlands, your mother's marriage portion, your moderate dowry—all were ventured with the certainty that the greater part would unquestionably be lost. On these hard conditions my brother's honor might be saved, and, if that could be rescued, he was willing to renounce the determination to escape shame by death. I must in justice say that it was not he who demanded the sacrifice from me; on the contrary, he did not suppose that I could or would make it; but I was satisfied in my mind that if I did not settle his affairs, at all hazards, he would execute his criminal project against his life. And yet—and yet, my child—I hesitated.

"Father," exclaimed Lenora, "you did not refuse."

A happy smile beamed on his face as he met the questioning glance of his daughter and answered firmly,—

"I loved my brother Lenora; but I loved you, my only child much more. The sacrifice demanded of me by his creditors insured misery for your mother and for you.

"Oh, God, Oh, God," sobbed Lenora.

"On one side my heart was distracted by this dreadful thought while on the other I was assailed by the despair that was present in the bankrupt's chamber; but generosity conquered in the awful trial, and at daylight I sought out the principal creditors and signed the documents that saved my brother's life and honor but gave up my wife and child to want."

"Thank God," gasped Lenora as if she had been relieved from a horrible nightmare. "Bless, you bless you father" for your noble, generous conduct."

She rose from her seat and passing her arms around his neck, gave him a glowing kiss with as much solemnity as if she had been anxious to endure this mark of love with all the fervour and sacredness of benediction.

"Ah, but canst thou bless me my child," said he with eyes full of gratitude, "for an act that should implore thy pardon."

"My pardon father," exclaimed Lenora, with surprise on all her features. "Oh had you done otherwise, what would I not have suffered in doubting the goodness of my parent's heart. Now, now I love you more than ever. Pardon you father. Is it a crime to save a brother's life when it is in your keeping."

"Alas Lenora the world does not reason thus and never forgives for the guilt of poverty. Reduced to that we suffer humiliations which any one may observe in the lives of multitudes of our nobles. Yes; society regards poverty as a crime and it treats us like outcasts. Our equals avoid us in order not to be confounded in our misery; while peasants and tradesmen laugh at our misfortune as if it was a sort of agreeable revenge. Happy, happy they to whom heaven has given an angel to pour comfort and consolation into their hearts in hours of want and dejection. But listen; my child.

TO BE CONTINUED.