

tinted leaves upon the trees, the calm cool air and the mellow sunlight covered all with nature's splendor.

During that autumn poor Nellie Elson had much to worry her. She had never been treated by her mother as a daughter should be, and though her father, in her younger days when he had had his health, had counselled and petted her, when sickness had confined him to his bed her training had been left to her teachers at school and at college—a circumstance not calculated to develop the most domestic love or even tenderness of disposition; but nevertheless, Nellie was neither a spoiled nor a cold-hearted girl. She had followed the instincts of a pure and noble nature, and by reason of the unostentatious manners she exhibited, was loved dearly by those who knew her intimately, and—I might well blush to confess it—I was among those who did not know her.

Our courtship had been one of a business-like character and neither, I believe had experienced any warmth of love in it.

The brightness of her nature shone from amid the clouds of her circumstances and while an undue reserve was exhibited by her to unfamiliar acquaintances, to those who knew her intimately she was a splendid conversationalist, a warm, confiding friend, and displayed a beauty of countenance not seen by those who knew not her very inner nature.

When I had first kept company with Nellie I had not known her, and even while I had looked forward to making her my wife her conduct had never inspired an intense love in me. Friendship, warm and confiding at times, at times cold and repellant, was all that had existed between us all this time. When I thought of this now, an excited anxious feeling would steal upon me and remorse would gnaw my heart till I longed to be free and at liberty to select a new choice among the fair sex.

Jessie Harle now seemed beyond my power and I wished to have the victory of winning her love. She was moneyless it is true, but at that time I was not aware of the value of money and though I knew my property was liable to be wrested from me at any moment, I would have made no difference so far as money was concerned between the two, Nellie Elson and Jessie Harle.

Werbletree had gone away mysteriously again and I was left with Arthur Drummel to wonder over my strange circumstances. To have staid at home must have been a constant strain on my nerves and the very night he went I took a walk into the city and found myself soon passing in the direction of Jessie Harle's abode. I had reached within a block of the house when I suddenly came face to face with Jessie and Walter Marston.

Meeting them so suddenly, and together—after not having seen them for so long and then under such other circumstances—I stood in amazement for a time, and in an instant it seemed to me the girl was at my side, having excused herself from Walter.

I did not realize my position for a few seconds.

"Oh! Joe," she said, "I've been wishing you'd come for so long" and she seized my hand and pressed it warmly.

"But—but" I returned confusedly; "you're leaving your friend. Was he going back anyway?"

"It makes no difference about him" she rejoined with composure as we saw him disappear at a jog in the street without ever looking around to see us. "It makes no difference about him. He's as cross as a bear to-night and he can go."

I understood the exact position of things now and I felt sorry for the poor fellow and heartily disgusted with the conduct of this thoughtless, heartless little Jessie.

"Have you met him often since?" I inquired, my inquisitiveness being superior to any other feeling at the time.

"No; not till to-night," she answered, assuming both in voice and manner a somewhat depressed appearance now and speaking very slowly indeed; "not till to-night and I'll never meet him again."

"Why, have you quarrelled?"

"I suppose so."

"What did you say to offend him?"

"I didn't say anything much till I saw you, and then I told him I had something important to tell you and if he didn't care I wished to be alone with you. So he just said

'you know whether I care or not,' and he wheeled about and turned red and went away."

"You acted rather mean with him I think" I returned in a half-joking voice from which she could not take offence.

"I don't care" and her saucy smile just put me in a good humor though I felt the injustice of her conduct.

By this time we had reached the door of her abode and she pressed me to enter.

I declined.

A look of disappointment clouded her light face as she entreated, but I was determined now to leave her for ever, and with a pretence of a business engagement I pressed her hand with a light good-bye and hurried out of sight; then leisurely walked on meditating on the strange and varied impressions the sweet young face had made on me. She was round-faced with dimpled chin and cheeks—the picture of merriment. Her hair, inclined to curl, clustered beautifully about her face. She was indeed pretty. Yes; I always admitted that, but she was as changeable as the weather of April. This I felt now even more than I had before. To-night illustrated practically her disposition in this respect even more plainly than did her conduct towards me on that last night I met her.

I was going away forever from Jessie now, at least I felt so in more than a mere sense of leaving her. Though I met her again it would not be the same as in other times. The bright-eyed Jessie I had once known, who had power to weaken my noble purposes had gone, and now in her place remained the thoughtless, fickle girl I had seen so rudely rush away from Walter Marston. Longing for someone to sympathize with and one of the fair sex too, I must go to Nellie Elson. I can't say that I was sorry her mother was ill, not that I had wished her so, but because it gave Nellie and me a chance to talk together undisturbed. On entering the house I had been struck with something nicer than usual in Nellie's appearance and on that visit my eyes were so open that I saw her as she really was, and I loved her—loved her with all the devotion and eager passion of my nature. Did she love me? Was my presence on this night imparting a new knowledge to her of my love, or did she only regard me now as on previous visits? I felt as a right that she should view me differently because of the new love I felt for her, and this night I was familiar with her as it behooved me to be and told her of my thoughts.

My words delighted her.

A new warm light shone out of her confiding eyes right into mine, and as she said, "I have always loved you, Joe," a sharp pang on my conscience simultaneous with a sudden delight came on. The delight was the stronger and as I pressed my affianced to my breast I felt the first pure triumph of love I had ever experienced in my life. Oh; what a real pleasure. Can Heaven give purer, sweeter joy?

(To be Continued.)

[Written for The Family Circle.]

### Nature's Own

Delightful task to rear the tender mind  
And teach the young idea how to shoot.

Thompson.

There is a limit to whatever incursions human beings can make on the laws of nature. If there were no curb, man's state of depravity would be awful to contemplate and the average mental power would be less efficient, in proportion to what it might be, than it is. Yet with proper education—by education I mean not the common acceptance of the term, but a genuine developing, and training of the faculties—with a proper education, I say, the mind should be capable of an incredible amount more work than it is; and with due moral culture—a permeation of the child with its father's courage and its mother's love—the moral nature would exert an incredibly powerful sway over the particular person so cultured and his associates in general.

But as education and moral training now are nature herself is left to prevent more degradation rather than assist in a higher cultivation. Indeed most parents do worse than nothing to assist, and many, who try most assiduously to train, overdo the work by not letting nature do her part—they disgust the child, so fond of freedom with their discipline