

infidel? As the most intimate friend and companion in life, you should seek one who truly can be *one* with you in all things, and most assuredly so in this vital respect."

"Ah," thought Dennis, "that would have been very good advice to give awhile ago. If from the first I could have understood my feelings and danger, I might have steeled my heart against and avoided the influences that have brought me to this. But now the mischief is done. The words that now, in spite of myself, continually run in my mind, are 'What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.' It seems as if some resistless power had joined my soul to hers, and I find no strength within myself to break the bond. I am not usually irresolute. I think I have principle, and yet I feel I would not dare make the most solemn vow against this love. I should be all the more weak because conscience does not condemn me. It seems to have a light that reason and knowledge know not of. And yet I wish I could be more sure. I wish I could say to myself, I may be loving hopelessly, but not sinfully. I would take the risk. Indeed I cannot help taking it. O that I could find light, clear and unmistakable."

He rose, turned up his lamp, and turned to the Pauline precepts. These words struck his eye—

"Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed." Then above, the words "How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife, even though she be an unbeliever?"

"Am I not bound—bound, by that which is God's link in the chain? It does not seem as if the legal contract could change or strengthen my feelings materially, and while honoring the inviolable rite of marriage, which is God's law and society's safety, I know that nothing can more surely bind me to her, so that the spirit, the vital part of the passage, applies to me. Then if through this love I could save her; if by prayer and effort I could bring her feet into the paths of life, I should feel repaid for all that I could possibly suffer. She may slight my human love with its human consummation, but God will not let a life of prayer and true love be wasted, and she may learn here, or know hereafter, that though the world laid many rich gifts at her feet, I brought the best of all."

He looked out, and saw that the early Spring dawn was tinging the horizon.

"A good omen," he said aloud. "Perhaps the night of this trouble is past, and the dawn is coming. I am convinced that it is not

wrong; and I am resolved to make the almost desperate attempt. A mysterious hope, coming from I know not where or what, seems to beckon and encourage me forward."

Dennis was young.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISS LUDOLPH COMMITS A THEFT.

Mr. Ludolph on his return found Christine suffering from a nervous horror of the small-pox. From her indiscreet and callous maid, intent on her own safety, and preparing to extenuate her own flight should her fears prove true. Christine learned that the city was full of this loathsome disease, and her feelings were harrowed by exaggerated instances of its virulent and contagious character.

"But you will surely stay with me," pleaded Christine.

"Mademoiselle could not expect dat."

"Heartless!" muttered Christine. Then she said, "Won't you go for Susie Winthrop? O how I would like to see her now."

"She would not come, no von would come who knew."

Christine wrung her hands and cried, "O I shall die alone and deserted of all."

"No you shall not," said her father, entering at that moment; "so do not give way, my dear. Leave the room, stupid!" (to the maid, who again gladly escaped, resolving not to enter till the case was decided.) "I have secured the best of physicians, and the best of nurses, and by to-night or to-morrow morning we will know about what to expect. I cannot help hoping still that it is only a severe cold."

And he told her of Dennis' offer of his mother's services.

"I am sure I would like her, for somehow I picture to myself a kind, motherly person. What useful creatures those Fleets are. They are on hand in emergencies when one so needs help. It seemed very nice to have young Fleet my humble servant; but really father, he deserves promotion."

"He shall have it, and I doubt not will be just as ready to do your bidding as ever. It is only common-place people whose heads are turned by a little prosperity. Fleet knew he was a gentleman before he came to the store."

"Father, if I should have the small-pox and live, would my beaut—would I become a fright?"

"Not necessarily. Let us hope for the