

In a very short time they were married, Caroline to please her father, appearing at the ceremony, with as good a grace as she could assume. One happy consequence of the wedding was, that it put a stop, a full stop, to the courtship, as far as the old people were concerned; and I think I may say, I never saw the second Mrs. May fickle or manifest any foolish affection for the old man after marriage. Caroline was amply avenged; I had abundant satisfaction on the old alderman for his folly. He was mated; he was more—he was checkmated. He got so little of his own way, was so thoroughly snubbed and kept under, that I foresaw, from the moment of his resumption of the matrimonial fetters, that his life would be a short, though not a merry one. Poor Caroline did all she could to maintain peace, but in vain, and she looked forward to her approaching marriage as a happy exit from a scene of domestic misery, almost as much as an entrance on the joys of domestic felicity. Her wedding-day was fixed, but before it arrived her father was lying very ill. I should have stated that one of the first acts of the second Mrs. May's reign was to banish one of us arm-chairs to the back sitting-room, and the other to the alderman's bed-room. It was my lot to be placed in the latter apartment. How tenderly Caroline nursed her sick father, I cannot describe. She was ever at hand to soothe and cheer him. One morning, the old gentleman appeared much worse, and, calling his daughter to him, he asked her, in a low voice, whether she had any request to make. I thought it but a matter of form. I knew that he had already made disposition of his property, and had provided for Mrs. May far more liberally than she deserved. I waited impatiently for Caroline's answer. To my surprise, she said that she had one favour to ask. Her father begged her to speak out. She seemed to hesitate. I hoped she was not going to disappoint all my hopes—to destroy my good opinion of her. She asked with all simplicity and half-reluctantly, "Father, let me have the two old oak arm-chairs that used to stand in the bay-window." Poor dear Caroline! My heart of oak warmed towards her while she spoke. She had not forgotten the days when she peeped into the room so timidly, to see whether her mother was reading. And after all, I was not deceived. She did love the old furniture, where her father and mother had sat, and she wished to claim these old chairs, which were now laid aside and neglected; and for the sake of "auld langsyne," and for the memories of days when she had learned her lesson or worked her sampler, seated in the arm-chair, or perhaps thinking of the time when Edward and she sat in them, and talked together, she would take them to her new home, and treasure them up as mementos of the past. But the alderman was not appointed unto death at that time; thanks, in some measure, no doubt, to the care and kindness of Caroline, he recovered from this attack, and lived a few months longer, during which time he saw his daughter wedded; and, when she entered her husband's house, the two chairs were standing by the fireside in a snug little parlor; and heartily glad was I to escape from the old house, and to accompany Caroline, though, had I known the

future, I had better have remained where I was. But of this anon.

We took up our abode very contentedly at our new residence, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson commenced their married life with every auspicious omen. The alderman not unfrequently retired from the discord of his own house to the peace which reigned in his daughter's residence, while Mrs. May never intruded into this tranquil retreat. The poor old gentleman bitterly bemoaned his hard fate, and his son and daughter could do little to comfort him, save in offering sympathy. He lived to see his first grand-child, and then passed away, leaving his disconsolate widow to mourn his loss.

Caroline proved as good a wife and mother as she had been a daughter, and for some time all went smoothly, and prosperity smiled on the happy family. By degrees, however, a change took place. I could perceive that something was wrong. Every evening Mr. Wilson went out, and once or twice, when Caroline asked him whither he went, he replied, "To the club." Still, beyond a little uneasiness on the part of the family, or a slight interruption of the domestic harmony, there seemed to be no further evil. In process of time, however, I observed that he had lost his healthy aspect, and looked bloated and sensual. Then, one night on his return home, he talked loudly and unconnectedly, stamped his feet, and, finally, sunk down on the ground in the stupor of drunkenness. From this time, his progress in dissipation and towards ruin was rapid. Morning, noon, and night, he indulged in the use of stimulants. Soon he became short of money. Caroline husbanded her resources as long as she received anything, and expended them with prudence and extreme economy. Her own dress became daily more and more shabby; then her children were meanly, and at length scantily clad; then the scarcity extended to provisions, and the children were coarsely at first, and soon insufficiently fed. Many there were who spared her husband for her sake, and delayed proceeding to extremities until her death, which, to all, save her infatuated husband, appeared inevitable. And still this simple-hearted, this tenderly-nurtured, this affectionate girl, bore all the burden of the household care. At once the mistress and the servant, she nursed the children, she attended upon her husband; she made excuses to those who came for money, and prevailed on them to wait yet a few days; she strove to reclaim her fallen husband; she reasoned, oh how wisely! she persuaded, oh how eloquently! she entreated, with what earnestness! she remonstrated, with what kindness and delicacy! She thought, she spoke, she acted, she labored, until at length, having exerted herself beyond her strength, she sunk upon the bed, and lay pouring out her life's blood with every breath. She lay long unregarded. The children were at play in the yard; her husband was attempting to attend to business. When he returned, he rushed out to seek assistance. Her father's old friend and surgeon was sent for, and gave directions for her treatment, but told them, at the same time, that there was little hope. The guilty husband looked on in helpless grief. Once more she opened her eyes, looked languidly on him she had so deeply