

his desolate farm. Meanwhile a dreadful heart sickness seemed to have stricken fair Evelyn. She neither worked, nor walked, nor talked. Her father in vain tried to cheer her. He had longed suspected the growing fancy of the young people. When Willie absented himself for so long a period, he began to think they had quarrelled, or that he had proved feckle. He asked Sylvester to reason with the maiden, and suggested some new study to divert her mind. The grave man obeyed Mr. Elwood's request, and unbent in a manner quite new to him to rally and amuse the invalid—for invalid she had become. Anguish can rob the cheek of its rose and the footstep of its spring, as surely but more slowly than disease. After a while the object of their care awoke as it were from her lethargic state, and set herself with more activity than in her happiest days to her long-neglected duties.

The house was swept and garnished. No attention, no foresight that affection could devise, was overlooked by the girl for her father's comfort. The garden was visited, the autumn seeds gathered and set aside, the winter stores laid in, the winter clothing made. Had Evelyn contemplated a long journey and an indefinite return she could not have prepared her father and his home better for her absence. The hue of the damask rose was in her face: in palmier days the tint had more resembled the pink blush of the wild briar buds. Her eyes shown with painful lustre: once they shed a soft mild radiance. Her father often chid her for over-exerting herself, by gentle force removing her work and compelling idleness. But in vain; she always had her way with her indulgent parent, and kissing the brown hands so fondly laid on her head, she would plead to do as she liked and he could not gainsay her.

Towards the close of October Mr. Elwood had to pay his half-yearly visit to the neighboring town of Hamilton, to get his dividends on certain mortgages in which he had invested the residue of his property. In those times it was a day's journey. Sometimes he remained a day or two in the city to make purchases that could not be accomplished at Cedar Creek; but more frequently he was only absent one night. Susan Finch, a hard working laborer's wife, who frequently assisted Evelyn in her more onerous duties, was then in the habit of staying at the cottage until Mr. Elwood's return. The farewell was spoken, and still the fond father lingered to beg his daughter not to toil so hard and to be careful of herself till he came back. He had passed the swing gate that led into the road with a heavier heart than usual, when Evelyn rushing down the garden path, again clasped him round the neck and passionately bade him good bye. With tenderest words the loving father embraced and cheered her, and with the old promise that had such charms in childhood, spoke of the pretty gifts he would bring her. And so they parted, but neither pleasure nor business could divert Elwood's mind from his daughter. Some gloomy mystery seemed to shroud her. What harm could reach his rustic flower? He was disappointed in finding Mr. Markham, his lawyer, out of town, but he was expected home the following evening, and he had no alternative but to wait. Two days elapsed before he received intimation of the gentleman's return, and at the same time an invitation to join the family at dinner at six o'clock.

The Markhams had been friends of his ever since his residence in the country, and he availed himself with pleasure of their kindness.

A cheery welcome, a good dinner, some pleasant chat with Markham, and all the charming trifles that make the social circle a relaxation and a delight, had their influence on Elwood, who left them at a late hour, with the understanding that his business was to be attended to, the first thing in the morning. Much more cheerful he laid his head on his pillow, thinking of the happy meeting on the morrow. At the first glimmer of dawn, when nature wears her coldest and most chilling aspect, the sleeping man awoke with an uncomfortable burst of tears. Was it a dream or a real thing,

that bent, broken figure at his bedside, with its white robe bespattered and soiled, and its hair—Evelyn's golden bloom hair—damp and streaming? His eyes were wide open, he was not dreaming. There she was in the grey, faint twilight, raising her bloodless hands and sallow eyes in silent agonizing entreaty. With a desperate effort he passed his hand athwart his brow, then looked again, but the figure was gone! No vestige of his spiritual visitant, save an iron weight sinking and ever sinking deeper in his heart.

There was no rest for him, until hastily despatching his business he set out for home. Never did the stage move so slowly; never did the landscape appear so devoid of interest. At length, as towards evening he approached Cedar Creek, the certainty of soon beholding his darling revived him, and with a glad step he alighted at the village tavern.

Good John Saunders seemed unusually civil and talkative, quite anxious to detain him in conversation. His road was beset with people, everybody appeared to be out, and respectful in an extraordinary degree. Hats were touched, curtsies dropped; the very children hushed their voices reverentially as he passed. Presently he turned into the turf lane that led to his cottage home. Sylvester was at the garden gate. They met face to face. Elwood read in his ghastly lineaments a confirmation of his most horrid dread.

"My child! what has happened to my child?"

He pushed past, but Sylvester held him with a strong arm.

"You must not enter," he said, huskily, "calm yourself, and I will tell you all."

But love—a father's love—was stronger than the hand of man, and dashing him away he rushed distracted into the house.

All was still below. Up the creaking narrow stairs he flew. Her door was open, and in the little white bed, so smooth and snowy, lay his beautiful sole treasure, prone and still in death!

Susan was seated near, hushing to sleep a wailing infant, but Elwood saw nothing but his dead Evelyn, and with a cry as if some strong animal mortally wounded, he staggered forward a few paces and fell senseless. Nature, ever kind in her dispensations, struck him with a fit that required all the skill of the good doctor and the nursing of Sylvester and Susan Finch to bring him through.

For weeks reason tottered on its throne, but at last his still vigorous constitution rallied, and the invalid was able to exchange his bed for an arm chair.

One day, after a long interview with the doctor, during which groans and sobs were distinctly heard by Susan below, and in sympathy with which she rubbed the tears out of her own eyes, she was summoned up stairs by the sick man.

"Bring me the child, Evelyn's child." The voice was choked and unsteady, but there was no mistake, and the woman with a flood of tears left the room, returning presently with her charge. The poor bereaved father put out his trembling arms, the unconscious babe was laid in them.

"Leave me!" Noiselessly, as if in a sacred presence, the woman crept out and closed the door.

"Murdered mother!" muttered the heart-broken man, as he gazed on the sleeping infant, "my child was innocent, I must believe it. I knew her every thought from infancy: her pure mind was laid bare to me like a book. Who destroyed my dove, and who turned her very softness and guilelessness to her destruction? Hadst thou been spared, my poor stray lamb, I might have felt the shame, but death has expiated thine error. Died mad! Calling on her father not to curse her! Oh Evelyn! hadst thou no confidence in thy father's love, in his sacrifice? How would I have sheltered my wounded dove in my bosom, hide her from the world, shielded her from scorn? The world is wide, we could have found a rest somewhere; but death, cruel death, is irrevocable, nothing is left me but desolation and despair!"

The babe wept like Moses of old, and its tears kindled pity in the breast of the injur-

ed father. At that moment Sylvester entered. He had been a constant attendant by the sick man's couch, and his presence seemed to give consolation, for he had known Evelyn and they could talk of her together.

When Susan claimed her charge it was calmly sleeping in Paul Sylvester's arms. Were these two, the broken down grandfather and the stern teacher, to be the protectors and guardians of the orphan babe?

A few weeks afterwards Willie Morris threw up his farm in favor of a younger brother, and receiving a sum of money from his father, left his native village forever.

Popular suspicion, even his own parents, and Elwood in particular, fixed the odium of the late tragic event on him. Evelyn had died uttering no name, accusing no one, and Elwood never breathed his belief in Willie's crime, but every vestige of his presence was destroyed, every tree he had planted, every trifling gift to his daughter; and though in time he came to speak of things and people as of old—even of those connected with Evelyn's early life—the name of Willie Morris never passed his lips.

(TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT)

[From Chambers's Journal.]

THE ANTI-NUPTIAL LIE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

On the morning of my twenty-third birthday, I awoke early, and with a profound sense of happiness and thankfulness. My five years of married life, without having been a realized dream or sentimental idyl, had inclosed the happiest and worthiest period of my existence. Tracing the details of it, I rejoiced to think my worst difficulties were overcome, and that strong affection and deep-rooted esteem had changed an anxious course of duty into blessedness and fruition.

My husband, Mr. Anstruther, had yielded to my earnest wish to celebrate our wedding anniversary in our country home, and had granted me just three days, snatched from the toil of active parliamentary life, to taste my holiday; and I was tasting it slowly, but with intense enjoyment, as I stepped out that morning upon the dewy lawn, and devoured, with my aching London sight, one of the loveliest park landscapes in all England. I looked in the distance upon low ranges of hills, blue in the early misty light, and granting, here and there, peeps of the adjacent sea, sleeping quietly beneath the rosy amber of the eastern sky, and immediately at my feet upon flower-gardens planned and cultivated with all the exigence of modern taste, and glowing with a hundred dyes. My mind recurred involuntarily to the narrow court in which my father's house was situated, and to the dreary prospect of brick and mortar—of factory-chimney and church-steeple, which for eighteen years had bounded my horizon; and if the recollection brought with it the old inevitable association, I was able to thank God that now no pulse beat quicker, no traitorous thrill responded.

How strange it seems that fate should come upon us with such overwhelming suddenness, that we are not suffered to hear the approaching footstep or see the outstretched arm, but are struck down instantly by the blow which might perhaps have been withstood, had a moment's warning been granted! I went back to the house that morning with the most absolute sense of security and happiness; but on the threshold of the breakfast-room I met my husband, and the first glance at his face told me something was wrong. His face was always reserved—it was now stern; his manner was always reserved—it was now severe.

I had approached him naturally with smiling face and outstretched hand, anticipating his congratulations; but I stood still at once, as efficiently arrested as if he had held a drawn sword at my breast.

"That is right," he said; "come no nearer!" Then, after a pause, he added, "You have been up some time; let us have breakfast at once;" and he opened the door of the room for me to enter. I took my place, and went through the accustomed

forms without a word. I saw he wished me to eat and drink, and I did so, although the effort nearly choked me. Indeed, I was thankful for the few minutes respite, and was striving to command my resources for the approaching conflict with all the strength of mind I possessed. I was not altogether ignorant of what had come upon me; there could be between us but that one point of disunion, that one cause of reproach; and surely, surely, neither God nor man could condemn me as without excuse upon that score!

While I ate, he walked deliberately up and down the room, making no pretence to eat; and as soon as I had finished, he rang the bell to have the table cleared, and then sat down before it opposite to me. "We have friends asked to dinner to-day to celebrate the double anniversary of our marriage and your birthday—have we not?" he said, leaning his arms heavily on the table, and gazing steadily into my face. "I shall not meet them. I fear it will be impossible for me ever to recognize you as my wife again!"

I think he expected that the cruel abruptness of this announcement would strike me swooning, or at least convicted, at his feet; but it did not. My heart did for a moment seem to stand still, and every drop of blood faded from my cheeks, but I did not tremble nor flinch under his hard scrutiny. I was even able to speak.

"Tell me at once," I said, "the meaning of this, you are under some delusion. What have I done?"

As I spoke, his face softened; I could see, in spite of the iron mould of his physiognomy, the instinctive hope, the passionate yearning produced by my manner; it was very evanescent, however, for almost before I had gathered courage from the look, it was gone, and all the hardness returned.

"I am not the man," he said, "to bring a premature or rash accusation, especially against the woman I have made my wife. I accuse you of having deceived me, and here is the proof."

He opened his pocket-book slowly, and took out a letter. I recognized it instantly, and my heart sank. I had sufficient self-command to repress the cry that rose instinctively to my lips, but no effort could keep back the burning glow which dyed face and hands like conscious guilt.

My husband looked at me steadily, and his lip curled. "I will read the letter," he said.

The letter began thus: "You have told me again and again that you loved me: were those words a lie? You shall not make good your Moloch offering, and sacrifice religion and virtue, body and soul, youth and happiness, to your insatiate craving after position and wealth. This man is too good to be cajoled. What if I showed him the pledges of your love? taught him the reliance that is to be placed on your faith? Why should you reckon upon my submission to your perjury?"

The letter ran on to great length, mingling vehement reproaches with appeals and protestations of such unbridled passion, that as my husband read them, his voice took a tone of deeper scorn, and his brow a heavier contraction.

The letter was addressed to me, on the back of the same sheet on which it was written; it was not dated beyond "Tuesday evening," but the post-mark, unusually legible, showed May 19, 1850—just three days before we were married. My husband indicated these facts with the same deliberation that had marked his conduct throughout, and then he said: "I found this letter last night in your dressing-room after you had left it: perhaps I ought not to have read it, but it would now be worse than mockery to make any excuses for so doing. I have nothing more to say until I have listened to your explanation. You tell me I am under a delusion—it will therefore be necessary for you to prove that this letter is a forgery."

He leaned back in his chair as he spoke, and passed his hand over his forehead with a gesture of weariness; otherwise, he had sustained his part in the scene with a cold insensibility which seemed unnatural, and which filled me with the most dreadful fore-