

At this moment, Captain Ainslie was announced; and when Ernest passed the drawing-room door on his way out, he saw Edna and the Captain sitting conversing together. Edna's quick eye noticed his look of disappointment as he glanced towards her, and she longed to be able to go to him and tell him all. She did not see him again, excepting for a few moments when he came in to bid them good-bye, and then he was very quiet and even cold in his manner. He asked her if she would be kind enough to tell Mrs. Maitland when she saw her, that he had been twice at the house, but could not find her at home. Edna told him she thought Mrs. Maitland was not in town, as she always spent Christmas with one of her sisters. Ernest expressed his regret at not seeing her, and Edna could not but feel that, if her friend had been at home, Ernest's parting would have been different from what it was; for she had begged Mrs. Maitland (should he allude to the subject) to assure Ernest that she and Captain Ainslie were merely friends, and of how grieved she had been at her hasty conduct.

A few years ago, Edna would have scorned to humble herself thus; but her spirit of pride was subdued now, and she was willing to confess her faults, and acknowledge that she had done wrong.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"It is most genial to a soul refined,
When love can smile, unblushing, uncon-
cealed;
When mutual thoughts, and words, and acts are
kind,
And inmost hopes and feelings are revealed;
When interest, duty, trust, together bind,
And the heart's deep affections are unsealed;
When for each other live the kindred pair,—
Here is indeed a picture passing fair!"
—*Tupper.*

Our readers will be wondering what has become of Winnifred and Frank Austin all this time. Suppose we peep into their cheery home, this cold February evening.

In the snug little parlor at Woodbine Cottage, the crimson curtains had been drawn, and a bright coal-fire was burning

in the grate. By a table in the centre of the room sat Frank Austin, and in his arms lay his infant son, now two months old, looking pretty much as all babies do at that interesting age, and appearing decidedly more comfortable than his father, who seemed scarcely to know how to handle the little bundle of white, and from time to time casting uneasy glances at his wife, sitting beside him; not, however, so engrossed in her stitching, but that she had time to bestow sundry looks of proud love and satisfaction on her youthful son. Grandmamma was sitting knitting by the fire, looking the very picture of quiet contentment.

At length, young Master Frank grew weary of staring at the bright gas and the dancing flames in the grate, and began to show decided signs of uneasiness. Now it was as much as "papa" could do to manage the infant prodigy when he was quiet, and he commenced tossing him about frantically, expecting every moment to hear his wife's unflinching caution:

"Oh! do be careful of his back, Frank."

Notwithstanding his most vigorous efforts, baby refused to be soothed or hushed; and Winnifred, rising, and laying down her work, said she would take him to nurse, that the poor darling was sleepy.

"Let me carry him upstairs for you; he is really getting quite heavy," said Frank.

"No, thank you, dear; I must see him put in his cradle," replied his wife, tenderly taking the baby, who, even now knowing mother's arms, ceased his cries.

When Winnie returned, after having been absent some time, she found her mother nodding over her knitting, and Frank quite tired of his newspapers.

"Come, little wife," he said, as she entered; "you've done enough work for this evening. Come, and sit down, and let us have a little quiet chat," and suiting the action to his words, he wheeled the couch near the fire; and, motioning Winnie to a seat, placed himself beside her.

They were silent for some moments when Frank suddenly said: