

Mrs. Winter's heart was too full for bitterness.

"He is recovering rapidly, Miss Grantly. Oh, I can never be thankful enough."

"I want to know—can you forgive me?"

"Forgive you? Oh, hush! I have only myself to forgive, if I ever can——"

"Oh, Mr. Stanley, will you step in here—I have had no chance to thank you," she said, as he complied with her request. "My husband and I must ever regard you as one of our dearest and best friends."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Winter," he said, his lip curling a trifle as he saw her companion, "I never was an intimate friend of your husband. I fear I never can be."

"And yet you risked your life to save him."

"Yes, he was a human being. A still greater reason, he was a Masonic brother."

Mrs. Winter left the room with bowed head. Entering her own, she knelt by her husband's side, weeping passionately, and exclaimed:

"Oh, George, forgive me, forgive me!"

He drew her to him, and replied:

"We have both something to forgive. Never mind, Mary, in the future we'll do better, and try to forget all this sad time."

Miss Grantly, in the reception room, recalled Clifton Stanley, as he turned to leave. "One moment," she said, "I am not so bad as you think me. I was nearly wild with fear for you this afternoon. You liked me once—can't you do so again?"

Her face was gloriously beautiful in its soft penitence, but he leaned calmly on the back of a chair, and coldly answered, "Miss Grantly, I loved you when I came here, and you knew it. But never mind that now. My wife must be a woman of high principle, of pure, noble nature—good evening."

And he left her, standing there alone, with her bitter disappointment. And yet, her fate was as she made it. The shadows of twilight gathered thicker and thicker. A song floated out from the parlor; a song she knew,

"It is the little rift within the lute,

That by and by will make the music mute."—*Voice of Masonry.*

STEALING THE SECRETS.

"SECRET LODGE" of Freemasons had just been organized at Steadytown, and, of course, it was the subject of conversation everywhere, on the street corners, at the sewing society, and at the innumerable tea-sippings which the elder portion of the feminine inhabitants enjoyed so much. Some condemned and others extolled it, while many sought the good old pastor's advice in regard to joining it; it was soon found that he, in the days of his youth, had joined the Mystic Brotherhood; after which there were found few who had aught to say against it.

It so happened that the "Daughters of Eve" were over anxious to learn what transpired in the Lodge-room, and one evening, three of them—May Eavesdrop, Belle Catchnote, and Emma Curious—met to consider the best method of finding out the Masonic secrets. After due deliberation they decided that they would go to the door and listen; and in order to better accomplish this, they would adopt the male attire. The next day they found out the next meeting night and matured their plans to secure the proper apparel for the undertaking.

On the night in question, they met at the appointed time and arrayed themselves in suitable apparel, "borrowed" from their brothers. But, before starting out, Emma Curious thought it would be well to see if the "coast was clear." So she commissioned her brother Tom, a rolicking boy of fifteen, who was unmindful of her object, to go over to the hall and see if he could find out the secrets; his instructions were to come back in half an hour and report. He went, but came back sooner than was expected, saying that Samuel Gallant had chased him down stairs, and threatened him with a worse fate if he should appear there again.

Here was a dilemma. It was now evident that they could not find out the secrets by listening at the door, so the girls sat down to meditate.

While the ladies are meditating, let us describe Samuel Gallant, whose unexpected appearance had put Tom Curious to such a precipitate flight and destroyed his sister's well-laid plans. He was a man of medium size, dark skinned and unpleasant to look upon, although he frequently made the assertion that he was *the* favorite of all the young ladies in Steadytown. His age was something over forty notwithstanding his repeated affirmation that he should soon be twenty-six. At first it was a matter of wonderment to the villagers, how he became a Mason; but the fact was finally elicited that when he was young he had been admitted, before he had experienced that fall which had turned the remainder of his days into a "night of years."

The girls sat thinking a long time, after having their air-castles demolished in the