

away as Agnes entered the parlor. Louisa was arranging her hair before the glass.

We all know with what lightning speed a train of thought will arise, pass through our minds, and bring us to a conclusion—whether right or wrong is entirely a matter of chance. In one instant Agnes saw, or thought she saw, it all. Mr. Haltaine really cared for Louisa; he had been jealous of the attention paid her by Escott Vallean, and of the favor with which that attention had been received; out of pique he had bestowed his time and conversation on herself—nay, had condescended to compliment her as he had never done before; Louisa had repented when she saw him departing in anger; she had followed him to the house; a few words had been sufficient to dispel the cloud; and doubtless there was now a clear understanding between them.

She did not stop to think how unlike all this was to anything she had ever believed of Mr. Haltaine; how totally different to all her preconceived ideas of his character would be such trifling, to call it by no harsher name. Who, under similar circumstances, ever does stop to think or reason? Blind feeling is the only guide received or followed. As, two hours before, Agnes had built for herself a fairy palace of love and pleasure, out of a look and a few low-spoken words, so did she now, on an equally unsubstantial foundation, erect a prison of darkness and despair.

Minnie and her brother of course stayed to tea, and Agnes had to exert herself for their entertainment. Mr. Vallean was going again the next day, much to Minnie's disappointment, who had counted on tea-parties and pic-nics during the time of his stay. It was a disagreeable evening to Agnes, who was (I blush to record it of my heroine) out of temper with herself and every one else, and misconstrued every word and action. Mrs. Vining was gay and in good spirits; this Agnes attributed to her pleasure in having come to an understanding with Mr. Haltaine; though had she been grave, it would probably have been considered a proof of pensive and silent happiness at the same cause. Mr. Vallean's politeness was intrusive and disagreeable; Minnie's lively chatter frivolous

and annoying, and Philip's remarks flat and tiresome. She was heartily glad when the visitors departed, and had hardly patience to continue talking as usual to Louisa, until she could with some show of reason, pretend to be asleep.

And Mr. Haltaine? He went home a considerably less happy man than he had left it in the morning. What the sight of a lock of hair had done for Agnes, three little words had done for him. He was fond of music; but there was one song which, from that time to the end of his life, he could not endure—that song was, "Over the Sea."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE FEVER.

Three days after that eventful Sunday, as Agnes was engaged in the cool and pleasant task of boiling preserves over the cooking stove, she received a visit from Mrs. Givins of the "Philipsburg Hotel." Agnes was a favorite with Mrs. Givins, who, like most others, had a high opinion of her "learning," and had been won by the ease with which she fell into the ways of the country, and her good nature to any who required her services. Mrs. Givins was a comely widow of about five-and-forty. Since her husband's death, five years before, she had kept the tavern on "her own hook" as she said, her only son, who was captain of a schooner on the Lakes, having no inclination for a shore life. She was a brisk and active woman, who bustled through life in a hasty and good-humored fashion; who was not fond of being crossed or put out, and who kept herself and all with whom she had to do, in strict order. In her customers she permitted no intemperance or disorderly behavior; in her daughters and servants, no untidiness or idleness; and in neither, any disobedience or disregard of her.

"Fine day this," said Mrs. Givins, beginning the conversation after the stereotyped and approved manner.

"Rather too hot for me," said Agnes, rising from her stooping posture over the skillet, and pushing back her hair.

"Them's beautiful currants," continued