

EDITH YORKE.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

He leaned back against the house, with his hands in his pockets, and stared at the sky...

"I never will!" Edith cried out, in an agony of terror and pity. "O you poor man! I didn't know it was so awful. O you poor man!"

Mr. Rowan had stopped, gasping for breath, and with this patched sleeve, wiped off the perspiration that was streaming down his face.

He took it with a shaking hand and wiped his face again, wiped his eyes again and again, breathing heavily.

Mr. Rowan turned away, with a look of irritation, at sound of her timid voice, walked round the house, and came sulkily in to his supper.

Their meals had always been comfortable and silent; but now Edith tried to talk, at first with Mrs. Rowan; but when she saw that the woman's tremulous replies, as if she did not dare to speak in her husband's presence, were bringing an uglier frown to his face, and that he was changing from sullen to savage, she addressed her remarks and questions to him.

It was Mr. Rowan's custom to go out immediately after supper and not come home till late in the evening, when he would stagger in, sometimes stupid, sometimes furious with liquor.

Mrs. Rowan's cheeks began to redden up with excitement as she went about clearing the table and washing the dishes, but she said nothing.

She could not have said better, but if she had known, she could have done better. What he needed was not an appeal to his sentiments, but physical help.

The lamp was lighted, the checker-board placed on the table beside it, and the two were talking over the slackening game.

Edith's chamber was the little, dark attic, which was reached by a steep stairway at one side of the fireplace.

"I was in bed, wide awake, and it was pitch dark. You know you put the cover over the skylight when it rained the other day, and it has not been taken off. Well, instead of shutting my eyes, I kept them wide open, and looked straight into the dark."

"I should guess it might be this," he said. "Though the place appears at first to be dark, there are really some particles of light there, and since there are too few of them to keep up a connection in their perfect state, they divide into their colors, and make the clouds you saw. I don't know why particles of light should not separate, when they have a great deal to do, and not much to do with. Alas, alas!"

"But what made them move?" Edith asked. "They were never still." "Perhaps they were alive."

Mr. Rowan gave a short, silent laugh. He knew that the child was only questioning in order to keep him "So reason why not?" he said.

"Don't you want to play solitaire?" Edith struck in desperately.

He made a slight motion of dissent, but it was not decided; so she brought out the pack of solled cards, and laid them before him.

"Isn't it about your bedtime?" he said presently to Edith.

She got up slowly, unwilling to go, yet not daring to stay. Oh! if she were but wise enough to know the best thing that could be said—something would strengthen his resolution, and keep him in it.

"How glad I shall be when Dick comes home!" she said. "Then I hope we can all go away from here, and wipe out, and begin over."

She could not have said better, but if she had known, she could have done better. What he needed was not an appeal to his sentiments, but physical help.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.

Before closing the trapdoor, she looked down once, and saw Mr. Rowan leaning and twisting his body as he had been playing with the cards.

"I'll go over and see if I can get some coffee or opium," he muttered, and pulled his hat on as he went out the door.

"I'll ask for nothing but coffee or opium," he protested to himself, as he shut the door softly after him.

CHAPTER II. WIPING OUT AND BEGINNING A NEW. The next morning was a gloomy one for the two who had nursed that trembling hope overnight, but they did not say much about it.

Mrs. Rowan's face showed the lassitude of long endurance. Edith's disappointment was poignant. She was no longer a looker-on merely, but an actor.

"I should guess it might be this," he said. "Though the place appears at first to be dark, there are really some particles of light there, and since there are too few of them to keep up a connection in their perfect state, they divide into their colors, and make the clouds you saw."

"But what made them move?" Edith asked. "They were never still." "Perhaps they were alive."

Mr. Rowan gave a short, silent laugh. He knew that the child was only questioning in order to keep him "So reason why not?" he said.

"Don't you want to play solitaire?" Edith struck in desperately.

He made a slight motion of dissent, but it was not decided; so she brought out the pack of solled cards, and laid them before him.

"Isn't it about your bedtime?" he said presently to Edith.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.

come, and were the neighbors welcoming him?" was the first thought.

"I wouldn't have ordered him off, if I hadn't thought he was steady enough to go," said another, who looked very pale.

"I should guess it might be this," he said. "Though the place appears at first to be dark, there are really some particles of light there, and since there are too few of them to keep up a connection in their perfect state, they divide into their colors, and make the clouds you saw."

"But what made them move?" Edith asked. "They were never still." "Perhaps they were alive."

Mr. Rowan gave a short, silent laugh. He knew that the child was only questioning in order to keep him "So reason why not?" he said.

"Don't you want to play solitaire?" Edith struck in desperately.

He made a slight motion of dissent, but it was not decided; so she brought out the pack of solled cards, and laid them before him.

"Isn't it about your bedtime?" he said presently to Edith.

She got up slowly, unwilling to go, yet not daring to stay. Oh! if she were but wise enough to know the best thing that could be said—something would strengthen his resolution, and keep him in it.

"How glad I shall be when Dick comes home!" she said. "Then I hope we can all go away from here, and wipe out, and begin over."

She could not have said better, but if she had known, she could have done better. What he needed was not an appeal to his sentiments, but physical help.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.

at her husband's side, leaned back in her chair, with closed eyes and clasped hands, only half alive.

"I should guess it might be this," he said. "Though the place appears at first to be dark, there are really some particles of light there, and since there are too few of them to keep up a connection in their perfect state, they divide into their colors, and make the clouds you saw."

"But what made them move?" Edith asked. "They were never still." "Perhaps they were alive."

Mr. Rowan gave a short, silent laugh. He knew that the child was only questioning in order to keep him "So reason why not?" he said.

"Don't you want to play solitaire?" Edith struck in desperately.

He made a slight motion of dissent, but it was not decided; so she brought out the pack of solled cards, and laid them before him.

"Isn't it about your bedtime?" he said presently to Edith.

She got up slowly, unwilling to go, yet not daring to stay. Oh! if she were but wise enough to know the best thing that could be said—something would strengthen his resolution, and keep him in it.

"How glad I shall be when Dick comes home!" she said. "Then I hope we can all go away from here, and wipe out, and begin over."

She could not have said better, but if she had known, she could have done better. What he needed was not an appeal to his sentiments, but physical help.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.

posed in a weary tone. "You can't judge of such things if you haven't felt them. It's easier to hurt a sore heart than a sound one."

"I should guess it might be this," he said. "Though the place appears at first to be dark, there are really some particles of light there, and since there are too few of them to keep up a connection in their perfect state, they divide into their colors, and make the clouds you saw."

"But what made them move?" Edith asked. "They were never still." "Perhaps they were alive."

Mr. Rowan gave a short, silent laugh. He knew that the child was only questioning in order to keep him "So reason why not?" he said.

"Don't you want to play solitaire?" Edith struck in desperately.

He made a slight motion of dissent, but it was not decided; so she brought out the pack of solled cards, and laid them before him.

"Isn't it about your bedtime?" he said presently to Edith.

She got up slowly, unwilling to go, yet not daring to stay. Oh! if she were but wise enough to know the best thing that could be said—something would strengthen his resolution, and keep him in it.

"How glad I shall be when Dick comes home!" she said. "Then I hope we can all go away from here, and wipe out, and begin over."

She could not have said better, but if she had known, she could have done better. What he needed was not an appeal to his sentiments, but physical help.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.

Edith started back, and, without another word, climbed the narrow stair to her attic.