

from those who had hitherto sought her friendship and love. She noted his virtues and loved him for them— and she was loved in return. Austin had a mind that could not fail to appreciate worth, excellence, and beauty combined; and such an unanimity of feeling as existed between them, drew them closer together, and tended to make them indissolubly one.

The day designated for the party at length arrived. It was a glorious day. All nature seemed conspired to render everything favorable for the excursion. The little party took an early start from the big willow tree, and proceeded down the lake as had been proposed. They were in high spirits. The scenery was enchanting. The birds from a neighboring wood tuned their mellow throats as they hopped from branch to branch, and seemed to vie with each other in melody. A breeze swept gently over the lake, laden with the perfumes of myriads of flowers that lined the bank in sweet profusion. Many jokes passed from one or another, and then the clear, ringing laugh might be heard far over the waters, while the forest, covered with green foliage, sent back the echo.

At length their destination was reached, and, after having secured the boat, they proceeded to the grove and commenced making preparations to enjoy the refreshments with which they had provided themselves. After they were completed, George gave Joe an intimation that he wished a private word with him. They stepped aside and conferred together for a moment, and then started towards the boat, saying they would be back directly. They proceeded in silence until they had nearly reached the boat, when George said—

“I’ve rather come it over him this time, haven’t I Joe?”

“Yes; but I don’t more than half like the arrangement,” returned Joe.

“O, it will all come out right, never fear. Besides, I can’t see why his cold water nonsense should prevent us from enjoying ourselves.”

“True; but then you agreed to bring no champagne along.”

“No, I did not. I merely said we couldn’t give up the party, and told him to be ready.”

“Well, but he inferred from the way you spoke that you agreed with his cold water terms.”

“No matter what he inferred; he might just as well have inferred half a dozen other things.”

They had now arrived at the boat, and George proceeded to lift a cover from the seat in the stern, and took therefrom a dozen bottles of champagne, saying, as he did so—

“This is the prime stuff, Joe: it’s none of your half water mixtures.”

Joe said nothing, but looked very grave. He did not, as he had told George, favor the deception. He was not aware, however, until George informed him, of the existence of his wine; but finding himself fairly enlisted, and being berated for looking so sober by George, he determined to make the best of it.

“What have you got there?” inquired Austin, as George placed the bottles upon the grass, and seated himself by them.

“Only something to make us merry,” returned George with apparent indifference; saying which he proceeded to “pop” one of the bottles, and to turn the contents into a glass.

Austin now perceived what the bottles contained. The blood mounted to his cheek, and he cast an angry glance upon George. It lasted but for a moment. The angry look vanished, and he was as calm as though nothing had occurred to ruffle his temper.

George’s next movement was to offer the glass to the girls. Mary Clifford and Lucy Martin promptly refused, but Julia Crawford accepted it without hesitation. Telling Joe to

help himself, they commenced a battle upon the wine in good earnest. Austin endeavored to renew the conversation, which had been carried on very lively before the production of the champagne, but in vain. The remainder of the refreshments were consumed in silence, George and Joe, in the meantime, making heavy draughts upon the bottles of champagne. As it rapidly disappeared before their frequent potations, they began to grow extremely talkative and merry, and it was plain to be seen that the liquor they had imbibed was fast getting the better of their understandings.

Austin now perceived that unless they set out at once upon their return, they would soon be unable to do so. He proposed, therefore, that they should now break up and proceed homeward. To his astonishment, they at once acceded to his proposal. It was with the utmost difficulty that George and Joe, who were now fairly drunk, could convey themselves to the boat; and as soon as they arrived there, they stretched themselves in the bottom and were soon fast asleep. The wind being fair, Austin spread the sail, and they were speeding rapidly homeward. They had proceeded about a mile and a half up the lake, and had a fair prospect of a speedy termination of their unpleasant excursion, when Julia Crawford, while attempting to pass from where she sat to the opposite side of the boat, and whose head was somewhat dizzy from the effect of the wine she had drunk, tripped her foot against a board that projected from the bottom of the boat, and was precipitated headlong into the water. Austin hesitated not a moment, but plunged immediately in after her. Here was a dilemma. The boat sped rapidly on its way, for the girls knowing nothing of its management, could not stop its progress. They besought the two inanimate beings before them to render their assistance, but wine had rendered them powerless, and deaf to entreaty. Austin, seeing that all hope of assistance from that quarter was cut off, struck out for the shore, which was some fifty or sixty rods distant, supporting, as well as he could, the now inanimate form of Julia Crawford. He was but an indifferent swimmer, and he knew the chances were many against him, yet he did not despair. He struggled on with almost superhuman strength, at times entirely submerged in the water, and he found if he did ultimately reach the shore, the life of his charge would have become extinct. The shore was at length reached, but it was with the utmost difficulty that he could ascend the bank, owing to his exhausted state.—He now applied such remedies as his exhausted state would permit, to restore to life the inanimate form before him.—But his efforts were all in vain, and his fears too well founded—life was indeed extinct—the spirit had taken its everlasting flight. Yet, as though unwilling to believe what was so evident, he continued to apply remedies as they suggested themselves to his mind in the vain hope of restoring to life the frail form that lay in death before him.

Meanwhile the girls had not been idle. Seeing they could render no assistance to Austin, and that all their shrieks failed to arouse the two worthies in the bottom of the boat, they directed their course as well as they could toward the place from whence they started, knowing it would be useless to land anywhere else, as no assistance could be procured short of the village, at which place they eventually arrived. The alarm was immediately given, and a party of villagers started for the place indicated as the scene of the catastrophe. Among the number was the widow Crawford. It took the party but a short time to arrive at the place indicated, where they found Austin lying on the ground by the side of the dead body, almost senseless. When Mrs. Crawford saw the lifeless form of her daughter, she broke out in transports of grief, and it was some time before she could be calmed by the kind-hearted villagers, who then examined the body and ascertained beyond a doubt that life was indeed extinct.—They then proceeded to construct a rude bier from branches which they cut from the trees, upon which they placed the