

delicate features, and the downcast blue eyes, and the bent, smooth brown head, with its poor but perfectly lady-like covering, something of the real state of the case flashed through the mind of the clergyman's wife.

"Come down from town by the first train to see Cis Travers married!" was her mental reflection. "Well, men *are* wretches, but I did think Cis Travers was too soft for that kind of thing—he is not half good enough for Juliet in any way, and now it appears he has not even been devoted to her! It all comes of his father's letting him be knocking about London so long by himself; it's a shocking bad thing for boys"—with a rapid thought of her own stalwart sons. "I shall be careful not to let Tom and Charlie be turned out in London with nothing to do. Poor girl!" added the Vicar's wife to herself pityingly, as she trudged rapidly down the churchyard path to the vicarage gate; "she looked modest and gentle enough; I dare say he has made her very unhappy—the wretch! Well, I don't think I shall say anything about it to the Vicar; he would be wanting to come out and reclaim her before breakfast, and that would make us all late; and besides, he would be sure to call her "brazen woman" or "daughter of sin," or some horribly coarse name to her face, and that would do more harm than good: good men are so hard on women! and they never have any discrimination to distinguish between the vicious and the unfortunate—no, I will say nothing about it; besides, I really know no thing, it is only my own suspicions." So saying, good little Mrs. Dawson, who, like many—alas, not most!—Christian women, had all a woman's tenderness towards a sorrowing fellow-woman, from whatever source her sorrows might come, shook off her wet cloak and stamped her muddy little toes in the vicarage porch, and went in to pour out her husband's tea, with never a word to that excellent but somewhat severe divine about the little strange girl who sat shivering in the church hard by, and who seemed to Mrs. Dawson's eyes to be the living impersonation of Cis Travers's London wickednesses—wickednesses of which you and I, my reader, know him to be guiltless.

I am not going to describe Juliet Blair's wedding. Weddings are but dismal things at best, and if anyone has a partiality for

reading detailed accounts of them, of the demeanour and aspect of the "blushing bride," of the elaborate costumes of herself and her bridesmaids, and her friends' presents on the interesting occasion, they have but to study the last *Court Journal*, where such scenes are weekly set forth in far better language and with far more knowledge of the subject than I should be at all likely to display.

Juliet Blair's wedding was exactly alike anyone else's. There was the same fluttering in of well-dressed wedding guests, bustling backwards and forwards in and out of the pews to exchange whispered greetings with each other. The same gathering of prettily-dressed and moderately good-looking bridesmaids at the bottom of the church. The same awkward interval of suspense whilst the bride was anxiously awaited, during which Cis stood first on one leg, then on the other, and gnawed nervously at the ends of his straw-coloured kid gloves in the same helpless-looking way that every bridegroom invariably does, suggesting irresistibly the idea that, but for the best man—in this case a very young Oxford friend—he must inevitably turn and flee. The best man, with a big button-hole flower, looks jaunty and self-important, as if the success of the whole ceremony depended mainly upon his exertions, although a passing thought of the speech which he will have to make by-and-by sends an occasional cold shudder down his back. Then the bride comes in on Sir George Ellison's arm, for, as she has no near relative, he, as an old friend of her father's, is to give her away. And there is the same scuffle of everybody getting into their places that always happens, and the ceremony proceeds with the same sniffles and snuffles from that female portion of the spectators who are invariably affected to tears without any known cause on such occasions.

There was nothing at all peculiar or striking in Juliet Blair's wedding; but to Gretchen Rudenbach, craning forward and straining her eyes and ears to catch every sight and every sound, it was a wedding different from every other wedding.

Presently the organ burst joyfully into the Wedding March, and the bride and bridegroom came down the aisle together, the school children flung flowers down before them as they came, and Gretchen pressed