

if I look grave; he says it is not natural at my age. And you, Philip, are only three years older, not quite."

"Alice, it is not my nature to be gay like you. Mine has not been a home of love and peace like yours."

"Dear Philip, is not this partly your own fault. Are you not often hasty and rash in your temper to your parents. Remember, God has commanded us to love, honor and obey our parents."

"True, Alice; but have I ever been treated with love and kindness by them—that is by her, by my mother? My father used to spoil me and let me have my own way, but ever since we came here, even he has changed, and now, since he has indulged in intoxicating draughts, he has become harsh and tyrannical to a degree that I know not how to bear. Oh! Alice, I am greatly to be pitied."

"This is sad, very sad, Philip, but still——"

"Alice these things are hard to bear. I know you will say it is my duty to be patient under reproach, to love my father and mother. How can I? I reason with myself in vain,—I strive to love my mother,—but, Alice, I cannot. There is something in her very look that seems to repel all sympathy, to wither every feeling of tenderness within me. Is it not dreadful?" And he took the young girl's hands between his own. "Am I not a wretch, a hateful unnatural wretch?"

But Alice's soft, glistening eyes were overflowing with sympathy for the sufferings of one whom she loved with more than a sister's affection. "Hateful, Philip Harding, hateful. No, that he was not, in her eyes."

There was something sweet and soothing in the artless words with which the gentle Alice strove to calm the agitation of Philip's mind. Her firm, yet gentle remonstrance against the indulgence of resentful feelings towards his parents, made him listen to her with deeper respect than if she had flattered his faults and encouraged him in what she tried to convince him was an error in the sight of God.

Philip thought it strange that this young girl who was so soft and mild, could look so grave and even reprovingly, when her nice sense of right and wrong was violated. She had been carefully brought up by a kind and pious father, and had early been taught to hold in deep reverence these words, "Honor thy father and thy mother." With her there was no compromise of conscience, no mental reservation, which premised. If your parents be good and kind and well to do in the world, honor and love them; if not, honor them only as it pleases you or as the world thinks they deserve it at your hands.

Philip humbled his haughty spirit to listen to the great truths taught by the lips of the young and simple-minded maiden, whom he loved and admired for her moral courage.

Till this evening, Philip had never thought

of Alice as anything dearer to him than a friend and a pleasant companion, and now for the first time he beheld her with feelings of deep interest, and felt the soothing influence of woman's gentler nature, as balm upon his wounded spirit, and he could not help thinking how much happier and better he would have been if he had had a kind and loving sister like Alice. Sarah was passionate, jealous and capricious, sometimes making him turn with impatience from her caresses and with distaste from her vehement expressions of love, which now became more than ever intolerable, he scarce knew why, but Alice was so different, she was never intrusive, but mild and modest and feminine in all she said or did.

Reader, did you ever love? If you have, you will easily understand Philip's feeling; if not, wait till you have communed with your own feelings, and then, the working of his heart will need no interpreter.

As they stood together before the open window, his eye rested with admiring fondness upon his companion's fair face; her's were raised towards the serene sky where the young moon shone in great beauty, shedding her mild light upon the young girl's features and gilding the flowing curls of pale brown that shaded her brow and bosom. Why did Philip sigh, and why did tears unbidden fill the blue eyes of Alice, as she felt the silent pressure of the arm that had stolen round her waist? At that moment a deep sob startled the lovers, it sounded close beside the window, and then there was a dull sound, like the fall of some heavy body.

"My father!" burst from the lips of Alice, for he was her first thought, and starting from Philip's encircling arm, she hurried to the door. Extended in a deep swoon, on the threshold, lay a female figure.

"Philip, Philip! dear Philip!" cried Alice, in accents of wonder and alarm, "come hither!" Philip hastened at her summons, and with feelings of infinite annoyance, as well as surprise, recognized by the dim light, the face of Sarah. "What in the world could have brought her here!" he exclaimed, with much irritation of manner, as he raised her prostrate form in his arms, and placed her on a seat that stood within the porch, while Alice knelt at her feet, chafing the ice-cold hand in her's, and striving with gentlest care to restore animation to the senseless form. At length, large tears forced themselves from beneath the closed damp eye-lids, and fell in heavy drops on the hands of Philip. In a few minutes she raised herself impatiently from his supporting arm, and with a convulsive shudder, pushed back the kneeling Alice, and rose to her feet.

"Sarah, what brings you hither at this hour?" said Philip, sternly. There was something harsh and discordant in the tones of his voice as he addressed her.—(To be continued.)