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THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

THE Ideal—what a glow of poetic feeling rises within the heart, what forms of beauty glide before the imagination, what sounds of harmony sweep over the soul, even while dwelling on the word! All that is lovely in nature, glorious in art, and holy and heavenly in action seem to meet here, and the contemplation fills us with joy because of the wondrous gift by which earth-born man can break the bonds that fetter him to sense, and thus soar into the higher regions of perennial beauty. Happy they whom no rude hand withdraws from these lovely heights—who can dream out their dream without being awakened by the grasp of stern reality. But where are these happy ones; Echo answers—where? The conflict with the real is allotted to us all.

There were few deeper dreamers of this kind than Harry Wyndham. Born the heir to a large fortune, endowed with fine talents, and to a small share of personal beauty, he had from early boyhood indulged in visions of romantic happiness, such as it seldom is the lot of mortals to realize, and this bias of his mind had been fostered by a mother as romantic as himself. His father, Col. Wyndham, a rich, hearty, hospitable man, and a gentleman in every sense of the word, was *au contraire* as a matter of fact as possible. Possessing a splendid estate upon the Potomac where he always resided, he prided himself in having all about him in the most perfect keeping. His house was princely both within and without, his horses were the finest in the Old Dominion, his equipages the best appointed, and his table served in the highest style. All his plantations presented a most cheering contrast to those of his less wealthy neighbours, in their perfect neatness and their high state of agricultural improvement. No torn fences, or

out-houses that were ready to fall to pieces with old age; no old smoke-dried dwellings that looked as if they had never known a repair since the age of Elizabeth; no half-clad negroes basking in the sun or loitering over their daily tasks. All was fresh, whole, busy and active, and showed that the master's purse was full, and the master's eye everywhere.

Harry being the sole survivor of a family of four children, the rest of whom had died in infancy, was the object round which the affections of both parents were entwined, with a devotedness that, had he been other than he was, might have ensured his ruin. The one great aim of their existence, to which all others were made subservient, was the promotion of his happiness. In the improvements Colonel Wyndham was constantly projecting in the different portions of his estate, Harry was the one to be ultimately benefited. Did he expend large sums in the adornment of his house and grounds, it was as Harry's future residence that this was chiefly desirable. He imported splendid books for Harry's use, fine wines to ripen for his table, and noble animals to occupy his stalls. In short, while these luxuries ministered very materially to the good Colonel's own gratification, it was his pride and pleasure to view them all as held in trust for his beloved son, his second self, and the heir of his name and wealth. As may be supposed, the mother was not less anxious for the happiness of this sole remnant of her little family, but having a different temperament from her husband, she laboured to secure it in a different manner. For the pomps and vanities of life she cared but little, was highly intellectual in her tastes, and romantic in her affections.—The sorrows she had experienced in the loss of her children, seemed to have awakened in her soul a more tender sympathy for the woes of others, and to know of suffering was with her