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EDWARD LYNN.

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CHAPTER V.—Continued.

With a firm resolve so to walk through life, as to show the great Author living and moving within, with lively sentiments of faith, and hope, and charity, for God and all His creatures, with his soul exulting in his new-found treasure, he almost wished for death to summon him to the world of bliss, before his soul should be sullied with the dust of sin, or his white robes come in contact with the pollutions of the world. Oh, spirit—pure dwelling place of the Eternal Word, thy labor is but begun. In the great work thou hast been placed here to perform shouldst thou be proved; and at last when thou hearest the welcome 'Come, ye blessed,' mayest thou be found as pure as now, though thou be tried in the furnace of affliction, and wearing the 'wedding garment' ready to enter into the joy of thy Lord.

CHAPTER VI.—CHANGES.

Captain Lynn returned to his regiment, but with scarce a hope that he would be able to go with them, as it was rumored through the camp that a march was contemplated immediately.—He was warmly welcomed, not only for himself, but on account of the numerous letters and packages which he had generously offered to carry to the boys, many of whom had never been home on furlough. It was his intention to tender his resignation, that his brave comrade, who had been left in command, might have the rank and pay he so nobly deserved, and then to offer himself as surgeon—to be placed wherever he should be most needed. But, after a few days' stay in the camp, he was convinced that if he attempted to serve in any capacity, he would do so at the risk of health, perhaps life, and he handed in his resignation. It was after much deliberation accepted, and he was soon on his way home.

Not far from the shore of one of our Northern lakes—though far enough to be entirely removed from the business-hum attending navigation, which gives such an air of importance to towns along the shore, or upon the banks of a navigable stream—is the quiet little village of —, where the spirit of repose seems to pervade the very air, and the grass grows unmolested in the streets. Although little noise—except the shrill whistle of the steam-mill, and occasionally a passing vehicle, is heard—the inhabitants are not exempt from the many ills that 'flesh is heir to,' and frequent the apothecary shop, nearly as often as the new dry goods and grocery store kept at 'The Corners'—by which singular appellation the village has been known, ever since the first cabin was erected just where the roads intersected, when those roads, now smooth and level as far as the eye can reach, were little more than by-paths. Old Dr. Middleton lived here for many years, and had a lucrative though very hard practice, embracing a tract of country more than twenty miles in extent. Harry Middleton was one of Edward Lynn's college mates; and when the old gentleman, borne down by years of toil, was about to retire to the quietude of private life, he wrote to his friend, urging him to locate in their pleasant village. Young Lynn visited the place, liked it, and all the preliminaries being speedily arranged, the good people at 'The Corners' were shortly astounded at seeing 'E. A. Lynn, Physician and Surgeon,' in the place formerly occupied by 'Dr. P. L. Middleton,' which had hung for so many years over his office door. The young doctor was sure of the patronage of all the friends of his predecessor, and had but little to fear from his enemies, as he had no rival in the place—though he was just as certain that whatever ill-feeling had been cherished toward old Dr. Middleton would now descend to his successor.

The handsome new comer was, of course an object of special interest, and the subject of many an inquisitive bit of gossip; for the inhabitants were no exception to village people in general. It was immediately ascertained, by a secret-investigating committee, that he was unmarried, and might be considered, in slang parlance, a 'good catch.'

Henceforth with the doctor, instead of the Captain, we have to do; and he confessed to his sister, in his first letter, that the retirement of this quiet village, and his present profession, suited him far better than the 'pomp and pageantry of war,' and the scenes of bloodshed which he had so often witnessed. With the prospect of an extensive practice, and a pleasant circle of acquaintances, he was in a fair way to like the place and people. But there was one drawback, there was no Catholic church nearer than eight or ten miles. There were three or four families professing the true faith living in the place, but little was known of their faith by their works. They seldom attended the most holy sacrifice of the Mass, seldom listened to the counsels of the priest, and probably not for years had any of them attended to these duties, 'with-out which they could not truly be called Catholics.' Dr. Lynn looked in pity upon them, and

thanked the Lord that he had been placed where he could labor in His vineyard.

Ten o'clock! Night had drawn her spangled curtain, and silence brooded over the sleeping village. Few lights yet gleamed through cottage windows, and in the office of Dr. Lynn a glowing wood-fire was burning brightly, shedding its genial warmth around the small room, and upon the animated countenance of the young man who entered; tossing his hat on a chair, and his boots into a corner, he sat down with his pen in his hand:

'Dear Sister Carrie,' he wrote hurriedly, and some times with evident emotion, 'no doubt the time seems long since my last letter was laid away in that pretty box, among all those precious bundles of big sheets and little ones, plain envelopes of yellow, and dainty ones of snowy white. Well, I've had hard riding to do, and more of it than I really like; especially if I am to go over a strange road, after midnight, and in a drenching rain, which is not infrequently the case. I am, at last, very pleasantly situated in the family of Mr. Emmet—the only lawyer in the village—an educated and agreeable man, with a very amiable wife, if I may judge upon so short an acquaintance.

'Well, dear Carrie, I have news for you—Last night, after I had thrown off my overcoat, after a chilly ride of six miles in the rain, and was just seating myself before a cheerful fire—wood fires we have here—there was a ring at Mr. Emmet's door, and I was hastily summoned to the 'tavern' to attend a man who had been taken suddenly ill while travelling. And now, Carrie, let me tell you, what I at first neglected, that my health has so visibly improved, that this exposure affects me but little; scarcely gives me a bad cold now, since I have become 'climated' in this chilly region. Indeed, I think it far more healthy than our own more changeable clime, where I have seen the four seasons in as many days, (with a very slight exaggeration.) But to return—I went, and found the gentleman very much prostrated. He had, I discovered, had heart disease for many years, and returning from a religious meeting still further North, had suddenly grown worse. He was nearly insensible when I found him, but in a short time was able to converse a little, though I desired him to keep perfectly still; and to prevent excitement, did not allow him a chance of recognizing his doctor. For, Carrie, he was the Rev. Ebenezer Craft, whom I had been called upon to attend. I made arrangements this morning, to have him removed from the tavern, as he was rather uncomfortably situated, and would be subjected to much annoyance in so public a place; and I know this man well enough to know that it would very materially retard his recovery. Every arrangement had been made, and I went to him; and now, in the morning light he recognized me. He was mortified exceedingly, but I was careful that he should not become excited, and treated him as though no disagreeable circumstance had ever broken our friendship. He was too weak, and too glad of a change, to oppose my plan; and he now lies in a pleasant room at Mr. Emmet's.—He thinks he will die, and seems to feel much anxiety of mind; more than one would suppose, knowing his profession. At his request a Bible was brought, and I read to him, the few moments I could spare. The state of his soul must be strangely at variance with his precepts—and, I may add, example. 'O, no,' said he, 'don't tell Anna, she has more now than she can bear, poor child! She is the picture of death; Ed—Mr.—I mean Dr. Lynn—but whatever he intended to say remained unfinished. I do not suppose he intended to say so much of Anna to me. He is at times almost delirious. I hope for the best, and pray too. Well, sister dear, I must say good night, and seek some rest, for I sadly need it. Love to the dear ones at home, and Dr. W.'s family. Tell Kate I will write to her soon.'

Wearily he donned his outer garments; extinguished his lamp, and left the office. After looking in upon his patient at Mr. Emmet's, and seeing that there were able and willing watchers beside his bed, the Dr. sought his room. After kneeling in humble supplication at the throne of grace, also repeating a portion of the Rosary, a form of prayer he particularly liked, he laid his head upon the pillow, but not to sleep. The events of the previous night and day had revived old associations, and waked emotions in his heart that he had hoped to forget. Anna Craft's sweet face came up before him and banished slumber. Her father had said, she had more than she can bear; said it, no doubt, unintentionally, for his mind was weak as a child's.—What could he have alluded to, unless to grief at the estrangement existing between herself and one yet dear to her? It was sweet to think she still loved him; and he fancied it must be so, and felt a secret satisfaction in musing upon it; although it brought as much pain as pleasure.—While he imagined her mingling with the gay pleasure-seekers at party and ball, in the crowded

city—or away in shady nooks of watering places, where her charms were shown to the best advantage, smiling on all, caressed and flattered, and having no time to notice, if she felt, the rankling pain at her heart—he could be proud and careless too, at least to all but himself. But now, in fancy, he saw her long lashes wet with tears, and instead of a smile wreathing the full red lips, a look of sorrow—and in his heart he felt an 'aching void' that earthly love, he believed, would never fill. The sick man, too, moved no easily upon his pillow, and as his door was ajar he heard now and then a moan, which did not seem to him occasioned by bodily pain—arising, rather, from a disordered mind. The neighbor who had offered to watch beside him—though the doctor thought it was hardly necessary, as his room adjoined the sick man's—had thrown himself upon a sofa, and by his regular breathing he knew he was asleep. Once the minister spoke, and Dr. Lynn listened, thinking he might be needed.—'Anna, my precious child, you will soon be left alone—oh, why was I so inexorable? Why did I so wrong him?' groaned the unhappy father.—'Twere better he should guard you, after all; yet I cannot tell him—I ought to—God help me, I am on my death-bed. O! my daughter!—he paused, and then, as if talking to himself resumed: 'You shall be happy yet. One who could act the good Samaritan thus, is surely worthy your hand.' He talked on, apparently regardless or unconscious that other ears might hear his singular, and often half incoherent ravings. 'Yis, he has been kind—but I see—yes, yes, he expects to be liberally rewarded. Fool that I was my heart is soft as a woman's, to be overcome by fancied kindness. He knows he will be well paid—I see.' The doctor could not repress a smile, as he remembered the old saying—'listeners hear no good of themselves,' and his thoughts having been somewhat drawn away from himself, he fell into a tranquil slumber.

The next day the invalid asked Mr. Emmet if there was another physician in town. He was told none but Dr. Middleton, who had retired from practice.—'Why, do you not approve of your treatment?' 'No—yes—that is, I knew Dr. Lynn before; I do not like the man.' 'I am surprised at that,' said his host, 'he is a great favorite here. And I have, I think, heard him speak highly of you.' 'That is strange,' said the sick man. 'I did not expect it. Still I would prefer another, if there was one near. Then, as if recollecting the singular impression he must be making, he added: 'I hope, my friend, you will not judge the minister of God by the expressions of a frail and sick old man.'

Mr. Emmet assured him that every allowance was made; that in a state of such feebleness it would be very unnatural for one to weigh every word, or even to keep the thoughts within proper bounds. 'You will do me a great favor,' said Mr. Craft, after a long pause, 'by writing to my brother, William Craft, at L—, K., telling him to come to me immediately.'

The lawyer sat down and penned a note as he was directed, adding a request that the gentleman would come immediately to his house. As there was no telegraph office in the village, and they would have been obliged to go to the next town, and as there seemed no occasion for alarm, as this was the third day he had been ill, Mr. Emmet agreed with him, that it would be as well to write. Why it was not done before, he could not tell, but laid it to Mr. Craft's caprice, which seemed indeed the only cause.

All was confusion in the minister's household, when the letter arrived; and Anna insisted on going with her uncle. In vain he remonstrated; she was firm. In vain aunt Betty urged her darling to stay, fearing something would happen to her; telling her she was not able to undertake such a journey, which, to her mind, was equal to crossing the ocean, and almost as perilous, considering the great Ohio must be crossed in the route; at last begging to be taken to care for her young mistress. Without giving, as the old woman thought, very satisfactory reasons for leaving her at home, though she surmised the true one, (that once across the waters that rolled between the two States she was no longer in bondage) Anna and her uncle set out with very little preparation. Mr. William Craft having great confidence in his niece's presence of mind, in any emergency. The daughter's thoughts were with her father, imagining him to be upon a bed of death, perhaps already borne to 'that undiscovered country' whence no traveller returns; she was silent and sorrowful, and the journey seemed long and tedious, although really very quickly performed.

The residence of Mr. Emmet was upon the principal street of the village, and on entering the place they were immediately driven to it, where that gentleman was waiting upon the steps for the arrival of the stage which had conveyed them

over the last five miles. It was dusk, and they were ushered into a dimly-lighted parlor, where Miss Craft sank weary and exhausted upon a sofa, while her uncle was shown up to his brother's room. Mrs. Emmet helped Anna off with her wrappers, assuring her that her father was doing as well as he could be expected, though still in a critical position. 'He has all the attention we are able to bestow,' said she, 'and the doctor attends him unceasingly. But I beg that you will not go up till you have a cup of tea—it will be brought immediately. You look exhausted,' Anna said she would rest a moment before going up, as she feared her strength was not sufficient for the trial she expected, and Mrs. Emmet went out for the needful refreshment.

In Ebenezer Craft's elegant mansion, a glass of wine would have been presented—for upon his side-board were decanters of almost every variety of pattern, and filled with as many different kinds of liquor, and in his cellar were barrels of the same deadly poison; without which he would not have thought his table sufficiently furnished.—In Mr. Emmet's cellar was stored a barrel of cider—which was the strongest beverage in the house—and even this was not upon every occasion called into requisition. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' was the motto of this and nearly every family at The Corners.

His brother found Mr. Craft much better than he expected; able to converse, though he considered him somewhat delirious, as he by turns expressed much gratification at the arrival of his daughter, and then wished she had not come.

'It will make me worse, I know,' said he; 'besides it will alarm her to see me so ill. I am astonished at your total lack of judgment, William, in bringing her. I thought you would act differently; and, again, impatiently desiring to see her. Dr. Lynn was aware that his patient had sent for his brother, but knew not of the recent arrival, and, as he hung his hat in the hall, stopped and knocked lightly at the half-open parlor door, and entered (with the privilege of a friend), before ascending to Mr. Craft's room. Anxiety for her father, and want of rest, made Anna almost ill; and now she sat with her head resting upon her hand, just where the brilliant lamp-light made her look, if possible, more ghastly.

'Dr. Lynn, let me present'—began Mrs. Emmet, but she suddenly stopped, for the doctor stood as if transformed into stone, and, as a low cry rung through the room, Anna fell fainting upon the sofa from which she had half arisen.—His presence of mind quickly returned, and requesting Mrs. Emmet to call no one, and to see that her father did not hear of this, he tenderly bent over the prostrate form, and bathed the white face until she opened her eyes.

'I see through it,' he said; 'nervous anxiety, and probably want of rest, if not previous illness, has been too much for her, Mrs. Emmet.'

The lady thought so, too; but the glance of recognition, which spoke volumes to the hearts of the lovers, convinced her quick eye that there was still another reason. She left the room—as the young lady was fast recovering—but not before the news of Miss Craft's sudden illness had been heralded through the house.

'Oh! Anna,' exclaimed the doctor, 'is it thus I meet you? and he clasped his arms around her, and her head rested upon his breast. 'I know I have no right to call you my Anna now, but I am not mistaken in supposing I am as dear to you as ever.'

'Edward,' said she, trying to be calm, 'you can never be less to me; oh, if you knew what I suffer.' He could not refrain from clasping her close to his heart, though his conscience smote him for the cowardly action.

'Oh, do not leave me, now that I know that you love me still,' she whispered. A feeling of new found happiness crept into two long sundered hearts, which now beat together, and each felt that it would not, could not, again sever the bonds which united them.

'But this must not be,' said Edward. 'It is hard to part, oh, my Anna—we must meet again.'

A far different scene was enacting in the room of the invalid.

'There! I said that tasty old gentleman, 'just as I expected. I suppose you did not know that my doctor is that Popish scamp, Edward Lynn. I dreaded this meeting—but the deed is done now. No doubt they're now planning an elopement. Just as I expected. She's a stubborn creature, and he—who knows what a black heart he may have before this time. Where is she? send her to me.'

'It strikes me,' said his brother—a plain spoken man, and very unlike the reverend gentleman—who strikes me she is in better hands.—Yon separated them without any good reason, Eben—that you must know—and it was too sudden; and now that they have been thrown together, you can make amends, if you will.' The

minister tried to reply. 'No—let me talk now,' said his brother—'you are already too much excited. Who would wonder if they would like each other again—though, for that matter, they have very likely always been the same—she has, I know; and if you want to kill her, just keep them apart a few months longer. But you went here to see it; he really believed this to be true. 'You're no doubt on your death-bed, Ebenezer, and I would not like to die with such a weight upon my soul.' The minister did not like to, either, and so he lay and listened to all his brother had to say, which, at any other time he would have considered very insulting language. William went on: 'He did not try to entice Anna from you—perhaps he could, perhaps he couldn't. There is no telling what a girl will do—and my dear Eben, you eloped with your own lamented wife, you should remember. However, I've no fears that they're planning an elopement. Edward Lynn wouldn't ask the girl he loves to elope, if they were both to die first.' He spoke with warmth, for he had always loved his niece more than any other of his relatives, and he had been much pleased with young Lynn, and equally displeased when his brother so ruthlessly separated them. He had always believed that Edward knew Anna better than to think it was her own will which placed a barrier between them; and he had secretly wished for just such a meeting as had taken place in the parlor below. William Craft was a bachelor, but he had a warm heart, and few knew the deep hidden romance of his life. He had been separated from an early love by a few hasty and bitter words, and death had claimed the being he almost idolized ere he had discovered his mistake and sought a reconciliation. No wonder, then, that his heart bled for his unhappy niece. The doctor entered, and before he could speak, Mr. Craft said: 'If my daughter has entirely recovered, be so kind as to bring her up, Edward.' He went down, but not a little astonished at the request, as well as the manner and tone of the speaker.—It was the tone in which Mr. Craft had been in the habit of addressing him, or very nearly approaching that tone of voice, once so familiar to him. Trembling from head to foot, with many mingled emotions, Anna entered the room, leaning on the arm of Dr. Lynn, who had prevailed upon her to remain in the parlor until he should see the situation of her father whom he well knew had been informed of their meeting, and fearing for him in the excitement occasioned by the knowledge. He could not refrain from pressing to his lips the little hand that trembled upon his arm; but she said: 'Anna, I did not think I could take such ungenerous advantages; but within the last half hour I have seen my heart as it is—weak, selfish, and I fear incapable of the sacrifices it has yet to make.'

He sent up a silent prayer to God to aid him in this new trial; and they approached the bed of Mr. Craft, who clasped his daughter in his arms and wept. It was but natural that he should shed tears, thought Mr. Emmet and his wife, as he was very weak, and met his child under exciting circumstances. How very exciting none but the actors in the drama themselves knew.

'Edward,' he said, and the doctor, who was gazing abstractedly into the fire, approached him; 'Edward, take her; I see that is useless to attempt any longer separating you—your hearts have not changed, as I hoped; though there is still a barrier, if she can overleap it, I will no longer make it an obstacle to your happiness.'

The doctor thanked him—wished he could do so with more feeling, for her sake—then clasped the hand which her father had placed in his own, with a convulsive clasp, and giving Anna one long and steady look he left the room. He knew he could not make himself understood, in the delicate position in which he had been so suddenly placed. Regardless of the impression he might make on the minds of those whom he had left, he seized his hat in the hall, and strode off towards his office. He cared not for the opinion of any but Anna, and her he intended to see as soon as he had composed his mind, so as to look clearly in the face of his duty, and could plainly tell her all that was in his heart. He sat down, leaned his head on the table, and then tried to discover the path of duty from the perplexing labyrinths that bewildered his brain. And then he prayed: long and fervently did he beg of God to enlighten his understanding, and enable him to do his duty, without in the least consulting his own feelings. He arose from his knees with peace in his soul. The moon had risen, and looked calmly through the window; the low wailing of the autumn wind was heard among the almost leafless branches, but it spoke peace to his spirit. All nature seemed at peace in the beauty of the autumn night. He walked home, thinking whether or not he would speak to Anna that night. He entered, the parlor was deserted, and he went up to his patient's room. Mr. Craft was sleeping quietly, probably finding 'an open