

the sight of her we hid ourselves or fled, so great was the awe with which the rumour of her unearthly powers inspired us. On each Friday in particular, it was said that she performed strange rites, reversing every article of furniture in her house, and uttering incantations which none could hear without terror. From all parts of the country the credulous came to consult her as to the past or future; parted lovers to learn the fate of the absent, or if yet their affection remained untold, to inquire if from the chosen one, it was destined to meet the response their hearts desired. Merchants engaging in important speculations sought the oracle, to inquire what would be the results of their enterprise; and parents or friends, anxious for the health and safety of some distant and beloved object, came also, relying upon her predictions to remove their fears, or give glad assurance to their hopes. Was there a murder committed, Moll was sure to be consulted by those interested to detect the criminal; or was some peaceful neighbourhood thrown into alarm by a daring robbery, her marvellous knowledge was taxed to describe the persons of the marauders, and the secret places of deposit for their stolen goods; and whether by chance or not, true it is, the information she gave, so often proved correct, that multitudes, even of cultivated and intelligent people, who had long ridiculed and despised her pretensions, grew at last to render implicit belief to her miraculous endowments.

"Possibly, aunt Mary," said Bella Langdon, who had listened with intense interest to these simple reminiscences of her aunt's early days. "Possibly this ancient witch had forestalled her age in discovering the mysterious agency of animal magnetism. For if, as its disciples assert, it reveals to one mind the secret thoughts and purposes of another, enabling it, without aid from the senses, to behold the persons and actions of those whom vast distances separate, then can the prescience she displayed be easily accounted for, without calling in the aid of Satan and his imps."

"True—unless we may suppose her to have exercised a degree of refined subtility which few, even of her strange profession, have ever been known to acquire. I am convinced, however, that her predictions often wrought out their own fulfilment, by the effect they produced upon sensitive and timid minds. The ease to which I have alluded strikingly confirms the truth of this, and I can never recur to it, without feeling impelled to warn any who may seem inclined to yield deference or trust to these mischievous oracles, by the fate of her, who truly fell a victim to her own weak credulity.

"At the time to which I allude there was in the same school with myself, a young lady four

years my senior, of great beauty, and whose sweet and gentle manners won the love of her companions, and rendered her the favourite of her teachers. She was an orphan, and the heiress to large estates in the West Indies, of which she was to come into possession when she attained the age of eighteen. Her guardian, a rich planter of Virginia, had formed an acquaintance with our preceptress the preceding season, at Nahant, where she was passing the holidays with part of her pupils, and favourably impressed with her lady-like manners and appearance, he resolved to place his ward under her charge, to complete her education. It had long been his wish that both Ida and her wealth should become the portion of his only son, a somewhat wild youth, who was then a member of the senior class in Harvard University; and he was, therefore, the more inclined to prefer for her the quiet and retired village where Mrs. D.'s school was located, rather than the fashionable seminaries of the metropolis, where her personal attractions would scarcely suffer her to pass unnoticed. But,

"There is a Power that shapes our destiny,  
Rough-hew it as we will."

And so in this instance did it prove. Ida Cathcart had grown up with the impression that she was to be the wife of Frank Randolph; and so frank, noble, and generous was his nature, so tender and kind his manner towards herself, that, from early childhood, she had voluntarily rendered him a warm and true affection, nor shrank from the thought that he was hereafter to be her companion through life, till from a new teacher, she first learned that a far more absorbing and impassioned sentiment could be awakened in her heart.

"In the youth's department of the academy, was a young Frenchman, the son of a Bordeaux merchant, who, through the agency of an American correspondent, had been placed at this village seminary, to acquire a thorough knowledge of the English language. He was handsome and graceful, and the beauty of Ida, which none could pass unnoticed, did not fail shortly to awaken his ardent admiration. But as the male and female pupils of the institution met in different apartments under their separate instructors, during the hours of study, and were forbidden all intercourse, even when free from the restraints of the school room, it was long before the young lover found an opportunity to address a word to the object of his incipient passion—though by the choice flowers, or the exquisite shells which, through the secret agency of some unknown hand, several times found their way to Ida's school-desk, he mutely told the passion which was daily gaining strength in his breast. The flowers which