

She was ten years younger than I, and was therefore a little girl when I was grown to man's estate, and my heart was fixed before Ellen came on the stage. But everybody loved Ellen Gray, and I loved her with no rest; and why should I not? There was no more harm in loving her than in loving a fairy or a picture of an angel. The heart would go out after one who loved every one; and hence the universal admiration which this sweet girl received as she passed on from childhood among the years that are known as the teens. Her father was dead, and her mother was poor, and Ellen was an only child; and if a slight feeling of pity was mingled with the feelings which moved the heart when Ellen Gray was near you, it served only to deepen the attachment with which this child was regarded. But before the death of her father, Ellen had enjoyed as good opportunities for instruction as that region of country afforded, and she had improved them all. Quick, ready, and ardent in pursuit of anything on which her mind was set, she had made rapid and solid advancement in learning, so that there was no young lady of her age who was equal to her.

Ellen's mother had struggled hard, after she was left a widow, to provide the means of support for herself and her daughter. How tenderly that mother and that child loved! It was a sight to bless the eye to look in upon their cottage; you could not say which was the more dependent; the mother lived for the daughter, and the daughter was happy only as she was the solace and support of her on whose breast in infancy she leaned. And the sweet smile of the daughter lighted that cottage as a star that never set. The mother rejoiced in it, and felt gratitude she could not speak in the possession of a treasure that no wealth, in her poverty, could buy.

But the mother's health was feeble, and her labours wore of course hardly sufficient to maintain herself, and Ellen's industry must add to the common store. This was cheerfully rendered; and for many years past, even when Ellen was not a mere child, she had delighted to spend her mornings and evenings in helping her mother, performing those light domestic duties which a child may easily discharge, if so disposed, and which lighten the load of a mother's cares, and leave her more leisure and strength for the more profitable employments on which she depended for daily bread. Now, let not any refined and sensitive reader in the city suppose that Ellen and her mother were the less respectable, or the less respected by the best society in the town of Lillinton, because they worked for a living. The fact is, they would not have been esteemed had they been willing to be dependent so long as they could take care of themselves. There was not a lady in Lillinton more beloved than Mrs. Gray. She was at the head of many of the movements in the parish for the promotion of this and that object of Christian benevolence; she was often looked up to for advice, and her example was as powerful as that of any other lady, except the minister's wife. In the best circles, that is, among the wealthiest and most intelligent people of the town, Ellen Gray was the brightest ornament; her company was sought; and a party was dull that lacked the light of Ellen's smile and the ring of her joyous voice. It was the mother's wish that Ellen should mingle much with her young friends. Mrs. Gray did not wish her daughter to be confined to her side continually; and she would urge her often, when Ellen would prefer to stay with her, to go out and be happy, and make others happy, as she shared the pleasures of society. But home was the dearest spot to both mother and daughter. Neither of them could have been happy elsewhere, unless the separation was the call of duty. It was therefore a terrible trial to faith and love when the conviction slowly pressed itself upon the mind of both mother and daughter that it was necessary for Ellen to go abroad, and assume labours and responsibilities for which she seemed to be unfitted. But it had often been suggested to Ellen by those to whom she had looked for counsel, that her education qualified her to give instruction to others, and that as a teacher she could provide a comfortable support for herself and her mother, and relieve the feeble Mrs. Gray from those labours to which she was now more and more inadequate. The thought of thus contributing to the comfort of her mother was enough to rouse the soul of this ardent girl to any sacrifice. She would undertake anything to make life's path smoother and life's load lighter for the mother she loved; and the only inquiry now to

be made was, where to find a situation in which to engage as a teacher. She first sought in her own neighbourhood for a school, but none could be found that was not already applied; and then the city was visited by the minister of the parish, who took a lively interest in the family, and an effort was made to obtain employment in one of the many schools in the great metropolis. Nothing being met with that answered the desired purpose, the worthy minister was advised to advertise in the newspapers for a situation, and he yielded to the suggestion.

It was represented to him that there was a great demand for female teachers at the south, and if the young lady in whom he was interested was willing to go thither and take the charge of children in a private family, she could find a situation pleasant and desirable, and far less laborious than the care of a school. The advertisement soon appeared in the usual form, and the result was that in less than a month Mr. Jones had several applications for the young lady, all of them from the south; and the most eligible being selected, it was determined that she should accept it, and as soon as a suitable opportunity should offer, that Ellen Gray should go and enter upon her new relations in a distant part of the land.

It would be useless to speak of the painfulness of that parting. Ellen had the strong support of one who feels that she is doing right; it was filial piety—a daughter's love, that led her to make the sacrifices involved; and great they certainly were. But the mother, how could she sustain the trial? There were kind friends who promised to be still kinder, and Ellen whispered that she would return at the end of a year; and a few years of service in her new vocation would give them the means of living always together, in more ease and comfort than they had enjoyed before.

She went. It was a new world, and a strange world, and a world she did not love, on which Ellen entered when the low but spacious mansion of a southern planter became the scene of her labours. Her new friends were kind in their way, and did what they thought was enough to make their governess happy. But what did they know of the means to make Ellen Gray happy? It was love that Ellen wanted; and in the luxuries with which she was surrounded, and to which she had never been accustomed in her own cherished home, she sighed often and deeply for the hills and the hearts she had left in the frozen north.

Her charge was that of two girls, twelve and nine years old, and they were delighted with their new teacher. They hated the cross French governess, who had tormented them with her music and *parley vous*, and it was joy to them to have so sweet tempered and lovely a girl as Ellen Gray to be their companion and guide. Months, a few months, passed wearily by, and the sense of loneliness wore slightly away, when George Douglass, the son of Mr. Douglass, in whose family Ellen is now domesticated, was announced upon his return from college. It was nothing strange that he should be smitten with the winning loveliness of this new inmate of his father's house; and that he should wonder that one so gifted with beauty and wit should be compelled to toil in the drudgery of teaching among strangers.

It will give a sad turn to this story; and one that I would not give to it, if it were not to record the dangers of youth and innocence, to say that George Douglass at college had not been cured of the vices contracted in still earlier life. Years of unbridled indulgence away from home had only served to pamper his depraved appetites and inflame his heart; while the associations and pursuits of his education course had expanded his mind, improved his manners, and made him a more attractive and dangerous companion. He came home to be admired, caressed, and courted; the pride of parents who had spoiled him in childhood, who were blind to his faults, and praised him for those dashing and prodigal habits that made him offensive to others. But this was the character in which he appeared before the world. He had not been at home a week before he learnt that Ellen Gray was a lovelier woman than he had ever trifled with; and her modest worth while it commanded his respect, assured him that if he would win her regard, he must appear to be all that he was not, and conceal all that he was. Among the young men at the north, and in the retired country parish where Ellen had lived, who looked upon the fair girl,