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## The Thunderstorm.

A stillness wraps in calm the summer day,  
 Unbroken by a sound, save when the breeze  
 A moment rustles through the parched trees,  
 Then leaves them motionless. The sultry air—  
 Hot as the breath of fevered patient—seems  
 Conscious of coming storms; the cattle crowd  
 With low-bowed heads beneath the elm-clumps, awed  
 By some dread instinct of they know not what,  
 Save that 'tis ill impending. All the sky  
 With thickly gathering clouds is overcast,  
 Dark leaden clouds, their edges tinged with red,  
 All ominous of storm: the quick, big drops  
 Of rain begin to fall—a rumbling peal  
 Of distant thunder, low reverberates  
 Along the hills; more thickly fall the drops,  
 Comes down a deluge—and the lightning gleams  
 In quick, successive flashes; louder still,  
 And louder roars the thunder—till gives rein  
 The tempest to its fury; awing man  
 And beast alike by its sublimity.  
 Its wrath at length the storm begins to hate,  
 A wrath too fierce to last; the thunder grows  
 Fainter and fainter, and the lightnings cease:  
 The rain-drops patter feebly through the leaves,  
 Till they at last are spent; bright diamonds,  
 Of heaven's purest water, glittering hang  
 On leaf, and blade, and flower; once more the birds  
 Resume their for-a-while suspended song;  
 The cattle leave the shelter of the boughs,  
 And seek again the pastures; all the air  
 Is filled with fragrance sweet, the cooling gift  
 Of storm beneficent: and once again  
 From her enforced torpor wakes the earth.

[Written for THE FAMILY CIRCLE.]

## MOLLIE'S TRUST.

BY ELSPETH CRAIG.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XX.

RETRIBUTION.

One day, about the middle of March, Sybil was sitting alone in a bright little room known as the morning room, which the family—when alone, preferred to the large dreary drawing room. There was an air of sadness in the drooping figure, a careworn look in her face as she bent slightly over her sewing, presently a heavy sigh escaped her, and leaning back in her chair and letting her work drop into her lap she gazed wistfully out of the window into the garden, where Kenneth was playing with another little fellow of his own age.

"Oh! my boy! my boy!" murmured the poor mother, pressing her hand to her eyes.

"I pray heaven to shield you from your father's example. It seemed a bitter thing to say; but she, who loved her reprobate husband, so faithfully and devotedly, was mother—as well as wife; and she would not blind herself to the awful danger in the future for her only child; the danger of a father's evil example. Many and many a time, for long afterwards, the prayer she had just uttered came back to her mind, with power to make her tremble and cry out with painful self-reproach.

At this moment she heard her husband's step in the hall and the door opened and he came in.

"Oh! you are home; I did not hear you come in," she said, looking up at him with a welcoming smile.

He did not answer, but walked over to the window, and took up his station beside her chair.

"Been out to-day Sybil?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, "Ken and I were out all morning; it is a beautiful day for March, cold but not at all windy, and we enjoyed our walk so much; but why did you ask dear?"

"Oh nothing!—I suppose you are too tired to go for a long drive with me this afternoon?"

"Indeed I am not a bit too tired and I would like it very much Arthur dear, but the fact is I am expecting some visitors and as I, myself invited them, I cannot very well go out before they come; I am so sorry, I would enjoy the drive with you so much dear; could not you defer it till to-morrow?"

"Well no; not very conveniently; I am obliged to go to Weston this afternoon, and to-morrow afternoon I have an engagement with Grenton and some others; but I will take you out the day after; I wish you could go with me to-day."

"I wish I could; is it to Weston you are going?"

"Yes; old Marks has a horse he wants to sell; a splendid animal; I think of buying it and am going this afternoon to look at it; Sultan is growing rather stiff in the joints."

"Is Mr. Marks' horse the one Mr. Grenton was talking about the other evening, named Firebrand?" asked his wife with a shade of anxiety in her voice.

"Yes, the same," he replied, gazing abstractedly from the window.

"Oh! Arthur, I wish—I do wish you would not think of buying that horse. They say he has a fierce temper, and that it is actually dangerous to ride him; don't you remember what Mr. Graham told us the other evening about the poor unfortunate young man who was worried by Firebrand and crippled for life? Oh? dearest Arthur, please give up all thought of buying this horrible horse."

"My dear Sybil what nonsense! That young fellow knew nothing whatever of horses, and should never have mounted one with even half of Firebrand's mettle, now I flatter myself I know a good deal about horsemanship, and I fancy Firebrand will find that he has met his master in me."

Sybil sighed and said no more, for she knew it would be useless to argue with him, his mind was set on possessing this particular horse and nothing she could say would turn him from his purpose.

"You need not be anxious Sybil," he said, after a pause, and placing his hand on the back of her chair bent forward and kissed her.