

health and spirit, from a visit with some friends at the sea-side. If the story had been true, it would have brought them together the very day Helen refused Lord Rainford.

But, as a matter of fact, she went back to her work of making bonnets for cooks and second-girls in Margaret's cottage on Lime-kiln avenue, under conditions that would have caused an intelligent witness of it to wonder whether she were not expiating an error rather than enjoying the recompense of devotion to a high ideal. The rewards of principle are often scarcely distinguishable from penalties, and the spectator is confounded between the question of the martyr's wisdom and a dark doubt of the value of living out any real conviction in a world so badly constituted as this. Helen, however, was harassed by neither of these misgivings. She never regretted her refusal of Lord Rainford, except for the pain it inflicted; she never blamed herself for anything but the hesitation in which she was tempted to accept him without loving him. Her sense of self-approval grew only the stronger and clearer with the trials which gathered upon her in what might have seemed to others a sort of malign derision. Her custom fell off, and the patrons who remained to her grew inevitably more and more into an odious mastery; their exactions increased as her health failed, and she could not always keep her promises to them; they complained that other people's bonnets were better made, and "more in the style."

One night she overheard, through the thin partition that separated her chamber from Margaret's a tipsy threat from Margaret's husband that he was going to be master in his own house, and that he was going to turn that girl and her bonnets into the street. He went off to his work in the morning sullen and lowering, and she and Margaret could not look at each other. She fled to Boston for the day, which she passed in incoherent terror at Clara Kingsbury's. When she turned from this misery the next