

grave, "but I could not get away from business; and as I should have been ruined in the opinion of my matter-of-fact neighbours, had I come to New York only to see an old friend, I was glad to trump up some old and neglected concern as an excuse."

"Do you still live in the little village, Frank, where you took up your abode soon after completing your law-studies?"

"The little village! bless your heart, Harry, nothing remains little in this country; our village is now an incorporated city, and I have the honour to be its chief magistrate. Ha! ha! only think of Frank Hargrave, the mayor—"

"And you are married too, Frank?"

"Yes, I have one of the best of wives, and two as pretty and promising little ones as one could wish to see."

"Then I suppose you have made a fortune too?"

"No, no, Harry, fortunes do not grow here as fast as they do in tropical countries. I own a farm whose produce suffices for the support of my family, and my profession brings me an income of from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars per annum. I do not count my salary as mayor, for that is all consumed in the extra expenses attendant upon the office,—the honor, the honor, Hal,—is all that political rank affords in an economical republic. I am enabled to lay aside something every year towards the support of my old age, but riches I never expect to obtain. My whole estate would scarcely pay for such a thing as that," and Hargrave pointed as he spoke, to the superb silver table which stood beside his friend, strewn with costly Indian toys.

"You have come just in time, Frank," said Eustace, after a pause, "this is my wedding day,—I am to be married this evening."

"Ah, I am truly glad of it; poor Helen! she has waited long for you, Harry; her youth and beauty have faded, and yet, now that I look more closely at you, she is not more changed than yourself. What a bronzed and weather-beaten face you have brought back; you are more than half a China-man."

Eustace sighed heavily.

"Nay, do not sigh about it, Harry, I dare say you are as handsome as ever in the eyes of Helen."

"Poor, poor Helen!" said Eustace, despondingly.

"Rather say rich Helen," cried Frank, gaily "why, man, you have more gold and silver in this very room than we Yankees are accustomed to handle in a life-time."

"Yet would I give all my hard-earned wealth, Frank, for the gifts which you possess."

"What are they, pray?"

"Your freshness of feeling, the earnestness of purpose, the enthusiasm of character which makes you still as ardent as a boy, while I am a care-worn and world-weary man."

"What do you mean, Harry? You have realized every hope,—you have gained a princely fortune, and are now upon the point of wedding the object of your first love;—what more can be wanting to your happiness?"

"*The capacity for enjoyment, without which all else is valueless.* I have wasted my glad youth in toil, thankless, unshared toil,—I have denied myself the enjoyments of social life,—shut up my better feelings within my own bosom,—made even love my slave, rather than my master, and by the force of an indomitable will have won all that I fancied necessary to happiness. But I forgot to calculate the changes of years and circumstances. I did not think that the rolling wheels of time which were scattering golden sands as they flashed past me in my foreign abode, were crushing the simple flowers of life which bloomed in my native woodland home. I return to claim my bright and beautiful Helen, and I find but a spectre of the past,—a pale, spiritless, sad-eyed creature, whose every feeling is centred in a blind devotion to me,—whose mind is as child-like as in the days of her girlish beauty and simplicity, while her person is blighted by premature age,—whose very guilelessness, so lovely in her extreme youth now wears the semblance of weakness,—whose only charm now consists in her undying love. Alas! alas! the perfume of the faded rose alone remains, and my future life must be spent in a vain attempt to cherish the perishing flower."

"Good Heavens! Eustace, with such feelings why do you marry Helen?"

"Why do I marry? Can you ask such a question, Frank? should I not be a monster if I hesitated when the path of duty is so plain? Who condemned her young years to the blight of loneliness and hope deferred? For whose sake was the sweetness of that fair flower wasted? While she lives she shall be watched over with all the tenderness of remorseful love, but she will die, Frank,—even now the seeds of disease are sown, and I know that she will die;—yet instead of being agonized at the very thought of such a catastrophe, I can talk of it calmly, and without one thrill of the anguish which in earlier days would have rent my very heart-strings. Am I not then changed? I tell