

was throwing off his cloak, and preparing to do honor to the comfortable evening meal.

Yes! comfortable—that was the word for the meal and the room. It was very plainly furnished—a round centre-table, a few cane chairs, a well-stocked book-case, full crimson curtains, now drawn closely over the one wide window, and a hearth, whose bright fender and irons multiplied the dancing light of the glowing fire, and gleamed o'er the neat checked carpet. Some fine crayon drawings were the only decorations of the walls, except the certificate of a surgeon, that, framed and glazed, occupied a recess by the fire-place. How many rooms, all gilding and glitter, French polish, and drapery, looked less pleasant and home-like, than this little parlor! Cleanliness and neatness, those embellishments of life to high and low, were there in all their freshness and order; and the young couple who flanked the clear fire, with the tea-table between them, would have graced any dwelling, however stately. Walter was tall, dark, at the first view grave-looking—but the light that lay in the clear depths of his hazel eyes, the waving hair that fell off in sable masses from his broad, white forehead, and the pleasant curve of the mouth, all aided the expression that played like light and shade on a mountain-side, over his somewhat strongly marked features and sombre black brows. Sense, determination and good humor were blended in that face, and a world of love flashed in his glances, as he looked at the blue-eyed, auburn-tressed, blooming little fairy, who was pouring out his tea, and who, from the crown of her graceful head, to the sole of her saucy bit of a foot, was so dainty, delicate, arch, and provoking, that she amply justified the tender and triumphant glance that her husband bent upon her. And yet, as the meal went on, Jessie was conscious of a something—perhaps the presence of her love had divined it before his coming—a something that troubled her husband that night more than usual. She saw it lingering behind the flashes of his loving glance; she heard it in the tones of his voice, like a sigh struggling to break in upon its music; and when the tea things were removed and the fire stirred for a rousing blaze, Jessie sat on a hassock that brought her head close to her husband's knee, and taking one of his long, brown hands in both hers, without looking up, said:

'What is it, Walter—any new disaster—tell me, dear?'

'Oh, nothing new,' replied Walter, coughing down a sigh, nervously. Then after a pause, through his shut teeth he added, half abstractedly, 'It's tough work, Jessie, my girl, rowing against wind and tide—tough work. But I am not going to give in, though.' He released his hand from Jessie's clasp, and smote it down on the table with a thump, and then, as if apologetically, he laid it tenderly on her head. The blue eyes looked up from under the shadow of the pent-house hand, and Jessie said:—

'Give in, indeed! Never! Faint heart never won fair lady.'

'Ah, my Jessie, that is true; but fortune is more fickle than fair, and often an unprincipled jade to boot. She's harder to win honestly than a certain fair lady that I know.'

'Hush! heretic, rebel, mutineer—what shall I call you? It is not true,' yet she added, after a little pause, 'and you know every one says a medical man cannot get a practice in a day.'

'No, Jessie; but we have been here two years, and we are farther off than at first.'

'Oh, Walter; and the poor people are always coming to you, and—'

'And the rich, Jessie? they desert me; and

I would bide my time, little wife, but you make a coward of me.'

'I! Why, Walter—now, that's not fair. I may make a brave man braver—a strong man stronger—but a coward! No, that I shall never make you. If being true and honest, and faithful to principle, is not the way to success, why, it's not we that are ruined, it's the world.'

'Well, Jessie, and if so, it amounts to the same thing.'

'No, Walter. People who have health and youth, and honesty and talent, are not and cannot be ruined. That's the best capital, I've heard you say twenty times; and depend on it, Walter, that Mr. Treboosy will be found out; for although people take drink freely themselves, they do not like a drinking doctor.'

'They like his prescriptions, my Jessie! and this very day I have lost my election as parish surgeon. Mr. Acrid, the distiller, and Gullem, the vintner, were at the board, and the guardians decided on re-instating Treboosy.'

A flush was on Jessie's cheek, and a tear in her eye, for she knew that the appointment of parish surgeon, though involving great labor and poor pay, was of the utmost importance to her husband, as it brought his professional skill into repute and aided him in getting a practice—so that by these tidings even her buoyant spirits were checked, and, still caressing her husband's hand, she was silent, wondering, meanwhile, that people should trust their own lives, and mourning that the poor who could not help themselves should be trusted to the care of a man noted for intemperance, and of whose neglect and cruelty to his pauper patients she had heard soul-harrowing details. Ah! Jessie had yet to learn that the world is very lenient to those whose vices are popular, so long as those vices only injure the poor; and she had equally to learn that virtue, if it condemns the practice of the majority, is sure to engender malice. Her husband's determination to live soberly, and to give sober remedies to his patients, was the hindrance to his success. He neither would drink with them nor sanction their drinking. People who wanted the flimsy pretext of medical prescription to quiet their consciences—ladies who desired to quote their doctor as advising port or sherry, bottled porter, or a dash of spirits now or then, were annoyed at the young surgeon, and soon returned to that kind, good soul, Treboosy—who was no one's enemy but his own.

The reverie of the young couple was disturbed by the sound of a horse's gallop, that, in the lull of the wind, seemed to be approaching near. 'Called out on such a night, Walter,' was the sentence hardly out of Jessie's lips, when they heard a well-known voice shouting, 'Here, Jack, take my horse. Is Mr. Elton within?'

'Why, it's Uncle Smithson, Jessie, come to see us at last, and on such a night as this.' Without a moment's delay both husband and wife hastened into the passage, and met their unexpected visitor at the threshold with many words of greeting, mingled with a surprise they could not check.

In a little time he was divested of all his wraps, and seated cosily in the snug seat Walter had just vacated, with his feet resting on the hassock that had served for Jessie's perch, and while he refreshed himself with tea, the young couple learned that their relative, who was a physician, had been called in to a consultation at a neighboring town, and preferred taking a bed at his nephew's to riding fifteen miles across the moor to his own house on such a night.

Walter Elton was almost as much surpris-

ed to hear that his uncle had been at a consultation as he had been to see him in his house that night. For Dr. Smithson had suddenly given up practice some years before, no one knew why, though, as he wrote extensively on medical subjects, it became gradually the general opinion that he wanted to devote himself to the literature of his profession. His skill was undoubted, but he refused all applications, though his means were far from ample. He it was who had brought up his orphan nephew, Walter Elton, and had implanted the strict temperance principle which the young surgeon had so fully carried out; as yet, it must be owned, to his professional injury. At the urgent solicitation of an old personal friend, Dr. Smithson had attended this evening's consultation, and was now making brief but keen inquiries about his young relative's prospects, and hearing the reluctantly expressed fears as to ultimate success which Walter could not suppress.

Dr. Smithson was a small, thin man, with an anxious, nervous expression of countenance. He was bald, his high forehead was furrowed with deep lines of care rather than age, and an agitated twitching of the mouth told a tale of irresolution that the clear gray eyes contradicted. There was evidently a contest in his nature. His reason clear, prompting him to firmness; his feelings acute, betraying him to weakness. He heard his nephew's discouraging account with a disturbed look, and then fell into a deep reverie, which neither Jessie nor Walter disturbed by a single word. At length, rousing himself, he looked from one to the other, and said, 'You find keeping a conscience expensive, no doubt; but you must not flag, for, if you do not cling to conscience as a friend, it will cling to you as an enemy.' A sigh, so heavy that little Jessie looked scared, followed the words, and the speaker after a while resumed, saying, 'I'll open a page of my experience for you—a page I had thought closed for ever—and if you are halting irresolute as to your course, what I have to tell may be useful. You know, Walter, that I was in practice at Mill Regis for many years; but you do not know why I gave up my prospects of a successful career in an honorable profession, and sank in the prime of my life into a mere recluse. Well, you shall hear. Among my patients was the family of a merchant, one of those delightful households that remind one of a better world. Mr. and Mrs. Morrell, Miss Digby, Mrs. Morrell's sister, and a lovely group of well-trained children, comprised the family. If ever there was a perfectly happy home in this world it was theirs. The father, though a keen business man, was God fearing, and full of tender and wise consideration in his family. Mrs. Morrell and her sister were not only very cultivated, but very gifted women. It had been an early marriage of the heads of the household—Mrs. Morrell was not more than thirty when her seventh child was born, her husband was some four years older, her sister five years younger. I became the friend as well as physician of this family. I may add, though that concerns no one but myself, that I had hopes—Maria Digby inspired them—of being their relative.' Uncle Smithson paused a moment here to swallow down a sigh, and continued—'You must not think these women lived for themselves and their own homestead only. They were the friends of the poor in the best sense—they helped them to help themselves. In the schools, by the bed of sickness and death, amid the struggles of decent industry; there were Mrs. Morrell and Maria, instructing, comforting, aiding. And, though gratitude is very rare, yet I am bound to say that the names of my friends were