

the reveries of philosophic sentiment until he became morbidly fastidious, and learned, too late, that the intellectual voluptuary, no less than the mere sensualist, must suffer the penalty of excessive indulgence. He had been a traveller in all lands, and had dwelt amid all nations. He had ripened his fancies and feelings beneath the sunshine of all climes, and now, unsatisfied and lonely, he had returned to breathe, once more, his native air, in the vain hope of renewing the simple tastes and habits of his boyhood.

When Charles Lilbourne went abroad, his cousin Julia was a child, a pretty, pettish little creature who sat on his knee and teased him for *bombons*. After fifteen years of absence, he returned to find his plaything transformed into the elegant and admired woman. If he had remembered her at all, it had been only as an unformed girl, and no vision of her surpassing beauty, her graceful self-possession, her queenly dignity ever crossed his imagination. He met her with wonder,—almost with awe. She seemed to him like the development of some lovely dream—the expansion of some dim vague fancy of his youth. He remembered her artless childhood, and he immediately associated his ideas of the past with those of the present until he had invested his beautiful cousin with all the loveliest attributes of feminine sweetness. True to his susceptible nature, while he fancied that he was only watching the phases of a new character, he became a lover and a worshipper, yet his idolatry, unlike the homage of a common mind, rendered him doubly sensitive to any defect in the object of his devotion. Julia Grey possessed no extraordinary mental or moral gifts. With some talent, but much more tact, she adapted herself to the tastes of others, with a degree of skill scarcely compatible with perfect truthfulness. Fond of admiration, she sought to win it by other means than merely her great beauty. She loved to make a decided impression upon her admirers—to say or do something which should remain fixed in their hearts for ever. She had sufficient sentiment to prefer the homage of the affections to the mere tribute of the senses, and she liked to bring her followers to the verge of the cliff whence they might take the Lover's Leap, even if she felt assured that they would turn back from its descent. She was a cheerful, intelligent, agreeable girl, without any fixed purpose in life, except to marry when she should become satiated with the pleasures of society: without any fixed principles of action, except the desire of pleasing and the fear of offending conventional rules: without any permanent affections except those awakened by

kindred; and without the slightest idea of her own responsibility to a Higher Power for the gifts and graces which she used merely as the adornments of a passing existence. Such was Julia; such are most women when their scholastic education is completed, and they are sent into society to be moulded or remodelled by circumstances.

On the evening already alluded to, Charles Lilbourne was in one of his most dreamy moods. The genial atmosphere he breathed, the luxurious appliances which surrounded him, the beauty which was before him, and the feeling of comfort, which is always felt, when the war of discordant elements without, is contrasted with the perfect harmony within, had combined to throw him into a delicious reverie. An artificial climate like that of the sunny south was around him, the works of Italy's most gifted children looked down upon him from the pictured walls, the voice of song was gently whispering near, and beside him, in living, breathing loveliness, was a realization of his fairest dream of beauty. What marvel therefore if he was for a few brief moments lapped in Elysium? what marvel if with half-closed eyes and languid frame he reclined in that sweet indolence of mind and body while such gentle influences lulled his soul into a trance of pleasure? Fearful of disturbing the current of vague, sweet fancies, he spoke not, stirred not, and even the entrance of a servant with some message which caused Julia to break the chain of a gentle melody, scarcely aroused him.

"How beautiful she is," sighed he, as the door closed behind the fair girl; "how beautiful and how good! can it be that the happiness of winning such a heart is reserved for me? Can it be, that after a fruitless search through the wide world, I am yet to find perfect sympathy in my child-hood's home?"

Just at this moment his ear caught the low pleading tone of some one speaking in the hall.

"Indeed, Miss Grey" said the person, "it was impossible to finish the dress this evening; I have been obliged to make up mourning for a lady who has just lost her only child, and I knew you would not mind the disappointment of a few hours."

"But I do mind it," was the sharp reply of Miss Gray. "It seems to me that somebody is sure to die when I want any sewing done; I am sure there is no necessity for any great haste in making up mourning; people don't want to go out at such times, and they need not be so particular about the color of their dresses."

"I can have your dresses completed by Wednesday morning," said the first speaker.