

supposed to do, to the list of marriages, I was astonished by seeing the announcement of Gerald Hamilton's marriage, at a fashionable church, to Miss Lucia Brevoort, the daughter of a very wealthy lawyer with whom Hamilton was associated in business; but it could not be Clare's Gerald, and yet the name—it was such an uncommon one, and I had heard some hints thrown out about Gerald transferring his allegiance from Lucia to Clare—yes, it must be the same. I would write home and enquire. Accordingly, I did so, and in a few days received the answer I dreaded. It was all too true. As soon as the loss of Clare's fortune became known he had deserted her, and married, in unseemly haste, Miss Brevoort, his old innamorata, who, passionately in love with him, was willing to suffer even the inconveniences of a hasty and unfashionable wedding, if she could but secure him. I knew now how sorely Clare must need comfort and consolation—not twenty years of age, an orphan, with scarcely any friends or relations, penniless, homeless, and deserted by her lover. Once again I went to her in her sore need,—not to find her as before in her luxurious home with a devoted lover at her side, but laid on a bed of pain and delirium in my father's humble home, with my dear mother for a nurse. She was too ill to recognize me, so I could do nothing but watch and wait till the crisis of the fever passed. When it was over she awoke to feeble life and consciousness, shorn of all her beautiful hair, with haggard and emaciated face, but in possession of her reason, which the doctor had feared she would lose. Through all the tedium of her long and wearisome convalescence she was wonderfully gentle and patient, but her fair face was so sad that I could not believe she would ever regain her cheerfulness. Slowly she came back to health, full of gratitude, and eager to earn something to pay the expenses of her illness. She never mentioned Gerald's desertion but once, and then she only said, without any bitterness or anger, "O Esther, it was terrible! I did not think I could live after it!" Soon she succeeded in obtaining a situation as a teacher of small children in a fashionable school, a situation for which she was admirably adapted,

for her many sorrows refined and purified a disposition naturally good and sweet; but in her deep mourning dress, she looked too frail and slender for the arduous work. And so, once more, we parted. I had lost my situation by my prolonged absence; but I suffered nothing by the loss, for shortly afterwards I became the wife of one of the teachers in the institution, a good man, whom I loved and revered. How strange it was!—Clare's future, that had promised so much happiness, had proved dark and stormy, while mine, that had held no such promise, was fair and peaceful as any one could wish. She had promised to come and spend her vacation with me in my pleasant home; so one day she came, dusty and weary with travel, but looking better and stronger than I had ever thought she would again. I suppose all women possess, either developed or undeveloped, a liking for matchmaking, and I was no exception to the rule. My Edward's brother, John Marshall, was studying for the ministry, and had already spent with us a few days of his long mid-summer vacation. I hoped to prevail on him to spend it all with us, and to make a match between him and my friend. I had seen enough of him to know that he was sufficiently like my own noble husband to make a kind and tender protector for my poor storm-tossed little friend. I had not said a word to her of his presence, nor had I told him of her expected arrival, so the morning after Clare came I had the pleasure of witnessing their mutual surprise as I introduced them. I had never seen Clare look lovelier than she did on that eventful morning. A simple and flowing robe of black made her slender form appear still more slender than it really was. She wore no ornaments save a cluster of sweet spring violets she had placed in her hair to please me. Her face, always beautiful, was now more eminently so since sorrow had wrought upon her soul. I saw that John thought her lovely; his grave face lighted up as he exchanged with her the common words of courtesies. He would have conversed with her, but she was so quiet and shy that the conversation died out. How different John was from Gerald Hamilton! But I knew that his nature was true as steel.