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THE ADMIRAL'S NIECE;

OR,

A TALE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. EDMUND HEATHCOTE.

VOL. I.

London:

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER;

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1858.

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A

THE ADMIRAL'S NIECE.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene of my story lies far away across the Atlantic's broad billows, in Nova Scotia; a land which, tho' little known, on that account is not the less lovely; with its lakes, its forests, its summers of undimmed sunshine; where the flowers flourish with all the luxuriant splendor of a tropical clime. Its glowing autumns, whose tints no pen can describe, varying from the most

brilliant scarlet to the richest brown, intermingled with the deep green of the spruce and fir. Its joyous winters, when the sky seems turned into a sea of sapphire, and the whole country round clothed in its soft white mantle, glitters and sparkles in the sunlight, as tho' it were studded with thousands of diamonds; while in the clearness of the atmosphere, from a far way off, may be heard the merry tinkle of the sleigh bells.

Though years have passed since my foot has trod this shore, and I have since wandered amidst the beautiful places of the earth, to me no other ever seemed so beautiful, and with an indescribable yearning I long once again to stray over my old haunts. And yet it were

wiser not to rob memory of its treasures by present reality; perchance all would look different to me now, for the faces and forms of many of the loved are no longer there, some are scattered far and wide over the broad earth and some have gone to that distant land where mortal may not seek them.

Alas! alas! for the fleeting happiness of this world; alas, for the bright eyes early closed in death, for the young loving hearts that so soon have ceased to beat. But to my story:—

It was a glorious day towards the close of summer; never shone the sun more brightly, or looked the sky more blue; there was just sufficient wind to fill the sails of a small boat, that floated grace-

fully over the bright waters of a lovely bay called the North-west arm, a part of the Atlantic, which seemed to have wandered up here solely for the purpose of enhancing the beauty of the scenery; and truly most beautiful it was. For some distance, the ground on each side of the bay, richly wooded, gradually undulated down to the very brink of the water, the monotony of so much wood ever and anon broken by a green sunny slope, while peeping out here and there might be seen a few gentlemen's country seats, looking as calm and peaceful as though no sound of earth's woes had ever reached them, no tears fallen, no sighs been breathed for earth's sins within their walls. Farther up towards the head of the bay some large masses of rock threw their shadows over the water,

adding much to the picturesqueness of the scenery; altogether it seemed a spot where one could dream away life, forgetting the outer world with all its toil and tumult.

The house that we have to do with, stood on a rising ground, it was a modern building, in which comfort seemed to have been more studied than appearances; its construction was most irregular, a wing having been added here and there, to suit the owner's convenience; but nevertheless, now in the mellowing light of approaching evening, peeping out from the surrounding wood, it looked far from inelegant. The large windows even with the ground, of a most comfortably furnished drawing-room stood open, the velvet turf before which bespoke studious care, while the quaintly shaped flower-beds were still brilliant with

varied colors. At the window stood a young girl waving her handkerchief towards the boat, glancing ever and anon impatiently toward a clock that stood on the mantelpiece. Presently her signal was answered, and the boat's head turned towards the shore; while she is gaining it we will try and describe the fair signaller. Tall, beyond the average height, with a figure that even the most fastidious might find no flaw in, so pliant was it, so full of grace in every turn; her complexion was that of a brunette, with hair that seemed to have stolen its hue and gloss from the raven's wing; the eyes were unusually large, and dark, their brilliancy somewhat softened by the long jetty fringes that swept nearly half-way down the cheek; the face was a perfect oval, with the softest

tinge of color in the beautifully rounded cheek, and the nose and chin had been masterpieces of sculpture could they have been imitated; but the mouth, in which lay the whole expression of the face, marred all its beauty; it was not its form or shape, but as she stood with it now tightly closed, there was an indescribable something about it that made the beholder forget for a moment that the face to which it belonged was beautiful.

Apparently she was dressed for dinner, in a simple white muslin, with no other ornament save one rich coloured rose fastened carelessly in the front of her boddice; a similar one was wreathed amidst her glossy hair contrasting well with its midnight hue; presently she slept lightly through the open window

and sauntered down to meet the occupants of the boat who had by this time landed, and were wending their way towards the house.

“You are rather late, uncle, and Ada looks tired,” she said, addressing a fine looking old gentleman whose silvery locks fell almost to his shoulders, and on whose arm leant a fair creature more lovely than words can describe.

Her golden hair touched now by the rays of the declining sun, was a rare sight, its loose wavy masses seemed to float round her like a soft cloud, touched here and there with living gold, and oh! how dazzlingly fair was the face beneath it.

Scarcely a tint of colour dwelt in

the soft cheek; the brow was like alabaster, no line of care had as yet disturbed its smooth surface; it was calm and unruffled in its gleaming whiteness; the eyes were of liquid blue, large and soft, they had a confiding, loving expression, and seemed to sink into your very heart, and who could withstand the smile that played about that dimpled mouth; it almost startled you with its intense loveliness.

She was as tall as her cousin, but her form seemed—more fragile, more ethereal in its beauty; she bore a strong resemblance to the old man, so that you could not mistake their relationship, that of father and daughter.

“Ah, Kate, my dear, I am sorry if we have kept you waiting; the evening

was so charming that it tempted us beyond our usual limits, but has not Edward arrived yet?"

"No, uncle, I am sorry to say that my brother Edward never can be punctual, but no doubt he is detained by the arrival of the mail steamer from England; you know she is due to day, and he will be anxious to bring you what news there may happen to be."

"True, child, I hope she may have arrived, I am very anxious for home accounts. How goes on the war I wonder; ah, were I but a few years younger, I should not be here in this ignoble inactivity. Well, my life has been pretty nearly used up, in my country's service, and I have not attained to the rank of admiral without

seeing more than one engagement; but I must in and prepare for dinner, hark! unless my ears deceive me I hear wheels; if it is Edward send him up to my room."

So saying the old man hurried into the house, Ada having preceded him, leaving Kate to saunter back more leisurely.

She had scarcely stepped again through the window from which she had issued, when a light dog cart, driven rather furiously, appeared in sight; it soon reached the house, when there alighted from it two gentlemen.

It required no second look to tell that one was the brother of Kate, the Edward just spoken of; the same dark complexion and hair, the same coloured

eyes, and on nearer approach the same indescribable expression about the mouth, that spoilt what otherwise would have been a face more than ordinarily handsome.

His companion was a tall, powerfully made man, also dark, with that rare grey eye, clear and bright as an eagle's; his brow was massive and intellectual; the whole face, when still, was rather stern, but when a smile broke over it, as it did now at some remark of his companion's, it was like the brilliant sunshine lighting up some calm sequestered nook; there was something in the whole air and manner that at once claimed respect, and you could not but exclaim as you looked on him, "What a noble fellow!"

Leaving the dog-cart to the care of a smart looking little groom, they entered the house, Edward leading the way to the drawing-room.

"How late you are, Edward," said Kate; "I—" but seeing a stranger she stopped.

"Allow me, Kate, to introduce an old friend, though no doubt you have long forgotten him, Herbert St. John. Don't you remember when he used to come home with me for the holidays, when we lived in Devonshire. He was not quite so big as he is now, so I don't wonder you cannot recall him to your memory."

Kate gracefully extended her hand, saying:

"Indeed, my memory serves me better

than you think for. I perfectly remember Mr. St. John, though the time you speak of is a long way to look back to. I scarcely think his memory in regard to me serves him as well, unless, indeed, the remembrance of the naughty childish tricks that I fear I played upon him as well as my brother, should still dwell in his recollection."

"Nay, Miss Hetherington, you do yourself injustice in supposing I could so easily forget, but I am greatly astonished to find you in this part of the world. I only arrived from England to-day to join my regiment, which unfortunately, has been ordered here instead of to the seat of war. The first person I met was your brother, who

kindly insisted on my accompanying him here. I am anxious to see Admiral Rainsworth, as I know in olden times he and my father were wonderful friends."

"I am sure he will be most delighted to see you; but he desired me to say, Edward, that he wished you to go up to his room; he is anxious for the news."

"Well, I shall leave you to entertain St. John;" and he left the room, merely looking back to say: "I hope, Kate, the dinner hour is not far off, for I am uncommonly hungry."

Kate was an adept in the art of conversation, and during the short time they were left alone, St. John thought he had never been so well entertained.

They were in the midst of early scenes and recollections, when the sonorous voice of the Admiral was heard in the hall; and presently, followed by Edward, he entered the room. Waiting for no introduction, he shook St. John by the hand warmly, saying:

“A thousand welcomes to you, my dear boy; right glad am I to see the son of my dear old friend, Sir Miles, under my roof.”

At this moment the door again opened, and Ada entered.

Never had she looked more lovely; she wore a pale blue dress of a floating, gauzy material, that set off to advantage her snowy skin, and that wondrous hair, which still swept over her shoulders, unconfined by either comb or

ribbon. Like her cousin, her dress was unadorned by any ornament, save a spray of white jasmine.

St. John was so struck by her appearance, that he forgot to reply to the Admiral; till now, he had thought that such a being could but live in a poet's dream. There was but time for a hasty introduction, when the dinner was announced, and the Admiral, consigning Ada to St. John's care, led the way to the dining-room with Kate, where we will leave them for the present, while we make a retrograde movement, and transport the reader to an earlier period in a different country.

CHAPTER II.

IN a most picturesque cottage in the South of Devonshire, in a room furnished with all the elegances of life, on a couch drawn towards the open window, round which the clematis and soft pale roses gracefully entwined their stalks, reclined a lady: her cheek was paler than the white blossoms that peeped through the casement.

She was gazing sadly towards the

sea, which was just perceptible in the distance, and a tear rolled slowly from her large, blue eyes, as with a deep drawn sigh she sank back upon the cushions that supported her wasted and fragile form. She was, perhaps, about forty years of age, and must have once been extremely beautiful; but her face now bore traces of severe illness, and her form was attenuated to a painful degree. There was a serene and solemn expression in her eye, that spoke of another world; the soul seemed to be looking eagerly forth through it, to the realms where sickness and sorrow may not enter.

By her side, on a low stool, sat a child about twelve years old, who (as she saw the tear trickle down that pale face) rose

hastily, and bending over the wasted form, said—

“Oh, do not weep, dear mama! I am sure papa will be home soon; it is now a month, or two, since the papers said his ship had left China on her homeward voyage, and I am sure he must be home soon,” and she fondly kissed the sufferer’s cheek.

“Bless you, my darling child! for your attempt to comfort me. But, my Ada, China is a great way off, and the ‘Ama-ranth’ will be long making the passage; she sails slowly, too slowly—too slowly,” she murmured; then, complaining of fatigue, her maid was summoned, and with the assistance of Ada, she reached her own room.

Ah! little did Ada think, as they

crossed the threshold, that the next time her loved mother passed through that door it would be in shroud and coffin.

When the invalid had been comfortably placed in bed, she desired Ada to leave her for a while.

“You need the fresh air, darling; go and meet your aunt and cousin, who must by this time be returning from their walk.”

Ada obeyed reluctantly; she could not bear to leave her mother's side. She had not walked very far before she met a lady, and a little girl about her own age; the lady was a tall, elegant looking woman, but her face was seamed with lines of care and sorrow; the heart's suffering was legibly stamped on her brow, and in the mournful expression of her dark eyes.

A slight sketch of her history will suffice.

She had been devotedly attached to her husband, Colonel Hetherington, who had fallen a victim to cholera in the West Indies, where his regiment had been stationed some time; left a widow with two children, in miserable health herself from the effects of that climate. With a broken heart she started for England, and there sought out the residence of her only brother, who was a post captain in the navy, and whose ship she knew had just returned from sea, and been paid off.

Captain Rainsworth received her with open arms, and insisted on his home for the future being hers; her sister-in-law also added her gentle persuasions, and the

widow gladly and gratefully yielded to their wishes, and so became an inmate of their lovely home.

Her son Edward was then about ten years old, and was sent immediately to a public school; from there he went to Woolwich to prepare for the army, and in time received a commission in the Artillery. Mrs. Hetherington herself undertook the education of her little daughter Kate, as also that of Ada, her brother's only child.

About that time Captain Rainsworth received his flag, and a year or two afterwards was appointed to a command in the Mediterranean, where he took his wife and child, leaving his sister, who on her son's account did not wish to leave England, in charge of his house. It was then, that on

Edward's return for the holidays he often brought with him his young friend, Herbert St. John, and thus Ada had never become personally acquainted with him, though she had often heard his name, it being frequently mentioned in her aunt's letters to her mama, and always with praises.

After the usual period of a commission, Admiral Rainsworth returned with his family to England, and remained for a year or two enjoying the luxury of home; but soon a sailor's restlessness seized him, and on applying for a command, the "Amaranth" was given him, and appointed to the East Indies, where he did not think it expedient to take his wife and child.

He had now been away for three years,

in which time Mrs. Rainsworth, who had always been delicate, gradually fell into ill health, and having caught a severe cold, which had settled on her lungs, the seeds of consumption, which had so long lain dormant in her frame, now sprung up, and grew apace, and were fast ripening, and the reaper, whose name is death, with his gleaming sickle, stood ready.

“I have left dear mama in bed, Aunt Emily; she was tired of sitting up, and seemed inclined to sleep; she desired me to come for a little walk.”

“I am glad you have done so, dear Ada, for you have lately lost all your roses; you do not take enough exercise, dear child.”

“I cannot bear to leave mama, Aunt Emily; she does not seem to get any

stronger, now the warm weather has come. Oh! I do wish that papa would come."

"So do I, dearest; let us hope it will not be long now before he is here; but see those lovely wild flowers; you and Kate run and gather some, your mama is so fond of them."

The children picked each a large bouquet, and they then all returned to the house. Mrs. Rainsworth's maid met them at the door; her face was very grave, and she said in a low voice to Mrs. Hetherington —

"I fear, ma'am, my mistress is not so well; she has just asked if you were come in."

Mrs. Hetherington immediately proceeded to her sister's room; she found

her apparently dozing; there was a strange unearthly look on the pale face; and as Mrs. Hetherington gazed upon her she felt that the mandate had gone forth, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

Presently those languid eyes were opened, and on seeing who stood by her, she said—

"Dearest Emily, I feel that my time has come. It is hard to go without once again seeing my beloved Charles," and for a moment she stopped, the tears rolling slowly down her cheeks. "But God's will be done," she presently added, "He knoweth what is best; and, Emily, dear, you will comfort him, tell him that my last thoughts were of him, my last grief, not seeing him again. You will take care

of Ada, Emily, for my sake; poor darling; her love will repay all your care; she looks, and is, far from strong. Would that I might have been spared a few years longer to her, but it may not be."

"I will, indeed, be a mother to her, dearest Helen," replied Mrs. Hetherington, the tears almost choking her utterance, "but pray do not exert yourself to talk any more," she added, seeing that her sister closed her eyes, and looked faint and exhausted.

"Nay, Emily," replied the invalid, again rousing herself: "Now is the only time with me; I can scarcely number hours, I fear, that I shall be with you." After she had more particularly expressed her wishes to Mrs. Hetherington, she

begged that Ada and Kate might be sent for.

They came, Ada carrying her bouquet of wild flowers, but with a face as pale as the white blossoms that were intermingled amongst them. She had heard the maid whisper to her aunt, and a foreshadowing of evil swept through her young mind. She had no sooner caught sight of her mama's face, than throwing down the flowers, she flung herself on the bed, and burying her face on her mother's neck, burst into a wild passion of tears.

Mrs. Hetherington, fearing the effect this violence might have on the invalid, tried to withdraw her, but she only clung the closer; and Mrs. Rainsworth said:

"Let her remain, dear Emily;" at the same time encircling her with her arms,

she whispered, "My Ada, will not make my last moments unhappy; try and calm yourself, darling, and listen to what I have to say to you."

The poor child tried to suppress her sobs, but she still clung to her mother's neck, as though her feeble arms could stay the fleeting breath; she, however, listened while her mother continued:

"My child, I shall soon be in a better land than this; will you promise me to strive and meet me there?"

Ada in a broken voice gave the desired promise.

Her mother continued, "When I am gone, aunt Emily will be a mother to you. You will obey her, dearest, as you would me. I know how dearly you love her, and I know my Ada will give her as little trou-

ble as she can. You are growing of an age to be a companion to your dear papa. You will be his sole comfort now," (here her voice shook) but she proceeded, "Make him your friend and counsellor, dear child, through life. I know his tender loving heart, and how readily he will sympathise with you in all things."

Ada answered only by a closer embrace. Mrs. Rainsworth now said a few affectionate words of adieu to Kate, who looked pale and frightened, and almost drew back as her aunt tenderly kissed her. She then requested to be left alone, as she felt inclined to sleep; but Ada still clung to her, and she would not have her removed. Mrs. Rainsworth closed her eyes and lay back exhausted, and Ada, tired from the

force of her emotions, soon fell into a sound sleep.

“Her mother, too, slept for awhile, but presently she woke with a start. There was a glorious light in her eyes, and a soft colour spread itself for a moment over her cheek.

“I come,” she murmured, “I come.”

It was the last flicker of the lamp in its socket. Suddenly the colour faded away, the light died out from her eye, and with the murmured name of Charles upon her lips, the spirit passed away, to be clothed for ever in the white garments of the saints.

Poor Ada still unconsciously slept on, presently a carriage drove furiously to the door, and there was a low murmur of voices in the hall, and then a

hasty footstep mounting the stairs, preceded by a lighter one, the door of the room was gently opened and Mrs. Hetherington and a gentleman entered. As she looked towards the bed she placed her finger upon her lips, and they drew near gently together.

One glance as they reached the bedside told all, and with a cry of anguish the strong man bowed himself upon the bed, his frame was convulsed with tearless sobs.

"Too late, too late," was all that escaped him.

The cry had startled Ada; she sat upright, gazing around her in bewilderment; unconsciously her hand fell upon the cold face of her dead mother and a shudder thrilled through her frame.

At that moment a slight movement attracted her, and as a well known face was lifted up, with a scream almost of terror, she threw herself into his arms, saying:

“Oh, papa, papa!”

The wretched man, for it was indeed Admiral Rainsworth, roused himself to sooth her violent grief, but for a time all efforts were unavailing, her tender form shook as though very soul and body would separate.

Her father seemed alarmed, and by his sister's advice carried her into another room; there he gently reminded her how much distressed her dear mother would have been at seeing such violent grief; amidst his tender caresses and gentle words, her sobs grew less

and less, till at last, exhausted and passive, she lay perfectly still in his arms; he placed her gently on a sofa, promising to send her aunt to her; having done so, he returned to that solemn chamber and bolting the door, remained there till the pale rays of morning began to dawn; he then silently made his way to his own dressing room, where, throwing himself upon a couch he strove hard to gain composure; nature came to his relief, and for a while he slept the heavy, dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

His ship had only that morning arrived at Portsmouth, and knowing that his wife had been seriously ill, he lost no time in proceeding to Devonshire, but arrived at his home as we have

seen, only a few minutes too late to receive her last blessing.

Mrs. Hetherington, tenderly conveyed Ada to her bed, but the shock had been too much for the nervous sensibility of the poor child, and ere the day broke she lost all consciousness in a violent attack of brain fever; for weeks she hovered between life and death.

After the last sad rites to his wife were over, her father scarcely ever left his child's bedside, and when the doctor pronounced, one day after she awoke from a long, deathlike sleep, that all danger was over, his heart felt the first glad thrill that it had experienced since his arrival in England, and fervently he thanked his heavenly Father, who

had in mercy spared to him this his only remaining treasure.

As soon as Ada was well enough, the doctor strongly recommended change of climate and scene; and Admiral Rainsworth, who had determined on retiring from his profession, made up his mind to seek a new home in Nova Scotia; he had many times during his younger years been stationed there at Halifax, and retained a lively recollection of the beauties of the place, and the kindness and hospitality of the people; he immediately wrote to some friends there and finding that a pretty place on the north west arm, which he knew well, was to be sold, became the purchaser.

Edward having just then received his

commission, Mrs. Hetherington felt at liberty to accompany him, and so bidding adieu to the home once so dear, but now made sad by recollections of the past, they crossed the Atlantic, and in a new world, amid new scenes, strove to regain that peace of mind which had so long forsaken them.

At the time our story opened, Mrs. Hetherington had been for more than two years entirely confined to her room; she had become a confirmed invalid. Ada had grown up as lovely in mind as person, devoted to her fond father, to whom she was as the bright evening star of his declining years. Guileless and unsuspecting, she dreamt not of ill or wrong in others, and least of all in the cousin who had grown up with her

from childhood's tender years; but alas! in Kate's heart there lurked evil passions that her anxious mother had striven hard to subdue, and thought she had in a measure (if not altogether) succeeded in doing so.

Mrs. Hetherington's delicate health had prevented her being as constantly with the two girls as she would have wished; and Kate, by her dissimulation, blinded the eyes that watched her with unsuspecting affection. She was talented and clever, and Ada was rather inclined to look to her for guidance and advice, more especially since her aunt had become such a complete invalid; there was but one year's difference in their ages. Kate was now just twenty, and Ada within a few days of nineteen.

Mrs. Hetherington had, about two years before our history begins, introduced them into the gay world, and had chaperoned them as long as her failing health would allow. Now they depended altogether upon the Admiral, who, being fond of society, was ever ready to be their escort.

About this time the company to which Edward belonged was ordered to Halifax, and as the Admiral's residence was only a mile and a half from the town, he spent much of his time there, evidently trying to gain the affections of his gentle cousin, while she, wholly unsuspecting of his intentions, bestowed upon him the familiar regard that she considered their relationship warranted.

Admiral Rainsworth was well off, as

the term is, and Ada being an only child, Edward, who had much of the disposition of his sister, took the winning that fortune more into consideration, we fear, than he did the winning of Ada's pure and noble heart.

Alas! how degraded is human nature; how the love of sordid gain tramples upon every better feeling. Money!—money!—money! is the universal cry. How to gain that, the one grand inducement, for which man will stride through filth and pollution, from the contact of which he can never more be free. For *that*, the son will betray the father, and the father the son. For *that*, the young maiden, in the fresh glow of her youth and beauty, will push aside a true and loving heart, and

crushing down her natural feelings of loathing and disgust, kneel at the altar beside driveling and palsied old age, and, with an unhesitating tongue, swear to love, honour, and obey. For *that*, will the cry of murder ring out in the midnight darkness, startling the shuddering ear. For *that*, will humanity forget to be human, and laugh while it tortures. For *that*, in a word, will every crime under the sun be perpetrated, and man's undying soul be stained, degraded, and destroyed. Alas! alas! that the despoiler should have so marred and defaced what once bore the image of the Creator.

CHAPTER III.

THE dinner was over, and Kate and Ada sat together in the drawing-room, talking of their new guest.

“Yes, he certainly is handsome,” said Kate; “but if I remember rightly, he was not of the pleasantest temper in the world; proud, too, and overbearing, I think I have heard Edward say; but perhaps he has outgrown these qualities,

though I fear when once such bad seed takes root, it is not ever thoroughly eradicated."

"I think you do him wrong, Kate; whatever he *may* have been in youth, I never saw a face where pride and temper were less visible, and I flatter myself I am a good discerner of the human countenance."

"Ah, well, Ada, I see you have already surrendered your heart to him, and as love is proverbially blind, should time prove me to be true in my conjectures, you will, I daresay, consider the faults virtues, or only a becoming degree of self respect."

"What nonsense you talk, dear Kate; my heart does not so easily surrender; and, believe me, if we should ever know

Mr. St. John intimately, and these odious qualities make their appearance, I will unhesitatingly acknowledge my judgment to have been in fault. But I will just run and see if aunt Emily wants anything."

Ada remained some little time with her aunt, and on her return to the drawing-room, found the gentlemen had made their appearance there. Edward was sitting by Kate's side conversing with her in a low tone, and the Admiral and St. John standing before a pretty water-coloured drawing of herself, which adorned the wall.

"Indeed, no," she heard St. John say. "It does not half do her justice, though the artist has been successful in catching the tints of that wondrously lovely hair."

At that moment he turned and saw the original, whose blushing cheek convicted her of having overheard his remark. He smiled and said, "Do not think me a flatterer, Miss Rainsworth, I really said what I thought, though I had no idea you were within hearing.

"The old adage says that 'listeners never ~~have~~^{see} any good of themselves;' but you see I have proved that false," she replied, seating herself upon a sofa.

St. John taking a seat by her side, they were soon lost in earnest conversation, the old admiral having buried himself in the numerous newspapers that Mr. St. John had thoughtfully brought with him, seemingly forgetful of the presence of any other living person around him. Edward glancing uneasily at the sofa, said :

“This will never do, Kate. I brought St. John out for your especial benefit. When his governor goes off the hooks (and I believe he is a very old man) he will come into no less than fifteen thousand a year; and I have no idea of letting my uncle’s seven thousand be added to that. No, no, Kate, you must win him, you do not every day get such a chance.”

“I am not at all loath, I assure you, Edward, to become Lady St. John, and live in the luxury that fifteen thousand a year can command. You and I were never meant to be poor, and I do not relish the thought of being dependent on Ada at our uncle’s death. I don’t suppose he will leave either of us more than sufficient to provide us with gloves. No, I hope I am not so devoid of brains as to let this golden

opportunity slip; e'en I will e'en begin my plans by destroying that charming tête-à-tête."

She advanced towards the sofa saying:

"Ada, dearest, will you give us a little music?"

St. John could not do less than say "I hope you will, Miss Rainsworth," though he felt provoked at the interruption, and Ada would have also preferred continuing their interesting conversation; however she immediately rose, saying, "what shall it be, instrumental or vocal?"

"Oh, vocal, by all means, if I may be allowed to choose," said St. John, as he handed her to the piano.

There was no long weary hunting for music, which never can be found; but striking a few simple chords, Ada at once

began that exquisite ballad of Mrs. Norton's,—

“ 'Tis not for a day or an hour
That I part from thee now,
To weep and shake off like a flower,
The tears from my brow.”

Her voice was touchingly sweet with a perfect clearness of articulation, and the pathos of every word went to St. John's heart, who was a passionate admirer of ballad singing; he did not say “thank you” when she had finished; but merely made a movement to prevent her rising from the piano. Willingly now would he have detained her there some time longer; but after another song, she rose, saying:

“ My cousin is far more worth listening to, and resigned her place to her.”

Kate's voice was magnificent, it had been highly cultivated, and many a Prima Donna might have envied her. St. John could not but admire it, as also the correctness of her Italian pronunciation, and he joined heartily, when she had finished, in the loud "bravo" of the Admiral (who never could withstand his favourite opera of *La Somnambula*, and now left his loved papers to join the group at the piano) but he in his heart preferred the touching tones of Ada's voice. The Admiral now called upon St. John for a song; without hesitation, he complied, accompanying himself; he had been much abroad, and learnt that accomplishment; his voice was rich and full and both Ada and Kate agreed that he sang most charmingly. The admiral clapped him on the back, saying:

"Well done, my boy, we shall have some jolly musical parties now."

As it was growing late, Edward, not feeling very amiable, ordered his dog-cart, and they made their adieus to the ladies, the Admiral following them to the door, saying:

"I trust, my dear boy, we shall see you very often. Whenever you have nothing better to do, come out here; you will always find a spare place at table."

And with repeated hearty shakes of the hand, they said "Good night," St. John promising to comply with the kindly pressing invitation of the old man.

The dog-cart rattled furiously down the drive, seeming scarcely to halt for

the purpose of having the gate opened. As the smart groom, with the dexterity of a monkey, climbed again into his place, he thus soliloquized:

“My master ain’t in no very hamiable humour to-night, I can see;” while the admiral, as he closed the door, said:

“God bless the boy! he will break his neck some day.”

The next few days passed as usual, Ada silently wondering that St. John did not make his appearance, while Kate insinuated that he had found some house more attractive to visit at.

“You know,” she said, “men are so fickle and unstable, that they never know what they like for two minutes together.”

“That is a sweeping assertion,” replied Ada, laughing. “No doubt we shall meet Mr. St. John at Government house to-night, and he may give some good reason for not having found his way out here again;” mentally adding “I feel sure he has some good reason.”

And she was right; St. John had longed to gaze on that lovely face again. It had never for one moment left his memory; waking or sleeping, he was haunted by it; but the general, Sir George —— required his attendance at the citadel, showing him the works that were going on there, and pointing out all they intended doing; he seemed to have taken a fancy for St. John, having been intimately acquainted with his mother, now many

years dead, and who, indeed, had been some distant relation of Sir George's. He was a kind hearted old man, but under the present circumstances, St. John thought uncommonly prosy, especially when he insisted on his dining with him every day, saying:

“I must take care of you till you get settled.”

St. John wished duty and the general at the bottom of the sea, and positively declined going one day (when Sir George said, “I shall expect to see you as usual at seven”), saying:

“Indeed, sir, I cannot think of trespassing farther on your hospitality, having now become established in very comfortable quarters, and feeling perfectly at home in them.”

“ Ah, my young friend,” the General replied, “ I do not intend to let you off to-night; there is a dance at the governor’s, and I must positively take you with me; you will find a galaxy of beauty there, which will make you fancy yourself in Paradise. Ha! ha! you do not object to that, I see. It is worth dining with an old prosy man for. Well, never blush; youth and beauty are more attractive than crabbed age, and I do not forget that I was once young myself.”

St. John spent the interval till dinner time wondering if Ada would be there; he found himself paying particular attention to his toilette, though at the same time he exclaimed :

“ How silly I am; how do I know she

is not engaged to some one else; or even if free, how can I be vain enough to hope to gain such an angelic being. What nonsense! I will put her out of my head."

Ah! St. John, she has taken possession of your heart, and if you can put the thought of her out of your head, why I can only say you are a more clever man than your neighbours.

Lord D., the governor, was a most popular man, clever and gentlemanly (which, alas! we cannot say of all noblemen), with a heart ready for every kind and generous action; he was exceedingly hospitable, delighted to see his rooms filled with the young and the gay; and was ever ready himself to lead forth to the dance Nova Scotia's justly celebrated

fair daughters, seeming, however, somehow always to fix upon the fairest of that fair band.

Lady D. was equally charming, showing her thorough breeding by never making her condescension visible, or allowing her guests to perceive that there was ought in their society different from what she had been accustomed to; Kate and Ada were especial favorites; her ladyship never took any excuse for their absenting themselves from her "at homes," and Lord D. declared that without their bright eyes, they should never be able to see to dance.

St. John had been introduced and was standing by Lady D. watching the fair fresh faces and graceful forms, that floated past in the waltz, search-

ing in vain for the one that he longed to see. So intent was he on this object that he did not perceive Lady D. step forward to receive a party until hearing a sonorous voice say:

“Your ladyship must not lay the blame upon me, it was altogether their fault; the carriage was at the door some half hour before they could quite make up their minds which gowns suited them best.”

“Well, they certainly have decided most admirably at last, for I think I never saw them look better, or more becomingly dressed,” said Lord D., who at that moment came up, “but my little Ada,” he added in a lower voice, “I have a new partner for you to-night.”

“Indeed, my lord,” she replied, “who

is it? Some frightful monster, I have no doubt, who will either use me as a battering ram to make room for himself in the crowd, or else tread upon my unfortunate feet with his heavy crushing heels."

"Well, I hope he will not prove quite such a barbarian as that," and Lord D. touched St. John on the shoulder, and was about introducing him, when Ada, with a slight blush, held out her hand, saying:

"I already have the pleasure of knowing Mr. St. John."

"Then I shall leave you to join the dancers; but remember, St. John, my little friend has a particular horror of having her fairy feet crushed by a gentleman's clumsy heels."

And looking mischievous, his lordship moved off, first claiming Kate for his partner.

St. John had been long in Germany, and had there learnt dancing to perfection, and many an eye glanced with envy and admiration, as he and his lovely partner mingled in the circle of the waltzers.

“How well suited they seem to be,” remarked Lord D. to Kate, “it is quite a pleasure to see such dancing; but how comes it that you are acquainted with Mr. St. John; I understood from the General that he only arrived a day or two ago?”

“So he did, but my brother and he were schoolfellows, and when my uncle and aunt, with Adā, were in the Mediterranean, they used to come home together to us in Devonshire for the holidays. Edward

brought him out the very evening he arrived, but we have not seen him since."

"Then Ada did not know him formerly; they seem to be conversing as intently as if they were old acquaintances."

"Oh, my lord, you know Ada does not take long to become friends with anyone, I often regret she has not a little more pride about her; she would be equally lavish of her kind words and smiles on a peasant as on a duke."

"And why not, Kate? Kind words and smiles cost nothing, and as to her not having pride enough, why wish her such an odious quality? I would never have her angel's face spoilt by its shadow. How lovely she looks to-night; St. John seems fascinated and no wonder."

A dark look stole over Kate's face, but the next moment it was gone, and she was conversing gaily and merrily on some other subject, though the while envy and jealousy were burning in her heart; burning up every remnant of better feeling that yet lurked there, and converting her indifference toward the unconscious Ada, into a something near akin to hatred; but that momentary expression was not lost upon Lord D., who was a clear penetrator of the human thoughts; he said that night to his wife:

“Do you know, Emmy, I have a strong fancy in my mind, that Kate does not love Ada as much as she professes; I am sure she was jealous of St. John's attention to her this evening. I caught a glance which she did not think I saw. I could not for a

moment believe it was Kate's face, so completely did it alter her and mar all her beauty."

"Nonsense, Henry, you must be mistaken, I never knew two sisters more attached; the glance you saw must have been intended for somebody else; who could not love a being like Ada?"

"Nay, Emmy, I was not mistaken; I wish I had been, for it has planted in my mind an uncomfortable feeling that I cannot shake off. You would feel as I do if you had seen it. I shall never like Kate again."

"Surely you are unjust, dear Henry, to discard her from your favour for a mere look, and you cannot be sure it was called forth by Ada."

"But I *do* feel certain, Emmy; we were

talking of her and St. John at the time, and her eyes were fixed on them. No, no I am sure I am right, and time will prove it."

CHAPTER IV.

KATE and Ada sat in the drawing-room at the Retreat (for by this name the Admiral designated his comfortable mansion), they were discussing the ball of the night before.

“Not pleasant, Kate? I thought it was even more so than usual. I enjoyed myself immensely.”

“Yes, *you* are easily pleased, Ada, and no doubt found it very agreeable, though

you seemed to have eyes and ears for no one but Mr. St. John."

Ada slightly blushed, but replied—

"Mr. St. John certainly is a very pleasant partner, and dances divinely, but I think I danced also with all my old friends; by the way, how comes it that Edward was not there?"

"Some duty kept him, I believe; but may I ask if St. John made any excuse for not calling?"

"It was the General's fault, who would daily insist on taking him to the citadel, and then make him dine with him, but he said he intended coming out to-day."

Just then the Admiral came to the window, calling out—

"Who's for the water this lovely day?"

Come girls, it will do you good after last night's dissipation."

Kate excused herself on the plea that she had promised to read to her mother, and Ada, though she fain would have remained to meet St. John, was too conscious of the wish to decline going, and Kate saw her depart with a feeling of triumph.

"Ha! ha!" she said to herself, "I will have my turn to-day, and it will go hard if I don't persuade this would-be lover out of his fancy for that doll's face."

But for once fortune was kind. The Admiral and Ada had just stepped into the boat, when a carriage came in sight; at the gate a gentleman got out, and seeing a boat getting under weigh, ran down to the landing.

"Bless me!" said the Admiral, "it is

St. John. Jump in, my boy; why you look as fresh as if you had slept comfortably in your bed all night, while I'll be bound the sun was up before you thought of retiring."

"Not quite so bad as that; I left shortly after you; but I trust, Miss Rainsworth," he continued, turning to Ada, "you feel none the worse for your exertions. What a charming ball it was; the governor and Lady D—— appear to be the most delightful people."

"They are, indeed—their balls are always pleasant, they certainly exert themselves to render their guests happy."

"Aye, that they do," said the Admiral, "we are very fortunate in having such people in this out of the way part of the globe."

By this time the boat had got under weigh, and with her white sails gleaming in the sun, she gracefully cut her way through the clear blue water; while Kate, who had seen what had occurred from the window, could have cried with vexation; and blamed her own stupidity in having declined to go when her uncle asked her.

The day was heavenly, and the Admiral proposed that they should land on a small island, where stood the remains of a French prison, a monument of the past; it was now denuded of its terrors, and served but as a picturesque object in that sequestered spot. They did not remain there long; but getting into the boat again, proceeded towards the head of the arm. St. John gazed round enchanted.

"What a lovely spot you live in, Miss Rainsworth. I envy you; one might forget here, that ever that mandate had gone forth,—'Cursed be the ground for thy sake.'"

"It is, indeed, beautiful," replied Ada. "I sometimes think there cannot be a more lovely spot on the face of the whole globe. It is even beautiful in the winter. Have you spent a winter in a cold climate, Mr. St. John?"

"Never! I have heard much of your winters, and look forward to seeing one with great curiosity."

"I feel sure you will like it. One hardly feels the intensity of the cold—the air is so dry and exhilarating, and the sky is always so clear and bright."

"Ah," said the admiral, "St. John

must see the country by moonlight, after a heavy fall of snow, or towards the spring when we have a silver frost."

"A silver frost! What is that?"

"Why, there comes a thaw, with a gentle rain, when presently the wind chops round, and it begins to freeze, while the rain is still falling; then every little twig is perfectly encased in ice. This generally happens in the night, and when you rise next morning with, perhaps, a bright sun shining, the effect is wonderful; every tree glitters and sparkles as though dressed with diamonds, showing all the colours of the rainbow. I assure you it looks quite like fairy land, and in a sight not easily forgotten."

"How much I should like to see it.

But are these silver frosts frequent? I do hope I may have an opportunity of seeing one."

"I am sorry to say they are not very frequent," said Ada. "However, the winter will scarcely pass without one. I so hope you may see it, the effect is truly wonderful."

In the mean time, the boat had gone "about," and they were now approaching the spot from whence they had started:

"It is time, I think," said the admiral to go in.

St. John would have liked to remain where he was, and we much doubt if Ada did not feel too happy to wish to move; however, they all landed, and proceeded homewards.

"Of course, St. John, you will stay and dine with us?" said the admiral.

St. John only too gladly assented.

The evening passed pleasantly enough. Kate, however, taking good care there should be no tête-à-tête, and managing to sustain nearly all the conversation with St. John. She was witty and brilliant beyond even her own wonderful powers, and St. John could not help saying to himself on his way home, "she is certainly a splendid creature; but for all that, there is something about her that I do not like; and yet Ada seems to love her; sweet Ada;" and his thoughts rambled off, building airy castles, in which sweet Ada held a conspicuous place.

Who has not, at times, built castles

in the air, in and about which, some loved object has hovered like the guardian spirit of the place? In youth how many have been the dreams of happiness, that the future was to bring. Alas! how seldom have those dreams been realized—how seldom has even the foundation of the actual castle been laid, or if haply once begun, how soon has cruel fortune despoiled it, leaving perhaps, not even a trace of its whereabouts.

“Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards,” and there is no treasure on earth that the moth and rust may not corrupt, which thieves may not break in and steal.

And yet how often the heart lays up for itself a treasure here, regardless of the warnings and experience of others;

and when at one swoop that treasure is wrenched from its grasp, it remains desolate and broken, till its beating is silenced by the cold hand of death. Oh that we could ever remember the uncertainty of things temporal, that we would even lay up our greatest treasure in that storehouse where no plunderer may ever enter; were no decay may corrupt or destroy; then we might walk on our way calm and resigned, let what would befall us. But I have wandered from my story.

After St. John had left, Kate and Ada retired. Kate, as was sometimes her custom, going to Ada's room, to have a chat before going to bed; this night she remained there long; their principal theme was Mr. St. John.

“And so you think, Ada, he really

was sincere in his excuses, as not being able to come here sooner? You are very simple, child; for my part, I feel sure he is just like all men, ever ready with a falsehood to suit their own purposes. I have no doubt he could have easily found the way, if he had had the inclination to come."

"Indeed, Kate, I am sure you wrong him. I believe him incapable of telling a falsehood. I am sorry you do not like him, Kate, he seems to me so pleasant and agreeable."

"Not like him, Ada? I never said I did not like him. I do not know him yet sufficiently, either to like or dislike. I only want to warn you against implicitly, believing, or trusting men, especially a stranger."

“Surely you do not call Mr. St. John a stranger? I almost look upon him in the light of an old friend, although I never actually knew him in former years; and you, Kate, ought not to consider him a stranger when he lived so many months in our old home.”

“Why, you know, people change so as they grow up; those we have known in childhood, sometimes do not choose to know us in later years, at any rate, I think it wiser to look upon them as strangers, till we really know them to be unaltered.”

“But you do not find Mr. St. John disinclined to allow the intimacy of former years, Kate. He seems to delight in recalling it, and aunt Emily says from what she knew of him as a

boy, she is sure he cannot ever become proud and worldly, or forget any old friend."

"Well, Ada, if you are determined to fall in love with this superlative youth, I cannot help it. I hope only he may turn out all that your romantic imagination pictures him," and waiting for no reply, she wished Ada good-night, leaving her to reflect on her words—words that said so little, and yet implied so much, that they excited an unpleasant and uncomfortable feeling in Ada's mind.

She threw up the window, and looked out upon the calm water, in which myriads of stars were reflected; as she sat there thinking of St. John's truthful open face, and his kind and winning words, secretly

wondering if such a face and such a voice could be untrue, the gentle moon slowly rose up, making a silver bridge across the bay. As Ada watched the wondrous beauty of the night, her own pure nature cast away its half conceived doubts of another's purity.

"No," she mentally exclaimed, "I feel he is sincere, let Kate say what she will."

And upbraiding herself for having entertained even a shadow of suspicion, she sought her couch, and was soon wrapped in the sweet sleep of health and innocence.

Kate also had kept vigil, gazing out on the night, but its beauty, its holy calmness was lost upon her. Her mind was distracted; the unholy fires of envy and jealousy were raging in her bosom.

“She shall not marry him!” she exclaimed, as she started up and paced to and fro in her chamber, and plan after plan she conned over in her own mind to win St. John from her cousin. She could come to no decision, however, but lay down with the determination that Ada and St. John should never become man and wife.

It was long before she slept, and then it was only to dream over her diabolical schemes. Alas! that a form so young and beautiful should contain a spirit that bore the likeness and similitude of the fallen angel.

CHAPTER V.

FROM this time St. John became almost a daily visitor at the Retreat, and, despite Kate's scheming, assisted, as she was, by Edward, who was sure always, if possible, to accompany him in his visits, he and Ada had grown dearly to love each other; he had several times been admitted into Mrs. Hetherington's room, and had long, quiet conversations with her, and her earnest

praises of him fell like sweetest music on Ada's ear.

By this time the glowing tints of autumn had faded away, and the trees, divested of their brilliant coloured garments, stood bare and gaunt, stretching out their denuded branches to the sky, as though beseeching pity for their desolate state. The north wind grew keen and cutting, and at last one calm still night, in the beginning of December, the Frost King stole forth, and set his seal on every rivulet and brook. As yet he breathed but lightly on the Arm; in the morning it showed but a thin coating of ice, but the next night, as if there was no rivulet or brook to divide his attention, he spent his whole energy in making fast those cold, deep waves, and fast enough he did make

them, for the morning after, when Ada looked out of her window, she saw a sledge filled with wood about half way across, the ice not bending or yielding beneath the horse's feet.

"How glad I am," she exclaimed; "now we shall have some skating parties."

"Half the town will be assembled here presently," said the Admiral, as they sat at breakfast. "What a glorious day it is, not a cloud. I hope your skates are in good order, girls? The ice is perfect; I scarcely ever saw it so smooth. I should not wonder if the Governor and Lady D—— came out."

"Oh, I hope they will," said Ada, "though we never can persuade Lady D—— to put on skates. She declares she

is too old to learn, and should only break her neck."

In two hours more numerous skaters were gliding over the Arm, and soon after luncheon the Governor and Lady D— did make their appearance, accompanied by the General, St. John, and Edward.

They were soon all prepared for the ice.

Kate and Ada, enveloped in their furs, their dresses gracefully looped up (showing a bright scarlet petticoat trimmed with black velvet, made rather short so as not to impede their movements in skating) looked bewitching. St. John gazed at Ada's tiny feet in admiration, and on reaching the ice begged to be allowed to fasten on her skates, an honor she smilingly accorded him.

"Dangerous work that, St. John," said

Lord D——, coming up to them; “those are the prettiest little trotters in the world, more than enough to steal any man’s heart from him. They stole mine the first time I ever saw them; did they not, Ada.”

“Come, my Lord, don’t be saucy; you are at my mercy on the ice, you know, so I advise you to take care,” and with a merry laugh she glided gracefully and swiftly away.

Lord D—— could not follow, scarcely being able to do more than stand on skates, but St. John, who was a perfect master of the art, was very soon close to her.

“Ah!” she said, as he came up, “I see you have been used to skating.”

“Yes,” he replied, “I have had a good

deal of practise in Germany, though I have never been there through the whole winter; still I have often remained late enough for a few weeks' severe frost, and enjoyed the amusement of skating exceedingly."

"I hear the ladies there skate wonderfully well;—is it so?"

"They do. But allow me to say, Miss Rainsworth, I have never seen any one equal the ease with which you move; you seem so perfectly at home on the ice."

"I don't think I deserve any credit for that, I have had so much practice, you know; but wait till you have seen Kate, then you really will see good skating. Look! there she is; she has just started."

It was a sight worth looking at, Kate Hetherington's skating; she was intensely

vain, and in whatever she did was determined to out-do others.

And here she certainly had succeeded. Among the numerous graceful gliding figures on the Arm she stood pre-eminent, attracting the eyes of all; every movement was a study full of perfect grace; to-day she seemed even to out-do herself, her cheek was flushed with gratified vanity, and her eyes flashed and sparkled with intense brilliancy, as she saw every glance of admiration, and heard the many murmured words of astonishment and praise that each movement called forth.

St. John's eye followed her as she shot rapidly past the spot where he and Ada stood.

"It is truly wonderful," he said, "I never saw anything so perfect."

“I knew you would say so, but come, let us follow her to the head of the Arm, and then with the wind in our back we shall come down at at a rapid pace.”

Kate seemed to fly before them, they found it impossible to come up with her, when suddenly, not perceiving the point of a rock protruding through the ice, she tripped over it and fell.

Ada uttered an exclamation of terror, and St. John using his utmost speed, soon reached the spot where the prostrate girl lay without making any attempt to move; he perceived that she had fainted, and leaving her to Ada's care, who had now also reached the place, he hurried off for assistance.

Before the rest of the party could come up, Kate opened her eyes, looking around

her confusedly for a minute; then recollecting she said:

“How clumsy of me to fall.”

At the same time she tried to rise, but the movement almost made her faint again.

“I have hurt my foot in some way,” she said.

And a look of vexation spread over her face as she thought that perhaps this accident might interfere with her scheming, and leave Ada and St. John more alone than ever.

“Don't try to move, dear Kate,” said Ada, as she kissed her, “I do hope it may be nothing serious, but here comes papa, and with him Dr. Ordman, who I saw among the skaters; how fortunate that he happened to be here.”

The Admiral wore an anxious and distressed face.


"My poor Kate," he said, "I hope you are not hurt very much."

"No, uncle, nothing more than a sprained ankle, I think, though I fear I must be carried home. What say you, doctor?"

"Yes, you are right, Miss Hetherington, but from what I can make out, it is a very severe sprain, and I fear it will be some time before you will have the use of your foot."

"I thought as much," Kate muttered.

The rest of the party now arrived, Lord and Lady D. expressed their deep commiseration, while Edward and St. John made the best of their way to the house, to procure some sort of litter on which she could



be carried; they soon returned, and in a short time Kate was comfortably laid on her own bed.

Doctor Ordman having more minutely examined the ankle, pronounced the sprain to be an exceedingly bad one, and implored Kate for her own sake to remain perfectly quiet, not attempting to move until he gave her leave; and promising to call again in the morning, he took his departure.

“I am very sorry for this unfortunate accident,” said Lady D. to Ada, who had just come down from Kate’s room to say good bye to them. “I had intended to carry you and Kate off with me; we have a few people coming to dinner, and I thought we might get up a little dance afterwards. Poor Kate, I am afraid her dancing is at an end for some time.”

And with reiterated regrets, the whole party made their adieus.

“I know some one who will be dull to-night,” said Lord D., glancing slyly at St. John, as they got into the carriage, and he bantered him all the way home on his downcast looks.

Edward, fortunately, was with the General, or he would not have been very much pleased at Lord D.'s raillery. He was as much annoyed at the accident as Kate herself; he saw that in spite of them, the intimacy between Ada and St. John was growing stronger each day; and “now,” he thought, “my chance is at an end; with Kate out of the way, they will be thrown into each other's society more than ever, and there is no doubt how it will end. I see St. John is desperately in

love already; what a fool I was ever to introduce him at the house; however, I suppose he would have found his way out there without me."

And sullenly and despondingly he prepared for the dance at Government House. On arriving there, he found St. John sitting quietly talking to Lady D. She had tried in vain to persuade him to dance; he pleaded a head-ache.

"Ah," she said with a smile, "I think it is more of a heart-ache. This accident is certainly very unfortunate; the room to me looks empty without Kate and Ada."

Edward at this moment came up.

"What! not dancing, St. John?" he said; "surely, Lady D., you don't allow that?"

“Why, Mr. St. John is suffering from a head-ache, and I have excused him; therefore I shall expect you, Mr. Hetherington, to do double duty, so you had better go and get a partner for the dance that is just going to begin.”

Thus dismissed, Edward was obliged to go, though he fain would have lingered to hear what St. John and Lady D. were so earnestly conversing about; he felt it was about Ada.

“Even *she* must conspire against me,” he peevishly said to himself; “I thought she was above matchmaking, but I believe all women are alike in that respect.”

And with unwilling steps, he claimed a pretty blue eyed girl for a partner, and mingled in the quadrille just formed.

“Will you answer me one question,

Lady D.?" said St. John abruptly, after having remained silent for some time. "Have you any reason to believe that Miss Rainsworth is fond of her cousin (Edward, I mean), and is there any engagement, or a chance of one between them?"

"I have never heard of anything of the kind," she replied. "I have seen them often together, but I must candidly say I never saw anything that could warrant such a supposition, nor do I believe there is a chance of such a thing. I feel sure Ada but feels a cousinly regard for him; but why do you ask?"

"I hardly know; something Edward said the other day conveyed the idea to my mind, and yet there was nothing in his actual words, it was the tone and

manner; no doubt I mistook his meaning, but somehow I have felt uncomfortable ever since. I may confess to you," he continued, after an irresolute pause, "that this is a matter of great importance to me. I hardly knew how great, until the thought that she could be engaged to another gained possession of my mind. I love her, Lady D——, with my whole soul," and his voice trembled with emotion.

"I have watched your growing affection my dear Mr. St. John, for some time," replied Lady D.; "and though I may be wrong, I have fancied that Ada is not altogether indifferent to you."

"Oh! I wish that I dared to think so."

Just then Lord D. came up.

"Are you two discussing the affairs of the nation," he said, laughing. "You

look as grave as though life or death depended on your decision."

"Well, I am not sure that it does not," said Lady D., looking slyly at St. John.

"Ha! ha! is that it? Why, St. John, you look as downcast as if the lady had said, 'believe me, I feel deeply sensible of the honor you have done me, and must always esteem you as a friend, but, &c., &c.' It is not quite so bad as that, is it."

"No, no," said St. John, laughing, "but it may be if ever I have the courage to ask the question."

"Take my word, 'No'; I know something about these sort of things, and if a certain little lady is not at this moment thinking of you, and wishing she were here, why then I am mistaken, and have no knowledge of the fair sex."

Though St. John denied the possibility of such a thing, he nevertheless looked pleased, and went home buoyant with hope again.

“Surely they cannot be mistaken; they know her so well. Oh! if I only could be sure, if I had but the courage to decide my fate. What could Edward have meant? Perhaps the Admiral is bent upon their union; and yet I think he would have given me some hint upon the subject; he is not the person to keep any thing of that kind secret. I will sound Mrs. Hetherington about it the first opportunity I get. Kate has once or twice, I thought, hinted at something of the kind. I don't think that girl likes me, but perhaps this is all my fancy. Heigh ho! it is a miserable thing I find to be in love, at

least in this horrid state of uncertainty," and he turned into bed, and dreamed that Ada had refused him.

After St. John had left, the Governor and Lady D. discussed the matter, for it was a subject that interested them both greatly.

"And so he confessed his love for her, Emmy? But what made him think she might be engaged to her cousin?"

"He did not tell me exactly what; something that Edward said the other day, led him to suppose such a thing might be possible; but I fancy I have set his mind at rest on that point. You do not think there is any thing but a cousinly regard between them, Henry?"

"No, certainly not; and if ever I saw a little lady in love I should say Ada was

with St. John. I wish she could have been here to-night, now that Kate is laid upon the shelf for a time; I'll take a wager this affair will come to a crisis. I cannot help thinking that it is partly her fault that it has not been settled before this; what think you, Emmy, do you not consider Ada over head and ears in love?"

"Yes, I think there is no mistaking that her heart has been caught; dear child, it is a very happy prospect for her. St. John appears to me all that a man should be."

"He is a capital fellow," replied Lord D., "and will love and cherish her as she deserves. God bless the pair of them, say I!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE frost still continued, and St. John day after day found himself in the midst of the merry party of skaters on the Arm. Ada did not always join them, for Kate, who was still unable to move, contrived to keep her in pretty close attendance on her room, always requiring something which she said no one could do as well as Ada, who, poor girl, was only too glad to do all that she could to make her cousin comfort-

able, and when St. John remained (as many a time the Admiral insisted that he should) to dine with them, Edward was sure to remain also, and would engross the few moments that Ada was able to give them of her society, by making, what seemed to St. John, the most unnecessarily minute enquiries as to how Kate was getting on; and once or twice his manner was so tender in beseeching Ada not to wear herself out by such close attendance upon the invalid, that St. John began to be certain that *he* at least was actuated by other feelings than a cousinly regard; he became in consequence low spirited and dull, so much so that the Admiral constantly joked him on the subject, telling him he was sure there was some fair one in the case; at last the doubt in his mind became

intolerable, and he determined to know the truth, so he asked one day if Mrs. Hetherington was equal to seeing him. After some conversation on general topics with her, he said with a nervous laugh:

“Poor Edward seems quite cut up by the loss of Miss Rainsworth’s society.”

“Yes, I fear you all find it dull in the evenings without ladies. I do hope poor Kate will soon be able to move; dear Ada is so unselfish, I often beg her to go down and amuse herself for a little while, but she says she is sure Kate likes her nursing better than anybody’s else. And as I know that it is a real pleasure to her to be of use, I just yield and let her have her own way.”

“It is certainly very amiable of her, but do you not think, Mrs. Hetherington,

that some little consideration is due to Edward, and that for his sake she should not shut herself up so completely."

"Why do you particularly mention Edward, Mr. St. John? If any one has a claim on Ada, I should think it would be her father."

"Then it is not true," said St. John, while the colour mounted to his temples, "that Edward is engaged to his cousin?"

"Edward engaged to Ada! This is the first I have heard of it, but may I ask what led you to suppose so?"

"Really I can hardly say, it seemed a very natural thing; but no doubt it was a mere fancy of my own brain, Mrs. Hetherington, for I cannot say I ever heard any one speak of it."

"Ah, young men's brains are given to

fancying strange things," replied Mrs. Hetherington, looking slyly at him, for her quick woman's tact had led her in a moment to see how the matter stood, "but let me assure you that this fancy is altogether an erroneous one; I do not approve myself of cousins marrying, and I feel sure that both Ada and Edward look upon each other in the light of brother and sister."

This was a great load taken off St. John's mind; after a few moment's more conversation, with a brightened eye and a lightened step, he took his leave; joyfully bounded his heart as he fastened on his skates; action was needed to carry off his wild excitement, and for some time he skated rapidly alone; but soon feeling calmer, he joined some of his brother offi-

cers, who were on the Arm, laughing and flirting with a bevy of fair faces.

Two hours ago St. John would have wondered how they could all be so merry, now he was ready to join in every jest, and give back laugh for laugh with the gayest there.

Presently the Admiral joined the party.

“Ah,” he said, “I fear your fun on the ice will soon be at an end, at least for a time; my judgment is seldom at fault in the matter of weather, and take my word for it, we shall have snow, and not a little, before this time to-morrow.”

“Not a bit of it, admiral,” said a laughing, bright-eyed girl, “I have no idea of giving up my skating already, and surely there is no snow in such a sky as that,” pointing upwards.

"It certainly looks blue and clear enough now, but nevertheless, my dear young lady, I think you will have to confess by this time to-morrow, that I was right; don't you feel the change in the air, its sharpness and crispness all are gone. I am certain we shall have a heavy fall to-night."

"Well, I for one, shall not be sorry to see it," said St. John. "I long to have a little sleighing; I flatter myself that my sleigh is rather well got up; you have not seen it yet, Admiral."

"No; of course, you are a member of the tandem club?"

"Yes, and as I find it is the custom for every gentleman to take a lady with him, in case the snow may come, I will just walk up with you to the

house, and ask Miss Rainsworth if she will honor me with her presence on the first club-day, which I take it, will not be long after the snow falls."

"Come along, then, my dear boy; I have no doubt she will be delighted to go, and we must try and persuade Kate to spare her for a day."

Kate reluctantly yielded to the request, and after making all arrangements, St. John took his departure with a lighter heart than he had known for many a day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Admiral was right, the next morning the whole country was enveloped in a dazzling white mantle; how beautiful and pure it looked; every tree was wrapped in its fleecy soft drapery, with outstretched arms seeming proudly to hold their cold burden; not a footprint, as yet, ruffled the even surface in road or field; it had snowed incessantly all through the night, though

silently as a fairy's footstep; no wind had driven the feathery particles into impassable drifts, they fell evenly and smoothly, and now lay many inches deep.

"I have no doubt the club will go out to-morrow," said the admiral, as he and Ada sat at breakfast. "What glorious sleighing we shall have. I think I never saw such a deep snow lie so evenly. Poor Kate, she will be in despair, when she hears the merry bells, and feels herself shut out from partaking in the fun."

"Indeed, it is miserable work for her, dear papa, being obliged to lie there helpless day after day, and no wonder her patience is sometimes exhausted; but Dr. Ordman says in a little while she may be supported to the drawing-

room, where she can rest on a sofa, and find it more cheerful than her own room. I do wish she could go with us to-morrow. I only hope the day will be as fine as this; but may I ask, what fair lady intends to bestow her company on you, or rather on your comfortable sleigh?"

"My *sleigh*, indeed, you impertinent little puss; why all the prettiest girls in the town are in love with me, and if I could only make up my mind which to choose among so many fair flowers, I should soon punish you with a step-mother. My sleigh will not carry the dullest eyes in the company to-morrow, you may depend on it."

"Well, papa," said Ada, laughing, "do tell me who it is to be?"

"No. I shall not gratify your curiosity for your impertinence; but I must first win the fair one's consent, so will order the sleigh for that purpose after luncheon. I dare say the streets in the town will be well beaten down by that time."

"Then I shall go too, papa. I don't think you are to be trusted alone."

"Well, you shall, if you don't keep me waiting, and are ready to start immediately after luncheon."

"Then I must go up and read to Kate now. I will not fail to be ready, papa," she looked back to say, as she was leaving the room.

Kate was irritable, and hard to please that morning; but Ada bore with her ill-humour most patiently, ever giving

the soft answer that turneth away wrath, though, alas! on Kate that did not always have the desired effect; she had hoped that the snow would not come until she was able to move about again. The thought of Ada and St. John driving together was very bitter to her; but she lay there inactive and powerless to help it; her own impatience and restlessness only retarding her recovery.

As she heard her uncle's sleigh come round to the door, the horses impatiently shaking their heads, and with every movement sending forth a merry peal of bells, tears of vexation actually stole down her cheek; and when Ada came in, looking so bright and lovely, all prepared for her drive, to ask if there was any commission she could execute for her, she answered crossly,

"No, I shall not trouble you, you will find plenty of occupation in your own amusement. I have no doubt you will be glad to forget my existence for a little while," and she deigned no return to the kiss that Ada silently imprinted on her cheek, ere she hurried away to the Admiral's impatient call.

They found numerous sleighs driving about, and exchanged cheerful greetings with many of their occupants; every one seemed in high spirits. The Admiral ascertained that the Tandem Club did intend going out on the morrow, and after a few turns round the town, he drove to Government House, and finding Lady D. at home, begged that she would bestow her company on him, a request which she readily granted.

"I am to be the president, it seems," he said, "and Colonel — is vice; if this weather only lasts, what a jolly day we shall have; but here is Lord D. coming in. I see he has had his sleigh newly rigged; what a magnificent robe that is."

"Is it not? it was a present from a friend in Montreal."

At this moment Lord D. entered.

"I hope you are admiring my new turn out," he said, seeing them clustered at one of the windows; "but do you know that the Club goes out to-morrow? They are anxious for me to join them, and I think I shall if I can get away. What say you, Ada; may I have the honor of driving you?"

"You are too late, my lord; I have al-

ready promised to go with Mr. St. John," said Ada, the tell tale colour suffusing her cheek and brow.

"Ha, that accounts for St. John's wild spirits; I met him when I was out, and wondered what had happened to him. Ada, how exceedingly becoming a blush is to you."

"Nonsense, Henry," said Lady D., coming to her relief; "it is nothing but the reflection of the red curtains."

"Red curtains are very convenient things, Admiral, are they not; but as you are the President, you can tell me what is the time and place of meeting to-morrow?"

"Oh, the meet will be on the old spot, the parade ground, and the hour is fixed for eleven. Will that be too early for you?"

"Not a bit; these short days do not allow of a late start."

"Do you intend going, Emmy?"

"Yes, the Admiral has kindly offered me a seat."

"Well, I shall take the old General out of spite, as Ada has thrown me over; but how did you leave poor Kate? She is so fond of sleighing, this will be a great disappointment to her."

"It is a very great one," replied Ada, "I do hope she will not be kept a prisoner much longer. Dr. Ordman thinks she will soon be able to move about a little; but she will be impatient for my return; we must really go now, papa."

And with reiterated hopes of a fine day and a pleasant meet on the morrow, they took their departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morn broke bright and clear; not a cloud floated over the sky's deep blue vault; the sun's beams danced gaily upon the snow, making it sparkle and glitter as though thousands of gems were embedded in its surface.

Sleigh after sleigh assembled on the parade ground, in front of Dalhousie College, and began to form in line preparatory to a start. First came the Admiral (as was the custom for the President),

driving four in hand, the magnificent horses pawing up the snow in their impatience to be off; his sleigh robes were of handsome black bear's skin, edged with scarlet cloth, which completely enveloped the body of the sleigh. At the back of each seat ran a strip of scarlet cloth, on which hung at intervals an ermine skin. At the ears of the horses were small scarlet feathers; the ornaments of the harness and the bells were of silver, the latter so arranged that they formed a chime; and a sweet and most musical one it was. Lady D. sat by the Admiral's side, almost buried amidst the soft furs; he was fidgeting and grumbling at the non-arrival of the vice-president and one or two of the other members of the club.

"There is St. John at last," he re-

marked. "Not a bad turn out that, is it, Lady D.?"

"No; how exceedingly pretty, and how lovely Ada looks."

St. John's sleigh was robed with white wolf skins, edged with blue cloth; his horses were chesnuts, of a particularly handsome colour, the leader especially was a splendid creature, attracting general attention. The blue rosettes, with their gracefully floating streamers adorning each ear, harmonized with, and set off their golden tinted coats.

St. John looked proud and happy as he took the place assigned him.

There were numerous other sleighs on the ground, each more or less handsome, from whose thickly furred seats glanced many a bright eye.

At last they were all ready, and the bugle in the Vice-President's sleigh rang out the note for a start, and scarcely waiting for the nimble grooms to whisk off the cloths and scramble into their places, they are off. No creaking or rattling of wheels; noiselessly and swiftly they glide over the ground, nothing giving warning of their coming save that soft tinkling of bells; merrily, merrily, one after another, each keeping a stated distance, they dash round the town, sweeping through the drive before Government House, and then away round the beautiful Bedford Basin into the country.

Hark! as they wind along ever and anon rings out the cheering sound of the bugle, fainter and fainter, till at last it is lost in the distance.

They soon reach the place of their destination, a regular old-fashioned inn about twelve miles from the town, whose landlady, "fair, fat, and forty," stands in the door-way with a beaming countenance to receive them: she having had intimation of their coming, has every thing in readiness.

Huge fires sparkle and glow in the large grates, and steaming jugs of mulled port scent the air with their spicy fragrance.

How joyous every one seems as they cluster round the cheerful hearth; jest after jest goes round, and rosy lips send forth peals of musical laughter. Now they are seated round the groaning board, partaking of what is called in the country a "heavy tea," consisting (besides tea and coffee) of chickens, hams, cold

rounds of beef, and a nameless variety of the good things of this life.

The days are very short now, and after their merry meal, they find the large room appropriated to the purpose, lit up for a dance.

The floor of that room is always in capital order; it has been so often well waxed, and well danced upon. Now the enticing notes of part of the —th band invite them to enter, and soon numbers of graceful forms and fairy feet are doing full justice to that exquisite music.

The hours quickly speed on, till the announcement is made that the moon has risen, and they must begin to prepare for a start; then comes the muffling and wrapping up, the cheerful good night to the buxom landlady, and again they are off.

What a drive home that was; will Ada ever forget it? The moonlight falling on the unsullied snow makes the night as light as day. What a sight it is, as they skim along amidst the stately trees, which on either side throw their flickering shadows across the road; one might fancy it a magic procession, moving on without sound, save the sweet tinkling bell music.

As they reach the town each sleigh branches off to deposit at her own residence its fair freight.

St. John, after saying good night to Ada and her father, returned to his own quarters. He was in no mood for sleep; buried in an arm chair, he sat before a blazing fire, lost in a dreamy reverie.

He had drunk in deep draughts of happiness that day; he could not be mistaken,

he felt sure he had won a place in Ada's heart; to-morrow must decide his fate; he had whispered at parting that he should see her to-morrow. If he should be mistaken after all? and his heart seemed to beat slower at the bare thought. But no, her soul was too pure to allow her to play the coquette, and he had seen the light of love glow within those wondrous blue eyes.

"My Ada!" he murmured softly, as he shook off this dreamy fit, and rose to prepare for rest, and soon in the land of dreams the scenes of the past day were enacted over and over again.

Ada on her return, gently stole into Kate's room; a soft smile was on her lips, and her eyes seemed filled with an inward happiness; she enquired tenderly how the invalid was, and how she had passed the

day, to which she received but surly answers; but to-night the cold and unkind words fell harmless; she seemed walking as it were, in a dream, and outward things for the moment had no power to dethrone the blissful spirit within; with a cheerful good night, and a loving kiss on Kate's brow, she sought her own room; her maid was quickly dismissed, and then wrapped in a soft blue cashmere dressing gown, with her golden hair floating round her, she sat on a low stool gazing into the fire, till long after the hall clock had tolled the knell of another day's departure.

Ah! how sweet are the dreams of youth! Who, in the solitude of their own room, has not at some time or other, sat like Ada, lost in happy dreams of futurity? How bright has life then seemed; no cloud even

in the distant horizon—bright, bright sunshine everywhere; alas! that those early dreams are so seldom fulfilled. Alas! that the sweetspring's bud and blossom should so often be nipped by the keen frost, and that no fruit should crown what promised so fair.

Kate also had her reverie that night, what meant that look on Ada's face? Had St. John declared his love? No, Ada surely would have spoken to her of it, and yet that look puzzled her; she bewailed Edward's absence, who some days before had been sent away for a short time on duty; oh, that she should have to lay there powerless, and she clenched her hand, and a heavy shadow passed over her handsome face, distorting and disfiguring its fair outline.

"I will come between them yet," she

said, half aloud, "love in a cottage is a fitting thing for her, but the palace is for me, aye, and mine it *must* be."

For hours she lay restless and wakeful, and when sleep visited her eyelids 'twas scarce a boon, it was but the uneasy repose of a mind not at rest. Ah! when do the sinful, the vain, and the ambitious, ever find rest.

CHAPTER IX.

THE morrow brought St. John to the Retreat; he found the Admiral preparing to go out. Ada lingered in her own room, where she had retired on the first sound of bells, till the repeated calls of her father forced her to come down.

“I must leave you, my dear, to entertain St. John for a little while,” he said, “as Cox wishes to see me about one of the horses who is ill.”

And without noticing Ada's deepening

colour, he left the room. She began nervously speaking about the drive of the day before.

“It was indeed a pleasant day,” replied St. John, “the pleasantest, I think, that I ever experienced, for it has given rise to a fond hope within my heart; a hope, Ada,” he continued, taking her hand, “on the realization of which depends my every chance of happiness. I have loved you deeply from the first moment of our meeting; you, since then, have been blended with every thought; and now life to me without you would be but a poor boon; say, dearest Ada,” and his voice shook with emotion, “will you yield me this little hand? Will you be my wife?”

For a moment Ada answered not; her cheek had grown very pale, and her eyes

were cast down, so that he could not read their expression; the thought that after all she did not love him, that he had been mistaken, rushed painfully through his brain."

"Ada," he said, "will you not answer me?"

There was so much trouble in the voice that she cast off all girlish shyness at once, and lifting her eyes suddenly to his, the bright colour mantling in her cheek, she said:

"Yours, yours for ever, Herbert."

"God bless you for those words, my Ada!" he murmured, as he drew her to him, "how shall I ever repay you for them?"

At this moment the Admiral entered.

"Upon my word," he said, "you seem

to have entertained each other vastly well since my departure. It strikes me I am rather *de trop*."

But ere he had done speaking, Ada had glided from the room, and in the solitude of her own chamber sought to still the wild tumult in her breast.

St. John told his tale of love, and besought the Admiral's consent to their union.

"From what I can see," he replied, "it would be useless my saying 'no,' even if I had a mind to; but to tell you the truth, my dear boy, I am greatly pleased that matters have turned out so, and willingly give my consent, feeling sure that my darling will be safe in your hands. She has been a bright star to me, St. John, cheering the evening of my declining years; it

will be dark to me without her :” And the moisture gathered in the oldman’s eyes.

“God forbid, my dear sir,” said St. John hastily, “that I should be the means of making the remaining years of your life unhappy! What need for separation? You will share our home, I trust? Surely you would not wish to end your life so far away from your native land?”

“We will talk of this at another time,” said the Admiral, the shadow lifting from off his brow.

After a little more conversation, St. John, who had some duty to perform in the town, took his departure, promising to return to dinner, and the Admiral sought an interview with his child.

It was a long and tender one, seasoned like April showers, with smiles and tears.

Ada confessed that she was very happy, and St. John had long been dear to her heart. She drank in her father's praises of him, those very praises making that loved parent dearer and dearer to her. With a trembling voice and overflowing eyes she asked :

“ My father, this will not part us ? ”

“ Nay, my child,” he replied, as he pressed her to his heart, “ I trust not ; ” but he continued, “ we must have no red eyes at dinner to-day ; that would be but a bad compliment to a certain friend of mine whom I expect. I shall leave you to get up your prettiest looks, while I go and announce the grand event to your aunt.”

“ You had better go and talk the matter over with Kate,” he said, as he left the

room: "she will be hurt, perhaps, at not being told at once."

Ada would rather not have gone to Kate just then; she felt somehow her cousin had rather a dislike for St. John, and could not therefore sympathise with her happiness.

"However," she said to herself, "it must be done, and the sooner I get it over the better; I have no doubt she has been wondering what has kept me away from her so long."

And half reluctantly, half pleased, she sought her cousin's room.

There was a red angry spot on Kate's cheek, and in an impatient voice she asked where Ada had been all the day:

"I think it very unkind of you," she said, "after having been away all yester-

day, to have left me alone again to-day; you know that Dixon cannot read to me, and that I soon get tired of reading myself. I should not have found it such a trouble to have remained with you a few hours in the day, if you had been so ill and helpless."

"Nay, dear Kate, don't be unjust, I have never found it a trouble to be of use to you; but"—and she blushed, "I had a good reason to-day for not coming. Mr. St. John has been here, and—and—"

"No doubt," Kate interrupted, "Mr. St. John's society is far more agreeable than mine. Ha, I see," she continued, looking at Ada's face, while a sneer curled her lip, "He has proposed; and, of course, been accepted?"

“Yes, Kate, and papa has willingly given his consent.”

“Well, my dear, I wish you joy of him. I only hope it may turn out as well as you expect;” and she began conversing on other subjects with an indifferent air, while envy, jealousy, and even hatred, were bubbling and boiling in her heart.

How different were her feelings to those of the happy trio assembled down stairs that evening; there all was peace and calm; with her was tumult and storm; billow after billow rolled over her unquiet soul, and strong was her determination to get up the next day. “Even yet I will come between them; if it had not been for this tiresome accident it never would have come to this,” she murmured. “What has Edward been about? fool that he is.”

Different were her dreams that night to those of Ada; over the one spirits of light hovered, gently fanning her to slumber with their angel wings, sealing the drooping eyelids with the kiss of peace; while over the other, alas! no good spirit found a place, the powers of darkness reigning triumphant.

CHAPTER X.

FOR a few weeks, sunny were the days to the betrothed lovers. Kate had so far recovered that she was able to walk without assistance, and to join the merry sleighing parties that still enlivened the winter days.

Christmas, with its gay festivities, had passed; it was new year's day. The two girls were entertaining a host of gentlemen visitors, for such is the custom of the

country on new year's day; no lady is seen out of doors; at twelve o'clock the governor holds a levée, and from that time, until dark, the town is filled with sleighs, crowded with gentlemen rushing about from house to house, at each of which they are expected, to taste at least, the wine or cherry brandy offered to them. It is a goodly custom; on that occasion, many friends who have been separated are again brought together; many a quarrel brought to an end, dying out with the old year. There had been a ball at government-house the night before (as was always the case on new year's eve) and merry and gay was the conversation on its event.

Among other visitors at the "Retreat," Lord D—— had driven out in the afternoon:

"I expected to have found St. John here," he said to Ada. "I fancied I saw his sleigh before me on the road."

"No," she replied, "he had numerous visits in the town to get through with, and as he dines here, we excused his making a morning call as well. It was Captain Athol's sleigh, his and Herbert's you know are exactly alike."

"Ah, so they are, I forgot that; but do you know, fair lady, you are looking rather sad to-day; how is that? Did St. John flirt last night with any of the pretty faces that graced our rooms, and so stirred up jealousy in your poor little heart."

"Oh! no, my Lord," said Ada laughing. "I do feel sad, though I have no such reason, in fact, no reason at all; but I felt when I awoke this morning, as if a cloud

were hanging over me, and all day I have tried constantly to shake it off, but in vain; I feel as if some dreadful calamity is going to happen;" and her lovely eyes actually filled with tears.

"Nonsense, child, the only thing going to happen, is that St. John intends insisting to night on your naming the happy day. Cheer up, my little Ada, or your melancholy face will quite spoil my dinner; but I really must be off now. I saw that the steamer from England was signaled before I left home; and I have no doubt she is in by this time. I am anxious to hear the news. Pray Heaven, that we may hear that Sebastopol has fallen," and with a kindly shake of the hand, and another admonition to cheer up, he departed.

On his road home he met the Admiral, who was looking grave and thoughtful; he pulled up when he saw Lord D.

“I have bad news for Ada, my Lord, the —th have just received orders to hold themselves in readiness for immediate embarkation to the seat of war; the troopship that is to convey them may be hourly expected. I saw St. John for a moment; he is torn by conflicting feelings; his natural bravery, and the earnest longing he has ever had to distinguish himself, and his love for my poor child; the latter I think is uppermost at present, for his voice shook as he told me of their orders, and I could hardly resist the pleading of his eyes when he begged that they might be married at once; but that I cannot consent to,

she could not accompany him, and it would break my heart to see her a widow ere scarcely she were a wife."

"I think you are right, Admiral; poor little Ada! this will be a dreadful blow to her. She might well look sad to-day," and with grave faces the friends parted.

On reaching home the unusually disturbed face of her father made Ada immediately exclaim:

"What has happened, papa? You have some bad news to tell."

"It is indeed sad, my darling," he said, drawing her to him till her fair head rested on his breast. "St John—"

But at that name Ada sprung up, and with a colorless face, and in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, exclaimed:

"What is it, papa? has there been any

accident? Is Her—?" and her choking utterance became stopped by a flood of tears.

"No, no, my child!" hastily replied the Admiral, in a soothing voice; "St. John is perfectly well, but the steamer to-day brought orders for his regiment to proceed with all despatch to the East, and the transport to convey them may be expected to arrive any day."

Poor Ada! this was almost worse news than she had dreaded; she retired to her own room, for even her kind father's sympathy at that moment oppressed her; she wished to be alone, where no eye might behold her grief.

With tottering steps she paced up and down, half stunned by this heavy and unexpected blow.

“My sad forebodings were right,” she murmured; “the dark cloud that I felt was hanging over me has burst, and swept away my happiness;” then throwing herself on the bed she wept long and bitterly, till recollecting that it must be nearly dinner time, she roused herself, and with trembling hands tried to efface the signs of tears. Just then some one knocked at the door, and scarcely waiting for her low “come in,” Kate, already dressed for dinner, entered.

She threw her arms affectionately round Ada, saying:

“Poor darling! this is a dreadful trial for you, but all will be right in the end; and for Herbert’s sake you will strive to bear it cheerfully, will you not, dear?” and she kissed the poor quiver-

ing lips, that for the moment could not reply.

Comforted by this unusual show of affection on her cousin's part, Ada strove to assume a more composed air, and gladly assented to Kate's offer to assist her in dressing, not wishing just then to meet the inquisitive eyes of her maid.

Poor child! her eyes were too heavy to note the triumphant light that shone in her cousin's; she did notice how high were her spirits, as she talked merrily all the time she was assisting at her toilette (which, despite Ada's wearied indifference, was made more elaborate than usual), but in the innocence of her unsuspecting nature, she put it down to an affectionate desire to cheer her drooping heart, and said to herself, "Kate does not really dis-

like poor Herbert, after all;" and felt soothed and pleased at the seeming discovery.

Ah! could she but have read the true sentiments of that false girl's heart; could she but have seen the throb of joy at the intelligence that had caused her own heart such bitter anguish, how horror stricken she would have been, and how she would have shrunk from those caresses, that now so helped to stem the rushing torrent of her misery.

Dinner had been announced ere they descended to the drawing-room; St. John stood before the fire, grave and silent. A slight shade of pain or annoyance passed over his countenance as his eye rested on Ada's toilette.

"Was it that kept her in her room so

long?" he mentally ejaculated; "surely at such a time it is not like her, so to study her dress?"

But as she came towards him, and he perceived her death-like cheek, and the heavy drooping eyelids, the half doubt was silenced, and taking both her hands, he said in a low tone:

"This a fearful trial, my own Ada."

"Too fearful, Herbert," she answered, as the tears again filled the eyes that were for a moment lifted to his face; "God help us to bear it!"

The dinner passed sadly enough, as also the remainder of the evening, at least to three of the party. Kate sat lost in thought, that, if one might judge from her countenance, seemed to afford her much satisfaction, having had the grace not to

interrupt the mournful *tête-à-tête* of Ada and St. John. Edward had chosen not to make one of the party that evening, feeling sure it would not be a merry one. He had not been sorry on hearing that St. John's regiment had received their orders for immediate departure, but he had no wish to be a witness of the unhappiness he knew those orders would cause.

“Like women in general,” he said to himself, “she will forget him before he has gone a month. ‘Out of sight-out of mind’ is always the case with them; besides, even if she should turn out to be constant, the chances of war are in my favour; not that I am wicked enough to wish St. John to fall, but it is ten to one against him.”

And in high spirits he joined the large party assembled in their mess-room.

St. John, before leaving the Retreat that night, again urged the Admiral to consent to his immediate union with Ada, but the old man, though moved almost to tears at witnessing their great misery, stood firm. In sorrow too deep for words, St. John said "Good night," hardly daring to hope for another interview with her who was dearer than all else on earth to him.

When he had gone, Ada hastily retired and spent the night—how? Let those who have been placed in a similar situation answer. God pity all who are called to endure such hours of misery!

CHAPTER XI.

ST. JOHN was roused the next morning from the uneasy slumber he had but recently relapsed into by his servant, with the report that the transport in which they were to sail was signaled, and would be in shortly.

“Are you quite sure it is she?” said St. John.

“Certain, sir,” replied the man, “I’ve just seen the Major’s servant, and he says we’re to be off immediately.”

St. John hastily rose, and dressed with a heavy heart; he sat down to breakfast, but it was a mere form, and it was removed untasted. Just then the order book was brought to him, and he found they were to embark that evening, and sail the next morning at daybreak. His preparations for departure occupied several hours; he had written a hurried note to Ada, telling her how soon they were obliged to embark, but saying he was sure of being able to get leave to spend the evening on shore, when, alas! their farewells must be spoken.

A death-like tremor stole over the poor girl's heart as she read. To see St. John but once again, and that, perhaps, for the last time in life, seemed too dreadful.

Her father could not endure the sight

of the anguish written on her face; he stole out, and for hours buried himself in the thick wood. When he returned to the house, he found St. John had arrived, but he ventured not to intrude himself on this, their last sad meeting. He and Kate sat alone at dinner that day.

About eleven o'clock St. John hastily entered the library, where Kate and her uncle had retired on leaving the dining-room; his face was pale, almost livid, with the effort of repressing his feelings; and his voice sounded hoarse and unnatural as he pressed the hand of each, and wished them good bye.

"God bless you, my boy!" said the Admiral, the tears actually running down his withered cheek. "Keep a stout heart and we shall have a merry meeting yet."

“God grant it!” murmured St. John, and waiting for no more, he abruptly left the room, and in another minute the well-known sound of his sleigh bells jingled for the first time discordantly on ears that had listened to them so oft with pleasure; fainter and fainter they sounded in the distance.

Ada sat in the drawing-room, where St. John had left her; the sweet music of those bells now fell on her heart like the knell tolled for the dead, though she eagerly listened till the last faint tone of them faded away. “Gone! Gone,” she murmured, as she buried her face on the cushions of the sofa, where so lately St. John had sat, and convulsive sobs shook that tender form, as though they would rend it from life; all command over herself was

gone, and she was soon in violent hysterics, to the great terror of the Admiral, who, with Kate, just then entered the room to look after her; despite the sal volatile and other restoratives administered, the paroxysms of weeping continued for some time, till nature was exhausted, and weak and weary, the poor girl slept.

Ere consciousness again dawned upon her, the "Queen of the South," (for such was the name of the transport) with a fair breeze, was majestically skimming over the cold waves which bore her up triumphantly, as though she held no hearts torn and bleeding, that would have reeked little at that moment, if those sparkling waters swept over their graves. But time is a great healer, and soon as that ship bore steadily on her course, the tears of love were dried

by the fire of ambition, and there was an eager looking forward to the journey's end.

Alas! alas! for the dreams all unrealized; bitter have been the tears shed over many—ah! too many—of the inmates of that very ship. Their hopeful manly forms lie still, where no foot of kindred may tread; the grass on their graves may not be watered by the tear of affection; the stranger and the enemy alone pass by, and perchance point to the spot where they repose, in cold indifference, or triumphant mirth.

Oh! war! war! What a fearful scourge art thou, desolating hearts and homes with thy destroying breath; crushing out life and light, hope, and joy, in thy relentless fury. Who can number the miseries to be

laid to thy account; the blighted hopes, the broken hearts, the maddened brains, the long life vigils of sighs and tears. Alas! who can reckon them; they cannot be numbered. Time's restless tide has not yet washed out the marks of thy recent foot-prints; they are large and legible on many a once fair garden, on many a tender flower whose lovely petals lie scattered on the earth, whose stalks, all crushed and broken, may never more revive in this world. How recent has been the vigil of the cold moon and silent stars, (alas! the only watchers) over the thousands that thy sanguinary hand has stretched on the battle field? Oh! devastating war, when shall thy sword be turned into a ploughshare—thy spear into a pruning hook?

CHAPTER XII.

SOME months had passed since the events recorded in our last chapter; it was a lovely May morning, the snows of winter had vanished, and nature wore the softest tinted emerald robe; white fleecy clouds were floating in the sky, as though lovingly veiling the rays of the too ardent sun from the tender springing plants; the rippling waters of the Arm released from the frost king's spell, musically dashed its tiny waves

upon the shore, stretching up as it were to kiss the young green foliage that here and there dipped in its placid surface.

The little boat floated again in its accustomed place, with loosened sails, all ready for a start, a man and a boy were settling cushions and shawls in her, ever and anon looking eagerly towards the house, as though expecting some one.

"I don't see them coming yet, father," said the boy. "Maybe, after all, master han't been able to persuade Miss Ada to ventur."

"Likely enough, Will," replied the man. "She be very weak yet, they say, though to my mind a little sail on sich a day as this here would do her ever so much good."

"She war very fond of the water last

summer, father; do you mind the day that we landed at Navy Island, and then went up along yonder to the head of the Arm, that handsome gentleman along with us? She weer pleased that day, I'm thinking, and the gentleman, too, for neer a one of them seemed to want to go in doors?"

"Ah, Will, that there gentleman has summut to do with this terryble illness, I'll be bound. They do say as how he is come home from the wars, and is coorting some other lady in England, but somehow I doan't believe all that. I've seed a sight o' faces in my time, and can tell a bad from a good 'un, and *he's* not a bad 'un, that I'll be sworn; but hold hard, I see them a coming; she do walk very feeble like."

Tenderly supported by her father, with

slow and feeble steps, Ada reached the landing. Was it indeed Ada? Her face was so changed that one well might doubt her identity; the deathly hue of her cheek, the sunken eye, encircled by deep dark furrows; the wasted, attenuated form, spoke of recent and severe illness; and so it was; for weeks she had been laid upon a bed of sickness, from which at times her agonized father thought she would never rise

For a time after St. John had departed she strove to keep up her spirits, and seem cheerful, looking eagerly for the arrival of a letter from him; but mail after mail came in, bringing many a sad account of actions fought, and friends killed or wounded, but still not a line from him, though several times, as she shudderingly

looked through a paper, she had seen his name honorably mentioned, though as yet he remained unwounded. What could it mean? She had written several times.

At first she put it down to some mismanagement regarding the letters, some irregularity that in such scenes of bloodshed and confusion could not be helped; but heart and hope sank as packet after packet brought her no tidings.

At last the papers announced Captain St. John, for such was now his rank, as having been wounded, and gone home on leave. Ada thanked God that it was no worse as she read and said to herself:

“Now that he is in England I shall surely hear by next mail.”

But, alas! the next mail, though it told of the arrival of Captain St. John and

others to their native shores, brought not that for which poor Ada's heart was almost breaking. No wonder the poor girl fell ill. How was she to account for this determined and continual silence? Could St. John be false? Could he have so soon forgotten her? Kate's warnings rushed through her disturbed brain, but she thrust them away. "He cannot so have cast me off," she said to herself. "Something, God knows what! has occurred to prevent his writing." But day after day courage, health, and spirits dwindled away, and after weeks of fever and delirium she lay like a broken lily, that another rude breath might snap altogether from its stem.

Her first question on regaining consciousness had been, "Is there a letter?"

Kate, who stood by her bedside, shook her head, and from that time no more allusion had been made to the subject, until one day, after Ada had somewhat recovered, Kate, with a letter in her hand, and an odd look in her face, entered her cousin's room.

“Are you strong enough, dear Ada,” she said, “to bear bad news about—about Captain St. John?”

“Merciful God!” she replied, wildly springing up, “is he dead?”

“No, no,” said Kate quickly; “but perhaps to you it may be something more than death.—he is married.”

Ada sunk gently back on her pillow; she did not faint or weep; her cheek, if possible, became a shade paler. Presently she said in a calm, steady voice:

“How do you know this?”

Kate's only reply was to read the letter she held in her hand, which proved to be from one of her early friends, with whom she had always kept up a correspondence.

It ran thus:—

“I have been in the north for some time, and just returned too late for a gay wedding of an old friend of yours, Captain St. John. He has married Emily Warren, a very lovely girl, whom you may remember came with her uncle and aunt, General and Mrs. Sandham, to live at Elmsley shortly before you left Devonshire; she is a great heiress, and they say old Sir Miles is charmed at the match. I feel quite vexed I should have been away, for grand-mama says there has been such a large party at the Castle, and such merry

doings. Somehow Sir Miles always manages to make time pass very pleasantly there. Captain St. John's brother, who I have never seen, as he has lived principally abroad, is expected at the Castle next week;" and with loves, &c., the letter ended.

Ada made no remark as Kate finished reading; but after a little while she said:

"I feel tired, dear, and should like to be left alone to sleep."

And Kate, with a puzzled countenance, left the room.

My readers must judge how much sleep visited those eyes then, or through the long, dark night that succeeded.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN a small, but pretty cottage, on the outskirts of a country town not far from Halifax, there dwelt a widow, with one only child, a daughter, who was fast ripening into womanhood, having at this period of our story just entered her seventeenth year. Mrs. Somers was the widow of a captain in the army, who, some few years before his death (from failing health), had retired from the service, and had settled in

this out-of-the-way place of the world, from motives of economy, as well as to be removed from the unkindness of his relatives, who were for ever taunting him with having made a low marriage (his wife being the daughter of a poor clergyman), and in every way striving to heap insult on his wife, a gentle, unoffending woman, whom he dearly and truly loved, and for whose sake he willingly exiled himself from his native land. Helen Somers, their only child, was scarcely ten when her father died, a fair and lovely child, the idol of his doting heart; since that parent's death, she and her mother had lived in quiet seclusion. Few strangers' feet ever crossed their threshold.

Helen had fulfilled the fair promise of her childhood, and grown into a most

lovely girl: her soft brown hair curled luxuriantly down the whitest neck in the world; her large hazel eyes had a thoughtful, half sad expression, when the face was still, but they could light up with the merriest look possible. The bright roses of early youth bloomed in her cheek, and dyed richly the pretty pouting mouth; she was neither tall nor short, but had a figure of bewitching grace, and a foot and hand that might have served fairies for a model.

One summer evening, as mother and daughter were sitting under a large elm tree that half covered their tiny lawn, Helen reading, while her mother plied her knitting needles, the sound of approaching wheels made them both look up, when presently, to their great horror, they per-

ceived a run-away horse attached to one of the light waggons of the country; he was coming down a hill that was near, at a frantic pace. They had barely time to perceive that the waggon held two men, when it was lost in the valley, but soon again came in sight, the wild speed of the horse undiminished. Once or twice Helen pressed her hands to her eyes, saying, "They are over! they are over!" but on and on they came, till just as they reached the cottage, the horse swerved to one side of the road, where lay a tree which had been blown down by a recent storm, and had been dragged out of the beaten path. Against this the waggon was violently hurled, bringing it, its occupants, and the ell, to the ground.

Around them there was soon a small

group collected, from the one or two farm houses that were near. One of the occupants of the waggon, whose dress showed him to be a groom, was quickly on his feet again, giving his attention to the prostrate horse; the other sat on the ground, gazing round him as though uncertain what had happened.

Mrs. Somers stood by, striving to discover if he were much hurt; he put his hand confusedly to his head, but made no reply to her repeated questions. With the assistance of one or two stout farmers, he was put upon his feet, but seemed much inclined to sink to the ground again. Mrs. Somers desired them to assist him into her cottage; there the groom, who had freed the horse from the harness, and seen that he was very little hurt, followed.

"Is master much hurt, ma'am?" he said, addressing Mrs. Somers. "I always telled him that ere horse would bring him to mischief. I guesses now he wishes he'd a took my advice."

"I cannot make out how much he is injured," replied Mrs. Somers; "any of the farmers here will lend you a horse, and you had better ride over to the town as quickly as you can for a doctor. Stay, I will write a line to my own medical man. You will have little more than two miles to ride, and cannot mistake the road, which is a straight one; on reaching the town, any one will tell you where Doctor Grant lives."

And she hastily scribbled a few words. As she wrote, she enquired of the man who his master was, and learnt that his

name was Hetherington, that he was an officer in the Artillery, had just got a fortnight's leave, and was going on a fishing excursion.

"But he has caught a fish he didn't bargain for, I spect," said the man with a half humorous, half dejected expression; "it's what I always said; says I—"

But here Mrs. Somers handed him the note, and hurried him off.

Edward (for it was he) had been carried into a spare room, and lay on the bed in a state of half consciousness. Mrs. Somers applied every simple remedy at hand to restore him, but without effect, and most gladly did she hail the doctor's appearance.

On examining the patient, Doctor Grant pronounced bleeding to be necessary, there

being, he said, a slight contusion; but first, with the assistance of the servant, he undressed Edward, and placed him comfortably in bed, as he wished him to have perfect quiet after the operation.

The bleeding over, Edward appeared to gain the use of his senses, and seemed inclined to talk, but the doctor put his veto upon that, and giving him a soothing draught he soon fell into a sound sleep, when Doctor Grant, assuring Mrs. Somers that there was nothing to be uneasy about, departed, promising to come over early the next day.

The next morning found Edward with little the matter save a slight degree of weakness; still Dr. Grant did not think it advisable for him to proceed on his journey for one day at least, and seemingly with

little reluctance, Edward assented to the kind request of Mrs. Somers, that he should remain with them for a day or two.

That day or two emerged into the whole fortnight of his leave, an eventful fortnight in the life of Helen Somers; days that coloured every event of her after life; whether for good or evil, the sequel of our tale must prove; suffice it here to say that Edward did not strive in vain to win that fresh pure heart, for how could one so young and unsophisticated suspect the guest of such circumstances to be actuated by other than true and honorable motives.

Mrs. Somers was almost as unsophisticated as her daughter, having lived so little in the world, and calmly and un-

suspectingly of evil, she watched the youthful pair, seeing only a bright future for her much loved child, little dreaming that all the while Edward was devoting himself to winning her daughter's affections, he was scheming in his heart how to win another for his wife.

The thought of marrying a portionless girl like Helen never entered his imagination. Still less did he consider the nature of the feelings he might be arousing in her mind; he thought of nothing but his own present amusement; that she was very beautiful he admitted, her freshness, and naiveté also interested him greatly; and had she been the possessor of thousands a year, he would have had no hesitation in making her his wife; but as it was, his thoughts never for a moment, tended in that

direction; and when on the expiration of his leave, he took his departure, promising soon to see them again, the promise was one that at the time he had no idea of performing. But despite himself he found that Helen's face haunted him, and on many occasions the few days of leave that he could procure, were spent in her society; he ever finding a warm welcome from Mrs. Somers, who looked upon him in the light of a son, and making stronger and stronger the chain that already bound Helen to him.

He had spoken lightly of his accident at the "Retreat," but had entered into no particulars, and of his subsequent visits to the same spot had never breathed a word, so that his uncle, as well as Kate and Ada, remained in ignorance of the very ex-

instance of Mrs. Somers and her daughter. Had Ada known of his heartless conduct, how great would have been her indignation, for at this time, with well chosen words, he had poured into her ear his tale of love, making her believe that for years she had been the one thing in life dear to him, that he had seen her preference to St. John with deep agony; but now that St. John had proved false, he asked but to be allowed to hope that at some future time she would become his.

Ada had listened to him, surprised, and deeply pained; but though she ever grieved to wound another's feelings, she answered unhesitatingly, that she had always looked upon him in the light of a brother, and even though her heart had been free, in that light alone could she ever regard him; he

pleaded in vain for one ray of hope for the future; she replied, that she knew time did wonders; but in this instance she felt he would be powerless in altering her feelings so towards her cousin, as to make her become his wife; and, therefore, she begged him never to allude to the subject again. But spite of this, Edward still hoped to win the day, and though from that hour he never spoke of love, he was unceasing in his attentions, both in private and public; and though Ada sought in every way to avoid him, circumstances threw them necessarily much together, till the tongue of gossip waxed loud, and fixed not only their marriage, but the day and date thereof as well.

These rumours never reached Ada's ears, she was still weak from the effects of her

recent illness, and apparently indifferent to the events that went on around her; her chief happiness seemed to be in wandering about with her father, or to float over the bright waters of the Arm in the boat, ever choosing the same course; the one that she had sailed so happily with St. John. Many were the comments on her altered looks, and various the tales in circulation as to their cause.

On hearing of St. John's marriage, the Admiral had flown into a towering rage, fully determining to write and tell him what a scoundrel he thought him; but Ada's earnest persuasions, that he would for her sake, let the matter drop, had for the time soothed him. Kate's remarks also had some weight:

"Such a creature, my dear uncle," she

said, "is best treated with silent contempt, let us forget his very existence. Ada will soon be all right again, and you cannot regret that she is not to be taken away from you."

"Well, child," he replied; "perhaps it is better—but my fingers tingle to come in contact with him—subdued as my strength is. Had I only the chance, he would not easily forget this old arm; but, there, let the matter drop."


And from that time the name of St. John was mutually avoided.

CHAPTER XIV.

AND how fared it with St. John all this time? Worn out with privations, and hardships in camp and field, his heart had daily yearned for the one thing alone that could have cheered and comforted him; a letter from the being whose image was wrought with his very soul; that letter would have rendered the long hours spent in those murderous trenches more bearable

and the very night vigils less dreary; but, alas! it came not; his heart dared not to account for this protracted silence; but his friends were not so scrupulous, and it was soon whispered among his brother-officers, that Ada was going to be married to her cousin; indeed, some went so far as to say they actually were married. St. John affected to laugh at these idle tales, as he called them; but as mail after mail was received, and though his companions many a time had letters from Halifax, no line came for him; despite himself, doubt of Ada's constancy found a place in his breast, which grew and strengthened. Week after week, and month after month passed, and still for him no letter.

One day, after the arrival of a budget of letters and papers, which were eagerly



seized and devoured by the respective claimants, a brother-officer, and great friend of St. John's, handed him a letter, he had been intently reading, saying in a tone half sad, half triumphant:

“There, old fellow, read that, and learn never to put faith in a woman; a lesson I got by heart many years ago.”

St. John perused it twice, then handed it back, simply saying, “thank you,” and turned upon his heel, quietly taking up a paper, and burying himself behind it, as though lost in its contents.

“Well, you're a cooler party than I took you for,” muttered his friend, as he also turned away and opened the letter again for another read. We shall take the liberty of peeping over his shoulder.

It was from an officer of artillery, at

Halifax. The part that is of interest to us ran thus:—

“We certainly live and learn as regards the fickleness of the softer sex. Here is the fair Ada, St. John’s most devoted ladye love, who had eyes or ears for no one else, going to be married to her cousin; how a woman can be such a fool, as to substitute the one for the other I know not; but it just shows what they are; talk of woman’s constancy, it’s all my eye. I met Kate Hetherington at the ball last night—Ada not going because Edward was on duty and could not be there, at least, so Kate hinted, and when I taxed her with her cousin’s faithlessness to St. John, she only laughed and said, ‘It is a woman’s privilege to be allowed to change her mind.’ So you see the affair must be settled, as she

admitted the charge. I hope St. John was not very far gone; it's all vastly well if you get tired of the damsel, and can plead a fierce old governor, who has sworn to cut you off with a shilling if you marry without his consent, and so get out of it; but when the lady throws you over, it's a deuce of a bore, and makes a man look like a fool. I think this is a clear case for an action of breach of promise. If I were St. John, I would try for damages. The lovely Kate herself is deeply in love with a man lately arrived here, who gives himself out as an Italian Marquis. I much doubt his claim to nobility, but he seems to have lots of tin and gives stunning parties. I believe fair Kate is not the only damsel that has lost her heart to his black eyes and perfect moustachios; he certainly is deuced good

looking;" and so the epistle ran on, giving all the gossip of the day.

St. John went to the trenches that night, callous as to whether he came out of them alive or dead. The rock on which he had built his hopes was shivered into atoms; he could not doubt the statements contained in that letter, for if Ada was unchanged, and was alive, apparently well, and enjoying herself, why had she never written to him? Never replied by a single line to his many letters! He resolved over and over again to think of her no more, but in vain; in the depths of his sad heart her image was still buried, and despite himself he found that he yet loved her more than anything else in this life; he would have given much could he have displaced her; but, who that has ever really loved, can forget the

memory of what has been; words, tones, and looks of affection will rise up before him, and no power he possesses can shut them out from his thoughts; so poor St. John, as often as he essayed to bend his mind to other subjects, sprang back to its old position, while the comparison between the past and the present almost drove him to madness. The longing for honor and fame seemed dead within him. What cared he now for them; the one that was to have shared in them was no longer his; ambition's fires were quenched by the chill blast of despair.

But death comes not to those who are indifferent to his approach; he mocks at those who call for him, and the tortured heart must still beat on till its appointed hour comes. So St. John, in sortie after sortie, escaped unwounded, though many a

comrade fell dead at his side, till, in the attack on the Redan, he received a serious wound in the shoulder, of which, at the time, he took little heed, but fought on till from loss of blood, he fell senseless and exhausted, and on awakening to consciousness found himself in hospital.

The wound was more serious than he imagined, and it was long ere he again was able to move. No doubt his mind retarded the recovery of his body; be that as it may, he was perfectly incapacitated from resuming his duty, and having obtained sick leave, started for England, where, as the papers announced, he arrived safely.

The first news that greeted him on reaching his home was the intended marriage of his younger brother; he was in

no mood for gay scenes, and least of all for a marriage festivity; he felt he had not sufficient strength of mind yet to witness that ceremony unmoved, and so, despite the prayers and entreaties of all concerned, he pleaded his shattered health as being unequal to the smallest fatigue or excitement, and betook himself on a visit to an old maiden aunt who resided in Bath, where he was sure of rest and quiet, and could indulge in his own sad thoughts undisturbed.

Here his bodily health gradually improved, which circumstance his worthy aunt attributed altogether to her good nursing.

The young married pair having returned from a short tour on the continent, were seized with a desire to visit America, and

see the far famed falls of Niagara. They were particularly anxious that their brother should accompany them, thinking such a complete change would be of benefit to him; and St. John, though reluctantly, yielded to their wishes, and in a few weeks they left Liverpool in one of the Royal Mail Packets, bound direct for New York, where, for the present, we shall leave them, hoping the winds and waves may treat them well on their journey.

CHAPTER XV.

"HERE comes the Marquis," said Captain Athol, as he and a party of officers stood looking out of the window in the mess-room at the Artillery Park.

"What a spicy turn out," remarked another. "I say, Athol, do you really think he is the Marquis Guadagni?"

"Heaven only knows," replied Captain Athol; "these Italian nobles are sometimes odd looking fish, and it is not easy to

judge from their appearance; this fellow certainly does the thing in style, and all I can say is, if he is not a marquis, he deserves to be."

At this moment the object of these remarks entered the room, gracefully saluting those assembled there. He was a tall, athletic looking fellow, with that soft olive complexion peculiar to Italians; his eyes were large and intensely dark, but a close observer might notice their quick glances to every part of the room, as though ever in search of something; they were restless, uncomfortable sort of eyes, and had a serpent like fascination about them, drawing one to watch them against the will. It seemed as if no thought even could be hid from them, their penetration was so great. For the rest of his face, it was certainly

handsome; the expression of the mouth was hid by a glossy black moustache; whiskers and hair were of the same raven hue; he was dressed in perfectly good taste, no jewelry adorning his person, save one magnificent brilliant that sparkled on his small and well made hand; he spoke English fluently, a slight foreign accent alone showing it was not his native tongue.

“How well your room looks,” he said, addressing Captain Athol. “You, I hear, have had the principal hand in its arrangement, and it certainly does you an infinite deal of credit.”

“Yes, I flatter myself I do these sort of things rather well,” replied Athol.

“Athol has determined we shall be extra magnificent to-night,” said another speaker.

"They did the thing so well at the ——th mess the other day, he has no idea of our being cut out by the line."

"Certainly not," said Athol, laughing. "Yes, I think we'll chop them down to-night," he continued, glancing round with satisfaction on the really handsome decorations of the room.

"No doubt of it," said the Marquis, "nothing could be more perfect; but do you anticipate a full attendance?"

"A full attendance? I should think so," replied Athol. "Why there is not a young lady but who would cry her eyes out if she was prevented from coming to one of our balls. The only fault is, that none of them ever will stay away, and so we are often rather too crowded."

"May I ask if the lovely Miss Hether-

ington and her cousin are to be amidst the throng?"

"Certainly, no ball is perfect without them. I say, Marquis, you seem rather smitten in that quarter; not a bad spec either, the old uncle has lots of money, and I hear, has handsomely provided for the charming Kate."

"Pooh! nonsense. I am whole hearted yet; she certainly is a charming girl, but as to money, I assure you that is no object to me. The pittance that her uncle would leave her might serve to buy her shoe-strings were she my wife. Why how much do you suppose now will this great fortune be?"

"Some two thousand a year or so," said Athol; "not a bad sum for a poor man; though, as you say, but sufficient for *your*

wife to buy shoe-strings with. I humbly trust the future Mrs. Athol will dispense with such an expensive item of dress."

The Marquis laughed, and managed to turn the conversation on other topics, and presently took himself off, many an envious eye following his handsome turn out.

"Well," said Captain Athol, "if he thinks two or three thousand a year an item not worth mentioning, I wonder what his income really is? I have strong doubts about that fellow, despite the magnificent style in which he lives; however, as long as he does live in that magnificent style, I shall put my doubts in my pocket. What a splendid feed he gave us last night. I wonder where he got his cook?"

"Brought him with him, to be sure, from his palace, in Italy," said Dr. Forbes, a

steady matter-of-fact old Scotchman; "but for my part, I don't think the cooking such great things after all, the victuals were so disguised that the deuce a bit could I tell what I was eating; give me plain beef or mutton in preference to these kickshaw dishes."

"You're right, doctor," said another old fogie. "Who knows but what we have been eating frogs, and such like nastiness?"

"The Lord forbid," said the doctor, with such a serious air that a shout of laughter was elicited.

"Frogs or no frogs," said Athol, "I hope he will soon repeat the dose."

"Every one to his taste," replied the doctor, "for my part I'm thinking he'll not catch my legs under his mahogany again."

Night succeeded day, and brilliant and bright looked the said mess-room, with all its gay trappings: flags, and banners, that perchance had waved over more than one battle-field, now waved as lightly over the fair throng fast assembling, as though there were no such things as bloodshed and battle field. Stars, made of bayonets, gleamed and sparkled on the walls, and the sweet breath of flowers floated all around; the hum of mirthful voices mingling with sweet strains of music stole forth through open casements upon the night air. Who, that looked upon the scene, could imagine aught of grief or woe, or could dream that beneath the fair outer garb of mirth perchance lay a heart breaking with its load of misery.

We know not how many amidst that gay throng, decked with a smile the lip that

fain would have quivered with emotion; or how many eyes gleamed brightly that could have wept bitter scalding tears; but there was one at least, whose smile was hollow; hollow as the heart of him who leant over her with such apparent tenderness. Listen to his voice soft and low, its very tone seemingly free from guile.

“Nay, dear Ada, do not regret coming to-night,” he softly whispers in reply to something she has said, “you are looking better for the exertion already, and without you it would have been dull work for me. Everything is dull to me without you.”

“Hush, Edward,” she interrupted, “why will you always talk to me in this strain? It grieves and annoys me; do pray go and join the dancers; I do not wish you to remain so constantly at my side.”

"Then you will not dance this dance with me," he replied in a mournful tone.

"Certainly not," said Ada, "I have already danced twice with you this evening, which is as often as I ever do with the same person; and as I have told you before, I will not break through my rule even for a cousin."

"Cruel girl," he muttered as he turned away, a vexed and annoyed expression usurping the place of the bland as he sought the hand of some other partner.

Just then Lord and Lady D. entered the room.

"What not dancing, Ada!" they both exclaimed, coming up to where she was sitting by a friend who had chaperoned her and Kate that evening, (the Admiral not

feeling well, was disinclined to venture out).

"I have been dancing a good deal for me," she replied, smiling sadly, "and feel worn out and tired, so I prefer sitting still; but how late you are to-night," she continued, "how is that?"

"Why to tell you the truth, it is, I fear, all my fault," said Lord D. "I went to dine with the General alone, having a little private business that we wanted to discuss, and I promised to come away and bring Emmy here at ten, but somehow the time flew past without either of us noticing it, till I was horrified at hearing the clock strike eleven; however, you know Emmy is a good little wife, and did not pout and say she would not come at all; but do you know on our way here, we heard two guns,

apparently from a steamer coming in. I wonder what it can be; I must go and enquire."

And placing Lady D. on a seat by Ada, his lordship hurried off.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE left St. John on the point of starting with his bother and sister-in-law for New York. The first half of the journey was pleasant enough, the weather being delightful; the young bride was an excellent sailor, as was also her husband and St. John, and the trio spent most of their time on deck; St. John each day seeming to gain strength, becoming also a little more cheerful in spirit.

His brother's wife, who, as yet had never known a care, tried to win him from his sad thoughts, and even went so far as to joke with him one day on the subject of his inconstant love; but he stopped her at once, saying gravely :

“Emily, never speak to me lightly on this subject, it is one that has wounded me too deeply. Think how different were my feelings when last I crossed the Atlantic. High hopes of future honor, dreams of future bliss, filled my heart with ecstasy; alas! how have those visions faded into empty nothingness. Emily, you have no knowledge of what my heart feels; God forbid you ever should!”

And with a deep-drawn sigh he turned from her and leant over the vessel's side.

Emily's eyes filled with tears, tears of

pity for him, and annoyance at her own thoughtlessness in having so touched on a theme, that to St. John yet required such tender handling; going up to him, she said:

“Forgive me, dear Herbert, I meant but to try and make you more cheerful and spoke without thought.”

He wrung the little hand held out him, saying kindly:

“Indeed, I know you did it for the best; but, Emily, I am very silly on that subject yet, and you must not allude to it in the way you did just now.”

She promised to be more careful for the future and the conversation turned on other subjects.

The weather which had been fine up to that morning now showed symptoms of a

change, though the sun still shone, sudden gusts of wind seemed to rush upon the ship, blustering loudly for a few minutes, and then sighing mournfully away through the rigging. The captain, who had been walking up and down the deck, gaily conversing with a party of American ladies, stopped and eagerly scanned the horizon.

"No storm coming, I hope, Captain," said one of the ladies.

He looked grave as he turned to reply.

"Aye, I fear we shall have a nasty night; but there is no danger," he added, seeing the ladies looked startled; "our ship is strong and tough, and has weathered many a worse night than I think this will be."

And he hurried off, as he said, to prepare to receive the enemy, while the

ladies dispersed, nervously hurrying below. The Captain's worst fears were realized; scarcely two hours after sunset it was blowing a perfect hurricane, but still gallantly the ship rode on the mountainous waves that seemed striving so madly to engulf her, though every timber groaned as if in mortal agony; there were wild shrieks, and hoarse wailings amongst the rigging, as though spirits of the air and of the deep had gathered there to howl for their prey. Truly it was a fearful night, and many a knee that had never sought the Throne of Grace since the tender years of infancy, now bent in eager and earnest supplication; many a reckless heart thrilled wildly with the fear of sudden death.

But this time the gallant ship was not

doomed to destruction and wreck; though the storm continued with but little abatement through the next day and night, and she was driven many miles out of her course, still she came forth as a conqueror.

Again the passengers clustered in merry groups on the deck. The sun beams danced and sparkled again on the waters, that had subsided into tiny wavelets, rippling with a gentle music against the ship's sides, as though glad of her recent escape from their fierce wrath.

"Treacherous things," said Emily, who, with her husband and St. John, stood looking over the side, "your smiles are not to be trusted."

"Like a woman's," said St. John bitterly.

"Nay, Herbert, you are severe on us. What say you, Arthur," turning to her husband, "are my smiles to be trusted?"

"Not a bit of it," he replied, drawing her fondly to him, his eyes all the time believing his words.

"Take care, sir impudence, or I shall never smile on you again, and as for you, Herbert, I don't know what punishment you deserve for such a rude speech."

But St. John apparently heard her not; he was gazing moodily on the sea; Emily wisely did not interrupt him, but taking her husband's arm, they walked rapidly up and down the deck, taking, as she laughingly said, their constitutional before dinner.

"I thought we should have been in

New York by this time," said her husband, "but the Captain has just told me that his coals are getting low, and he fears he shall have to put into Halifax to replenish; that horrid storm carried us so far out of our way."

"Good gracious!" said Emily, "does Herbert know this? What does he say to going there?"

"I do not think he knows it yet; the Captain thinks we shall not get in there till the middle of to-morrow night, and as we shall only have to stay a few hours it will not much signify."

"Oh, dear, I am sorry it will be in the night; I so long to see the girl who has still such power over Herbert's heart."

"Woman's curiosity," gaily replied her husband; "I would not give a straw to

see her," he added more gravely; "she must have a bad heart to treat such a fellow as Herbert in the cruel way she has done. For his sake I regret we shall have to put into Halifax; the very knowledge of being so near this false Ada will, I fear, re-open afresh the wounds that I had hoped were healing."

"I trust not," said Emily.

But at this moment St. John joined them.

"What are you so earnestly hoping about, Emily?" he said.

She blushed slightly as she answered:

"Oh, something Arthur and I were talking about."

"That is as much as to say," he replied smiling, "something that is no business of yours."

“Nay,” said Arthur gravely, “I fear it is business of yours; something the Captain told me a little while ago, and she was hoping it would not distress you.”

“What is it?” said St. John.

“Why, he thinks as his coals are very low, nearly out, we shall have to put into Halifax to replenish.”

“To Halifax!” echoed St. John, turning very pale “anywhere rather than there.”

“My dear fellow,” said Arthur, “we shall be there a very few hours, and that, too, in the middle of the night, so do not distress yourself.”

But St. John from that moment became restless and uncomfortable at times; he shrank from going anywhere in Ada's vicinity, and then again his heart yearned with an intense longing once more to look

upon that face; every pulse throbbed wildly in his breast the next night, as, sooner than the Captain anticipated, the good ship made her way up Halifax Harbour. As they swiftly glided by each well known landmark, recollections of the past rushed painfully through his breast, and burying his head in his hands, he fairly groaned aloud.

Emily and her husband stood near, neither of them venturing to interrupt; at last they reached the wharf, the noise and commotion occasioned by which effectually roused him, and rising he said:

“We had better go into the saloon, no doubt many of my old friends will come on board; I remember there was always a rush amongst us on the arrival of any steamer, to hear the news.”

Emily and Arthur willingly consented, glad to see him so calm and composed.

He had judged rightly, they had hardly seated themselves in the saloon when a gay party of officers entered, among whom was Captain Athol.

“St. John!” he exclaimed, “good heavens, is it possible? I can scarcely credit my eyes, where are you off to, old fellow?”

“To visit Niagara, with my brother and his wife; let me introduce you to them.”

Having performed that ceremony, St. John enquired why Athol and those that accompanied him were in full dress.

“Why, my dear fellow,” he replied, “we have a ball at our place to night, but we could not resist stealing away for a few minutes, on hearing the report that a

steamer had just come in. By the way, the Captain informed me he should be here for some hours, suppose you just slip on another rig and come back with me, perhaps your brother and his wife will honor us with their company also; my carriage is here, and I shall only be too happy if you will make use of it; come, old fellow, everybody is there, all your old friends, won't they be astonished to see you!"

St. John hesitated a moment, but his yearning to see that loved face once again, overcame every other feeling; turning to his brother, he said:

"Will you and Emily come, Arthur? I think Emily will like it, it will be a pleasant break to this long journey. What say you?"

Emily's eyes danced gaily at the prospect.

“Oh, yes, Arthur, do let us go.”

“No ball for me to-night, thank you,” he answered, “but I don’t see anything to prevent your going with Herbert; so run away, and get ready, you shall have ten minutes to dress in.”

“I shall do the best I can in that time,” she replied, as she hurried off to her state room.

In little over the given ten minutes, she re-appeared, looking very lovely, dressed most simply yet becomingly in white; on seeing her her husband looked half-regretful that he had declined going; however, it was too late now to change his mind, so wrapping her carefully up, he placed her in the carriage, saying:

“Do not stay more than an hour, for fear we might start.”

She promised they would not, and the carriage drove off.

How St. John's heart beat as they reached the entrance of the well known barracks; in another moment he should be in Ada's presence; he felt she was there, though he had not dared to ask the question of Captain Athol.

Ada was still sitting by Lady D.; a quadrille had just been formed, and an officer of the engineers with his partner stood before her; presently she heard him say:

“Do you know I have just been down on board the New York steamer, and saw such a lovely woman there, a Mrs. St. John; the steamer has to remain some hours to coal, and Athol was trying to persuade her and her husband, to come here for an hour or

so, I do hope they'll come; by Jove, there they are!"

Ada started and stood up, could she believe her eyes? Yes, there was St. John with his wife leaning on his arm.

Poor Ada, a sudden giddiness seized her and she sank upon her seat, a deathlike hue spreading over her face; well for her that Lady D. sat by her side, and that the crowd in front at the moment shielded her from observation; but her faint was of only momentary duration; the blood quickly came back to lip and cheek, and a bright, indignant fire lighted her usually soft eye.

Lady D. looked upon her with astonishment; she also had seen St. John, and had expected a scene.

"Brave girl," she whispered, "he was not worthy of your love."

Just then Kate hurried up.

"Do you know who is here?" she said. "St. John and his wife; for heaven's sake, Ada, call up all your pride to your assistance, and don't let him fancy you are breaking your heart about him."

"You need have no fear on my account, Kate," answered Ada, calmly and haughtily; "Captain St. John and his wife are the same as any other strangers to me, their coming and going is a matter of perfect indifference."

Kate at that moment was claimed for the dance by the Marquis Guadagni; she was so lost in amazement at Ada's calm tone, and haughty expression that she replied absently to her partner's repeated ques-

tion of what she thought of the new arrival.

Edward had taken Kate's place by Ada's side, and she began talking eagerly to him.

As the crowd opened, St. John saw her and Edward bending over her. His cheek paled at the sight, and for a moment he shook so that Emily looked up to see what was the matter; but *his* pride was also roused, and with a flashing eye he said:

“Come, Emily, I will show you the fairest and falsest girl under heaven.”

And placing her hand within his arm he walked deliberately to the part of the room where Ada and her cousin were seated.

Ada felt they were coming, and her

voice for a moment shook; but again pride came to her assistance, and as St. John passed he heard her laugh gaily; he half paused, and looked full in her face; she lifted her eyes to his for a moment, as if they had been utter strangers, and never met before, and then indifferently turned them away, and continued her apparently interesting conversation.

St. John needed no more to convince him of her utter worthlessness; he hurried from the room on board, heart-sick and weary, and delivering Emily to the care of her husband, he shut himself up in his own state-room, and in bitter sorrow mourned over his shattered idol.

The steamer was soon under weigh again, but he knew it not; every sense but the sense of utter misery was deadened.

Could he have looked into Ada's room as the soft dawn was breaking, how would his feelings have altered—could he have seen her, no trace of pride, no trace of life scarcely in her lovely face as she lay on the floor, where she had lain for hours, the traces of heavy tears on her pallid cheeks. Ah! could he have seen her then, he had not mourned so bitterly over his broken idol.

CHAPTER XVII.

ADMIRAL RAINSWORTH sat in his library, apparently in deep thought; there was a stern expression on his usually placid face, and a glance of indignation shot from his still bright eye, as he referred again to a letter that lay before him.

“Scoundrel,” he muttered to himself. “A pretty reward truly, for all the kindness I have shown him; but I’ll tell him

another tale now. I'll alter my will this very day. He will find that his old uncle is not such a fool as he took him for;" and the old man rose and rang the bell violently. "Tell Cox," he said, as a servant entered, "that I wish him to ride into the town at once, and tell Mr. Johnstone, that I wish to see him. Stay, I had better write a note," and hastily scribbling a few lines, he gave it to the man, bidding him to tell Cox to be sure and wait for an answer.

The letter which had so disturbed the good Admiral, was from Mrs. Somers, and ran thus:—

"Sir,—I consider it my painful duty to inform you of facts, with which, I believe, you at present to be wholly unacquainted. In the beginning of last summer, your nephew's carriage was overturned, and he and his

servant thrown out directly in front of my cottage; Mr. Hetherington, though not seriously hurt, was much bruised and shaken, and the surgeon whom I sent for immediately, considering a few days' rest requisite for him before proceeding on his journey, I willingly begged him to become my guest for that time. I am a widow, with only one daughter, the sole tie to life that I possess. I do not here speak of her beauty, of her guileless and unsuspecting nature; suffice it that your nephew strove, and not in vain, to win her love; from the date of his accident, scarcely a month passed without our seeing him; and I, with stupid blindness, perceived not the object of these frequent visits, till too late—till my poor Helen had learnt to love him with all the intensity of a first love—a love that makes

its object an idol to be blindly worshipped. Immediately that my eyes were opened to what was going on, I spoke to your nephew, when he confessed that he entertained a deep love for my child; but that, at present his circumstances would not allow him to marry, but hoped to do so at some future time. I wished then to write to you on the subject, but he implored me, for the sake of his own, as well as Helen's happiness, to remain silent for the present, as you had set your heart on his marrying his cousin, your daughter; and that your fury would be so great, that you not only would refuse your consent, but very probably discard him altogether from your favour; he would break it to you, he said, by degrees. There was a something in his manner then and afterwards, that raised doubts of his sin-

cerity in my mind; and I determined to find out if I could, how far his statements were correct; and for this purpose, leaving my daughter with my good friends, Dr. Grant and his wife, in Windsor, I proceeded to Halifax; there I soon found out the truth; that, at the very time Mr. Hetherington first sought to win my daughter's affections, his cousin was, with your free consent, engaged to another gentleman; therefore I knew he must have uttered a falsehood when he said it had always been your wish and intention that she should marry him. This, alas! was not the only falsehood I found he had told me. I wrote, begging him to call upon me at once; he did so, and when he found how much I really knew, he coolly and impertinently said, 'You did not think I was really going to be so green as

to marry a girl without a sixpence. Miss Somers is a pleasant little thing to know, but I must fly at a higher game for a mate for life.' I replied, my daughter would scorn to become the wife of one who had acted so dishonorably; and who, whatever his position in society, had no title to the name of gentleman; and, begging never to see his face again, I bade him good-morning. That afternoon, I returned home. I need not describe my daughter's feelings when I imparted to her the true object of my journey, and its result; but love is not expelled at will, and though her pure nature would shrink with loathing from being chained for life to a man capable of such conduct, still the memory of what he was, or rather seemed to be, clings to her, and though she strives to be the same, I

can see that my poor child's heart is breaking. Oh! Admiral Rainsworth, you have an only child; how could you bear to see her wasting away, day by day growing paler and paler. I tell you my child is dying; I feel it, I know it; and your nephew is her murderer; this is strong language, but it is truth.

“HELEN SOMERS.

“ Briar Cottage, near Windsor.”

The Admiral continued to pace the room muttering to himself, until the arrival of Mr. Johnstone, with whom he remained closeted for some hours—when the worthy lawyer had departed, Ada was summoned by her father, and Mrs. Somers' letter placed in her hands, the Admiral saying bitterly:

“There, my child, learn to know the viper we have been cherishing at our hearth.”

Ada grew pale as she read, till the allusion to herself brought the color to her cheek, and a bright indignant flash to her eye, but all thought of self was stilled as she finished the epistle, and tears of pity for Helen Somers flowed freely.

“I will go to her papa,” she said, as she returned him the letter. “This is too horrible; who would have believed Edward capable of such conduct? Shame on him! What do you mean to do, papa?”

“Mean to do? Why discard him, of course. Do you suppose I would ever let such a blackguard as that put his foot over my threshold again. Thank Heaven, my poor sister did not live to see this day.

This time twelvemonth she died, and I, like a fool, grieved over her loss. To-day, I thank God, she is not alive."

"But Kate, papa? This will be a dreadful blow to her; you will not forbid his coming occasionally to see her?"

"Allow him to come here! not if he were fifty times my nephew and Kate's brother. Why should I consider Kate's feelings? She does not seem to pay much respect to mine lately. Why does she still keep that man dangling after her? I have told her pretty plainly my opinion of him. He's just about as much an Italian Marquis as I am; imposter is written on his face. What the deuce has got into the girl that she should be so blind, I can't conceive."

"Oh! papa, you may be in the wrong

about him. Though I dislike the Marquis, he seems to me a gentleman, and I believe Kate is really fond of him."

"Fond of him!—stuff and nonsense; but you women are all alike; any wandering vagabond has only to come and make himself eccentric and odd, when you all fall down and worship him, and believe he is some prince in disguise."

"I hope we are not quite so bad as that, papa."

And the ghost of Ada's once bright smile flitted over her pale cheek; the next moment it was gone, and she was earnestly soliciting her papa's consent to go and see Helen Somers.

"But, my darling, you cannot go alone, and I have business that prevents my leaving town at present."

“ Oh, papa, don't you remember Lord and Lady D. saying they intended going to Windsor some day this week. They mean to stay there ten days, so I could go and come back with them. I am sure I know where Briar Cottage is. Do you recollect the last time we went to Windsor, noticing just before we got to the town, a very pretty cottage? I feel sure that is it, and it is all in the way; so Lord and Lady D. could just drop me there, and call for me on their way back. Pray let me go, papa.”

“ Well, my darling, if it is as you say, this will be a very good opportunity for you to go and comfort that poor girl; but we may as well drive to Government House and settle the matter; I will then reply to this sad letter, and tell Mrs. Somers you

are coming." And the Admiral rang the bell to order the carriage, while Ada left the room to prepare for the drive.

The good Governor and his wife were shocked and indignant on hearing the tale of Edward's perfidious conduct, and only too gladly consented to take charge of Ada on such an errand of mercy.

"We are going to start the day after to-morrow, and very early in the morning," said Lord D., "almost too early for you to rise, my poor little Ada, with that pale face of yours."

"Nay, my Lord, I like early rising, and I assure you I am now quite strong and well."

He shook his head as he looked at her, but said nothing more.

"Ada dear, you had better dine and sleep here to-morrow," said Lady D.,

“and that will not hurry you up so early.”

This was agreed upon, and the Admiral and his daughter took their leave.

On their way home the old man fixed his eyes anxiously on Ada's face.

“Lord D. is right; you are very pale, my darling. Are you still pining for that scou——?”

“Oh, hush, papa!” she quickly interrupted. “I assure you there is nothing the matter with me. I only want a little change of air. You will see with what rosy cheeks I shall return to you.”

“God grant it!” murmured her father, as he handed her out of the carriage at their own door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ADA slept the next night as promised at Government House, and the following morning with her kind friends started for Windsor. Their road for the most part lay through the forest; how calm and peaceful it seemed; the day was warm and sunny, and Ada longed to ramble amidst the stately trees, and repose in the shady nooks made by their dense foliage. The lovely wild flowers, for which Nova Scotia

is so famous, on all sides grew in such profusion that Ada once or twice could not resist having the carriage stopped while she got out and gathered some.

One one of these occasions, just as she returned with her parasol, which she had converted into a basket, overflowing with the sweet wild things, she heard Lord D. say, "I think it would be better to tell her, Emmy;" then, as he handed her into the carriage he declared he could not do any longer without a cigar, and lighting one, he clambered upon the box.

Despite himself, there was a little consciousness in his manner, and Ada, looking earnestly in Lady D.'s face, said nervously:

"What is it? Has anything happened? Oh, tell me."

“Nay, dear,” said Lady D., kindly encircling Ada’s waist with her arm, “only a little piece of news that I heard yesterday; but really you have become such a nervous little thing, that I am half afraid to tell it to you.”

“Oh, now that I see you smile, I am not afraid, so you may tell me what this news is.”

“Well, as you are again looking like yourself, I will. Have you ever had reason to suppose that Mr. St. John was not married?”

“Not married!” said Ada, the bright colour rushing to her cheek at the mention of St. John’s name, “why, I saw his wife with my own eyes.”

“Yes, but eyes are deceitful sometimes,” said Lady D. “What should you say if I

told you that was not his wife, but his brother's?"

“Impossible.”

“But it is possible, dear.”

And Lady D. explained the whole circumstance.

Ada burst into tears.

“Oh, what must he have thought of me?” she murmured.

“Do not blame yourself, dear Ada; though Captain St. John is not married, remember how badly he has behaved. You could not have received him in any other way after such conduct; I wonder he could have the impertinence to show himself in your presence.”

“You are right, Lady D.; I had forgotten,” said Ada sadly; “but tell me how you found out all this.”

“Simply in talking to Captain Athol; he was amongst those who went on board the New York steamer on the night of their ball, and there Captain St. John introduced him to his brother, who, with his young wife, was making a wedding tour to Niagara. Captain Athol thought St. John looking very ill, but it seems he has only just recovered from a severe wound received in the Crimea, and the visit to Niagara on his part was merely for change of air. Captain Athol was much astonished at our not knowing all this, as he said he had explained it all to Kate on the very night in question.”

“Explained it to Kate!” said Ada, “how cruel of her not to tell me; but,” she added with a deep sigh, “I daresay she did it all for the best.”

“Perhaps so, dear Ada; but had I been in her place I should have certainly told you the truth; but we will let the matter drop now, and tell me all you know of this poor girl, Helen Somers.”

“I know nothing beyond that letter,” replied Ada; “Edward has never mentioned her name; he certainly told us he had been upset, and taken into a cottage by some people who were very kind to him, but never led us to suppose they were anything but poor cottagers. Who could have believed him to be so heartless? His conduct distresses me more than I can tell.”

“It is very shocking; I can only hope the mother’s fears may have exaggerated the case, and that the unfortunate girl may not feel it so very deeply.”

“I am afraid not, Lady D.; I seem to have a presentiment of what Helen is like; one whose affections once given must be given for ever. There can be no change where once you love truly; do you think so?”

“All very young ladies hold that opinion, Ada; but I have known many who, finding the first love prove false, have transferred their affections to another, marrying and living happily, and, moreover, occasionally blessing Providence that the first love did not turn out well. Don't look so grave about it, Ada,” continued Lady D. laughing, “I fully expect to hear you some day echoing the same sentiments.”

“Never;” and poor Ada's lip quivered with emotion; “the blow has been too deeply struck, you little know how deeply.

Pray don't joke upon the subject, Lady D.; indeed, indeed, I cannot bear it."

And the big tears rolled slowly down her pale cheek.

"Nay, dear child, forgive my stupid jesting. Heaven knows how sincerely I feel for you; would for your own sake your nature was less true; that you could cease to love one who has proved so unworthy. But cheer up; we are not far from Windsor now, and Mrs. Somers' cottage must be near; I think I see it peeping among the trees there. Is it not so?"

"Yes, that is what I suppose to be Briar Cottage; in fact, so certain am I that it is so that I should not mind your putting me down here and leaving me to my fate."

"Well, I should hardly like to do that,

it would be rather awkward, should you be mistaken; why that cottage, as far as you know, may belong to some gay young bachelor; only fancy his astonishment at finding you and your boxes waiting for admission, with no visible mode of conveyance near; he would mistake you for some wood nymph or spirit of the air. No, no, I will make sure before I drop you in these lonely wilds."

Just then the carriage came to a halt.

"I suppose this is your resting place, Adā," said Lord D., as he descended from the box, "this little green path leads to the house; it is not wide enough for the carriage, but Emmy. and I can walk up with you, and if we find it is really Briar Cottage, Thompson can carry up your traps."

And he assisted them to alight.

The distance to the house was short, and they very soon reached a wicket gate, opening into a tiny, but exquisitely pretty flower garden. The cottage itself was exceedingly pretty, almost covered with roses and Virginian creepers.

“What a *bijou* of a place,” whispered Lord D. to Ada, “I should not mind sharing your visit.”

By this time they had reached the entrance, and stood in a rustic porch, whose trellis work was interwoven with sweet briar, filling the air all around with its sweet perfume. Lord D. directed Ada's attention to it.

“No doubt of the place now,” he said, “this sweet briar tells a tale; but must I disturb this sweet serenity by knocking?

The open door looks as if one might enter unannounced."

At this moment, just as Lord D. lifted the knocker, Mrs. Somers herself appeared.

"This is Miss Rainsworth, I suppose," she said, going up to Ada, "how kind of you to come to us like this; Helen has been feverish and restless for your coming all day; I received your father's letter announcing your kind intention only this morning, but pray come in."

Ada introduced her friends.

"Now that we have delivered Miss Rainsworth into your care, we must say good by, and pray take good care of her, Mrs. Somers," said Lady D.; "though she won't acknowledge it, I assure you she is far from strong."

Mrs. Somers promised to be a mother to

her, and declining all refreshment, as the day was fast drawing to a close, Ada's kind friends departed, promising to write her a line and say what day they should return to town, so that she might be quite ready to accompany them.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON the morning of Ada's departure for Windsor, Edward Hetherington sat before an untasted breakfast with a look of deep gloom and annoyance on his face, a letter from his uncle lay on the table before him, a letter in which the Admiral had spoken his mind pretty freely, upbraiding his nephew in no mild terms for his duplicity, his dishonourable and heartless conduct, it concluded with these words:

“I had provided for you most liberally; but since reading Mrs. Somers’s letter, I have altered my will, and have not left you one penny. Blame yourself for this, you have worked out your own fortune. I need hardly say, I never wish to see you again cross my threshold.”

“Hang the whole affair,” muttered Edward, “what’s to be done now? That was an unlucky upset of mine, and the worst of it is I love the girl after all; what a fool I have been, how was I to know the old buffer had so handsomely provided for me? I thought all his fortune would have gone to Ada; those cursed debts, if it had not been for them I should not have thought of Ada’s money. What is she, in comparison with my Helen? *My* Helen, indeed, a nice opinion she must have of me; I warrant

her mother has shown me up to her pretty strongly, and serve me right; I didn't deserve such a creature, I suppose she wouldn't look at me now. What an ass I have been."

And Edward pushed back his chair impatiently, disturbing by the act, a fine Newfoundland dog, that was peacefully reposing at his side.

The chair by accident struck against the dog, and sent him howling to the other end of the room.

"Serve you right for getting in the way," growled Edward.

A minute afterwards the faithful beast was licking his master's hand and looking up inquiringly in his face, as though to see whether he might venture on further freedoms.

Edward, who was again in deep thought, almost unconsciously let his hand fall on the dog's head, and abstractedly stroked his glossy coat, whereupon the animal, as though to show his gratitude, jumped up rapturously and licked his surly master's face, as much as to say, "There, it's all right again, don't be cross any more."

Edward seemed pleased by the dog's caresses.

"Faithful old Nova!" he said; "you love me still—good dog." At this moment, though no sound of footsteps was heard, Nova pricked up his ears, and made a spring towards the door, and as a decided quick tap sounded on the panel, he uttered a deep growl.

"Down! quiet, Nova. Come in," was uttered in no very sweet voice, for Edward

was in no mood to see visitors. "Oh, it is you," as the door opened, and a powerful athletic looking Indian entered the room. He wore the dress common to the remnant of the Mic Mac tribe (the only remaining Indians now left in Nova Scotia); it was half Indian, half civilized; a sort of tunic made of cloth, reached a little below the knee, bound tightly round the waist with a belt of wampum; the shoulders and cuffs slightly embroidered with red cloth and various coloured beads; his legs were encased in cloth leggings, fitting tight, also embroidered on the outer seam; on his feet were mocassins made of undressed moose skin; round his shoulders a blanket was loosely thrown, which, if the truth must be spoken, was not quite so white as it might have been; his long jet black hair

was gathered behind into a club, and bound with a bright scarlet ribbon; this was crowned by a beaver hat, with a ribbon of the same colour tied round it; about his neck were hung numerous strings of beads, with quaint looking ornaments attached, and in his belt was stuck a keen-edged tomahawk; his complexion was of a reddish copper coloured hue, with high cheek bones, and small black piercing eyes; he was probably about fifty years of age; he did not remove his hat, or make any other obeisance as he entered the room, but going up to Edward said, in his broken English:

“How you do, Captain; you go find moose this day?”

“I have not got my leave yet, John (for — so was the Indian called by the offi-

cers whom he frequently accompanied out hunting), but it will be here in a minute. Ah, here it is," as an orderly entered and handed him a letter. "I have got a fortnight this time, John, but I don't care for moose stalking, it is tiring work. I shall just shoot whatever comes in my way. I like the fun of living in the woods. I would we could come across a bear; I hear several have been troubling the farmers lately."

"May be we find one," replied the Indian. "Two three days ago one fine black fellow come close to my wigwam; he much hungry I 'spose, this cut him skull wide," and he pointed to the tomahawk; "bring him skin in this day for sell him."

"Well, I hope we may come across another," said Edward.

"Me hope so too," said John; then looking wistfully at the breakfast table, "you no ask John eat; him hungry as the old bear."

Edward laughed, and cut off a hunch of bread and a large slice of meat.

"Here, eat this, while I get ready."

The Indian composedly seated himself on the floor and began munching the food, utterly regardless of plate, knife, or fork, while Edward entered an adjoining chamber, and summoning his servant, quickly got ready what traps were necessary for a fortnight's sojourn in the wild forest.

Having crossed in the ferry-boat to the Dartmouth side and driven some miles on the Truro road, Edward and his Indian friend got out of the light waggon, leaving

the servant who had accompanied them to drive it back; and struck off the roads into the woods, the Indian leading the way.

They had not proceeded more than a mile, when he stopped, and held up his hand.

“John hear footsteps; it my son.”

Edward listened but heard nothing; presently an Indian youth, about sixteen, sprung through the bushes close to them.

“Well, young 'un,” said Edward, “I thought you would have missed us this time.”

“Me no do that never,” replied the boy, showing his white teeth. “You tell me you be here this day, me watch till you come;” then turning to the old Indian, he spoke a few words in the soft guttural Indian tongue, and then dropping quietly

behind, the trio pushed on their way almost in silence.

They had walked many miles, and were surrounded by dense forests, when the setting sun warned them to prepare to bivouac for the night; the two Indians quickly erected a wigwam, or tent of poles, covered with bark, in which was spread a most comfortable bed of soft dry moss. Edward eyed these preparations for rest with no small complacency, his day's journey having rather fatigued him. They next lighted a large fire outside the tent, and having partaken of a hearty supper of cold meat and bread, with something to wash it down, they sat round the blazing wood, smoking, till Edward's pipe suddenly dropping from his mouth, aroused him from his half sleeping state; and entering the tent

he threw himself on his mossy couch, and in a very few minutes was oblivious to all around him.

The Indians, also wrapping their blankets around them, with their feet toward, the fire, sank upon the soft mossy ground, and were soon apparently asleep.

They had lain thus for about two hours, and the fire had nearly died out, when the elder Indian raised himself gently and listened. There was no sound that an ordinary ear would have caught in the still summer night, but the Indian evidently heard something, for in the waning fire light you could see his small bright eye glisten, and cautiously taking up a rifle that lay by his side, he examined it to see that it was right, and drew his finger over the edge of the tomahawk. A grim smile

of satisfaction passed over his countenance as he made these preparations; he then lay down again, as though sleeping, but the gleam of his bright eye was visible, watching intensely in one direction. Glancing towards the boy, we might have discovered his eyes wide open also; he had watched his father's movements in silence; presently he raised himself on one arm. Hist! and he has dropped again as though lifeless. A few moments more watching, and with a stealthy, hesitating step a huge black bear comes towards the tent; almost imperceptibly the elder Indian has raised himself into a sitting posture, and silently lifted his gun; a moment more, and a sharp report rings out in the still night. With a savage growl of pain and anger, the bear turns to make off; but with the

swiftness of light the boy is on his feet, and straight as an arrow a gleaming tomahawk cuts through the air, and the beast, without a sound, falls lifeless to the ground.

“Good,” was all the father uttered.

The report of the gun had roused Edward, who rushed out of the tent. On seeing the dead bear, a look of great disappointment came into his face, and in a surly tone he asked :

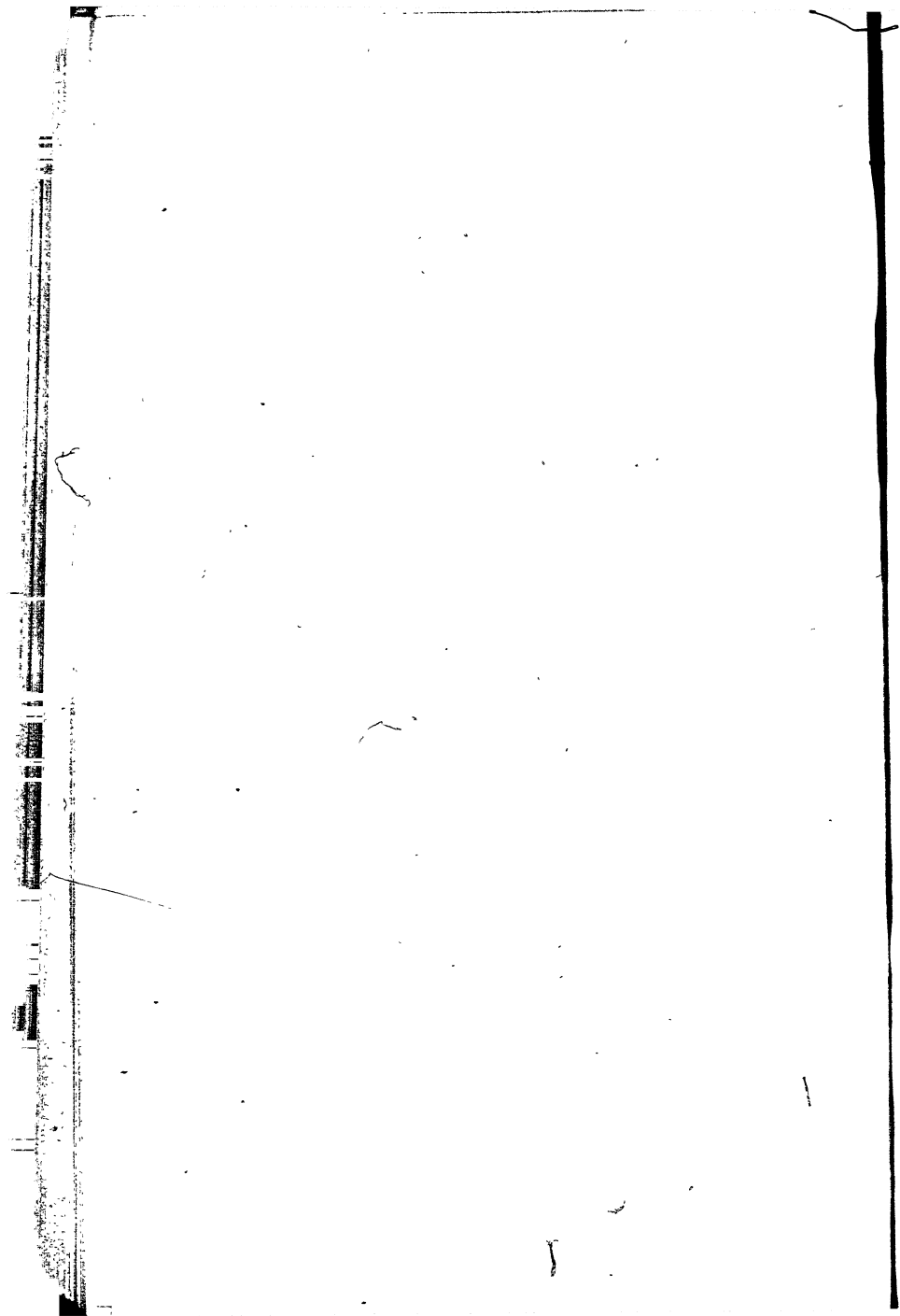
“Why did you not call me?”

“Him run off if we stir,” replied the Indian; “him old and much cunning.”

In the meantime the boy, with much dexterity, was quietly removing the animal's skin; he then proceeded to cut off a steak, which no doubt was intended for breakfast. The fire was again replenished,

and Edward once more retired to rest, while the two Indians, lighting their pipes, smoked on in unbroken silence, till the first streaks of light gave token that the early summer day was beginning; then once more wrapping themselves in their blankets, they sought for that repose which the dark hours of the night had denied to them.

END OF VOL I.



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