

VARIOUS

GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE,
VOL XXXIII, NO. 6,
DECEMBER 1848

Various

**Graham's Magazine, Vol
XXXIII, No. 6, December 1848**

«Public Domain»

Various

Graham's Magazine, Vol XXXIII, No. 6, December 1848 / Various —
«Public Domain»,

Содержание

MILDRED WARD	5
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	8
CHAPTER III	9
CHAPTER IV	11
CHAPTER V	14
CHAPTER VI	17
CHAPTER VII	20
A LAY	23
THE SAILOR'S LIFE-TALE	25
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	33

Various
Graham's Magazine, Vol
XXXIII, No. 6, December 1848

MILDRED WARD
OR THE DEBUT
BY MRS. CAROLINE H. BUTLER

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

CHAPTER I

Archibald Dundass was a rich Jamaica planter, whose estates were situated in one of the most delightful regions in that garden of the West India isles. His wife, an English lady, of great personal attractions and highly connected, died when Helen, their only child, had just entered her thirteenth year, an age when, perhaps, a mother's counsel and tender guidance is most required. When the news of Mrs. Dundass's death reached her friends, they immediately wrote, beseeching the bereaved husband to come at once to England with his child, or if not expedient for himself to leave Jamaica, that he would at least suffer the little Helen to come to them; and especially did they urge the plea that thereby he would enable her to receive a more finished education than could possibly be acquired upon the island.

This plea, to be sure, offered a strong inducement to Mr. Dundass; but how could he school his heart to this second bereavement. Helen possessed all her mother's traits – her dark blue eyes – her golden hair and skin of dazzling purity – the smile that played around her dimpled mouth – her light airy step, were all her mother's. Looking upon her thus in her budding loveliness the Helen of his youth once more moved before him. To yield her up he could not – and therefore Mr. Dundass rejected the oft-repeated entreaties of his English friends. Helen remained in Jamaica. A governess was provided, and whatever money could secure in the way of learning was most freely expended.

Mr. Dundass possessed many noble traits of character, yet pride was a very strong ingredient in his composition leading him not unfrequently into errors which his sober judgment condemned. Still he was generally beloved, especially by his slaves, to whom he was a kind, indulgent master. Knowing himself to be one of the richest, if not *the* richest proprietor upon the island, it was natural he should mark out an alliance for his daughter commensurate with the fortune her hand would bestow. When, therefore, Helen, beaming and beautiful as the star of evening, burst from the confinement of the school-room to dazzle all eyes and move all hearts, what wonder that pride and ambition swelled the heart of Mr. Dundass. But

"Love will venture in where it daur nae weel be seen;"

and, unfortunately for the realization of those ambitious dreams, a mutual love had already sprung up between Helen and a young man without friends or fortune, whom her father had received into favor, and employed for some years in his counting-room.

To appeal to Mr. Dundass for his sanction to their union Ward knew would be vain, and he therefore prevailed upon the imprudent Helen to elope with him, assuring her that her father's anger would be but momentary, and that his great affection triumphing over resentment, would compel him to forgive her error, and open his arms to welcome her return. But, unhappily, it was not so. There was no moving the heart of Mr. Dundass to forgiveness. His anger and resentment were as boundless as had been his love. He refused to see his child, spurned her from his door, and to all the numerous and penitent letters she addressed him, gave no reply. The blow was, indeed, a heavy one, coming from one so idolized; his affections, as well as his long-cherished pride, were crushed, and his resentment rose in proportion.

In the meantime Ward had removed to a distant part of the island with his young and beautiful bride, where he had obtained a situation which promised to be lucrative. That he loved his young wife who for his sake had renounced wealth, station, and a father's love, cannot be doubted; but that he also held a corner of his heart for the possessions she might inherit, is also certain. His disappointment, therefore, at the inflexibility of Mr. Dundass was extreme, and mingled with it a bitterness which, in a short time, displayed itself toward his unoffending wife, and in an irritability which, ere the end of a twelvemonth, caused his employer to dismiss him from his service. From that time the life of poor

Helen was most wretched, bitterly reaping in tears and poverty the fruits of disobedience. From place to place she followed her husband wherever he could obtain employ, but of which his idle, dissolute habits soon deprived him. A constitution naturally feeble sunk under the inroads of dissipation. Ere three years a wife Helen became a widow. Her situation was now truly deplorable. Without money, without friends, and thrown upon the cold charity of the world ere yet she had reached her twentieth year. For the sake of her innocent babe she resolved to make one more appeal to the mercy of her father.

Over mountain ridges, through deep valleys – crossing dense forests and treacherous rivulets – sometimes on foot, sometimes indebted to the kindness of some chance traveler for a few miles ride, Helen at length drew near the home of her childhood, and stole, unannounced, into the presence of her father. The moment was propitious. Mr. Dundass had already learned the death of his son-in-law, and the probable destitution of his daughter. In those three years alienation from his only child he had suffered much, and untimely old age had silvered his temples and worn deep furrows o'er his brow. Not all his wealth, not all the goadings of disappointed ambition, nor even the sting her ingratitude had left, could drive her image from his heart, or check the still small voice of conscience, which whispered that not even her errors could excuse the harshness with which she had been repulsed. The death of Ward seemed to unite Helen once more to him. Over her misfortunes he shed bitter tears; and although pride still rebelled against the yearnings of his heart, and made him resolve he would never more admit her to his presence, yet even at the moment when she fell fainting and exhausted at his feet, he was meditating some measures by which he could place her and her little one above want. Ah! pride, anger, enduring obstinacy, where are ye now? There was a well of love in that old man's heart whose depths ye had not yet probed. One look at the sad, care-worn face of Helen; one glance at the innocent babe pillowed upon her breast, and that fount of love was unsealed. The father took them to his breast and blessed them.

CHAPTER II

A few years and Helen, more beautiful than ever, again made her appearance in society, and again Mr. Dundass cherished his darling dream of her forming some high connection. Little Mildred, in the meanwhile, having been sent to England under the charge of a faithful nurse, to receive her education.

A second time, however, was Mr. Dundass doomed to disappointment. The charming and attractive young widow gave her hand to Mr. Donaldson, a Scotch gentleman, whose only recommendation in the eyes of Mr. Dundass was a showy exterior and a superb set of teeth. He had known him for many years, and had always regarded him as more shrewd than honest, and one who, where his own interests were concerned, would let no scruples of conscience stand in the way of his advancement. He thought him rich, but he had much rather he had been poor, if able to boast a titled descent. The idea, therefore, of this second marriage of his daughter gave him in reality as little satisfaction as the first. His reluctant consent was, however, at length obtained, and Helen borne off a second time a bride from her father's house.

The plantation of Mr. Donaldson was delightfully located in a most lovely region of hill and dale, sparkling with delicious rivulets, and sprinkled with charming groves of the deep-tinted pimento, the graceful palm, and magnificent cotton-trees, and the air rife with the fragrance of the orange and citron blossoms, through which, like winged jewels, glanced birds of the most brilliant plumage. Whatever may have been the errors which Mr. Dundass detected in the moral character of Mr. Donaldson, he was a most tender and devoted husband; and in this paradise to which he had brought her, the happiness of Helen seemed perfect. The Cascade, as Mr. Donaldson had named his station, from the numerous little rills and waterfalls in the neighborhood, was distant fifty miles from Mount Dundass, yet the intercourse between father and daughter continued uninterrupted until the infirmities of age pressing upon Mr. Dundass, rendered his visits to the Cascade less frequent, and the cares of a growing family confining Mrs. Donaldson more closely at home.

Helen was now the mother of several children, charming, bright little girls, yet it was strange that Mr. Dundass never seemed to regard them in the same tender light he did Mildred Ward. Mr. Donaldson had never seen Mildred, but already in his heart he hated her. The partiality of the grandfather rankled his inmost soul, for he saw plainly it would interfere with the prospects of his own children. Indeed, Mr. Dundass had already settled fifty thousand dollars upon his granddaughter Mildred, asserting also that at his death that sum should be doubled. Mr. Donaldson possessed great influence over his wife – his words to her were oracles – his wishes laws. By degrees, therefore, he instilled into her mind a jealousy against her absent child, mingled with feelings of resentment toward her father, that, to the exclusion of her little Grace and Anna, he should have made her the object of his love and munificence. This feeling once engendered Mr. Donaldson took good care to keep alive. The poison worked slowly but so secretly, that no doubt Helen herself would have been shocked could she have read her own heart and found that, instigated by jealousy, a mother's tenderness for her first-born was fast turning to bitterness.

In the meantime seventeen rosy summers had flitted as some fairy dream over the head of Mildred, when her grandfather, no longer able to resist his desire of seeing her, urged her return to Jamaica.

CHAPTER III

To merry England our story now takes us, that we may trace a brief sketch of those scenes wherein the days of Mildred had glided so happily away.

Norcross Hall, the ancestral domain of the late Mrs. Dundass was situated in one of England's most charming nooks, about forty miles from the great metropolis. It was an ancient building, the main part of which was said to have been erected in the time of Elizabeth – but of this little of the original structure remained. Its present occupant, Sir Hugh Norcross, was the son of Mrs. Dundass's eldest brother, and to his guardianship the little Mildred had been consigned. In this charming family she was treated with the utmost tenderness, receiving the same education and sharing the same pursuits as her little cousins, between whom and herself a lively affection sprung up. Lady Norcross was a superior woman, both of mind and heart; and under her guidance and gentle teachings, which her every-day life so beautifully exemplified, what wonder that the little family growing up around her should prove all that was good and lovely. Helen Norcross was near the same age as Mildred, Rupert three years her senior. It was not until the latter had reached his fourteenth year that the three cousins were ever separated, even for a single day; but now, Rupert was sent to Eton, and the two girls were left to weep and mourn his absence, or to study a thousand delightful projects to welcome his return at the holidays.

What happy seasons those were when, released for a time from the thralldom of college pursuits, Rupert once more sprung in freedom through the haunts of his childhood; the old walls rung with cheerful voices, and every dell and dingle echoed to the merry music of their happy hearts. And then, as each holyday came round, what changes marked their progress. The two little girls had become graceful, lovely women, while Rupert from a school-boy had as suddenly shot up into a tall, elegant young man.

Sir Hugh and his lady saw with pleasure the attachment of the cousins; they already loved Mildred as their daughter, and it was the nearest wish of their hearts that in time the affection which now united them might assume a more enduring form. As the education of Mildred might now be considered completed, and the object for which she had been sent to them attained, they grew every day more and more fearful that Mrs. Donaldson would claim her long absent child. Mildred was too young when she left Jamaica to have other than a faint recollection of her mother; she could only remember the beautiful blue eyes which used to meet hers so fondly, and the long golden ringlets through which, as she nestled in mamma's lap, she had played bo-peep with an old gentleman in a high-backed elbow-chair. Then she was so happy at Norcross Hall that when her heart whispered to her, as it often did, of her other dear mother in a far-off land, she could not but reproach herself for not being more impatient for the moment to arrive when she might again embrace her. But now the time drew near when she must bid farewell to this cherished spot.

April had smiled farewell in tears, and May with her beauteous buds and blossoms danced over the green earth. The streams welcomed her presence with songs of glee, and the forests dressed in fresh beauty opened their arms to greet her presence. It was yet early morning, and to the uplifting of the rosy curtain draping the couch of the day-god the birds were singing a merry prelude, as two young men stole softly around an angle of the old building, and crept silently under the shadow of the wall, until they stood beneath the windows of an apartment whose inmates were probably buried in sleep, as through the half-closed shutter the curtains appeared still closely drawn.

"You see I have proved a true prophet, for the girls still sleep," cried the taller of the two, laughing. "Now fie upon their laziness this bright May morning – why we should have been off to the dell an hour since, to gather the flowers ere the sun kissed away their freshness."

"Now I will warrant you, Rupert," replied the other, "that while we stand here with 'dewy feet,' maybe catching our deaths from this early exposure of our delicate frames, the little jades are quietly

dreaming over the last new romance, or their first ball – come, let us arouse them with a song!" and dropping on one knee, the young man placed his hand upon his heart, and lifting his eyes to the window in the most languishing manner began:

"Come, come to me, love,
Come, love, arise —
And shame the bright stars
With the light of thine eyes,
Look out from thy lattice,
O lady – "

"Very well sung, most tender swain – what a pity Mildred and myself by our too early rising lost the melting expression of those upturned orbs!" cried Helen, issuing with her cousin from a thicket of rose-bushes. "So you thought us still sleeping, slanderers, when we have already brushed the dew from the lawn, and look here," (showering down a quantity of early violets,) "see what we stole from Flora while you two were sleeping."

A few moments were spent in playful badinage, and then the happy party strolled off in the direction of the dell. But, alas! like many of our brightest hopes this morn which dawned so blissfully was destined to end in sorrow! Upon the return of the party to the Hall, Sir Hugh with a sorrowful countenance placed in the hands of Mildred a package of letters. She grew pale as she read, and ere she had finished burst into tears, and handing the package to Sir Hugh fled to her chamber. Those letters contained the mandate for her return to Jamaica. That very week she must leave Norcross Hall, its beloved inmates, and all the delightful scenes of her childhood, and hasten to London, to join a family who were about returning to the island, and to whose charge her grandfather had consigned her.

The grief which filled all hearts at this dreaded separation may easily be imagined. Rupert was nearly crazy at the thought. He now felt how dear Mildred was to him, and that to part with her was like rending soul and body. But certain that his love would meet the sanction of his parents, knowing how tenderly they regarded her, he hastened to make known his feelings to them, and to entreat that he might accompany Mildred to Jamaica, and demand the consent of her friends to their union.

"No, my dear son," said Sir Hugh, "Mildred is yet very young – of the world she knows little, and it would be cruel to shackle her with ties which she may in time be brought to abhor, nor would it be doing justice to her friends to bind down her affections to us alone. Leave her free, Rupert; if she loves you, that love will not diminish by absence, and I promise you that in due time you shall be allowed to prosecute your suit in the presence of her mother, and should you be so fortunate as to win a bride so lovely, your parents' hearts will welcome her with joy."

How coldly his father reasoned thought the ardent young lover, but accustomed to yield all deference to his wishes, he consented that Mildred should depart without knowing how necessary her love was to his happiness.

Both Sir Hugh and Rupert accompanied her to London, and saw her safely on board her majesty's ship the Essex, bound for Jamaica.

CHAPTER IV

Leaving Mildred to pursue her voyage we will see what preparations were already making for her return by Mr. Donaldson.

This gentleman was by no means as rich as many supposed him to be. His plantations were valuable, and located advantageously, but whether from mismanagement, or from circumstances beyond his control, for several years his affairs had become greatly involved, and he had only been saved from absolute ruin through the scheming friendship of a Spaniard named Perozzi – a man whose cunning was as deep as his own, and who by advancing large sums from time to time, only sought to entangle his victim in such a snare as should secure him in the end his valuable possessions. Pride prevented Mr. Donaldson from applying to Mr. Dundass – every year matters grew worse, until finally he felt himself to be completely in the power of Perozzi, who had even begun to threaten loudly, and talk of distraining. It was at this critical juncture that Mr. Dundass declared his intention of sending for Mildred Ward. A project now suddenly suggested itself to Mr. Donaldson which promised to relieve him from his difficulties, and which he seized upon in his selfishness with as little conscience as the highwayman who robs you of life in order to obtain your purse.

Mounting his mule he one morning rode over to the "Pen" of Perozzi, some few miles farther down the valley. He was received rather coolly.

"Your timely visit has saved me a ride this morning, Donaldson," said the Spaniard. "I have an imperative necessity for my money, or at least for a part of it."

"My dear fellow, the very thing I have come to talk about!" said Donaldson.

"*Corambre – to talk about!* It must be something more than talk – words will not answer my purpose," replied Perozzi, his sharp black eye glittering with hate. "I tell you money I must have – money I will have, or – "

"Good God, Perozzi, don't drive me to desperation. You know I cannot pay you a single piastre! Only wait until I receive my return sales from England, and I swear to you you shall receive your last farthing!"

"Holy Mother Mary! your return sales from England!" exclaimed the other, in a tone of cutting sarcasm. "In what manner of vessel must those same returns be coming, for, if my memory serves me, Columbus discovered a new world in less time than this same richly-freighted *caravela* has been crossing the Atlantic – this has been your answer for twice a twelvemonth. And now," he continued, suddenly altering his tone, and striding to the side of his victim, "there must be an end of this – either pay me what you owe me, or give me a quit claim to the Cascade, for which you have already received from me more than its value."

"By heavens, Perozzi!" cried Mr. Donaldson, turning pale with anger and mortification, "this is more than I can bear even from you; but come," he added, suddenly forcing a laugh, "it was to see you upon a more pleasing errand I came here."

"*Corambre!*" whistled through the teeth of the Spaniard.

"Hark ye, Perozzi; what would you say if I could this moment promise to place you in possession of one hundred thousand dollars and – a wife?"

"Say! why that the Devil helped you to cajole, and then deserted you at the pinch, as he always does!" replied Perozzi.

"No cajolery about it, as you shall find," answered Mr. Donaldson. "But come, let us sit – by your leave I'll taste your wine; your health, signor, and" (turning out a second glass) "here is another to Madame Perozzi – ha-ha-ha! There – now," said he, setting down his glass with a force which nearly shivered it, "listen to me. You know that Mrs. Donaldson, by her first husband, had one daughter, Mildred Ward, who is at this moment on her return from England, whither she was sent at an early age

for her education. She is now, by the bye, seventeen, and, as report informs us, extremely beautiful and accomplished. Now what think you, Perozzi, of the charming Mildred for a wife?"

"I want money – no wife!" moodily replied Perozzi, draining a third glass.

"Precisely – money," answered the other; "and that is what the fair hand of Mildred tenders you."

"One hundred thousand dollars, did you say, Donaldson?" said the Spaniard, with a searching gaze.

"I did. Fifty thousand with the wedding-ring, and the balance when the old man, her grandfather, dies."

Excellent, by the Virgin! – ha-ha-ha! No one can dispute your skill in diplomacy; but methinks it would be well to know by what method you propose to bring about a "consummation so devoutly to be wished," said Perozzi, with a sneer.

"Leave that to me; only act with me, and Mildred Ward becomes your wife just so certain as I now drink to you – your health, signor."

"And, pray, allow me to ask," said Perozzi, "what benefit you expect to reap from such unparalleled generosity – it cannot surely be out of pure love to me that you thus

"Buckle fortune on my back
To bear her burthen whether I will or no!"

"You are right," answered Mr. Donaldson, dropping the servile tone in which he had before spoken, "you are right – it is from no love to you; my object is this. You know as well as I do the utter impracticability of my refunding any part of the money I owe you at present. True, you may seize my estates, but this I think you will hardly do in preference to the plan I propose; it would be at best but a vexatious affair, while by accepting my proposition you secure not only an equivalent for your debt, but also the hand of a charming young girl."

"Well, well, to the point," interrupted the Spaniard, impatiently.

"It is simply this; give me your written promise to release me from all obligation, return me whatever notes you hold against me, and I on my part pledge to you the hand and fortune of my step-daughter."

Perozzi remained for some moments in deep revery, as if studying the feasibility of the proposed plan. "I have half a mind to try it," he mused; "it may do – the connection will be a good one. Old Dundass is as rich as a Jew, and a man of great influence; while on the other hand, should the project fail, I shall be no worse off than now, unless an earthquake should swallow up the estates from my grasp."

"There is one contingency which seems to have entirely escaped your forecast," he exclaimed aloud, turning to Mr. Donaldson, "the lady may not be of your way of thinking – she may prove refractory."

"Leave that to me," was the reply.

"I may not fancy her."

"Nor the money?" added Mr. Donaldson, with a meaning smile.

"Ah, there, I grant, you have me. Well, well, I am willing to talk the matter over with you a little more freely. Miss Ward is handsome, you say?"

"As a Houri."

"And young?"

"Scarce seventeen."

"Very well – now to business."

But we have already entered into sufficient detail of the conversation of these two men to show the reader in what peril poor Mildred stood from their machinations. It is enough to say that ere they

parted, Perozzi pledged his word that, should their plot succeed, he would, on his marriage-day, place in the hands of Mr. Donaldson a quit claim to every demand he held against him.

CHAPTER V

How beautiful was Mildred as she sprung to meet the embrace of her old grandfather; and how fondly did the old man gaze upon his recovered treasure, almost incredulous that this lovely girl could be the same little pet, whose infantine gambols and artless caresses time had not been able to efface from his mind.

The style of Mildred's beauty was, indeed, most captivating and piquant. To a form of perfect symmetry and airy grace was added a countenance beaming with intellect and vivacity. Her complexion was of the same dazzling fairness as her mother's, but her eyes were of a deep-gray, sparkling beneath the most delicately penciled brows, and her hair of that dark, glossy chestnut, flecked as it were with sunbeams, whose peculiar tint painters so much love to catch. A small, rosy mouth, and white, regular teeth, which in her innocent vivacity were often displayed, completes the picture of Mildred's charms.

After spending a few days at Mount Dundass she took leave of her grandfather, and under the escort of Mr. Donaldson, who had hastened thither for the purpose, departed for the Cascade, impatient to behold her mother, in whose love she trusted to find a recompense for the pain which parting with her dear friends at Norcross Hall had caused. And for a few weeks all went happily. The sight of her innocent, beautiful child banished for a time from the heart of Mrs. Donaldson that unnatural jealousy her husband had awakened. Mr. Donaldson, for his own selfish purposes, strove by every attention and kindness to win her esteem and confidence, while Mildred on her part delighted with and reciprocating her mother's affection, gratified by the interest her step-father expressed for her, and perfectly enchanted with the novel and beautiful scenery, threw off all her sadness – linking the past with the present, not regretful or sorrowful, but as one continued scene of love and happiness, for which her heart rose in gratitude to her Maker that he had conferred upon her so many rich blessings.

How often did she wish that Rupert and Helen could share with her this West India paradise. The climate so bland and delicious – soft, balmy airs by day, and nights of unclouded loveliness; the beautiful undulating scenery of hill and valley stretching far away into the dim haze of ocean – hills from whose summits towered the magnificent cabbage-palm, its immense plume-like leaves waving like the crest of some gigantic warrior above the band of palms crowding around, bending their graceful heads to this their chief; valleys of luxuriant beauty, studded with groves of the aromatic pimento, whose pure white blossoms seem like snow-flakes just fallen amid their dark, glossy foliage, while at intervals clumps of magnolia, resting on a carpet of bright verdure sprinkled with flowers, and their trunks garlanded with the gay passa-flora, arrested the eye. From those beautiful hill-sides silvery cascades came leaping and dancing down into the rich valleys, then twining their lovely arms through this charming landscape, as if they would fain bear off its beauties to the broad ocean, whither they are gliding.

In the meantime, you may be sure, Perozzi made his appearance at the Cascade, where, under some slight pretext, he soon became almost domesticated, merely riding over to the Pen at intervals of two or three days. To Mildred there was something extremely repulsive in his appearance, and she could not but feel amazed at the influence he seemed to exercise over her parents, and the deference with which they treated him. She little dreamed of the power he would soon exert against her happiness – just as over those luxuriant valleys, whose smiling beauty I have but imperfectly sketched, the whirl-wind comes rushing in terrible might, scattering ruin and devastation around, did the tempest burst over the head of Mildred, changing all the brightness of her young life to darkness. Perozzi needed no other impetus than the sight of Mildred's beauty to render him as eager to push forward the plot in agitation as Mr. Donaldson, and in accordance his attentions to her assumed a direct and positive form. She, however, had not the most remote suspicion of his intentions. How

great, then, was her surprise when one day Perozzi made her a formal offer of his hand, assuring her at the same time that he did so with the consent and approbation of her parents and her grandfather. Mildred could hardly credit her senses, that Perozzi, a man as old as her step-father, should think of a mere child like herself for a wife, seemed very strange, but that her friends should also approve of such a match, stranger still.

"My dearest Mildred, what have you done!" cried Mrs. Donaldson, meeting her daughter a few hours after. "Can it be possible you have refused Signor Perozzi?"

"Dear mamma, you surely do not think I could do otherwise than refuse him!" replied Mildred, surprised at her mother's manner.

"And why not, Mildred? Would it not be a most eligible match for you – why he is not only very rich, but will probably soon succeed to a title."

"Riches and titles can never make happiness, mamma."

"But they conduce greatly to its maintainance, Mildred."

"O, no, mamma, not if attached to such a disagreeable person as the signor."

"Disagreeable! Mildred, you surprise me – pray what can be your objections?"

"Indeed, they are so numerous, that the repetition would only be tiresome," replied Mildred, smiling. "But you are surely laughing at me; you did not really suppose, now did you, that I could love such a man?"

"I did suppose you had more sense, Mildred, than to refuse him," replied Mrs. Donaldson. "I can only say your decision has deeply grieved both Mr. Donaldson and myself; yet we regret it more for the disappointment it will cause your grandfather, for to see you the wife of Perozzi has long been his most cherished wish."

"Can it be!" cried Mildred. "Can it be that my grandfather, my kind grandfather, would have me marry Perozzi – is it so, mamma?"

"It is, Mildred."

"Now, indeed, am I most unhappy," cried Mildred, bursting into tears, "for it can never, never be!"

"My sweet child, I am sorry to see you so grieved!" said Mrs. Donaldson. "It must be painful, I know, for you to distress your excellent old grandfather, who loves you so truly, and has ever treated you with such generosity; but perhaps your decision has been too hasty – it is not too late; reconsider the subject, Mildred, and perhaps you will conclude differently."

"No, mamma, my resolution is unalterable!"

"Let me at least soften your refusal to poor Perozzi – indeed, he is quite overwhelmed with despair; let me bid him hope that in time you may be brought to listen more favorably to his suit."

"O, not for worlds, mamma – not for worlds!"

"Well, well, my dear, you are strangely agitated. There, go – retire to your chamber, and compose yourself, my love;" and affectionately kissing her daughter, Mrs. Donaldson repaired to the library, where her husband and Perozzi were awaiting the result of this interview.

Had Mrs. Donaldson forgotten her own youth?

From that day Mildred was the object of ceaseless persecution. Go where she would, there was Perozzi ever at her side, to annoy her with his odious attentions; walking or riding, he intruded himself upon her; no room in the house seemed sacred from his approach; and even when she retired to her own apartment, he either stationed himself beneath her window, or stood at her door, ready to greet her with his hateful smile as she issued forth. Constantly, too, was he urging his suit, while her repeated refusals, her cold words, and still colder looks, might as well have been spent upon a rock – for a rock could not be more impressionless to their meaning. The persecution she underwent from the odious Perozzi, had, perhaps, revealed to her the true nature of her regard for Rupert, and in so doing, brought also the pleasing consciousness that she was beloved even as she loved him. How aggravating, then, her situation. Daily her life grew more wretched, nor had she even the consolation

of sympathy. With a yearning heart did she now recall the happy days at Norcross Hall, rendered by contrast still more dear. "O!" she cried, in her anguish, "could I but once more rest in their loving arms, what power could tear me thence! Dearest Helen! Dearest Rupert, come to me! O, hasten thither and rescue me from this horrible thraldom!"

But months passed in sorrow; there came no letters from England – nothing to cheer up her fainting heart, and finally, Mildred, the once gay, happy Mildred, sunk into a state of utter despondency.

CHAPTER VI

"*Hist – hist*, Pedro!" and a tall, swarthy Creole, obeying the finger of Perozzi, glided stealthily behind a large tree, where stood the Spaniard, both screened from observation by the thick drapery of ferns and parasitic plants clinging around its trunk. Eyeing the man keenly, Perozzi said, in a low tone,

"Hark-ye, Pedro! I have a job for you; here are thirty pistoles as an earnest, and when it is finished, you shall receive thirty more."

"By St. Jago, signor! I am ready – what is it? *This*?" touching the handle of his knife.

"*Corambre*, knave! No. Listen to me. Do you see yonder mansion, with the green verandas stretching itself out on the hill-side like an anaconda at play?"

"The Scotchman's – Donaldson's?"

"The same. Now look, and tell me what you see at the open jalousie on the right, that is, if you can see through the heavy screen of jessamines which droop over it."

"Ho, ho! I have eyes at any time for a pretty girl, signor; she is an angel, that fair English girl!"

"Very well – you know her, then. Now do you remember the thick pimento walk between this and the hospital?"

"Si, signor."

"Now, Pedro, hasten thither, and conceal yourself. This fair Signora will soon pass that way. Now mind me, knave, when she reaches the middle of the grove, do you rush suddenly upon her – seize her in your arms, and – "

"Ho-ho! a pleasant job, signor!"

"Peace, knave! Seize her, I tell you, and draw your knife, as if about to plunge it in her white bosom. Now, mark me, at that moment I rush upon you and rescue the lady – do you understand?"

"Si, signor; but will your honor please to remember I am but flesh and blood – don't strike more than skin deep, signor."

"Tush, knave! and remember – no violence; by the Holy Mother! if you so much as breathe upon a hair of her head, you taste my dagger!"

"Ho-ho, signor! methinks to snatch a kiss from her sweet lips would be worth more than a thousand pistoles."

"Villain, to your work!"

"Ho-ho! a pleasant job, signor – a pleasant job!" And with a hideous leer, the lesser villain parted from the greater, and concealing himself within the deep shadows of the grove, awaited the coming of Mildred.

It was not long ere, little suspecting the terrible scene which she was to encounter, Mildred set forth *en route* to the hospital, to visit an old faithful female slave. This was a favorite walk, and soothed by the quiet of the scene, she lingered long in its delightful depths. As her foot pressed the summit of a gentle slope, enameled with many-colored flowers, and over which frown the blood-tinged foliage of a stately mahogany-tree, pendent garlands of the passion-flower, and delicate white jasmine swung in the soft breeze, she paused for a moment, as if to prolong this happy reprieve from the presence of the Spaniard.

Suddenly, the wretch, Pedro, sprung in her path, and while with one hand he seized the trembling girl, with the other he drew his stiletto, and muttering a horrible oath, raised it as if about to strike at her innocent bosom. Mildred did not scream, she did not faint, but her eyes closed, and all power of speech and motion seemed paralyzed. But the threatened blow was arrested; a violent struggle ensued, during which she was clasped still more tightly to the breast of the ruffian, who seemed to be defending himself from some superior arm. Oaths and curses mingled with the clash of weapons; she was dragged, as it were, several paces through the grove, and then, after another

struggle, she felt the arm of the assassin relax its grasp – she was caught to the breast of her deliverer, and then placed gently on the soft turf.

"Mildred – my angel – my life – O, speak to me!"

That voice! Mildred knew its hateful tones; and a cold shudder crept through her frame, as if some venomous reptile had touched her, as she felt the villain's lips press her brow. Recoiling, she slowly opened her eyes.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Perozzi, "you are restored to me. Holy Virgin! can it be – so near death, and yet living and unhurt, I now hold you in my arms! O, blessed moment, when love guided me hither!"

"I owe you my life, signor," said Mildred, freeing herself from his embrace, "but it is a thankless boon; methinks death would have been sweeter! Leave me – I am better – I am well – leave me, signor!"

"Sweet angel! leave thee – leave thee thus exposed to new dangers! No – lean on me, my beloved – let me guide your trembling steps!" and he passed his arm around her.

"Away!" cried Mildred, springing from him. "Away! touch me not! Monster – fiend! I hate you! Begone from my sight forever, or, in mercy, kill me!"

Perozzi became livid with rage, and his eye-balls gleamed like fire in the deepening shadows, as they rested on Mildred, never more beautiful than as she now stood before him in all the majesty of outraged purity. But masking the hell in his heart with a well-feigned air of desperation, he fell on his knees before her.

"Would that the assassin's knife had reached my heart!" he exclaimed. "Better for me to die than endure your scorn. Yes, *die!* By heavens! why not end this miserable existence – here – yes, here, at your feet, cruel Mildred! *It shall be done!*" and drawing a pistol from his breast, he placed the muzzle to his temple.

"Hold – hold – for God's sake, miserable man, hold!" shrieked Mildred, springing forward.

It was too late – the pistol exploded.

"Ha – ha – ha!" shouted Perozzi, wiping his blackened brows, "that was well done!" And raising the now senseless girl in his arms he bore her to the house.

When, after a long and death-like swoon, Mildred opened her eyes they rested upon the anxious countenances of her mother and Mr. Donaldson bending over her couch.

"Where am I?" she cried, starting up wildly – "how came I here – what has happened? Ah, now I remember – or was it some dreadful dream?" She pressed her hand to her forehead – "no, no, it was no dream – tell me," she added, with a convulsive shudder, closing her eyes as if to shut out some horrible vision, "is he dead – is Perozzi dead?"

"Compose yourself, my dear Mildred," replied Mrs. Donaldson, "he lives – fortunately the ball but slightly grazed his temple – yet, my child, such is his despair – to such a state of frenzy has your cruelty brought him, that we dare not trust him alone even for a moment, lest he once more attempt to end his misery by self-destruction."

A heart-rending groan was the poor girl's only answer.

"Mildred, my daughter," said Mr. Donaldson, "I had decided to say no more to you upon a subject so painful, but duty to my friend compels me to make one more appeal to your compassion. Can I stand calmly by and witness the wreck which despair has wrought in that beloved friend – can I behold him resolutely rushing upon death to end his misery and not speak! O, Mildred," falling on his knees, "save him – for you can – Mildred, behold me thus imploring your pity for Perozzi!"

Mildred burst into tears, and placed her hand within that of Mr. Donaldson.

"You will relent, my sweet child, will you not?" said her mother, throwing her arms around her – "yes, you will, and make us all happy – see," she added, drawing a letter from her bosom, "here is a letter from my beloved father – let his words plead with ours – shall I read?" Mildred assented, and breaking the seal Mrs. Donaldson continued:

"Mildred, – You have refused compliance with the fondest wish of my heart – you have obstinately cast from you the man of all others I wished to see your husband! Henceforth I renounce you. I loved you, my child, (as I now for the last time call you,) I have loved you from your infancy – to you I looked as my greatest earthly blessing – but it is all over – we never meet again! Yet, cruel, ungrateful girl, I will not doom you to a life of hardship and dependence. The fortune settled upon you is still yours. Take it, Mildred, and enjoy it if you can, knowing that you have broken the heart of your old doting grandfather,
Archibald Dundass."

As Mrs. Donaldson concluded, Mildred sobbed aloud. These reproaches, mingled with so much kindness, almost broke her heart.

"Give me the letter," said she, extending her trembling hand, and once more she tearfully perused it, while a glance of triumph was exchanged between husband and wife. The look of agony which Mildred cast upon them as she finished reading would have melted a heart of stone. Mrs. Donaldson burst into tears, and even the lip of her husband quivered with agitation.

"My God, pity me!" cried Mildred, clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven. Once more she turned them on her mother. "Mother, do not weep — *I – O God – I – consent!*" And as if with those dreadful words her pure spirit had fled, she fell back cold and rigid as marble upon the pillow.

CHAPTER VII

Let the silence of despair rest upon the sufferings of the unhappy Mildred after those fatal words had passed her lips.

Among other artful devices agreed upon between Mr. Donaldson and Perozzi, previous to Mildred's return, was that of keeping her entirely secluded from society, lest some other suitor might wrest the hand of the doomed girl from him. But now that a consent to their infernal measures had been torn from her, it was resolved that a magnificent *fête* should mark the *début* of the affianced bride. The evening previous to the wedding was the time fixed upon for this important event, and accordingly invitations were immediately issued for a grand *bal masqué*, including the governor's family, together with all the *élite* of the island.

For weeks all was hurry and confusion at the Cascade – artisans of many trades were busily engaged pulling down and putting up – the drawing-rooms – the halls – verandas, all newly decorated – in fact, the whole establishment, through the purse of Perozzi and the good taste of Mrs. Donaldson, completely revolutionized. Mildred in the meanwhile remained in strict seclusion in her apartment, unless dragged thence by the importunities of the Spaniard, so sad, so perfectly overwhelmed with the wretchedness of her lot, that it seemed most probable death might claim the young bride ere the day of sacrifice came. In vain her mother strove to interest her in the gay proceedings – entreating she would at least choose a costume for her expected *début*.

"Do with me as you will, mother," Mildred would reply, with a faint smile.

In the sleeping-room of Mrs. Donaldson there hung a portrait of a beautiful Turkish maiden. This picture was a favorite with Mildred, and it occurred to Mrs. Donaldson that a similar costume would well become the style of her daughter's beauty. A careful examination of her own and Mildred's ward-robe convinced her the thing could be done, and she set herself diligently to prepare the dress – Mildred passively obeying her directions.

At length all was finished, and in its swift course Time brought round the appointed evening for the *début* of the wretched Mildred, so soon to become a more wretched wife. At an early hour those guests who resided at a distance began to arrive, and after partaking of the grateful refreshments provided for them were conducted to their dressing-rooms, to prepare for the festivities of the evening – all being expected to appear *en masqué*.

Mrs. Donaldson, the still handsome mistress of the *fête*, wore a splendid dress of the tartan, in compliment to the Scottish tastes of her husband, who himself appeared in the costume of a Highland Chief, and had already entered the drawing-room, in readiness to welcome the gay throng. The victim, too, was ready. Passive as a lamb in the hands of the destroyer, she had suffered her mother and her maid to array her, and now sat like some marbled image, awaiting the coming of Perozzi to lead her forth.

How lovely she was, nor yet casting one look to the mirror wherein her exquisite form and beautiful face were reflected. The robe her mother had chosen was the same as the picture, of a pale rose color, floating like a summer cloud around her lovely person, and confined to her waist by a broad girdle of white satin, wrought with gold and clasped by a superb diamond. The sleeves of the same airy fabric as the caftan were long and loose, revealing in their transparency the fine contour of her snowy arm, and were ornamented upon the shoulders and around the graceful fold of the outer edge with rich embroidery seeded with pearls. The caftan was slightly open at the bust, displaying an under vest of thin white gauze gathered in maidenly modesty over her lovely bosom, and fastened by a magnificent cluster of diamonds and rubies. A *talpec*, or head-dress, of white velvet, around which were wound two rows of the finest pearls, was placed low on her pale brow, from which her beautiful hair fell in long natural ringlets, looped here and there with sprigs of the white jasmine and orange buds.

Gently the wind swayed the orange boughs, and creeping through the flowery links of the jessamine and passa-flora, kissed the pale cheek of Mildred as she sat there in her misery – twilight stole on with saddened step, and from out the cloudless heavens one by one the stars looked down upon her wretchedness. Then over the distant mountains rose up the full-orbed moon, bathing their summits with gladness and flooding the valleys with calm and holy light. On she came, majestic and serene, o'er her glorious path, and as her mild beams quivered through the thick clustering blossoms around the window they touched the heart of Mildred as the smile of angels. Throwing open the jalousie she stepped into the veranda, and leaning over the balustrade gazed upon the peaceful landscape stretching before her in all the chastened loveliness of the moonlight.

There was something in the scene which brought with it the "light of other days" to her sad heart. For a few brief moments she was happy – present sorrows lost themselves in past pleasures. Once more upon the ivy-clad battlements of Norcross Hall she was standing with Helen and Rupert, while the scene upon which the moon looked down identified itself with the woods and dells of that beloved spot. Her bright dream was brief – the voice of Perozzi in loud and angry altercation with some one awoke her too rudely to her misery.

"O, Rupert!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands in agony as she turned to re-enter her chamber – "Rupert, farewell – farewell forever!"

"Dearest Mildred!" cried a voice whose tones leaped into her heart with a strange thrill of joy – "dearest Mildred!"

Did she still dream – or was it indeed Rupert to whose breast she was now folded with a bliss too great for words!

"Thank God, Rupert, you have come!" cried Mildred.

"Mildred," said Rupert, (for it was indeed Rupert,) "what mean these tears? Are you not happy – this marriage –"

"A – h!" shrieked Mildred, clinging to him as though the basilisk hand of Perozzi were already upon her, "*save me – save me, Rupert!*"

"*Save you!* dearest, beloved Mildred – tell me – tell me quick – this marriage – is it not your own choice?"

"O no, no, no!" sobbed Mildred.

"Then no power on earth shall compel you to it! You are mine – mine, dearest Mildred!" and clasping her once more in his arms, Rupert kissed the tears from her beautiful eyes, as full of hope and love they met his beaming gaze.

"But my grandfather!" she cried, starting up.

"He is here, dear girl."

"Here! then lead me to him quickly – let me implore him to have pity upon me!"

The arrival of Mr. Dundass upon the scene was wholly unlooked for by Mr. Donaldson – need we say as wholly unwelcome. Guilt and fear paled his cheek and almost palsied his tongue as his lips feigned a welcome – nor was Perozzi less moved. To define the feelings of Mrs. Donaldson would be difficult. Her love for her daughter had been held in complete subjugation to the will of her husband, and while she grieved deeply for the sorrows heaped upon her, her love and fear of Mr. Donaldson, and her knowledge of his pecuniary distress caused her at the same time to exert all her influence to rivet the chain around poor Mildred – so strange is human nature! What then was to be the result of her father's unexpected visit – was it freedom for Mildred – was it to heap disgrace upon her husband?

In the mean time Mr. Dundass had been shown to a private room in a remote wing of the building, while Mr. Donaldson and Perozzi were already planning new schemes. They resolved that Mildred should be kept in ignorance of her grandfather's arrival as long as possible – of Rupert's they themselves knew nothing – and that on no account should she be allowed to speak with him privately. The marriage should take place at an early hour the following morning —*that* consummated they would defy even the devil himself!

Mr. Dundass was sitting sad and sorrowful in the apartment to which he had been conducted, for this marriage filled him with grief, wondering that Mildred did not appear to welcome him, or that Rupert did not return, when the door suddenly opened and Mildred rushed in, and falling at his feet exclaimed:

"O dearest, dearest grandfather, pity me – O sacrifice me not to Perozzi!"

"Sacrifice you, my darling child! Come to my arms – what mean you —*sacrifice*– I thought it was your happiness I was securing by consenting to your union."

"*Happiness!* O grandfather – rather my misery!"

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Dundass. "There must be treachery somewhere! God knows how it has grieved my heart to think of your union with that man – I know him to be a villain, and when repeatedly urged to consent to the marriage, I as repeatedly refused, until your own letter – "

"*My letter* – good heavens!" exclaimed Mildred.

"Written in the most moving language, at length won my reluctant consent!"

All was now explained, and the villainy of Mr. Donaldson and his coadjutor made clear.

"Courage, courage, my darling," said Mr. Dundass, "come with me. Come, Rupert, I will 'beard the lion in his den,' and make known this infamous plot – come."

"My mother – spare *her*, dear grandfather – forgive them all – I am happy now – let us not mar the pleasure of the guests," interceded Mildred.

"You say right, my child – to-morrow will be soon enough. But come with me, children – let us join the gay assembly – nay, fear not, Mildred. Perozzi, the villain, he shall not dare even to look upon you!"

Now strains of delicious music filled the air – lights gleamed – jewels flashed – feathers waved, and on every side the merry laugh and gay badinage met the ear from prince and beggar – wild roving gipsy and sombre nun – knights in armor – minstrels – flower-girls – jugglers and staid Quakers, as in confused *mélée* they swept through the rooms – yet all stood aside in silent admiration as the lovely Mildred Ward in her graceful Turkish costume, her face beaming with happiness, entered the saloon leaning on the arm of her gray-haired sire.

Muttering curses through his closed visor, Perozzi (who was dressed as a knight of Old Castile) hastily left the scene. He had sought Mildred in her chamber – she was not there, and well did his guilty fears surmise where she might be found. One glance at her speaking countenance was enough. He saw in a moment all was over – that the fiendish plot so near consummation was betrayed! With terrible oaths he mounted his mule, and plunging his spurs rowel-deep into the sides of the poor beast rushed, armed as he was, like some terrible demon through the peaceful moon-lit vale until he reached the Pen – vowing that on the morrow he would seize at once with the grip of a harpy upon the estates of Mr. Donaldson.

But here, too, he was foiled! Mr. Donaldson, it is true, did not deserve so much mercy, but when, like a penitent, he came before Mr. Dundass and confessed his crime, the heart of the old man was moved to pity. He generously advanced the necessary funds, and wrenched the Cascade from the clutches of Perozzi. Touched by such unmerited goodness and generosity, Mr. Donaldson resolved to become a better man, and to repair by his future conduct the errors of the past.

At Mount Dundass, whither the whole family accompanied its venerable proprietor, Rupert received the hand of the happy Mildred, and after the death of Mr. Dundass, which took place only a few months later, took his beautiful young bride to England.

A LAY BY GRACE GREENWOOD

The glorious queen of heaven who flings
Her royal radiance round me now,
As with clasped hands and upturned brow
I watch her pathway fair and free,
Is not so silvery with the light
She pours o'er darkened earth to-night,
As in the gentle thoughts she brings
Of thee, dear love, of thee!

The night-wind trembling round the rose —
The starlight floating on the river,
The fearful aspen's silvery shiver,
The dew-drop glistening on the lea,
Night's pure baptism to the flowers —
All, all bring back our dear, lost hours,
Till every heart-string thrills and glows
For thee, dear-love, for thee!

And when dawn wakes the Earth with song,
And Nature's heart, so hushed to-night,
Goes leaping in the morning light, —
While waves flash onward to the sea.
While perfumed dews to heaven arise —
While glory flashes o'er the skies —
Still through my soul shall sweet thoughts throng
Of thee, dear love, of thee!

Ah, thou beloved, whose heart hath thrilled
To blessed dreams and joys with mine,
What power shall change thy love divine,
Or shut its presence out from me!
Since all bright things, from flower to star,
Its types and sweet reminders are
To this fond heart, this soul so filled
With thee, dear love, with thee!

We part not, though we said adieu —
Since first thy thoughts chimed in with mine,
And from those glorious eyes of thine
A heaven of love looked down on me,
My very life round thine is poured —
Thy words within my soul I hoard —
Still true, in every heart-throb true

To thee, dear love, to thee!

**THE SAILOR'S LIFE-TALE
A TRUE REMINISCENCE
BY SYBIL SUTHERLAND
(DEDICATED TO MY COUSIN MARY S – .)**

"There's many an 'o'er true' tale, coz,
That comes to the listening ear,
That makes the cheek turn pale, coz,
And brings the glistening tear."

During the last summer, Mary mine, I was one of a party of friends, who, tired of the bustle and confusion of the busy city, resolved to lay aside business and all other engagements, for the brief space of one day, which was to be devoted to a picknick in some retired country location. The destined spot for our intended *fête* was, after considerable consultation, at length decided upon, and we unanimously agreed to spend the day in a pleasant woods in the neighborhood of New Brighton.

It was upon a balmy June morning, when, with light hearts, but heavier baskets, laden with provisions, sun-bonnets, books, music, and sundry et cæteras indispensable upon such an occasion, we found ourselves snugly ensconced upon the deck of one of those spacious steamboats which hourly wend their way toward the sunny shores for which we were bound; and after an exhilarating sail of half an hour's duration, we landed at Snug Harbor, and proceeded toward our place of destination, which was situated about ten minutes' walk distant.

It was to the Sailor's woods that our steps were bent on the morning of our picknick. Sauntering slowly through a shady lane we first passed the great gate leading to the Sailor's Snug Harbor, an institution which, as you doubtless know, Cousin Mary, was, through the munificence of a certain private individual, erected some years since as a place of refuge and repose to the weary, wayworn seaman. Walking a short distance beyond these stately buildings, we found ourselves within "the deep solitudes of the leafy wood."

How shall I describe to you, gentle coz, that dear old woods, as on that eventful day its beauties and wonders first greeted my gaze? We had not advanced far within its recesses, when a welcome sound fell upon our ears, and in a moment more came gladly upon our sight. A laughing little streamlet rose before us, its bright waters rippling and dancing, and here and there illuminated by a stray sunbeam that stole softly and faintly through the thick foliage of the sturdy old trees above. The brook was narrow, and one could have crossed it almost at a bound; but there was no necessity for the exertion, for glancing but a few yards ahead, we beheld a rustic bridge, which, on nearer approach, proved to be of cedar, and was ornamented with a sofa of the same material.

"The flashing ray
Of joyous waters in their play,"

Upon this rude couch we rested awhile till our friend C – , whom we had elected master of ceremonies, went forward to take a more extended survey of the woods and its surroundings. In a few minutes we heard a loud and very expressive halloo from our absent companion, and looking about to find whence the sound proceeded, we beheld him standing upon a stone-fence at some distance, and beckoning us to hasten immediately to his side. The mandate was obeyed, and after a scramble over the stones, we succeeded in mounting the desired eminence, when a pleasant sight met our delighted

visions. The waters of the brook were here so managed as to form two sylvan lakes, divided from each other by a bridge similar to the one previously mentioned. The borders of these lakes, through one of which glided two stately swans, were supplied with seats formed of cedar wood, and so arranged as to resemble lounges, *tête-à-têtes*, and arm-chairs, whose appearance seemed to invite repose. And here we would fain have lingered, but asserting that he had something to show us in another direction, C – bade us follow him a few steps farther.

Descending from our elevation, and roaming through a shadowed path, we at last halted at the door of a diminutive and picturesque-looking cottage, within which, to our astonishment, was a table, round which were ranged seats more than sufficient for our number. In no measured terms did we now express our surprise and delight at thus finding in the very heart of the wilderness accommodations so necessary, wondering at the same time whether the fairies had not been there before us to provide every thing for our convenience.

Beside the door of this rustic dwelling an old man, evidently nearing the allotted "three score and ten," was seated upon a rude bench, busily engaged weaving a small and dainty-looking basket. He was dressed in a sailor's garb, but there was an indescribable something in his appearance, betraying that he did not belong to the lowest rank of seamen. There was a cloud of melancholy upon his countenance, and though the sounds of laughter and mirth were floating around him, he desisted not from his occupation, nor even once gazed into the bright faces by which he was surrounded. Absorbed in his own meditations, he seemed not to heed nor care for aught else; and it was some time ere any of us presumed to address him. But after awhile C – , who was on every occasion the most venturesome of our group, approached the old man, and endeavored to lead him into conversation. He did not resist the attempt, and we now learned that the various adornments of the woods were entirely the handiwork of an aged sailor, to whose taste and ingenuity many a previous picknick party had owed the greater portion of its pleasures. He showed us a spring near by, where we regaled ourselves with a libation of the purest and coldest water, and told us of a fitting place for a dance, an even, grass-grown spot in another part of the woods. He also described to us a moss-house, which he said was located just below the opposite hill, informing us at the same time that it belonged to the estate of Mr. G – , one of New York's merchant-princes, who kindly and unselfishly left it free and open to the inspection of the curious, and wonder-loving community. And to this latter domain my friends now agreed to adjourn – but much to my regret, I was unable to accompany them. A severe headache, the usual result of excitement of any kind, was now exerting its influence over me; and I was confident, from experience, that my only way of soon getting rid of it would be by remaining where I was and keeping perfectly quiet. All of my friends expressed their sorrow at my sudden indisposition, and each one kindly offered to stay and bear me company; but unwilling to deprive them of any enjoyment, I declined their offers, alleging that I should not be altogether alone, as the old man whom we found there would doubtless continue where he was till their return. The sailor looked up as I spoke, and said that it was his intention to remain there for the rest of the morning, adding that he frequently passed the entire day in the woods. So, assured that I would not be actually solitary, they at last allowed themselves to be persuaded to go without me in search of the moss-house.

After watching their forms till they had quite receded from my view, I re-entered the arbor where the old sailor was still at work, and seated myself very comfortably in a rocking-chair. It was somewhat of an oddity, too, Mary – that rocking-chair; and though I had almost forgotten to mention the circumstance to you, the first discovery of such an article of furniture in the woods had been a source of infinite amusement to my companions and myself. It was built of cedar, to correspond with the other various decorations of the woods, and though hewn of the roughest material, for ease and grace of motion, I might confidently challenge the drawing-room of a fashionable lady to produce its equal. Again, I say, it was an oddity – that rocking-chair. But the powers of my simple pen being scarcely adequate to a description of it, this being, as I have styled it, a true reminiscence, I would advise and invite you, dear Mary, if you wish to behold the rocker, and judge of its *indescribable*

merits, to accompany me on the first summer's day you may have to spare, to the pleasantest and most romantic spot in the immediate vicinity of New York – the Sailor's Woods at Snug Harbor.

But to go on with my record. After enjoying for a space the easy lulling motion of this inimitable chair; and after bathing my head repeatedly in water from the woodland-spring, I began to feel considerably revived, while the pure air, and the stillness that reigned around, were of especial benefit to my aching temples. The pain gradually grew less and less tormenting, till at length it was no longer felt, and again I found myself watching the old sailor, who sat at a few paces from me weaving his pretty, delicate basket. Gathering courage, I entered into conversation with him. He had stated previously that his abode was at "the Harbor," so I now made some inquiries concerning that institution, its regulations, &c., and he very readily gave me all the requisite information.

"They must be very happy, are they not?" I asked, referring to the members of the institution of which we were speaking; "very happy and very thankful, too, to have had so pleasant a home provided for them in their old age?"

"They are generally contented," was the reply, "but there are many among their number who, having no fears for their earthly future, allow their minds to dwell too earnestly upon the past – and wo be to them, if one voice from the memories of bygone days comes back with reproachful accents!" He sighed heavily – and for some moments there was a pause. At length, raising his eyes hastily to mine, he said,

"Young lady – do you think that *I* am happy?"

The question was altogether so abrupt and unexpected, that I scarcely knew what to answer; but, after some little hesitation, I replied, "I do not, sir. There is too much of sadness in your countenance to speak of a mind quite at ease. I should think that you had known many sorrows."

"You are right," he rejoined, in a voice of emotion, "I have, indeed, borne the burden of many griefs; but, alas! I do not mourn them so much as the errors of a heart but for whose weakness they had never oppressed me. I know not what it is, young lady, that prompts me to confide to you my history. But, perchance, it may serve you as a warning – it may impress more strongly upon your mind that divine law of forgiveness inculcated by Him who pardons *our* trespasses, 'as we forgive those who trespass against us.' There is a passage in the 'Book of Books' that never fails to convey to me a reproof, for I remembered not the lesson till it was too late to profit by it. 'Then came one of his disciples unto him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven.'"

Though somewhat surprised at the turn matters were taking, yet, as the speaker had paused, and was now apparently awaiting some token on my part of interest in his proposed narration, *I*, of course, entreated him to proceed. Nor was he long in complying with my desire.

It was truly a touching story, dear Mary. I would, indeed, that I could "tell the tale as 'twas told to me." And yet I would not, if I possessed the power, portray the mournful accents of that old man's voice, and the sorrowing expression of his countenance – for the picture would make you weep. I may not attempt to recall the sketch in the language of the aged sailor, for that it would be utterly impossible to do; but I will strive to repeat it to you after my own peculiar fashion, and to the best of my ability. Could I boast your incomparable grace of diction, Mary, I might do full justice to my subject. But I know that with your accustomed kindness you will overlook the faults which I humbly trust that time and practice may enable me to overcome. So, having thus worthily delivered my preface, let me hasten at once to my task.

Some sixty years since, there dwelt in the city of Boston, a merchant by the name of Sydney – a man justly beloved and respected for benevolence of character, integrity of purpose and of principle, and envied by the worldly for the enormous income which enabled him to surround his family with every luxury that money could procure. Early in life he had married a beautiful girl, to whom he was tenderly devoted. A son, whose name was Arthur, and who, to come at once to the point, was the original narrator of this story, was the sole offspring of this happy union, and, as may be supposed, the

pride and idol of his parents. They watched over him with the most untiring affection, and endeavored to instil into his young mind those firm and honorable principles which rendered their own lives so lovely. But at the age of ten years the hand of death deprived Arthur Sydney of his gentle mother, and daily he missed her counsels and her embrace, and most bitterly did he mourn for the footsteps that was to come no more.

The loss of his wife was a stunning blow to Mr. Sydney. He never married again, for he had loved the departed one too well to think for an instant of supplying her place; and so four more years elapsed, and his child continued to be the only object of his cares. But at the termination of that period this good and just man was called to a mansion beyond the skies, doubtless there to claim the crown of immortality. And then Arthur was left alone in the wide world – a young and almost broken-hearted orphan.

Upon searching into Mr. Sydney's affairs soon after his decease, to the surprise of every one, instead of leaving his son in the possession of an immense estate, there was not quite sufficient to meet the demands of creditors. When Arthur Sydney became older, he could not help suspecting that there was some mystery about this, for strictly honest as he had ever known his father to be, he could not believe that he would ever have swerved thus from the path of right. What was in reality the cause of this deficiency, whether it was owing, as his son afterward thought, to the craft and fraud of his executors, can only be answered from the curtain of futurity.

The mansion where Arthur's early years had passed so happily, was now sold, with all its effects, and the lonely orphan took up his abode beneath the roof of an uncle. But, alas! it was not like the home he had lost – the dear hearth of his sunny childhood. His relative, Mr. Lindsay, was a far different being from his deceased parent, and though, like the latter, he lived in splendor, he knew not how to enjoy it. Devoid of that generosity of spirit which Mr. Sydney had possessed, he was also of a morose, exacting, and passionate nature, and his family, instead of hailing his presence with delight, shrunk from him ever with indifference, and sometimes with trembling. Governed by the law of fear instead of that of love, it was scarcely to be wondered at that his children resorted to every petty means of covering their faults, and were often guilty of deception and falsehood. Arthur Sydney's education had been widely different, and he despised the meannesses which his cousins practiced; but when he expostulated with them, as he frequently did, his words invariably drew upon himself a torrent of invectives. They taunted him with his dependence upon their father's charity, and asked what right a beggar had to preach to *them*; and then the youth's proud heart would swell within him, and he would rush to his own little room, and there, unseen, give full vent to his wounded feelings.

His eldest cousin, Alfred Lindsay, who was always foremost in every plan of mischief, and the most perfect adept in concealing the part he had taken in it, was a twelvemonth Arthur's senior. From earliest childhood the two had evinced a dislike to each other's society, and as they grew up, the feeling did not diminish. At school they had been rivals, and Arthur had now far outstripped Alfred in their course of study. In various other ways he had also quite unintentionally foiled his cousin's ambition; and he was convinced that at the first opportunity Alfred would have his revenge. Too soon was the fore-boding realized.

Mr. Lindsay one afternoon entered the room where his children generally spent their leisure hours, and with threatening looks announced that he had lost a ten dollar bank note. He had missed it under such circumstances that he was sure it must have been purloined by one of the younger members of his family; and he now declared his intention of searching both their persons and their apartments, that he might, if possible, discover the guilty one. Very pale were the young faces that now gathered round him; and though Arthur's heart was free from reproach, he, too, trembled with fear for the criminal. I need not dwell upon the details of that search, but suffice it to say that the bank-note was found – found in *Arthur Sydney's* apartment, within a little box that always stood upon his dressing-table as the honored receptacle of his parents' miniatures. Vainly did he assert his ignorance as to

how it came there – his uncle refused to listen to his words, and loaded with passionate reproaches, he was dismissed to his own room, there to remain till he received permission to leave it.

It was a long while ere the boy became sufficiently calm to reflect upon what had occurred, for the thought that he was accused of theft came with such bitterness to his soul that for several hours he was almost frantic. But as he grew more composed he became confident that this was the work of Alfred, and he remembered the triumphant leer that stood upon his cousin's countenance when the hiding-place of the missing note was proclaimed.

Just at this moment his meditations were disturbed by the sound of footsteps stealthily approaching his door, and the next instant it was opened, and Alfred Lindsay stood upon the threshold, gazing exultingly upon Arthur's misery, while a malicious smile wreathed his lips as pointing his finger exultingly at him, the single word, "thief!" fell upon the ear of his victim. Oh! how that undeserved epithet stung the innocent and sensitive boy; and, almost maddened by the sense of his injuries, he rushed toward the offender, impelled by but one thought – the wish for revenge. But, coward-like, Alfred fled from his approach, and then closing the door, and locking it, Arthur threw himself upon his couch in tearless, voiceless agony. It was not until the shades of evening had closed in that he roused himself from the stupor into which he had been thrown by those overpowering emotions. And now came a determination that he would no longer remain in his uncle's house, where he knew that he must ever after be subjected to the sneers and gibes of his cousins. He resolved to quit Mr. Lindsay's dwelling, though he knew not of any other roof where he might find a shelter for his aching head.

That night, when the unbroken stillness that reigned around gave assurance that the family had all retired to rest, Arthur Sydney stole softly down the stairs, and taking with him nothing but a small bundle of clothing, and the few treasured memorials of other days that he could lawfully call his own, he left forever the mansion of his uncle. And as he looked his last upon the home of Alfred Lindsay, there rose in his heart a wild, dark resolve, that if he ever possessed the power, his cousin should one day reap the fruits of his evil deed.

For hours the youth wandered listlessly through the now deserted streets of the city, till at last overcome with fatigue, and completely unnerved as the full sense of his desolate situation burst upon him, he seated himself near the edge of one of the wharves, and wept long and bitterly. Suddenly a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice whose tones though rough were yet full of sympathy, inquired the cause of his grief, and looking hastily up, he beheld a man apparently about fifty years of age, and habited in a seaman's garb. Touched with his kindness, in the first impulse of the moment, Arthur gave him a brief account of his misfortunes. When he had concluded, much to his surprise, his listener informed him that he had known his father, who had, years before, rendered him an important service, in return for which, he said that he would now willingly do all in his power to serve the child of one to whom he was so deeply indebted. He told Arthur that he was at present commander of a large vessel lying close at hand, and which was to sail the following day for South America, and asked if he would be willing to accompany him, and learn to be a sailor like himself. The idea was a novel one, and the boy seized upon it with avidity, as beside being his only available means of obtaining life's necessaries, he knew that by embracing it he should lose the chance of meeting those relatives whom he cared no more to behold. And when he at once expressed his readiness to go, his new friend patted his head in token of approval, prophesied that he would prove a brave mariner, and then taking his young companion by the hand, led him toward the ship which was henceforth to be his abiding-place. The next day Arthur bade adieu to his native city, and commenced his career as a seaman. But upon the events of that career I have not time to linger. For years Captain Carter, for such was his patron's name, continued to treat his *protégé* with unremitting favor, sharing with him all the nautical knowledge he had acquired, and using every endeavor for his advancement. At the age of eight-and-twenty, through this kind friend's interest, Arthur was himself raised to the post of captain, and took possession of a packet-ship sailing between the ports of New York and Southampton. He had now

attained the summit of his hopes, for a way was opened before him of obtaining, what had long been his desire, a competence, which would enable him to resume that station in life which his father had occupied, and of supplying also to his parent's creditors the sum of which they had been so strangely defrauded. And at the close of five more years he had the satisfaction of knowing that this latter purpose was accomplished.

It was about this period that an incident occurred which had a material influence over the future destiny of Arthur Sydney. During one of his voyages, accident revealed to his notice the wreck of what had once apparently been a noble vessel. He immediately despatched a boat with a portion of his crew to survey the ruins, and ascertain if any of the passengers survived. They returned, bringing with them the inanimate form of a lovely girl, seemingly not more than eighteen years old. Every effort was used for her speedy restoration to consciousness, but it was nearly two hours ere she opened her eyes, and then she was so weak as to be quite unable to move or speak. Her delicate frame was evidently exhausted by long fasting, and the fearful scenes she must have witnessed; and for the whole of that day Sydney watched beside her with feelings of the strongest sympathy for her sufferings. The next morning she was much better, she could recline in an easy chair, and had acquired sufficient strength to relate her history. She was a native of Italy – the youngest daughter of an ancient and noble family, whose father having been undeservedly regarded by the government with suspicion, was threatened with imprisonment, and had barely time to escape with his household on board of a ship bound for America. That vessel was the one whose wreck Captain Sydney had espied, and of the large number of souls within it, who had departed but a few weeks before from Italia's sunny shores, but one remained – that gentle and helpless maiden. For three days she had continued upon the wreck without the slightest sustenance, haunted by the memories of the terrible past, and expecting that each instant would dash the frail fabric to pieces, and precipitate her also into the deep, dark sea, till at length consciousness forsook her, and in a death-like swoon she forgot the dangers by which she was surrounded.

With tears of anguish she now spoke of the dear ones lost to her forever on earth – the loved mother, the noble father, the darling sisters, and the cherished brother, over each one of whom she had beheld the wild waves close. Then she lamented her desolation, utterly destitute, and nearing the shores of a foreign land, where no familiar voice would accord her a welcome. There was a similarity in her situation to what had once been his own, and as Sydney listened, the story inspired him with an interest in that fair being such as he had never till then experienced for a fellow-creature. He used every effort to console her – gave her an account of his own early life, and bade her trust in the kind Providence who in the hour of need had given *him* a friend. He assured her also that he, at least, would not forsake her, but that he would endeavor to place her in some way of gaining her own livelihood till she could write to and hear from her friends in Italy; and begged that she would look upon him as a brother. She heard him with glistening eyes, and clasping his hand in hers, with child-like earnestness expressed her thanks for his kindness.

During the rest of that voyage Captain Sydney spent every leisure moment by the side of his beautiful charge. Returning health imparted a bloom to her cheek, and a lustre to her soft, dark eyes, and as Arthur gazed upon her, he often thought that earth had never owned a fairer flower. It was not long ere he became fully conscious that she daily grew dearer to him, and great was his joy as he marked the flush that invariably rose to her pure forehead when he approached. And when at length he poured his tale of love into the ear of the sweet Leonor, the reply that he sought was given with an impassioned fervor that sent a thrill of rapture to his soul.

They were united the day that they landed at New York, and renting a small but pretty cottage in the outskirts of the city, Captain Sydney installed his Leonor as the mistress of that pleasant domain. Here, amidst flowers and birds, and enlivened by the music of two loving hearts, the time glided tranquilly away till the hour of separation arrived – and, for the first time, Sydney quitted the land with regret, and embarked once more upon the deep blue ocean.

Eight years after his marriage, Captain Sydney was destined to weep over the cold corpse of his lovely wife. She had never enjoyed uninterrupted health since her residence beneath the variable clime of her adoption, and at last she fell a victim to consumption. Vainly did the anxious husband consult the most celebrated physicians – the disease was incurable, and ere the blossoms of spring again burst forth, Leonor slumbered beneath the sod. Wild, indeed, was the grief of the bereaved one at her loss – but he recovered the first effects of his sorrow, and leaving his only child, Harry, a brave boy just six years of age, under the guardianship of a friend who had loved the departed mother, Sydney resumed his former vocation.

Years again fled. Harry Sydney attained the age of manhood – and every one that knew him loved him, for he was a fine, manly fellow, honorable and generous in every impulse, with a heart susceptible of the warmest sympathies. He inherited his mother's ardent temperament, and was of a sensitive and impassioned nature. Captain Sydney had destined him for a merchant, and as such he had just commenced life with every prospect of success. Had he been allowed to take his own inclination as a guide, Harry would fain have followed the sea. But to this his father was averse, and early, at his command, he relinquished the desire.

Upon his son all the hopes of Captain Sydney were centered. It was his earnest wish to see him happily married, and determined to express the desire to Harry, he one day sought his side for that purpose. Both to his surprise and approval, the latter informed his father that he had already met one to whom his heart's warmest affections were given. He added that the young lady, though poor and dependent upon her own exertions for her support, and that of an invalid father, was the descendant of a family said to be highly respectable. "Her grandfather," he continued, "was Robert Lindsay, a well-known merchant of Boston; and though his son, Alfred, has dissipated the patrimony left him by his parent, and now relies solely for maintenance upon the proceeds of his daughter's needle, I am sure, my dear father, this praiseworthy effort, on the part of one so young and lovely as Ida, will but elevate her in your estimation?"

"Robert Lindsay! Alfred Lindsay!" were the exclamations of Captain Sydney, in a voice full of passion, as those well-remembered names fell upon his ear for the first time in many years; "boy – did you say that *Alfred Lindsay* was her parent? Then be assured that never, while life lasts, will I give my consent to your marriage with the daughter of him who was the enemy of my unprotected youth!"

"Father – what mean you?" asked Harry, in tones of amazement, for the tale whose memory had so sudden an effect upon his companion, had never been breathed to him. And suddenly recalled to a sense of his son's ignorance upon the subject, Captain Sydney now hurriedly sketched the history of the past.

"It is very strange," said Harry, musingly; "but they never mentioned that they were related to me. It is probable that Ida's father, if aware of the fact, concealed it from her knowledge."

"Or rather that he instigated her to keep it a secret, that in the end she might reap the benefit of his injured cousin's wealth," was the rejoinder.

"Oh, no, father!" replied the young man, warmly. "I could not wrong Ida by a suspicion of that kind. She is too good and pure-hearted to countenance deception, and," he added, after a moment's hesitation, "I cannot give her up and wreck both her own happiness and mine, for the sake of her parent's faults."

These words aroused Captain Sydney's indignation. He accused his son of want of spirit in refusing to resent the occurrences that clouded his youth; and when Harry responded that he felt them deeply, but could not on their account brand himself with dishonor, by breaking the troth already plighted to Ida Lindsay, his father parted from him in anger, declaring that if his son married Ida, he might never expect his blessing.

The thought of uniting his son by indissoluble ties to the child of his early foe, was, indeed, repugnant to the heart of Captain Sydney; and while he remembered his resolve uttered on the night when he went forth from his uncle's roof a desolate, friendless and dishonored being – dishonored

through the machinations of his cousin Alfred – he was determined that it should be fulfilled, even though in so doing he thwarted the earnest wishes of the one dearest to him.

A few days afterward Captain Sydney departed upon one of his accustomed voyages, and was absent several months. On his return he found his son just recovering from a lingering fever, brought on, as the physician averred, by distress of mind. He looked very pale and thin, and his father could scarcely help feeling a sensation akin to reproach, as he gazed upon that colorless cheek and wasted form. He knew that this indisposition was occasioned by the manner in which he had treated his son's engagement, for, through the medium of a friend, he had learned that Ida Lindsay had nobly refused longer to encourage attentions, which, as she learned from Harry, were tendered in opposition to his father's desires. Alfred Lindsay, too, had died a few weeks before, and the object of his resentment being no more, Captain Sydney began to feel less reluctant to the match which he had at first looked upon with such violent disapprobation. Conscience told him he had acted cruelly in thus casting a blight over his child's sweetest hopes, and he was determined that he would now do all in his power to further them. And when Harry grew strong enough to bear a conversation upon the subject, he communicated the change in his feelings. Both startled and appalled was he at his son's reply.

"My father, would you mock me with this show of kindness, when it is too late to profit by it? Know you not that she is now dying of consumption? I was sure that *she* was too delicate to endure the steady occupation necessary for her support – and my presentiment has been verified. Yes, Ida Lindsay is dying! I would have saved her – I would have borne her to a more genial clime, where she might, perhaps, have revived; but she refused to give me a right to be her guardian, for it was against the will of my parent, without whose sanction, she said, our union would never prosper."

He bowed his face, while for an instant his frame shook with emotion. Hastily his father drew nearer to him, but he turned shudderingly from those words of penitence and self-reproach, and dashing aside the extended hand, rushed from the apartment.

It was, indeed, too true – Ida Lindsay was dying! The constant confinement called for by her continued exertions to obtain a livelihood, had proved too much for a constitution by no means strong – and it was his anxiety for her failing health which had caused the illness of Harry Sydney. Oh! what would not the erring father have given for power to recall the past; but it was too late – too late! A few hours after the interview with his son the intelligence of Ida's death was received, and during the whole of the succeeding evening Captain Sydney could plainly distinguish the sound of Harry's footsteps as he wildly paced his chamber, and each echo sent a thrill of remorse to his soul. Little did the repentant and sorrowing parent then think it was the last time that footfall would ever resound in his dwelling – for that night Harry Sydney departed from his home, leaving no trace of his destination. Days, weeks, months passed on, and the heart of his father grew dark with the anguish of despair, for he felt most surely that he should behold his son no more. Whither the latter had gone was a mystery he tried in vain to solve, though sometimes he remembered Harry's predilection for a mariner's life, and blighted as he had been in his affections, might he not now have followed the yearnings of former times, as the only means of gaining oblivion of his sorrows? So, night after night, Captain Sydney sat alone at his deserted hearth – a father, and yet childless, with a host of dark recollections pressing heavily upon his spirit. And at last he sought forgetfulness of his errors in the sparkling wine-cup, whose draught he drained with an intense eagerness, for it enabled him to mock at his misery.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.