ARTHUR TIMOTHY SHAY

HOME SCENES AND HOME INFLUENCE; A SERIES OF TALES AND SKETCHES

Timothy Arthur

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Содержание

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PREFACE

MANY of the scenes presented in this volume are such as show the mother's influence with her children; a few include the marriage relation; and a few give other domestic pictures. In all will be found, we trust, motives for self-denial and right action in the various conditions of social life. Home is the centre of good as well as of bad influence. How much, then, depends on those to whom have been committed the sacred trust of giving to the home-circle its true power over the heart!

This volume makes the fifth in "ARTHUR'S LIBRARY FOR THE HOUSEHOLD."

TAKING COMFORT

"REALLY, this is comfortable!" said I, glancing around the handsomely furnished parlour of my young friend Brainard, who had, a few weeks before, ventured upon matrimony, and was now making his first experiments in housekeeping.

"Yes, it is comfortable," replied my friend. "The fact is, I go in for comforts."

"I'm afraid George is a little extravagant," said the smiling bride, as she leaned towards her husband and looked tenderly into his face.

"No, not extravagant, Anna," he returned; "all I want is to have things comfortable. Comfort I look upon as one of the necessaries of life, to which all are entitled. Don't you?"

I was looking at a handsome new rose-wood piano when this question was addressed to me, and thinking about its probable cost.

"We should all make the best of what we have," I answered, a little evasively; "and seek to be as comfortable as possible under all circumstances."

"Exactly. That's my doctrine," said Brainard. "I'm not rich, and therefore don't expect to live in a palace, and have every thing around me glittering with silver and gold; but, out of the little I possess, shall endeavour to obtain the largest available dividend of comfort. Ain't I right?"

"Perhaps so."

"You speak coldly," said my friend. "Don't you agree with me? Should not every man try to be as comfortable as his means will permit?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Of course he should. Some men set a value upon money above every thing else, and sacrifice all comfort to its accumulation; but I don't belong to that class. Money is a good gift, because it is the means of procuring natural blessings. I receive it thankfully, and use it wisely. You see how I am beginning life."

"I do."

"Well, what do you think of it?"

By this time my observation of things had become more particular, and I saw many evidences of expenditures that indicated a lavish spirit.

"What rent do you pay?" I asked.

"Three hundred."

I shook my head.

"Too much?" said Brainard.

"I think so."

"Perhaps it is a little high. But you can't get a genteel, comfortable house, in a good neighbourhood, for any thing less."

As it was my first visit to the young couple, who were but a few weeks past their honey-moon, I did not feel like questioning the propriety of my friend's conduct to the serious extent he was

about involving himself; and so evaded replying to this excuse for taking at least a hundred dollars more rent upon himself than he was justified in doing by his circumstances, he being simply a clerk, with a salary of one thousand dollars.

"Rents are high," was my apparently indifferent answer.

"Too high," said he. "A man who wants a pleasant house has to pay for it. This is my experience."

The subject of conversation changed; I passed an agreeable evening; at the close of which I left my friend and his lovely young bride in their comfortable home.

What I had seen and heard during the few hours spent with Brainard made me fear that he was about committing a too common error. His ideas of comfort were not in keeping with his circumstances. Some days subsequently I saw my friend and his wife riding out in a handsome vehicle, drawn by a gay horse.

"Taking their comfort," said I, as I paused and looked upon the happy young couple.

Not long after, I saw them dashing off again to enjoy an afternoon's ride. Next, I met them at a fashionable concert.

"Have you been to the opera yet?" asked Brainard, leaning forward to the seat that I occupied just in front of him.

"No," was my answer.

"Then there is a treat in store for you. We go twice, and sometimes oftener, every week. Truffi, Benedetti, Rosi—oh! they are enchanting."

"Rather expensive," said I.

"It does cost something," and Brainard shrugged his shoulders. "But I think it's money well spent. You know that I go in for the comforts of life."

And he leaned back, while I thought I perceived a slight shadow flit across his face. A singer came forward at the moment, and no more was said.

"It is possible," thought I, "in seeking after comfort, to get into the wrong road. I am afraid my young friends are about committing this error."

I not only suggested as much to Brainard soon afterwards, but actually presented a serious remonstrance against the course of life he had adopted. But he only smiled at the fears I expressed, and said he understood perfectly the nature of the ground he was treading. Thus it is with most young persons. Be their views true or false, they act upon them, in spite of all counsel from the more experienced, and in the end reap their harvest of trouble or pleasure, as the ease may be. Pride, which stimulates the desire to make a certain appearance in the world, is generally more at fault than a wish to secure the comforts of which my friend talked so much.

I had another acquaintance, by the name of Tyler, who was married about the same time with Brainard. His tastes were as well cultivated as those of the former, and his income was as large; yet, in beginning the world, he had shown more prudence and a wise forecast. I found him in a small, neat house, at a rent of one hundred and seventy dollars. His furniture was not costly, but

in good taste and keeping with the house and his circumstances. As for real comfort, as far as I could see, the preponderance was rather in his favour.

"This is really comfortable," said I, glancing around the room in which he received me on the occasion of my first visit.

"We think so," replied my friend, smiling.

"Nothing very elegant, but as good as we can afford, and with that we have made up our minds to be content."

"If all the world were as wise, all the world would be happier," I remarked.

"Perhaps so," returned Tyler. "Brainard tried to get me into a house like the one he occupies; but I thought it more prudent to cut my garment according to my cloth. The larger your house, the more costly your furniture and the higher your regular expenses. He talked about having things comfortable, as he called it, and enjoying life as he went along; but it would be poor comfort for me to know that I was five or six hundred dollars in debt, and all the while living beyond my income."

"In debt? What do you mean by that?" said I. "It isn't possible that Brainard has gone in debt for any of his fine furniture?"

"It is very possible."

"To the extent of five or six hundred dollars?"

"Yes. The rose-wood piano he bought for his wife cost four hundred dollars. It was purchased on six months' credit."

"Foolish young man!" said I.

"You may well say that. He thinks a great deal about the

comforts of life; but he is going the wrong way to secure them, in my opinion. His parlour furniture, including the new piano, cost nearly one thousand dollars; mine cost three hundred; and I'm sure I would not exchange comforts with him. It isn't what is around us so much as what is within us, that produces pleasure. A contented mind is said to be a continual feast. If, in seeking to have things comfortable, we create causes of disquietude, we defeat our own ends."

"I wish our friend Brainard could see things in the same light," said I.

"Nothing but painful experience will open his eyes," remarked Tyler.

And he was correct in this. Brainard continued to take his comfort for a few months, although there was a gradual sinking in the thermometer of his feelings as the time approached when the notes given for a part of his furniture would fall due. The amount of these notes was six hundred dollars, but he had not saved fifty towards meeting the payments. The whole of his income had been used in taking his comfort.

"Why, Brainard!" said I, in a tone of surprise, on meeting him one day, nearly six months after his marriage. "What has happened?"

"Happened? Nothing. Why do you ask?" replied the young man.

"You look troubled."

"Do I?" He made an effort to smile.

"Yes, you certainly do. What has gone wrong with you?"

"Oh, nothing." And he tried to assume an air of indifference; but, seeing me look incredulous, he added—

"Nothing particularly wrong. I'm only a little worried about money matters. The fact is, I've got two or three notes to pay next week."

"You have?"

"Yes; and what is more, I haven't the means to lift them."

"That is trouble," said I, shaking my head.

"It's trouble for me. Oh, dear! I wish my income were larger. A thousand dollars a year is too little."

"Two persons ought to live on that sum very comfortably," I remarked.

"We can't, then; and I'm sure we are not extravagant. Ah, me!"

"I spent the evening with our friend Tyler last week," said I. "His salary is the same as yours, and he told me that he found it not only sufficient for all his wants, but that he could lay by a couple of hundred dollars yearly."

"I couldn't live as he does," said Brainard, a little impatiently.

"Why not?"

"Do you think I would be cooped up in such a pigeon-box of a place?"

"The house he lives in has six rooms, and he has but three in family—your own number, I presume"—

"I have four," said Brainard, interrupting me.

"Four?"

"Yes. We have a cook and chambermaid."

"Oh! Mrs. Tyler has but one domestic."

"My wife wasn't brought up to be a household drudge," said Brainard, contemptuously.

"Your house has ten rooms in it, I believe?" said I, avoiding a reply to his last remark.

"It has."

"But why should you pay rent for ten rooms, when you have use for only five or six? Is not that a waste of money that might be applied to a better purpose?"

"Oh, I like a large house," said my friend, tossing his head, and putting on an air of dignity and consequence. "A hundred dollars difference in rent is a small matter compared with the increase of comfort it brings."

"But the expense doesn't stop with the additional rent," said I.

"Why not?"

"The larger the house, the more expensive the furniture. It cost you a thousand dollars to fit up your handsome parlour?" said I.

"Yes, I presume it did."

"For what amount did you give your notes?"

"For six hundred dollars."

"On account of furniture?"

"Yes."

"Tyler furnished his parlour for three hundred."

There was another gesture of impatience on the part of my young friend, as he said—

"And such furnishing!"

"Every thing looks neat and comfortable," I replied.

"It may do for them, but it wouldn't suit us."

"Whatever is accordant with our means should be made to suit us," said I, seriously. "You are no better off than Tyler."

"Do you think I could content myself in such a place?" he replied.

"Contentment is only found in the external circumstances that correspond to a man's pecuniary ability," was my answer to this. "Which, think you, is best contented? Tyler, in a small house, neatly furnished, and with a hundred dollars in his pocket; or you, in your large house, with a debt of six hundred dollars hanging over you?"

There was an instant change in my friend's countenance. The question seemed to startle him. He sighed, involuntarily.

"But all this won't lift my notes," said he, after the silence of a few minutes. "Good morning!"

Poor fellow! I felt sorry for him. He had been buying comfort at rather too large a price.

The more Brainard cast about in his mind for the means of lifting his notes, the more troubled did he become.

"I might borrow," said he to himself; "but how am I to pay back the sum?"

To borrow, however, was better than to let his notes be dishonoured. So Brainard, as the time of payment drew nearer and nearer, made an effort to get from his friends the amount of

money needed.

But the effort was not successful. Some looked surprised when he spoke of having notes to meet; others ventured a little good advice on the subject of prudence in young men who are beginning the world, and hinted that he was living rather too fast. None were prepared to give him what he wanted.

Troubled, mortified, and humbled, Brainard retired to his comfortable home on the evening before the day on which his note given for the piano was to fall due. Nearly his last effort to raise money had been made, and he saw nothing but discredit, and what he feared even worse than that before him. Involved as he was in debt, there was no safety from the sharp talons of the law. They might strike him at any moment, and involve all in ruin.

Poor Brainard! How little pleasure did the sight of his large and pleasant house give him as it came in view on his return home. It stood, rather as a monument of extravagance and folly, than the abode of sweet contentment.

"Three hundred dollars rent!" he murmured. "Too much for me to pay." And sighed deeply.

He entered his beautiful parlour, and gazed around upon the elegant furniture which he had provided as a means of comfort. All had lost its power to communicate pleasure. There stood the costly piano, once coveted and afterwards admired. But it possessed no charm to lay the troubled spirit within him. He had bought it as a marriage present for his wife, who had little taste for music, and preferred reading or sewing to the blandishment

of sweet sounds. And for this toy—it was little more in his family—a debt of four hundred dollars had been created. Had it brought him an equivalent in comfort? Far, very far from it.

As Brainard stood in his elegant parlour, with troubled heart and troubled face, his wife came in with a light step.

"George!" she exclaimed on seeing him, her countenance falling and her voice expressing anxious concern. "What is the matter? Are you sick?"

"Oh, no!" he replied, affecting a lightness of tone.

"But something is the matter, George," said the young wife, as she laid her hand upon him and looked earnestly into his face. "Something troubles you."

"Nothing of any consequence. A mere trifle," returned Brainard, evasively.

"A mere trifle would not cloud your brow as it was clouded a moment since, George."

"Trifles sometimes affect us, more seriously than graver matters." As Brainard said this, the shadows again deepened on his face.

"If you have any troubles, dear, let me share them, and they will be lighter." Anna spoke with much tenderness.

"I hardly think your sharing my present trouble will lighten it," said Brainard, forcing a smile, "unless, in so doing, you can put some four hundred dollars into my empty pockets."

Anna withdrew a pace from her husband, and looked at him doubtingly.

"Do you speak in earnest?" said she.

"In very truth I do. To-morrow I have four hundred dollars to pay; but where the money is to come from, is more than I can tell."

"How in the world has that happened?" inquired Mrs. Brainard.

Involuntarily the eyes of her husband wandered towards the piano. She saw their direction. Her own eyes fell to the floor, and she stood silent for some moments—silent, but hurriedly thoughtful. Then looking up, she said, in a hesitating voice—

"We can do without that." And she pointed towards the piano.

"Without what?" asked Brainard, quickly.

"The piano. It cost four hundred dollars. Sell it."

"Never!"

"Why not?"

"Don't mention it, Anna. Sell your piano! It shall never be done."

"But, George"—

"It's no use to talk of that, Anna; I will not listen to it."

And so the wife was silenced.

Little comfort had the young couple that evening in their finely furnished house. Brainard was silent and thoughtful, while Anna felt the pressure of a heavy weight upon her feelings.

How different was it in the smaller and more plainly attired dwelling of Tyler! There was comfort, and there were peace and contentment, her smiling handmaids.

On the next morning, Brainard found it impossible to conceal from his wife the great anxiety he felt. She said very little to him, for his trouble was of a kind for which she could suggest no remedy. After he parted with her at the door, she returned and sat down in one of the parlours to think. The piano was before her, and back to that her thoughts at length came. It was not only a beautiful instrument, but one of great excellence. Often had it been admired by her friends, and particularly by a lady who had several times expressed a wish to own one exactly like it in every respect.

"I wish you would let me have that piano," the lady had said to her not a week before; and said it as much in earnest as in jest.

"I wonder if she really would buy it?" mused Mrs. Brainard. "I don't want so fine an instrument. My old piano is a very good one, and is useless at father's. Oh! if I could only get George the four hundred dollars he wants so badly!"

And she struck her hands together as her thoughts grew earnest on the subject. For more than an hour the mind of Mrs. Brainard gave itself up to this one idea. Then she dressed herself and went out. Without consulting any one, she called upon the lady to whom reference has been made.

"Mrs. Aiken," said she, coming at once to the point, "you have often remarked that you would like to own that piano of mine. Were you really in earnest?"

"In earnest? Certainly I was." Mrs. Aiken smiled, at the same time that a slight expression of surprise came into her face. "It's

one of the finest instruments I ever touched."

"It's for sale," said Mrs. Brainard, in a firm, business-like way. "So there is a chance for you to call it your own."

"For sale! Why do you say that, Anna?"

"It's too costly an instrument for me to own. My old piano is a very good one—quite good enough for all my purposes."

"But this is your husband's wedding-gift, if I remember rightly?"

"I know it is; but the gift was too costly a one for a young man whose salary is only a thousand dollars a year."

"Then he wishes to sell it."

"No, indeed, not he!"

"And would you sell it without consulting him?" said Mrs. Aiken.

"Such is my intention."

"He might be very much displeased."

"No matter; I would soon smooth his frowning brow. But, Mrs. Aiken, we won't discuss that matter. The instrument is to be sold. Do you want it?"

"I do."

"Very well. Are you prepared to buy it?"

"Perhaps so. It cost four hundred dollars?"

"Yes."

"What is your price?"

"The same."

"Then you make no deduction?" said Mrs. Aiken, smiling.

"I wouldn't like to do that. It's as good as new. If I can sell it, I want to be able to put in my husband's hands just what he paid for it."

"Oh, then you want the money for your husband?"

"Certainly, I do. What use have I for four hundred dollars?"

"You've come just in time, Anna," said Mrs. Aiken. "I arranged with my husband to meet him this morning, at his store, to go and look at some pianos. But if yours is really for sale, we have no occasion to take any further trouble."

"It is for sale, Mrs. Aiken. Understand this."

"Very well. When do you want the money?"

"This morning."

"I don't know about that. However, I will see Mr. Aiken immediately."

"Shall I wait here for you?"

"You may do so, or I will call at your house."

"Do that, if you please."

"Very well. In an hour, at most, I will see you."

The two ladies then parted.

When Mr. Brainard left his house that morning, he felt wretched. Where—how was he to get four hundred dollars? To go to the party from whom he had bought the piano, and confess that he was not able to pay for it, had in it something so humiliating, that he could not bear the thought for a moment. But if the note was not paid,—what then? Might not the instrument be demanded? And how could he give it up now? Or, worse,

might it not be seized under execution?

"Oh, that I had never bought it!" he at length exclaimed, mentally, in the bitterness of his feelings. And then he half chid himself for the extorted declaration.

Nearly the whole of the morning was spent in the vain attempt to borrow the needed sum. But there was no one to lend him four hundred dollars. At length, in his desperation, he forced himself to apply for a quarter's advance of salary.

"No doubt," said he, within himself, "that the holder of the note will take two hundred and fifty dollars on account, and give me time on the balance."

About the ways and means of living for the next three months, after absorbing his salary in advance, he did not pause to think. He was just in that state of mind in which he could say, with feeling, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Unhappily, his effort to raise money by this expedient failed. His application was received coldly, and in a way to mortify him exceedingly.

Half desperate, and half despairing, Brainard started for his home about one o'clock, his usual hour for dining. What was he to do? He turned his thoughts to the right and to the left, groping about like a man in the dark. But no light broke in upon his mental vision.

"It will not do to meet Anna in this way," said he, as he approached his own door. "I left her with a troubled countenance in the morning. Now I must force an assumed cheerfulness."

He entered, and was moving along the passage, when Anna

came out through one of the parlour doors to meet him, and drawing her arm through his, said, in a lively tone,—

"Come, George, I want to play for you a favourite piece. I've been practising it for the last hour."

And she drew him into the parlour, and, taking her seat at the piano, commenced running her fingers over the keys. Brainard stood and listened to the music until the piece was finished, trying, but in vain, to feel an interest in the performance.

"How do you like that?" said the wife, with animation, lifting her sparkling eyes to the face of her husband, which was serious, in spite of all he could do to give it a better expression.

"Beautifully performed," replied Brainard.

"And do you really think so?" said Anna, as she arose and leaning on his arm again, drew him into the next room.

"Certainly, I do."

"Didn't you think the instrument a little out of tune?" asked Anna.

"No; it struck me as being in better tune than when you played last evening."

"It's a fine instrument, certainly. I prize it very much."

Brainard sighed faintly.

"Oh! How about your four hundred dollars?" said Anna, as if the thought had just occurred to her. "Did you get the money?"

A change was apparent in the manner of Brainard.

"No, Anna," he replied, with assumed calmness.

"Do you want it badly?"

"Yes, dear. I have four hundred dollars due in the bank to-day, and every effort to obtain the sum has failed."

"What if I lend it to you?" said the young wife, looking archly into his troubled face.

"You!" he exclaimed, quickly.

"Yes, me. Would you take it as a very great favour?"

"The greatest you could do me just at this time!"

"Very well; here is the money."

And Anna drew a purse of gold from her pocket, and held it before his eyes.

"Anna! What does this mean?"

And Brainard reached his hand to grasp the welcome treasure. But she drew it away quickly, saying, as she did so,—

"Certain conditions must go with the loan."

"Name them," was promptly answered by the husband, into whose face the sunshine had already come back.

"One is, that you are not to be angry with me for any thing that I have done to-day."

"What have you done?"

And Brainard glanced around the room with an awakened suspicion.

"I want your promise first."

"You have it."

"But mind you, I am in earnest," said Anna.

"So am I. Now make your confession."

"I sold the piano."

"What?"

There was an instant change in the expression of Brainard's face.

"Your promise. Remember," said Anna, in a warning voice.

"Sold the piano!"

And he walked into the next room, Anna moving by his side.

"Yes, I sold it to Mrs. Aiken for four hundred dollars. I had my old instrument brought over from father's. This is as good a piano as I want, or you either, I should think, seeing that you perceived no difference in its tones from the one I parted with. Now, take this purse, and if you don't call me the right sort of a wife you are a very strange man—that is all I have to say."

Surprise kept Brainard silent for some moments. He looked at the piano, then at his wife, and then at the purse of gold, half doubting whether all were real, or only a pleasant dream.

"You are the right sort of a wife, Anna, and no mistake," said he, at length, drawing his arm around her neck and kissing her. "You have done what I had not the courage to do, and, in the act, saved me from a world of trouble. The truth is, I never should have bought that piano. A clerk, with a salary of only a thousand dollars, is not justified in expending four hundred dollars for a piano."

"Nor in having so much costly furniture," said Anna, glancing round the room.

Brainard sighed, for the thought of two hundred dollars yet to pay flitted through his mind.

"Nor in paying three hundred dollars for rent," added Anna.

"Why do you say that?" asked Brainard.

"Because it's the truth. The fact is, George, I'm afraid we're in the wrong road for comfort."

"Perhaps we are," was the young man's constrained admission.

"Then the quicker we get into the right way the better. Don't you think so?"

"If we, are wrong, we should try to get right," said Brainard.

"It was wrong to buy that piano. This is your own admission."

"Well?"

"We are right again in that respect."

"Yes, thanks to my dear wife's good resolution and prompt action."

"It was wrong to take so costly a house," said Anna.

"I couldn't find a cheaper one that was genteel and comfortable."

"I'm sure I wouldn't ask any thing more genteel and comfortable than Mrs. Tyler's house."

"That pigeon-box!"

Brainard spoke in, a tone of contempt.

"Why, George, how you talk! It's a perfect gem of a house, well built and well finished in every part, and big enough for a family twice as large as ours. I think it far more comfortable than this great barn of a place, and would a thousand times rather live in it. And then it is cheaper by a hundred and twenty dollars a year."

A hundred and twenty dollars! What a large sum of money. Ah, if he had a hundred and twenty dollars in addition to the four hundred received from Anna, how happy he would be! These were the thoughts that were flitting through the mind of Brainard at the mention of the amount that could be saved by taking a smaller house.

"Well, Anna, perhaps you are right. Oh, dear!"

"Why do you sigh so heavily, George?" asked Mrs. Brainard, looking at her husband with some surprise.

"Because I can't help it," was frankly answered.

"You've got the money you needed?"

"Not all."

"Why, George! Didn't you say that you had only four hundred dollars to pay?"

"I didn't say only."

"How much more?"

"The fact is, Anna, I have two hundred dollars yet to meet."

"To-day?"

Anna's face became troubled.

"No, not until the day after to-morrow."

The young wife's countenance lighted up again.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, thank Heaven, that is all. But how the payment is to be made, is more than I can tell."

Dinner was now announced.

"I shall have to turn financier again," said Anna, smiling, as

she drew her arm within that of her husband, and led him away to the dining-room.

"I'm a little afraid of your financiering," returned her husband, shaking his head. "You might sell me next as a useless piece of furniture."

"Now, George, that is too bad," replied Anna, looking hurt.

"I only jested, dear," said Brainard, repairing the little wrong done to her feelings with a kiss. "Your past efforts at financiering were admirable, and I only hope your next attempt may be as successful."

Two days more passed, during which time neither Brainard nor his wife said any thing to each other about money, although the thoughts of both were busy for most of the time on that interesting subject. Silently sat Brainard at the breakfast-table on the morning of the day when his last note fell due. How was he to meet the payment? Two hundred dollars! He had not so much as fifty dollars in his possession, and as to borrowing, that was a vain hope. Must he go to the holder of the note, and ask a renewal? He shrunk from the thought, murmuring to himself —"Any thing but that."

As for getting the required sum through Anna, he did not permit himself to hope very strongly. She had looked thoughtful since their last interview on the subject, and at times, it seemed to him, troubled. It was plain that she had been disappointed in any efforts to get money that she might have made.

"That she, too, should be subject to mortification and painful

humiliation!" said he, as his mind dwelt on the subject. "It is too bad—too bad!—Oh, to think that my folly should have had this reaction!"

Anna looked sober as Brainard parted with her after breakfast, and he thought he saw tears in her eyes. As soon as he was gone she dressed herself, and taking from a handsome jewel-box the present of her husband, a gold watch and chain, a bracelet, diamond pin, and some other articles of the same kind, left the house.

Two hours afterward, as Brainard sat at his desk trying to fix his mind upon the accounts before him, a note was handed in bearing his address. He broke the seal, and found that it enclosed one hundred and seventy dollars, with these few words from Anna:

"This is the best I can do for you, dear husband. Will it be enough?"

"God bless her!" came half audibly from the lips of Brainard, as he drew forth his pocket-book, in which were thirty dollars. "Yes, it will be enough."

"There is no comfort in owing, or in paying after this fashion," said the young man to himself, as he walked homeward at dinner-time, with his last note in his pocket. "There will have to be a change."

And there was a change. When next I visited my young friend, I found him in a smaller house, looking as comfortable and happy as I could have wished to see him. We talked pleasantly about

the errors of the past, and the trouble which had followed as a natural result.

"There is one thing," said Brainard, during the conversation, glancing at his wife as he spoke, "that I have not been able to make out."

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Brainard, smiling.

"Where the last one hundred and seventy dollars you gave me came from."

"Have you missed nothing?" said she, archly.

"Nothing," was his reply.

"Been deprived of no comfort?"

"So far from it, I have found a great many new ones."

"And been saved the trouble of winding up and regulating that pretty eight-day clock for which you gave forty dollars."

Brainard fairly started to his feet as he turned to the mantel, and, strange to say, missed, for the first time, the handsome timepiece referred to by his wife.

"Why, Anna, is it possible? Surely that hasn't been gone for two months!"

"Oh, yes, it has."

"Well, that beats all."

And Brainard resumed his chair.

"You've been just as comfortable," said the excellent young woman.

"But you didn't get a hundred and seventy dollars for the timepiece?"

"No. Have you lost no other comfort? Think."

Brainard thought, but in vain. Anna glided from the room, and returned in a few moments with her jewel-box.

"Do you miss any thing?" said she, as she raised the lid and placed the box in his hands.

"Your watch and chain!"

Anna smiled.

"You did not sell them?"

"Yes."

"Why, Anna! Did you set no value on your husband's gifts?"

There was a slight rebuke in the tone of Brainard. Tears sprang to Anna's eyes, as she answered—"I valued them less than his happiness."

Brainard looked at her for a few moments with an expression of deep tenderness. Then turning to me, he said, in a voice that was unsteady from emotion—"You shall be my judge. Has she done wrong or right?"

"Right!" I responded, warmly. "Right! thank Heaven, my friend, for giving you a true woman for a wife. There is some hope now of your finding the comfort you sought so vainly in the beginning."

And he has found it—found it in a wise appropriation, of the good gifts of Providence according to his means.

CHILDREN—A FAMILY SCENE

"MOTHER!"

"As I was saying"—

"Mother!"

"Miss Jones wore a white figured satin"—

"Oh! mother!"

"With short sleeves"—

"Mother! mother!"

"Looped up with a small rosebud"—

"I say! mother! mother!"

The child now caught hold of her mother's arm, and shook it violently, in her effort to gain the attention she desired, while her voice, which at first was low, had become loud and impatient. Mrs. Elder, no longer able to continue her account of the manner in which Miss Jones appeared at a recent ball, turned angrily toward little Mary, whose importunities had sadly annoyed her, and, seizing her by the arm, took her to the door and thrust her roughly from the room, without any inquiry as to what she wanted. The child screamed for a while at the door, and then went crying up-stairs.

"Do what you will," said Mrs. Elder, fretfully, "you cannot teach children manners. I've talked to Mary a hundred times about interrupting me when I'm engaged in conversation with any one."

"It's line upon line and precept upon precept," remarked the visitor. "Children are children, and we mustn't expect too much from them."

"But I see other people's children sit down quietly and behave themselves when there is company."

"All children are not alike," said the visitor. "Some are more restless and impetuous than others. We have to consult their dispositions and pay regard thereto, or it will be impossible to manage them rightly. I find a great difference among my own children. Some are orderly, and others disorderly. Some have a strong sense of propriety, and others no sense of propriety at all."

"It's a great responsibility; is it not, Mrs. Peters?"

"Very great."

"It makes me really unhappy. I am sometimes tempted to wish them all in heaven; and then I would be sure they were well off and well taken care of. Some people appear to get along with their children so easy. I don't know how it is. I can't."

Mrs. Peters could have given her friend a useful hint or two on the subject of managing children, if she had felt that she dared to do so. But she knew Mrs. Elder to be exceedingly sensitive, and therefore she thought it best not to say any thing that might offend her.

There was a quiet-looking old gentleman in the room where the two ladies sat conversing. He had a book in his hand, and seemed to be reading; though, in fact, he was observing all that was said and done. He had not designed to do this, but the

interruption of little Mary threw his mind off his book, and his thoughts entered a new element. This person was a brother of Mrs. Elder, and had recently become domesticated in her family. He was a bachelor.

After the visitor had retired, Mrs. Elder sat down to her work-table in the same room where she had received her company, and resumed her sewing operations, which the call had suspended. She had not been thus engaged long, before Mary came back into the room, looking sad enough. Instead of going to her mother; she went up to the old gentleman, and looking into his face with her yet tearful eyes, said—

"Uncle William?"

"What, dear?" was returned in a kind voice.

"Something sticks my neck. Won't you see what it is?"

Uncle William laid down his book, and, turning down the neck of Mary's frock, found that the point of a pin was fretting her body. There was at least a dozen little scratches, and an inflamed spot the size of a dollar.

"Poor child!" he said, tenderly, as he removed the pin. "There now! It feels better, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it feels better; thank you, dear uncle!" and Mary put up her sweet lips and kissed him. The old gentleman was doubly repaid for his trouble. Mary ran lightly away, and he resumed his book.

In about ten minutes, the child opened the door and came in pulling the dredging-box, to which she had tied a string, along

the floor, and marking the progress she made by a track of white meal.

"You little torment!" exclaimed the mother, springing up, and jerking the string and box angrily from Mary's hand. "It is too bad! you know well enough that you had no business to touch this. Just see what a condition the floor is in! Oh dear! Shall I never teach the child any thing?"

Mrs. Elder took the dredging-box out into the kitchen, and gave the cook a sound scolding for permitting the child to have it. When she got back, Mary had her work-basket on the floor, rummaging through it for buttons and spools of cotton.

"Now just see that!" she exclaimed again. "There now!" And little Mary's ears buzzed for half an hour afterwards from the sound box she received.

After the child was thrust from the room, Mrs. Elder said, fretfully, "I'm out of all heart! I never saw such children. They seem ever bent on doing something wrong. Hark! what's that?"

There was the crash of something falling over head, followed by a loud scream.

Uncle William and Mrs. Elder both started from the room and ran up-stairs. Here they found Henry, a boy two years older than Mary, who was between three and four, lying on the carpet with a bureau drawer upon him, which he had, while turning topsy-turvy after something or other, accidentally pulled out upon him. He was more frightened than hurt, by a great deal.

"Now just look at that!" ejaculated the outraged mother when

the cause of alarm became apparent. "Just look at that, will you? Isn't it beyond all endurance! Haven't I told you a hundred times not to go near my drawers, ha? No matter if you'd been half killed! There, march out of the room as quick as you can go." And she seized Henry by the arm with a strong grip, and fairly threw him, in her anger, from the chamber.

While she was yet storming, fretting, and fuming over the drawer, Uncle William retired from the apartment and, went down-stairs again. On entering the room he had left but a few minutes before, he found Mary at her mother's work-basket again, notwithstanding the box she had received only a short time before for the same fault.

"Mary," said Uncle William to the child, in a calm, earnest, yet kind voice.

The child took its hands from the basket and came up to her uncle.

"Mary, didn't your mother tell you not to go to her basket?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mary, looking steadily into her uncle's face.

"Then why did you go?"

"I don't know."

"It was very wrong." Uncle William spoke seriously, and the child's face assumed a serious expression.

"Will you do it any more?"

"No, sir." Mary shrink close to her uncle, and her reply was in a whisper.

"Be sure and not forget, Mary. Mother sews with her spools

of cotton, and uses her scissors to make little Mary frocks and aprons, and if Mary takes any thing out of her work-basket, she can't do her sewing good. Will you remember?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now don't forget."

"No, sir."

"And just see, Mary, how you have soiled the carpet with the dredging-box! Didn't you know the flour would come out and be scattered all over the floor?"

"No, sir."

"But now you know it."

"Yes, sir."

"You won't get the dredging-box any more?"

"No, sir."

While this conversation was going on, Mrs. Elder came down, still feeling much excited. After Uncle William had said what he considered enough to Mary, he took up his book and commenced reading. The child stood leaning against him for five or ten minutes, and then ran out of the room.

"How long do you suppose she will remember what you have said?" remarked Mrs. Elder, with a lightness of tone that showed her contempt for all such measures of reform.

"Much longer than she will remember your box on the ear," was the blunt reply.

"I doubt it. Words make no impression on children."

"Harsh words make very little impression, I admit. For these

close up, instead of entering the avenues to the mind. Kind words, and reasons for things, go a great way even with children. How long did Mary remember and profit by your sound rating and box on the ear (still red with the blow) into the bargain? Not over ten minutes; for when I came down-stairs, she had both hands into your basket again."

"The little huzzy! It's well for her that I did not catch her at it!"

"It is well indeed, Sarah, for you would, by your angry and unjust punishment, have done the little creature a serious injury. Did you ever explain to her the use of your work-basket and the various things in it, and make her comprehend how necessary it was to you to have every thing in order there, just as you placed it?"

"Gracious, William! Do you think I haven't something else to do besides wasting time in explaining to children the use of every thing in my work-basket? What good would it do, I wonder?"

"It would do a great deal of good, Sarah, you may rely upon it, and be a great saving of time into the bargain; for if you made your children properly comprehend the use of every thing around them, and how their meddling with certain things was wrong, because it would incommode you, you would find them far less disposed than now to put their hands into wrong places. Try it."

"Nonsense! I wonder if I haven't been trying all my life to make them understand that they were not to meddle with things that didn't belong to them! And what good has it done?"

"Very little, I must own; for I never saw children who had less

regard to what their mother says than yours have."

This touched Mrs. Elder a little. She didn't mind animadverting upon the defects of her children, but was ready to stand up in their defence whenever any one else found fault with them.

"I reckon they are not the worst children in the world," she replied, rather warmly.

"I should be sorry if they were. But they are not the best either, by a long way, although naturally as good children as are seen anywhere. It is your bad management that is spoiling them."

"My management!"

"Frankly, Sarah, I am compelled to affirm that it is. I have been in your house, now, for three or four months, and must say that I am surprised that your children are as good as they are. Don't be angry! Don't be fretted with me as you are with every thing in them that doesn't please you. I am old enough to hear reason as well as to talk reason. Let us go back to a point on which I wished to fix your attention, but from which we digressed. In trying to correct Mary's habit of rummaging in your work-basket, you boxed her ears, and stormed at her in a most unmotherly way. Did it do any good? No; for in ten minutes she was at the same work again. For this I talked to her kindly, and endeavoured to make her sensible that it was wrong to disturb your basket."

"And much good it will do!" Mrs. Elder did not feel very amiable.

"We shall see," said Uncle William, in his calm way. "Now

I propose that we both go out of this room, and let Mary come into it, and be here alone for half an hour. My word for it, she doesn't touch your work-basket."

"And my word for it, she goes to it the first thing."

"Notwithstanding you boxed her ears for the same fault so recently?"

"Yes, and notwithstanding you reasoned with her, and talked to her so softly but a few moments since."

"Very well. The experiment is worth making, not to see who is right, but to see if a gentler mode of government than the one you have adopted will not be much better for your children. I am sure that it will."

As proposed, the mother and Uncle William left the room, and Mary was allowed to go into it and remain there alone for half an hour. Long before this time had expired, Mrs. Elder's excited feelings had cooled off, and been succeeded by a more sober and reflective state of mind. At the end of the proposed period, Uncle William came down, and joining his sister, said—

"Now, Sarah, let us go and see what Mary has been doing; but before we enter the room, let me beg of you not to show angry displeasure, nor to speak a harsh or loud word to Mary, no matter what she may have been about; for it will do no good, but harm. You have tried it long enough, and its ill effects call upon you to make a new experiment."

Mrs. Elder, who was in a better state than she was half an hour before, readily agreed to this. They then went together into the

room. As they entered, Mary looked up at them from the floor where she was, sitting, her face bright with smiles at seeing them.

"You lit"—

Uncle William grasped quickly the hand of his sister to remind her that she was not to speak harshly to Mary, no matter what she was doing, and was thus able to check the storm of angry reproof that was about to break upon the head of the child, who had been up to the book-case and taken, therefrom two rows of books, with which she was playing on the floor.

"What are you doing, dear?" asked Uncle William, kindly.

"Building a house," replied the child, the smiles that the sudden change in the mother's countenance had driven from her face, coming back and lighting up her beautiful young brow. "See here what a pretty house I have, uncle! And here is the fence, and these are trees."

"So it is, a very pretty house," replied the uncle, while the mother could scarcely repress her indignation at the outrage Mary had committed upon the book-case.

The uncle glanced toward the table, upon which the work-basket remained undisturbed. He then sat down, and said —"Come here, love."

Mary got up and ran quickly to him.

"You didn't touch mother's work-basket?" he said.

"No, sir," replied Mary.

"Why?"

Mary thought a moment, and then said—"You told me not to

do it any more."

"Why not?"

"Because if I take the cotton and scissors, mother can't make aprons and frocks for Mary."

"And if you go into her work-basket, you disturb every thing and make her a great deal of trouble. You won't do it any more?"

"No, sir." And the child shook her head earnestly.

"Didn't you know that it was also wrong to take the books out of the book-case? It not only hurts the books, but throws the room and the book-case into disorder."

"I wanted to build a house," said Mary.

"But books are to read, not to build houses with."

"Won't you ask papa to buy me a box of blocks, like Hetty Green's, to build houses with?"

"I'll buy them for you myself the next time I go out," replied Uncle William.

"Oh, will you?" And Mary clapped her hands joyfully together.

"But you must never disturb the books in the book-case any more."

"No, sir," replied the child, earnestly.

Mrs. Elder felt rebuked. To hide what was too plainly exhibited in her countenance, she stooped to the floor and commenced taking up the books and replacing them in the book-case.

"Now go up into my room, Mary, and wait there until I come.

I want to tell you something."

The child went singing up-stairs as happy as she could be.

"You see, Sarah, that kind words are more effective than harsh names with children. Mary didn't touch your work-basket."

"But she went to the book-case, which was just as bad. Children must be in some mischief."

"Not so bad, Sarah; for she had been made to comprehend why it was wrong to go to your basket, but not so of the book-case."

"I'm sure I've scolded her about taking down the books fifty times, and still, every chance she can get, she's at them again."

"You may have scolded her; but scolding a child and making it comprehend its error are two things. Scolding darkens the mind by arousing evil passions, instead of enlightening it with clear perceptions of right and, wrong. *No child is ever improved by scolding, but always injured*."

"There are few children who are not injured, then. I should like to see a mother get along with a parcel of children without scolding them."

"It is a sad truth, as you say, that there are but few children who are not injured by scolding. No cause is so active for evil among children as their mother's impatience, which shows itself from the first, and acts upon them through the whole period in which their minds are taking impressions and hardening into permanent forms. Like you, Sarah, our own mother had but little patience among her children, and you can look back and remember, as

well as I, many instances in which this impatience led her into hasty and ill-judged acts and expressions that did us harm rather than good."

"It's an easy thing to talk, William. An easy thing to say—Have patience."

"I know it is, Sarah; and a very hard thing to compel ourselves to have patience. But, if a mother's love for her children be not strong enough to induce her to govern herself for their sakes, who shall seek their good? Who will make any sacrifice for them?"

"Are you not afraid to trust Mary up in your room?" said Mrs. Elder, recollecting at the moment that Mary was alone there for a longer time than she felt to be prudent.

"No. She will not trouble any thing."

"I'd be afraid to trust her. She's a thoughtless, impulsive child, and might do some damage."

"No danger. She understands perfectly what may be and what may not be touched in my room, and so do all the children in the house. I wouldn't be afraid to leave them all there for an hour."

"You'd be afraid afterwards, I guess, if you were to try the experiment."

"I am willing to try it."

"You are welcome."

"Henry! William!" Uncle William went to the door and called the children.

Two boys came romping into the room.

"Boys," he said, "Mary is up in my room, and I want you to

go up and stay with her until I come."

Away scampered the little fellows as merry as crickets.

"They'll make sad work in your room, brother; and if they do, you mustn't blame me for it."

"Oh, no, I shall not blame you, nor scold them, but endeavour to apply some corrective that will make them think, and determine never to do so again. However, I am pretty well satisfied that nothing will be disturbed."

In less than an hour, Mrs. Elder and her brother went up to see what the children were about. They found them seated on the floor, with two or three loose packs of plain cards about them, out of which they were forming various figures, by laying them together upon the floor.

"Why, children! How could you take your uncle's cards?" said Mrs. Elder reprovingly.

"He lets us play with them, mother," replied the oldest boy, turning to his uncle with an appealing look.

"You haven't touched any thing else?" said Uncle William.

"No, sir, nothing else. We found Mary playing with the cards when we came up, and we've been playing with them ever since. You don't care, do you, Uncle William?"

"No; for I've told you, you remember, that you might play with the cards whenever you wanted to."

"Can't we play with them longer, Uncle William?" asked Mary.

"Yes, my dear, you can play with them as long as you choose."

Mrs. Elder and her brother turned away and went down-stairs.

"I don't know how it is, William, that they behave themselves so well in your room, and act like so many young Vandals in every other part of the house."

"It is plain enough, Sarah," replied her brother. "I never scold them, and never push them aside when they come to me, no matter what I'm engaged in doing. I never think a little time taken from other employments thrown away when devoted to children; and, therefore, I generally hear what they have to say, let them come to me when they will. Sometimes I am engaged in such a way that I must not be interrupted, and then I lock my door. I have explained this to them, and now the children, when they find my door locked, immediately go away. On admitting them into my room at first, I was very careful to tell them that such and such things must on no account be touched, and explain the reason why; at the same time I gave them free permission to play with other things that could sustain no serious injury. Only once or twice has any of them ventured to trespass on forbidden ground. But, instead of scolding, or even administering a reprimand, I forbade the one who had done wrong coming to my room for a certain time. In no case have I had to repeat the interdiction. If I can thus govern them in my room, I am sure you can do it in the whole house, if you go the right way about it."

"You say that you always attend to them when they come to you?" said Mrs. Elder.

"Yes. I try to do so, no matter how much I am engaged."

"If I were to do that, I would be attending to them all the time. I couldn't sit a moment with a visitor, nor say three words to anybody. You saw how it was this morning. The moment I sat down to talk with Mrs. Peters, Mary came and commenced interrupting me at every word, until I was forced to put her from the room."

"Yes, I saw it," replied the brother in a voice that plainly enough betrayed his disapproval of his sister's conduct in that particular instance.

"And you think I ought to have neglected my visitor to attend to an ill-mannered child?"

"I think, when Mary came to you, as she did, that you should have attended to her at once. If you had done so, you would have relieved her from pain, and saved yourself and visitor from a serious annoyance."

"How do you mean?"

"Don't you know what Mary wanted?"

"No."

"Is it possible! I thought you learned it when she came to me after Mrs. Peters had left.

"No, I didn't know. What was the matter with her?"

The brother stepped to the door and called for Mary, who presently came running down-stairs.

"What do you want, uncle?" said she, as she came up to him and lifted her sparkling blue eyes to his face.

"What were you going to ask your mother to do for you when

Mrs. Peters was here this morning?"

"A pin stuck me," replied the child, artlessly. "Don't you know that you took it out?"

"Yes, so I did. Let me look at the place," and he turned down Mary's frock so that her mother could see the scratched and inflamed spot upon her neck.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Elder, the tears springing to her eyes as she stooped down and kissed the wounded place.

"Are you playing with the cards yet, dear?" asked Uncle William.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you want to play more?"

"Yes, sir."

"Run along then." And Mary tripped lightly away.

"When the child first spoke to you, Sarah, if you had paused to see what she wanted, all would have been right in a few minutes. Even if her request had been frivolous, by attending to it you would have satisfied her, and been in a much better frame of mind to entertain your friend."

Mrs. Elder was silent. There was conviction in Mary's inflamed neck not to be resisted; and the conviction went to her heart.

"We," said the old gentleman, "who have attained to the age of reason, expect children, who do not reflect, to act with all the propriety of men and women, and that too, without mild and correct instruction as to their duties. Are we not most to blame?

They must regard our times, seasons, and conveniences, and we will attend to their ever active wants, when our leisure will best permit us to do so. Is it any wonder, under such a system, that children are troublesome? Would it not be a greater wonder were they otherwise? We must first learn self-government and self-denial before we can rightly govern children. After that, the task will be an easy one."

Mrs. Elder stayed to hear no more, but, rising abruptly, went up into her chamber to think. When she appeared in her family, her countenance was subdued, and when she spoke, her voice was lower and more earnest. It was remarkable to see how readily her children minded when she spoke to them, and how affectionately they drew around her. Uncle William was delighted. In a few days, however, old habits returned, and then her brother came to her aid, and by timely uttered counsel gave her new strength. It was wonderful to see what an improvement three months had made, and at the end of a year no more loving and orderly household could be found. It took much of Mrs. Elder's time, and occupied almost constantly her thoughts; but the result well paid for all.

Thinking that this every-day incident in the history of a friend would appeal strongly to some mother who has not yet learned to govern herself, or properly regard the welfare of her children, we have sketched it hastily, and send it forth in the hope that it may do good.

LOSING ONE'S TEMPER

I WAS sitting in my room one morning, feeling all "out of sorts" about something or other, when an orphan child, whom I had taken to raise, came in with a broken tumbler in her hand, and said, while her young face was pale, and her little lip quivered,—

"See, Mrs. Graham! I went to take this tumbler from the dresser to get Anna a drink of water, and I let it fall."

I was in a fretful humour before the child came in, and her appearance, with the broken tumbler in her hand, did not tend to help me to a better state of mind. She was suffering a good deal of pain in consequence of the accident, and needed a kind word to quiet the disturbed beatings of her heart. But she had come to me in an unfortunate moment.

"You are a careless little girl!" said I, severely, taking the fragments of glass from her trembling hands. "A very careless little girl, and I am displeased with you!"

I said no more; but my countenance expressed even stronger rebuke than my words. The child lingered near me for, a few moments, and then shrunk away from the room. I was sorry, in a moment, that I had permitted myself to speak unkindly to the little girl; for there was no need of my doing so; and, moreover, she had taken my words, as I could see, deeply to heart. I had made her unhappy without a cause. The breaking of the tumbler was an accident likely to happen to any one and the

child evidently felt bad enough about what had occurred, without having my displeasure added thereto.

If I was unhappy before Jane entered my room I was still more unhappy after she retired. I blamed myself, and pitied the child; but this did not in the least mend the matter.

In about half an hour, Jane came up very quietly with Willy, my dear little, curly-haired, angel-face boy, in her arms. He had fallen asleep, and she had, with her utmost strength, carried him up-stairs. She did not lift her eyes to mine as she entered, but went, with her burden, to the low bed that was in the room, where she laid him tenderly, and then sat down with her face turned partly away from me, and with a fan kept off the flies and cooled his moist skin.

Enough of Jane's countenance was visible to enable me to perceive that its expression was sad. And it was an unkind word from my lips that had brought this cloud over her young face!

"So much for permitting myself to fall into a fretful mood," said I, mentally. "In future I must be more watchful over my state of mind. I have no right to make others suffer from my own unhappy temper."

Jane continued to sit by Willy and fan him; and every now and then I could hear a very low sigh come up, as if involuntarily, from her bosom. Faint as the sound was, it smote upon my ear, and added to my uncomfortable frame of mind.

A friend called, and I went down into the parlour, and sat conversing there for an hour. But all the while there was a weight

upon my feelings. I tried, but in vain, to be cheerful. I was too distinctly aware of the fact, that an individual—and that a motherless little girl—was unhappy through my unkindness; and the consciousness was like a heavy hand upon my bosom.

"This is all a weakness," I said to myself, after my friend had left, making an effort to throw off the uncomfortable feeling. But it was of no avail. Even if the new train of thought, awakened by conversation with my friend, had lifted me above the state of mind in which I was when she came, the sight of Jane's sober face, as she passed me on the stairs, would have depressed my feelings again.

In order both to relieve my own and the child's feelings, I thought I would refer to the broken tumbler, and tell her not to grieve herself about it, as its loss was of no consequence whatever. But this would have been to have made an acknowledgment to her that I had been in the wrong, and instinctive feeling of pride remonstrated against that.

"Ah me!" I sighed. "Why did I permit myself to speak so unguardedly? How small are the cause that sometimes destroy our peace! How much good or evil is there in a single word!"

Some who read this may think that I was very weak to let a hastily uttered censure against a careless child trouble me. What are a child's feelings?

I have been a child; and, as a child, have been blamed severely by those whom I desired to please, and felt that unkind words fell heavier and more painfully, sometimes, than blows.

I could, therfore, understand the nature of Jane's feelings, and sympathize with her to a certain extent.

All through the day, Jane moved about more quietly than usual. When I spoke to her about any thing—which I did in a kinder voice than I ordinarily used—she would look into my face with an earnestness that rebuked me.

Toward evening, I sent her down-stairs for a pitcher of cool water. She went quickly, and soon returned with the pitcher of water, and a tumbler, on a waiter. She was coming towards me, evidently using more than ordinary caution, when her foot tripped against something, and she stumbled forward. It was in vain that she tried to save the pitcher. Its balance was lost, and it fell over and was broken to pieces at my feet, the water dashing upon the skirt of my dress.

The poor child became instantly as pale as ashes, and the frightened look she gave me I shall not soon forget. She tried to speak, and say that it was an accident, but her tongue was, paralyzed for the moment, and she found no utterance.

The lesson I had received in the morning served me for purposes of self-control now, and I said, instantly, in a mild, voice—

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.