he had rendered was a very small one, it had been a genuine pleasure to him to render it. Then, seeing that no one touched the food, he turned with a quick instinct to Dennis, and said: "By the way, Dennis, let me see you at the door a moment."

Dennis followed him out, and then my father bowed his head, and thanked the Good Giver for the provision made for his family, for the safety of his boy, and for the prosperous journey, and ended by asking a blessing upon the meal.

When, after a considerable interval, Mr. Bradford and his servant reappeared, it was only on the part of the former to say that Dennis would remain to assist in putting the beds into such shape that the family could have a comfortable night's rest, and to promise to look in late in the morning. He shook hands in a hearty way with my father and mother, said "good-night" to the children, and then came and looked at me. He smiled a kind, good-humored smile, and shaking his long finger at me, said: "Keep quiet, my little man: you'll be all right in the morning." Then he went away, and after the closing of the door I heard his brisk, strong tread away into the darkness.

I have often wondered whether such men as Mr. Bradford realize how strong an impression they make upon the minds of children. He undoubtedly realized that he had to deal with a family of children, beginning with my father and mother—as truly children as any of us; but it is impossible that he could know what an uplift he gave to the life to which he had ministered. The sentiment which he inspired in me was as truly that of worship as any of which I was capable. The grand man, with his stalwart frame, his apparent control of unlimited means, his self-possession, his commanding manner, his kindness and courtesy, lifted him in my imagination almost to the dignity of a God. I wondered if I could ever become such a man as he! I learned in after years that even he had his weaknesses, but I never ceased to entertain for him the most profound respect. Indeed, I had good and special reason for this, beyond what at present appears.

After he departed I watched Dennis. If Mr. Bradford was

my first gentleman, Dennis was my first Irishman. Oh, sweet first time! let me exclaim again. I have never seen an Irish man since who so excited my admiration and interest.

"Me leddy," said Dennis, imitating as well as he could the grand manner of his master, "if ye'll tek an Irish b'y's advice, ye'll contint yoursilf with a shake-down for the night, and set up the frames in the marnin'. I'm thinkin' the Squire will lit me give ye a lift thin, an it's slape ye're wantin' now."

He saw the broad grin coming upon the faces of the children as he proceeded, and joined in their unrestrained giggle when he finished.

"Ah! there's nothing like a fine Irish lad for makin' little gurr'ls happy. It's better nor whisky any day."

My poor father and mother were much distressed, fearing that the proprieties had been trampled on by the laughing children, and apologized to Dennis for their rudeness.

"Och! niver mind 'em. An Irish b'y is a funny bird any way, and they're not used to his chirrup yet."

In the meantime he had lighted half a dozen candles for as many rooms, and was making quick work with the bedding. At length, with the help of my mother, he had arranged beds enough to accommodate the family for the night, and with many professions of good-will, and with much detail of experience concerning moving in his own country, he was about to bid us all "good-night," when he paused at the door and said: "Thank a blind horse for good luck!"

"What do you mean, Dennis?" inquired my father.

"Is it what I mane? ye ask me. Wasn't it a blind horse that fell on the hill, and threw the lad aff jist where the Squire was standin,' and didn't he get him in his arms 'the furr'st one, and wasn't that the beginnin' of it all? Thank a blind horse for good luck, I till ye. The Squire can no more drap you now than he can drap his blissid ould hearr't, though it's likely I'll have to do the most of it mesilf."

My mother assured Dennis that she was sorry to give him the slightest trouble.

"Never mind me, me leddy. Let an Irish b'y alone for bein' tinder of himsilf. Do I look as if I had too much worr'k and my bafe comin' to me in thin slices?" And he spread out his brawny hands for inspection.

The children giggled, and he went out with a "good-night." Then he reopened the door, and putting only his head in, said, "Remimber what I till ye. A blind horse for good luck;" and, nodding his head a dozen times, he shut the door again and disappeared for the night.

When I woke the next morning, it all came back to me—the long ride, the fearful experience upon the hill, and the observations of the previous evening. We were indebted to the thoughtful courtesy of Mr. Bradford for our breakfast, and, after Dennis had been busy during half the morning in assisting to put the house in order, I saw my gentleman again. The only inconvenience from which I suffered was a sense of being bruised all over; and when he came in I greeted him with such a smile of hearty delight that he took my cheeks in his hands and kissed me. How many thousand times I had longed for such an expression of affection from my father, and longed in vain! It healed me and made me happy. Then I had an opportunity to study him more closely. He was fresh from his toilet, and wore the cleanest linen. His neck was enveloped and his chin propped by the old-fashioned "stock" of those days, his waistcoat was white, and his dark gray coat and trousers had evidently passed under Dennis's brush in the early morning. A heavy gold chain with a massive seal depended from his watch-pocket, and he carried in his hand what seemed to be his constant companion, his heavy cane. At this distance of time I find it difficult to describe his face, because it impressed me as a whole, and not by its separate features. His eyes were dark, pleasant, and piercing—so much I remember; but the rest of his face I cannot describe. I trusted it wholly; but, as I recall the man, I hear more than I see. Impressive as was his presence, his wonderful voice was his finest interpreter to me. I lingered upon his tones and

cadences as I have often listened to the voice of a distant waterfall, lifted and lowered by the wind. I can hear it to-day as plainly as I heard it then.

During the visit of that morning he learned the situation of the family, and comprehended with genuine pain the helplessness of my father. That he was interested in my father I could see very plainly. His talk was not in the manner of workingmen, and the conversation was discursive enough to display his intelligence. The gentleman was evidently puzzled. Here was a plain man who had seen no society, who had lived for years among the woods and hills; yet the man of culture could start no subject without meeting an intelligent response.

Mr. Bradford ascertained that my father had but little money, that he had come to Bradford with absolutely no provision but a house to move into, that he had no definite plan of business, and that his desire for a better future for his children was the motive that had induced him to migrate from his mountain home.

After he had made a full confession of his circumstances, with the confiding simplicity of a boy, Mr. Bradford looked at him with a sort of mute wonder, and then rose and walked the room.

"I confess I don't understand it, Mr. Bonnicastle," said he, stopping before him, and bringing down his cane. "You want your children to be educated better than you are, but you are a thousand times better than your circumstances. Men are happiest when they are in harmony with their circumstances. I venture to say that the men you left behind you were contented enough. What is the use of throwing children out of all pleasant relations with their condition? I don't blame you for wanting to have your children educated, but I am sure that educating working people is a mistake. Work is their life; and they worked a great deal better and were a great deal happier when they knew less. Now isn't it so, Mr. Bonnicastle? isn't it so?"

Quite unwittingly Mr. Bradford had touched my father's sensitive point, and as there was something in the gentleman's

manner that inspired the conversational faculties of all with whom he came in contact, my father's tongue was loosed, and it did not stop until the gentleman had no more to say.

"Well, if we differ, we'll agree to differ," said he, at last; "but now you want work, and I will speak to some of my friends about you. Bonnicastle—Peter Bonnicastle, I think?"

My father nodded, and said—"a name I inherit from I do not know how many great-grandfathers."

"Your ancestor was not Peter Bonnicastle of Roxbury?"

"That is what they tell me."

"Peter Bonnicastle of Roxbury!"

"Ay, Peter Bonnicastle of Roxbury."

"By Jove, man! Do you know you've got the bluest blood in your veins of any man in Bradford?"

I shall never forget the pleased and proud expression that came into the faces of my father and mother as these words were uttered. What blue blood was, and in what its excellence consisted, I did not know; but it was something to be proud of—that was evident.

"Peter Bonnicastle of Roxbury! Ah yes! Ah yes! I understand it. It's all plain enough now. You are a gentleman without knowing it—a gentleman trying in a blind way to get back to a gentleman's conditions. Well, perhaps you will; I shall not wonder if you do."

It was my first observation of the reverence for blood that I have since found to be nearly universal. The show of contempt for it which many vulgar people make is always an affectation, unless they are very vulgar indeed. My father, who, more than any man I ever knew, respected universal humanity, and ignored class distinctions, was as much delighted and elevated with the recognition of his claims to good family blood as if he had fallen heir to the old family wealth.

"And what is this lad's name?" inquired Mr. Bradford, pointing over his shoulder toward me.

"My name is Arthur Bonnicastle," I replied, taking the words out of my father's mouth.

"And Arthur Bonnicastle has a pair of ears and a tongue," responded Mr. Bradford, turning to me with an amused expression upon his face.

I took the response as a reproof, and blushed painfully.

"Tut, tut, there is no harm done, my lad," said he, rising and coming to a chair near me, and regarding me very kindly "You know you had neither last night," he added, feeling my hand and forehead to learn if there were any feverish reaction.

I was half sitting, half lying on a lounge near the window, and he changed his seat from the chair to the lounge so that he sat over me, looking down into my face. "Now," said he, regarding me very tenderly, and speaking gently, in a tone that was wholly his own, "we will have a little talk all by ourselves. What have you been thinking about? Your mouth has been screwed up into ever-so-many interrogation points ever since your father and I began to talk."

I laughed at the odd fancy, and told him I should like to ask him a few questions.

"Of course you would. Boys are always full of questions. Ask as many as you please."

"I should like to ask you if you own this town," I began.

"Why?"

"Because," I answered, "you have the same name the town has."

"No, my lad, I own very little of it; but my great-grandfather owned all the land it stands on, and the town was named for him, or rather he named it for himself."

"Was his blood blue?" I inquired.

He smiled and whistled in a comical way, and said he was afraid that it wasn't quite so blue as it might have been.

"Is yours?"

"Well, that's a tough question," he responded. 'I fancy the family blood has been growing blue for several generations, and perhaps there's a little indigo in me."

"Do you eat anything in particular?" I inquired.

'No, nothing in particular: it isn't made in that way."

"How is it made?" I inquired.

"That's a tough question, too," he replied.

"Oh! if you can't answer it," I said, "don't trouble yourself; but do you think Jesus Christ had blue blood?"

"Why yes—yes indeed. Wasn't he the son of David—when he got back to him—and wasn't David a King?"

"Oh! that's what you mean by blue blood;—and that's another thing," I said.

"What do you mean by another thing, my boy?" inquired Mr. Bradford.

"I was thinking," I said, "that my father was a carpenter, and so was his; and so his blood was blue and mine too. And there are lots of other things that might have been true."

"Tell me all about them," said my interlocutor. "What have you been thinking about?"

"Oh!" I said, "I've been thinking that if my father had lived when his father lived, and if they had lived in the same country, perhaps they would have worked in the same shop and on the same houses; and then perhaps Jesus Christ and I should have played together with the blocks and shavings. And then, when he grew up and became so wonderful, I should have grown up and perhaps been one of the apostles, and written part of the Bible, and preached and healed the sick, and been a martyr, and gone to heaven, and—and—I don't know how many other things."

"Well, I rather think you would, by Jove," he said, rising to his feet, impulsively.

"One thing more, please," I said, stretching my hands up to him. He sat down again, and put his face close to mine. "I want to tell you that I love you."

His eyes filled with tears; and he whispered: "Thank you, my dear boy: love me always. Thank you."

Then he kissed me again and turned to my father. "I think you are entirely right in coming to Bradford," I heard him say "I don't think I should like to see this little chap going back to the woods again, even if I could have my own way about it."

For some minutes he walked the room backward and forward, sometimes pausing and looking out of the window. My father saw that he was absorbed, and said nothing. At length he stopped suddenly before my father and said: "This is the strangest affair I ever knew. Here you come out of the woods with this large family, without the slightest idea what you are going to do—with no provision for the future whatever. How did you suppose you were going to get along?"

How well I remember the quiet, confident smile with which my father received his strong, blunt words, and the trembling tone in which he replied to them!

"Mr. Bradford," said he, "none of us takes care of himself. I am not a wise man in worldly things, and I am obliged to trust somebody; and I know of no one so wise as He who knows all things, or so kind as He who loves all men. I do the best I can, and I leave the rest to Him. He has never failed me in the great straits of my life, and He never will. I have already thanked Him for sending you to me yesterday; and I believe that by His direction you are to be, as you have already been, a great blessing to me. I shall seek for work, and with such strength as I have I shall do it, and do it well. I shall have troubles and trials, but I know that none will come that I cannot transform, and that I am not expected to transform, into a blessing. If I am not rich in money when the end comes, I shall be rich in something better than money."

Mr. Bradford took my father's hand, and shaking it warmly, responded: "You are already rich in that which is better than money. A faith like yours is wealth inestimable. You are a thousand times richer than I am to-day. I beg your pardon, Mr. Bonnicastle, but this is really quite new to me. I have heard cant and snuffle, and I know the difference. If the Lord doesn't take care of such a man as you are, he doesn't stand by his friends, that's all."

My father's reverence was offended by this familiar way of speaking a name which was ineffably sacred to him, and he made no reply. I could see, too, that he felt that the humility

with which he had spoken was not fully appreciated by Mr. Bradford.

Suddenly breaking the thread of the conversation, Mr. Bradford said: "By the way, who is your landlord? I ought to know who owns this little house, but I don't."

"The landlord is not a landlord at all, I believe. The owner is a landlady, though I have never seen her—a Mrs. Sanderson—Ruth Sanderson."

"Oh! I know her well, and ought to have known that this is her property," said Mr. Bradford. "I have nothing against the lady, though she is a little odd in her ways; but I am sorry you have a woman to deal with, for, so far as I have observed, a business woman is a screw by rule, and a woman without a business faculty and with business to do is a screw without rule."

In the midst of the laugh that followed Mr. Bradford's axiomatic statement he turned to the window, and exclaimed: "Well, I declare! here she comes."

I looked quickly and saw a curious turn-out approaching the house. It was an old-fashioned chaise, set low between two high wheels, drawn by a heavy-limbed and heavy-gaited black horse, and driven by a white-haired, thin-faced old man. Beside the driver sat a little old woman; and the first impression given me by the pair was that the vehicle was much too large for them, for it seemed to toss them up and catch them, and to knock them together by its constant motion. The black horse, who had a steady independent trot, that regarded neither stones nor ruts, made directly for our door, stopped when he found the place he wanted, and then gave a preliminary twitch at the reins and reached down his head for a nibble at the grass. The man sat still, looking straight before him, and left the little old woman to alight without assistance; and she did alight in a way which showed that she had little need of it. She was dressed entirely in black, with the exception of the white widow's cap drawn tightly around a little face set far back in a deep bonnet She had a quick, wiry, nervous way in

walking, and coming up the path that led through a little garden lying between the house and the street, she cast furtive glances left and right, as if gathering the condition of her property. Then followed a sharp rap at the door.

The absorbed and embarrassed condition of my father and mother was evident in the fact that neither started to open the door; but Dennis, coming quickly in from an adjoining room where he was busy, opened it, and Mr. Bradford went forward to meet her in the narrow hall. He shook her hand in his own cordial and stately way, and said jocularly: "Well, Madame, you see we have taken possession of your snug little house."

Her lips, which were compressed and thin as if she were suffering pain, parted in a faint smile, and her dark, searching eyes looked up to him in a kind of questioning wonder. There was nothing in her face that attracted me. I remember only that I felt moved to pity her, she seemed so small, and lonely, and careworn. Her hands were the tiniest I had ever seen, and were merely little bundles of bones in the shape of hands.

"Let me present your tenants to you, Mrs. Sanderson, and commend them to your good opinion," said Mr. Bradford.

She stood quietly and bowed to my father and mother, who had risen to greet her. I was young, but quick in my instincts, and I saw at once that she regarded a tenant as an inferior, with whom it would not do to be on terms of social familiarity.

"Do you find the house comfortable?" she inquired, speaking in a quick way and addressing my father.

"Apparently so," he answered; and then he added: "we are hardly settled yet, but I think we shall get along very well in it."

"With your leave I will go over it, and see for myself," she said quietly.

"Oh, certainly!" responded my father. "My wife will go with you."

"If she will; but I want you, too."

They went off together, and I heard them for some minutes talking around in the different parts of the house.

"Any more questions?" inquired Mr. Bradford with a smile, looking over to where I sat on the lounge.

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I have been wondering whether that lady has a crack in the top of her head."

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if she had a very, very small one," he replied; "and now what started that fancy?"

"Because," I continued, "if she is what you call a screw, I was wondering how they turned her."

"Well, my boy, it is so very small indeed," said Mr. Bradford, putting on a quizzical look, "that I'm afraid they can't turn her at all."

When the lady came back she seemed to be ready to go away at once; but Mr. Bradford detained her with the story of the previous night's experiences, including the accident that had happened to me. She listened sharply, and then came over to where I was sitting, and asked me if I were badly hurt. I assured her I was not. Then she took one of my plump hands in her own little grasp, and looked at me in a strange, intense way without saying a word.

Mr. Bradford interrupted her, with an eye to business, by saying: "Mr. Bonnicastle, your new tenant here, is a carpenter; and I venture to say that he is a good one. We must do what we can to introduce him to business."

She turned with a quick motion on her heel, and bent her eyes on my father. "Bonnicastle?" said she, with almost a fierce interrogation.

"Oh! I supposed you knew his name, Mrs. Sanderson," said Mr. Bradford; and then he added, "but I presume your agent did not tell you."

She made no sign to show that she had heard a word that Mr. Bradford had said.

"Peter Bonnicastle," said my father, breaking the silence with the only words he could find.

"Peter Bonnicastle!" she repeated almost mechanically, and continued standing as if dazed.

She stood with her back toward me, and I could only guess at her expression, or the strangely curious interest of the scene, by its reflection in Mr. Bradford's face. He sat uneasily in his chair, and pressed the head of his cane against his chin, as if he were using a mechanical appliance to keep his mouth shut. He knew the woman before him, and was determined to be wise. Subsequently I learned the reason of it all—of his silence at the time, of his reticence for months and even years afterward, and of what sometimes seemed to me and to my father like coolness and neglect.

The silence was oppressive, and my father, remembering the importance which Mr. Bradford had attached to the fact, and moved by a newly awakened pride, said: "I am one of many Peters, they tell me, the first of whom settled in Roxbury

"Roxbury?" and she took one or two steps toward him. "You are sure?"

"Perfectly sure," responded my father.

She made no explanation, but started for the door, dropping a little bow as she turned away. Mr. Bradford was on his feet in a moment, and, opening the door for her, accompanied her into the street. I watched them from the window. They paused just far enough from the driver of the chaise to be beyond his hearing, and conversed for several minutes. I could not doubt that Mr. Bradford was giving her his impression of us. Then he helped her into the chaise, and the little gray-haired driver, gathering up his reins, and giving a great pull at the head of the black horse, which seemed fastened to a particularly strong tuft of grass, turned up the street and drove off, tossing and jolting in the way he came.

There was a strong, serious, excited expression on Mr. Bradford's face as he came in. "My friend," said he, taking my father's hand, "this is a curious affair. I cannot explain it to you, and the probabilities are that I shall have less to do with and for you than I supposed I might have. Be sure,

however, that I shall always be interested in your prosperity, and never hesitate to come to me if you are in serious trouble. And now let me ask you never to mention my name to Mrs. Sanderson, with praise; never tell her if I render you a service. I know the lady, and I think it quite likely that you will hear from her in a few days. In the mean time you will be busy in making your family comfortable in your new home." Then he spoke a cheerful word to my mother, and bade us all a good-morning, only looking kindly at me instead of bestowing upon me the coveted and expected kiss.

When he was gone, my father and mother looked at each other with a significant glance, and I waited to hear what they would say. If I have said little about my mother, it is because she had very little to say for herself. She was a weary, worn woman, who had parted with her vitality in the bearing and rearing of her children and in hard and constant care and work. Life had gone wrong with her. She had a profound respect for practical gifts, and her husband did not possess them. She had long since ceased to hope for anything good in life, and her face had taken on a sad, dejected expression, which it never lost under any circumstances. To my father's abounding hopefulness she always opposed her obstinate hopelessness. This was partly a matter of temperament, as well as a result of disappointment. I learned early that she had very little faith in me, or rather in any natural gifts of mine that in the future might retrieve the fortunes of the family. I had too many of the characteristics of my father.

I see the two now as they sat thinking and talking over the events and acquaintances of the evening and the morning as plainly as I saw them then—my father with his blue eyes all alight, and his cheeks touched with the flush of excitement, and my mother with her distrustful face, depreciating and questioning everything. She liked Mr. Bradford. Mr. Bradford was a gentleman; but what had gentlemen to do with them? It was all very well to talk about family, but what was family good for without money? Mr. Bradford had his own affairs to attend to,

and we should see precious little more of him! As for Mrs. Sanderson, she did not like her at all. Poor people would get very little consideration from an old woman whose hand was too good to be given to a stranger who happened to be her tenant.

I have wondered often how my father maintained his courage and faith with such a drag upon them as my mother's morbid sadness imposed, but in truth they were proof against every depressing influence. Out of every suggestion of possible good fortune he built castles that filled his imagination with almost a childish delight. He believed that something good was soon to come out of it all, and he was really bright and warm in the smile of that Providence which had manifested itself to him in these new acquaintances. I pinned my faith to my father's sleeve, and believed as fully and as far as he did. There was a rare sympathy between us. The great sweet boy that he was and the little boy that I was, were one in a charming communion. Oh God! that he should be gone and I here! He has been in heaven long enough to have won his freedom, and I am sure we shall kiss when we meet again!

Before the week closed, the gray-haired old servant of Mrs. Sanderson knocked at the door, and brought a little note. It was from his mistress, and read thus, for I copy from the faded document itself:—

"THE MANSION, BRADFORD

"MR. PETER BONNICASTLE:—

"I should like to see you here next Monday morning, in regard to some repairs about The Mansion. Come early, and if your little boy Arthur is well enough you may bring him.

"RUTH SANDERSON."

The note was read aloud, and it conveyed to my mind instantaneously a fact which I did not mention, but which filled me with strange excitement and pleasure. I remembered that my name was not once mentioned while Mrs. Sanderson was in the house. She had learned it therefore from Mr. Bradford,

while talking at the door. Mr. Bradford liked me, I knew, and he had spoken well of me to her. What would come of it all? So, with the same visionary hopefulness that characterized my father, I plunged into a sea of dreams on which I floated over depths paved with treasure, and under skies bright with promise, until Monday morning dawned. When the early breakfast was finished, and my father with unusual fervor of feeling had commended his family and himself to the keeping and the blessing of heaven, we started forth, he and I, hand in hand, with as cheerful anticipations as if we were going to a feast.

CHAPTER II.

I VISIT AN OGRESS AND A GIANT IN THEIR ENCHANTED CASTLE.

"THE MANSION" of Mrs. Sanderson was a long half-mile away from us, situated upon the hill that overlooked the little city. It appeared grand in the distance, and commanded the most charming view of town, meadow and river imaginable. We passed Mr. Bradford's house on the way—a plain, rich, unpretending dwelling—and received from him a hearty good-morning, with kind inquiries for my mother, as he stood in his open doorway, enjoying the fresh morning air. At the window sat a smiling little woman, and, by her side, looking out at me, stood the prettiest little girl I had ever seen. Her raven-black hair was freshly curled, and shone like her raven-black eyes; and both helped to make the simple frock in which she was dressed seem marvelously white. I have pitied my poor little self many times in thinking how far removed from me in condition the petted child seemed that morning, and how unworthy I felt, in my homely clothes, to touch her dainty hand, or even to speak to her. I was fascinated by the vision, but glad to get out of her sight.

On arriving at The Mansion, my father and I walked to the great front-door. There were sleeping lions at the side and there was a rampant lion on the knocker which my father was about to attack when the door swung noiselessly upon its hinges, and we were met upon the threshold by the mistress herself. She looked smaller than ever, shorn of her street costume and her bonnet; and her lips were so thin and her face seemed so full of pain that I wondered whether it were her head or her teeth that ached.