

Was it manly for me to seek help from her to be a man? If she had not pitied me and seen further than I did, she would have spurned me.

This conversation was nothing but a brief episode in the evening's experiences, but it made a healthy impression upon me.

Livingston and I left the Bradfords together, and, as we were to take opposite directions to our lodgings, we parted at the door. Not a word was said about Millie; and all that he said about the Bradfords was in the guarded words: "These friends of yours seem to be very nice people." I knew that he would be there again, as soon as it would be practicable, and that he would be there without me. I was quite reconciled to this, for I saw that he monopolized attention, and that I could be nothing but a boy by his side, when he chose that I should be.

He remained in the town for a week, calling upon the Bradford family nearly every day, and on one occasion taking a drive with them in the family carriage. In the meantime Henry made rapid strides toward recovery, and the dreaded hour approached when it would be necessary for me to take the step which would abruptly change the current of my life.

When I parted with Livingston, he still entertained the project of travel, and said that he should return in a fortnight to ascertain my conclusions.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### MRS. SANDERSON MEETS HER GRANDSON AND I RETURN TO MY FATHER'S HOME.

LIVINGSTON had been gone three or four days when, one morning, Henry's surgical attendant came down stairs from his regular visit to the young man, and announced that his patient was sitting in a chair by the window, and that he would soon be able to take a little passive exercise in the open air. Having given me directions with regard to getting him back to his bed, when he should become tired with sitting, he went away. The sudden realization that Henry was so near the point of perfect recovery sent the blood to my heart with a dull throb that made me tremble. I knew that he would endeavor to get away as soon as possible, and that he would go whenever his mother should consider it safe for him to be separated from her.

"Are you well to day?" I said, lifting my eyes to my aunt.

"Perfectly well."

"Are you willing to have a long talk with me this morning?" I inquired.

She looked at me with a quick, sharp glance, and seeing that I was agitated, replied with the question: "Is it a matter of great importance?"

"Yes, of the greatest importance."

"H'm! You're not in love, I hope?"

"No," I responded, coloring in spite of the terrible depression that had come upon me, "though I probably should not tell of it if I were."

"I'm sure I don't see why you shouldn't," she answered quickly.

"No," I said, "it has nothing to do with that. I wish it had, but it doesn't look as if anything of that kind would ever come to me."

"Psh! You're a boy. Don't worry yourself before your time."

We were seated in the little library where she first received me. I rose from my chair, went to the door that opened into the hall, and locked it. The door into the dining-room stood ajar, and I threw it wide open. Then I went back to my chair and sat down. She watched these movements in silent astonishment, and her eyes fairly burned with excited curiosity when I concluded them.

Looking into the dining-room upon the picture that still hang where I had replaced it, I said: "Aunt, you must forgive me; but I have learned all about that picture, and I know the whole history of the person whom it represents."

"Who has been base enough to tell you?" she almost screamed.

"A person who wishes no harm either to you or me," I replied.

She had risen to her feet at the first announcement, but she sank back into her chair again, and covered her face with her hands. Suddenly steeling herself against the feelings that were overwhelming her, she dropped her hands, and said, with a voice equally charged with fright and defiance: "So, this is the important business, is it! You have listened to the voice of a slanderer, who has represented me to be little better than a fiend; and I am to be lectured, am I? You, to whom I have given my bread and my fortune—you, to whom I have given my love—are turning against me, are you? You have consented to sit still and hear me maligned and condemned, have you? Do you wish to forsake me? Have I done anything to deserve such treatment at your hands? Does my presence defile you? Do I go about meddling with other people's business? Have I meddled with anything that was not my own? I would like to know who has been poisoning your mind against

me. Has there been anything in my treatment of you that would lead you to think me possessed of the devil?"

She poured out these words in a torrent so impetuous and continuous that I could not even attempt to interrupt her; and it was better that she should spend the first gush of her passion without hinderance. It was to me a terrible revelation of the condition of her mind, and of the agitations to which it was familiar. This was doubtless the first utterance to which those agitations had ever forced her.

I paused for a minute to collect my thoughts, while she buried her face in her hands again. Then I said: "Mrs. Sanderson, I have noticed, since my return from college particularly, that you have been in trouble. I have seen you many times before that picture, and known that it was associated in your mind with distressing thoughts. It has troubled me, because it has given me the impression that I am in some way, directly or indirectly, connected with it. I have sought for the explanation and found it. No one has prejudiced my mind against you, as I will prove to you by such a sacrifice as few men have been called upon to make. You have been very kind to me, and I do not now see how it is possible for me ever to cease to be grateful to you. You have been my most generous and indulgent benefactress, and it is partly because I am grateful, and desire to prove my gratitude, that I have sought this interview."

She looked up to me with a dazed, distressed expression upon her sharpened features, as if waiting for me to go on.

"There was once a little boy," I said, "who grew up in this old house, under his mother's care; and then he went away, and went wrong. His mother was distracted with his ingratitude and his excesses, and finally cut him adrift, with the means of continuing his dissipations. After a time he married one of God's own angels."

"You know nothing about it," she interrupted, spitefully "You know nothing about her. She was a poor girl without any position, who managed to weave her net about him and inveigle him into marriage. I cursed her then, and I curse her still."

"Don't, aunt," I said. "I am sure you have done some things in your life that you are sorry for, and I know you will be sorry for this."

"Don't lecture me, boy."

"I don't lecture you. I don't presume to do anything of the kind, but I know I speak the truth."

"Well, then, what about the angel?"

"She did her best to make him what his mother had failed to make him."

"And the angel failed," she said contemptuously. "Certainly a woman may be excused for not accomplishing what a superior being failed to accomplish."

"Yes, the angel failed, mainly because his mother would not help her."

"I tell you again that you know nothing about it. I am a fool for listening to another word."

It was a strange thing to me, as I sat before this agitated woman, quarreling with her own history, and helplessly angry with me and with the unknown man who had given me my information, to find myself growing cool and strong with every burst of her passion. I had found and pierced the joints of her closely-knit harness. I was in the center of the rankling secret of her life, and she was self-contained no longer. I was in power, and she was fretfully conscious that she was not.

"Yes, the angel failed, because his mother would not help her. I presume the mother intended to drive that angel to forsake him, and compel him to return to herself. If she did not have so good a motive as this, she intended to drive him to the grave into which he was soon gathered."

"Oh, Arthur! Arthur! Arthur! Don't say it! don't say it!"

The anger was gone, and the old remorse which had been eating at her heart for years resumed its sway. She writhed in her chair. She wrung her hands. She rose and paced the room, in a painful, tottering way, which distressed me, and made me fear that I had been harsh, or had chosen the wrong plan for approaching her and executing my purpose.

"Yes, aunt, the woman was an angel. If she had not been, she would have become a torment to you. Did she ever write to you? Did she ever ask a favor of you? Do you suppose that she would ever receive from you a farthing of the wealth that her husband would rightly have inherited, unless first you had poured out your heart to her in a prayer for forgiveness? Has she acted like a mercenary woman? No, aunt, it is you who know nothing about her."

"She was nothing to me," Mrs. Sanderson said. "She never could have been anything to me."

"That you don't know."

"Well, what else have you to say?"

"She is living to-day, and, in a self-respectful way, is earning her own livelihood."

"I tell you again she is nothing to me," my aunt responded. "She is doing to-day what I presume she did before her marriage. I know of no reason why she should not earn her living. She probably knows me well enough to know that I will do nothing for her, and can be nothing to her. If you have taken it into your head to try to bring me to recognize her and give her money, I can tell you that you have undertaken a very foolish and fruitless enterprise. If this is all you have to say to me, we may as well stop our conversation at once. It is a boy's business, and if you know what is for your own good you will never allude to her again."

She rose impatiently as if determined to close the interview, but I did not stir; so, seeing me determined, she sat down again.

"Mrs. Sanderson," I said, "is your heart satisfied with me? Have you not, especially in these last years and months, longed for some one of your own blood on whom to bestow your affections? I grant that you have treated me like a son. I grant that I not only have nothing to complain of, but that I have a thousand things to be grateful for. You have tried to love me. You have determined with all your power of will to make me everything to yourself; but, after all, are you satisfied?"

Though one of your kindred, my blood does not come near enough to yours to make me yours. Have you not longed to do something before you die to wipe out the memories that haunt you?"

She watched me with sad, wide-open eyes, as I firmly and tenderly said all this, and then, as if she could conceive of but one conclusion, her anger rose again, and she exclaimed: "Don't talk to me any more about this woman! I tell you I will have nothing to do with her."

"I am saying nothing about this woman, aunt," I responded. "I am going to talk about some one besides this woman, for she had a child, of whom your son was the father."

"What?"

Half exclamation, half interrogation, the word pierced my ears like a scream.

"Mrs. Sanderson, you are the grandmother of as noble a man as breathes."

She cried; she laughed; she exclaimed: "Oh, Arthur! Oh God!" She covered her face; she threw her handkerchief upon the floor; she tore open her dress to relieve her throbbing heart, and yielded herself to such a tumult of conflicting passions as I had never witnessed before—such as I hope I may never be called upon to witness again. I sat frightened and dumb. I feared she would die—that she could not survive such agitations.

"Ha! ha! ha! I have a grandson! I have a grandson! Oh, Arthur! Oh, God! Is it so? Is it so? You lie! You know you lie! You are deceiving me. Is it so, Arthur? Say it again. It can't be so. I should have known it. Somebody has lied to you. Oh, how could you, how could you deceive an old woman, with one foot in the grave—an old woman who has loved you, and done all she could for you? How could you, Arthur?"

Thus she poured out her emotions and doubts and deprecations, unmindful of all my attempts to interrupt her, and I saw at once that it was the only mode by which she could ever be

come composed enough to hear the rest of my story. The storm could only resolve itself into calm through the processes of storm. When she had exhausted herself she sank back in her chair. Then, as if moved by an impulse to put me under the strongest motive to truthfulness, she rose and came to me. With a movement so sudden that I was entirely unprepared for it, she threw herself upon my lap, and clasping her arms around my neck, placed her lips close to my ear, and said in a voice surcharged with tender pleading: "Don't deceive me, dear! Don't be cruel to me! I have never used you ill. Tell me all about it, just as it is. I am an old woman. I have only a little while to live."

"I have told you everything just as it is," I responded.

"And I have a grandchild?"

"One that you may love and be proud of."

"And can I ever see him?"

"Yes."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"Do you suppose he will come to live with me, if I ask him?"

"I don't know."

"Does he hate me?"

"I don't think he hates anybody."

"Is he with his mother?"

"Yes."

"Is he fond of her?"

"So fond of her," I answered, "that he will accept no invitation from you that does not include her."

"I take it all back, Arthur," she said. "He is right. He is a Bonnicastle. When can I see him?"

"Soon, I think."

"And I have really a grandson—a good grandson? how long have you known it?"

"Only a few days."

"Perhaps I shall not live forty-eight hours. I must see him at once."

"You shall see him soon."

Then she patted my cheek and kissed me, and played with my hair like a child. She called me her good boy, her noble boy. Then, struck suddenly with the thought of the changes that were progressing in her own mind and affections, and the changes that were imminent in her relations to me, she rose and went back to her chair. When I looked her in the face again, I was astonished at the change which a single moment of reflection had wrought upon her. Her anger was gone, her remorse had vanished, her self-possession had come back to her, enveloping her as with an armor of steel, and she was once more the Mrs. Sanderson of old. How was she to get rid of me? What arrangement could she make to get me out of the house, loosen my hold upon my expectations, and instal the rightful heir of her wealth in her home? She turned to her new life and her new schemes with the eager determination of a woman of business.

"What has led you to this announcement, Arthur?" she inquired.

"A wish to do justice to all the parties to whom it relates," I replied.

"You have done right," she said, "and of course you have counted the cost. If my grandson comes here, you will not expect to stay. Have you made any plans? Have you any reward to ask for your sacrifice? I trust that in making up your mind upon this point, you will remember what I have done for you. You will find my expenses on your account in a book which I will give you."

The cool cruelty of the woman, at this supreme moment of her life, angered and disgusted me. I bit my lips to keep back the hot words that pressed for utterance. Then, with all the calmness I could command, I said: "Do you suppose that I have come to you to-day to sell your grandson to you for money? Do you suppose that your dollars weigh a pin witz

me? Can't you realize that I am voluntarily relinquishing the hopes and expectations of a lifetime? Can't you see that I am going from a life of independence to one of labor and struggle?"

"Don't be angry, Arthur," she responded coolly. "I have given you your education, and taken care of you for years. I have done it under the impression that I had no heir. You tell me that I have one, and now I must part with you. You foresaw this, and I supposed that you had made your plans for it. The simple question is, how much do you want in consideration of your disappointment? How are we to separate, so that you shall feel satisfied that I have done you justice?"

"I have no stipulations to make," I answered; "I understand that you have done much for me, and that I have done very little for you, indeed; that I have very poorly improved the privileges you have bestowed upon me. I understand that you do not consider yourself under the slightest obligation to me, and that so soon as you may get your grandson into your possession, through my means, you will drop me and be glad to be rid of me forever."

"You speak bitterly, Arthur. I shall always be interested in your welfare, and shall do what I can to serve you; but when we separate we must be quits. You know my mode of doing business. I exact my rights and pay my dues."

"I have no bargains to make with you, Mrs. Sanderson," I said. "We are quits now. I confess that I have had a dream of travel. I have hoped to go away after this change in my life, and to forget it among new scenes, and prepare myself to take up and bear a burden for which my life here has done much to unfit me. I have dreamed of getting away from Bradford for a time, until the excitement that will attend these changes shall have blown over. I confess that I shrink from meeting the questions and sneers that await me; but we are quits now."

"Have you any idea what the expenses of a foreign tour will be?" she inquired in a cool, calculating tone.

"Mrs. Sanderson, you have just come into the possession of the most precious knowledge the world holds for you, and through it you expect to receive the great boon of your life. All this comes through me. Neither your daughter-in-law nor your grandson would ever have made themselves known to you, and now, when I have sacrificed the expectations of a life to them and to you, you talk about the price of a foreign trip for me, as if you were bargaining for a horse. No, madam; I wash my hands of the whole business, and it is better for us both to talk no more about this matter. We are quits to-day. I shall feel better by and by, but you have disappointed me and made me very unhappy."

Even while I talked, I could see her face harden from moment to moment. Her heart had gone out toward her heir with a selfish affection, which slowly, quietly, and surely shut out every other human being. She grudged me every dollar of her fortune on his behalf. The moment she ceased to regard me as her heir, I stood in the same relation to her that any other poor young man in Bradford occupied. Her wealth was for her grandson. She would pay to him, on his father's account, every dollar she held. She would lavish upon him every affection, and every service possible. She would offer herself and her possessions to atone for wrongs for which her conscience had upbraided her more and more, as her life had approached its close. She longed for this consummation, and looked to it for peace.

Thus I reached the moment of transition, and in disappointment and bitterness—feeling that my sacrifice was not appreciated, and that my benefactress had lost all affection for and interest in me—I took up the burden of my own life, determined that on no consideration would I receive, beyond the clothes I wore, one dollar more of the fortune on which I had lived.

"When can I see my grandson?"

"When you choose."

"To day?"

"Yes."

"Bring him to me."

"I must go to my room first," I said.

I mounted to my chamber, and threw myself into my accustomed chair by the window. I had passed into a new world. The charming things about me, which I had counted my own, were another's. The old house and the broad, beautiful acres which stretched around it were alienated forever. I realized that every dollar that had been bestowed upon me, and every privilege, service, and attention I had received, had come from a supremely selfish heart, through motives that sought only to fill an empty life, and to associate with an honored ancestral name the wealth which could not be taken out of the world with its possessor. A mercenary value had been placed upon every sentiment of gratitude and respect and love which my benefactress had inspired in me. I had been used as a thing of convenience, and being a thing of convenience no longer, I was dropped as a burden. I was humiliated, shamed, angered by the way in which I had been treated, but I was cured. The gifts that I had received looked hateful to me. The position I had occupied—the position in which I had not only grown to be content, but in which I had nursed and developed a degree of aristocratic pride—seemed most unmanly. I had been used, played with, petted, fed with daily indulgences and great promises, and then cast away, there being no further use for me.

"Never again!" I said to myself—"never again! I would not take another dollar from this estate and its owner to keep myself from starving."

The dream of travel was shattered. My new life and relations were squarely before me. Where and what I should be in a week I did not know. What old friends would fall away from me, what new friends I should make, how I should earn the bread which had thus far been supplied, was all uncertain.

I believed, however, that I had done my duty; and out of all my shame and disappointment and disgust and apprehension, there rose within me a sentiment of self-respect and a feeling of strength. And when I thought of all the circumstances

that had conspired to bring me to this point, I could not doubt that Providence—the great will that embraces all wills—the supreme plan that subordinates and weaves into serviceable relations all plans—the golden fabric that unrolls from day to day, with the steady revolutions of the stars, and rolls up again, studded thick with the designs of men—had ordered everything, and ordered it aright. It was best for me that I had gone through with my indulgences and my discipline. It was best for me that I had passed through the peculiar experiences of my life. It was best for Mrs. Sanderson that she had been tormented, and that, at last, she was passing into the hands that were strong and steady—hands that would lead her aright—hands into which she was ready to throw herself, with self-abandoning love and trust. It was best that Henry had struggled and learned the worth of money, and acquired sympathy and respect for the poor. It was best that the feet of all the persons concerned in this great change of relations should be brought together at last, by a series of coincidences that seemed well-nigh miraculous.

One thing struck me as being very singular, viz.: that Mrs. Sanderson was so easily satisfied that she had a grandson, and that I not only knew him, but that he was close at hand. It only showed how eagerly ready she was to believe it, and to believe that I had prepared everything to satisfy her desire. In another frame of mind—if another frame of mind had been possible—she would have questioned me—doubted me—put me to the proof of my statements; but she was ready to accept anything on my simple assurance. After sitting quietly for an hour, I rose with a long sigh. I had still the duty of presenting Henry Sanderson—for that was his real name—to his grandmother. My heart throbbed wildly every time the thought of this meeting came to me. I had said nothing to Henry, for I knew that it would distress him beyond measure,—nay, that, disabled as he was, he would contrive some way to get out of the house and out of the town. Nothing but a sense of freedom from detection and discovery had ever recon-

ciled him and his mother to an hour's residence in The Mansion. Hidden away in this New England town, toward which they had drifted from the far South, partly on the current of circumstances, and partly by the force of a desire to see and know the early home and associations of the husband and father, they did not doubt that they could cover their identity so perfectly that it would not be suspected. Henry had studiously kept away from the house. His mother had met Mrs. Sanderson entirely by accident, and had taken a sweet and self-amusing revenge by compelling her to love and trust her. They had confided their secret to but one man, and he had had their permission to confide it to his family. Through all these long years, the two families had been intimate friends, and Mr. Bradford had endeavored in every possible way to obtain their consent to the course he had pursued, but in vain. After the death of Mrs. Sanderson, he would doubtless have informed me of Henry's natural claims to the estate, relying upon my sense of justice and my love for him for its division between us; but he saw that my prospects were ruining me, and so had taken the matter into his own hands, simply confiding the facts of the case to my father and Mr. Bird, and acting with their advice and consent.

I drew out my trunk, and carefully packed my clothing. Not an article in the room that was not necessary to me did I take from its place. It would be Henry's room, and all the choice ornaments and appointments that I had had the happy pains to gather, were left to please his eye and remind him of me. The occupation, while it pained me, gave me strength and calmness. When the work was done, I locked my trunk, put the key in my pocket, and was about to leave the room when there came to me the sense of a smile from the skies. A cloud had been over the sun, and as it passed a flood of sunlight filled the room, growing stronger and stronger until my eyes were almost blinded by the sweet effulgence. I was not superstitious, but it seemed as if God had given me His benediction.

I turned the key in my door, and bowed at my bed. "Dear

Father," I said, "at last nothing stands between Thee and me. That which I have loved better than Thee is gone, and now I beg Thee to help me and lead me in Thine own way to Thyself. I shrink from the world, but Thou hast made it. I shrink from toil and struggle, but Thou hast ordained them. Help me to be a man after Thine own heart. Give me wisdom, guidance, and assistance. Help me to lay aside my selfishness, my love of luxury and ease, and to go down heartily into the work of the world, and to build my life upon sure foundations."

Then there rose in me a flood of pity and charity for one who had so long been my benefactress; and I prayed for her—that in her new relations she might be blessed with content and satisfaction, and that her last days might be filled with something better than she had known. I forgave her for her quick and complete renunciation of myself, and the cruel wounds she had inflicted upon my pride, and felt the old good-will of childhood welling in my heart. I enveloped her with my charity. I crowned her with the grace of pardon.

When I went down stairs I found her awaiting me in the room where I had left her. She sat holding a paper in her hand. She had dressed herself in her best, as if she were about to receive a prince. There was a bright spot of red on either thin and wrinkled cheek, and her eyes shone like fire.

"You are sure you have made no mistake, Arthur?" she said, with a voice quite unnatural in its quavering sharpness.

"Quite sure," I answered.

"This," said she, holding up her paper, "is my will. There is no will of mine beside this in existence. I have no time to ask my lawyer here to-day to make another. Life is uncertain, and there must be no mistake. I wish you to go with me to the kitchen."

She rose and I followed her out. I could not imagine what she would do, but she went straight to the old-fashioned fireplace, where the dinner was cooking, and holding the paper in her hands, opened it, and asked me to read the beginning of it and the signatures. I did so, and then she laid it upon the

coals. The quick flame shot up, and we both looked on in silence, until nothing was left of it but white ashes, which a breath would scatter. The elements had swallowed all my claim to her large estate. The old cook regarded us in wondering silence, with her hands upon her hips, and watched us as we turned away from the fire, and left her alone in her domain.

When we returned to the library, Mrs. Sanderson said: "The burning of that will is equivalent to writing another in favor of my grandson; so, if I make no other, you will know the reason."

She pressed her hand upon her heart in a distressed way, and added; "I am as nearly ready as I ever can be to see—"

"Henry Sanderson," I said.

"Is that his name? Is that his real name?" she asked, eagerly.

"It is."

"And it will all go to Henry Sanderson!"

The intense, triumphant satisfaction with which she said this was almost enough, of itself, to repay me for the sacrifice I had made.

"Mrs. Sanderson," I said, "I have put into my trunk the clothes I need, and when I go away I will send for them. I have left everything else."

"For Henry—my Henry Sanderson!"

"Yes, for your Henry; and now I must go up and see my Henry, and Mrs. Belden; for after I have presented your grandson to you I shall go away."

I mounted the stairs with a throbbing heart, and a face that told the tale of a terrible excitement and trouble. Both Henry and his mother started as I came into the room, and simultaneously uttered the words, "What is it, Arthur?"

"Nothing, except that my aunt and I have had a talk, and I am going away."

A quick, involuntary glance passed between the pair, but both waited to hear my announcement.

"I am glad you are here," I said. "You can stay as long

as you wish, but I am going away. I shall see you again, but never as an inmate of this house. I want to thank you for all your kindness and love, and to assure you that I shall always remember you. Mrs. Belden, you never kissed me: kiss me now."

The dear woman looked scared, but obeyed my wish. I sat down on Henry's bed and laid my head beside his. "Good-by, old boy; good-by! Thank you for all your faithfulness to me and for your example. I hope some time to be half as good as you are."

My eyes were flooded with tears, and both Mrs. Belden and Henry were weeping in sympathy.

"What is it, Arthur? what is it? Tell us. Perhaps we can help you."

"Whatever it is, it is all right," I answered. "Some time you will know, and you will find that I am not to blame."

Then I shook their hands, went abruptly out of the room, and ran down stairs to Mrs. Sanderson. She saw that I was strangely agitated, and rose feebly as I entered.

"I wish you to go up stairs with me before I leave," I said. "Will you be kind enough to go with me now?"

There was no dawning suspicion in her heart of what I had prepared for her. She had expected me to go out and bring in a stately stranger for whose reception she had prepared her toilet. She had wondered how he would look, and by what terms she should address him.

I gave her my arm and we slowly walked up the stairs together, while my heart was beating so heavily that I could hear it, blow upon blow, in my ears. I knocked at Henry's door and entered. The moment Henry and his mother saw us together, and caught the agitated look that both of us wore, they anticipated the announcement that was imminent, and grew pale as ghosts.

"Mrs. Sanderson," I said, without offering her a seat, "this is Mrs. Belden Hulm, your daughter-in-law, and this (turning

to Henry) is your grandson, Henry Sanderson. May God bless you all!"

I dropped her arm and rushed to the door. A hurried glance behind me showed that she was staggering and falling. Turning swiftly back, I caught her, while Mrs. Hulm supported her upon the other side, and together we led her to Henry's bed. Then she dropped upon her knees and Henry threw his arms around her neck, and said softly: "Grandmother!"

"My boy, my boy!" was all she could say, and it was enough.

Then I left them. I heard Henry say: "Don't go," but I did not heed him. Running down stairs, with limbs so weak with excitement that I could hardly stand, I seized my hat in the hall, and went out of doors, and hurriedly took my way toward my father's house. I did not even cast a glance at the Bradford residence, so absorbed was I in the events in which I had been an actor. The vision of the three persons clustered at Henry's bed, the thought of the powerful emotions that were surging in them all, the explanations that were pouring from Henry's lips, the prayers for forgiveness that my old benefactress was uttering, and the dreams of the new life of The Mansion which I had inaugurated blotted out the sense of my own sacrifice, and made me oblivious to all around me. Men spoke to me on the street, and I remembered afterwards that I did not answer them. I walked in a dream, and was at my father's door before I was aware. I felt that I was not ready to go in, so I turned away and continued my walk. Up the long streets I went, wrapped in my dream. Down through the busy life along the wharves I wandered, and looked out upon the water. The sailors were singing, children were playing, apple-women were chaffing, but nothing could divert me. My heart was in the room I had left. The scene was burnt indelibly upon my memory, and no new impression could take its place.

Slowly I turned toward home again. I had mastered myself sufficiently to be able to think of my future, and of the necessi-

ties and proprieties of my new position. When I reached my father's house, I found Mrs. Sanderson's man-servant—old Jenks's successor—waiting at the gate with a message from Henry, desiring my immediate return to The Mansion, and requesting that I bring with me my sister Claire. This latter request was one that brought me to myself. I had now the responsibility of leading another through a great and unanticipated excitement. Dismissing the servant, with a promise to obey his new master's wish, I went into the house, and found myself so much in self-possession that I told Claire with calmness of the message, and refrained from all allusion to what had occurred. Claire dressed herself quickly, and I could see as she presented herself for the walk that she was full of wonder. Nothing was said as we passed out. There was a strange silence in the family. The message meant a great deal, and all so thoroughly trusted Henry that no questions were asked.

When we were away from the house, I said: "Claire, you must be a woman to-day. Strange things have happened. Brace yourself for anything that may come."

"What can you mean? Has anything happened to—to him?"

"Yes, much,—much to him, and much to me; and something very strange and unexpected will happen to you."

She stopped short in the street, and grasping my two hands nervously, exclaimed: "Tell me what it is."

"My dear," I said, "my life at Mrs. Sanderson's has ceased. I am no more her heir, for Henry is discovered to be her own grandson."

"You deceive me; you can't mean it."

"It is just as I tell you."

She burst into a fit of weeping so passionate and uncontrollable that in a low voice I said, "You must command yourself. You are observed."

We resumed our walk, but it was a long time before she could speak. At length she said, "I am so sorry for you, and so sorry for myself. I do not want it so. It changes all my

plans. I never can be to him what I could be if he were poor; and you are to work. Did he know he was her grandson?"

"Yes, he has always known it."

"And he never told me a word about it. How could he treat me so like a child?"

She was half angry with the thought that he had shut from her the most important secret of his life. As to the fortune which was opened to her, it did not present to her a single charm. The thought of it oppressed and distressed her. It made her life so large that she could not comprehend it. She had had no natural growth up to it and into it.

When we reached The Mansion she was calm; and it seemed, as we stood at the door and I looked inquiringly into her face, as if her beauty had taken on a maturer charm while we had walked. I led her directly to Henry's room, and there, in the presence of Mrs. Sanderson, who sat holding Henry's hand as if she were determined that her newly-found treasure should not escape her, and in the presence of Henry's mother, neither of whom she either addressed or regarded, she stooped and received her lover's kiss. I saw simply this, and with tears in my eyes went out and closed the door softly behind me. What occurred during that interview I never knew. It was an interview so tenderly sacred that neither Henry nor Claire ever alluded to it afterwards. I went down stairs, and awaited its conclusion. At the end of half an hour, I heard voices whispering above, then the footsteps of Mrs. Sanderson going to her chamber, and then the rustle of dresses upon the stairs. I went out into the hall, and met Mrs. Hulm and Claire with their arms around each other. Their eyes were wet, but they were luminous with a new happiness, and I knew that all had been settled, and settled aright.

"Henry wishes to see you," said his mother.

I cannot tell how much I dreaded this interview. I knew of course that it would come, sooner or later, and I dreaded it as much on Henry's account as on my own.

I sat down by his bed, and gave to his eager grasp both

my hands. He looked at me with tears rolling down his cheeks, with lips compressed and with the perspiration standing unbrushed from his forehead, but without the power to speak a word. I pulled out my handkerchief, and wiped his forehead and his cheeks.

"Are you happy, Henry?" I said.

"Yes, thank God and you," he answered, with choking emotion.

"So am I."

"Are you? Are you? Oh Arthur! What can I ever do to show you my gratitude? How can I look on and see you toiling to win the bread you have voluntarily given to me?"

"You have had your hard time, and I my easy one. Now we are to change places, that's all, and it is right. You have learned the value of money, and you will spend this which has come to you as it ought to be spent."

"But it is not the money; it is the home of my father—the home of my ancestors. It is a home for my mother. It is rest from uncertain wandering. I cannot tell you what it is. It is something so precious that money cannot represent it. It is something so precious that I would willingly work harder all my life for having found it. And now, my dear fellow, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing—only love me."

"But I must do more. Your home must be here. You must share it with me."

"No, Henry, the word is spoken. You have come to your own, and I shall go to mine. My lot shall be my father's lot, until I can make it better. We shall be friends forever. The surrender I have made shall do me more good than it has done you. You did not absolutely need it, and I did. You could do without it and I could not. And now, let's not talk about it any more."

We embraced and kissed as if we had been lovers, and I left him, to walk back with Claire. That night the story was all told in our little home. My trunk was brought and carried to

my bare and cramped chamber; and when the accustomed early hour for retirement came I knelt with the other children and worshipped as of old. My father was happy, my mother was reconciled to the change, for Claire had been recognized at The Mansion, and I went to bed and rested through a dreamless sleep until the morning light summoned me to new changes and new duties.