

young man, striven to live for God's service, but when riches and cares increased, like the seed sown among thorns, they had choked up and over-grown his faithful endeavors. Until this great affliction, this lost treasure, had awakened him to a sense of his evil life, and made him seek since then to live nearer his God, and he ended by repeating a verse from some hymn which May loved well :

“ Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer,  
Bring me to my Saviour's feet,  
Lay me low, and keep me there.”

It is a good thing, dear Mrs. Percy, that you let May come, for she has been such a balm, such a helper to these sorrowing hearts. Oh it must comfort you when you know this.——'

And it does infinitely, more than I can tell. My darling is laying up for herself a crown of joy.

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## CHAPTER LIX.

DECEMBER 15.

WE are all to go down to “Ingleside” and “Rosedale,” to spend the week's vacation at Christmas, because Mr. Audley insists :

“For once we will keep the holidays in true English style, with a whole week's merriment for rich and poor : we will have Lela's anthracite coal in the grates, and a yule log on the hearth.”

“Why do you say Lela's anthracite coal, Uncle?” asks Adèle.

“Because queen likes it, better than anything that was ever lighted before, even than the light of a lover's eyes,” was the reply.

Orders were sent down for the men to trim the house, but the girls countermanded that immediately, declaring :

“The chief sport will be in that.”

Holidays are but sad things after all, for at best they are but way-stones which mark the distance we have come, and the ills we have endured since the last was reared. Even worse with some they are cold, white monuments beneath whose shadow lies buried some tender memory, some vain regret. We sigh and think once it was thus, such and such a presence lent a beauty to the time, now—now though gay laughter, and smiling faces greet us, we sigh wearily for the old happiness.

This year we miss the presence of four accustomed faces. Clare and Harry, with a thousand miles of deep, dark water between, think of us to-day.

Marion and Ada, in their sorrowful, far away place, will pine to be with us but will try to be contented away.

Howard comes home for his vacation. Oh, the blessing of having him with us, is some compensation for the loss of the rest.

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“INGLESIDE,” DECEMBER 31.

We came here the day before Christmas, and found Mrs. Lawrence already settled at Rosedale, with a house-full of friends. Mr. Audley has also been very lavish of his invitations, therefore as he insisted upon every one of our own family coming, we are pretty closely stowed away.

It is a long journey from B—— to this place ; in summer we thought nothing of it, but in the depths of winter, the idea of it was rather intimidating, but Mr. Audley like many another man, knows of no impossibilities, or impracticabilities, if there is pleasure to be won at the end of the effort.

So, very much against the will of some of us older ones, but to the joy of the young folks we were bundled up and brought a two days' journey by railroad, to spend the holidays,

“Half the fun was in getting here,” giddy Cora declares.

The first day was passed in trimming the house with wreaths of ever-green, holly, and other things, until we seemed to be living in a perfect forest. From the merry shouts which reached my room, I judged this decorating process was the gayest time of the whole.

gated robe decking her form, stands, a grieved expression upon her face, with clasped hands, gazing sadly upon the cup which the youthful Ganymede, is bearing away. Howard was the latter.

"The old 'sire of the gods,' had a miserable taste, to turn away his nectar and ambrosia bearer, for any cause, if she was as fair as this one," quoth Mr. Livingstone

Again Birdie, whose fair hair and "heaven blue eyes," were requisite in almost every group, to set off some darker face, enacted the fair Rowena when "descending from her station with graceful dignity," she is about to place upon the brow of the victorious Ivanhoe the chaplet of Honor. Birdie surprised us by her pretty dignity as the queen of Love and Beauty, and Mr. Livingstone, who was Ivanhoe, vowed:

"I wonder not the good knight periled his life for her smile."

There were among a dozen others, the Christian Graces, with May for Faith, Ada for Hope, and Dora for Charity.

Then we had poor Amy Robsart, as, wild with happiness, the one night of her triumph, she sat at the feet of the handsome, but wicked Robert, Earl of Leceister, robed for the first time as became her station as his wife; again we had Cora and Mr. Livingstone. And last of all the scene in the "Bridal of Triermain," where the brave De Vaux, after a score of adventures and temptations, enters

"A lofty hall, with trophies drest,  
Where as to greet imperial guest,  
Four maidens stood, whose crimson vest,  
Was bound with silver zone.

Mr. Marstone was for the nonce the brave De Vaux, and looked the hero every inch. Of the four damsels: the first, a lively nymph of Gaul,

"Where easy step and laughing eye,  
The borrowed air of awe belie,"

was Meta Chalton, the personification of a laughing French girl. Next to her was Dora, much against her will, playing the Spanish maiden's part,

"Dark-eyed, dark-haired, sedate, yet bold."

While Coralie's "ivory skin and tress of gold," told "a daughter of Almaïne."

Thus they stood, proffering sceptre, robe, and crown, which he refusing, the fourth maiden, (Ada) "who a space behind them stood," dressed

"Like ancient British druidess,  
Her hair an azure fillet bound,  
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,  
And in her hand displayed,  
A crown did that fourth maiden hold,  
But unadorned with gems of gold,  
Of glossy laurel made."

Suddenly she struck the harp 'gainst which she leaned, and sang. While she recounted the brave deeds of the bold knight, a curtain at the back of the "Alcove" was drawn apart by unseen hands, and there as "King Arthur's child, deep slumbering in her fatal chair," lay Lela in a gorgeous dress,

"That form of maiden loveliness  
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth.—  
—Still her dark locks dishevelled flowed—  
Hiding half her charms from sight."

Then enacting his part (which from a representation of the "divine art," had now assumed a life-like guise,) to perfection, Mr. Marstone, as the text bade him, "stood motionless, with folded arms and clasped hands, gazing down upon her,

"Trembling in fitful joy!"

And then, as slowly the dark-fringed lids of the sleeping Gyneth quivered,

"Gently low the warrior kneels,  
Soft that lovely hand he steals,  
Soft to kiss, and soft to keep—"

And ere we had achieved one half the picture, mischievous Mr. Audley turned out the lights and left us in utter darkness.

"To typify the general consternation which should have

come in just here, when the waking beauty drops her warder," he declared.

When the lights came, Lela had vanished, and Mr. Marstone stood at a window looking out upon the snow.

It had been sadly against Lela's will that they were thus coupled together, but when Mrs. Lawrence conceives an idea, she has a woman's will, and is not easily put off, and of course Lela could make no determined objection in so small a matter; and Mr. Marstone gravely accepted whatever parts were assigned him.

AT HOME, FEBRUARY 20.

THE night before leaving Ingleside, a thing occurred which pained me exceedingly. After the entertainment was over, and the company dismissed either to their rooms or homes, came, unexpectedly enough to the poor child, an offer of marriage from Carrol to Lela, as unwelcome as it was unlooked for.

This was their last evening—on the morrow all were to disperse—and as the affair turned out it was well it was so.

Leanore has a habit of late of sitting up alone, long after all the rest have retired. This evening she sat in the drawing-room, before the fire in a deep fit of musing, when suddenly her solitude was broken in upon, a voice saying:

"May I come in, Miss Nora?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carrol, what is the matter? have you left anything?"

"Yes," he replied, in a low tone.

"The fire-light is so dim, you will be scarcely able to find it, I fear,—shall I light a candle?"

"No, no, I can find it better in the dark."

"Why what is it? that is strange."

"My—shall I tell you?"

"Certainly," she replied laughingly.

"Please be serious, and be patient with me. I am not come to seek for what I lost to-night, but months ago—do you guess what it is?"

"How should I, Mr. Carrol, I have no interest in taking care of your property," she said coldly.

"But you have this nevertheless,—my heart—I love you,

do not turn coldly away from me. Give me one word of hope, that you do not quite hate me," and he caught her hand.

"I am sorry, Mr. Carrol, you have spoken thus, for you have been a very pleasant companion to me all this winter, and now——"

"It is all over," he said bitterly.

"Now it is all over, unless you will forget this scene to-night," and she held out the hand which she had withdrawn, "and will be what I at first heard you were, and have held you in high estimation as being, my dear friend Ada's especial lover."

"Ada Lawrence's lover I am not," he said fiercely.

"But you were once, and would be still, had not this foolish fancy for a new face, and some silly quarrel between you two parted you for a time," then she added merrily "but I must say good night while the night lasts, please forget me as speedily as possible, Ada is better worth your love than I, though I doubt whether it is to be had, for she is a wilful lassie, is my Ada, but I counsel you to try," and she left him and came to me in great distress.

"Oh if Ada finds it out and she can hardly help it, she will be so unhappy." But it was not so, for though Carrol looked rather pale, he stood the bantering of the rest, about the quieting effect, the prospect of parting seemed to have upon him, bravely.

And when we reached P—— he bid us a careless adieu, to fulfil an engagement of some kind, with some college friends. at New Haven, he announced.

We came directly home, sending Howard back to college with Carrol. We had hardly been back a week ere I had a letter from the latter, dated from his own home in the south, announcing the fact of his being upon the eve of departure, for Europe, "At the urgent command of my father, who has conceived an idea that I have over worked myself, which I am sure you will bear me witness is not the case, unless it was in the way of dissipation,— so I am to give up all ideas of a profession for the present, and go abroad to hunt up Beaumont and Lester. I go so soon, that I must needs take my farewell of all my dear friends in B——, by means of this letter."

Ada's cheek has grown paler since this news came, but

that is all, she makes no confidants in this matter, not even of me to whom she tells almost every other thought, and I cannot ask it from her.

We have been home nearly three weeks. Mr. Livingstone we see almost continually, but Mr. Marstone has some honorable appointment at Washington, and is there nearly all of his time, so an hurried and rare call is all we receive from him.

Stuart still keeps up his never ending study, though now he and May are having their long hoped for pleasant evenings.

Mrs. Lawrence is in a perfect whirl of excitement all the while, and keeps not only Ada and Lela deluged with invitations and engagements, but would fain have my little Birdie introduced, but I say no, to all her pleadings on that score.

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## CHAPTER LX.

MARCH 20.

HARLEY and Dora had thought this spring tide would bring upon its waves their wedding day, but for some reasons we deem it better it should be delayed awhile.

He had at first a kind of pride about marrying an heiress, although Dora can scarcely be called that, at least in a great way, but she has such a gentle way of arguing the matter, that she has at last convinced him, it is much the better plan for him to help her spend the little she has in Christ's cause, giving her in return, a guide and protector, which she needs so sadly, poor orphan Dora!

His health is very indifferent, and even he has been brought to think, what we all dread to be obliged to know, is best, that he should seek out some country home to labor in. Therefore they will delay their marriage for a while until something is decided, more definitely upon this subject.

It is hardly possible, but that this people among whom

he has toiled so many years, should have won his affections very nearly, but though they love him likewise tenderly, they with us have watched his failing health, with great anxiety, and now say, one and all, it is better he should leave them, than jeopardize his life by staying.

And now a letter from Howard, has quite made us at ease, as far at the church is concerned, he writes,

'Ever since you wrote to me of Uncle Harley's determination to leave the E—St. church, I have been thinking over a plan, to aid his leaving it less regretfully.

You remember Grey, the young man whose attempt at suicide, made him so noted at the time of dear Clare's trouble. Since then he has been an earnest repentant man. With the aid of some friends he has finished his collegiate course, although of course he was a marked man through the whole town and he has, since he graduated been studying for the ministry, and will be admitted next June.

He is spoken of as an excellent, fervid preacher, and there can be but one opinion of his through repentance, and eminent piety.

Suppose I invite him home with me this summer, for I am quite intimate with him, (although he is old enough to be my father,) for Clare's sake, I need say nothing about the object of his coming, and you can all judge of him, and see if he would be a fit person, upon whom to let fall Uncle Harley's mantle.'

We have written for him to come, and hope we have found a substitute.

APRIL.

Nora's health is very poor this Spring, and Mr. Audley talks strongly of taking her with him to Europe, where he is obliged to return shortly. In the meanwhile I have decided to take her away from our busy city life, and spend a few quiet weeks ere summer comes, at 'Ingle-side.'

Now Marion is at home, I feel I can be spared from the school, especially as we have engaged a couple of gentlemen to teach some of the higher branches.

Poor little May, it will tire her sadly, I doubt not, but that will be better than to have her go with Lela, as I at

first thought of doing, and leave Stuart just when they are having such pleasant times.

So we are to go next week, taking Adèle with us, in order to lighten the care of the rest as much as possible, for as Mrs. Wilbur declares,

"You have left the younger classes, and divers other things to Birdie's care, and for the three first days doubtless she will attend to them most vehemently, but after that as a matter of course, good little Gracie will have it all to do, while Birdie kisses, pets, and plagues us."

"Naughty grand-mamma," cries Birdie, pouting, "tra-ducuing my good name, mamma knows how faithful I am, how trustworthy!" with a comical little shrug.

"Exactly, I know you are to be depended upon as entirely, as Adèle's 'Bueno.'"

"But, Bueno is very wise, sometimes, mamma," cries Adèle fearful lest her little spaniel should suffer by comparison with Birdie.

"So is Birdie sometimes," laughed Ernest, as he came into the room.

"Et tu Brute!" cried Cora with a little scream of pretended horror.

"Shame on yer Cora-ly, to call yer Uncle sich bad names, and he one of the granderest gentlemen in the country," cries Milly, "come along yer, wid yer and make a custard for dinner, and try to be respectful to yer elders."

"Even Milly," cried Cora with raised hands and eyes, as she went out.

And this journey has another great object in view, aside from the hope of good to Lela, Mr. Audley has promised to take us to New Haven, to stay a week first. Dear Howard, it seems such a long while since we saw him at Christmas, and though we have two letters every week, we want to hear his voice and see his face.

## CHAPTER LXI.

"And why that fervent love was cross'd  
Thou knowest the best, I feel the most.  
But few that dwell beneath the sun  
Have loved so long and loved but one."—BYRON.

MAY 20.

ALTHOUGH spring with her balmy breath has studded the valleys below us with a multitude of bright flowers, she has scarcely settled her wings upon 'Ingle-side,' and its surroundings, although she sings us a little song of hope for the future.

These mountain regions are hard to warm, so that even now though the middle of the day is soft and balmy, in the mornings and evenings we find our anthracite coal grates very genial. Adèle has learned to depend so entirely upon herself, now that Gracie is away, that she wanders through the house and gardens, and is looking very bright and well.

Last evening I had been busy seeing to her after tea, but when I was through I went to spend the remainder of the evening until bed time with Lela. As I went in at the door, something in the way she crouched before the fire made me pause. I could not tell why, but though I could not see her face, a certain drooping of her figure, or a prostration noticeable in the way in which she sat, with her hands clasped round her knees and her head bowed upon them, struck me painfully as having a crushed despairing way about it, I went in quickly.

"Is anything the matter, pet?" I asked. She sprang up and hid her face out of sight, and seemed trying to get beyond my reach.

"My poor child, what ails you?" She turned her pale face to me and clasping her hands above her head moaned.

"Oh mamma! mamma!" and with an earnest, entreating look flung herself into my arms. There she lay panting wildly, nor did my utmost entreaty serve to soothe her, suddenly springing up she began.

"I cannot help it, I must tell, right or wrong, I can bear it no longer alone. Oh mamma, I love him so! why

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In the evening they lighted a 'yule log' in the wide hall, and danced and played charades by its light, until as Gracie told me,

"We heard the great clock on the stairs tell the hour of twelve, and then we all clasped hands and waited until the angel of Christmas had passed by. Then Lela began the Christmas hymn, and we all joined her. After that we all said good night and went without much more talk to bed."

The next day while the Christmas tree was getting what some of the little ones called,—“Sparkled over with little stars,” a something came to us by way of a gift which was doubly precious because we had not dared to hope for it.

Soon after breakfast Mr. Audley came in wrapped in a great fur riding coat.

"I am going down to the 'Percy lane' station to meet the cars, for half the things Lela ordered, did not get here last night." And he went out.

We worked with a will, getting things ready for the evening's entertainment until we heard the tinkling of the sleigh-bells once more, when it came in sight some one said,

"It is filled with people, ladies too, I declare."

"It is May and Ada as I am alive," shouted Birdie, flying out of the room.

It was worth something to see the way Stuart dropped his book, and sprang out of the house, and then to watch the race between him and Birdie as she flew down the path her curls streaming behind her, but Stuart won, and bounded into the sleigh and had May in his arms, the happiest fellow the world held.

Then such a torrent of kisses and welcomes as followed from everybody, the girls were obliged to cry for mercy, and beg off.

The explanation of their sudden appearance was, Mrs. Du Tille needed medical advice, and knowing the girls pined to be with us, hastened her journey a month. They left the Du Tilles in B——, and followed us here at once. Of course May made it a more enjoyable Christmas for all, but a blessed time for me.

At night from the brilliantly illuminated tree, a comical gentleman, attired as the far-famed Santa Clause, gave each

one a pretty remembrance of some kind, seasoning it with divers quizzical jokes, and words of warning.

Then they had what was to be the crowning glory of the evening, *tableaux vivants*, for which purpose not only every trunk and chest at Ingleside had been invaded, bringing forth scores of articles which had not seen the light since Mr. Audley was a child and his mother a brilliant belle, but also, everything Mrs. Lawrence could gather from her own ample store or that of her thousand and one friends, in two weeks searching.

At the head of the larger drawing-room, there is a small oval room, to which you ascend by one broad step; this is enclosed by sliding glass doors, and is the room in which Mr. Audley years ago arranged a very valuable cabinet of the trophies he had gathered in a long life abroad; the library, and Mr. Audley's study, lie at either side of this room, and communicate with it.

Before the arch which leads into the drawing-room, Mr. Audley had crimson curtains hung, and altogether this (as we call it) "Sanctum Sanctorum" of Mr. Audley's, was a jewel of a place for a *tableau* enactment.

The drawing room with its host of spectators, guests and neighbors, rich and poor, was dimly lighted, the sole illumination of the pictures coming from the lights shed through the doors at the sides from the library and study. This arrangement heightened the effect amazingly, all the light being gathered and centred there.

The first picture was the scene in *Ivanhoe*, so celebrated as a *tableau*, wherein the beautiful, but unhappy Rebecca, visits the fair-haired Rowena, the morning of her bridal, and presents to her the casket of jewels. Lela was the one—Cora the other.

Then one very beautiful picture was *Leanore*, as the fair Kate Percy, Harry Hotspur's faithful wife, the dress was exquisite, and my proud, haughty girl was in her element, as she assumed the apparel, and mein of her ancestress,—the ancient robe and odd coiffure, copied from an old picture, became her well.

Then Ada, as the saucy, witching Di Vernon, looked her very best.

Next a pretty scene, in which the lovely Hebe, (Coralie) with a chaplet of flowers on her fair brow, and the vari-