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cause new and unfamiliar; others, because they seem like a weird echo from a remote geologic past. Many of the organisms, now dwelling in the quiet ocean depths, are identical with those in existence when the mighty Mastodon roamed the forests of the Tertiary epoch, and the frightful Megatherium silently waited to drop upon his prey. Others, again, point to a still remoter past: the formation which is now taking place at the bottom of the sea, is, it can almost be said, a continuation of the "Chalk." The Atlantic ooze is formed of multitudes of the tiny shells of *foraminifera* and *globigerina*, which, under the microscope, so closely resemble specimens of the "Chalk" that only a trained eye can detect the difference. The glass-sponges have at last unriddled the mystery which has so long puzzled geologists,—the *ventriculites* of the "Chalk."

At the present moment, the exquisite

silicious net-work which characterizes these sponges is found associated with deposits

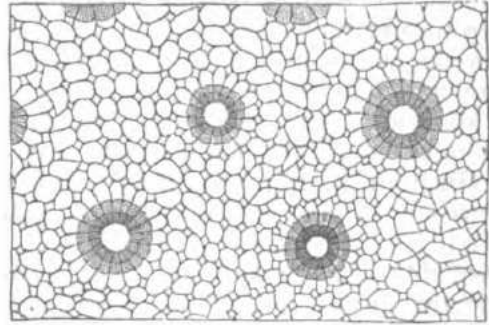


PLATE VIII. OUTER SURFACE VENTRICULITES SIMPLEX OF THE CHALK. (FOUR TIMES NATURAL SIZE.)

of tiny calcareous shells, just as they were in those ages long past, whose record is engraved upon the adamantine rocks. We look upon them with a sense of awe as we recognize the mysterious handwriting of the Creator.

THE STORY OF ANNE MATURIN.

A SKETCH FOR A PICTURE.

CHAPTER I.

ANNE MATURIN was an orphan, brought up by her aunt Mrs. Hartley, who was well off, and generous enough to give the solitary girl a home. She was very well and kindly treated, but still there was a shade of difference between her and her cousins. Mrs. Hartley had four children—two boys and two girls—and the difference of treatment to which Anne was subjected was very much what a younger daughter has to submit to while her elder sisters are still reigning in the house. She went out with them only at intervals, when either Letty or Susan happened to be indisposed for some special engagement. She was not quite so well dressed. A number of little occupations which they were not fond of fell naturally upon her, and were considered, without any question as to whether she liked them or not, her duty. Her inclinations, her dislikes, her little ailments, those trifling things which affect only comfort and have little to do either with life or health, were not, perhaps, so instantly or so carefully attended to.

But in all that could really or deeply influence her well-being Anne was as well cared for as if she had been in her mother's house. They were all very kind to her; nay, I use words which have no business here. They were not kind; they had no thought of being kind; they were simply her family as nature had made them. When Letty and Susan married, Anne worked at both the trousseaux and danced at both the weddings, and cried when they went away, and again for joy when they came back. "But," she said, "I am the only young lady in the house now. I am quite a great person," and felt her own importance, as "the youngest" does, when she finds herself at last promoted and reigning alone. Thus it will be seen that nothing in the least of a Cinderella character was in Anne's thoughts, though indeed there were friends of the family who called her Cinderella, and remarked that her gowns were more flimsy, and that her bonnets lasted longer, than those of the older girls. Letty and Susan both made very satisfactory marriages, and left their old home somewhat

lonely. It was Anne who kept things going, and kept her aunt from feeling too much the loss of her daughters; but yet Mrs. Hartley, with natural feeling, snubbed her niece when she made her little brag of being the only young lady in the house.

"Anne is a good girl," she said, "but if she thinks she can replace my own girls—"

"Hush, mamma!" cried Letty, who was a kind soul. "She did not mean to replace us; but I am sure she *is* a comfort."

And Mrs. Hartley admitted that she was a comfort, though not like her very own.

Fortunately, however, Anne did not hear this. She missed the girls very much, and she thought it natural that their mother should miss them still more, and that dreary reflection which comes to so many minds,

"Many love me, yet by none
Am I enough beloved,"

had never entered her young soul. She was happy and light-hearted, and contented with what was given to her. The other state of mind, with its deeper questionings, may be more picturesque and more imposing; but to live with, commend me to the fresh heart which takes what it has and is happy, and grumbles not for more. She was twenty-two when she rose to the dignity of being the only young lady in the house; and what with her aunt to love and care for, and her cousins' brand-new houses to visit and admire, and "the boys" still in the house "for company," Anne Maturin was as cheerful and as pleasant a young creature as eye could desire to see. She was pretty and yet not striking, with the prettiness of youth and health, and roundness and bloom and good temper, rather than with positive beauty of any description. Her nose was not worth speaking of; her mouth, like most people's mouths, was somewhat defective. Her eyes were bright but not brilliant; well opened but not very large. In short, nice, warm, shining, ordinary brown eyes, such as you could find by the dozen. Her figure light and springy, her hair wavy and abundant. A nice girl,—this was what everybody said of her; pleasant to talk to, pleasant to look at, but no more remarkable than half of the young women who make our lives pleasant or miserable. I doubt much if in any assemblage of such, at kirk or market, you would have noted Anne at all, or found her special advantages out.

Mrs. Hartley had two sons, Francis and John—the one a barrister, the other in a public office.

John, the public office man, was like most other young men in public offices, and scarcely claimed separate notice. The barrister was the pride of the house. He had gone through a very successful career both at school and college; had made a successful appearance at the bar very early, and bade fair to be a successful man. The successfulness of success was already apparent in him. The further he advanced, the greater became his rate of progress, and the more rapidly he continued to go on. He was only about thirty, and he was already known as a rising man. The Hartleys were all proud of him, though I am not sure that his sisters, at least, were as fond of him as they were proud. Sisters judge impartially in many cases, and have many little data to go upon unknown to the outside world. Letty and Susan had an impression of his character which they would not for the world have put into words, but which they communicated to each other by little side remarks, saying: "It is just like him," when any incident happened which confirmed their theory. This theory was that Francis was selfish. He liked his own way (as who does not?), and when his way came into collision with other people's way, never yielded or compromised matters; so at least his sisters said. But Anne held no such doctrine. Since her earliest capabilities of use began she had been the little vassal first, and recently the champion and defender of Francis; and he was always good to her. That is to say, he accepted her services with much kindness, and spoke to her pleasantly, and sometimes even would applaud her gentle qualities, especially in points where she differed from his sisters. I do not know if he had ever in his life exercised himself to procure a pleasure, or done anything else in Anne's behalf which cost him trouble. But he was always "nice" to his cousin, and she thought immensely of his easy kindness. She was ready to fetch him whatever he wanted—to study his looks, to talk or be silent, according as the humor pleased him. And she could divine his humors much more quickly than even his mother could; for, indeed, Mrs. Hartley was not one of the mothers who sacrifice or annihilate themselves for their children. She was a very good mother—very careful of them and very anxious for their welfare; but withal she retained her own personality and independence. She was very good and indulgent to Francis, but she did not search his looks, and follow tremulously every shade

of meaning on his face, neither did she make everything in the house subservient to her sons. She was the mistress, and such she intended to be as long as she lived.

It was therefore with some solemnity and a little excitement, but with nothing of the intense and painful feeling which often attends such a revelation, that she made a certain disclosure to Anne one wintry spring afternoon, which changed the current of the poor girl's life, though nobody knew of it.

"I am going to tell you some news, Anne," she said; "of a very important kind. I don't quite know whether I am pleased or not; but, at all events, it is something very important and rather unexpected."

"What kind of a thing, aunt?" said Anne, looking up from her knitting.

Her fingers went on with her work, while her eyes, brightening with expectation and interest, looked up at the speaker. She was full of lively, animated curiosity, but nothing more. No fear of evil tidings, no alarm for what might be coming, was in her peaceful soul.

"What would you say to a marriage in the family?" said Mrs. Hartley.

"A marriage! But, dear aunt, there is nobody to marry—unless," said Anne, with a pleasant ring of laughter, "without my knowing anything about it, it should be me."

"Nobody to marry? Do you think the boys are nobody?" said Mrs. Hartley, with a little snort of partial offense.

"The boys! Oh, did you mean the boys?" said Anne, bewildered.

She made a little momentary pause, as if confused, and then said, rather foolishly:

"The boys' weddings will be weddings in other families, not here."

"That is true enough if you think of nothing but the wedding; but I suppose you take more interest in your cousins than that," said Mrs. Hartley. "Francis came in quite unexpectedly when you were out."

"Francis? Is it Francis?" said Anne, in a hurried low tone of dismay.

"Why not?" said Mrs. Hartley.

Why not, indeed? There could be nothing more natural. He was a full-grown man. But the surprise (surely it was only surprise made Anne quite giddy for the moment. Her head swam, the light seemed to change somehow, and darken round her. She felt physically as if she had received a violent and sudden blow.

"To be sure," she said, mechanically, feel-

ing that her voice sounded strange, and did not seem to belong to her—"Why not? I suppose it is the most natural thing in the world, only it never came into my head."

"That is nonsense," said her aunt, somewhat sharply. "Indeed the wonder is that Francis has not married before. He is over thirty, and making a good income, and when I die he will have the most part of what I have. Indeed it is in a sort of a way his duty to marry. I do not see how any one could be surprised."

Anne was silent, feeling with a confused thankfulness that no reply was necessary, and after a pause Mrs. Hartley resumed in a softened tone:

"I confess, however, that for the moment I did not expect anything of the kind. I generally have a feeling when something is going to happen; but I had not the least warning this morning. It came upon me all at once. Anne, I do think, after living with us all your life, you might show a little more interest. You have never even asked who the lady is."

"It was very stupid of me," said Anne, forcing herself to speak. "Do we know her? Do you like her? I cannot think of any one."

"No, indeed, I suppose not," said Mrs. Hartley. "She is not one of our set. It will be a capital marriage for Francis—though, indeed, a man of his abilities may aspire to any one. It is Miss Parker, the daughter of the Attorney-General, Anne; a man just as sure to be Lord Chancellor as I am to eat my dinner. She will be the Honorable Mrs. Francis Hartley one day—of course the Honorable is not much of itself. If it had been some poor Irish or Scotch girl, for instance, who happened to be a Lord's daughter; but the Lord Chancellor is very different. Fancy the interest it will give him, not to say that it will be of the greatest importance to him in his profession; the Lord Chancellor's son-in-law; nobody can have a greater idea than I have of my son's abilities," continued the old lady; "but such a connection as this is never to be disregarded. I am to call upon Lady Parker to-morrow, and make acquaintance with my future daughter. Perhaps as the girls have both got their own engagements, and Letty would not like me to take Susan without asking her, perhaps I had best take you with me, Anne."

"Oh, thanks, aunt," said Anne, tremulously. "Did you hear anything about the young lady herself?"

"Oh, I heard that she was an angel, of course," said Mrs. Hartley. "That, one takes for granted, and he gave me her photograph; it is lying about somewhere. Look on my little table under the newspaper, or under my work. Pretty enough; but you never can tell from a photograph. What is the matter with you, Anne?"

"I only tripped against the stool," said Anne, hastily turning her back to the light, and catching a glimpse of herself in the glass, which frightened her.

She was thankful to go with the photograph to the window after she had found it, the waning light being an excuse for her. The photograph was like a hundred others, such as every one has seen. A pretty young face, with the usual elaborate hair-dressing, and the usual elaborate costume. As for such things as expression or character, there were none in the so-called portrait, which might of course be the fault of the original; but this no one would dare to make sure of. It seemed to Anne, looking at it with her hot eyes, to swell and magnify, and smile disdainfully at her, as she gazed at it. She was still stupid with the blow, and, at the same time, was making so desperate an effort to restrain herself, that between the stunned sensation of that shock, and the self-restraint which she exercised, she seemed to herself to be like marble or iron, rigid and cold. The photograph fell out of her stiff fingers, and she had to grope for it on the floor, scarcely seeing it. All this occupied her so long that Mrs. Hartley became impatient.

"Well, have you nothing to say about it, now that you have seen it?" she asked.

"She is very pretty," said Anne, slowly. "I hope Francis will be very happy with her. Did he seem very much ——"

"Oh, he seemed all a young man ought to be, as foolish as you please," said Mrs. Hartley; "but he is coming home to dinner this evening, so you can question him to your heart's content. Give me a cup of tea, Anne. I think I shall go to my room and rest a little before dinner. There is nothing tiresome like excitement," said the placid old lady; and she continued to talk about and about this great subject while she drank her afternoon cup of tea.

How glad Anne was when she left the room to take that nap before dinner; how thankful that she had a moment's breathing-time, and could, so to speak, look herself in the face. This was precisely the first thing she did when she was left to herself. She

went up to the mantel-piece and leaned her arms upon it, and contemplated in the mingled light, half twilight, half ruddy gleams from the fire, the strange, forlorn, woe-begone face, that seemed to look back at her mournfully out of that rose-tinted gloom. The giddiness was beginning to go off a little, and the singing in her ears was less than it had been; the strange whirl and revolution of earth and heaven had ceased, and the things were settling down into their places. What was it that had happened to her? "Nothing, nothing," she said to herself, vehemently, the red blood of shame rushing to her face in a painful and tingling glow. Poor pretense; nothing was changed, but everything was different. The whole world and her life, and everything she was acquainted with, or had any experience of, seemed suddenly to have been snatched from her and thrown into the past. The very path she was treading seemed cut away under her feet. She had stopped short, startled, feeling deadly faint and sick when the sudden precipice opened at her feet; but there it was, and there did not seem another step for her to take anywhere upon solid ground. This sudden, wild consciousness of the difference, however, though it was bad enough, was not all. Bitter and terrible shame that it should be so, scorched up poor Anne. Shame flamed upon her innocent cheeks. Her eyes fell before her own gaze, ashamed to meet it. A man feels no such shame to have given his love to a woman who loves him not. He may be angry, jealous, mortified, and vindictive; but he is not abashed. But the woman who has given her heart unsought is more than abashed. She feels herself smitten to the earth as with a positive stain. Shame embitters and impoisons all her suffering. It is almost worse than a crime—it is a disgrace to her and to all womankind—or at least so the girl feels in the first agony of such a discovery, though her love may be as pure and devoted and unselfish as anything known in this world.

Then her thoughts all rushed to the question of self-defense. She must not make a show of herself and her emotions. She must smile and congratulate and gossip as if the event were one of the happiest which could have occurred, as she had done with a light heart when Letty and Susan were married. Their weddings had been the greatest gala-days she had ever known. She had been bridesmaid to both, with a fresh dress, and an important position, and much

attention from everybody. She had taken the most genuine interest in everything that was done and said. Her life seemed to date indeed from these great occasions. And now must she go over all this, and probably be bridesmaid again to Francis's wife? Her very heart grew sick at the thought; but she must do it, must keep up, and give no one any reason to think—no one—that her heart was broken.

She was still standing thus, when the door opened, and Francis himself came into the room. Anne's heart gave a wild bound, and then seemed to stand still; but perhaps it was best that it should happen so, for she must have met him soon, and the room was dark, and he could not see how she looked. He came up to her where she stood, and took her hand, as he had a way of doing.

"Well, Anne," he said.

"Well, Francis," she returned faintly, as by some mechanical action, and withdrew her hand. She looked down into the fire, which threw a ruddy reflection on her face and disguised her paleness. She did not feel able to look at him.

"What's the matter?" said Francis, jauntily; "not displeased, are you? Of course my mother has told you," and he took her hand again. She dared not withdraw it that time, but had to leave it in his hold, though the poor little fingers tingled to their tips with the misery and bitterness and shame in her heart. All that he meant, of course, was friendliness, cousinship—while she—she, a woman, had allowed other thoughts to get entrance into her mind!

"I am not displeased," she said, summoning all her courage, "except that you did not give us any warning, Francis. You might have told me something about her; I was rather hurt at that."

"Were you, dear?" he said, with a tenderness that was unusual, and he put his other arm round her waist, as if somehow this new change had increased instead of diminishing his privileges. And Anne, poor Anne, dared not resent it—dared not break from him, as probably, laughing and blushing, she would have done yesterday. She had to stand still, making herself as stiff and cold as she could, enduring the half embrace. "If I had thought that, you should have known everything from the beginning; but it has not been a very long business; and, until I knew her sentiments, I saw no need to betray mine. It might have come to nothing, and a man does not care to make a fool of himself."

"Then tell me about her now," said Anne, holding firmly by the mantel-piece, and desperately plunging to the center of the misery at once.

Francis laughed.

"I don't know what I can say. I left her photograph somewhere, and I suppose my mother told you."

"Only that it was an excellent marriage, nothing about *her*."

Once more Francis laughed. He shrugged his shoulders, and bent down to look into her face.

"I suppose Letty and Susan raved of *him* to your sympathetic ears, did they? But men don't go in for that sort of thing. No; I want you to tell me, Anne, my dear little girl—look up, that I may see your face—are you pleased?"

"Francis! of course I am pleased if you are happy," faltered poor Anne; "but how can I tell otherwise, when I don't know her, and you won't tell me anything about her?"

"Give me a kiss then and wish me joy," he said.

Anne felt his cheek touch hers. There seemed to ensue a moment in which everything whirled round her—the fire-light, the pale evening sky through the window, the glimmer in the glass. Whether she should faint in his arms, or break away from them, seemed to hang upon a hair. But that hair-breadth of strength still remained to her. She escaped from his hold. She flew out of the room and upstairs like a hunted creature and dropped down upon her knees in her own little chamber, hiding her face on her bed. Had he suspected? Could he know? But in the passion that swept over her, Anne was beyond entering very closely into these questions. She dared not cry aloud or even sob, though nature seemed to rend her bosom; but the darkness fell on her mercifully, hiding her even from herself.

Mr. Francis Hartley remained behind and contemplated himself in the glass as Anne had done. He caressed his whiskers and drew his fingers through his hair, and said "Poor little Anne!" to himself with the ghost of a smile about the corners of his mouth. Yes, Anne was piqued, there was no doubt of it. Her little heart had been touched. Poor, dear little thing! it was not his fault; he had never given her any encouragement, and it was hard if a man could not be kind to his little cousin without raising hopes of that sort in her mind. But he liked Anne none the worse for her

weakness, and resolved to "be very kind" to her still. He could be kind with perfect safety now that he was going to be married, and he had always been fond of Anne.

CHAPTER II.

MISS PARKER turned out to be very like her photograph—a pretty person, with a very elaborate coiffure, and a very handsome dress; thoroughly trained in London society, full of references to dear Lady Julia and the parties at Stafford House. She asked Anne whether she was going to Lady Uppingham's that night, and told her that she understood it was to be the first of a series of parties, and wasn't it delightful? Everything was so charmingly managed at dear Lady Uppingham's. She had such taste. Now, the Hartleys had never been in the way of such supreme delight as Lady Uppingham's parties, and poor little Cinderella-Anne did not know what answer to make. Fortunately for her, a little sense of fun came in to help her while she was undergoing these interrogations—invaluable auxiliary for which those who possess it cannot be too thankful. The humor of the situation saved her. But Mrs. Hartley was much impressed by the aspect of her new daughter-in-law.

"They are evidently in the very first society, Anne," she said, "as, of course, was to be expected in their position. What a thing for Francis to be among people who will appreciate him. There is only one thing that troubles me."

"What is that, aunt?"

"Her health, my dear," said Mrs. Hartley, solemnly shaking her head.

"Oh, her health!" said Anne, with something of the contempt of youth and strength. "What danger could there be about any one's health at twenty?"

And she paid no attention to her aunt's maunderings (as I am afraid she thought them) about the character of Miss Parker's complexion, its variableness, and delicacy of tint. Indeed, poor Anne had enough to think of without that. She had to conceal her own feelings and master her own heart. And she had to endure the affectionateness of Francis, who was more "kind" than he had ever been before, and would indeed be tender to her when he saw her alone, until, between despite and bitterness, and proud sense of injury, and a still prouder determination not to show her sufferings, Anne felt often as if her heart would break. Fortu-

nately, he was not often at home in the evenings, and at other times she could keep herself out of his way.

And then came the marriage, an event of which Anne was almost glad, as it ended this painful interval, and carried Francis away to another house, where he could no longer gall her by his kindness, or touch her heart by old tones and looks, such as she had loved unawares all her life. Poor Anne—she played her part so well, that no one suspected her; or rather, better still, the sisters who had suspected her decided that they had been mistaken. Mrs. Hartley had never taken any notice at all; and if any one in the house had a lingering consciousness that Anne was not quite as she was before, it was John, the second son, a very quiet fellow, who communicated his ideas to no one, and never gave to Anne herself the least reason to believe that he had found her out. After the wedding, however, when all the excitement was over, Anne fell ill. No, she was not ill, but she was pale and languid, and listless, and easily tired, and so frightened Mrs. Hartley, that she sent for the doctor, who looked wise, and ordered quinine, and hinted something about cod-liver oil. As Mrs. Hartley, however, was able to assure him, which she did with much vivacity and some pride, that disease of the lungs had never been known in her family, Anne was delivered from that terrible remedy. No, she was not ill, whatever the doctor might say. She was, as all highly strung and delicate organizations are, whom sheer "pluck" and spirit have carried through a mental or bodily fatigue which is quite beyond their powers. The moment that the heart fails, the strength goes; and when the great necessity for strain and exertion was over, Anne's heart did fail her. Life seemed to stop short somehow. It grew *fade*, monotonous, a seemingly endless stretch of blank routine, with no further motive for exertion in it. All was flat and blank, which a little while before had been so bright. She made no outcry against Providence, nor did she envy Miss Parker, now Mrs. Francis Hartley, or bemoan her own different fate. Anne was too sensible and too genuine for any of these theatrical expedients. She cursed nobody; she blamed nobody; but her heart failed her: it was all that could be said. Her occupations and amusements had been of the simplest kind; nothing in them at all, indeed, but the spirit and force of joyous, youthful life, with which she threw herself into everything; and now that spirit was

gone, how tedious and unmeaning they all seemed.

At this dreary time, however, Anne had one distraction which often answers very well in the circumstances, and, indeed, has been known to turn evil into good in a manner wonderful to behold. She had a lover. This lover was the Rector of the parish, a good man, who was one of Mrs. Hartley's most frequent visitors, and a very eligible person indeed. Everybody felt that had it been a luckless curate without a penny, it would have been much more in Anne's way, who had not a penny herself. And probably had it been so, Letty and Susan said, with justifiable vexation, Anne would have fancied him out of pure perversity. For the first moment, indeed, she seemed disposed to "fancy" the Rector. Here would be the change she longed for. She would escape at least from what was intolerable around her. But after a while there seized upon Anne a visionary disgust for the life within her reach, which was almost stronger than the weariness she had felt with her actual existence. And she dismissed, almost with impatience, the good man who might have made her happy. Perhaps, however, Mr. Herbert was not altogether discouraged; he begged to be considered a friend still; he came to the house as before. He was of use to Anne, though she would not have acknowledged it; and perhaps in the natural course of affairs, had nothing supervened, a pleasant termination might have come to the little romance, and all would have been well.

"The Francis Hartleys" came back after a while and settled in their new house amid all the splendors of bridal finery. They "went out" a great deal, and happily had not much time to devote to "old Mrs. Hartley," who liked that title as little as most people do. Mrs. Francis was a very fine and a very pretty bride. She was a spoiled child, accustomed to all manner of indulgences, and trained in that supreme self-regard which is of all dispositions of the mind the most inhuman, the least pardonable by others. It was not her fault, Anne would sometimes say with perhaps something of the toleration of contempt. She had been brought up to it; from her earliest years she had been the monarch of all she surveyed; her comfort, the highest necessity on earth; her pleasure, the law of everybody about her. Sometimes even this worst of all possible trainings does a generous spirit no harm; but poor little Mrs. Francis had

neither a generous spirit nor those qualities of imagination and humor which keep people often from making themselves odious or ridiculous. She had frankly adopted the pleasant doctrine of her own importance, and saw nothing that was not reasonable and natural in it. Further, the fact crept out by degrees that Mrs. Francis had a temper: undisciplined in everything, she was also undisciplined in this, and even in presence of his family would burst into little explosions of wrath against her husband, which filled the well-bred Hartleys with incredulous dismay. At these moments her pink color would flush into scarlet, her bosom would pant, her breath come short, and circles of excitement would form round her eyes. The pretty white of her forehead and neck became stained with patches of furious red, and the pretty little creature herself blazed into a small fury out of the smooth conventional being she generally appeared. That Francis soon became afraid of these ebullitions, and that Mrs. Francis was often ill after them, was very soon evident to his family. He came more to his mother as time went on, and though he did not speak of domestic discomfort, there was a tone in his voice, an under-current of bitterness in what he said, that did not escape even less keen observers than Anne. She, poor girl, had managed with infinite trouble to withdraw herself from the dangerous intimacy which her cousin had tried to thrust upon her. It was better, she felt, to allow him to draw conclusions favorable to his vanity than to permit him to hold her hand, to show her a tenderness which was fatal to her, and unbecoming in him. She gained her point, though not without difficulty, and it would be impossible to describe the mixture of softening compassion, sympathy, pain and contempt, with which Anne came to regard the man whom she had loved unawares all her life. Yes, even contempt—though perhaps it was not his fault, poor fellow, that he was under that contemptible sway of weakness, which even the strong have to bow to, when an ungoverned temper is conjoined with a delicate frame and precarious health. But it was his fault that he had married a woman for whom he had no real love, no feeling strong enough to give him influence with her, or power over her; and it was his fault that he came back and made bitter speeches at his mother's fire-side instead of making some effort worthy of a man to get his own life in tune. These were the reflections of an inexperienced girl, one of

the hardest judges to whose sentence weak human nature can be exposed. Anne began to look on pitying, to feel herself disentangled from the melancholy imbroglio, regarding it with keen and somewhat bitter interest, but no personal feeling. The position was painful to her, but yet buoyed her up with a certain sense of superiority to the man who had wronged her.

CHAPTER III.

THE threads of Fate which tangle round unwary feet and bring them by all kinds of unthought-of paths to fall into some tragic net, are only now spoken of in melodrama—in the primitive and artless exhibitions of dramatic art which please the vulgar; and when we speak more piously of Providence, we attribute to that benign power those plans which bring happiness and well-being, and not those darker evils of circumstance which lead to misery or death. And yet it is still true that at the most unguarded moment the darkest cloud may rise on a blameless life—that innocence may be made to bear the guise of guilt, and heart and soul may be petrified, and all bright prospects and happy hopes come to nothing by an unconsidered momentary act. So long as this dread possibility remains, tragedy cannot be far from the most commonplace existence. And thus it was that the innocent days of Anne Maturin, most commonplace, most ordinary as they were, were suddenly swept into a destroying current, which ravaged the best part of her existence before it finally left her exhausted on the strand to snatch a late and shadowed peace.

Francis had been for some time married, and all the evils attending his marriage had become known to his family, as well as the social success and advancement which made a large counterpoise in favor of his wife, when one day he arrived at his mother's house breathless and excited.

"I want you to come to Maria directly, mother," he said. "I want you or Anne. She has had a worse attack than usual, and is really ill. Her mother is in Ireland, heavens be praised! I don't want Lady Parker in my house. I have sent for the doctor, and there is no one but the maids to be with her. She won't have me."

"Won't have you, Francis? Why?"

"Oh, it is needless entering into particulars," he said, with rising color. "The past is enough. But, in the meantime, if you would go to her,—or Anne."

"Anne can go. As for me, I am too old

to be of much use in a sick-room, and you know how it knocks me up," said Mrs. Hartley, who could sit up night after night with Letty or Susan without thinking of fatigue. "But Anne will go. Anne, my dear, put on your bonnet at once."

"Will Mrs. Francis like to have me?" said Anne, hesitating. It was no very pleasant office for her, but she no more thought of resisting Mrs. Hartley's disposal of her, than did that lady of recommending that she should go directly. Letty or Susan would have been consulted—would have been allowed their own opinion on the subject; but on Anne all such punctilios would have been thrown away.

"Of course she will like to have you," said the old lady, and Anne obeyed without further struggle.

She walked with her cousin to his house, checking the confidence which he seemed to wish to bestow upon her.

"Never mind the cause," she said. "If your wife is ill I will be of what use I can, Francis. What does it matter how it came about?"

"Perhaps you are right," said Francis sullenly. He was excited, angry, and yet frightened. "She has never been crossed all her life," he said, with a half apologetic, half-resentful air. "I don't know what is to come of it, for my part. When a woman is married, how is it possible to keep up all those pretty fictions about her? She must get to understand the necessities of life."

Anne made no reply. How strange was it that this man, for whom she herself would have undergone anything, should thus murmur to her over the difficulties of the lot he had chosen! Her heart swelled with a certain proud indignation, but with that came a feeling of natural repulsion, almost of disgust. Had she made a similar failure, how proudly, with what desperation, would she have concealed it from him! But he, if she would have permitted him, would have bemoaned himself to her. Was this another of the characteristic differences between men and women, or was it individual feebleness, cowardice on the part of Francis? She turned from him, feeling herself expelled and alienated. She had never felt her individuality more distinct, or her independence more dear to her. She had nothing to do with him or his house or his troubles, thank Heaven! She would help if she could, but she had neither part nor lot with them. Her life might be dismal enough, but yet it would be her own.

With these thoughts in her mind, she put aside her bonnet and cloak, and went into the room of the patient. Mrs. Francis lay raised up on pillows, breathing quick, and with a high and unnatural color. When she saw her husband she uttered a shrill shriek.

"Oh, go away, go out of my sight, monster. I know what you want. You want to kill me and be rid of me. Send for mamma, and go, go, go away. I hate you; go away. What did you marry me for, to bring me to misery? Go away, go away, go away."

"Maria," said Francis, who was trembling with passion, "I have brought my cousin to be with you. I cannot alarm your mother for so little. I have sent for the doctor, who will be here directly, and here is Anne to do what she may. You know the remedy is in your own hands."

"Oh, is it Anne?" said Mrs. Francis. "Come in, Cinderella-Anne; so they have sent you, because you can't help yourself. It is like the Hartleys. Come in, Cinderella; come here. Oh, you didn't know he called you Cinderella, did you? But I can tell you some pleasant things. Oh, help me, help me; give me something. I shall be suffocated. I shall—die."

The sudden change in her tone was caused by a fresh paroxysm of her malady. She placed her hands upon her side, and panted and struggled for breath, with great patches of scarlet upon her whiteness, while the bed on which she lay vibrated with the terrible struggle. Anne forgot even the sharp impression which Mrs. Francis' words had made upon her, in natural compassion and terror. She rushed to the window and threw it open. She hastened to the bedside to take the place of the terrified maid, who, uttering as many exclamations as her mistress had done, wavered, and trembled in her task of holding up the pillows which supported the sufferer. "Go away; go away," Anne said sharply to her cousin. She, too! Sullen, angry, miserable, Francis went out of the sick-room, and left the woman he had slighted alone to tend the woman he had preferred, with the comfortable conviction that all the utterances of his vanity by which he had amused his bride at the expense of his cousin, were now about to reach that cousin's ears. What a fool he was to have brought Anne, to expose her and himself to such an ordeal! The other one, confound her! ought to have the penalty of her own folly. But when the thought had passed through his mind, Fran-

cis Hartley, who was not bad, was ashamed of himself. She was in real danger, which touches the hardest heart; and she was so young, and his wife.

The paroxysm ended after a time, and the doctor came, and the ignorant panic of the attendants was somewhat mitigated. The doctor was one who had watched over Miss Parker through all her youthful existence, and he was very severe upon her husband for allowing her to be excited.

"Don't you know she will die one of these days if this is repeated?" he said, somewhat sternly. "Did not I warn you of the state she was in when you married her? Did not I tell you that she must not be crossed?"

"For God's sake, Doctor, listen to reason," cried the unhappy Francis. "How is it possible for a woman to marry and enter upon the cares of life without being crossed?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Thank Heaven, that is your affair, not mine," he said. "I only tell you the fact, if you don't give over exciting her or allowing her to be excited, she will die."

"It is not I who excite her, she excites herself," said Francis, sullenly; but then instinct came in to remind him that domestic squabbles must not be published. "I will do my best, Doctor," he said. "In the meantime, my presence seems to excite her, would you advise me to keep away?"

"Till she wants you," said the doctor; "it might be as well perhaps. Miss Maturin, whom I left with her, seems very kind and attentive. I have left full instructions with her, and a gentle opiate to be taken at night. That, I hope, will give her some sleep and perfect quiet. I must insist upon that."

The quiet was procured, the gentle opiate administered, and the patient had a good night. Anne's presence somehow—or so at least Francis thought—stilled the house. The maids no longer ran up and down the stairs to inquire for "my poor missis, sir," as they had done before, making Francis furious. He went and dined with his mother quietly, and she was sorry for him. "A married woman and not to be crossed, forsooth," the old lady cried. It was preposterous, beyond expression, and Francis went home more and more convinced of his grievances. The next morning he went up to inquire after his wife. Exhausted as she was, and ill as she had been, she received him with that sudden rallying of animosity, that flush of battle which often shows itself when an opportunity occurs of renewing a not fully terminated matrimonial quarrel.

"Oh, I am much better, I thank you," said Mrs. Francis, with rising color. "It is quite kind of you to think of asking for me, at last."

"I would have come last night," said Francis. "I should not have left you at all, but that the doctor thought it best. He told me to keep away till you wanted me; but, you see, I could not consider myself banished so long as that."

"Oh, banished indeed," she said; "though, to be sure, perhaps you like to be here when Anne is here. She is fond of you, you know, fonder than I am, I suppose. But you did not marry her, Mr. Hartley. Oh, you may make faces at me as long as you like! Who was it that told me? Have you telegraphed for mamma?"

"No," said Francis, whose face was white with passion; for Anne stood by all this time, hearing every word.

"No!" screamed his wife; "do you mean to kill me without letting her know? Oh, if she could only see what is being done to her child, or papa either! Oh, what a fool; what a fool I was to leave them who were so fond of me, and marry you, who never cared for me! Oh, what a fool I was! They took care of me—they never allowed me to be plagued; but you torment me about everything, about your mean house-keeping, and your money, and things I hate. Oh, I am going again, I am going! Send that man away. He has taken advantage of papa's position, and got to know people through us, and got himself pushed and taken out. That was all he wanted. Oh, my God, I am going, I am going! and it is he that has done it. Send him away! Send for mamma! Oh, I will leave him! I will have a separation! I will leave him. I hate him! I never cared for him!" she cried.

Mrs. Francis Hartley's maid was in the room hearing every word. And the doctor had paused on the top of the stairs and heard it also. And so did Anne, who stood by the bedside, with, as may be supposed, many a thought in her heart. Anne was not thinking of her own share in the matter, and when, on the doctor's entrance, Francis beckoned to her at the door and took her hand in his agony and begged her pardon in miserable tones, it was with scarcely any personal sensation that she answered him. She was humbled and wounded to the very heart to see him thus beaten down and humiliated. The impotent passion in his face, the rage, the shame, the miserable self-

conviction were terrible to her. She seemed herself to be mortified and humbled in sight of his humiliation.

"Forgive you; I have nothing to forgive," she said. "I am very sorry for you," and then added more anxiously: "Go away, for God's sake, go away! you can do no good, and you may do harm. Go to your mother or one of the girls; but, at least, Francis, go! Go! there is nothing else to be said."

He left her, doubly humiliated, with a flush of such exquisite pain upon his face as he scarcely thought himself capable of feeling. He was banished by both—by the one imperiously, by the other (which was worse) indifferently—and Anne—Anne, who had loved him, did not even think so much of him now as to be wounded by hearing what he had said of her; last and deepest affront a man can be called upon to bear.

Anne went back into the sick-room. She received renewed instructions from the doctor. Quiet once more, and, chiefly, not to let the husband come in to disturb the patient. "It was well meant, no doubt, but injudicious," the doctor said. Quiet was the chief thing, and a few drops of the opiate at bed-time—only a few drops. He left her, promising to return in the evening; and Anne, tired and pale, returned to the bedside and seated herself there. Wondering at herself, as at a woman in a book. How strange, that she should be there, the protector of Francis's wife, charged to keep Francis out of sight, to guard this woman's tranquillities. It was a very irony of circumstances. She sat, thus worn out and drowsy, while the pale, misty autumn day wore on, scarcely moving, lest she should disturb the patient in the half slumber, half stupor of her exhaustion. A maid came creeping elaborately on tip-toe into the room from time to time to ask if anything was wanted—if anything could be done—if Miss Maturin would take anything. Anne was sick at heart and worn out in body, and she was mortally afraid of the recurrence of another such scene. She rejected all these proposals with a wave of the hand, and an impatient "hush!" She kept the room in an unbroken silence, which gradually seemed to creep into her mind like a kind of trance. She was not sleeping, yet she seemed to be dreaming. The day lengthened, waned, sank into twilight. No sound was in it except the dropping of the ashes from the fire, the occasional movements of the sufferer in her bed, the stealthy footsteps

coming and going. Anne seemed to herself to be waiting, waiting for the coming of the mother. In the silence, she seemed to hear the low monotonous roll of the wheels which were bringing her, bringing her, but never brought her, all the long silent day. When would she come? When would she herself, poor Anne, be able to go out free from this hectic bed-chamber, where she had no right to be, no natural duty? How she longed to go! What a yearning and anxiety there was in her mind to get out of it, anywhere into the free air, to escape, she did not care how! Yet, she sat still, unmoving though that tumult was in her soul.

In the evening the patient stirred and asked for food; and then, after her long stillness, became restless, and talked; the talk was wild, excited, and wandering; but she had not been "crossed," and there was no passion in it. Then she dozed, and Anne began to think that the worst of her vigil was over, to calculate on a quiet night, and the certainty of the mother's arrival on the morrow, and to allow the slumbrous quiet to steal into her own soul. All at once, however, in the darkening, Mrs. Francis sprang up in her bed, as if suddenly awakened, and full of fresh excitement. She plucked wildly at Anne's sleeve.

"You forget the draught," she cried; "the draught, the thing to make me sleep. Give it me; give it me this moment. You want to keep me without sleep; you want to kill me; you want to marry Francis after I am gone. Oh, I know; he told me how you tormented him; how you gave him no peace. Cinderella, give me my draught; give me sleep—sleep! There is the bottle; take it, quickly, quickly! Give me the twenty drops. Oh, you clumsy, stupid—. I shall die if I don't sleep. Give it me. Give it me. Quick! quick! quick!"

Anne had started up from a doze. She was worn out with fatigue and mental pain. She took up the bottle, which stood on a little table close to the bed, and, while this wild storm of words was poured upon her, began to drop the dangerous liquid into a glass. For years after, she labored to recall the exact sequence of her thoughts, as, with this abuse sounding in her ears, with trembling hands and shaken nerves, she tried to do her nurse's office. What were her thoughts? Fright, first, lest the attack should be coming on again; then, indignation, hot shame, contempt, anger; then did the thought cross her mind: Oh, what if the draught were strong enough to still those

babbling, violent lips, and make an end of so much misery? God help her! If the thought passed through her mind, it was none of hers. All at once Mrs. Francis darted at her, violently shaking the hand which held the bottle; then snatched the glass out of it. "There is too much," cried Anne, waking up to the full horror of the crisis, and rushing upon the mad creature; but before she could stop her, Mrs. Francis had drunk it to the last drop, and, sinking back upon her pillow with a laugh, held out the glass to her in foolish triumph:

"There now, Cinderella, you can go; now I'll sleep."

For the first moment Anne stood still, paralyzed with horror. The next, she rushed to the bell and rang it—to the door, and shrieked for help. Never was stillness more violently and suddenly broken. She called her cousin's name more loudly than she had ever spoken in her life before, and shrieked to the maids to come, to send for the doctor, to bring help, help! Francis had not come in, but all the servants in the house rushed to her. The footman went for the doctor; the maids in a body rushed into the room, filling the place, which had been so still, with a tumult of noises suggesting every kind of remedy. Oh, what would Anne have given for the power to rouse the patient into one of those paroxysms of which she had been so much afraid! For a minute Mrs. Francis kept looking at them from her bed with a smile, and with large, excited eyes, which seemed to have a kind of diabolical light. Her faculties would seem to have been at once deadened by the opiate. She resisted with the extraordinary strength of passive resistance their frantic attempts to raise her, their wild prayers to her to swallow the improvised remedies which each one presented. Anne, for her part, became as if inspired for the moment (she thought, mad, and possessed with the strength of madness). She lifted Mrs. Francis from her bed. With a terrible consciousness of controlling the despair that was in her, she tried everything she had ever heard of to counteract the fearful effects of this death draught. Whether it all passed in one horrible moment, or whether hours intervened, she never knew. By and by she became aware of the doctor's presence, of many fans about, and that she herself was employed in a variety of services with which her reason had nothing to do, acting blindly like a machine, with her whole heart and soul stupefied, but her bodily powers preternaturally active. It was mid-

night at last, when, amid dimly burning lights, and strange gusts of air from the open windows, and all the confusion of such a terrible event, Anne became aware at last that all was over. Some one drew her away from the bed-side—some one placed her in a chair, and made her swallow some wine, which he held to her lips. It was the doctor, who had employed her as his assistant.

"We have done all we could," he said, with a voice that seemed to Anne to come out of the distance, out of the darkness somewhere—miles away. "We have done all we could." Terrible confession of human impotence which attends the conclusion, whether peacefully or violently, of every human life.

This was the tragedy which, all at once, without warning or probability, enveloped Anne Maturin's life, and swallowed up its tranquillity, its gentle commonplaces, its every-day story. It was no fault of hers; indeed it would be no hyperbole to say that she would have given her life willingly to redeem that one which she appeared to herself to have sacrificed. I dare not lift the veil from the awful thoughts that took possession of her next morning, when, after the broken and disturbed sleep of exhaustion, she awoke to a real sense of what had happened. God help her! Had she murdered the wife of Francis? This was the first awful question which the daylight seemed to ask her. The cry which she uttered rang through the whole house, startling and alarming every one in it. She sprang from her bed in her agony, and paced up and down the room with moans and cries.

"What have I done; what have I done?" she cried, piteously, when some one came to her.

"Oh, miss, you didn't mean it," cried the horror-stricken maid, who, half-frightened, came into the room and stood by the door, keeping at a distance, as if Anne had been some dangerous animal. What had she done?

The parents of the unfortunate Mrs. Francis Hartley arrived that morning, and her mother, a foolish woman, raved, as a poor creature may be excused for raving over the grave of an only child. She would have had Anne arrested at once and tried for the murder of her daughter; and, indeed, a private inquiry was instituted, at which everything was investigated. Anne, fortunately for herself, was too ill to know—too ill to be aware of the ravings of poor Lady Parker, or even the unreasoning horror of

her aunt. "I can't see her; I won't have her here," Mrs. Hartley had cried, and even had gone further—crying out that her children would leave her in the power of that creature, and that she should never feel safe again. When Anne recovered, which was not for a long time, she was transferred, under pretense of "change of air," first to Letty's house and then to Susan's, who became, as they had never been before, most anxious to save her trouble, and would not accept her assistance in their nurseries or any personal attendance from her. "Oh, never mind baby; I am sure he is too much for you," Letty would say; and Susan actually snatched one of her children out of Anne's arms, when she, unconscious, was about to give it something. Poor Anne wondered, but she had become somewhat stupid since her illness. It did not occur to her what was the cause of this. Her heart was very heavy, her life like something spoilt, from which all the flavor and the freshness had gone. When it slowly dawned on her that she was not to be allowed to go home her heart stood still, and seemed as if it would never resume beating again. What was she to do? But Letty and Susan were very kind. They broke it to her in the gentlest way possible; they reminded her that old people took strange notions, and assured her of their own warm support and friendship. "Fancy the possibility of *us* doubting *you*!" Letty said with generous and sisterly warmth, but, instinctively, as she spoke she took her child's food out of Anne's hand.

If she had been as well and as full of spirit as in the old days when she thought herself so unhappy, Anne could not have borne it. But she had not the heart to justify herself, or to fly from unjust judgments. She stayed in her corner of Letty's drawing-room as long as they would let her. Her heart was broken and her judgment enfeebled, and her pride gone. She made the children's clothes, and forbore to look at them, forbore to notice them. She went to see her aunt when she was permitted, without an attempt to appeal against her doom. Her brightness, her pretty color, her lively ways were all gone. She looked ten years older; she looked dull and stupid. "What a change upon Anne!" every one said, and some whispered that it was her conscience, and many avoided her with a cruelty of which they were not aware. From being everybody's willing servant, the blithe domestic minister of the Hartley family, joyously

at their command for everything, she fell into the humble and silent dependent, living in her corner alone, half shunned, half pitied, the pariah of the house.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCIS HARTLEY had returned to his mother's house. The event which released him from a career of domestic misery acted uncomfortably upon his worldly prospects. An impression that he had not "behaved well" got abroad—one of those vague impressions which can neither be explained nor accounted for, but which sap a man's public character and popularity without any apparent reason. His father-in-law gave him up. He was no longer admitted into his intimacy, scarcely even to his acquaintance; and good-natured friends were but too ready to say and believe that "something must be very much amiss" when a good-hearted man like the Attorney-General so cast off his daughter's husband. Other circumstances concurred, as they always do, to make Francis unfortunate. During his brief married life he had spent a great deal of money and made many new friends, but in the enforced retirement of his early widowhood, the money he had spent and the friends he had made became useless, and the society into which he had struggled forgot him. Francis felt all these things deeply, as he was in the habit of feeling anything that affected his own comfort. He grew indolent and listless, and this made matters worse. At length he formed a resolution, which involved many changes, and to which he was moved by a great diversity of motives. His wife had been dead about a year and a half, when one morning he came suddenly to the house of his sister Letty, where Anne was staying. During all this time he had been very kind to Anne; a touch of real consideration had been in his behavior to her. His own humiliation before her in those terrible days before his wife's death had made him gentle to her afterward; and in the dull state of no feeling which supervened after so much excessive feeling she had been conscious that he was kind. He was not suspicious, like the others. He did not bemoan her, and then tremble at her as they did. He behaved to her more respectfully, less carelessly, but much as he had done before.

Anne was alone. She was in a little morning room, which she chiefly inhabited while Letty was busy with her household

and her children. What a change it was for Anne—she who had been always in movement about the house, going errands for everybody, executing all sorts of commissions since ever she could recollect! Francis felt for her as he entered the little room where she sat at work.

"Always making pinafores?" he said, half bitterly. Her aspect made his resolution all the more decided.

"I am very glad to do it," she said, with a smile.

How subdued she was—how unlike the Anne of old!

"Anne, I have a great deal to say to you," he cried, "about myself and about you. First about myself: I have not been getting along well lately. Things seem to have taken a bad turn. Old Parker has set himself dead against me; as if—as if it could have been my fault, and other things have gone wrong. I can't tell you all the details; but the result is, I am disgusted with England and with London, and I have made up my mind to go to India and practice at the Indian bar."

"To go to India?" said Anne, in amaze.

"Yes; that is my determination. So much about myself. Now about you."

"Don't say anything about me, please," said Anne, reddening painfully. "About me there is nothing to be said. I have been very unfortunate, and nothing—nothing can mend it. Talking only makes it all worse. Tell me a little more about yourself. What will your mother do?"

"But, I must talk about you, because myself is involved," said Francis, with a calm sense that all objection on her part must give way to this momentous reason. "Anne, it is best to come to the point at once; why should not you come with me to Calcutta? You are not very happy here now, any more than I am."

"I—go with you to Calcutta?" said Anne, looking up at him with her lips apart, with a strange whiteness coming over her face.

"Yes; why not? I mean, of course, as my wife. Listen to me, Anne, wait a little before you rush from me in that ghostly way. What have I said to make you look so horror-stricken? There is nothing so very much against me to alarm a woman. And, look here, I always was fond of you; even before—before poor Maria's time," he said, with a slight shiver. "I used to like you years and years ago. Anne, you surely don't mean to leave me without an answer?"

"Oh, let me go, Francis?" she said, "don't speak another word; too much has been said. I go with you to Calcutta? I be your wife? Francis, Francis, let me go!"

"Why should you go? You shall not move a step till you have given me an answer. What is it to be?"

"Let me go, let me go!" cried Anne, pale as marble.

He stood between her and the door. He thought she was modestly overcome by so wonderful a hope.

"Not without my answer!" he said. "Yes, Anne, I have always been fond of you. Many a day before poor Maria's time, did I think——"

"Then, why did you not say it?" she cried, with sudden passion. "Why—why—when nothing had happened, when there was nothing to remember, nothing to fear! Oh, how dare you tell me this now?"

"I did not tell you—because—I think you might guess—because, I could not in my position marry a penniless girl without connections. But now, when things are so different, when we have both been unfortunate."

Anne broke from him with a cry—a bitter cry wrung out of the depth of her heart. The excitement and storm of passionate feeling which overwhelmed her, made her unable to speak; but, when she had opened the door, she turned back again and stood there for a moment, looking at him wildly.

"Had you said it then," she cried, "had you said it then! Oh, how much might have been spared! But now there is nothing so impossible, so horrible. You and I to marry—you and I!—not if we were the last two in the world!"

"But, Anne, why, in the name of Heaven?"

"Oh, hear him, hear him!" she cried, "you and I, you and I! Would she not come out of her grave to stop it? Oh, go, go; and never speak to me more."

"But you used to be fond of me, Anne," he said, in amaze.

Another low cry of pain came out of her heart. This time surely it was broken quite, and she would die. She rushed up to her own room, leaving him all amazed and uncomprehending, not knowing what to make of it. Why should she be moved so deeply? he asked himself; was this horror affected, or did it really mean anything? He waited for some time, thinking she might come back, and then, when further waiting seemed vain, Francis took up his

hat again, and, with much annoyance and some regret, went away.

This strange interview, of which no one knew, roused Anne out of the half stupor into which her life had fallen. When she was quite sure that Francis was gone, she put on her hat and went out. She did not know where to go; but, had it been possible, she felt she would never have returned again. She walked far and fast until she was weary, and then reluctantly she turned back, with a failing and sinking heart. Home? oh, no, to Letty's, which was all the home she had in the world.

But when she got back, she had not the heart to go in. Letty lived in one of the Squares in the Kensington district, and Anne, after her long wandering went into the garden in the middle of the square, and seated herself on a bench in her weariness. She could not stay there forever, and she had nowhere else to go to; but yet she could not make up her mind to return to the house. She sat there she did not know how long, till the evening was falling, and she was chilled through and through. Just as she began to be aware of the glimmer of lights in the houses round, some one came along the winding walk and started at sight of her. It was the clergyman she had refused after Francis's marriage, but whom, perhaps, if all had gone well, she might not always have refused. He was a friend; he came and sat down beside her on the bench and talked to her in soft and tender tones. And Anne was so forlorn that she burst into tears when she answered and betrayed herself. She had not met him for what seemed to be a very long time, and he knew almost nothing of her story, nor why it was that she had left her aunt's house. In the commotion of her disturbed heart, she told him everything that had happened from the time that Francis had come to fetch her to nurse his wife. That dismal epoch rose before her eyes as she spoke; she told him everything—fully, as she had never been able to tell it before—and then in broken words, by half revelations, unawares, she let him see how desolate she was.

"I have been thinking," she said, "if I could get a governess's situation. I don't know very much; but I could teach little children. Would any one take me, Mr. Herbert, or would people be afraid to let me be with their children, like Letty? Oh, you don't know," cried Anne, with tears, "how hard it is; I, that would rather die than hurt them,—and Letty is afraid of me.

Letty! Don't mind my crying, it does me good. How kind you are!"

"You are trembling with cold," said Mr. Herbert, whose heart was wrung for the woman who had rejected him. "You will be ill. Miss Maturin, will you go home now, and let me come to you to-morrow? In the meantime, I will think what can be done."

"Will you?" said Anne, weeping still, but softly, for her heart was relieved by her outburst. "How good you are! Oh, if I could but stay here until to-morrow; but I know it would be wrong, it would make them all unhappy. I must go back to Letty's; it is not home. I wish I could stay here."

"And I wish I could take you home," he said, with sudden fervor.

Far from poor Anne's thoughts was any vanity; any possibility of putting a different meaning on his words. He would like, perhaps try, in his kindness to open her old home to her, she thought; how good he was!—but that could never be.

And she went back, and met Letty's reproaches with humble and gentle apologies. She had not meant to make any one uneasy. She was very sorry to have pained her cousin. That evening, when they were sitting together, she broached her idea of trying "a governess's place."

"I could not teach much," she said; "but perhaps strangers would not be afraid of me." Upon which Letty, touched by her conscience, fell a crying like a woman deeply wronged.

"Take a governess's place?" she cried. "One of our family in a governess's place! Could you have so little consideration for us, Anne, making people suppose that we are unkind to you—that you are not happy at home?"

"I shall never be happy anywhere," said

poor Anne. "But you are afraid of me," she added with a moan, and with bitter tears swelling in her eyes.

"Oh, Anne, how unkind you are!" said Letty, crying. She had nothing to say for herself, and therefore she wept as if she were the injured person. Many people take this way of persuading themselves that they are right, and the object of their unkindness in the wrong.

Mr. Herbert came next day. He came not to speak of a governess's place, but to tell Anne that he had accepted a living in the country, and to ask her to go with him there. He did not weary her worn-out mind by asking for her love. He took no high ground; his heart was overflowing with pity. "It will be a home, and your own," he said, looking at her with anxious tenderness. "And I will never marry any one but you, whether you will have me or not," he added, with a smile. What answer could she make but one?

Thus after a while Anne Maturin's story ended in the peaceablest way. Francis Hartley went to India, piqued and disappointed, but the rest of the family were very much satisfied with the good marriage Anne made, and her aunt restored her to her favor as soon as it was all settled. She had not a very long life, but she lived for some tranquil years in her country Rectory, and made her husband happy. Anne, too, was far happier than she ever expected to be,—but yet never, in her own consciousness, got quite free from that tragic net which caught her heedless feet unawares. In one moment, without thought or warning, without meaning or premeditation, she fell into it, and never struggled fully out again, nor quite emancipated herself, all her life.

LAUS MARIÆ.

ACROSS the brook of Time man leaping goes
 On stepping-stones of epochs, that arise
 Fixed, memorable, 'midst broad shallow flows
 Of neutrals, kill-times, sleeps, indifferences.
 So 'twixt each morn and night rise salient heaps:
 Some cross with but a zigzag, jaded pace
 From meal to meal: some with convulsive leaps
 Shake the green treacherous tussocks of disgrace;
 And some advance, by system and deep art,
 O'er vantages of wealth, place, learning, tact.
 But thou within thyself, dear manifold Heart,
 Dost bind all epochs in one dainty Fact.
 Oh, Sweet, my pretty Sum of history,
 I leapt the breadth of Time in loving thee!