

From hand to hand her restless shuttle flew,
Till the full web was wound upon the beam,—
Love's curious toil,—a vest without a seam!

They reach the holy place, fulfil the days
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise.
At last they turn, and far Moriah's height
Melts in the southern sky and fades from sight.
All day the dusky caravan has flowed
In devious trails along the winding road
(For many a step their homeward path at-

tends,
And all the sons of Abraham are as friends).
Evening has come,—the hour of rest and
joy;—

Hush! hush!—that whisper,—“Where is
Mary's boy?”

O weary hour! O aching days that passed
Filled with strange fears, each wilder than the
last:

The soldier's lance,—the fierce centurion's
sword,—

The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman
lord,—

The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's
breath,—

The blistering sun on Hinnom's vale of death!
Thrice on his cheek had rained the morning
light,

Thrice on his lips the mildewed kiss of night,
Crouched by some porphyry column's shining
plinth,

Or stretched beneath the odorous terebinth.

At last, in desperate mood, they sought once
more

The Temple's porches, searched in vain be-
fore;

They found him seated with the ancient
men,—

The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen,—
Their bald heads glistening as they clustered
near,

Their gray beards slanting as they turned to
hear,

Lost in half-envious wonder and surprise
That lips so fresh should utter words so wise.

And Mary said,—as one who, tried too long,
Tells all her grief and half her sense of
wrong,—

“What is this thoughtless thing which thou
hast done?

Lo, we have sought thee sorrowing, O my
son!”

Few words he spake, and scarce of filial
tone,—

Strange words, their sense a mystery yet un-
known;

Then turned with them and left the holy hill,
To all their mild commands obedient still.

The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men,

And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again;

The maids re-told it at the fountain's side;

The youthful shepherds doubted or denied;

It passed around among the listening friends,

With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,

Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown

Of Joseph's son, who talked the Rabbis down.

But Mary, faithful to its lightest word,
Kept in her heart the sayings she had heard,

Till the dread morning rent the Temple's
veil,
And shuddering Earth confirmed the wondrous
tale.

Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friend-
ship fall:

A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

THE MINISTER'S WOOING.

[Continued.]

CHAPTER XII.

MISS PRISSY.

WILL our little Mary really fall in
love with the Doctor?—The question
reaches us in anxious tones from all the
circle of our readers; and what especial-
ly shocks us is, that grave doctors of di-
vinity, and serious, stocking-knitting ma-
trons, seem to be the class who are par-

ticularly set against the success of our
excellent orthodox hero, and bent on
reminding us of the claims of that unre-
generate James, whom we have sent to
sea on purpose that our heroine may re-
cover herself of that foolish partiality for
him which all the Christian world seems
bent on perpetuating.

“Now, really,” says the Rev. Mrs. Q.,
looking up from her bundle of Sewing-

Society work, "you are *not* going to let Mary marry the Doctor?"

My dear Madam, is not that just what you did, yourself, after having turned off three or four fascinating young sinners as good as James any day? Don't make us believe that you are sorry for it now!

"Is it possible," says Dr. Theophrastus, who is himself a staunch Hopkinsian divine, and who is at present recovering from his last grand effort on Natural and Moral Ability,—*"is it possible that you are going to let Mary forget that poor young man and marry Dr. H. ? That will never do in the world !"*

Dear Doctor, consider what would have become of you, if some lady at a certain time had not had the sense and discernment to fall in love with the *man* who came to her disguised as a theologian.

"But he's so old!" says Aunt Maria.

Not at all. Old? What do you mean? Forty is the very season of ripeness,—the very meridian of manly lustre and splendor.

"But he wears a wig."

My dear Madam, so did Sir Charles Grandison, and Lovelace, and all the other fine fellows of those days; the wig was the distinguishing mark of a gentleman.

No,—spite of all you may say and declare, we do insist that our Doctor is a very proper and probable subject for a young lady to fall in love with.

(If women have one weakness more marked than another, it is towards veneration. They are born worshippers,—makers of silver shrines for some divinity or other, which, of course, they always think fell straight down from heaven.

The first step towards their falling in love with an ordinary mortal is generally to dress him out with all manner of real or fancied superiority; and having made him up, they worship him.)

Now a truly great man, a man really grand and noble in heart and intellect, has this advantage with women, that he is an idol ready-made to hand; and so that very painstaking and ingenious sex

have less labor in getting him up, and can be ready to worship him on shorter notice.

In particular is this the case where a sacred profession and a moral supremacy are added to the intellectual. Just think of the career of celebrated preachers and divines in all ages. Have they not stood like the image that "Nebuchadnezzar the king set up," and all woman-kind, coquettes and flirts not excepted, been ready to fall down and worship, even before the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, and so forth? Is not the faithful Paula, with her beautiful face, prostrate in reverence before poor, old, lean, haggard, dying St. Jerome, in the most splendid painting of the world, an emblem and sign of woman's eternal power of self-sacrifice to what she deems noblest in man? Does not old Richard Baxter tell us, with delightful single-heartedness, how his wife fell in love with him first, spite of his long, pale face,—and how she confessed, dear soul, after many years of married life, that she had found him *less* sour and bitter than she had expected?

The fact is, women are burdened with fealty, faith, reverence, more than they know what to do with; they stand like a hedge of sweet-peas, throwing out fluttering tendrils everywhere for something high and strong to climb by,—and when they find it, be it ever so rough in the bark, they catch upon it. And instances are not wanting of those who have turned away from the flattery of admirers to prostrate themselves at the feet of a genuine hero who never wooed them, except by heroic deeds and the rhetoric of a noble life.

Never was there a distinguished man whose greatness could sustain the test of minute domestic inspection better than our Doctor. Strong in a single-hearted humility, a perfect unconsciousness of self, an honest and sincere absorption in high and holy themes and objects, there was in him what we so seldom see,—a perfect logic of life; his minutest deeds were the true results of his sublimest

principles. His whole nature, moral, physical, and intellectual, was simple, pure, and cleanly. He was temperate as an anchorite in all matters of living,—avoiding, from a healthy instinct, all those intoxicating stimuli then common among the clergy. In his early youth, indeed, he had formed an attachment to the almost universal clerical pipe,—but, observing a delicate woman once nauseated by coming into the atmosphere which he and his brethren had polluted, he set himself gravely to reflect that that which could so offend a woman must needs be uncomely and unworthy a Christian man; wherefore he laid his pipe on the mantelpiece, and never afterwards resumed the indulgence.

In all his relations with womanhood he was delicate and reverential, forming his manners by that old precept, “The elder women entreat as mothers, the younger as sisters,”—which rule, short and simple as it is, is nevertheless the most perfect *résumé* of all true gentlemanliness. Then, as for person, the Doctor was not handsome, to be sure; but he was what sometimes serves with woman better,—majestic and manly, and, when animated by thought and feeling, having even a commanding grandeur of mien. Add to all this, that our valiant hero is now on the straight road to bring him into that situation most likely to engage the warm partisanship of a true woman,—namely, that of a man unjustly abused for right-doing,—and one may see that it is ten to one our Mary may fall in love with him yet, before she knows it.

If it were not for this mysterious selfness-and-sameness which makes this wild, wandering, uncanonical sailor, James Marvyn, so intimate and internal,—if his thread were not knit up with the thread of her life,—were it not for the old habit of feeling for him, thinking for him, praying for him, hoping for him, fearing for him, which—woe is us!—is the unfortunate habit of womankind,—if it were not for that fatal something which neither judgment, nor wishes, nor reason, nor common sense shows any great skill

in unravelling,—we are quite sure that Mary would be in love with the Doctor within the next six months; as it is, we leave you all to infer from your own heart and consciousness what his chances are.

A new sort of scene is about to open on our heroine, and we shall show her to you, for an evening at least, in new associations, and with a different background from that homely and rural one in which she has fluttered as a white dove amid leafy and congenial surroundings.

As we have before intimated, Newport presented a *résumé* of many different phases of society, all brought upon a social level by the then universally admitted principle of equality.

There were scattered about in the settlement lordly mansions, whose owners rolled in emblazoned carriages, and whose wide halls were the scenes of a showy and almost princely hospitality. By her husband's side, Mrs. Katy Scudder was allied to one of these families of wealthy planters, and often recognized the connection with a quiet undertone of satisfaction, as a dignified and self-respecting woman should. She liked, once in a while, quietly to let people know, that, although they lived in the plain little cottage and made no pretensions, yet they had good blood in their veins,—that Mr. Scudder's mother was a Wilcox, and that the Wilcoxes were, she supposed, as high as anybody,—generally ending the remark with the observation, that “all these things, to be sure, were matters of small consequence, since at last it would be of far more importance to have been a true Christian than to have been connected with the highest families of the land.”

Nevertheless, Mrs. Scudder was not a little pleased to have in her possession a card of invitation to a splendid wedding-party that was going to be given, on Friday, at the Wilcox Manor. She thought it a very becoming mark of respect to the deceased Mr. Scudder that his widow and daughter should be brought to mind,—so becoming and praiseworthy, in fact, that, “though an old woman,” as she said, with

a complacent straightening of her tall, lithe figure, she really thought she must make an effort to go.

Accordingly, early one morning, after all domestic duties had been fulfilled, and the clock, loudly ticking through the empty rooms, told that all needful bustle had died down to silence, Mrs. Katy, Mary, and Miss Prissy Diamond, the dressmaker, might have been observed sitting in solemn senate around the camphor-wood trunk, before spoken of, and which exhaled vague foreign and Indian perfumes of silk and sandal-wood.

You may have heard of dignitaries, my good reader,—but, I assure you, you know very little of a situation of trust or importance compared to that of the dressmaker in a small New England town.

What important interests does she hold in her hands! How is she besieged, courted, deferred to! Three months beforehand, all her days and nights are spoken for; and the simple statement, that *only* on that day you can have Miss Clippers, is of itself an apology for any omission of attention elsewhere,—it strikes home at once to the deepest consciousness of every woman, married or single. How thoughtfully is everything arranged, weeks beforehand, for the golden, important season when Miss Clippers can come! On that day, there is to be no extra sweeping, dusting, cleaning, cooking, no visiting, no receiving, no reading or writing, but all with one heart and soul are to wait upon her, intent to forward the great work which she graciously affords a day's leisure to direct. Seated in her chair of state, with her well-worn cushion bristling with pins and needles at her side, her ready roll of patterns and her scissors, she hears, judges, and decides *ex cathedra* on the possible or not possible, in that important art on which depends the right presentation of the floral part of Nature's great horticultural show. She alone is competent to say whether there is any available remedy for the stained breadth in Jane's dress,—whether the fatal spot by any magical hocus-pocus can be cut out from

the fulness, or turned up and smothered from view in the gathers, or concealed by some new fashion of trimming falling with generous appropriateness exactly across the fatal weak point. She can tell you whether that remnant of velvet will make you a basque,—whether Mamma's old silk can reappear in juvenile grace for Miss Lucy. What marvels follow her, wherever she goes! What wonderful results does she contrive from the most unlikely materials, as everybody after her departure wonders to see old things become so much better than new!

Among the most influential and happy of her class was Miss Prissy Diamond,—a little, dapper, doll-like body, quick in her motions and nimble in her tongue, whose delicate complexion, flaxen curls, merry flow of spirits, and ready abundance of gayety, song, and story, apart from her professional accomplishments, made her a welcome guest in every family in the neighborhood. Miss Prissy laughingly boasted being past forty, sure that the avowal would always draw down on her quite a storm of compliments, on the freshness of her sweet-pea complexion and the brightness of her merry blue eyes. She was well pleased to hear dawning girls wondering why with so many advantages she had never married. At such remarks, Miss Prissy always laughed loudly, and declared that she had always had such a string of engagements with the women that she never found half an hour to listen to what any *man* living would say to her, supposing she could stop to hear him. "Besides, if I were to get married, nobody else could," she would say. "What would become of all the wedding-clothes for everybody else?" But sometimes, when Miss Prissy felt extremely gracious, she would draw out of her little chest just the faintest tip-end of a sigh, and tell some young lady, in a confidential undertone, that one of these days she would tell her something,—and then there would come a wink of her blue eyes and a fluttering of the pink ribbons in her cap quite stimulating to youthful inquisitive-

ness, though we have never been able to learn by any of our antiquarian researches that the expectations thus excited were ever gratified.

In her professional prowess she felt a pardonable pride. What feats could she relate of wonderful dresses got out of impossibly small patterns of silk! what marvels of silks turned that could not be told from new! what reclaimings of waists that other dress-makers had hopelessly spoiled! Had not Mrs. General Wilcox once been obliged to call in her aid on a dress sent to her from Paris? and did not Miss Prissy work three days and nights on that dress, and make every stitch of that trimming over with her own hands, before it was fit to be seen? And when Mrs. Governor Dexter's best silver-gray brocade was spoiled by Miss Pimlico, and there wasn't another scrap to pattern it with, didn't she make a new waist out of the cape and piece one of the sleeves twenty-nine times, and yet nobody would ever have known that there was a joining in it?

In fact, though Miss Prissy enjoyed the fair average plain-sailing of her work, she might be said to *revel* in difficulties. A full pattern with trimming, all ample and ready, awoke a moderate enjoyment; but the resurrection of anything half-worn or imperfectly made, the brilliant success, when, after turning, twisting, piecing, contriving, and, by unheard-of inventions of trimming, a dress faded and defaced was restored to more than pristine splendor, —that was a triumph worth enjoying.

It was true, Miss Prissy, like most of her nomadic compeers, was a little given to gossip; but, after all, it was innocent gossip,—not a bit of malice in it; it was only all the particulars about Mrs. Thus-and-So's wardrobe,—all the statistics of Mrs. That-and-T'other's china-closet,—all the minute items of Miss Simpkins's wedding-clothes,—and how her mother cried, the morning of the wedding, and said that she didn't know anything how she could spare Louisa Jane, only that Edward was such a good boy that she felt she could love him like an own son,

—and what a providence it seemed that the very ring that was put into the bride-loaf was one that he gave her when he first went to sea, when she ~~wouldn't~~ be engaged to him because she thought she loved Thomas Strickland better, but that was only because she hadn't found him out, you know,—and so forth, and so forth. Sometimes, too, her narrations assumed a solemn cast, and brought to mind the hush of funerals, and told of words spoken in faint whispers, when hands were clasped for the last time,—and of utterances crushed out from hearts, when the hammer of a great sorrow strikes out sparks of the divine, even from common stone; and there would be real tears in the little blue eyes, and the pink bows would flutter tremulously, like the last three leaves on a bare scarlet maple in autumn. In fact, dear reader, *gossip*, like romance, has its noble side to it. How can you love your neighbor as yourself and not feel a little curiosity as to how he fares, what he wears, where he goes, and how he takes the great life tragi-comedy at which you and he are both more than spectators? Show me a person who lives in a country-village absolutely without curiosity or interest on these subjects, and I will show you a cold, fat oyster, to whom the tide-mud of propriety is the whole of existence.

As one of our esteemed collaborators in the ATLANTIC remarks,—“A dull town, where there is neither theatre nor circus nor opera, must have some excitement, and the real tragedy and comedy of life *must* come in place of the second-hand. Hence the noted gossiping propensities of country-places, which, so long as they are not poisoned by envy or ill-will, have a respectable and picturesque side to them,—an undoubted leave to be, as probably has almost everything, which obstinately and always insists on being, except sin!”

As it is, it must be confessed that the arrival of Miss Prissy in a family was much like the setting up of a domestic show-case, through which you could look into all the families in the neighborhood,

and see the never-ending drama of life,—births, marriages, deaths,—joy of new-made mothers, whose babes weighed just eight pounds and three-quarters, and had hair that would part with a comb,—and tears of Rachels who wept for their children, and would not be comforted because they were not. Was there a tragedy, a mystery, in all Newport, whose secret closet had not been unlocked by Miss Prissy? She thought not; and you always wondered, with an uncertain curiosity, what those things might be over which she gravely shook her head, declaring, with such a look,—“Oh, if you only *could* know!”—and ending with a general sigh and lamentation, like the confidential chorus of a Greek tragedy.

We have been thus minute in sketching Miss Prissy's portrait, because we rather like her. She has great power, we admit; and were she a sour-faced, angular, energetic body, with a heart whose secretions had all become acrid by disappointment and dyspepsia, she might be a fearful gnome, against whose family-visitations one ought to watch and pray. As it was, she came into the house rather like one of those breezy days of spring, which burst all the blossoms, set all the doors and windows open, make the hens cackle and the turtles peep,—filling a solemn Puritan dwelling with as much bustle and chatter as if a box of martins were setting up housekeeping in it.

Let us now introduce you to the sanctuary of Mrs. Scudder's own private bedroom, where the committee of exigencies, with Miss Prissy at their head, are seated in solemn session around the camphor-wood trunk.

“Dress, you know, is of *some* importance, after all,” said Mrs. Scudder, in that apologetic way in which sensible people generally acknowledge a secret leaning towards anything so very mundane. While the good lady spoke, she was reverentially unpinning and shaking out of their fragrant folds creamy crape shawls of rich Chinese embroidery,—India muslin, scarfs, and aprons; and already her hands were undoing the pins

of a silvery damask linen in which was wrapped her own wedding-dress. “I have always told Mary,” she continued, “that, though our hearts ought not to be set on these things, yet they had their importance.”

“Certainly, certainly, Ma'am,” chimed in Miss Prissy. “I was saying to Miss General Wilcox, the other day, I didn't see how we could ‘consider the lilies of the field,’ without seeing the importance of looking pretty. I've got a flower-de-luce in my garden now, from one of the new roots that old Major Seaforth brought over from France, which is just the most beautiful thing you ever did see; and I was thinking, as I looked at it to-day, that, if women's dresses only grew on 'em as handsome and well-fitting as that, why, there wouldn't be any need of me; but as it is, why, we *must* think, if we want to look well. Now peach-trees, I s'pose, might bear just as good peaches without the pink blows, but then who would want 'em to? Miss Deacon Twitchel, when I was up there the other day, kept kind o' sighin' 'cause Cerintha Ann is getting a new pink silk made up, 'cause she said it was such a dying world it didn't seem right to call off our attention: but I told her it wasn't any pinker than the apple-blossoms; and what with robins and blue-birds and one thing or another, the Lord is always calling off our attention; and I think we ought to observe the Lord's works and take a lesson from 'em.”

“Yes, you are quite right,” said Mrs. Scudder, rising and shaking out a splendid white brocade, on which bunches of moss-roses were looped to bunches of violets by graceful fillets of blue ribbons. “This was my wedding-dress,” she said.

Little Miss Prissy sprang up and clapped her hands in an ecstasy.

“Well, now, Miss Scudder, really!—did I ever see anything more beautiful? It really goes beyond anything I ever saw. I don't think, in all the brocades I ever made up, I ever saw so pretty a pattern as this.”

“Mr. Scudder chose it for me, himself,

at the silk-factory in Lyons," said Mrs. Scudder, with pardonable pride, "and I want it tried on to Mary."

"Really, Miss Scudder, this ought to be kept for *her* wedding-dress," said Miss Prissy, as she delightedly bustled about the congenial task. "I was up to Miss Marvyn's, a-working, last week," she said, as she threw the dress over Mary's head, "and she said that James expected to make his fortune in that voyage, and come home and settle down."

Mary's fair head emerged from the rustling folds of the brocade, her cheeks crimson as one of the moss-roses,—while her mother's face assumed a severe gravity, as she remarked that she believed James had been much pleased with Jane Spencer, and that, for her part, she should be very glad, when he came home, if he could marry such a steady, sensible girl, and settle down to a useful, Christian life.

"Ah, yes,—just so,—a very excellent idea, certainly," said Miss Prissy. "It wants a little taken in here on the shoulders, and a little under the arms. The biases are all right; the sleeves will want altering, Miss Scudder. I hope you will have a hot iron ready for pressing."

Mrs. Scudder rose immediately, to see the command obeyed; and as her back was turned, Miss Prissy went on in a low tone,—

"Now, *I*, for my part, don't think there's a word of truth in that story about James Marvyn and Jane Spencer; for I was down there at work one day when he called, and I *know* there couldn't have been anything between them,—besides, Miss Spencer, her mother, told me there wasn't.—There, Miss Scudder, you see that is a good fit. It's astonishing how near it comes to fitting, just as it was. I didn't think Mary was so near what you were, when you were a girl, Miss Scudder. The other day, when I was up to General Wilcox's, the General he was in the room when I was a-trying on Miss Wilcox's cherry velvet, and she was asking couldn't I come this week for her, and I mentioned I was coming to

Miss Scudder, and the General says he, —'I used to know her when she was a girl. I tell you, she was one of the handsomest girls in Newport, by George!' says he. And says I,—'General, you ought to see her daughter.' And the General,—you know his jolly way,—he laughed, and says he,—'If she is as handsome as her mother was, I don't want to see her,' says he. 'I tell you, wife,' says he, 'I but just missed falling in love with Katy Stephens.'"

"I could have told her more than that," said Mrs. Scudder, with a flash of her old coquette girlhood for a moment lighting her eyes and straightening her lithe form. "I guess, if I should show a letter he wrote me once — But what am I talking about?" she said, suddenly stiffening back into a sensible woman. "Miss Prissy, do you think it will be necessary to cut it off at the bottom? It seems a pity to cut such rich silk."

"So it does, I declare. Well, I believe it will do to turn it up."

"I depend on you to put it a little into modern fashion, you know," said Mrs. Scudder. "It is many a year, you know, since it was made."

"Oh, never you fear! You leave all that to me," said Miss Prissy. "Now, there never was anything so lucky as, that, just before all these wedding-dresses had to be fixed, I got a letter from my sister Martha, that works for all the first families of Boston. And Martha she is really unusually privileged, because she works for Miss Cranch, and Miss Cranch gets letters from Miss Adams,—you know Mr. Adams is Ambassador now at the Court of St. James, and Miss Adams writes home all the particulars about the court-dresses; and Martha she heard one of the letters read, and she told Miss Cranch that she would give the best five-pound-note she had, if she could just copy that description to send to Prissy. Well, Miss Cranch let her do it, and I've got a copy of the letter here in my work-pocket. I read it up to Miss General Wilcox's, and to Major Seaforth's, and I'll read it to you."

Mrs. Katy Scudder was a born subject of a crown, and, though now a republican matron, had not outlived the reverence, from childhood implanted, for the high and stately doings of courts, lords, ladies, queens, and princesses, and therefore it was not without some awe that she saw Miss Prissy produce from her little black work-bag the well-worn epistle.

"Here it is," said Miss Prissy, at last. "I only copied out the parts about being presented at Court. She says:—

"One is obliged here to attend the circles of the Queen, which are held once a fortnight; and what renders it very expensive is, that you cannot go twice in the same dress, and a court-dress you cannot make use of elsewhere. I directed my mantua-maker to let my dress be elegant, but plain as I could possibly appear with decency. Accordingly, it is white lutestring, covered and full-trimmed with white crape, festooned with lilac ribbon and mock point-lace, over a hoop of enormous size. There is only a narrow train, about three yards in length to the gown-waist, which is put into a ribbon on the left side,—the Queen only having her train borne. Ruffled cuffs for married ladies,—treble lace ruffles, a very dress cap with long lace lap-pets, two white plumes, and a blonde lace handkerchief. This is my rigging."

Miss Prissy here stopped to adjust her spectacles. Her audience expressed a breathless interest.

"You see," she said, "I used to know her when she was Nabby Smith. She was Parson Smith's daughter, at Weymouth, and as handsome a girl as ever I wanted to see,—just as graceful as a sweet-brier bush. I don't believe any of those English ladies looked one bit better than she did. She was always a master-hand at writing. Everything she writes about, she puts it right before you. You feel as if you'd been there. Now, here she goes on to tell about her daughter's dress. She says:—

"My head is dressed for St. James's, and in my opinion looks very tasty. Whilst my daughter is undergoing the

same operation, I set myself down composedly to write you a few lines. Well, methinks I hear Betsey and Lucy say, "What is cousin's dress?" *White*, my dear girls, like your aunt's, only differently trimmed and ornamented,—her train being wholly of white crape, and trimmed with white ribbon; the petticoat, which is the most showy part of the dress, covered and drawn up in what are called festoons, with light wreaths of beautiful flowers; the sleeves, white crape drawn over the silk, with a row of lace round the sleeve near the shoulder, another half-way down the arm, and a third upon the top of the ruffle,—a little stuck between,—a kind of hat-cap with three large feathers and a bunch of flowers,—a wreath of flowers on the hair."

Miss Prissy concluded this relishing description with a little smack of the lips, such as people sometimes give when reading things that are particularly to their taste.

"Now, I was a-thinking," she added, "that it would be an excellent way to trim Mary's sleeves,—three rows of lace, with a sprig to each row."

All this while, our Mary, with her white short-gown and blue stuff-petticoat, her shining pale brown hair and serious large blue eyes, sat innocently looking first at her mother, then at Miss Prissy, and then at the finery.

We do not claim for her any superhuman exemption from girlish feelings. She was innocently dazzled with the vision of courtly halls and princely splendors, and thought Mrs. Adams's descriptions almost a perfect realization of things she had read in "*Sir Charles Grandison*." If her mother thought it right and proper she should be dressed and made fine, she was glad of it; only there came a heavy, leaden feeling in her little heart, which she did not understand, but we who know womankind will translate for you: it was, that a certain pair of dark eyes would not see her after she was dressed; and so, after all, what was the use of looking pretty?

"I wonder what James *would* think,"

passed through her head; for Mary had never changed a ribbon, or altered the braid of her hair, or pinned a flower in her bosom, that she had not quickly seen the effect of the change mirrored in those dark eyes. It was a pity, of course, now she had found out that she ought not to think about him, that so many thought-strings were twisted round him.

So while Miss Prissy turned over her papers, and read out of others extracts about Lord Caermarthen and Sir Clement Cotterel Dormer and the Princess Royal and Princess Augusta, in black and silver, with a silver netting upon the coat, and a head stuck full of diamond pins,—and Lady Salisbury and Lady Talbot and the Duchess of Devonshire, and scarlet satin sacks and diamonds and ostrich-plumes, and the King's kissing Mrs. Adams,—little Mary's blue eyes grew larger and larger, seeing far off on the salt green sea, and her ears heard only the ripple and murmur of those waters that carried her heart away,—till, by-and-by, Miss Prissy gave her a smart little tap, which awakened her to the fact that she was wanted again to try on the dress which Miss Prissy's nimble fingers had basted.

So passed the day,—Miss Prissy busily chattering, clipping, basting,—Mary patiently trying on to an unheard-of extent,—and Mrs. Scudder's neat room whipped into a perfect froth and foam of gauze, lace, artificial flowers, linings, and other aids, accessories, and abetments.

At dinner, the Doctor, who had been all the morning studying out his Treatise on the Millennium, discoursed tranquilly as usual, innocently ignorant of the unusual cares which were distracting the minds of his listeners. What should he know of dress-makers, good soul? Encouraged by the respectful silence of his auditors, he calmly expanded and soliloquized on his favorite topic, the last golden age of Time, the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb, when the purified Earth, like a repentant Psyche, shall be restored to the long-lost favor of a celestial Bride-

groom, and glorified saints and angels shall walk familiarly as wedding-guests among men.

"Sakes alive!" said little Miss Prissy, after dinner, "did I ever hear any one go on like that blessed man?—such a spiritual mind! Oh, Miss Scudder, how you are privileged in having him here! I do really think it is a shame such a blessed man a'n't thought more of. Why, I could just sit and hear him talk all day. Miss Scudder, I wish sometimes you'd just let me make a ruffled shirt for him, and do it all up myself, and put a stitch in the hem that I learned from my sister Martha, who learned it from a French young lady who was educated in a convent;—nuns, you know, poor things, can do *some* things right; and I think I never saw such hemstitching as they do there;—and I should like to hemstitch the Doctor's ruffles; he is *so* spiritually-minded, it really makes me love him. Why, hearing him talk put me in mind of a real beautiful song of Mr. Watts,—I don't know as I could remember the tune."

And Miss Prissy, whose musical talent was one of her special *fortes*, tuned her voice, a little cracked and quavering, and sang, with a vigorous accent on each accented syllable,—

"From the third heaven, where God resides,
That holy, happy place,
The New Jerusalem comes down,
Adorned with shining grace.

"Attending angels shout for joy,
And the bright armies sing,—
'Mortals! behold the sacred seat
Of your descending King!'"

"Take care, Miss Scudder!—that silk must be cut exactly on the bias"; and Miss Prissy, hastily finishing her last quaver, caught the silk and the scissors out of Mrs. Scudder's hand, and fell down at once from the Millennium into a discourse on her own particular way of covering piping-cord.

So we go, dear reader,—so long as we have a body and a soul. Two worlds must mingle,—the great and the little, the solemn and the trivial, wreathing in and out, like the grotesque carvings on a

Gothic shrine;—only, did we know it rightly, nothing is trivial; since the human soul, with its awful shadow, makes all things sacred. Have not ribbons, cast-off flowers, soiled bits of gauze, trivial, trashy fragments of millinery, sometimes had an awful meaning, a deadly power, when they belonged to one who should wear them no more, and whose beautiful form, frail and crushed as they, is a hidden and a vanished thing for all time? For so sacred and individual is a human being, that, of all the million-peopled earth, no one form ever restores another. The mould of each mortal type is broken at the grave; and never, never, though you look through all the faces on earth, shall the exact form you mourn ever meet your eyes again! You are living your daily life among trifles that one death-stroke may make relics. One false step, one luckless accident, an obstacle on the track of a train, the tangling of the cord in shifting a sail, and the penknife, the pen, the papers, the trivial articles of dress and clothing, which to-day you toss idly and jestingly from hand to hand, may become dread memorials of that awful tragedy whose deep abyss ever underlies our common life.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARTY.

WELL, let us proceed to tell how the eventful evening drew on,—how Mary, by Miss Prissy's care, stood at last in a long-waisted gown flowered with rose-buds and violets, opening in front to display a white satin skirt trimmed with lace and flowers,—how her little feet were put into high-heeled shoes, and a little jaunty cap with a wreath of moss-rose-buds was fastened over her shining hair,—and how Miss Prissy, delighted, turned her round and round, and then declared that she must go and get the Doctor to look at her. She knew he must be a man of taste, he talked so beautifully about the Millennium; and so, bursting into his study, she actually chat-

tered him back into the visible world, and, leading the blushing Mary to the door, asked him, point-blank, if he ever saw anything prettier.

The Doctor, being now wide awake, gravely gave his mind to the subject, and, after some consideration, said, gravely, "No,—he didn't think he ever did." For the Doctor was not a man of compliment, and had a habit of always thinking, before he spoke, whether what he was going to say was exactly true; and having lived some time in the family of President Edwards, renowned for beautiful daughters, he naturally thought them over.

The Doctor looked innocent and helpless, while Miss Prissy, having got him now quite into her power, went on volubly to expatiate on the difficulties overcome in adapting the ancient wedding-dress to its present modern fit. He told her that it was very nice,—said, "Yes, Ma'am," at proper places,—and, being a very obliging man, looked at whatever he was directed to, with round, blank eyes; but ended all with a long gaze on the laughing, blushing face, that, half in shame and half in perplexed mirth, appeared and disappeared as Miss Prissy in her warmth turned her round and showed her.

"Now, don't she look beautiful?" Miss Prissy reiterated for the twentieth time, as Mary left the room.

The Doctor, looking after her musingly, said to himself,—“The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold; she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.”

"Now, did I ever?" said Miss Prissy, rushing out. "How that good man does turn everything! I believe you couldn't get anything, that he wouldn't find a text right out of the Bible about it. I mean to get the linen for that shirt this very week, with the Miss Wilcox's money; they always pay well, those Wilcoxes,—and I've worked for them, off and on, sixteen days and a quarter. To be sure, Miss Seudder, there's no real need of my doing it, for I must say you keep him

looking like a pink,—but only I feel as if I must do something for such a good man."

The good Doctor was brushed up for the evening with zealous care and energy; and if he did *not* look like a pink, it was certainly no fault of his hostess.

Well, we cannot reproduce in detail the faded glories of that entertainment, nor relate how the Wilcox Manor and gardens were illuminated,—how the bride wore a veil of real point-lace,—how carriages rolled and grated on the gravel works, and negro servants, in white kid gloves, handed out ladies in velvet and satin.

To Mary's inexperienced eye it seemed like an enchanted dream,—a realization of all she had dreamed of grand and high society. She had her little triumph of an evening; for everybody asked who that beautiful girl was, and more than one gallant of the old Newport first families felt himself adorned and distinguished to walk with her on his arm. Busy, officious dowagers repeated to Mrs. Scudder the applauding whispers that followed her wherever she went.

"Really, Mrs. Scudder," said gallant old General Wilcox, "where have you kept such a beauty all this time? It's a sin and a shame to hide such a light under a bushel."

And Mrs. Scudder, though, of course, like you and me, sensible reader, properly apprised of the perishable nature of such fleeting honors, was, like us, too, but a mortal, and smiled condescendingly on the follies of the scene.

The house was divided by a wide hall opening by doors, the front one upon the street, the back into a large garden, the broad central walk of which, edged on each side with high clipped hedges of box, now resplendent with colored lamps, seemed to continue the prospect in a brilliant vista.

The old-fashioned garden was lighted in every part, and the company dispersed themselves about it in picturesque groups.

We have the image in our mind of Mary as she stood with her little hat and wreath of rose-buds, her fluttering ribbons and rich brocade, as it were a picture framed in the door-way, with her back to the illuminated garden, and her calm, innocent face regarding with a pleased wonder the unaccustomed gayeties within.

Her dress, which, under Miss Prissy's forming hand, had been made to assume that appearance of style and fashion which more particularly characterized the mode of those times, formed a singular, but not unpleasing, contrast to the sort of dewy freshness of air and mien which was characteristic of her style of beauty. It seemed so to represent a being who was in the world, yet not of it,—who, though living habitually in a higher region of thought and feeling, was artlessly curious, and innocently pleased with a fresh experience in an altogether untried sphere. The feeling of being in a circle to which she did not belong, where her presence was in a manner an accident, and where she felt none of the responsibilities which come from being a component part of a society, gave to her a quiet, disengaged air, which produced all the effect of the perfect ease of high breeding.

While she stands there, there comes out of the door of the bridal reception-room a gentleman with a stylishly-dressed lady on either arm, with whom he seems wholly absorbed. He is of middle height, peculiarly graceful in form and moulding, with that indescribable air of high breeding which marks the polished man of the world. His beautifully-formed head, delicate profile, fascinating sweetness of smile, and, above all, an eye which seemed to have an almost mesmeric power of attraction, were traits which distinguished one of the most celebrated men of the time, and one whose peculiar history yet lives not only in our national records, but in the private annals of many an American family.

"Good Heavens!" he said, suddenly

pausing in conversation, as his eye accidentally fell upon Mary. "Who is that lovely creature?"

"Oh, that," said Mrs. Wilcox,— "why, that is Mary Scudder. Her father was a family connection of the General's. The family are in rather modest circumstances, but highly respectable."

After a few moments more of ordinary chit-chat, in which from time to time he darted upon her glances of rapid and piercing observation, the gentleman might have been observed to disembarass himself of one of the ladies on his arm, by

passing her with a compliment and a bow to another gallant, and, after a few moments more, he spoke something to Mrs. Wilcox, in a low voice, and with that gentle air of deferential sweetness which always made everybody well satisfied to do his will. The consequence was, that in a few moments Mary was startled from her calm speculations by the voice of Mrs. Wilcox, saying at her elbow, in a formal tone,—

"Miss Scudder, I have the honor to present to your acquaintance Colonel Burr, of the United States Senate."

THE WALKER OF THE SNOW.

SPEED on, speed on, good master!

The camp lies far away ;—
We must cross the haunted valley
Before the close of day.

How the snow-blight came upon me
I will tell you as we go,—
The blight of the shadow hunter
Who walks the midnight snow.

To the cold December heaven
Came the pale moon and the stars,
As the yellow sun was sinking
Behind the purple bars.

The snow was deeply drifted
Upon the ridges drear
That lay for miles between me
And the camp for which we steer.

'Twas silent on the hill-side,
And by the solemn wood
No sound of life or motion
To break the solitude,

Save the wailing of the moose-bird
With a plaintive note and low,
And the skating of the red leaf
Upon the frozen snow.