

"Where? where?" says Adèle, eagerly.

And straightway she is all aglow with excitement. Her swift questions patter on the ears of the old gentleman thick as rain-drops. She looks at the houses, the hills, the trees, the face of every passer-by, — wondering how she shall like them all; fashioning to herself some image of the boy Reuben

and of the Aunt Eliza who are to meet her; yet, through all the torrent of her vexed fancies, carrying a great glow of hope, and entering, with all her fresh, girlish enthusiasms unchecked, upon that new phase of life, so widely different from anything she has yet experienced, under the grave atmosphere of a New England parsonage.

## THE CHIMNEY-CORNER.

### V.

#### LITTLE FOXES. — PART IV.

##### PERSISTENCE.

MY little foxes are interesting little beasts; and I only hope my reader will not get tired of my charming menagerie before I have done showing him their nice points. He must recollect there are seven of them, and as yet we have shown up only three; so let him have patience.

As before stated, little foxes are the little pet sins of us educated good Christians, who hope that we have got above and far out of sight of stealing, lying, and those other gross evils against which we pray every Sunday, when the Ten Commandments are read. They are not generally considered of dignity enough to be fired at from the pulpit; they seem to us too trifling to be remembered in church; they are like the red spiders on plants, — too small for the perception of the naked eye, and only to be known by the shrivelling and dropping of leaf after leaf that ought to be green and flourishing.

I have another little fox in my eye, who is most active and most mischievous in despoiling the vines of domestic happiness, — in fact, who has been guilty of destroying more grapes than anybody knows of. His name I find it

difficult to give with exactness. In my enumeration I called him *Self-Will*; another name for him — perhaps a better one — might be *Persistence*.

Like many another, this fault is the overaction of a most necessary and praiseworthy quality. The power of firmness is given to man as the very granite foundation of life. Without it, there would be nothing accomplished; all human plans would be unstable as water on an inclined plane. In every well-constituted nature there must be a power of tenacity, a gift of perseverance of will; and that man might not be without a foundation for so needful a property, the Creator has laid it in an animal faculty, which he possesses in common with the brutes.

The animal power of firmness is a brute force, a matter of brain and spinal cord, differing in different animals. The force by which a bulldog holds on to an antagonist, the persistence with which a mule will plant his four feet and set himself against blows and menaces, are good examples of the pure animal phase of a property which exists in human beings, and forms the foundation for that heroic endurance, for that perseverance, which carries on all the great and noble enterprises of life.

The domestic fault we speak of is the wild, uncultured growth of this faculty, the instinctive action of firmness uncontrolled by reason or conscience, — in common parlance, the being "*set in one's way*." It is the *animal* instinct of being "set in one's way" which we mean by self-will or persistence; and in domestic life it does the more mischief from its working as an instinct unwatched by reason and unchallenged by conscience.

In that pretty new cottage which you see on yonder knoll are a pair of young people just in the midst of that happy bustle which attends the formation of a first home in prosperous circumstances, and with all the means of making it charming and agreeable. Carpenters, upholsterers, and artificers await their will; and there remains for them only the pleasant task of arranging and determining where all their pretty and agreeable things shall be placed. Our Hero and Leander are decidedly nice people, who have been through all the proper stages of being in love with each other for the requisite and suitable time. They have written each other a letter every day for two years, beginning with "My dearest," and ending with "Your own," etc.; they have sent each other flowers and rings and locks of hair; they have worn each other's pictures on their hearts; they have spent hours and hours talking over all subjects under the sun, and are convinced that never was there such sympathy of souls, such unanimity of opinion, such a just, reasonable, perfect foundation for mutual esteem.

Now it is quite true that people may have a perfect agreement and sympathy in their higher intellectual nature, — may like the same books, quote the same poetry, agree in the same principles, be united in the same religion, — and nevertheless, when they come together in the simplest affair of everyday business, may find themselves jarring and impinging upon each other at every step, simply because there are to each person, in respect of daily personal habits and personal likes and dis-

likes, a thousand little individualities with which reason has nothing to do, which are not subjects for the use of logic, and to which they never think of applying the power of religion, — which can only be set down as the positive ultimate facts of existence with two people.

Suppose a blue-jay courts and wins and weds a Baltimore oriole. During courtship there may have been delightfully sympathetic conversation on the charm of being free birds, the felicity of soaring in the blue summer air. Mr. Jay may have been all humility and all ecstasy in comparing the discordant screech of his own note with the warbling tenderness of Miss Oriole. But, once united, the two commence business relations. He is firmly convinced that a hole in a hollow tree is the only reasonable nest for a bird; she is positive that she should die there in a month of damp and rheumatism. She never heard of going to housekeeping in anything but a nice little pendulous bag swinging down from under the branches of a breezy elm; he is sure he should have water on the brain before summer was over, from constant vertigo, in such swaying, unsteady quarters, — he would be a sea-sick blue-jay on land, and he cannot think of it. She knows now he don't love her, or he never would think of shutting her up in an old mouldy hole picked out of rotten wood; and *he* knows she does n't love him, or she never would want to make him uncomfortable all his days by tilting and swinging him about as no decent bird ought to be swung. Both are dead-set in their own way and opinion; and how is either to be convinced that the way which seemeth right unto the other is not best? Nature knows this, and therefore, in her feathered tribes, blue-jays do not mate with orioles; and so bird-housekeeping goes on in peace.

But men and women as diverse in their physical tastes and habits as blue-jays and orioles are wooing and wedding every day, and coming to the business of nest-building, *alias* housekeep-

ing, with predilections as violent, and as incapable of any logical defence, as the oriole's partiality for a swing-nest and the jay's preference of rotten wood.

Our Hero and Leander, then, who are arranging their cottage to-day, are examples just in point. They have both of them been only children,—both the idols of circles where they have been universally deferred to. Each in his or her own circle has been looked up to as a model of good taste, and of course each has the habit of exercising and indulging very distinct personal tastes. They truly, deeply esteem, respect, and love each other, and for the very best of reasons,—because there are sympathies of the very highest kind between them. Both are generous and affectionate,—both are highly cultured in intellect and taste,—both are earnestly religious; and yet, with all this, let me tell you that the first year of their married life will be worthy to be recorded as *a year of battles*. Yes, these friends so true, these lovers so ardent, these individuals in themselves so admirable, cannot come into the intimate relations of life without an effervescence as great as that of an acid and alkali; and it will be impossible to decide which is most in fault, the acid or the alkali, both being in their way of the very best quality.

The reason of it all is, that both are intensely "*set in their way*," and the ways of no two human beings are altogether coincident. Both of them have the most sharply defined, exact tastes and preferences. In the simplest matter both have *a way*,—an exact way,—which seems to be dear to them as life's blood. In the simplest appetite or taste they know exactly what they want, and cannot, by any argument, persuasion, or coaxing, be made to want anything else.

For example, this morning dawns bright upon them, as she, in her tidy morning wrapper and trimly laced boots, comes stepping over the bales and boxes which are discharged on

the verandah; while he, for joy of his new acquisition, can hardly let her walk on her own pretty feet, and is making every fond excuse to lift her over obstacles and carry her into her new dwelling in triumph.

Carpets are put down, the floors glow under the hands of obedient workmen, and now the furniture is being wheeled in.

"Put the piano in the bow-window," says the lady.

"No, not in the bow-window," says the gentleman.

"Why, my dear, of course it must go in the bow-window. How awkward it would look anywhere else! I have always seen pianos in bow-windows."

"My love, certainly you would not think of dashing that beautiful prospect from the bow-window by blocking it up with the piano. The proper place is just here, in the corner of the room. Now try it."

"My dear, I think it looks dreadfully there; it spoils the appearance of the room."

"Well, for my part, my love, I think the appearance of the room would be spoiled, if you filled up the bow-window. Think what a lovely place that would be to sit in!"

"Just as if we could n't sit there behind the piano, if we wanted to!" says the lady.

"But then, how much more ample and airy the room looks as you open the door, and see through the bow-window down that little glen, and that distant peep of the village-spire!"

"But I never could be reconciled to the piano standing in the corner in that way," says the lady. "*I insist* upon it, it ought to stand in the bow-window: it's the way mamma's stands, and Aunt Jane's, and Mrs. Wilcox's; everybody has their piano so."

"If it comes to *insisting*," says the gentleman, "it strikes me that is a game two can play at."

"Why, my dear, you know a lady's parlor is her own ground."

"Not a married lady's parlor, I imagine. I believe it is at least equally her

husband's, as he expects to pass a good portion of his time there."

"But I don't think you ought to insist on an arrangement that really is disagreeable to me," says the lady.

"And I don't think you ought to insist on an arrangement that is really disagreeable to me," says the gentleman.

And now Hero's cheeks flush, and the spirit burns within, as she says, —

"Well, if you insist upon it, I suppose it must be as you say; but I shall never take any pleasure in playing on it"; and Hero sweeps from the apartment, leaving the victor very unhappy in his conquest.

He rushes after her, and finds her up-stairs, sitting disconsolate and weeping on a packing-box.

"Now, Hero, how silly! Do have it your own way. I'll give it up."

"No, — let it be as you say. I forgot that it was a wife's duty to submit."

"Nonsense, Hero! Do talk like a rational woman. Don't let us quarrel like children."

"But it's so evident that I was in the right."

"My dear, I cannot concede that you were in the right; but I am willing it should be as you say."

"Now I perfectly wonder, Leander, that you don't see how awkward your way is. It would make me nervous every time I came into the room, and it would be so dark in that corner that I never could see the notes."

"And I wonder, Hero, that a woman of your taste don't see how shutting up that bow-window spoils the parlor. It's the very prettiest feature of the room."

And so round and round they go, stating and restating their arguments, both getting more and more nervous and combative, both declaring themselves perfectly ready to yield the point as an oppressive exaction, but to do battle for their own opinion as right and reason, — the animal instinct of self-will meanwhile rising and rising and growing stronger and stronger on both

sides. But meanwhile in the heat of argument some side-issues and personal reflections fly out like splinters in the shivering of lances. He tells her, in his heat, that her notions are formed from deference to models in fashionable life, and that she has no idea of adaptation, — and she tells him that he is domineering, and dictatorial, and wanting to have everything his own way; and in fine, this battle is fought off and on through the day, with occasional armistices of kisses and makings-up, — treacherous truces, which are all broken up by the fatal words, "My dear, after all, you must admit I was in the right," which of course is the signal to fight the whole battle over again.

One such prolonged struggle is the parent of many lesser ones, — the aforementioned splinters of injurious remark and accusation, which flew out in the heat of argument, remaining and festering and giving rise to nervous soreness; yet, where there is at the foundation real, genuine love, and a good deal of it, the pleasure of making up so balances the pain of the controversy that the two do not perceive exactly what they are doing, nor suspect that so deep and wide a love as theirs can be seriously affected by causes so insignificant.

But the cause of difficulty in both, the silent, unwatched, intense power of self-will in trifles, is all the while precipitating them into new encounters. For example, in a bright hour between the showers, Hero arranges for her Leander a repast of peace and good-will, and compounds for him a salad which is a *chef d'œuvre* among salads. Leander is also bright and propitious; but after tasting the salad, he pushes it silently away.

"My dear, you don't like your salad."

"No, my dear; I never eat anything with salad oil in it."

"Not eat salad oil? How absurd! I never heard of a salad without oil." And the lady looks disturbed.

"But, my dear, as I tell you, I never take it. I prefer simple sugar and vinegar."

"Sugar and vinegar! Why, Lean-

der, I'm astonished! How very *bourgeois*! You must really try to like my salad" — (spoken in a coaxing tone).

"My dear, I *never* try to like anything new. I am satisfied with my old tastes."

"Well, Leander, I must say that is very ungracious and disobliging of you."

"Why any more than for you to annoy me by forcing on me what I don't like?"

"But you would like it, if you would only try. People never like olives till they have eaten three or four, and then they become passionately fond of them."

"Then I think they are very silly to go through all that trouble, when there are enough things that they do like."

"Now, Leander, I don't think that seems amiable or pleasant at all. I think we ought to try to accommodate ourselves to the tastes of our friends."

"Then, my dear, suppose you try to like your salad with sugar and vinegar."

"But it's so *gauche* and unfashionable! Did you ever hear of a salad made with sugar and vinegar on a table in good society?"

"My mother's table, I believe, was good society, and I learned to like it there. The truth is, Hero, for a sensible woman, you are too fond of mere fashionable and society notions."

"Yes, you told me that last week, and I think it was very unjust, — *very unjust, indeed*" — (uttered with emphasis).

"No more unjust than your telling me that I was dictatorial and obstinate."

"Well, now, Leander, dear, you must confess that you are rather obstinate."

"I don't see the proof."

"You insist on your own ways and opinions so, heaven and earth won't turn you."

"Do I insist on mine more than you on yours?"

"Certainly, you do."

"I don't think so."

Hero casts up her eyes and repeats with expression, —

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as others see us!"

"Precisely," says Leander. "I would that prayer were answered in your case, my dear."

"I think you take pleasure in provoking me," says the lady.

"My dear, how silly and childish all this is!" says the gentleman. "Why can't we let each other alone?"

"You began it."

"No, my dear, begging your pardon, I did not."

"Certainly, Leander, you did."

Now a conversation of this kind may go on hour after hour, as long as the respective parties have breath and strength, both becoming secretly more and more "set in their way." On both sides is the consciousness that they might end it at once by a very simple concession.

She might say, — "Well, dear, you shall always have your salad as you like"; and he might say, — "My dear, I will try to like your salad, if you care much about it"; and if either of them would utter one of these sentences, the other would soon follow. Either would give up, if the other would set the example; but as it is, they remind us of nothing so much as two cows that we have seen standing with locked horns in a meadow, who can neither advance nor recede an inch. It is a mere deadlock of the animal instinct of firmness; reason, conscience, religion have nothing to do with it.

The questions debated in this style by our young couple were surprisingly numerous: as, for example, whether their favorite copy of Turner should hang in the parlor or in the library, — whether their pet little landscape should hang against the wall, or be placed on an easel, — whether the bust of Psyche should stand on the marble table in the hall, or on a bracket in the library; all of which points were debated with a breadth of survey, a richness of imagery,

a vigor of discussion, that would be perfectly astonishing to any one who did not know how much two very self-willed argumentative people might find to say on any point under heaven. Everything in classical antiquity, — everything in Kugler's "Hand-Book of Painting," — every opinion of living artists, — besides questions social, moral, and religious, — all mingled in the grand *mêlée*: because there is nothing in creation that is not somehow connected with everything else.

Dr. Johnson has said, — "There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said."

With all deference to the great moralist, we must say that this statement argues a very limited knowledge of the resources of talk possessed by two very cultivated and very self-willed persons fairly pitted against each other in practical questions; the logic may indeed be ridiculous, but such people as our Hero and Leander find no cases under the sun where something is to be done, yet where little can be said. And these wretched wranglings, this interminable labyrinth of petty disputes, waste and crumble away that high ideal of truth and tenderness, which the real, deep sympathies and actual worth of their characters entitled them to form. Their married life is not what they expected; at times they are startled by the reflection that they have somehow grown unlovely to each other; and yet, if Leander goes away to pass a week, and thinks of his Hero in the distance, he can compare no other woman to her; and the days seem long and the house empty to Hero while he is gone; both wonder at themselves when they look over their petty bickerings, but neither knows exactly how to catch the little fox that spoils their vines.

It is astonishing how much we think about ourselves, yet to how little purpose, — how very clever people will talk and wonder about themselves and each

other, and yet go on year after year, not knowing how to use either themselves or each other, — not having as much practical philosophy in the matter of their own characters and that of their friends as they have in respect of the screws of their gas-fixtures or the management of their water-pipes.

"But I won't have any such scenes with *my* wife," says Don Positivo. "I won't marry one of your clever women; they are always positive and disagreeable. I look for a wife of a gentle and yielding nature, that shall take her opinions from me, and accommodate her tastes to mine." And so Don Positivo goes and marries a pretty little pink-and-white concern, so lisping and soft and delicate that he is quite sure she cannot have a will of her own. She is the moon of his heavens, to shine only by his reflected light.

We would advise our gentlemen friends who wish to enjoy the felicity of having their own way not to try the experiment with a pretty fool; for the obstinacy of cleverness and reason is nothing to the obstinacy of folly and inanity.

Let our friend once get in the seat opposite to him at table a pretty creature who cries for the moon, and insists that he don't love her because he does n't get it for her; and in vain may he display his superior knowledge of astronomy, and prove to her that the moon is not to be got. She listens with her head on one side, and after he has talked himself quite out of breath, repeats the very same sentence she began the discussion with, without variation or addition.

If she wants darling Johnny taken away from school, because cruel teachers will not give up the rules of the institution for his pleasure, in vain does Don Positivo, in the most select and superior English, enlighten her on the necessity of habits of self-control and order for a boy, — the impossibility that a teacher should make exceptions for their particular darling, — the absolute, perishing need that the boy should begin to do something. She hears him all through,

and then says, "I don't know anything about that. I know what I want: I want Johnny taken away." And so she weeps, sulks, storms, entreats, lies awake nights, has long fits of sick-headache, — in short, shows that a pretty animal, without reason or cultivation, can be, in her way, quite as formidable an antagonist as the most clever of her sex.

Leander can sometimes vanquish his Hero in fair fight by the weapons of good logic, because she is a woman capable of appreciating reason, and able to feel the force of the considerations he adduces; and when he does vanquish and carry her captive by his bow and spear, he feels that he has gained a victory over no ignoble antagonist, and he becomes a hero in his own eyes. Though a woman of much will, still she is a woman of much reason; and if he has many vexations with her pertinacity, he is never without hope in her good sense; but alas for him whose wife has only the animal instinct of firmness, without any development of the judgment or reasoning faculties! The conflicts with a woman whom a man respects and admires are often extremely trying; but the conflicts with one whom he cannot help despising become in the end simply disgusting.

But the inquiry now arises, What shall be done with all the questions Dr. Johnson speaks of, which reason cannot decide, which elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous, — cases where something must be done, and where little can be said?

Read Mrs. Ellis's "Wives of England," and you have one solution of the problem. The good women of England are there informed that there is to be no discussion, that everything in the *ménage* is to follow the rule of the lord, and that the wife has but one hope, namely, that grace may be given him to know exactly what his own will is. "*L'état, c'est moi*," is the lesson which every English husband learns of Mrs. Ellis, and we should judge from the pictures of English novels that this "awful right divine" is insisted on in detail in domestic life.

Miss Edgeworth makes her magnificent General Clarendon talk about his "commands" to his accomplished and elegant wife; and he rings the parlor-bell with such an air, calls up and interrogates trembling servants with such awful majesty, and lays about him generally in so very military and tremendous a style, that we are not surprised that poor little Cecilia is frightened into lying, being half out of her wits in terror of so very martial a husband.

During his hours of courtship he majestically informs her mother that he never could consent to receive as *his* wife any woman who has had another attachment; and so the poor puss, like a naughty girl, conceals a little school-girl flirtation of bygone days, and thus gives rise to most agonizing and tragic scenes with her terrible lord, who petrifies her one morning by suddenly drawing the bed-curtains and flapping an old love-letter in her eyes, asking, in tones of suppressed thunder, "Cecilia, is this your writing?"

The more modern female novelists of England give us representations of their view of the right divine no less stringent. In a very popular story, called "Agatha's Husband," the plot is as follows. A man marries a beautiful girl with a large fortune. Before the marriage, he discovers that his brother, who has been guardian of the estate, has fraudulently squandered the property, so that it can only be retrieved by the strictest economy. For the sake of getting her heroine into a situation to illustrate her moral, the authoress now makes her hero give a solemn promise not to divulge to his wife or to any human being the fraud by which she suffers.

The plot of the story then proceeds to show how very badly the young wife behaves when her husband takes her to mean lodgings, deprives her of wonted luxuries and comforts, and obstinately refuses to give any kind of sensible reason for his conduct. Instead of looking up to him with blind faith and unquestioning obedience, following his directions without inquiry, and believing not only without evidence, but against ap-

parent evidence, that he is the soul of honor and wisdom, this perverse Agatha murmurs, complains, thinks herself very ill-used, and occasionally is even wicked enough, in a very mild way, to say so, — whereat her husband looks like a martyr and suffers in silence ; and thus we are treated to a volume of mutual distresses, which are at last ended by the truth coming out, the abused husband mounting the throne in glory, and the penitent wife falling in the dust at his feet, and confessing what a wretch she has been all along to doubt him.

The authoress of *Jane Eyre* describes the process of courtship in much the same terms as one would describe the breaking of a horse. Shirley is contumacious and self-willed, and Moore, her lover and tutor, gives her "*Le Cheval dompté*" for a French lesson, as a gentle intimation of the work he has in hand in paying her his addresses ; and after long struggling against his power, when at last she consents to his love, he addresses her thus, under the figure of a very fierce leopardess : —

"Tame or wild, fierce or subdued, you are *mine*."

And she responds : —

"I am glad I know my keeper and am used to him. Only his voice will I follow, only his hand shall manage me, only at his feet will I repose."

The accomplished authoress of "*Nathalie*" represents the struggles of a young girl engaged to a man far older than herself, extremely dark and heroic, fond of behaving in a very unaccountable manner, and declaring, nevertheless, in very awful and mysterious tones, that he has such a passion for being believed in, that, if any one of his friends, under the most suspicious circumstances, admits *one doubt* of his honor, all will be over between them forever.

After establishing his power over Nathalie fully, and amusing himself quietly for a time with the contemplation of her perplexities and anxieties, he at last unfolds to her the mysterious counsels of his will by declaring to another of her lovers, in her presence, that he

"has the intention of asking this young lady to become his wife." During the engagement, however, he contrives to disturb her tranquillity by insisting prematurely on the right divine of husbands, and, as she proves fractious, announces to her, that, much as he loves her, he sees no prospect of future happiness in their union, and that they had better part.

The rest of the story describes the struggles and anguish of the two, who pass through a volume of distresses, he growing more cold, proud, severe, and misanthropic than ever, all of which is supposed to be the fault of naughty Miss Nathalie, who might have made a saint of him, could she only have found her highest pleasure in letting him have his own way. Her conscience distresses her ; it is all her fault ; at last, worn out in the strife, she resolves to be a good girl, goes to his library, finds him alone, and, in spite of an insulting reception, humbles herself at his feet, gives up all her naughty pride, begs to be allowed to wait on him as a handmaid, and is rewarded by his graciously announcing, that, since she will stay with him at all events, she *may* stay as his wife ; and the story leaves her in the last sentence sitting in what we are informed is the only true place of happiness for a woman, at her husband's feet.

This is the solution which the most cultivated women of England give of the domestic problem, according to these fair interpreters of English ideas.

The British lion on his own domestic hearth, standing in awful majesty with his back to the fire and his hands under his coat-tails, can be supposed to have no such disreputable discussions as we have described ; since his partner, as Miss Brontë says, has learned to know her keeper, and her place at his feet, and can conceive no happiness so great as hanging the picture and setting the piano exactly as he likes.

Of course this will be met with a general shriek of horror on the part of our fair republican friends, and an equally general disclaimer on the part of our American gentlemen, who, so

far as we know, would be quite embarrassed by the idea of assuming any such pronounced position at the fire-side.

The genius of American institutions is not towards a display of authority. All needed authority exists among us, but exists silently, with as little external manifestation as possible.

Our President is but a fellow-citizen, personally the equal of other citizens. We obey him because we have chosen him, and because we find it convenient, in regulating our affairs, to have one final appeal and one deciding voice.

The position in which the Bible and the marriage service place the husband in the family amounts to no more. He is the head of the family in all that relates to its material interests, its legal relations, its honor and standing in society; and no true woman who respects herself would any more hesitate to promise to yield to him this position and the deference it implies than an officer of State to yield to the President. But because Mr. Lincoln is officially above Mr. Seward, it does not follow that there can be nothing between them but absolute command on the one part and prostrate submission on the other; neither does it follow that the superior claims in all respects to regulate the affairs and conduct of the inferior. There are still wide spheres of individual freedom, as there are in the case of husband and wife; and no sensible man but would feel himself ridiculous in entering another's proper sphere with the voice of authority.

The inspired declaration, that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church," is certainly to be qualified by the evident points of difference in the subjects spoken of. It certainly does not mean that any man shall be invested with the rights of omnipotence and omniscience, but simply that in the family state he is the head and protector, even as in the Church is the Saviour. It is merely the announcement of a great natural law of society which obtains through all the

tribes and races of men,—a great and obvious fact of human existence.

The silly and senseless reaction against this idea in some otherwise sensible women is, I think, owing to the kind of extravagances and over-statements to which we have alluded. It is as absurd to cavil at the word *obey* in the marriage ceremony as for a military officer to set himself against the etiquette of the army, or a man to refuse the freeman's oath.

Two young men every way on a footing of equality and friendship may be one of them a battalion-commander and the other a staff-officer. It would be alike absurd for the one to take airs about not obeying a man every way his equal, and for the other to assume airs of lordly dictation out of the sphere of his military duties. The mooted question of marital authority between two well-bred, well-educated Christian people of the nineteenth century is no less absurd.

While the husband has a certain power confided to him for the support and maintenance of the family, and for the preservation of those relations which involve its good name and well-being before the world, he has no claim to an authoritative exertion of will in reference to the little personal tastes and habits of the interior. He has no divine right to require that everything shall be arranged to please him, at the expense of his wife's preferences and feelings, any more than if he were not the head of the household. In a thousand indifferent matters which do not touch the credit and respectability of the family, he is just as much bound sometimes to give up his own will and way for the comfort of his wife as she is in certain other matters to submit to his decisions. In a large number of cases the husband and wife stand as equal human beings before God, and the indulgence of unchecked and inconsiderate self-will on either side is a sin.

It is my serious belief that writings such as we have been considering do harm both to men and women, by insensibly inspiring in the one an idea of a

licensed prerogative of selfishness and self-will, and in the other an irrational and indiscreet servility.

Is it any benefit to a man to find in the wife of his bosom the flatterer of his egotism; the acquiescent victim of his little selfish exactions, to be nursed and petted and cajoled in all his faults and fault-findings, and to see everybody falling prostrate before his will in the domestic circle? Is this the true way to make him a manly and Christ-like man? It is my belief that many so-called good wives have been accessory to making their husbands very bad Christians.

However, then, the little questions of difference in every-day life are to be disposed of between two individuals, it is in the worst possible taste and policy to undertake to settle them by mere authority. All romance, all poetry, all beauty are over forever with a couple between whom the struggle of mere authority has begun. No, there is no way out of difficulties of this description but by the application, on both sides, of good sense and religion to the little differences of life.

A little reflection will enable any person to detect in himself that setness in trifles which is the result of the unwatched instinct of self-will, and to establish over himself a jealous guardianship.

Every man and every woman, in their self-training and self-culture, should study the art of giving up with a good grace. The charm of polite society is formed by that sort of freedom and facility in all the members of a circle which makes each one pliable to the influences of the others, and sympathetic to slide into the moods and tastes of others without a jar.

In courteous and polished circles, there are no stiff railroad-tracks, cutting straight through everything, and grating harsh thunders all along their course, but smooth, meandering streams, tranquilly bending hither and thither to every undulation of the flowery banks. What makes the charm of polite society would make no less the charm of

domestic life; but it can come only by watchfulness and self-discipline in each individual.

Some people have much more to struggle with in this way than others. Nature has made them precise and exact. They are punctilious in their hours, rigid in their habits, pained by any deviation from regular rule.

Now Nature is always perversely ordering that men and women of just this disposition should become desperately enamored of their exact opposites. The man of rules and formulas and hours has his heart carried off by a gay, careless little chit, who never knows the day of the month, tears up the newspaper, loses the door-key, and makes curl-papers out of the last bill; or, *per contra*, our exact and precise little woman, whose belongings are like the waxen cells of a bee, gives her heart to some careless fellow, who enters her sanctum in muddy boots, upsets all her little nice household divinities whenever he is going on a hunting or fishing bout, and can see no manner of sense in the discomposure she feels in the case.

What can such couples do, if they do not adopt the compromises of reason and sense,—if each arms his or her own peculiarities with the back force of persistent self-will, and runs them over the territories of the other?

A sensible man and woman, finding themselves thus placed, can govern themselves by a just philosophy, and, instead of carrying on a life-battle, can modify their own tastes and requirements, turn their eyes from traits which do not suit them to those which do, resolving, at all events, however reasonable be the taste or propensity which they sacrifice, to give up all rather than have domestic strife.

There is one form which persistency takes that is peculiarly trying: I mean that persistency of opinion which deems it necessary to stop and raise an argument in self-defence on the slightest personal criticism.

John tells his wife that she is half an hour late with her breakfast this morning, and she indignantly denies it.

"But look at my watch!"

"Your watch is n't right."

"I set it by railroad time."

"Well, that was a week ago; that watch of yours always gains."

"No, my dear, you're mistaken."

"Indeed I'm not. Did I not hear you telling Mr. B—— about it?"

"My dear, that was a year ago, — before I had it cleaned."

"How can you say so, John? It was only a month ago."

"My dear, you are mistaken."

And so the contest goes on, each striving for the last word.

This love of the last word has made more bitterness in families and spoiled more Christians than it is worth. A thousand little differences of this kind would drop to the ground, if either party would let them drop. Suppose John is mistaken in saying breakfast is late, — suppose that fifty of the little criticisms which we make on one another are well- or ill-founded, are they worth a discussion? Are they worth ill-tempered words, such as are almost sure to grow out of a discussion? Are they worth throwing away peace and love for? Are they worth the destruction of the only fair ideal left on earth, — a quiet, happy home? Better let the most unjust statements pass in silence than risk one's temper in a discussion upon them.

Discussions, assuming the form of warm arguments, are never pleasant ingredients of domestic life, never safe recreations between near friends. They

are, generally speaking, mere unsuspected vents for self-will, and the cases are few where they do anything more than to make both parties more positive in their own way than they were before.

A calm comparison of opposing views, a fair statement of reasons on either side, may be valuable; but when warmth and heat and love of victory and pride of opinion come in, good temper and good manners are too apt to step out.

And now Christopher, having come to the end of his subject, pauses for a sentence to close with. There are a few lines of a poet that sum up so beautifully all he has been saying that he may be pardoned for closing with them.

"Alas! how light a cause may move  
Dissension between hearts that love;  
Hearts that the world has vainly tried,  
And sorrow but more closely tied;  
That stood the storm when waves were rough,  
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,  
Like ships that have gone down at sea  
When heaven was all tranquillity!  
A something light as air, a look,  
A word unkind, or wrongly taken, —  
Oh, love that tempests never shook,  
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken!  
For ruder words will soon rush in  
To spread the breach that words begin,  
And eyes forget the gentle ray  
They wore in courtship's smiling day,  
And voices lose the tone which shed  
A tenderness round all they said, —  
Till, fast declining, one by one,  
The sweetnesss of love are gone,  
And hearts so lately mingled seem  
Like broken clouds, or like the stream,  
That, smiling, left the mountain-brow  
As though its waters ne'er could sever,  
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,  
Breaks into floods that part forever."

## NEEDLE AND GARDEN.

THE STORY OF A SEAMSTRESS WHO LAID DOWN HER NEEDLE AND BECAME  
A STRAWBERRY-GIRL.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

## CHAPTER V.

I IMAGINE, that, if one went into any of the numerous places, in this or any other city, where numbers of women are assembled as workers, or to any of the charitable institutions where orphan children are taken in and cared for, and were to institute a general examination of the inmates as to their personal history, he would find few of them but had experiences to relate of a kind to make the heart ache. From my own incidental inquiry and observation of these classes, it would appear that they afford representatives of every phase of domestic and pecuniary suffering. I read of kindred sufferings which occasionally happen to the high-born and wealthy, but here I have come in personal contact with those in humble life to whom such trials seem to be a perpetual inheritance.

In our factory there was one operator on a machine with whom I never could gain an acquaintance beyond the usual morning salutation which passed between most of us as we came in to our daily employment. To me she was reserved and taciturn, and it was evident that there was no disposition on her part to be sociable. But somehow she fell in with my sister's gay, open, and prepossessing manner, and there grew up a sort of passionate intimacy between them that I could not account for, as she was much older than Jane. When we stopped work at noon, they always dined together by themselves, in a corner of the room, and a close and incessant conversation was carried on between them, for an hour at a time, as if they had been lovers. There must have been great mutual outpourings of confidence, for my sister soon became

acquainted with the minutest particulars of her new friend's singular life.

This woman's name was Vane. Who her father was no one knew but her mother. When a child, she had lived with the latter in what was at that time the remains of a wooden hut, that must have been among the very first buildings erected in the forest which covered the northwestern portion of what is now the suburbs of the great city around us. In this little obscure home the two lived entirely alone. They had neighbors, of course, but none of them could tell how they contrived to subsist. The mother did no work, except for herself and her child; she had but a small garden in front of the house, the embellishment of which was her particular care; and she was surrounded with books, in the reading of which she spent all her leisure time, having little intercourse with her neighbors. The gossips that exist everywhere in society, if curious about her affairs, could discover nothing as to how she lived so comfortably without any visible means.

When the daughter, Sabrina, grew up to sixteen, her beauty, the character she developed, and her general conduct were the topic of quite as much rural conversation and remark as had been the mystery that hung around the mother. Gradually drawn out into the neighboring society, her great personal attractions, added to her shrewdness and good sense, made her so much admired as to collect around her a train of suitors, who seemed to consider her being fatherless as of no more consequence to them than it was to herself.

But there was in her temperament an undercurrent of ambition so strong as to cause her to receive their advances toward tender acquaintance with a freez-