

have been driven from within the church by the potency of holy-water. Nearly the entire crew and pack of Woden overrun York Cathedral, which is built on an old Saxon foundation, and supposed therefore to be particularly haunted by the old deities, the Augustinian conception of whom may be derived from the horrible creatures on its roof and cornice.

It is impossible not to feel a certain pathos in the miserable forms in which old religions run to seed. The astronomic religions of the East survive in the absurdities of Zadkiel's almanac; the great apotheosis of Nature represented in the religion of the Northern nations declines to a horseshoe over a door or a prayer at the howling of a dog; the once powerful Druid priest is now some old woman in the police court tried for imposture; the Sybil or Soothsayer are now the fortune-tellers in obscure quarters, visited only by fools greater than themselves! Religions thus attain their immortality only on the Tithonic condition of shrinking to be grasshoppers. Their gods preserve only in their names the traditions of their former splendor and of their varied helpfulness to mankind. But "the fair varieties of earth" which they originally symbolized can not pass away; and under the wand of that one foe to superstition—Science—which has destroyed those whom Christianity had degraded, they must all eventually rise again in the perfect and beautiful laws whose discovery must always deform whatever violates their sacred meaning. The devout science of Germany and England to-day is the reappearance of the old Norse worship. Like the wolf Isengrim, who became a monk, but when the brethren would make him utter paternosters would only cry *lamb, lamb*—and whose "thoughts were ever to the woodward"—so the Northman was conquered and made a monk; but from beneath the cowl the old voice of his nature is still heard, and he still yearns to explore the universe in which he beholds the visible raiment of the Deity.

LOVE ON CRUTCHES.

PERSIS came hopping in like a bird. "Dear, dear!" said she, presently, peering out from a cloud of silks and laces, "what shall I do for a dress-maker?"

"Why, where is Rhoda Tracy?"

"Gone to fill a vacancy, mamma. In other words, she has married a widower."

Mrs. Talbot laughed.

"Well, let her go, my dear; you can have Mrs. Blake."

"Oh, but Rhoda is better. Only think of her leaving me and becoming somebody's second wife! For my part I wouldn't thank any man for his affections *warned over*."

"My little Persis, don't fret. No man will ever offer you his affections, either fresh or warmed over, you may depend on that."

"Then he needn't, and I sha'n't have to refuse him," retorted Persis, gayly, as she dipped,

swallow-like, this way and that, laying away the silks.

But there was a painful flush on her young cheeks, and a moment after she swept gracefully out of the room. Unless you looked twice you would never have divined the cause of her peculiar sideways motion. The gold-mounted crutch which peeped in and out of the folds of her dress was like a wand of enchantment, and, as was said of Mlle. Salle, "all her steps were sentiments."

When Persis was a baby her perfect beauty had well-nigh wrought her ruin. The nurse, proud of her superb little figure and graceful poses, was accustomed, with criminal recklessness, to perch her on a broad mantle and show her off to visitors. In this way the little creature had a fall which made one limb shorter than the other, and lamed her for life. Persis had suffered very little physical pain, but the mortification had been intense; it had given a morbid coloring to an otherwise rose-colored life.

"No man will ever offer you his affections, you may depend on that," repeated she, burying her face in a sofa-pillow. "Mamma says it, and it is true; I knew it all before. Stanley Warner means nothing by all his tender words and tenderer glances. He is as proud as Lucifer, and would never abide the mortification of a lame wife. It does seem cruel! But I will not eat my heart for any man!" exclaimed she, spiritedly, springing up and dashing off the unshed tears. "And now for the party, and a gay new dress! I'll send for Mrs. Blake forthwith."

It so happened that Rhoda, in flying away with her widower, had dropped her mantle on Mrs. Blake, who used her needle and scissors like a fairy straight from the land of elves. How marvelous a dress she fashioned out of "such stuff as dreams are made of," and how Persis floated off in it like a vision of beauty! As fair and sweet, said Celia Warner, as a "wounded dove." Persis caught the words, and the little morbid spot in her heart ached afresh.

"No, Mr. Warner," said she, proudly, as he asked her to dance. "I prefer to sit in this window; it is so pleasant to watch the crowd in motion."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Warner, biting his mustache, and moving away with a graceful flourish. "I was thoughtless to make the request."

And he never dreamed that his words hurt.

"He forgets sometimes that I am a 'wounded dove,'" sighed Persis from the window-seat; "but, sooner or later, he always comes to his senses."

There was one man who did not forget, and that was Ephraim Zelic. But then Persis did not care very much what Ephraim remembered or what he forgot. He was a "worthy young man;" and she said, in her girlish intolerance, "If there's one thing stupider than another it is your *worthy* young man!" He taught school

and studied law, and I am not sure but he "carried on" a large farm at the same time; but when you tried to draw him out in general conversation it was like drawing a sound tooth. He was the most industrious of men, and the kindest of sons to a widowed mother; but then his eyes were sea-green under rugged cliffs of eyebrows, his hands were horny, and all his angles as acute as a lawyer's wits.

Seeing Miss Persis alone in the window-seat he ventured to go up and address her, though his heart thumped a loud opposition to such boldness.

"How do you do, Miss Persis?" said he, offering his honest hand, while his plain face narrowly escaped becoming expressive.

"Very well, Ephraim; and how are you?" replied she, rousing from a sad reverie. She always called him "Ephraim," because she had known him from a boy. He had lived a year at her father's, and worked for his board while attending the academy. How Ephraim at this moment envied other youths their nonchalance of manner! Here was he standing beside the very woman he wished most to please, but he was tongue-tied. She sat there self-possessed and beautiful, scanning him from head to foot, he thought. She was not haughty in the least, but she might have placed him at his ease, and she did not care to do it. If she had once turned the conversation to "old times," and the well-remembered incidents of that too happy year, Ephraim would have been himself in a moment. Would he ever forget the afternoons on the "basin," and the efforts he made to teach her how to skate, having first modeled for the shoemaker a pair of little skates which were mismated to fit her unequal feet? How carefully he had guided her over the ice! He kept the precious red comforter still, the "life-preserver" she had called it, by which she had clung to him in her timid efforts to stand upright.

In those old times Persis liked him; he was sure she did. She had sat in the kitchen while he plodded at his Latin Grammar—he was a hard student always—and her bright face had been as good as an extra lamp. She had confided to him her childish sorrows, which generally sprang from one cause—her lameness; and he had pitied her with all his heart. Then his awkwardness and ugliness had raised no barrier between them; but latterly it seemed different. Persis as a young lady was much admired. She had learned to set a high value on wealth and appearances; much of the childlike simplicity was gone from her character. Ephraim never saw her now but he thought of his ungainly hands and feet, and every mole-hill of a defect loomed up like a mountain. Persis had spent years at boarding-school forming her mind and manners, and though Ephraim was fully alive to all the acquired elegance, he mourned for the old-time cordiality. It had got lost in the process of polishing. He was rising in the world; he thought she might see one day that he had

not been laboring for naught; but his hope of winning her for a wife was dying a slow, hard death.

While he was still stammering before her, trying to find words for his thoughts, Stanley Warner approached, sparkling with the exhilaration of his dance. Persis had been watching him while she talked absently with Ephraim; and now, as he smiled down upon her graciously, she looked up at him with a glow in her eyes which the poor young lawyer could not bear. He turned on his heel and walked away, grinding some resentful thought under the sole of his big boot.

Persis scarcely noted that he went. Some time hence, when years of experience should soften her harsh judgments, she would learn to appreciate a lump of genuine gold, even though half buried in quartz; not yet.

"Was it a pleasant dance, Mr. Warner?" said she, playing with the delicate fan she had just rescued from the clumsy clasp of Mr. Zelig.

"Indifferently so, Miss Persis. With another lady I might mention as partner, it would have been it is impossible to say how charming."

Persis blushed, agreeably to expectation. Mr. Warner liked to play with those blushes; it was delightful to call them up at his bidding; such bright, shy things that even the odious crutch was forgotten, or glorified, in their rosy light.

"So, in spite of my neglect, you were not left to play the wall-flower," continued he, taking a seat beside her, and boldly possessing himself of her little hand.

"No, not a wall-flower," repeated she, timidly, half withdrawing her hand, half yielding it to his clasp.

"It seems to me, Persis, that young lawyer hovers about you very persistently."

There was the slightest touch of pique in Mr. Warner's tone, and it thrilled the simple heart of Persis.

"He is a worthy young man, mamma says, and I must like him," replied she, with a reassuring smile. "He does not smoke cigars, like the beasts that perish," added she, in her quaint way.

Mr. Warner offered a correction. "Man is the only animal that smokes," said he, with a wise smile; for he never understood Persis when she talked playfully. Mr. Zelig had the advantage of him there.

"He is a tremendous worker, that Zelig; began at the foot of the ladder, and is steadily climbing up. Forgive me, Persis, but seeing how he presumes upon your old child-friendship, I have sometimes feared—"

"Oh, Stanley!"

The frank, guileless eyes which looked up in honest surprise at the unspoken suggestion of attachment for another, how could Mr. Warner mistake their meaning? He did not mistake it. The heart of his little friend had long been to him an open book, and very easy reading. Not that Persis was by any means forward or

unmaidenly; but she had not yet learned the woman's lesson of concealing her emotions. Perhaps if there had been a trifle more of the blindness of love athwart the young man's vision he could not have seen to read so clearly. He sincerely admired Persis; he thought he loved her, or that he should love her if he only dared. But then that terrible crutch! It swung over his head like the sword of Damocles. To-night he seemed for the first time to forget it. She looked so unusually beautiful; she had such sincere affection for him; how could he resist the attraction?

"Persis," said he, in low and thrilling tones, "words can not say how dear you are to me. May I hope," etc., etc.

A commonplace love-scene. Another was going on under the same roof that very evening, and not a pin's choice between the two; but you may be sure it was all as fresh and glorious to Persis as if the world had just been created, and she and Stanley were alone in it. The little hand which lay in his was not withdrawn, nor was there the faintest sign of indifference in the eyes bent timidly on the floor. It all ended in the most orthodox manner: they left the party betrothed.

As Persis passed Ephraim on the stairway he faltered out a hurried "Good-night," and she beamed down upon him so graciously that he walked home on a bed of roses, and never really came to his senses till Mrs. Blake dropped in to tea a week afterward and said her charming new friend, Persis Talbot, was going to be married. Now Mrs. Blake was own aunt to Ephraim. (Think what a plebeian he must have been to have relatives who took in sewing!) She was a quiet, sensible woman, who attended strictly to her own business, and had almost pricked away her left forefinger down to the bone. What she said was usually the simple truth, and you might depend upon it.

Ephraim's heart stood still.

"Persis Talbot, did you say?" asked he, picking a currant out of a bun with the coolest deliberation.

"Yes, to Stanley Warner; the affair is cut-and-dried," replied the not overelegant Aunt Blake, as indifferently, her nephew thought, as if she had been alluding to a bushel of pippins. Mr. Zelig sat late at his desk that night, and scribbled a black "Ichabod" on every blank bit of paper at hand. It was all the outward sign he ever gave of the hidden wound. His own mother observed no change in him, except that "he fell away from his food," and stood in daily need of chamomile tea.

Even Persis herself, "walking on thrones," never once suspected she was trampling over a heart. The happy young creature saw in life but one shadow, and that was the shadow of her crutch. It might now be supposed to grow less, but, on the contrary, it rather increased.

"Oh, mother," she sighed one day, "Stanley says it is all the defect I have—this lameness, I mean."

"Does he?" remarked Mrs. Talbot, dryly, and with the set look about the lips she always wore when Stanley's name was mentioned. "Does he? Then I suppose he is thankful for that one defect. Not being any where near an angel himself, he can't wish for perfection in you."

"Oh, mamma, he knows I am very human indeed; it is only his way of talking," said Persis, with one of her quick blushes. "I should be so glad for his sake to walk like other people. Do you know there is a way—a terrible way—I hardly dare tell you—"

"A terrible way to what?"

"To walk," gasped Persis, the color dying out entirely, and her white lips trembling as she spoke. "Amputation—as far as the ankle. Then, when the time comes, a cork foot. You know, mamma, a cork foot walks beautifully."

"Persis Talbot! How could you conceive such a dreadful idea?"

"Oh, I heard of a girl once who had it done. I have seen her—Abby Harlow. You would never detect the slightest limp. You know, mamma, all the patent contrivances for the feet do no good. I must always swing this cruel, detestable crutch, unless—"

"Persis, when did you see Abby Harlow? Who introduced you?"

"I saw her last week, mamma, when I went with Stanley to the Islands."

Mrs. Talbot's lips shut together with a spring-lock. What she thought of her son-in-law elect it had always been easy to guess by what she did not say. Persis looked at her inquiringly, and, as their eyes met, a cold glitter of determination rose in both pairs of orbs. Gentle Persis had steel in her composition as well as her mother; the two natures met sometimes and struck fire.

"I think, mamma," said the young girl, a few weeks later, "I shall go to Boston and submit to the operation I spoke of."

Her voice was low and sweet, but there was no wavering in it.

"Not with my consent, my daughter."

"I am so sorry, mamma; but you will think better of it. Papa has consented. He is going with me, and—and—Mr. Warner too."

There was no help for it. Persis had set her feet in the "terrible way," and Mrs. Talbot, with a mother's heart, could do no less than follow. The world knew nothing of the object of the journey. But Ephraim Zelig learned it from his Aunt Blake, who, unless she shut her ears, could not help hearing the warm discussions between mother and daughter which were incautiously carried on in her presence. Woman-like, Mrs. Blake took sides against that "cold-blooded Warner," who "hadn't any more feeling than a billet of rock-maple." She went to her nephew with the story because she knew he had a friendly interest in Persis.

"But if you'd never set eyes on the sweet lamb you couldn't but want to take her part," cried she, thrusting her needle into a bit of

cambric as savagely as if it had been an imaginary poniard, and the cloth the unfeeling breast of Mr. Warner.

Ephraim set his teeth together and whittled a shingle into the shape of a tomahawk. It would have been a waste of breath to tell Aunt Blake how he longed to rush to the rescue and save his devoted Persis from her "hard-wood" admirer.

"If she was going to marry a man with a soul as big as a nine-pence I think I could bear it," groaned he inwardly. "Oh, little Persis, is there nobody to save you? My poor dear lamb!"

Meanwhile the traveling party of four was a cheerful one to all appearance; and the two lovers, living on smiles and moonbeams, seemed to forget the terror that was to come.

"I am doing it for Stanley," this was the girl's thought.

The time of trial drew near. Thus far Persis had not faltered. The next day would prove how much her stout heart could bear.

"Good-night, dearest!" said Stanley, as they parted at the foot of the staircase in the hall of their hotel. "Good-night! Don't dream of cruel steel. Dream of me, and the graceful little bride I shall claim one of these days."

The old ready blush flickered on Persis's cheek, but no smile came with it. She shuddered and drew away. Something in her lover's tone hurt her. She had been half conscious of the same thing before; but to-night, as if she had wakened to it for the first time, it gave her a thrill of pain.

"I am doing it for Stanley," thought she, as her head sought the pillow.

But the magic had somehow gone out of the words. What if she were doing it for Stanley? Was that going to take away the terror and the agony? Was there length and breadth and depth enough in his love to atone for all this? How could he let her suffer so? Ah, there was the sting! Not that he had persuaded or even advised her; but then he certainly had not opposed the undertaking. He had let her see clearly that he should be gratified if she had the fortitude to bear it. And why? Because then he could claim a "graceful bride." Not a "wounded dove." Not a woman who faltered in her gait, but one who walked among other women as their peer.

And this was the way he loved her! The man for whom she was ready to sacrifice so much! Persis could not sleep.

"Her soul kept up too much light
Under her eyelids for the night."

Next morning she knocked betimes at her mother's door.

"What is it, my daughter?"

"When does the early train leave, mamma? I think I will go home."

"Why, Persis, this is the day—"

"On which I have come to my senses."

"What do you mean, child? I wish I could hope you had given up this mad scheme; but I suppose that is past praying for."

"No, mamma, I have given it up; and that is not all, nor half. I give up also the proud man who is willing to let me suffer."

Mrs. Talbot caught her beautiful daughter in her arms.

"Bless you, my own little Persis," said she; and the rigid look she had worn ever since starting for Boston fell off like a mask.

"He is a cold, ambitious man," went on Persis, rapidly. "I always knew it, but I kept trying to think it was not so. The man I marry must not be like that. He must be as tender and kind to me as you are, mother."

This was all the poor little girl could say, clinging fast to the one dear friend whose love had never failed her. The brave spirit which had been ready for physical suffering had not yet braced itself against this new and worse trial. To live, and live without Stanley! The thought seemed to blacken the whole future with the abomination of desolation.

"Stanley," said she, as they met in the parlor, "I am going home to-day."

"Going home!" repeated he, in astonishment, looking at her with his placid blue eyes which certainly were not dimmed by want of sleep.

"Yes," said Persis, with sad emphasis. "I have spent the whole night in thinking. I do not blame you for being what you are; but I shall not give up my crutch, Stanley, and so I can never keep pace with you. For the future you and I must go separate ways, my friend."

"My sweet Persis, and you have never so much as hinted at this before. Your nerves are shaken. Let us walk in the fresh air and talk this over a little."

The tone was kind, but there was just enough patronage in it to irritate Persis, and confirm her in her new resolve.

"My nerves are as firm as steel. Oh, Stanley, it is not that! It is that you are willing to let me do it! Don't you talk to me of love! I have had a vision of what real love is, and it is something quite, quite different from yours!"

Persis's voice quivered, and the words came with difficulty.

"Poor child," replied Mr. Warner, indulgently; "as if I had ever advised; as if I wished—"

But the girl had fled. Out of the room, out of the house, any where just then, to escape the presence of the man she had determined to thrust from her heart. Gasping a little for breath, but otherwise composed and quiet, she stopped at the end of the corridor, near an open door, and casually glanced out at the street. In so doing her eye fell upon a familiar face, and she turned suddenly away, but not before she had been observed.

"Persis! Miss Persis!" cried an eager voice, and Ephraim Zelig rushed up the steps with both hands extended.

She had not thought of seeing a friend from home, and when he came forward and greeted her with such unusual warmth of manner a

revulsion of feeling swept over her, the fearful calmness gave way, and she sobbed like a child.

"Dear Persis, if I could only do any thing for you," said Ephraim, hanging over her tenderly, and in his earnestness forgetting to be awkward.

He never doubted she was weeping at thought of the outrageous suffering before her, and he could have fought his dastardly rival with a good will. He did not tell her he had come to Boston for her sake, just to learn how it fared with her; much less would he have had her know that he had slept last night as little as she, and was now on his way to the surgeon's on a fool's errand, to beg him have pity and stay his knife.

"If there were only something I could do for you," repeated Mr. Zelig in an agony, not daring to speak more explicitly, for he was supposed to be profoundly ignorant of the whole affair.

"You can't help me, you can't help me," said poor Persis, stifling the sudden wish to confide in him. At that moment their old friendship asserted its half-forgotten sway; she was carried back in feeling to the years when she had gone with all her childish griefs to this awkward, "worthy," sympathetic Ephraim. But no, it would never do to tell him what she was suffering now; pride forbade. She only said:

"We have been here at Boston—father, mother, and I—for a few days. We are going home this morning. Something has occurred—I can not tell you what—which makes me unhappy; but it is all for the best, Ephraim, and one of these days I shall see it so."

"God grant it!" ejaculated Mr. Zelig, having no idea of Persis's meaning, but secretly exultant that at any rate she was going home, and the object of the journey had not been accomplished.

The days and weeks which followed were dreary ones for Persis. She could far better have borne the surgeon's knife than the lukewarm regrets of Stanley, who felt that gallantry demanded him to pursue her for a certain length of time with protestations of his undiminished regard.

"No," replied Persis, firmly, and feeling more and more that she was in the right, "I will not make it possible for you to repent and be ashamed of me."

At last Stanley made a final bow and withdrew, a little relieved, perhaps, to find his persistence all in vain. Persis was certainly a charming creature, but he had all along been conscious that his feelings had betrayed him into a rash engagement. A lame wife *would* be rather a millstone round a man's neck, as she had the good sense to perceive. He married, six months afterward, a fair girl with "little feet like mice," which could trip faultlessly through a quadrille.

"That was the way he loved me," said Persis, bitterly; and she caressed the worn gold at

the top of her crutch as if that enchanted wand had saved her from a broken heart.

Time brought back the lost roses to her cheek, and more than one lover came to sue; but "she did not care for love," she said.

Mrs. Talbot watched her daughter anxiously. She was surprised one day to see her face light up as Ephraim Zelig bowed in passing.

"Ephraim is a rising young man; he will make his mark in the world," said she, slyly; "but look, Persis, how awkward he is."

"Yes, mamma," was the quiet reply; "but for my part I am tired of elegance; I consider awkwardness so refreshing!"

"Ah ha! Blows the wind in that quarter?" thought mamma, and went on demurely with her knitting.

Persis and Mr. Zelig had grown to be fast friends again; but it was a long time before Persis understood the nature of their friendship, or came to any knowledge of the deep love which lay concealed beneath Ephraim's rough exterior, like a pure fountain underground. She had grown a little distrustful. "Men were all alike," she said.

But somehow, when Ephraim spoke she listened and rejoiced. She believed in him; and so at last the "worthy young man" was rewarded for his years of hopeless constancy.

"It took a bitter experience to teach me the difference between gold and tinsel," said the happy bride, hopping up to her husband's chair one day and stroking his rugged eyebrows with her slender hand; "but nowadays I must say, Ephraim, a lump of the genuine ore looks good to me, even if it is half buried in quartz."

"Thank you," laughed Ephraim, "if you mean *me*!"

AN OUTSIDER AT AN OTTER-HUNT.

THE sensations of an outsider are seldom enviable. I have experienced them, and I speak out of the fullness of that experience. As a small child I have smarted under my physical inability to take part in the pastimes of my companions. As a struggling and unknown writer I have bemoaned the mental incapacity which kept me out of the established ranks of the staff of some first-class magazine. As a very young woman I have lamented in a futile way the slight obstacles my sex offered to any thing like a career and advancement. The feeling of being outside all these respective coveted positions and advantages was upon me strongly when they were offered to my view. But I never felt myself to be so completely a nothing—a mistake, a superfluity, an "outsider," in fact—as I did on the occasion of my first most uncalculated appearance at a South Devon otter-hunt.

I knew a hawk from a heron, and (which is more to the point) a hound from a harrier. But it was

"Many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,"