

THE STORY OF BESSIE COSTRELL*

BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

SCENE V.

So the husband and wife were left together in the cottage room. The door had no sooner closed on Saunders and his companions than Isaac was seized with that strange sense of walking amid things unreal upon a wavering earth which is apt to beset the man who has any portion of the dreamer's temperament, under any sudden rush of circumstance. He drew his hand across his brow, bewildered. The fire leapt and chattered in the grate; the newly washed tea-things on the table shone under the lamp; the cat lay curled, as usual, on the chair where he sat after supper to read his *Christian World*; yet all things were not the same. What had changed?

Then across poor John's rifled box he saw his wife sitting rigid on the chair where he had left her.

He came and sat down at the corner of the table, close to her, his chin on his hand.

"Ow did yer spend it?" he said, startled, as the words came out, by his own voice, so grinding and ugly was the note of it.

Her miserable eyes travelled over his face, seeking, as it were, for some promise, however faint, of future help and succor, however distant.

Apparently she saw none, for her own look flamed to fresh defiance.

"I didn't spend it. Saunders wor lyin'."

"Ow did yer get them half-crowns?"

"I got 'em at Bedford. Mr. Grimstone give 'em me."

Isaac looked at her hard, his shame burning into his heart. This was how she had got her money for the gin. Of course, she had lied to him the night before, in her account of her fall and of that mark on her forehead, which still showed, a red disfigure-

ment, under the hair she had drawn across it. The sight of it, of her, began to excite in him a quick loathing. He was at bottom a man of violent passions, and in the presence of evil-doing so flagrant, so cruel—of a household ruin so complete—his religion failed him.

"When was it as yer opened that box fust?" he asked her again, scorning her denials.

She burst into a rage of tears, lifting her apron to her eyes, and flinging names at him that he scarcely heard.

There was a little cold tea in a cup close to him that Bessie had forgotten. He stretched out his hand, and took a mouthful, moistening his dry lips and throat.

"Yer'll go to prison for this," he said, jerking it out as he put the cup down.

He saw her shiver. Her nerve was failing her. The convulsive sobs continued, but she ceased to abuse him. He wondered when he should be able to get it out of her. He himself could no more have wept than iron and fire weep.

"Are yer goin' to tell me when yer took that money, and 'ow yer spent it? 'Cos, if yer don't, I shall go to Wat-son."

Even in her abasement it struck her as shameful, unnatural, that he, her husband, should say this. Her remorse returned upon her heart, like a tide driven back. She answered him not a word.

He put his silver watch on the table.

"I'll give yer two minutes," he said.

There was silence in the cottage except for the choking, hysterical sounds she could not master. Then he took up his hat again, and went out into the snow, which was by now falling fast.

She remained helpless and sobbing, unconscious of the passage of time,

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one hand playing incessantly with a child's comforter that lay beside her on the table, the other wiping away the crowding tears. But her mind worked feverishly all the time, and gradually she fought herself free of this weeping, which clutched her against her will.

Isaac was away for an hour. When he came back, he closed the door carefully, and, walking to the table, threw down his hat upon it. His face under its ruddy brown had suffered some radical disintegrating change.

"They've traced yer," he said, hoarsely; "they've got it up to twenty-six pound, an' more. Most on it 'ere in Clinton—some on it, Muster Miles o' Frampton ull swear to. Watson ull go over to Frampton, for the warrant—to-morrer."

The news shook her from head to foot. She stared at him wildly—speechless.

"But that's not arf," he went on—"not near arf. Do yer 'ear? What did yer do with the rest? I'll not answer for keepin' my 'ands off yer if yer won't tell."

In his trance of rage and agony he was incapable of pity. He had small need to threaten her with blows—every word stabbed.

But her turn had come to strike back. She raised her head; she measured her news against his; and she did it with a kind of exultation.

"Then I *will* tell yer—an' I 'ope it ull do yer good. I took thirty-one pound o' Bolderfield's money then—but it warn't me took the rest. Someone else tuk it, an' I stood by an' saw 'im. When I tried to stop 'im—look 'ere."

She raised her hand, nodding, and pointing to the wound on her brow.

Isaac leant heavily on the table. A horrible suspicion swept through him. Had she wronged him in a yet blacker way? He bent over her, breathing fast—ready to strike.

"Who was it?"

She laughed. "Well, it wor *Timothy* then—yur precious—beautiful son—*Timothy!*"

He fell back.

"Yo're lyin'," he cried; "yer want to throw it off on someone. How cud

Timothy 'ave 'ad anythin' to do with John's money? Timothy's not been near the place this three months."

"Not till lasst night," she said, mocking him. "I'll grant yer—not till lasst night. But it *do* 'appen, as lasst night Timothy took forty-one pound o' John Borroful's money out o' that box, an' got off—clean. I'm sorry if yer don't like it—but I can't 'elp that; yo' listen 'ere."

And lifting a quivering finger she told her tale at last, all the beginning of it confused and almost unintelligible, but the scene with Timothy vivid, swift, convincing—a direct impression from the ugly immediate fact.

He listened, his face lying on his arms. It was true; all true. She might have taken more and Timothy less; no doubt she was making it out as bad as she could for Timothy. But it lay between them—his wife and his son—it lay between them.

"An' I 'eard yer coming," she ended; "an' I thought I'd tell yer—an' I wor frightened about the arf-crowns—people 'ad been talkin' so at Dawson's—an' I didn't see no way out—an'—an'—"

She ceased, her hand plucking again at the comforter, her throat working.

He, too, thought of the loving words he had said to her, and the memory of them only made his misery the more fierce.

"An' there ain't no way out," he said violently, raising his head. "Yer'll be took before the magistrates next week, an' the assizes ull be in February, an' yer'll get six months—if yer don't get more."

She got up from her chair as though physically goaded by the words.

"I'll not go to jail," she said, under her breath. "I'll not—"

A sound of scorn broke from Isaac.

"You should ha' thought o' that," he said. "Yo' should ha' thought o' that. An' what you've been sayin' about Timothy don't make it a 'aporth the better—not for *you!* Yo' led 'im into it too—if it 'adn't been for yo', 'ee'd never ha' *seen* the cursed stuff. Yo've dragged 'im down worse nor 'ee were—an' yer-self—an' the childer—an' me. An' the drink, an' the lyin'!—it turns a man's stomach to think on it. An' I've been

livin' with yer—these twelve years. I wish to the Lord I'd never seen yer—as the children ud never been born! They'll be known all their life now—as 'avin' 'ad sich a woman for their mother!"

A demon of passion possessed him more and more. He looked at her with murderous eyes, his hand on the table working.

For his world, too, lay in ruins about him. Through many hard-working and virtuous years he had counted among the righteous men of the village—the men whom the Almighty must needs reckon to the good whenever the score of Clinton Magna had to be made up. And this pre-eminence had come to be part of the habitual furniture of life and thought. To be suddenly stripped of it—to be, not only disgraced by his wife, to be thrust down himself among the low and sinful herd—this thought made another man of him; made him wicked, as it were, perforce. For who that heard the story would ever believe that he was not the partner of her crime? Had he not eaten and drunk of it; were not he and his children now clothed by it?

Bessie did not answer him nor look at him. At any other moment she would have been afraid of him; now she feared nothing but the image in her own mind—herself led along the village street, enclosed in that hateful building, cut off from all pleasure, all free moving and willing—alone and despised—her children taken from her.

Suddenly she walked into the back kitchen and opened the door leading to the garden.

Outside everything lay swathed in white, and a snow-storm was drifting over the deep cup of land which held the village. A dull, melancholy moonlight seemed to be somewhere behind the snow-curtain, for the muffled shapes of the houses below and the long sweep of the hill were visible through the dark, and the objects in the little garden itself were almost distinct. There, in the centre, rose the round stone edging of the well, the copious well, sunk deep into the chalk, for which Bessie's neighbors envied her, whence her good nature let them draw freely at any

time of drought. On either side of it the gnarled stems of old fruit-trees and the bare sticks of winter kale made black scratches and blots upon the white.

Bessie looked out, leaning against the doorway, and heedless of the wind that drove upon her. Down below there was a light in Watson's cottage, and a few lights from the main street beyond pierced the darkness. The "Spotted Deer" must be at that moment full of people, all talking of her and Isaac. Her eye came hastily back to the snow-shrouded well and dwelt upon it.

"Shut that door!" Isaac commanded from inside. She obeyed, and came back into the kitchen. There she moved restlessly about a minute or two, followed by his frowning look—the look, not of a husband, but of an enemy. Then a sudden animal yearning for rest and warmth seized her. She opened the door by the hearth abruptly and went up, longing simply to lie down and cover herself from the cold.

But, after all, she turned aside to the children, and sat there for some time at the foot of the little boys' bed. The children, especially Arthur, had been restless for long, kept awake and trembling by the strange sounds outside their door and the loud voices downstairs; but, with the deep silence that had suddenly fallen on the house after Isaac had gone away to seek his interview with Watson, sleep had come to them, and even Arthur, on whose thin cheeks the smears left by crying were still visible, was quite unconscious of his mother. She looked at them from time to time, by the light of a bit of a candle she had placed on a box beside her; but she did not kiss them, and her eyes had no tears. From time to time she looked quickly round her, as though startled by a sound, a breathing.

Presently, shivering with cold, she went into her own room. There, mechanically, she took off her outer dress, as though to go to bed; but when she had done so her hands fell by her side; she stood motionless till, suddenly wrapping an old shawl round her, she took up her candle and went downstairs again.

As she pushed open the door at the foot of the stairs, she saw Isaac, where

she had left him, sitting on his chair, bent forward, his hands dropping between his knees, his gaze fixed on a bit of dying fire in the grate.

"Isaac!"

He looked up with the unwillingness of one who hates the sound he hears, and saw her standing on the lowest step. Her black hair had fallen upon her shoulders, her quick breath shook the shawl she held about her, and the light in her hand showed the anguished brightness of the eyes.

"Isaac, are yer comin' up?"

The question maddened him. He turned to look at her more fixedly.

"Comin' up? noa, I'm not comin' up—so now yer know. Take yerself off, an' be quick."

She trembled.

"Are yer goin' to sleep down 'ere, Isaac?"

"Ay, or wherever I likes: it's no concern o' yourn. I'm no 'usband o' yourn from this day forth. Take yoursel' off, I say!—I'll 'ave no thief for *my* w. o'!"

But instead of going she stepped down into the kitchen. His words had broken her down; she was crying again.

"Isaac, I'd ha' put it back," she said, imploring. "I wor goin' in to Bedford to see Mr. Grimstone—'ee'd ha' managed it for me. I'd a worked extra—I could ha' done it—if it 'adn't been for Timothy. If you'll 'elp—an' you'd oughter, for yer *are* my 'usband, whatever yer may say—we could pay John back—some day. You can go to 'im, an' to Watson, an' say as we'll pay it back—yo' *could*, Isaac. I can take ter the plattin' again, an' I can go an' work for Mrs. Drew—she asked me again lasst week. Mary Anne ull see to the childer. You go to John, Isaac, to-morrer—an'—an'—to Watson. All they wants is the money back. Yer couldn't—yer couldn't—see me took to prison, Isaac."

She gasped for breath, wiping the mist from her eyes with the edge of her shawl.

But all that she said only maddened the man's harsh and pessimist nature the more. The futility of her proposals, of her daring to think, after his fiat and the law's had gone forth, that there was any way out of what she had done, for

her or for him, drove him to frenzy. And his wretched son was far away; so he must vent the frenzy on her. The melancholia, which religion had more or less restrained and comforted during a troubled lifetime, became, on this tragic night a wild-beast impulse that must have its prey.

He rose suddenly and came toward her, his eyes glaring, and a burst of invective on his white lips. Then he made a rush for a heavy stick that leant against the wall.

She fled from him, reached her bedroom in safety, and bolted the door. She heard him give a groan on the stairs, throw away the stick, and descend again.

Then for nearly two hours there was absolute stillness once more in this miserable house. Bessie had sunk, half fainting, on a chair by the bed, and lay there, her head lying against the pillow.

But in a very short time the blessed numbness was gone, and consciousness became once more a torture, the medium of terrors not to be borne. Isaac hated her—she would be taken from her children—she felt Watson's grip upon her arm—she saw the jeering faces at the village doors.

At times a wave of sheer bewilderment swept across her. How had it come about that she was sitting there like this? Only two days before she had been everybody's friend. Life had been perpetually gay and exciting. She had had qualms indeed, moments of a quick anguish, before the scene in the "Spotted Deer." But there had been always some thought to protect her from herself. John was not coming back for a long, long time. She would replace the money—of course she would! And she would not take any more—or only a very little. Meanwhile the hours floated by, dressed in a color and variety they had never yet possessed for her—charged with all the delights of wealth, as such a human being under such conditions is able to conceive them.

Her nature, indeed, had never gauged its own capacities for pleasure till within the last few months. Excitement, amusement, society—she had grown to

them ; they had evoked in her a richer and fuller life, expanded and quickened all the currents of her blood. As she sat shivering in the darkness and solitude, she thought, with a sick longing, of the hours in the public-house—the lights, the talk, the warmth within and without. The drink-thirst was upon her at this moment. It had driven her down to the village that afternoon at the moment of John's arrival. But she had no money. She had not dared to unlock the cupboard again, and she could only wander up and down the bit of dark road beyond the "Spotted Deer," suffering and craving.

Well, it was all done—all done !

She had come up without her candle, and the only light in the room was a cold glimmer from the snow outside. But she must find a light, for she must write a letter. By much groping she found some matches, and then lit one after another while she searched in her untidy drawers for an ink-bottle and a pen she knew must be there.

She found them, and with infinite difficulty—holding match after match in her left hand—she scrawled a few blotted lines on a torn piece of paper. She was a poor scholar, and the toil was great. When it was done, she propped the paper up against the looking-glass.

Then she felt for her dress, and deliberately put it on again, in the dark, though her hands were so numb with cold that she could scarcely hook the fastenings. Her teeth chattered as she threw her old shawl round her.

Stooping down she took off her boots, and pushing the bolt of her own door back as noiselessly as possible, she crept down the stairs. As she neared the lower door, the sound of two or three loud breathings caught her ear.

Her heart contracted with an awful sense of loneliness. Her husband slept—her children slept—while she—

Then the wave of a strange, a just passion mounted within her. She stepped into the kitchen, and walking up to her husband's chair, she stood still a moment looking at him. The lamp was dying away, but she could still see him plainly. She held herself steadily erect ; a frown was on her brow, a flame in her eyes.

"Well, good-by, Isaac," she said, in a low but firm voice.

Then she walked to the backdoor and opened it, taking no heed of noise ; the latch fell heavily, the hinges creaked.

"Isaac !" she cried, her tones loud and ringing, "*Isaac !*"

There was a sudden sound in the kitchen. She slipped through the door, and ran along the snow-covered garden.

Isaac, roused by her call from the deep trance of exhaustion which only a few minutes before had fallen upon his misery, stood up, felt the blast rushing in through the open door at the back, and ran blindly.

The door had swung to again. He clutched it open ; in the dim weird light, he saw a dark figure stoop over the well ; he heard something flung aside, which fell upon the snow with a thud ; then the figure sprang upon the coping of the well.

He ran with all his speed, his face beaten by the wind and sleet. But he was too late. A sharp cry pierced the night. As he reached the well and hung over it, he heard, or thought he heard, a groan, a beating of the water—then no more.

Isaac's shouts for help attracted the notice of a neighbor who was sitting up with her daughter and a new-born child. She roused her son-in-law and his boy, and through them a score of others, deep night though it was.

Watson was among the first of those who gathered round the well. He and others lowered Isaac with ropes into its icy depths, and drew him up again, while the snow beat upon them all—the straining men—the two dripping shapes emerging from the earth. A murmur of horror greeted the first sight of that marred face on Isaac's arm, as the lanterns fell upon it. For there was a gash above the eye, caused by a projection in the hard chalk side of the well, which of itself spoke death.

Isaac carried her in, and laid her down before the still glowing hearth. A shudder ran through him as he knelt, bending over her. The new wound had effaced all the traces of Timothy's blow. How long was it since she had stood there before him pointing to it ?

The features were already rigid. No one felt the smallest hope. Yet with that futile tenderness all can show to the dead, everything was tried. Mary Anne Waller came—white and speechless—and her deft gentle hands did whatever the village doctor told her. And there were many other women, too, who did their best. Some of them, had Bessie dared to live, would have helped with all their might to fill her cup of punishment to the brim. Now that she had thrown herself on death as her only friend, they were dissolved in pity.

Everything failed. Bessie had meant to die, and she had not missed her aim. There came a moment when the doctor, laying his ear for the last time to her cold breast, raised himself to bid the useless effort cease.

"Send them all away," he said to the little widow, "and you stay." Watson helped to clear the room, then he and Isaac carried the dead woman upstairs. An old man followed them, a bent and broken being, who dragged himself up the steps with his stick. Watson, out of compassion, came back to help him.

"John—yer'd better go home, an' to yer bed—yer can't do no good."

"I'll wait for Mary Anne," said John, in a shaking whisper—"I'll wait for Mary Anne."

And he stood at the doorway leaning on his stick; his weak and reddened eyes fixed on his cousin, his mouth open feebly.

But Mary Anne, weeping, beckoned to another woman who had come up with the little procession, and they began their last offices.

"Let us go," said the doctor, kindly, his hand on Isaac's shoulder, "till they have done."

At that moment Watson, throwing a last professional glance round the room, perceived the piece of torn paper propped against the glass. Ah! there was the letter. There was always a letter.

He walked forward, glanced at it, and handed it to Isaac. Isaac drew his hand across his brow in bewilderment, then seemed to recognize the handwriting, and thrust it into his pocket without a word. Watson touched his arm. "Don't you destroy it," he

said in warning; "it'll be asked for at the inquest."

The men descended. Watson and the doctor departed. John and Isaac were left alone in the kitchen. Isaac hung over the fire, which had been piled up in the hope of restoring warmth to the drowned woman. Suddenly he took out the letter, and, bending his head to the blaze, began to read it.

"Isaac, yer a cruel husband to me, an' there's no way fer me but the way I'm goin'. I didn't mean no 'arm, not at first, but there, wot's the good of talkin'. I can't bear the way as you speaks to me an' looks at me, an' I'll never go to prison—no, never. It's orful—fer the children ull 'ave no mother, an' I don't know however Arthur ull manage. But yer woodent show me no mercy, an' I can't think of anythin' different. I did love yer an' the childer, but the drink got holt of me. Yer mus' see as Arthur is rapped up, an' Edie's eyes ull 'ave to be seen to now an' agen. I'm sorry, but there's nothin' else. I wud like yer to kiss me onst, when they bring me in, and jes say, Bessie, I forgive yer. It won't do yer no 'arm, an' p'raps I may 'ear it without your knowin'. So good-by, Isaac, from yur lovin' wife, Bessie. . . ."

As he read it the man's fixed pallor and iron calm gave way. He leaned against the mantelpiece, shaken at last with the sobs of a human and a helpless remorse.

John, from his seat on the settle a few yards away, looked at Isaac miserably. His lips opened now and then as though to speak, then closed again. His brain could form no distinct image. He was encompassed by a general sense of desolation, springing from the loss of his money, which was pierced every now and then by a strange sense of guilt. It seemed to have something to do with Bessie, this last, though what he could not have told.

So they sat, till Mary Anne's voice called "Isaac" from the top of the stairs.

Isaac stood up, drew one deep breath, controlled himself, and went, John following.

Mary Anne held the bedroom door open for them, and the two men entered, treading softly.

The women stood on either hand crying. They had clothed the dead in white and crossed her hands upon her breast. A linen covering had been passed, nun-like, round the head and chin. The wound was hidden, and the face lay framed in an oval of pure white, which gave it a strange severity.

Isaac bent over her. Was this *Bessie*—Bessie, the human, faulty, chattering creature—whom he, her natural master, had been free to scold or caress at will? At bottom he had always been conscious in regard to her of a silent but immeasurable superiority, whether as mere man to mere woman, or as the Christian to the sinner.

Now—he dared scarcely touch her. As she lay in this new-found dignity, the proud peace of her look intimidated, accused him—would always accuse him till he too rested as she rested now, clad for the end. Yet she had bade him kiss her—and he obeyed her—groaning within himself, incapable altogether, out of sheer abasement, of saying those words she had asked of him.

Then he sat down beside her, motionless. John tried once or twice to speak to him, but Isaac shook his head impatiently. At last the mere presence of Bolderfield in the room seemed to anger him. He threw the old man such dark and restless looks that Mary Anne perceived them, and, with instinctive understanding, persuaded John to go.

She, however, must needs go with him, and she went. The other woman stayed. Every now and then she looked furtively at Isaac.

"If some one don't look arter 'im," she said to herself, "'ee'll go as his father and his brothers went afore him. 'Ee's got the look on it awready. Whenever it's light I'll go fetch Muster Drew."

With the first rays of the morning Bolderfield got up from the bed in Mary Anne's cottage, where she had placed him a couple of hours before, imploring him to lie still and rest himself. He slipped on his coat, the only garment he had taken off, and taking his stick he crept down to the cottage door. Mary Anne, who had gone out to fetch some bread, had left it ajar. He

opened it and stood on the threshold looking out.

The storm of the night was over, and already a milder breeze was beginning to melt the newly fallen snow. The sun was striking cheerfully from the hill behind him upon the glistening surfaces of the distant fields; the old laborer felt a hint of spring in the air. It brought with it a hundred vague associations, and filled him with a boundless despair. What would become of him now—penniless and old and feeble? The horror of Bessie's death no longer stood between him and his own pain, and would soon even cease to protect her from his hatred.

Mary Anne came back along the lane, carrying a jug and a loaf. Her little face was all blanched and drawn with weariness; yet when she saw him her look kindled. She ran up to him.

"What did yer come down for, John? I'd ha' taken yer yer breakfast in yer bed."

He looked at her, then at the food. His eyes filled with tears.

"I can't pay yer for it," he said, pointing with his stick; "I can't pay yer for it."

Mary Anne led him in, scolding and coaxing him with her gentle, trembling voice. She made him sit down while she blew up the fire; she fed and tended him. When she had forced him to eat something, she came behind him and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"John," she said, clearing her throat, "John, yer sha'n't want while I'm livin'. I promised Eliza I wouldn't forget yer, and I won't. I can work yet—there's plenty o' people want me to work for 'em—an' maybe, when yer get over this, you'll work a bit, too, now and again. We'll hold together, John—anyways. While I live and keep my 'elth yer sha'n't want. An' yer'll forgive Bessie"—she broke into sudden sobbing. "Oh! I'll never 'ear a crule word about Bessie in my 'ouse, *never!*"

John put his arms on the table and hid his face upon them. He could not speak of forgiveness, nor could he thank her for her promise. His chief feeling was an intense wish to sleep; but as Mary Anne dried her tears and began to go about her household work, the

sound of her step, the sense of her loving presence near him, began for the first time to relax the aching grip upon his heart. He had always been weak and dependent, in spite of his thrift and his money. He would be far more weak and dependent now and henceforward. But again, he had found a woman's tenderness to lean upon, and as she ministered to him—this humble, shrinking creature he had once so cordially despised—the first drop of balm fell upon his sore.

Meanwhile, in another cottage a few yards away, Mr. Drew was wrestling with Isaac. In his own opinion he met with small success. The man who had refused his wife mercy, shrank with a kind of horror from talking of the Divine mercy. Isaac Costrell's was a strange and groping soul. But those misjudged him who called him a hypocrite.

Yet, in truth, during the years that followed, whenever he was not under

the influence of recurrent attacks of melancholia, Isaac did again derive much comfort from the aspirations and self-abasements of religion. No human life would be possible if there were not forces in and round man perpetually tending to repair the wounds and breaches that he himself makes. Misery provokes pity; despair throws itself on a Divine tenderness. And for those who have the "grace" of faith, in the broken and imperfect action of these healing powers upon this various world—in the love of the merciful for the unhappy, in the tremulous yet undying hope that pierces even sin and remorse with the vision of some ultimate salvation from the self that breeds them—in these powers there speaks the only voice which can make us patient under the tragedies of human fate, whether these tragedies be "the falls of princes," or such meaner, narrower pains as brought poor Bessie Costrell to her end.

THE END.

AMERICAN WOOD-ENGRAVERS—ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY *

IT is as an interpreter of Nature that Elbridge Kingsley is best known. His reproductions of paintings by famous landscape artists—Corot, Diaz, Daubigny, Inness, and Tryon—and his original blocks, either from his own studies or directly in the wood, are permeated through and through with a sympathy and poetry only possible to one who knows and loves Nature.

His boyhood was passed upon a farm near Hadley, Mass., in the heart of a beautiful and varied country, and his early acquired fondness for the freedom of the woods and fields has led him back in his maturity to make his home amid the scenes that gave him his first artistic inspiration. From the age of sixteen until manhood, when he came to New York with the ambition to study art, he worked in the office

of a small country newspaper. Arrived in the city, his first object was to enter the evening classes of the Cooper Union Art Schools, after which he found a practical means of defraying expenses as a compositor on *The Tribune*. An opportunity presenting to take up the more congenial study of wood-engraving, he began it with the enthusiasm that has characterized all of his work. After a few years of city life he returned to the freedom of his loved country, where his spare time was spent in wandering through the woods, sketch-book in hand, ready to make note of any scene that might appeal to his passing mood. A reading of Mr. Hamerton's "Painter's Camp," and a long-cherished wish to live and be in touch with Nature, to work within her charmed circle, to be at hand in all her changing moods from dawn to night, and in sun and storm, suggested

* With a portrait and two original wood-engravings.