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MATTY GORE.

BY MISS C. E. SEDGWICK. [sic]

"Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks."

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"WHAT ails you, Matty, to sit moping at that window—are you counting the rain-drops that fall on the pavement?"

"No, Harry, I was just thinking—that's all."

"A penny for your thoughts!"

"I was thinking how dismal it is to live in a city! How pleasant it is to hear the soft dropping rain on the grass! and here it is nothing but patter, patter, patter on the dirty pavement; and, as I looked at the lamps that shed such a dim light through the watery air, and at those blank houses opposite with all their windows closed, I remembered how many times I had gone to our east window in the sitting-room at Fairtown, and seen the lights from Mr. Jessup's, and widow Allen's,

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and Deacon Milnor's, and fancied I could see the families, and what they were all about, and it seemed as if I could almost hear their voices. To my eye there is no life in these dwellings—they don't look like homes—nothing is right here; the stars don't look as they did through our clear air, and the thunder don't sound half so good as it did at Fairtown!"

"Why, Matty, you get the blues sitting here alone; if you would go to the theatre with me, and to the public balls, and Miss Wright's lectures, you would find something brighter than starlight, and quite as entertaining as Fairtown thunder."

"O! Harry, my dear brother, it is your going to such places that makes me more than all wish we were back in Fairtown. I have heard of many young men who were first drawn aside from the narrow path, by going to those public places where so many bad people go. It is not easy for us, while we are young, Harry, to resist temptation, so it is best to fence ourselves about as well as we can."

"Pray don't preach, Matty."

“I won't, Harry; don't call it preaching; but do let me speak what is so heavy at my heart. I don't like your going to the theatre, but I would rather you would go there every night, than go to hear infidel lectures.”

“My dear child, you don't know any thing about it; ‘live and let live,’ Matty,—you go your way, and let me go mine.”

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“There is but one way, Harry.”

“That is an old fashioned notion, my dear; in this age of steamboats, and railroads, new ways are opened. Don't look so solemn, Matty, I don't wish to disturb your faith, and so I tell father.”

“O! Harry, that is not what I am afraid of, for I will hold fast that which is good; but disturbed I must be, when I see you and father seeking, as it were, darkness, and avoiding the light that has come into the world. I cannot reason, as the people do who come here and talk with father, and only cloud up the truth; but I feel, and believe.”

Harry, notwithstanding his resolution not to interfere with his sister's faith, could not forbear saying, “A common family division, my dear; ‘the men reason— the women believe.’”

“No, Harry, that is not fair, for we are required to give a reason for the faith that is in us; therefore faith in man or woman must have reason to support it.”

Matty was interrupted by her father's entrance. He looked displeased. This was unusual; for John Gore, though rough, was not irritable or churlish. He thrust the poker into the grate, and, without seeming to know what he was about, poked out every coal of a light, spring fire; and then turning to Matty he asked, “Are we not going to have tea to-night?”

“I understood you, sir, that you were not coming home to tea.”

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“Well, I suppose I can change my mind.”

“O, yes, sir,” said Matty, setting herself eagerly about arranging the tea apparatus.

“And if I may, Miss Martha, it's a privilege I use only on small occasions.” Gore had not called his daughter Martha, half a dozen times in her life. She felt sure she had

displeased him, and stopping before him, she said, with all the courage she could summon "Have I offended you, father?"

"Yes--no—make the tea, will you?"

Matty, pale and trembling, went to the little cup board for the tea canister, and her brother left the room whispering, as he went past her, "This storm has blown up from Fairtown, I guess."

The tea was soon ready, and Matty sat down and poured out cup after cup, which her father swallowed without uttering a word. He rejected the bread and butter which Matty offered, and, in the hope of pleasing him, she set on the table a beefsteak pie. This was an article of food he particularly liked. His wife had excelled in preparing it, and had communicated her skill to Matty. This was the first she had made since their removal from Fairtown.

"Will you take a bit, father?" she asked; "Harry said it tasted just like mother's."

"No!" he replied, and then added in a softened voice, "not to-night, Matty"—he hemmed and cleared his throat. "Like mother's, is it? your mother never

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disobeyed me. How long, Miss Martha, have you been keeping up a correspondence with Russel Milnor?"

"Simple truth" was Matty's "utmost skill." "I have had no correspondence with Russel, sir," she replied, "excepting that he has sent his kind remembrance to me, and I, mine to him."

"Then this is his first letter, since we left Fairtown, is it?" and he took a letter from his pocket, and threw it across the table.

"It is, sir," replied Matty, faintly, while her eyes filled and her cheeks glowed with the irrepressible feeling that is awakened in every woman's heart, by the sight of the first love-letter.

"You need not study the outside any longer," resumed her father, and for the first time Matty raised her eyes, that had been downcast and fixed upon the letter, as he added, "I know every thing that is in it—I don't mean the love and nonsense, but the business part—it came in a letter to me. Why don't you break the seal?"

"I *can't*, sir," she answered, and burst into tears. Various feelings struggled in Matty's tender heart. She knew what Russel's letter must contain, the first expression, in words, of a long-cherished affection. She knew that her father had strong prejudices

against her lover, and that his prejudices were as rigid as his iron frame. She thought of her mother, and that if she were alive, she would share every feeling with fond

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sympathy; but now, in the trials that awaited her, there was no one to whom to look for sympathy; not even Harry; her dear and only brother, for he too had prejudices against Russel. Matty was of the ivy nature, dependence was habitual to her; but there is no strict analogy between a vegetable and rational existence. The weakest human soul is capable of receiving a divine energy, and if it mount heavenward it needs not to grasp an earthly support. "Hush up your tears, child," said Gore, "my mind is settled; and you must settle yours, and cry or laugh afterwards, as the case may be. In the first place tell me, how happens it Russel stuck to farming! I thought the Education Society were going to run him over into a minister."

"Russel was advised to that, sir; but he did not wish to put himself into a dependent situation, and he thought he might serve his Master as acceptably, by being a farmer, as if he were a minister."

"*Cant!* but, however, there is some sense in it. There may be now and then an *honest* professor *out* of the pulpit; but it's all hypocrisy where there is a bounty paid. It seems Russel has laid up money enough to buy him a farm in Michigan. He has bought it, and now has the modesty to ask my leave to let you go out and help him take care of it. If you go, mark me! you go contrary to my *wishes* and my *judgment*; but I don't forbid it. I am not one of their *religious* folks,

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who think they have a divine right to lord it over the world. I believe that women, though they are far enough from being fit for it, have a right to independence; and, therefore, you are free to go; but if you go, never come back to my house again—never expect any help from me, be the case what it will; for Russel Milnor's wife's husband will be always the man that I can't abide. I don't set up any right over you. I am an enemy to all arbitrary authority—to father-craft, as well as kingcraft and priestcraft." John was just as honest as others are when, giving way to the impulse of temper and prejudice, they fancy themselves acting in obedience to an established principle.

There had been an old feud between Deacon Milnor and John Gore, which eventuated in a long pending lawsuit. Gore finally gained the suit, and, as is common in country neighbourhoods, the general sympathy was with the losing party, and Gore, alienated from his old friends, transferred his residence from Fairtown to New York, where he still followed successfully the vocation of master-builder. Gore was a strong, though narrow-minded man. He saw clearly, but he looked through a knot-hole. He never had any religious faith, unless the accidental belief of his childhood might be dignified by that name. He had always treated lightly the faith of his wife, a meek

“Traveller between life and death.”

He took pride in differing from the strictly religious

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community in which he lived, and contracted a very common habit of looking at the abuses of religion, at the dishonour which the bigotries, pretensions, and lapses of its false professors cast upon it, while he was deaf and blind to the testimony, on every side, of its true disciples. After he went to town, he fell in with some clamorous skeptics, and had not the ability, or, alas! the inclination to resist their specious arguments. They were, like Gore, uninstructed men, but they could quote the names of Hobbes and Hume, and Gore's vanity pleased itself with the idea that his preconceived opinions were in accordance with these great mens'. Wo to the ignorant, who are not intrenched in the strongest hold of Christianity, a deep, heart-felt conviction of its truth, resulting from an experience of its adaptation to the wants of humanity!

Gore has hinted his theoretical respect for the “rights of women.” He had recently imbibed it from a certain eloquent lecturer, who has done them worse than doubtful service. The truth was, he looked upon the whole sex with a feudal eye; regarding women as liege subjects, if not “born thralls” of their natural lords; and if his new notions forced him to admit that they were *possible* equals, he had never yet doubted they were *actual* inferiors. John Gore's theories had made as yet no apparent difference in his mode of life; his industrious habits were fixed, and the external moralities were second nature to him; but that spiritual work of

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subduing the passions, disciplining the temper, and elevating the affections, John had never yet begun.

But while John Gore went on in his old track, the effect of their new associations on his son Harry, was but too obvious. He had cast aside the faith of his boyhood, but he was too much under the dominion of his senses, to adopt practically the theories of virtue inculcated by his new teachers. He had rejected his mother's pious instructions as nursery tales, and in his change of residence he had escaped from the vigilance and restraints of a moral community. He was destined to learn too late, or never to learn, that the only safe liberty for a young person, in the flush of life, is the liberty that follows self-conquest. Harry Gore was just two-and-twenty; handsome, with that frank and gay expression so captivating to young women, and with that manliness, reckless generosity and impulsive ardour, which altogether constitute the “*whole-souled*” character so attractive to young men. With these characteristics this unfortunate young man was introduced by his father to a society of skeptics; and by his young companions plunged into the second or third-rate dissipation of a great city. The character of his career might be foreseen; its sad particulars time alone could disclose.—But we forget that it is not Harry Gore's story we

are writing. We left John Gore producing a miserable perplexity in his daughter's mind, by the annunciation of his

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wishes, his judgment, and his will. She saw that, by the terms of his opposition, she might follow her inclination without violating the letter of filial obedience; but the spirit of all her duties governed Matty Gore; and though we think she erred, she believed that in *all circumstances* the precept, "honour your parents," required the surrender of her own wishes to her father's.

Accordingly, when she answered her lover's letter, which she did that sleepless night, while her tears almost blinded her, she made no secret of the state of her affections. She repeated all that had occurred that evening, and concluded by saying, that her duty was implicit submission to her father's wishes.

We have given merely the points of Matty's letter; the essence of such a letter is of too delicate a nature to be imparted.

To these *points* came, immediately, a reply from Russel Milnor, enclosed in a letter to Gore, in which he communicated the purport of that to his daughter. Russel said that he trusted he should be enabled to submit to a known duty, even though it required such a martyrdom as the relinquishment of Matty; but that his view of the case differed totally from her's. "You were twenty-one, the first day of this present month, Matty," he said, "and at that age the law allows men and women, if ever they were capable, to be capable of judging for themselves. If your father alleged any thing against my character, or any thing in my circum-

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stances, that formed a reasonable barrier to our union, it would be your duty to acquiesce; but where there is no such reason, I cannot think that parents have a right to control their children. They marry for themselves, not for their parents. In the course of nature they must long survive them. It is, then, their own concern, and they ought to act independently, *according to their light*, that is, according to the dictate of their best judgment, and of *tried affection*. Parents do not enough respect the rights of their children on this subject. They interfere by their wishes, their biases, and their manoeuvring. It is an inexpressible happiness when parents approve the choice of their children; but no right of theirs to direct or mar this choice. Our affections are amenable to God only, and when He has joined, man should not sunder them. I have not urged my wishes or my love, for beside that you know I should neither expect nor wish it to prevail against your sense of duty; that once settled in your mind, I am sure, wherever the sacrifice may fall, you will act in conformity to it."

Before this letter arrived a sudden and great change had taken place in John Gore's domestic arrangements. He had placed at the head of his household a very pretty

and flippant young woman, some months Matty's junior, whom he called his wife. Matty had painful reason to suspect that this marriage was merely one of those fragile, and evanescent ties substituted for the holy one of God's appointment, and advocated by a few

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of her father's new associates. Emboldened by that courage which religion alone could inspire in a timid girl, who had grown up in habitual awe of her father; she determined to know from himself the truth; and she took the first occasion, when neither the new Mrs. Gore nor Harry were present, to ask her father, "If he wished her to call his wife, mother?" John's eye fell, and a deeper hue dyed his sanguine cheek, as he answered; "Yes—no—that is to say, just as you like; a name does not signify."

"That name seems to me," replied Matty; "to signify more than all other words;" and while she spoke, the eye that she kept steadfastly fixed on him filled with tears, and his quailed under it; as that of the lower animals is said to do, beneath the intellectual ray of man. "Father," she continued; "it is best to speak plain my meaning; I cannot profane that word mother. Is this person my mother in the eye of the law?"

"The law has nothing to do with the matter, and the gospel less," cried Gore, recovering his usual tone. "She is my wife, according to her view, and my view; and if you don't like her for a mother, you need not make one of her; and that's the end on't."

"O! father, it is not the end," exclaimed Matty; in the earnestness of her feeling, forgetting her habitual quietness, and falling on her knees at his feet. "It is God's law you are violating; O! pray, pray, do not bring this shame on us all! this dishonour and misery

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on your old age! O! send her away, sir! Those men that come here, and scoff at all that's good and holy, have been a snare to your soul. Send her away, father, and let us go back to Fairtown; or, lay me down there by mother's grave."

"Hush! Matty, my child; hush!" His voice was softened, and Matty proceeded. "Dear father, God has made misery to follow sin—even in this world—and there is a judgment to come—for the deeds done in the body, we must give account. What signifies all they say! we know, we feel it in ourselves; there is a heaven, and there is a hell."

While Matty was speaking the last words, the door opened and *Mrs. Gore*, flushed with exercise, and the pleasurable excitement of a walk with her young gallant, Harry, entered. Harry divined the meaning of the scene and disappeared; and *Mrs. Gore*, with affected unconcern, echoed in a soft under tone, "Hell! bless my soul, Miss Matty! a big word for a mealy-mouthed young woman."

Matty rose from her knees, and turned on the woman a look so full of sorrow, so beaming with the elevation of a spirit immeasurably above her, that she shrunk away abashed. Gore was dimly conscious of a feeling akin to that of a bully, when he is detected by a comrade in an act of cowardice; he rose, and blustered round the room, muttering something of "Matty's nonsense and superstition!"

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Poor Matty went to her own little room, and there remained, in tears and prayers, till she was roused by her father's voice calling her. She met him at the head of the stairs. He gave her Russel's letter, saying, "Russel acts above-board; I give him credit for this; it's his mother's blood, not his sneaking father's. I know, mainly, what is in his letter to you, by one he has written to me. He says what I said to you; that you have a *right* to follow your inclinations. I'll hold no woman in bondage. One thing that I said to you when Russel first proposed, I take back; the rest must stand. Circumstances alter cases; and now, if you marry Russel, you will not act against my wishes; but remember, Matty! no person that bears the name of Milnor shall ever enter my doors, or have a penny of my property. I have chosen my way, you are free to choose your's."

There are periods when thoughts pass so rapidly, and the affections will work with such energy, that we seem in brief instants to have lived an age. This was such a moment to Matty. While her father was speaking, the prospect he opened before her, of leaving her wretched home, to live with him who would have made any desert home to her, seemed like a gleam of paradise; and then the thought of leaving her father to wear out his last days in sin and certain misery, closed the gate of happiness against her. "If I could but save him," she said, mentally, "I would relinquish every

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earthly hope; I am weak, but for such a work, there is strength that will be made perfect in my weakness." When he had finished speaking, she said in a very low but resolute voice; "Father, there is something nearer my heart than Russel; it is that you should do the right thing."

"Stop there, Matty! you have taken me to task once, and that is once too many. Water won't run up hill; fathers won't be chidden by their children."

"But once more, father, I beg you to hear me; but once more."

"No, no!" he cried, but in a gentler voice; for he was softened; who could resist that earnest and most sweet countenance? "No, Matty! I must follow my light."

"O! father; that light is darkness: hear me, I beseech you, in the name of God."

"No, no, Matty! you are too superstitious; there is no use."

"In the name of my mother, then."

“You look now like her own self—speak—say quick what you have to say.”

“O! think that it is my mother pleading with you; think that you are back in those days when you believed in truth, and followed after good. Forgive me, forgive me, sir, but I must speak. I must pray you to repent and return to Him, who is ever ready to receive those who forsake their sins. Send away this bad woman,

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father! I will stay with you; I will never, never leave you. I will write to Russel that I have solemnly devoted myself to you. I will do every thing to make your home comfortable and cheerful; it will be neither, with this woman. I will watch over Harry, night and day; I will do all, with God's help, that child and sister can do.”

“You have not considered, Matty.”

“I have considered, sir; and resolved.”

“Well, let me go; let me go; I must consider too;” and he turned from his child, and with faltering steps, and a purpose that now faltered for the first time, retraced his way to his little parlour, while Matty returned to her own room, to strengthen her resolution with prayer; and so strengthened was she by this holy office, that she read Russel's letter with calmness, and sat down to write to him all that had occurred, with a conviction that he would acquiesce in the sacrifice they were to make. But her generosity was not to have its reward. If Gore had been left alone to the workings of conscience, and the gracious ministry of his awakened affections, he might have been saved; but his evil genius interposed. The woman who had led him away from domestic purity and peace, came in while his countenance was dark and agitated with the stormy conflict of right and wrong. With the quick instincts of her sex, she perceived the nature of his disturbance, and suspected

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the source of it. Her youth, beauty and art, soon enabled her to regain her ascendancy over the weak old man, who had nothing to oppose to her but the good feelings that his daughter had awakened. Faith and its securities were gone.

In the course of the morning the following brief note was brought to Matty by the servant girl.

“You've been a good child, and serviceable to me, Matty; and I give you the enclosed, (a hundred dollar note.) It is but justice to say I've nothing to complain of from you; but we've come to the parting point, Matty. It is best we should not have any good bye- ing. I am going out for the rest of the day. Pack and direct your things, and I will send them after you. You had best go to your aunt's before night, as I mistrust we should not all sleep well under the same roof.

“Your father, John Gore.”

Poor Matty! this was almost too much for her to bear. Religion even, cannot soothe the anguish that sin inflicts; the sin of those we love. Matty sat for some time stupified; suddenly she was roused by the thought that she might make an appeal to the woman, who seemed to her the personification of evil. She gained admittance to her room. She was dressed gayly, and was arranging some artificial flowers on her hat preparatory to a walk. She was flurried by the sight of the innocent girl; and she said—the most na-

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tural thing to say—looking at Matty's swollen eyes and colourless cheek; “You don't seem well, Miss Matty.”

“O! I am not well—I am sick—sick at heart;” and she was obliged to grasp the bed-post against which she stood for support.

It is useless to enter into the particulars of the conversation that ensued. Every thing that a pure woman and a devoted child could say, Matty urged; every argument of religion, she exhausted in vain.

There is no harder subject to deal with, than a young woman who has thrown down the bulwarks of religion, and defied the usages of society; not blinded and impelled by the impulses of passion, but a voluntary sacrifice to vanity and selfishness. Matty could not awaken her fears, for she felt secure in her young life; and she could not touch her affections, for their fountains were dried away. Wearied and sick at heart, the poor girl returned to her own room.

A less spiritual being would have been satisfied; would have felt that, having done her filial duty, she was free to indulge the yearnings of her heart. But to this good young person it was not so. She did not act simply with reference to quieting her own conscience. She felt that there must be a most bitter infusion in her cup, while the death of the soul was impending over her father and brother. Her letter to her lover was coloured by her sad feelings. She assented to his plans

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and appointed the time for their meeting; and then reverted to her deep anxieties in a prayer, that she might be patient and never without hope, in the greatest of all tribulations.

After leaving her father's house, she saw her brother repeatedly, but all her efforts to influence him were ineffectual. He did not listen seriously to her entreaties; he did not oppose her arguments with reason; but answered her only with bantering and ridicule; fruits of the lightest, the most hopeless soil.

We resume our story at a period rather more than three years subsequent to Matty's separation from her father. He still occupied the comfortable house in Elm street, in which she had left him; but how changed was its interior! The simplicity, neatness, and precision that, under her regime, had seemed the type of her well-ordered mind, had given place to slatternliness, disorder, and finery. A crazy auction pier-table, with tarnished gilding, occupied the place of the spotless waxed mahogany table with falling leaves, a Fairtown friend. The old family Bible had disappeared, and in its stead was a vase of French flowers, with a cracked shade. The new Mrs. Gore had substituted for the honest, old windsor conveniences which she condemned as "too Presbyterian," defaced and rickety mahogany chairs, that looked as if they had mouldered at a pawnbroker's. Over the mantel-piece had hung,

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time out of mind, (for it was an heirloom from Matty's maternal ancestors,) the picture of a tree bearing symbolical fruit, each apple labelled with the name of one of the Christian graces. Its perpetual verdure was preserved by an angel who was watering it, while the evil one stood in the background menacing it with a scythe. This picture, which Matty looked upon with almost a Catholic's love, had been much derided by Gore's new friends; and with a reluctance that he was half ashamed of, he had consented to the substitution of a tarnished chimney mirror.

But John Gore stood at bay, at the next proposed alteration. His fine young lady bought a tawdry French clock, which she insisted would serve for use and ornament too; instead of a faithful old family time-piece.

"The old clock," urged Gore, "is as true as the sun."

"That, my dear love, is of no consequence; we have town-clocks all about us that are regulated by the sun. At Fairtown this horrid old thing might have been useful; but in the city, you know, a clock is chiefly for looks."

"Like every thing else!" muttered John. "They build their houses for looks, and they tumble down over their heads. They buy their furniture for looks; and it warps and snaps, and is good for nothing. They take their wives for looks, and they"-----

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"My dear, darling husband!"

John Gore suppressed the bitter words that were on his lips, but the tender deprecation of his wife had not the accustomed effect. Either his vanity had lost something of its susceptibility, or his lady (we cannot profane the name of wife) had worn out her poor arts of cajoling. He stood for some moments before the fire, silent,

with his hands behind him, as was his wont, when a tempest was gathering; and then burst forth, calling his wife by her unchanged name, as he always did when displeased with her. "I warn you, Angeliky Foot"-----

"My dear Mr. Gore, pray say Angelica!"

He merely raised his voice a tone higher, as he resumed. "I warn you, Angeliky Foot, not to sell that clock; it's the only thing nowadays that keeps me peaceable; it was my father's; it marked the prayer-time, and the meal-time, and the play-time; when all I knew was to do my duty. It struck the hour for my marriage; it told the hour of my children's birth. In my Fairtown home, it was true to us, and we were true to that. When my wife died it sounded like a tolling bell. Well it might! well it might! Once, again, it tolled! when Matty passed that threshold! and well it might then too! And now, when all is ajar, and out of time, that still is true. Its old face, as it were, speaks to me; and there are times when its look of quiet, gone-by days, is all that keeps my temper from rising over

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bounds. So I warn you, Angeliky Foot, not to say another word of parting with it."

Angelica Foot did not at that time; but at prudent intervals and fortunate moments she resumed the topic, and John Gore at last yielded, as many yield, to whom "carrying the day," seems not worth the trouble of continued resistance. He yielded however only to a compromise. The old clock was removed up stairs, and out of sight, and the "bargain," of what John descriptively designated as "a bit of French trumpery," bought.

Not long after this change was made, John came home one day at his usual time. He was as punctual as the old clock, and had been so rigid in the enforcement of this observance upon Miss Angelica Foot, that she, aware of the importance of keeping on his blind side, had taken care that a domestic should supply her short-comings, and have Gore's meals ready for him, when she, on the pretext of a headache, was lying in bed, or strolling in Broadway, or sitting with a sick friend. On such occasions an alibi might have been proved, by such as saw her taking a drive, far out of town, with Harry Gore!

But, on the morning to which we allude, John came home and found his little parlour looking much like a slattern, when the morning light has dawned upon her coarse and dirty finery. Every thing was out of place. The lamps of the preceding night were still dimly burn-

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ing. His eye involuntarily turned towards the clock, to see if he had not mistaken the hour of the day. The pointers as usual were motionless. He muttered a malediction, and proceeded through the unswept entry, down stairs to the little basement room, where he

was accustomed to find his meridian meal. There were no signs of it. He went to the kitchen. There was no apparent preparation for dinner. Gore heard voices above, from one of the chambers; he followed the sound and burst most unexpectedly upon his wife, Harry, and two female friends of hers, who had forgotten him and every thing else, in the excitement of preparing for a masquerade ball. In the most innocent circumstances, it is rather provoking to find those whose duty it is to minister to our necessities, occupied with their own pleasures. The masks, ribands, flowers, and finery of all sorts, with which the room was cluttered, operated on Gore's temper as the colour of scarlet does on some enraged animals. His fury broke forth in the most unmeasured expressions. The lady-friends escaped. "What do you here, at this time of day, sir!" he asked, turning fiercely to his son.

"What do I!" he answered, with affected calmness; "why, you know, sir, it's the hour when all regular labourers go home to their meals."

"Regular! I wonder when you have done an hour's work, regular or irregular. I tell you, sir, what I have told you before; that I'll not have you loitering here

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with Angeliky Foot, when I am out of the house. 'Children, obey your parents,' is a law that I'll uphold while I have breath."

"Ah, father!" replied Harry, uttering a biting truth, in a manner still gay and careless. "Ah, father, quoting Scripture! You can't expect, sir, your son will wear the yoke you have broken, and trampled under foot." Anxious to be off, before a return blow could be given, he hurried on his surtout while speaking, and in his haste accidentally dropped from it an unsealed letter. The address to himself, caught John Gore's eye. "From Matty!" he exclaimed; "why did you not give me this?"

"I forgot it; it can't be of any consequence; only one of Matty's preachments, I guess." Harry told the truth; he had forgotten it. The poor young man had rejected the high motives to virtue, and its sanctions; and in his present downward course of life, his affections were perishing for lack of nourishment.

The sight of a letter from Matty in the midst of all this discomfort and discord, went to John Gore's heart. He put on his spectacles to read it, but they were soon blurred, and he was obliged to take them off again, and again, to clear them before he could proceed. We must premise that Matty, scrupulous in the performance of her duties, had written to her father at regular intervals since their separation, without receiving or hoping for a return.

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"Fairmount, Michigan, 20th June, 183-

“My Ever Dear Father.—I think so much of you that I must believe you have not quite forgotten me. O! what a good gift is memory! (“to the good it may be,” thought Gore;) how it peoples the wilderness with dear recollected forms! how it brings to life again the long past pleasures of childhood! the time that was, before any trouble or change had come! How it carries me back to those pleasant Saturday evenings, when every thing, having been done decently and in order, for in every thing mother went after Scripture rule, (Gore looked round on the litter of gauzes and tinsel, and heaved a deep sigh,) Harry and I sat down on our little benches beside her, and learned our Bible lesson for Sunday. They were always got before the clock struck eight; the dear old clock that told the coming on of happy mornings, and peaceful nights. I wonder if it keeps good time yet?

“But, dear father, I sat down, not to write of the past, but to tell you of our present condition; which, thanks to the Giver of all good, has much improved since my last. The failure of crops the first season was a disappointment, and the loss of stock occasioned by low and insufficient feed fell heavy upon us; but we did not murmur. I have *one sorrow* at heart, that always makes worldly troubles seem light; (“Matty's religion is no sham,” thought Gore;) and Russel says he has received too much good at the hand of the Lord, to mur-

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mur at a little evil. Last year we should have done finely, but for Russel's long sickness; but that is past now, and we trust it has done a good work for us, in making us more fully realize the worth of that hope which sustained us, when the world seemed vanishing from us. Now every thing prospers around us. I can almost see the wheat and corn grow; for in this rich soil it does not take the whole summer, as it does at the east, to come to perfection. It seems as if the Al- mighty had made gardens in this wilderness; and, dear father, I often think that if you and Harry could stand in the door of our little loghouse here at Fairmount, and look over the prairie; all that part of it which is still untouched by the hand of man, that the sight of it would draw you near to Him who created it. Those who live in cities, where nothing but man's hand is seen, may forget God, especially if there be temptation about them, to lure the eye and enchant the ear; as in poor Harry's case; but here, father, with this vastness around us; this stillness—with nothing for the eye to see but the beautiful earth God has created, and the Heavens that declare his glory, His presence is felt, and the heart goes out to Him, as naturally as a little child to its parent. O! that you and Harry were here! My little Sybil is now twenty months old. I hardly ever speak her name without thinking of you, for you were the only person I ever heard call mother by that

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name; and I am sure, father, I seldom think of you without a prayer in my heart to God for your best good. (“Religion does make children faithful!” thought Gore.) Sybil already speaks quite plain; and in her morning and evening duty she is taught always to remember you, father! I have a little brother for her, just six months old. I should have

given him your name, if I had thought it would be pleasing to you, to have your name joined with his father's. Please tell my brother, with my love, that I call him Harry. (An involuntary prayer escaped from John's lips, "The Lord make him another kind of a man!") O, father! what a different feeling I have had for my parents since my children were born! Short-sighted creatures are we indeed, that we must stand just in the places of others, before we can see and feel as they do! Such are now my feelings, that I think, nay, I am sure, I would give up my life freely to have you brought to the faith and love of the gospel; and what is life to that eternal happiness which awaits the humblest followers of Jesus?

"But, dear father! I would not weary you. Pray do not get so tired of my letters that you will not read them; and pray let me beg you, once more, if any great good or great sorrow comes upon you, to let some word of it be sent to your ever affectionate and dutiful daughter, MATTY."

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"Good! good! will any good ever come to me?" thought Gore, in the bitterness of his heart; and then a prayer—an aspiration should we not rather call it—rose from the depths of his soul. "O ! my child, my child! would that I were altogether such as you are!" This was the first gleam of light.

Time went on; and Gore's out-of-door life presented its accustomed aspect. His habits of industry were now almost his sole comfort. He was a skilled artisan, and in the busy and flourishing city of New York, his art found ample employment and large reward. His earnings were consumed by his idle son and exacting lady. Gore was generous in his nature, and parted with his money without a regret; but frugal in his own habits, and rational in his views of the uses of money, it irritated him to see it wasted, and worse than wasted. He became reserved in his supplies, and finally, a terrible suspicion having taken possession of his mind, he drove his son from his house, and reminded Angelica Foot that she was but a tenant at will; and that the light bond that united them could be broken at his pleasure. "At my pleasure, too," thought Angelica. A few evenings after, Gore was on some business in a distant part of the city; he met two persons, veiled and muffled, who struck him, as he passed them, as resembling Harry and Angelica Foot. He stood still to observe them: then followed them a few steps; and then, cursing his own folly, and resolving that if he returned

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and found her gone, he would bar his doors forever against her; he resumed his homeward way. She was not in his house. "She will return to me, to-morrow," he said, "as she has done before, and tell me she has been watching with her sick cousin; but I know now, what I then suspected! This surely is from the hand of God; it is fitting I should be punished by the child I led astray."

It was a proof that Gore's conscience was awakened, that he turned from upbraiding others to a crushing consciousness of his own sins. Tears gushed from his eyes; his limbs seemed sinking under him; and he leaned against the mantel-piece for support, when a letter sealed with black, in Matty's hand, caught his eye. A longer interval than usual had passed since he had heard from her. He seized it eagerly.

It was of a date two years later than the one we have already transcribed. It had been written at intervals, "in affliction and anguish of heart; and," as the blistered paper witnessed, "with many tears." It began,

"MY EVER DEAR FATHER.—My last letter to you was written as soon as I could hold a pen, after the birth of my second son, my little Russel. Since then I have not written to you, because I have many misgivings that you have more than trouble enough of your own; and I know further, by what I feel, that there is that in a parent's heart which cannot be torn out of it; and that

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however contrary appearances may be, my sorrows would weigh upon you; though my sorrows are, I fear, far lighter than your own." ("God knows they are, whatever they may be," murmured Gore.) "After Russel's birth I fell into a low fever, which is apt to set in on such occasions, and after I got a little better of that, the doctor said I was threatened with a decline; and recommended a journey; and my dear husband, who has always set my health and comfort before every earthly possession, got a trusty woman to take care of our children, and took me down to Buffalo, by the lake, to return by land. The journey was greatly blessed to me, and every thing went as we desired, till, on our way home, we were overtaken by heavy rains, and delayed two weeks. A fatal delay for us. When we arrived at home, we found that the woman left in charge of our children, not being able to overstay the time she had engaged for, had gone and left our little family in the care of a young girl. In consequence of her ignorance and neglect, poor little Harry had taken cold, and was dreadfully ill with an inflammatory rheumatism, and my poor baby seemed pining away. It had pleased God to restore my strength, and I entered upon the care of my children with resolution and hope.

"The low lands were overflowed by the freshet, and the crops much injured. They required my husband's immediate care. He overworked himself, and his fatigue and the stagnant water in the coves brought on a

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terrible fever. Six weeks have passed since he took to his bed. The fever is broken; but, O! my dear father, he seems sinking away, and I look for the worst; humbly trusting that God will enable me to bear what he sees fit to lay on me."

“Ten days have passed, my dear father; God has been merciful to little Harry. He is on his feet again, though still pale and feeble. My dear husband is no better. O ! my heart and strength fail me, when I think of what is coming. When Russel sees me drooping, he says, with a sweet smile, ‘stay your heart on God, Matty;’ and I do. O, father! how can those bear life whose hearts are not so stayed?

“My baby revived after we got home, and seemed to be thriving again; and was a great comfort to his father. When the little creature was sleeping, his father would have the cradle beside his bed. It seemed as if there was something in the sight of such sweet innocence, composing to the spirit. Last week the little fellow had a bad turn again, and two days ago, when he was evidently dying, my husband would have me sit with him, by his bedside. Together we watched his last breathings. O! my dear father, I thought then—I think now—that if you had lost one of us in infancy, you would never have doubted there was another world. The smile of my boy as his closing eye met mine for the last time, might convert a soul to faith in Jesus; for it

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was a speaking confirmation of His words, ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ In that sweet smile there was love that cannot die; light beaming from immortality. We buried him the next day. The doctor was the only friend with us. He dug the grave under an oak tree, a few yards from our bed-room window. My husband selected the spot. He can see it, when he is raised on his bed. It is a trial, father, to a mother, to lay her child out of her arms into the cold earth; but there is in it no bitterness—no fear—no doubt. Believe me, dear father, for while I say it—I am sorely pressed upon —any thing may be borne, but sin and separation from God.”

(The letter dropped from Gore's hands; “*That cannot!*” he exclaimed; and in the anguish of his heart he cried aloud.)

“Ten days have passed since my baby's death. My husband is sinking fast. The doctor told us yesterday, that our separation might take place at any moment. When he went out, Russel said, ‘This is much hardest for you, Matty. Rest on God's promises. He has never been known to forsake the widow and fatherless that put their trust in Him; we cannot be separated long; we know that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I asked him if he had any directions to give about the children. ‘None,’ he said, ‘none; you will bring them

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up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I have no anxieties for them, Matty; I have for you; but I am trying to cast off this care.’ He has given me his advice as to all earthly matters; he seems to have forgot nothing.”

“It is over. He died at sunrise this morning; he sat up, supported by the doctor; his last look was on that little green mound under the oak tree, and then at me. I had been alone with him all night. Never, father, did I witness such faith; such peace; such joy; and, I may add, such thought for others. Surely he had drank deep of his Saviour's spirit. Before the children were put to sleep last night, he would have them come and kneel down at the bedside, while he prayed with us for the last time. Father, he remembered you and Harry! O! how he prayed that you might be brought to believe in Jesus; ‘the resurrection and the life.’ Father, you will! you will! I am too weak to write more, his words are all written on my heart.

‘We buried him yesterday. Kind friends came to help us. There was no clergyman; but we had prayers and hymns, and a fitting service; and we laid him there beside the baby, where they will rest together, till this mortal puts on immortality. O! father, what a frightful, fathomless abyss, must the grave be to an unbeliever!’

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“Ten days have passed; my strength is a little recruited. Every thing has been done as my husband wished. You know many things have gone against us in a worldly way, since we have been here. I have sold all the personal property except the bed, and a little silver, and other valuables bought with the hundred dollars you gave me, and paid our debt to the doctor, and all other debts. I have fifty dollars over, for my journey to Fairtown. My husband wished me to return there, as I can do nothing here. The land may be something for the children hereafter. I begin my journey to-morrow. The lateness of the season makes it imprudent to delay. I intend taking the steamboat at Detroit. Farewell, dear father, may God have mercy on us all!”

“Amen !—amen!” cried Gore, clasping his hands, while tears poured like rain down his cheeks. It was a sleepless but a blessed night to him. Silence and solitude are powerful enforcements of conscience. Gore had never felt the influence of religion. In his youth he lived more even than most young persons, in the outward world. He judged of causes by their effects. He compared Matty's course to his own, and to Harry's. In the midst of disappointments and grievous afflictions, she dwelt in the light of another world; she was borne up by an immortal principle; the fire did not consume her, nor the floods overwhelm her. What was

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Harry's condition; what his own, at this moment! Like Mackenzie's philosopher, Gore wished he had never doubted; but, unlike him, he doubted no longer. For the first time since he had come to man's estate, he, that night, bent his knees to his Creator!

The next morning, before going out to his affairs; he dismissed Angelica's servant, and determined to lock his door, to prevent that bad woman access to his house.

He had received the night before two thousand dollars, in payment of a debt, too late to deposit it in the bank; his first errand out was to go there with it. On opening the desk where he had put the money, he found that it was gone. The desk had been opened by a false key. The loss of the money was no insignificant matter to Gore, but every other feeling was swallowed up in the horror of the belief that Harry was a participator in the robbery. He resolved at once, to keep it secret; he told it only to one friend. A secret should have but one keeper.

We return to Matty, who was driven, with her two children, in a wagon to Detroit. She passed the night there, before embarking in the steamboat, and was compelled to sleep in a room filled with emigrants; the women of half a dozen families, Scotch, Irish, and German. When she went to bed, she put her pocket, containing her pocket-book, with her little store of bank notes, under her pillow. Worn out with fatigue, and the watchful nights of many weeks, she slept soundly.

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In the morning the pocket-book was gone! Matty, unconscious of her loss, paid her bill from a purse in the pocket of her dress where she had a small sum for present use. Her box, containing her bed, &c, had been left on the wharf with the steamboat baggage; and Matty, knowing little of the ill chances of a traveller, had no further anxiety but to get herself and her children on board. As soon as they had put off, and her weak head, which had reeled with the confusion of the embarkation, had recovered a degree of steadiness, she went to look after her baggage. A trunk, containing her own and her children's apparel was forthcoming, but the box was left behind.

“This is a heavy loss to you, ma'am,” said a good-natured man, who had assisted her search. “Yes,” said Matty, with a melancholy smile which the man seemed truly to interpret; for he added; “but, Lord bless me, ma'am, I think you have met with greater.”

“I guess she has,” said little Sybil; “for she has lost father and the baby, and we are all alone!”

“Well, well!” said the man, brushing away a tear; “the greater burden makes the lesser one feel light— that's a comfort, anyhow.”

Poor Matty was destined to farther experience of the truth of her comforter's philosophy. It was not long before the crier called out to the passengers from Detroit, to “come to the Captain's office, and pay their passages!” Matty waited till the press was over, and

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then went forward. The captain told her the amount, and, taking her little boy in his arms, was addressing a kind word to him, when he perceived the mother turn suddenly very pale.

“My pocket-book is gone,” she said; “I have not a dollar left! What is to become of us?” Her sense of their utter destitution overcame her, and she covered her face with her hands, and sank down on a bench. The children crept into her lap, and put their arms around her. Sybil whispered, “Why, mother! Mother, you always say God will take care of us? Won’t he now, mother?”

The captain fixed his eye steadfastly on the poor mother. He was accustomed to every mode of imposition and evasion, but this was truth; he felt assured, and it went to his heart, as warm and generous as any man’s; and, despite his hackneyed life, untouched by cupidity, and incapable of selfish suspicion. His attention was for a moment called off by some applicants at the office; and when it again reverted to Matty, she had wiped away her tears, and said calmly, “You must excuse me, sir; I have been through great fatigue and trouble lately;” her voice faltered, and little Sybil interposed. “She means father and baby are dead, sir.” “I see plainly,” resumed Matty, “there is but one thing to be done; I must be set on shore at the first landing place.”

“Where were you bound, ma’am?” asked the cap-

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tain in a voice that indicated sympathy and respect. Matty told him. He inquired, “if she expected to find friends there.”

“It is my native place, sir,” she replied; loath to enter into further particulars.

“Then,” said the captain, “we must get you there as fast as steamers and canal-boats can take you. You are in no state to be put ashore, my friend, and left to shift for yourself.” He called to the chambermaid. “Give this lady No. 15,” he said, “and a settee, and see that she has every attention and comfort.” Then taking Sybil in his arms, and kissing her, he said; “God does take care of good little children, my dear.”

“And so do good men, too!” replied the child, returning his caress. The mother smiled through her tears. It was a smile full of sweetness, peace, and gratitude. She could not speak. The captain understood her. He replaced Sybil in her arms, and turned away. Matty retired to her berth; and there her full heart found utterance without the aid of voice.

Subsequently it occurred to her, that the contents of her box, if recovered, might afford a compensation to the captain, and she told him so. “There is not much of value in the box,” she said, “excepting a bed, but it is a very good one.”

“I do not doubt it,” he replied; “or that I shall recover it; but I shall sleep all the better on my own bed, for thinking you have got yours in safety. Say no

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more about it, Mrs. Milnor; it is not every trip, up or down the lake, I have a chance of doing a good turn to a person I respect so much as I do you.”

When they arrived at Buffalo, the captain himself attended her to the canal-boat, and got an assurance from its commander that Mrs. Milnor should be forwarded free of expense to Albany; and then giving her a basket, well packed with an ample store of good provisions, he took a kind leave. Subsequently the box, directed and forwarded by the captain, came safely into Matty's possession.

These particulars of the captain's humanity, we should fear, might prove tiresome if they were fictitious; but being true *to the letter*, we would do our part towards cherishing their memory, as one of the moral treasures of our race.

It was not from this benevolent captain alone that Matty experienced kindness. Wherever she needed it, it was extended to her. She arrived safely at Schenectady. Being much exhausted, she asked leave to remain for an hour in the canal-packet, after the passengers had left it. New arrangements were now to be made. She was to change her mode of travelling, and she dreaded going among the throng, and begging a passage in a rail-road car.

Her delicacy shrunk from this prolonged dependence, and she was half inclined to stop where she was, and seek employment. But her strength was inadequate to

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labour, “and surely,” she thought; “experience should teach me faith in my fellow-beings, and trust in Him who hath helped me thus far!” She resolved to proceed; when a person, who, like her, was lingering in the packet, asked her if she would like to look at a “New York paper?”

“Thank you—no!” said Matty; who had no very keen appetite for newspapers.

“But there is something quite awful and interesting there,” pursued the person, pointing to a heading,

“Farther Disclosures.”

Matty took it languidly; but so she did not read, what follows. “A second examination took place yesterday, of Angelica, alias Nancy Foot. She declared that she had not had any special altercation with Gore on the fatal night; nor since the previous morning, when the robbery first got wind. He had shared the money with her, believing it was, as she assured him, her savings from various largesses. It seems that the unfortunate youth, though deeply depraved, was struck with horror at the imputation of having robbed his own father. He said to Nancy, when he heard the police were in search of him,

‘It was well there was no hell hereafter; there was enough of it here!’ It seems more than probable, that his disbelief in a final retribution, concurring with his present degradation and alarm, impelled him to the horrible act of suicide.”

Matty read no farther; the paper dropped from her

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hands; she fainted and fell on the floor! The person who gave her the paper had left the cabin. “O! mother has died too!” screamed Sybil, and the little boy cried piteously. At this moment an old man entered the cabin door, and when Matty opened her eyes she found herself in her father's arms.

John Gore has returned to his old home in Fairtown. The waxed table, the old clock, and the Bible are in their accustomed places. But the Bible no longer seems to Gore a mere piece of furniture. He reads it daily, and with the earnest and humble mind befitting him who knows he reads the oracles of the living God. He has but one sorrow, yet that admits no cure; and he never speaks of it. He lives in close friendship with the Milnors, “not having yet forgiven them,” he says, with a smile; “but having been forgiven by them!”

Matty now only shows she has suffered by her ready and deep sympathy with all who suffer. Her losses on earth are her treasures in heaven. She is the solace of her old father; the guide and delight of her loving and good children; the example of all worth in her humble neighbourhood; and though “poor, she maketh many rich.”