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C. W. FENTON,
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PROSPECTUS OF THE WASHINGTON AMERICAN.

We can hardly think it necessary to urge upon those who hold that Americans ought to rule America, the importance of having a paper at the seat of the Federal Government, which shall enunciate and advocate the doctrines of the American party.

A paper issued from any of the great centres of a nation, but especially from the political Metropolis, in the present age, not in this country only, but in Great Britain, France, and wherever there is the least freedom of discussion, is a medium through which those holding similar sentiments in regard to public affairs and public policy, may make known, discuss and defend their views, and expose the impropriety of the principles, and the impolicy of the measures of their antagonists. It should earnestly labor to give a proper direction to public opinion by enlightening the public mind.

The AMERICAN is the only paper published at the seat of the Federal Government which advocates *American* doctrines; the only sentinel of the party stationed where a near and clear view can be had of the movements and doings of their opponents at their headquarters. Here political information concentrates, and from hence it radiates to every part of the empire; here party measures and movements are determined, and political campaigns planned; here stratagems are concocted and thwarted, and here at certain seasons of the year politicians most do congregate; here, in short, is the centre of the great political maelstrom in which so many thousands are constantly plunging and forever gyrating.

If the American party is desirous of being a *national* party, it should not be without a paper here through which it can make known to all people its views, aims and opinions, and which shall also refute the calumnies that are from time to time uttered against it through ignorance or a less excusable motive; and we, therefore, take hope that the AMERICAN, standing, as it will stand, upon the platform of the *American* party, advocating, as it will advocate, the paramount rights of native-born citizens, eschewing, as it will eschew, all interference with slavery as a national concern, and maintaining, as it will maintain, perfect freedom of opinion and of conscience in religion, will find favor in the eyes of all truly patriotic citizens in the land, and commend itself to their generous support.

Lest we may not have been specific enough in declaring our principles, we add, that the FAREWELL ADDRESS of the Father of his country, as illustrated by the broad light of his administration, is our political text-book and *vade mecum*; and shall be our compass and chart.

PLATFORM

Of the American Party, adopted at the session of the National Council, June 2, 1857.

1st. An humble acknowledgment to the Supreme Being, for His protecting care vouchsafed to our fathers in their successful Revolutionary struggle, and hitherto manifested to us, their descendants, in the preservation of the liberties, the independence, and the union of these States.

2d. The perpetuation of the Federal Union, as the palladium of our civil and religious liberties, and the only sure bulwark of American Independence.

3d. *Americans must rule America*, and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all State, Federal, and municipal offices or government employment, in preference to all others: nevertheless,

4th. Persons born of American parents residing temporarily abroad, should be entitled to all the rights of native-born citizens; but

5th. No person should be selected for political station, (whether of native or foreign birth,) who recognises any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or power, or who refuses to recognise the Federal and State constitutions (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, as rules of political action.

6th. The unqualified recognition and maintenance of the reserved rights of the several States, and the cultivation of harmony and fraternal good will, between the citizens of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions appertaining solely to the individual States, and non-intervention by each State with the affairs of any other State.

7th. The recognition of the right of the native-born and naturalized citizens of the United States, permanently residing in any Territory thereof, to frame their constitution and laws, and to regulate their domestic and social affairs in their own mode, subject only to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the privilege of admission into the Union whenever they have the requisite population for one Representative in Congress. *Provided always*, that none but those who are citizens of the United States, under the constitution and laws thereof, and who have a fixed residence in any such Territory, ought to participate in the formation of the constitution, or in the enactment of laws for said Territory or State.

8th. An enforcement of the principle that no State or Territory ought to admit others than citizens of the United States to the right of suffrage, or of holding political office.

9th. A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years, of all not heretofore provided for, a indispensable requisite for citizenship hereafter, and excluding all paupers and persons convicted of crime, from landing upon our shores; but no interference with the vested rights of foreigners.

10th. Opposition to any union between Church and State; no interference with religious faith, or worship, and no test oaths for office.

11th. Free and thorough investigation into any and all alleged abuses of public functionaries, and a strict economy in public expenditures.

12th. The maintenance and enforcement of all laws constitutionally enacted, until said laws shall be repealed, or shall be declared null and void by competent judicial authority.

13th. A free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our platform.

THE SPINNING WHEEL.

BY MRS. M. ST. LEON LOUD.

There stands, or rather *stood*, for the Giant Improvement may, for ought I know, have run a double railway over the spot, or excavated a canal, or divided the beautiful farm into town lots; but there did stand at the date of my story, in the loveliest of New England vallies, a large, old fashioned, rambling, many-winged house, which every attempt to modernize would have rendered less picturesque. One high-peaked gable-end fronted the road, and from each side of a latticed porch over the door, a hardy vine, had clambered upward, clinging by its root-like fibres, until the whole gray and weather-beaten front was covered by a drapery of the richest green. Here and there, the luxuriant screen was parted away from the small narrow windows, which peeped out like bright eyes from among clustering curls. At the other end of the house, a venerable willow of immense size, spread its branches protectingly abroad, while the summer wind made sweet music through its waving top. Everything around bespoke comfort of the most substantial kind, but had the proprietor yielded to the superior taste of his wife and eldest daughter, the shady old homestead that had sheltered its four generations, would soon have been *improved*, as far as possible, into a mere Chinese pagoda. But considering all improvement as innovation, and actuated moreover by a sincere veneration for the home of his fathers, Mr. Mason, stoutly resisted the entreaties of Miss Malvina, that the vines might be torn from the old wall, whose imperfections they had so long and lovingly concealed; and a coat of white paint substituted; or that an unsightly wing might be pulled down, or the shrubbery cut away, and rows of poplar planted to form an avenue, and afford a prospect; or even that the garden beds might be changed from the triangles, quadrangles, and all sorts of angles, which they exhibited, to the more ornamental figures of a plan she had drawn.

But it is time the reader was more particularly introduced to the family inhabiting the mansion we have described, which consisted of Mr. Mason, his wife, his aged mother, a stately and interesting relic of the olden time, and two daughters. On the eldest of these, Mrs. Mason, who had just been reading "The Children of the Abbey," bestowed the twice romantic name of Malvina Euphrasia; while Mr. Mason claimed the paternal privilege of naming the yougest Charity. Mr. Mason himself was a fine specimen of a New England farmer, some years ago. His father, a sharer in the Revolution, had well nigh impoverished himself by his devotion to the cause of liberty, and, at his death, left his son little mote than the house in which he was born, and a few acres, adjoining; but, during his life-time, he had endowed him with that which no vicissitudes could take from him, a treasure of greater value than houses or lands—a contented disposition, sound and correct principles, and frugal, industrious habits: by the exercise of which he had added field to field—built barns and filled them, and secured to his family every comfort of life. At middle age, he found himself the independent owner of a large and valuable farm, on which it was no longer necessary for him to labor. As is not unusual in these latter days, there was a division in the family of Mr. Mason; for while he strove to perpetuate the good old primitive habits of his ancestors, his wife, whose only dowry when he married her, was a pretty face and abundance of pride, contended that her daughters ought to be exempt from all labor, go to a fashionable, that is, expensive boarding school, and dress as well as other young ladies in the institution; in no other way, she declared, could they ever become fitted for society. By dint of perseverance, she carried her point so far as to obtain her husband's consent that Malvina should receive what her mother called the "advantages of education," while Charity was to remain and attend a really excellent day school in the next village.

With this arrangement, Mrs. Mason was fain to comply, for as she said, it was labor lost, to try to make a lady of Charity, but in reality she was unwilling to dispense with the active, and efficient aid rendered by her youngest daughter in all household affairs. The result of these different systems was, that when after two years, Malvina returned tinselled over with showy accomplishments, Charity had laid up a treasure of the sterling ore of Knowledge. Malvina, who was her mother's favorite, inherited many of her peculiar traits of character, and had profitted so well by her instructions, that she looked upon the necessary avocations of a farm-house with sovereign contempt. To her father's expressed desire that she should assist about the house, she pleaded delicate health, and, to establish her plea, never arose till after the family had breakfasted. But sweet Charity Mason—no wonder that she was the life and soul of the place, as blooming with health, her fair round face dimpled with smiles and her blue eyes beaming with cheerfulness, she performed, not only her own, but her sister's share of the household duties. The earliest carol of the lark was sure to be answered by her blythe voice from the garden, where there was some spray to be tied up, that had broken loose, during the night: or from the dairy, where she was superintending the disposal of the brimming pans of milk: or from the orchard where she was gathering the early ripe apples that had fallen, before the pigs and poultry devoured them; or from some other place where she was making herself useful. And no wonder that she was the pride and comfort of her father, and the idol of her doting grandmother.

The southern wing of the house, containing two rooms, was appropriated to the use of the elder Mrs. Mason, and a more delightful retreat for age, could scarcely be imagined. On each side of a door opening into the garden, were rose bushes, whose branches, weighed down with their fragrant blossoms, met above while the room was almost darkened by the pink and purple morning glories which the old lady delighted to train across the windows. Within, the exquisite neatness and order were refreshing—indeed grandmother's room was the favorite resort of the whole family. (And oh! how kind—how cheerful—how sunny tempered; how interesting and instructive as a companion—how judicious as an adviser—how soothing and affectionate as a friend, was Mrs. Mason; and how lovely is age, when free from the querrulousness that so often attends it! There is mingled with the wisdom and experience of years, the cheerfulness of youth.)

It was a bright, pleasant, afternoon, and the shadows were falling westward, when the sisters found themselves in the only place where they met on common ground. Charity was resting from the labors of a busy day, in a large old rocking chair, listening to the monotonous hum of her grandmother's spinning wheel, and Malvina, leaning out of the window, began pulling off the half closed buds of the morning glory, and making prisoners of the bees who had lingered too long in their honied cells. There, too, sat Mrs. Mason before the open door, just where the pleasant sounds of the hay-making could reach her ears, now and then stealing a glance from her employment at the laborers as they tossed about the new-mown clover, and the distant hills dotted with cattle, turning at the same time by a quick motion of her foot, the small wheel through whose agency was twisted and wound up, the fine continuous thread which her well-skilled fingers drew from the bright, silvery flax on the distaff. At last Malvina said—

"I wonder you do not tire of that eternal spinning, grandmother; I am sure I should fall asleep over it, for the very sound makes me drowsy.

"Any constant employment might produce the same effect," replied Mrs. Mason, smiling. "But perhaps you think it a waste of time?"

"Indeed I do," said the young lady, "and I verily believe I should starve if I had to get my living in that way."

"Don't you know," said Charity, "that father often wishes we were back to the primitive times when women spun and wove the clothing for their families, and made it up besides?"

"It is very few such garments I would wear," said Malvina scornfully, "let alone making them. And as to being primitive, I don't think we need go far back for that, when I am obliged to make the beds like a chamber-maid, and you, who will suffer yourself to be imposed upon, wash and bake, and scrub, till your hands are not fit to be seen."

"Never mind, sister," replied Charity, I fancy I shall get through the world with these hands," holding up a pair, which, if they were not soft and white as those of her sister, were nevertheless small and well shaped, with the pink glow on the palms which Mrs. Hale thinks requisite to beautiful hands—"quite as well as Grace Doolittle, who wears gloves with suet skin woven on the inside, to keep them soft. But about the spinning, grandmother—I wish you would teach me to spin; I am sure I should like it."

"But it would in fact be a waste of time for you or any other young woman to sit down to spinning in these days," said Mrs. Mason."

"There!" exclaimed Malvina, triumphantly, "I knew grandmother would agree with me in thinking that we have more important things to attend to."

"Certainly we have," said Mrs. Mason, gravely. "You, Malvina, whose delicate health forbids you to inhale the morning air, must lie in bed until the sun has dispelled the noxious vapors; then you have your hair to put in papers, which in the afternoon must be taken out; your numerous dresses must be re-modelled after the latest fashion, and it is highly important to write often to your score of school correspondents. Besides, you must spend several hours ever day practising, as you call it, on your piano; of course to you, spinning would be an unpardonable waste of time."

Malvina pouted, and Mrs. Mason continued—

"And if you, Charity, were to devote your time to it, the comfort of the whole family would be diminished without an adequate return."

"But father says that men were more prosperous and happy when their wives and daughters manufactured the linen and woollen cloth for their families, and a surplus to dispose of—than they are now."

"That they were equally happy, cannot be disputed," said Mrs. Mason. "If they had fewer sources of what is now called enjoyment, that is, if they were less refined and intellectual, they had fewer of the artificial wants which are a fruitful source of unhappiness to the present generation. As to wealth, many a man, who were nothing but homespun, had a good substantial leather bag well filled with hard dollars, laid by in case of emergency, which cannot be said of thousands who, to judge by their outside show, might be called rich. There was great virtue, too, and often heroic self-denial, practised by those whose industry clothed their families; had they not done so, many would scarcely have been clothed at all, but such sacrifices brought their own reward in a consciousness of duty performed. 'Where much is given, much will be required,' and the females who are reaping the benefits of the wise regulations and wonderful inventions of the last half century, will be highly culpable, if they misimprove the time thus placed at their disposal."

"And then again," said Chairity, 'father says that girls ought not to be married til they have made and laid by a large quantity of linen for themselves and household purposes, that they might do very well with one silk dress for winter, and a muslin one for summer, and that they should milk the cows, make butter and cheese—in short do all the work, and save the expense of hiring help."

"Your father," replied Mrs. Mason, "in his attachment to old customs, forgets that the occupations which were necessary and laudable fifty years ago, would now be a mere waste of time, and that a young lady of the present day, engaged in spinning or weaving, would be as much out of her proper sphere of action as a buxom, roughhanded farmer's daughter of the olden time, learning painting and embroidery. The truth is, it is the abuse of what is called 'fashionable,' that makes men so bitter against the present state of things, and causes them to revert to the days when they were not teased for money to be spent in frippery, nor their sleep haunted by visions of tradesmen's bills; to pay which, mortages must be given on their property; for to this very strait have many been reduced, by the extravagance of their families. Your father is a rich man, nor would he like to see you doing any really laborious work constantly; it is the principle he contends for, because he fears you may be drawn into the vortex of fashionable folly, with others."

"No danger, while he holds the purse strings," remarked Malvina, who had listened in silence to the conversation.

"As a proof of what I say," continued Mrs. Mason, "he has sent you, Malvina, to the best school in the country,—suffered you to acquire accomplishments which he no doubt considers useless, and has purchased a piano for your gratification; and now, my dear child, he expects you will not devote all your time to these things, but assist your mother and Charity about the house."

"It is not genteel for a lady to do housework," said Malvina Euphrasia, affectedly.

"It was not thought ungenteel in the time of our own Governor Wolcott," replied her grandmother, "whose amiable and accomplished wife and daughters assisted regularly in the work of the house, and I have seen them wearing fine thread stockings, spun and knit with their own hands. No one ever disputed their right to the title of ladies, in every sense of the word."

"But about the spinning, grandmother," said Charity, returning once more to the starting point, "why do you sit all day at your wheel, when there is no necessity for it?"

"I am old," replied Mrs. Mason, and can be of little help in any other way. Besides, it calls up pleasant recollections of days long past, and while I sit at my humble employment, I retrace again and again the thread of my life, and when I find a rough, uneven spot, I endeavour to remember whether it was caused by my own wilfulness and passion, and if so, try to atone for it by deep and heartfelt penitence, and thus I am quietly preparing for the great change that awaits me."

There was a pause, but at length Mrs. Mason continued:

"I cannot have my favorite spinning wheel fall into disgrace because the time is past when it can be profitably employed; it must be honored for the good it has done. I recollect an instance where it rendered important service to a whole family."

"Oh, pray relate it," cried Charity; and even Malvina seemed disposed to listen.

"I am afraid, Malvina," said Mrs. Mason, "that the tale of a 'Spinning wheel,' sounds very unpromising, after the high-flown novels you read; but it may do you good, for it will show what patient industry can accomplish for those we love:

"It was long, long ago, that two young girls were walking along the dusty street of a very small village, engaged in carest conversation. One, whose name was Jemima Eldridge, was short and thick, with plump red cheeks, and very white teeth, which she was exceedingly fond of displaying; her person was loaded with finery of every kind, put on in defiance of all taste, and total disregard for harmony in colors. The other—Hester Wilson—was tall and slender, with delicate complexion and blue eyes, in whose depths the very spirit of kindness seemed to nestle, while on her expressive features there rested a shade of sadness, as if trouble had already fallen on her young heart. Her dress was plain and simple in the extreme, yet far more becoming, in its beautiful neatness, than the gaudy apparel of her companion. 'Do you know,' said Jemima, 'that school begins to-morrow?' The new master has come, and father says he is such a nice young man—only a little reserved. I am going, and who knows but I may make a conquest. 'Are you going?' 'No,' replied Hester, 'I do not think father can afford to send us all, and the children need it more than I do.' 'What nonsense,' exclaimed Jemima, tossing her head; 'there are a pack of young ones at our house, too; but I am not going to give up my privileges to them, I assure you. You had better leave yours at home, and go to school with the rest of the girls.' 'I cannot leave them all and go myself, for I have no mother as you have, Jemima, to look after them,' returned Hester, sorrowfully. 'Well, I would not give it up so; I always tease father until I have my own way, and dare say you could do the same.' Hester made no reply, and having arrived at the point where their roads separated, the girls bade good night, and each walked quickly homeward, Jemima to assert her determination of going to school, and Hester to prepare the frugal evening meal for her father and his motherless children.

Mr. Wilson sighed as he looked round on his little flock, and felt that many and bitter are the trials of those who, having known prosperity endure its reverse, and through that ordeal he was now passing. The death of his wife, which followed the birth of little Molly, was the beginning of a series of misfortunes which Providence sends like the rain, on the just as well as the unjust. Loss succeeded loss, until Stephen Wilson was a poor man, with a debt of considerable amount contracted during the long illness of his wife, which he knew not how to pay. For a long time, after the youngest children had gone to bed, he remained with his arms crossed on the table, and his head resting on them.

"Hester," he said at length, looking up at his daughter, who sat opposite, busily plying her needle, "I have heard all about the school, and that all the girls of your age are going. It grieves me that you cannot go too."

"Do not let that distress you, father," returned Hester, but at the same time she turned away her face to conceal the tears that would start in spite of herself. "You know I went to school a good deal before mother died, and now I must let the rest go."

"I fear they will be disappointed too, for Mr. Johnson must be paid; he has waited already longer than I could expect. There is a way by which you can go, and pay for your own schooling, if you choose, Hester. Mr. Eldridge has raised a quantity of the finest flax, and his wife says, that as Jemima is going to school, she shall be obliged to hire it spun; and if you will spin forty yards of table linen, you may set your own price on the work."

There was a temptation for poor Hester, such as she had never met with before. She thought of her ardent desire for learning, and the limited means afforded for its gratification, and then she thought of her young brothers and sister. Henry, a tall, sickly boy of fourteen, had never been more than a year at school; with a little more learning, he might get a situation in a store, for he would never be able to work. Jack, a sturdy little fellow of ten, could but just read; and little Molly was still in b-a-—k-e-r. And could she selfishly appropriate the offered opportunity, while they were growing up in ignorance? Oh! who can tell the love of an elder sister for the dear ones bequeathed to her care by a dying mother?

"Father," said Hester, in a steady voice, "I will take the spinning, but the children shall go to school."

When Stephen Wilson rose up and kissed the fair brow of his first born, ere he blessed her and bade her good night, he felt that one treasure at least was yet spared to him.

Lonely, indeed, would have been the home of the bereaved husband, but for the daughter, who had grown up in the beauty of early womanhood by its hearth, whose sunny smiles so often dispelled his gloom when cares pressed heavily on his heart, and whose sweet voice cheered and consoled him.

The next morning Hester looked up all the old spelling books in the house, and with many kind words of advice and encouragement, prepared the children for school. They departed in the highest spirits; and you must not suppose that Hester repined at her own lot, when I tell you that closing the door upon her loneliness, she wept long and freely. They were natural tears, which were soon dried in the light of a cheerful spirit.

In a few days her task commenced, and many blamed Stephen Wilson for permitting his daughter to undertake it, in addition to the cares of the family. They knew not the strong affection, the yearning anxiety for the welfare of her brothers and sister, which prompted and supported her. Not a household duty was neglected; not one of the thousand nameless attentions to the comfort of her father omitted; but the board was as duly spread, the fire shone as brightly on the clean hearth, and no children were so neatly clad, or so punctual at school as those of Stephen Wilson. If Hester's cheek grew a shade more pale with such continued exertion, she felt herself well repaid when, in addition to the remarkable progress of her brothers, she had the pleasure of hearing little Molly read a chapter in the Bible for the first time, and knew that through her means the hitherto sealed fountain of eternal life was opened to the precious child. But, though animated by a noble purpose, and never for a moment regretting the choice she had made, Hester had her trials, and sore ones too, for a young girl. Every morning, just as she had finished the work of the house, and was sitting down to her daily employment, Jemima Eldridge came by, on her way to school, looking so fine, so happy—and Hester fancied that of late she had assumed airs of superiority over her old friends. At night, too, Jemima was sure to stop in, just to rest a minute; and some how or other she could talk of nothing but the schoolmaster, his beauty, his learning, his genteel manners, and interesting ill health; and how she could not find out where he came from, or anything about him, a mystery which greatly enhanced his importance in her eyes—always ending with pitying poor Hester's hard fortune in being obliged to stay at home. Twenty times a day did Hester blush to find herself thinking of the schoolmaster, whom she had not yet seen, and no wonder if she felt a little flurried when the children informed her that Mr. Avery, in his progress of "boarding round," would be their guest the next week. It was a new era in the life of Hester Wilson, for except her father and the good old minister, she had never spent an hour in the society of a gentleman. Not that Hester had not plenty of rustic admirers, but a certain dignity of manner had compelled them to rest content with rendering the homage of their eyes. Notwithstanding a natural grace that would have adorned any station, she was bashful to a painful degree, and would gladly have dispensed with the established usage; but it was not to be thought of, so she set herself resolutely to prepare for the reception of her expected guest. The small parlor, which in those days, even in better houses than Mr. Wilson's, was often used as a sleeping apartment, was cleaned, the whitewashed fire-place filled with evergreens, and the well-sized bed supplied with snowy linen. Two whole days were spent in preparing for his substantial entertainment, and "last, though not least," in the scale of importance, her slender wardrobe was examined, and a good deal of womanly indecision manifested, as to which of her two best dresses was the most becoming, the blue or pink calico. At last the dreaded day arrived, and with it Edward Avery Hester thought all her bustle and anxiety had been thrown away on one who seemed so dignified, so proud-like, that he did not notice anything around him. He did not praise the pumpkin pies, apple tarts, or dough-nuts, on the manufacture of which she had exausted her skill; she would not have been pleased had he done so, yet she felt dissatisfied, and never was prisoner more rejoiced to escape from his thraldom, than was Hester at nine o'clock to retreat to her little room. If it be true that our last waking thoughts flow on in dreams, you can easily guess what visions haunted the pillow of Hester Wilson that night.

The next morning she cared less about it, and in a few days Edward went and came in his quiet way, seeming so like one of the family, that she wondered how his presence could ever have disturbed her. The last evening of the week came, and Hester felt sad; perhaps she was thinking how much she should miss the interesting books Mr. Avery read aloud every evening, or that her father would be lonely when there was no one to talk with him, or——but whatever her thoughts were, her eyes filled with tears, and she turned her wheel with renewed energy. At a small table near her sat Edward Avery, shading his eyes with his hand, seemingly absorbed in a book, but in reality studying with intense interest the half-averted face of the unconcious Hester. He knew why she toiled early and late, when other girls of her age in the village were going to school, for Jack, in the ardor of his brotherly love, had revealed it. He had seen her affectionate and dutiful conduct as a daughter, her solicitude and untiring exertions for those who looked up to her, and as he gazed on her, so young, so devoted, with her slender figure bending gracefully as she pursued her humble occupation, he felt that he loved her, and every principle of his nature assented to the deep, fervent affection that had sprung up in his heart for the lovely and virtuous being before him. It was true she was poor and humble, but would not his excellent and pious mother welcome to her bosom, as a kindred spirit, one so amiable? And his lady sisters, fashionable and refined though they were, would they not be proud of one so rich in personal attraction? He knew them too well to doubt it, and he longed to ascertain if he had created an interest in that innocent bosom. But Edward Avery was not governed by impulse, and resolved to study thoroughly the character of her whom he hoped to find every way worthy of his love.

"That must be a pleasant employment of yours, Miss Wilson," he said, laying down his book. "It seems to occupy a good deal of your time."

"I shall be candid enough to acknowledge that I do not pursue it for amusement," replied Hester, "pleasant as it may seem. It is necessary, and I do not regret the time it consumes."

"Perhaps, then, you would prefer devoting your evenings to study."

"It would be unwise to encourage desires," said Hester, averting her face still more, "which you must be aware, Mr. Avery, I have not the means of gratifying. If——" But a choking sensation prevented her completing the sentence.

"Hester—for so I must call you—" said Edward, drawing his chair nearer to her side, "will you permit me to come sometimes, and bring a few books I have, with me?"

I never knew exactly what reply Hester made, but from that time Mr. Avery was a constant evening visitor at the house of Mr. Wilson, a circumstance in no way pleasing to his young lady scholars. Especially did it offend Jemima Eldridge, whose growing penchant for the handsome schoolmaster had rendered itself quite conspicuous. She was a coarse-minded girl, whose parents, in their desire to accumulate worldly wealth, had neglected her moral education, until she scrupled at no means by which she might attain her object.

Poverty, in her eyes, was one of the deadly sins, and never doubting that others thought likewise, she took every opportunity to speak of the unfortunate circumstances of Mr. Wilson, affecting to pity Hester, whom she represented as exceedingly proud, and suffering the keenest mortification, because she could not hold up her head with other girls in the village. To all this, Edward deigned not the slightest reply, and she proceeded to hint that Hester was volatile in her friendships, and heartless, beside being so vain of her good looks as to suppose they would one day procure her the situation in life to which she aspired. Her malicious insinuations fell powerless on the ear to which they were addressed; and Jemima Eldridge, with her affected airs of gentility, became his utter aversion. Finding the evening visits of Edward still continued, she changed her attack to a more vulnerable quarter.

"Do you know," said she to Hester, as she called one morning at Mr. Wilson's, "what folks say about you?"

"About me! Nothing bad, I hope," said Hester, looking up in surprise, from an apron she was making for little Molly.

"Bad enough, I should think," retorted Jemima, "when they say that it is very imprudent in you to allow Mr. Avery to visit here so often, and you a young girl without a mother or an elder sister. And I am sure Mr. Avery don't think any the better of you, for this morning he wrote in little Molly's copy-book, "Familiarity breeds contempt," as if on purpose for you to see it."

Poor Hester covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

"Now don't cry," said her tormentor, rejoicing in her heart that she had at last touched the right chord, "or I shall believe what they say, that you are in love with Mr. Avery."

She shut the door, and left Hester writhing in all the agonies of wounded pride, and the humiliating belief, that Edward thought lightly of her.

The fact was, Jemima had invented and uttered a wilful falsehood, for "they say"—whose authority she quoted—was just nobody at all; but Hester, who was truth itself, believed all she heard. "I have indeed been imprudent in seeing him so often," she exclaimed; "I have listened to his voice too long, and, fool that I was, I sometimes thought—Oh! I am wretched—wretched!" And she wrung her hands. "But he shall find I am not the weak, vain girl he imagines. I will see him no more."

That day the book they were reading was returned to Edward, with the message, verbally delivered by Jack, "that she stood in no further need of Mr. Avery's instructions."

But oh how long were the days to Hester, as she sat at her monotonous toil, uncheered by the anticipated pleasure of the evening; and how dull, how intolerably tedious were the evenings! Weeks passed on, and rumors of the schoolmaster's attentions to Jemima not unfrequently caused her heart to sink like lead in her bosom. Yet what, to her, was Edward Avery? And a quick blush woul spread over her features.

To crown her trials, Mrs. Eldridge called one day, and requested Hester to take great pains with her spinning, for she had determined to lay by the linen for Jemima. "You know, Hester, she gets no time to spin, now that she is so taken up with learning; indeed, we don't wish her to do such drudgery—we can well afford to hire it done; but as to this piece of linen—to be sure Jemima is close enough on the subject, but if one can believe what other people say, there is no telling how soon she may want it. Mr. Avery, you know, boards altogether at our house now; and though he never even speaks to Jemima when I am by, I've no doubt it is done on purpose to blind me—young people are so sly. Mr. Avery is a nice young man, though I can't say but Jemima might do better." And here she fairly stopped for want of breath.

For a long time after Mrs. Eldridge departed, Hester sat motionless by her wheel, with her hands crossed on her lap, while the paleness that stole over her features told of a struggle going on, deep, deep beneath the placid surface. From that time the utmost care was bestowed upon her work, for was it not to grace the table of Edward?

The winter came to a close, and so did the time during which Edward had engaged to fill the office of scoolmaster. Hester had so often said to herself, "He might have called once more at least, to know why I sent him such a message," that she had almost persuaded herself she had just cause to be quite angry, and was really vexed with herself that she thought of the subject at all; but the more she strove to banish it, the more constantly it recurred to her mind. When the day came which she knew was fixed for his departure, she asked herself again and again, "Will he not come to bid us good-bye?" In the words of the old song,

"How could she think of spinning?"

So she put away her wheel, and looked up the road in the direction of the school-house, though she knew he was not there, and down the road in the opposite direction. All day she hurried about the house, arranging, and re-arranging every thing in it; but it grew dark, and he had not come.—No! he was not coming. Why should he wish to see her? She had spoken to him so distantly and coldly when they met at church, or by accident in the street, that—but just then came a gentle tap at the door, and Edward entered. Hester raised her eyes; how pale he looked, and sad too, very sad, as if some great trouble weighed on his mind. Her heart smote her, and it was with difficulty that she requested him to be seated while she called her father.

"Hester," he said, "it is you I wish to see.—Will you listen to me a few moments?"

Hester could not speak; but she sat down, and Edward continued.

"I scarcely need tell you, Hester, that I love you. You must have seen it during those long evenings that we read and conversed together. When I heard of all your goodness, and saw you, so young and beautiful, devoting all your energies to your family—when I sat by you, evening after evening, and discovered new and rich treasures of intellect which had lain like hidden gems till I drew them forth, and compared the pure freshness of your feelings with the hacknied world in which I have mingled—is it strange that I love you? But I spoke not of it—I dared not—until—pardon me, Hester, if it was presumption—until the eye that drooped beneath the glance of mine, the blush, and the trembling voice, encouraged me to hope. On the very day that I determined to place my happness at your disposal, I received that cruel message. Ah! Hester—it was not like you. It wounded me deeply, for I perceived at once that an enemy had gained your ear. I was too proud to intrude on you unbidden, and should probably have left the village without seeing you: but last night I heard the whole from one, who, I am pained to learn, has been harboring for me a warmer sentiment than it is in my power to return. I pity, and forgive her the injury she would have inflicted on my peace—shall I say *yours*, Hester?"

He took a hand that was not withdrawn, and as he bent to kiss it, warm tears fell upon his face—such tears as are only shed when the heart is too full for utterance.

It was late that night when Edward tore himself away from the cottage of Mr. Wilson, and early the next morning he left the village for his own distant home, while Hester, serious and thoughtful, yet with a deep, calm joy in her heart, moved about the house in the performance of her customary duties.

Every week, during the long summer that followed, a letter arrived at the post office, directed, as the postmaster said, in the most beautiful hand, but which he would deliver to no one but Jack Wilson, who regularly called for it, at the same time dropping very slyly into the box, a small neat packet, bearing the name of Edward Avery.

A knowledge of this circumstance converted the last drop of kindness in the heart of the ignorant, conceited and disappointed Jemima Eldridge, into gall, which she vented in the bitterest invectives against the innocent Hester. Her temper was soon after still further soured, for her father, on making his usual quarterly payment at Mr. Johnson's store, discovered that his daughter had purchased, without his knowledge, articles of dress, or rather useless