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THE DOLLAR PER ANNUM INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

"REGARDLESS OF DENUNCIATION FROM ANY QUARTER."

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TOWANDA:

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A LOVE STORY.

Marrying Through Prudential Motives.

BY MARY VALE.

"My dear Mrs. Elmer," said I, taking my seat at her feet, as her visitor, a sentimental lady of the first water, left the room, and I not hear you express a disbelief in first love."

"I suspect it was the name of a favorite author that attracted your attention, rather than any remark of mine. I merely read the extract from one of his letters:

"Assure yourself that scarce one person out of twenty marries his first love; and scarce one out of twenty of the remainder has cause to regret it at having done so. What we love in those early days is generally rather a fanciful creation of our own than a reality. We are states of snow, and weep when they melt."

"In my opinion, this consummate reader of human nature never penned a truer paragraph than this."

"I do not understand you," said I, puzzled. "The most young ladies, I had formed a grand notion of 'first, unchangeable, eternal love,' and did not quite relish its destruction. 'I suppose that many, after being disappointed in their affection, marry through prudential motives; but I cannot believe that such unions are to be blameworthy.'"

"You display a romantic contempt for 'prudential motives.' I should be sorry were you to marry with any other. I hope that they will influence me."

"My astonishment increased tenfold. I had always regarded Mrs. Elmer as a pattern of logical affection, and had inwardly resolved that, if I ever married, I would strive to select a husband who should resemble hers in many particulars, goodness, and intelligence; only he would be far handsomer. My mind instantly set upon this want of beauty as the cause which, at the time of her marriage, had prevented her from mingling with the natives which had induced her to accept him."

"You are bewildered, I see," she said, with a amused look at my face. "I have shocked my friends with notions of matrimony most terrible, and to get myself into favor again, shall try to tell you a real love-story—of first love. When I was about your age—and, if I will excuse me, I will add, in some respects quite as nonsensical, even more, perhaps, than I was an only and petted child—I resided in a small town in the interior of the State. The society of B—— was better and more refined than is generally to be found in so remote a place; and, although at a distance from the metropolis, a tri-weekly stage, which brought us the newspapers and the magazines a month, kept us from falling entirely behind the times and the fashions. The entry of the mail-coach was, as it always is in a village, an event of great importance, even if the mail was empty; but one day the interest of the public was raised to the highest pitch by the appearance of a passenger, who alighted at the hotel, and ordered his baggage to be removed. In the course of half an hour's conversation with the landlord, he announced his intentions to become a citizen of B——. He had just been admitted to the bar, and had just had a good opening there for himself as an attorney, the principal lawyer of the place being dead a short time before."

"For several days nothing was talked of but the late arrival. Lawton's puns were quoted by the young men, his opinion of trade by the pupas, his respectful and deferential demeanor praised by the mammas; while the daughters exhausted their stock of superlatives in describing his bright eyes, sweet smiles, and commanding whiskers. In short, Mr. Lawton became at once the great man of our 'little town,' and like most other lions, paid dearly for his honors by lending a patient ear to all squabbles, domestic and public; and, no matter how pressing his business engagements might be, holding himself in readiness to play the part of chief guest at every pleasure party and merry-making. It was at one of these that I first met him. I had pictured him as conceited and foppish, and was resolved to cast the good people of B——, that they had been making fools of themselves only to gratify his self-love. He should see, too, that one of them at least was not to be blinded by high flown speeches and outside show. Accordingly, I did not look towards the end of the room where I knew he was stationed for nearly an hour after I entered. I had been indisposed for a week or two previous, and therefore had never met him even at church. At length I was led to the piano, by one who had been our Adonis until recently, and whom I now treated with more affability than I had ever before shown. I had played several pieces, and had sung divers songs, which were demanded by the company; there was a pause in the demand, and I took advantage of it to sing a favorite, and what I intend should be the last before quitting the musical-stool. It was 'Moore's Farewell.' In the thoughts inspired by the exquisite mournful words and music, I had almost forgotten the presence of others, when, chancing to raise my eyes, I encountered a gaze which startled and confused me—I could not tell why. Standing at one corner of the instrument, almost facing me, and bending slightly forward as if to drink in every note, was a young man, a stranger, and handsome enough to satisfy even your fastidious taste. You like portraits, and I will describe him as he then appeared to me. He was tall, with a figure of the most graceful proportions, walking and moving as if he had been the monarch of the universe; raven hair, not curling, but waving around a fine, thoughtful brow; eyes that flashed and glowed at times, until I hardly dared look at them, and anon seemed melting into tenderness; perfect teeth, and a smile which even now I must acknowledge was sin-

gularly sweet. I did not make these observations at first; for I looked away instantly, but could feel that his regards were fixed on me still. He remained motionless until I ceased singing, and then walked slowly away. In a few seconds, the lady of the house, bringing him up to me, introduced Mr. Lawton. This was done, I know, by special request, since the worthy hostess had several marriageable daughters, and was never known to neglect their interests for the momentary gratification of a guest; and I was sufficiently well acquainted with her to read chagrin in her eyes as she presented him. This proof of admiration, coupled to the one he had already given me, softened somewhat my determination to treat him coldly; and, had these failed, his address must have disarmed me. His voice, when addressing a lady, was ever soft and low—an excellent thing, in a man as well as woman; and his manner on this occasion respectful almost to timidity.

"He stood by me for a short time, making remarks and replying to mine with distant gravity, until a rather lively observation from me caused him to turn his eyes to my face with a smile, at the same time responding in a gayer tone. The ice was now broken; he soon drew a chair to my side and moved no more during the remainder of the evening. If I had been pleased with his appearance and manner, I was charmed with the insight which his conversation gave me to his mind. I have always cordially detested the soft nothings and chitchat with which others of the sex are wont to regale us. I had rather be fed all my life upon sylabons and whipt creams. Lawton's first approach to this interesting compound was checked by a remark similar to this, but couched, I daresay, in more elegant terms, for in those days I prided myself upon what I conceived to be the perfect propriety of my language. He took the hint, and at once led the conversation into other channels, touching lightly upon different topics, until his quick eye assured him that he had found one quite peculiarly interesting to me. He spoke of music, and from this, by a most natural transition we wandered to poetry, from poetry to romance, and works of a graver nature. I was now completely in my element. From my earliest childhood I had been an indefatigable book-worm, devouring everything that came within my reach; my brain was filled with a mass of heterogeneous lore, crowded in without order; but I could generally find a little knowledge of almost any subject.

"My love of poetry amounted almost to a passion, and gave a tone to my whole character. I was not in the habit of displaying my treasures to those whom I considered cold and prosaic, sordid and heartless; but I had now met with one who could appreciate me. With great tact he drew me, as it were, out of myself, and I was not aware how completely engaged I had been, until a movement of departure throughout the room warned me of the lateness of the hour. I arose.

"You are not going yet, surely?" said my companion in a tone of surprise. "It is very early."

"I held up my watch; he effected great wonderment, and begged to be allowed the pleasure of attending me home.

"Do you know," said I, as he assisted me to put on my cloak, "that if our conversation of the last hour has been overheard, we have lost, irrevocably lost our reputation as lovers of the bon ton? I am alone to blame, as you are a comparative stranger; yet I thought you had resided here long enough to know that it is high treason in a gentleman to speak of literature to a lady. It is regarded as an insinuation that there are things in the world worthy of attention besides herself. Do not think me ill-natured. I only say this to show that my fault was not one of ignorance of established rules, which is, in such a case, a more heinous sin than willful transgression."

"I am not so ignorant as you imagine," he answered. "I flatter myself that I am already an *adieu* to the court rules of B——. This I speedily discovered to be one of the most imperative, and have met with no temptation to break it until to-night. At least," he continued, "I shall have a companion in misfortune; for if I am convicted in pejantry, you will not escape the title of 'blab.'"

"I did not rest well that night; my dreams were troubled by the picture of a stern school-master, whose every third word was Greek or Latin, and myself seated by his side, in solemn state, with an immense black letter tome in my lap, and my feet covered with a pair of indigo stockings. But then a voice murmured, 'At least I have a companion in misfortune; and I turned to meet the laughing glance of my new acquaintance.

"He made his first call a day or two afterwards, and from that time was a constant visitor. I was, remember, very young, and new to the world, my knowledge of which was drawn from romances, all of which assured me that life without love was nought. I had long treasured in my secret soul an ideal being, whom I endowed with every grace and virtue, and I now found myself repeating—

"But from that first hour I met thee,
All caught real life from you."

The more I thought of it, the more firmly convinced was I that this extraordinary windfall, dropped as it were at my very feet, was designed by my good genius for my especial benefit. I can truly say that I made no effort to attract him. I looked with contemptuous amusement upon the manoeuvres and lures of my young companions, never feeling jealous of any attention which they might extort, well knowing that, although he might linger with them for a while, he would ere long be found again by my side. I even delighted to appear perfectly indifferent when in their presence, and I have since thought that he was himself deceived by my manner, and piqued in an attempt to inspire other feelings.

"Time flew on, and the gossips of the town began to wonder if we were engaged, and, if not, why he delayed the declaration. But none of these troubled me. I was only too happy to have him near me—to feel his eyes fixed on me as if reading my very soul—to mark how

widely his manner to me differed from his deportment to others—to pour into an ever attentive ear the thoughts and feelings that fear of ridicule had hitherto led me to conceal within my own bosom. Of love we never spoke; but he wore a gentle protecting air, as if he felt that he had a right to guide and support me; while I looked up to him with a confident tenderness—a little singular in one by nature so high spirited and independent. I heard that he was at times petulant, even passionate; some called him a heartless trifler; and all agreed that he was conceited—except myself. Who had a better right to know and understand him than I? Yet I saw nothing of all these faults; and if they existed, I felt that I could have loved him better, perhaps; for the distance between us would have been lessened. So I set these remarks down to the score of envy, and smiled complacently at my keen discernment of character and motives.

"Matters were in this train when I one day received a call from Miss Noyes, the belle, as she was called—a distinction to which she was by no means insensible or indifferent. She treated me with an unvarnished degree of affection and sociability, which I knew presaged something peculiarly disagreeable.

"Do you go to Mrs. Henderson's party to-morrow night?" she inquired presently.

"I expect to attend," said I.

"No doubt your presence will be very agreeable to most of the company; but I know a few who would rather you would remain at home. There are a set of designing misses who can never forgive your monopoly of the only decent bean fate has granted us; for I should say that he monopolizes you, since I have never seen that desire for his attentions which he says you have shown."

Half of this speech, smoothly and innocently as it was delivered, would have sufficed to make my blood boil. In a voice choked with passion I ejaculated—"I desire his attentions!"

"Forgive me, my love; I would not wound or excite your feelings for the world; but as a friend, I repeat that that you may refute the false charge, not by words but by actions. The remark I alluded to I heard myself; and he added—the scandalous fellow—that he was too old a bird to be caught with chaff!"

"With a mighty effort I commanded myself sufficiently to thank her for her disinterested kindness, and assure her that, if an opportunity offered, I should gladly reciprocate the favor. She took her leave, and I gave way to my feelings. Disappointed love, mortified pride and resentment strove for mastery in my breast. The latter triumphed; and with glowing cheeks, I hastened to my toilet, resolving to make him feel to the utmost the mortification he would have me experience. Never had I bestowed such pains upon my person. I carefully laid aside every article of dress or ornament that he particularly admired, taking care, however, to replace them by others equally becoming. My stern determination was nearly overcome by a very beautiful bouquet, which was handed me just as I was ready to go. The tears rushed to my eyes; but drove them back, and, without looking for the delicate note of compliments which I knew lay *perdu* among the leaves, I tossed it into the fire."

"The first person that I saw upon entering the room was Miss Noyes, who, 'happened in Elysium,' was listening to the sugared sentences poured into her white ear by the scandalous fellow whose conduct she had deprecated. His face lighted up instantly, but I affected not to see him. Half an hour more saw me engaged in a rattling flirtation with a young naval officer, now on a visit to B——. We promenade, and I swept past Lawton, banging on the middle's arm, apparently in the finest humor with myself and my new conquest. The conversation of my companion was the flatter of small talk; but I listened as to the wisdom of a Solon. I ventured one look at Lawton as we passed him for the twentieth time. He had left Miss Noyes, and leaned against the wall, silent and moody. I declined walking any longer when we reached the other end of the room, and threw myself upon a sofa. The middle pointed, and I recollected that his fine figure and bright buttons could not be seen to much advantage in his retired corner, and sent him to borrow a fan from a lady some distance off. He requested it in his own name; and she, of course did not resign it without a little coquetish trifling, which occupied some time.

"You are enjoying yourself much to-night," said a voice at my elbow.

"I bowed assentingly, gazing with much interest at the gold lace upon the officer's collar.

"I am not," he said in a lower tone.

"I dared not trust myself to speak, but looked as frigid as an iceberg.

"I cannot be happy when I fear that I have alienated a friend," he continued, with a perseverance that surprised me; "and it is very evident that such is the case with you—I know you to well to suspect you of caprice, and therefore blame myself, although unconscious of my offence. You were wont to be frankness itself; will you not explain the cause of your changed manner? I am ready to make any apology or reparation that will place us upon our former friendly footing."

"My gallant returned with the fan, and like a booby as he was, handed it to Lawton supposing that he had usurped his place, and steered off in search of another prize. A *tele-tele* was unavoidable. I felt my inability to hold out much longer, and abruptly answered—"Do not trouble yourself to render apologies; from such a source and under such circumstances, they would be even more worthless than chaff; and, to use your own elegant phrase, 'old birds cannot be caught with that!'"

"My own phrase! You surprise me. I do not understand," said he, in such genuine wonderment, that I could not doubt his words.

"Ellen, there is something wrong here."

"It was not."

"And pray, what lady stands so high in your estimation, that you will receive from her a tale like this, of one who has never given you cause to doubt his word or honor?"

"Again I refused to gratify him, and he contented himself with an explicit and indignant denial of the charge. From this moment we were closer friends than ever. Often since has my cheek crimsoned at the thought that, on this occasion, I fairly challenged a declaration; but then I was too ignorant, as well as happy, to think of it.

"The winter passed, spring, summer; and the frost began to give signs of the decline of the year. It was the day preceding my birthday and my ever-indulgent parents had promised me a *fete* upon that occasion. Night had closed in and I sat alone in the parlor, my father and mother having gone to see a sick neighbor. I lay upon a lounge, my eyes closed and my mind filled with bright anticipations and rosy dreams. A knock at the door made me start; it was a gentle tap, but one that I had emphatically learned by heart. I stood in trembling expectation until a servant ushered in the visitor. My heart was a true prophet. He saluted me with more cordiality than usual, and tried to talk of indifferent subjects; yet I could see that his thoughts were wandering. After an hour spent in this manner, he looked at his watch, started up, sat down, then rising again, with a desperate attempt at composure, asked me for his favorite song; it was the same song that I was singing when I first met his eye, and he had told me that the feeling manner in which I had executed it had attracted him to the piano. He played finely on the flute, and was accustomed to accompany me, but now declined. "He would rather hear my voice alone."

"Thank you," he said sighing, as I concluded. "I shall never hear that song without thinking of you; and it is with deep sadness that I reflect that this is the last time I shall hear it from your lips for years—perhaps forever!"

"I felt myself growing faint; I did not speak; and he went on to explain that he had been chosen *attache* to a foreign embassy, had that day heard of the appointment, and should be forced to leave town early the next morning.

"In all probability I shall be absent four years, possibly for a longer period. In some respects this change will be highly advantageous and agreeable to me; but I have in my sojourn here, formed friendships that it pains me to break. I have not a moment to spare this evening; but I could not leave without thanking you for the kindness I have received under this roof. It has seemed not an abode of strangers but like my own dear home. Believe me, my dear Miss Ellen, whatever may be the events and changes of my future life, I shall ever cherish fondly the remembrance of the happy hours I have spent with you. In the beautiful words you have just sung—

"Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright gleams of the past, which she cannot destroy;
But which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
To bring back the features that joy used to wear."

"Scarcely knowing what I did, I accompanied him to the door, murmuring a few parting words in answer to his affectionate farewell. My hand lay for an instant in his—was respectfully raised to his lips—the next moment I was alone. I strained my eyes to watch his figure through the thick darkness, and listened to the echo of his hasty step upon the pavement until it died away in the distance.

"And this was the end of my fairy dreams! Gone, gone, for ever! rang in my ears as I sank upon a seat in the piazza, and bowed my head upon my hands. I did not weep; I was too wretched. A cold autumnal rain was falling; the drizzling mist lay heavily upon my hair and dress; I did not regard it; I even bared my brow to the damped air, to cool its feverish throbbing; and, as the night wind moaned through the fading vines, I thought of the church-yard and wished that that breeze rustled the grass over my unconscious head. The sound of voices aroused me; they were those of my parents at a distance. I hastily sought my chamber, but not to sleep. The morning found me calmer. One thing was uppermost in my mind; none should know my disappointment. I will not weary you with the details of the long-wished-for festival, the very thought of which was now sickening to me. I forced myself to go through with it; arrayed in my gala attire, played the smiling hostess and light-hearted girl; even listened unflinchingly to Miss Noyes's lamentations over what she called "our mutual and irreparable loss." One circumstance relieved me in a measure, since it showed that no one suspected my real sentiments. Lawton was known to have honored me with a parting call, and rumor said that one great cause of his sudden departure was my rejection of his suit. My indifference, on being rallied on the subject, confirmed the impression. Necessity and pride taught me dissimulation. I brooded over my griefs in silence; in the presence of others was extravagant and gay. My health began to suffer from this unnatural state of mind, and with secret delight I saw each morning the change that a day made in my appearance; my cheeks grew paler, and eyes more dim. It would be a beautiful piece of constancy to die for his sake! I pictured when, at his return, he should learn that I was no more—his surprise, grief, and remorse. In a secret drawer in my cabinet lay a parcel directed to him, "not to be opened until after my death." It contained sundry notes, unimportant in themselves, but sacred in my eyes, together with dried flowers, and one or two trifles presented by him. A farewell letter was to be added, and this was to be written in due time.

"One day I felt more languid than usual, and considered that I had better begin this precious document while I had strength. Accordingly I had seated myself at my desk, and dipped my pen in the ink, when a rap at the door made me drop it upon the paper, thereby

causing a frightful blot. In no amiable mood, I obeyed a summons from my father, who the servant said awaited me in the parlor.

"My friend, Mr. Elmer, my dear," he said as I entered; and a young man bowed whom I had never seen before.

"I had, a few days previous, heard my father speak of a certain Rupert Elmer, son of an old crosby of his who had written to inquire if the station Lawton had occupied were yet vacant. "And he thinks to fill his place!—You need no description of my acquaintance the few years that have elapsed since the time of which I speak have produced little change in him. In person he differed widely from his predecessor, and in character not less. Somewhat to my vexation, he—at my father's earnest solicitation—became an inmate of our house; and I was thus thrown into daily intercourse with him. I treated him with frigid politeness, which he met with unvarying courtesy—not strained, but proceeding from the intimate kindness of his heart.

"My manner altered by degrees; I no longer availed myself of every opportunity to escape from the room, and seek the companionship of my own sad thoughts. My heart was still too full of the memory of the absent to think of another, and I could not join in the encomiums passed every day, in my hearing, upon the amiability and intelligence of the new comer; but I began to look upon him as a pleasant, good young man, whose conversation might be agreeable when one had nothing better to engage attention. He took less notice of me than of any other member of the household; held mamma's silks, and sketched patterns for her embroidery, and read aloud to papa. He read well; and his manner, more than the beauty of his style, caused me to listen with pleasure. He was popular—why, I could not tell. He was too straightforward and candid to be a lady's man, and detested sycophancy too heartily to seek patronage. Yet his coming was always hailed with pleasure, and he soon obtained a thriving practice.

"My selfish sorrows were interrupted by real affliction. My father was taken ill with a lingering fever, that slowly dried the blood in his veins and wasted his strength. My mother, always delicate, was soon too feeble to render much assistance, and I became his constant attendant. Absorbed in the cares and anxieties of the sick-room, I scarcely noticed who were my companions, and paid no regard to one who hung over the patient sufferer with the devotion of a son and tenderness of a woman. One night I took my place by the bedside, with a spirit worn down with depression. There were no signs of a favorable change, and hope forsook my bosom. I gazed upon the pallid face, and thought how soon the remaining spark of animation would forsake it! The blow, I felt, would be too heavy for the devoted wife. The anticipation was too harrowing; my fortitude gave way, and I burst into tears. My sobb did not break the stupor-like sleep of the invalid; but some one entered hastily through the open door of an adjoining apartment. It was Elmer, who, with an alarmed look, passed to the side of the bed, and pressed his finger lightly upon the thin wrist that lay upon the coverlet.

"His pulse is feeble, but regular—he whispered; and his fever is off. I hope—I think he is better. Let me entreat you not to distress yourself."

"I could not answer. With the gentle force of a brother he led me to the open window, made me drink a glass of water, and, as I grew composed, playfully threatened to give me into the hands of the physician, if I did not keep my feelings under better control.

"I know it is difficult, especially as you have been tasked beyond your strength. I have watched you with great uneasiness. Will you not be persuaded to rest during the remainder of the night? As I told you before, I think him better; at least there is no immediate danger. I promise to summon you upon the slightest change. Will you trust me?"

"Mrs. Ainslie is to watch part of the night," said I; "but I shall not retire; I could not sleep. What is my health compared with his?"

"But for his sake you must preserve it."

"And you?" said I, remarking his jaded look for the first time.

"Oh, that is nothing; I am accustomed to it!"

"You have been up much lately?" I asked recollecting that the door through which he had come had been open for several nights, and that in the apartment, the library, I had seen a light.

"I sit up late studying," he rejoined, evading the remark. "But I remember a time when for fourteen nights I did not close my eyes; a time that makes all that I am now able to do seem as nothing."

"You are then an experienced nurse."

"I learned in a bitter school; at the death-bed of my own mother. He spoke in a saddened tone.

"I should die too," said I, glancing at the bed while tears again filled my eyes. "How could you heart it?"

"I hear it, that I may be better fitted to meet her hereafter. She taught me submission to the will of Him who doth all things right."

"Here ended the conversation for this time. After a vain endeavor again to induce me to rest, he retired, leaving the door slightly ajar. I compared my violent grief with the chastened sorrow of this pious son. His bereavement was recent, I knew; for when he first came to B—— he was dressed in deep mourning, I had never inquired of whom. The invalid stirred in his sleep, I stood by him; and, as I pressed my lip to his brow, inwardly resolved, "I too will bear it, that I may meet you in a happier world."

"The much dreaded blow did not fall; symptoms of amendment appeared, gradually, strength and health returned. I was again free to follow my former habits of thought and action, but had little inclination to do so. My feelings had undergone a change; they flowed now in a different channel. I felt the folly of the dreaming, useless life I had led, and so set work in good earnest to effect a reformation—not by my own strength, but with the aid of

Him who is ever ready to receive the penitent. Elmer's companionship and counsel were of great benefit to me. By degrees, I learned to look upon him as a dear friend; but the thought of his being anything, nearer never occurred to me. Judging from my experience on the subject, I thought love a mental hallucination. Some writer has remarked, "there is no anguish like that of an error of which we are ashamed," and I felt this truth deeply. I regarded Rupert as a brother, and therefore great was my surprise when informed by my father that he had asked his consent to address me. The old gentleman had assured him of his warmest wishes for his success; and, although he forbade to urge me, I saw that his heart yearned to embrace him as a son. Firmly resolved, as I believed myself, not to accept him, I could not bring myself suddenly to disappoint a parent whom I loved so fondly, and avoided giving a direct answer.

"Perplexed and sorrowful, I left him, and sought relief in the open air. Stepping out of the door, I found myself in the very spot where I had parted with Lawton just eight months before. It was a lovely month of June; but I was too perturbed to notice its beauty. Restlessly I paced the piazza, unable to define my own feelings, or to form any settled determination; the more I thought, the more my first resolve wavered. I considered the character of my lover; in every position of life firm as a rock when duty required, yet on every other occasion ready to sacrifice his own pleasures to promote the happiness of others. I dwelt upon his strict integrity, his manly honor and delicacy, his warm friendship.

"A voice pronounced my name, and he was by my side. I did not tremble; my heart felt warmer, but his motion was not quickened. I did not withdraw my hand as he drew it within his own—in short, my love, there was nothing romantic in the whole affair. We walked beneath the bright moon, and conversed calmly and seriously upon the proposed change in our prospects. All my agitation, the effect of irresolution was gone. I refused to give a definite reply; but he was not very unhappy when we re-entered the house.

"At the end of the time I had asked for deliberation, during which I had reflected much and solemnly, I yielded my consent; and, a few months after, took the name of him whom I now loved and honored more than any human being. With a full sense of our frailties, and an humble dependence upon One who could alone make our life one of peace and happiness we entered upon our new state; and I can say that my lot has been happy, far more delightful than I deserve."

"But Lawton," said I, drawing a long breath, "did you ever meet him again? Perhaps you would have been equally blest with him."

"She shook her head with a half sad smile—"I have seen him; but my cup was none the less sweet after our meeting. About two years ago, we were returning from a visit to Rupert's relations, who reside in the State of New York. The fashionable summer season was just over, and the steamboat, as it ploughed its way through the noble Hudson, carried a crowd of living beings within its bosom. We were seated on the upper deck, enjoying the cool breeze that sprung up at sunset, and admiring the splendid view spread on both sides of us, when I discovered that I had left my reticule in the ladies' saloon. Rupert instantly offered to look for it, and went below accordingly. Just as he disappeared, I became conscious that a pair of eyes were surveying me from the other side of the boat, with a gaze more eager than polite or agreeable. At length, annoyed by the pertinacious and continued stare, I raised my head and looked the owner of the orbs full in the face. There was something strangely familiar about his countenance. Where had I met him before? That he was an acquaintance I could not doubt. My glance perhaps expressed this conviction, for he arose and approached with a smile. I knew him well enough now; that smile brought back a throng of recollections."

"Forgive me; but can I be mistaken in supposing that I address Miss Halland?"

"Mr. Lawton, I believe," said I as he offered his hand.

"I was perfectly self-possessed, and must have appeared far less delighted at the recognition than he did. He probably had not altered much; but he was so unlike Lawton the ideal, that I did not wonder I had not observed him before. To my no longer blinded eyes he was less stately and graceful; his eyes were keen, but not so beautiful as of old; his voice had little of the melody that had once thrilled my heart; his smile and teeth alone seemed the same. With an air of easy assurance he dropped into the vacant seat beside me.

"You have not changed, I have been watching you for the last half hour in the vain hope of attracting your attention, and had become almost savage in my intentions towards the happy fellow who seemed to interest you so completely. Pray who is he? Here he comes again."

"With a sensation of proud satisfaction, I introduced "My husband, Mr. Elmer."

"Both gentlemen bowed; one with an air of surprise—the other, I thought, rather distant. Before I could form any conjecture as to the cause of this coldness, Elmer turned to me—"I met with a friend just now to whom I wish to introduce you—Mrs. Lawton. Your lady, I presume, sir!"

"Lawton nodded.

"I promised to conduct you to her," pursued Rupert. "I tried to induce her to come upon deck; but she feared you would not think it prudent," addressing her liege lord. "She looks delicate; is she an invalid?"

"Not particularly. Like most ladies, she imagines herself nervous and ill. I do not oppose her coming into the air. For my part I would not be confined to that hot saloon."

"In that case, we will invite her to join us," said my husband with an expression of more contempt than I had ever before seen in his look; and offering me his arm, we sought the neglected wife together.

"She was a pretty creature, refined-looking and ladylike. Her voice was sweet; but to my ear, it had a plaintive tone. She received me