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Choice Literature.

From the New-York Organ.

LAURA MAITLAND.

BY MRS. SANSBURY.

Such was the story which brought grief and consternation, too great for words, to the gentle heart of Mrs. Loring. Tears filled her eyes as she exclaimed—

'My sweet child! My cherished Laura! She shall not remain a moment longer under this painful deception, nor be further exposed to such unhappy influences.'

She left the room, but returned almost immediately, leading in the trembling, agitated Laura. Placing her on a seat by her side, she kindly asked if she knew either of the gentlemen present. She answered faintly that she did not. Wishing to test her ingenuousness in the presence of her advocates, Mrs. Loring asked—

'Did you get a letter to-day, my child?'

A flood of crimson rushed over Laura's face and as quickly receded, then, covering her face, she replied in a tone of anguish, 'Oh, how unhappy I am! I didn't want to read it. I wished to bring it to you, but they wouldn't let me. They said you would hate and despise me.'

'Do you know Lindley Morrison?'

'I do not, I never saw him to my knowledge,' she replied, firmly, looking up through her tears, and casting a furtive and enquiring glance at the tall lad whose earnest eyes were fixed on her with an expression of intense interest.

'My dear little girl,' said Mr. Morrison, coming forward and taking Laura's hand, 'you have been the victim of your schoolfellows, who, when they saw your distress, feared the exposure of their wickedness, and impressed you with the false belief that you would be disgraced and lose your friends unless you kept silence. But Providence found means to expose the guilty, and save you from further sorrow. This is Lindley Morrison. He is my son, and is, I hope and believe, as incapable of the act you were led to suppose he committed, as you were of feeling pleasure when you read that silly letter. We heard all that passed, and your friends will love and cherish you more than ever for the truthful and proper spirit you displayed.'

'Oh, how could they treat me so! How could they be so wicked! I'm sure I never had an unkind thought towards one of them, and they seemed so kind to me too.' Laura had taken another lesson in the world's deceit.

'What shall I do with these girls Laura? Shall I bring them before the whole school and expose their conduct?' Mrs. Loring inquired.

'Oh! no, no. That will be too hard.—Surely they will be punished enough when they know you have found them out. But—I do so much want to talk to Bel. She is so good and kind. May I not tell her?'

'Yes, my dear. Go to her now. I know she is anxious about you.' As Laura was leaving the room Mr. Morrison stooped and imprinted a kiss on her blushing cheek, while Lindley made an awkward attempt to bow profoundly.

While the sensitive Laura lay, giving vent to her long pent feelings, on the bosom of Bel, in their own little room, a more painful scene was going on in the apartment she had just quitted. Lindley had been sent home, and the five guilty girls stood in the presence of Mrs. Loring and Mr. Morrison, covered with shame, confusion and penitence from the sudden knowledge that their machination had been discovered. Their offence was held up to them in its true light, and the consequences attending such folly pointed out and explained in a most impressive and forcible manner.

'At the solicitation of the sweet child you have afflicted and sought to injure, your punishment will end here. No one acquainted with this, your first serious offence, will expose you further, or treat you differently on account of it. But beware in the future.'

Speaking thus, Mrs. Loring dismissed from her presence the youthful culprits, some of whom had received a lesson that proved salutary and beneficial.

CHAPTER VI.

Another year rolled round. Isabel Ware was at home, and installed in the sweet office of teacher to her young sisters, and a select number of the misses of the village, while Kate Halsey, the merry but generous and pureminded Kate, had succeeded her in the place she had held towards Laura.—Laura had frequently heard from her parents, whose absence was prolonged to a length not at first anticipated; but the letters from her mother were formal, spiritless and worldly, and left a sadness rather than a joy in her young heart. When she saw Kate reading her letters from home, and watched her animated face, that glowed and sparkled as if all the sunshine of her joyous soul had centered upon it, she wondered why no thrill of happiness agitated her on similar occasions. 'But I suppose,' she would say to herself, 'it is because I am so young and don't understand mamma's ways yet.' Sometimes she would say to Kate,

'Is it not strange I don't get home-sick as most of the girls? It seems as if I am at home here. I wonder why mamma does not return and send for me?'

After such questions as these, she would remain in pensive thought for some time, unless hindered by the playful sallies of her companions. She was warmly attached to Kate, but it was a love different from that which the gentle Isabel had inspired. Her nature was as warm and impulsive as Kate's, and had she grown to her present years amid the sweet ties and happy association of a loving home, she would doubtless have been equally joyous. But the circumstances of her life, and her isolated position in the home circle rendered her thoughtful beyond her years, and the more contemplative Isabel was, therefore, the companion best suited to her hours of retirement. It was with the hope that the ever sunny mind of Kate would dispel the shadows that of late had been observed to pass over the spirits of Laura, that the two were placed together.

But change awaited Laura. The sweet feeling and slumbering energies of her inner nature were about to be awakened, beyond the power of gloom to impair.

One afternoon she sat beneath the shade of a tree deeply absorbed in the contents of a book, when she felt an arm suddenly thrown around her, and, turning she beheld the face of Kate, all radiant with smiles, fixed upon her own. 'Your mother is home, Laura. See what I have brought you!' and the sympathising girl placed a letter in Laura's hand, and then took a seat beside her. With trembling fingers Laura broke the seal and read as follows:

'MY DEAR LITTLE DAUGHTER:—I am home at last, and very impatient to see you. You must be ready on Friday morning, when your papa will come for you.

'How you must have grown. I am anxious to see how you have improved in looks and manners.

'I have a present which I think will please you, but I shall say no more until you arrive. 'Your loving mother,

'MARGARET LEIGH.'

Laura sprang from her seat, and flinging her white arms about the neck of Kate, she kissed her in the wild excess of her gladness.

'To-morrow is Friday,' she exclaimed, 'and then I shall see mamma. Oh, it seems a very long time since I was home. I wonder if ma dresses as splendidly as she did, and if she will go out and receive company as much as ever,' and she mused a moment, but only a moment. It was not an occasion for unpleasant memories. She talked only of her mother's kindness, and of the many comforts and luxuries she had always surrounded her with. But the next morning she said to Kate, as she was assisting her to prepare for the journey—

'I want to please mamma, but I am afraid I shall not. I shall be all the time fearful of saying or doing something she will think is not genteel or lady-like. Perhaps, too, my dresses are all unfashionable, and she is so particular.'

Poor child! Such fears nearly destroyed the pleasure she felt in the prospect of a return to the home where she had witnessed so much willing slavery to form and fashion. Mrs. Loring saw her depart with deep anxiety. She knew Laura would act true to the feelings and principles of her nature, and she feared Mrs. Leigh's worldly ambition for her child would induce her to remove her to some institution where her own peculiar views would be rigidly carried out.

When Laura entered the city, instead of being driven, as she expected, to the house she had left more than two years before, the hack, which conveyed them from the railroad station, drew up to a hotel. There was no time to reply to her questions of surprise. She was lifted out, and led in through the great hall, amid people hurrying to and fro, and then up several flights of stairs, where waiters, and porters, and lodgers jostled against them, while their ears were filled with a confused number of sounds. At length Laura found herself ushered into a small but elegant parlor, and the first object she saw distinctly was her mother seated in a luxurious chair. Confused, agitated and almost ill from fatigue and excitement, she rushed forward and threw herself into her mother's arms, and burst into tears.

'Why, Laura, my dear, what ails you? How red your face is. Do you cry because you are sorry to see me?' Such were the expressions of Mrs. Leigh as she raised her child, and kissed her burning cheek.

'Oh no, no, mamma! I am very, very glad to see you, but I am warm and tired, and this great noisy place makes my head ache badly,' and Laura pressed her hand to her throbbing temples.

'Well, it's quiet here. Lay off your things and compose yourself. Here is a fan. Why, my dear, your hair curls as beautifully as ever, and how tall and graceful you have grown. I have not seen a finer looking girl in all my travels.'

'I am glad you are pleased, mamma,' said Laura, in a choking voice. She was glad to see her mother look smiling and gratified, but the remarks she made were not of a nature to make her happy. She felt a strong desire to lay her weary head on some friendly bosom and weep, and she thought of Bel, and of Kate, whose parting embrace thrilled her yet, but her mother, the being who should have been ever her closest friend, sat there so stately and formal, she felt as if in the presence of a stranger, and her heart seemed ready to burst with the weight of feelings crowded back upon it. Refreshments were ordered, but Laura could taste nothing, and her mother, perceiving that she was really indisposed, advised her to lie down, and she very gladly accepted the offer. A pale sad looking young woman was summoned, and attended her to a small room partially darkened, and as soon as she was left alone, she threw herself on the bed, and indulged in a fit of weeping, after which she sank to sleep. When she awoke she was conscious of hearing, close by, the feeble cry of an infant.—Feeling greatly refreshed, she arose, approached the door and peeping into the room she remembered having passed through on her way to her own, she saw the young woman just mentioned, holding in her arms a delicate babe of three or four months. Laura came softly forward, and gazing curiously and tenderly on the pale little one, she asked—

'Is it your baby?' The pale young woman answered, between a smile and a tear:

'No, miss. My own dear baby lies in the green grave yard, far away in old England.'

'Whose then is it?' she asked in a quick eager tone, while a strange unaccountable feeling fluttered through her breast.

'Ah, miss, your father and mother wished to surprise you on your arrival. They told me not to tell you while you were so tired, but you may know now. This is your little brother, Walter Leigh. He's a pretty baby, isn't he? rather weakly, but he'll grow by and by.'

'My brother! My brother! Oh, is it true! Have I indeed a darling little brother to love and care for! I shall be so happy now,' and Laura drew a low seat to the nurse's side, and twining her arms softly and tenderly about the little thing, she lifted it on her lap. She kissed over and over again the tiny hands and cheeks and lips, and when, with his large dreamy eyes, the babe looked up in her face and smiled, her extacy knew no bounds. The fluttering hope nestled down, a sweet, joyful expansiveness, and the endearing name of brother, which she repeated again and again, seemed to have opened at once a new world to her.

'Oh, mamma, I am so very happy! Is this the present you wrote about?' she exclaimed, as Mr. and Mrs. Leigh entered the room laughing at her extravagant expressions of joy.

'Did I not tell you she would act just so, Herbert. She is the most singular child, I ever saw. I expect she would be perfectly contented if I should impose on her the office of nurse,' Mrs. Leigh remarked.

'So you are pleased with the present, are you Laura?' asked Herbert Leigh approaching and bending over the infant.

'Oh, yes, you could not have pleased me better had you brought me all the wealth you ever saw.'

'I am glad you love him. If he lives let him always find a true friend and counsellor in you. I feel sure you will care for him, whatever may happen.'

Herbert Leigh uttered these words in a low tone, and no one save Laura heard him, and no one saw the look of bitterness that passed over his face, or perceived the sigh that agitated his breast as he bent above the two objects who possessed all the pure feeling that remained in his once noble nature.

The same evening, while passing along the street, Leigh met his old companion Edward Ellis. The latter grasped his hand warmly, amid a few hurried enquiries, and then pressed him to return with him to his office, that they might talk of their plans and prospects uninterruptedly. Leigh excused himself, but promised to call when it would be more convenient. He remembered his last conversation with the young man, and he had no very strong desire to renew the subject at that time, particularly since he had learned on his return, that Ellis, had forsaken his old habits, had associated him- and was soon to be united in marriage to a lady who had long possessed his affections. Many months passed ere the two friends met again, for in a few days Leigh started with his wife and child for the country, Laura returned to school, grieving much to be obliged so soon to part with the little treasure who had been, despite her mother's ridicule, almost her constant care since her arrival. But she was to come home in the winter, and after that, often, her mother said, and she returned to her young companions and her friends with a new life visible in all her actions.

In the meantime Mrs. Leigh gave orders respecting the remodelling the interior of her dwelling. It was to be completed and fitted up with new furniture of the latest French style, in time for the commencement of the gay season.

Those who wed themselves to the world, cling to it with renewed tenacity when they find youth waning and beauty fading, and at length the heart becomes so buried that the holy claims of nature and of duty are alike powerless to call it forth. Thus it was with Mrs. Leigh and her reckless husband. For several consecutive seasons they attracted around them heartless crowds of deceitful flatterers, by their lavish expenditure and display. They continued

"To squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction,"

Time and treasure are wasted, health and morals destroyed, jealousy and envy fostered, and the pure instincts of mutual affection buried amid the wreck and ruin of every noble and lofty principle. These are some of the fruits springing from a passion to outshine and surpass others in fashionable folly. What says the poet—

"She who asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they bless?)
Make just reprisals; and with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her."

What a picture of moral corruption and degradation, and yet how true of all who bow to the gilded shrine of wealth, or suffer a worldly ambition to take possession of their hearts.

CPAPTER VI.

'Margaret, are you not growing weary of this unceasing round of folly and extravagance?' asked Herbert Leigh of his wife, as they sat one morning, with languid and dissatisfied looks, over their late breakfast. The wife looked with surprise and displeasure depicted on her countenance, and replied,

'I think, Mr. Leigh, I've a right to enjoy myself while I can. It will be time enough for you to counsel me when you show signs of weariness.'

'Yes, while you can,' repeated the husband, with bitter emphasis, 'but how long, think you, can this extravagance be supported?'

'So long as you take care of the wealth I brought you.'

'You are mistaken, Margaret. We have not enough to continue this expensive style of living, and unless we retrench, we shall soon be ruined.'

'Perhaps if Mr. Leigh would spend a little more time in business and less in pleasure, the danger might be averted.

Herbert felt the cutting and just reproach conveyed in this reply, but he retorted in the same tone of sarcasm, 'A man who is obliged, nearly all the year, to be in constant attendance on a wife to places of amusement and fashionable resort, has but little time left for business.'

'And far less inclination, I presume,' was the retort. There was a desperate conflict in the breast of Leigh, but his better feelings and his judgment triumphed for a moment, and he replied with forced calmness:

'Margaret, I am weary of this vain show—this unsatisfactory mode of life, and if I can but persuade you to relinquish it for the retirement of domestic life, I will make a strong effort to change my habits. I think we should find more real pleasure in the society of our children and a few choice friends, than all the hypocritical parasites who fawn around us can bestow.'

'Ned, the wife, haughtily. 'They will have no effect to persuade me to depart from the course I have pursued, and to sink into insignificance.'

'Then you may be compelled to sink into worse insignificance than that which I propose,' said Leigh, bitterly. 'I again warn you that if you wish to save yourself and children from poverty and destitution, you must at once curtail your expenses, for I assure you it will require but one or two more such entertainments as you gave last night, to leave us irretrievably ruined.'

'It is false, and you shall not hinder me from enjoying myself as I please by your misrepresentations,' said Mrs. Leigh, determined not to face an unpleasant truth.

'It is true, and now I have warned you, you can do as you please.' As Leigh said this, he left the house. Near the door of a drinking saloon which he daily frequented, and was about to enter now, he encountered his old friend Ellis. He was in that state of mental supineness which sometimes follows moments of intense excitement, and when Ellis halted, and earnestly requested him to go with him, the wretched man followed unresistingly, and in a few minutes was seated in the office of his companion.

'I have wished to see you a long time, Herbert,' said the other, 'but you have seemed to shun me since your return from Europe. You have never yet given me the account of your trip, promised so long ago.'

'Those who follow different pursuits, and adopt different modes of enjoyment, are not apt to seek each other's society or find pleasure in intercourse,' said Leigh. 'Since we were in the habit of meeting, years ago, you have lost the simple abbreviation of 'Ned, and I should feel rather awkward in addressing you as Mr. Edward Ellis. Besides, you are a happy husband and father as I am told, and steady business man, while I remain, the same reckless, hopeless spendthrift me?'

'Herbert, I want to warn you, to save you from the misery and degradation and destruction you are pursuing. Why do you remain reckless and wretched? Why not at once dash from you the wine cup, and in that strength of manhood rise up and find happiness in freedom from this slavery to appetite?'

'Happiness! There is no such thing as happiness!' and Herbert laughed scornfully.

'Not in your present career, I admit, Herbert, but experience has taught me that there is pure happiness to be found, even in this sinful world.'

'And in the same school of experience I have learned a very different lesson.'

'Herbert, you have not turned away from the tempter, who, I fear is gaining a powerful mastery over you. You have not sacrificed selfish indulgence, nor sought that joy and satisfaction springing from a consciousness of right doing, and from the steady pursuit of some honorable employment. Let me entreat you, in the name of our former friendship, to change your course ere it be too late.'

'It's too late now, Ellis. I told you it more than five years ago; and I have less inclination now than I then had to reform.'

'But surely you have a motive which you had not then, and one which should be strong enough to conquer your disinclination. You too are a father.' An expression of pain passed over the face of Leigh as he replied,

'Yes, I am the father of a puny, sickly boy, so frail that I have centered no hopes in him. He was born on foreign soil too, thro' the perversity and vanity of the mother who, from his birth, has bestowed on him less attention than her lapdog receives. Happiness! You may talk of happiness if you will, but not to me,—and Herbert rose and rapidly paced the floor.

'And do you take no blame on yourself for being miserable? Ellis inquired, after a brief silence.

'Yes,' returned the other, pausing abruptly 'So far as my own wretchedness is concerned, I alone am to blame, and I deserve it. My whole life has been careless, reckless and selfish, and

"'The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted; they have torn me, and I bleed."

'I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed. I married for money, I found it, but I found nothing else which, now that has deserted me, I can look to for consolation.'

'Deserted you; what do you mean, Herbert? Surely your wife's fortune is not squandered also.'

'It is an undisputable fact that very little of that fortune remains, and I think a few months will leave us stripped of every thing,' Leigh replied in a tone of careless indifference.

'Then, certainly, you will discontinue your expensive habits, and make an effort at once to retrieve what is lost.'

'It is useless. I have done all I intend to do, all I can do. Mrs. Leigh is determined to continue her extravagance. She will not listen to warnings, the proof she cannot disregard. Upon the whole I think a reverse of fortune will be the best thing that can happen for us both. There is a possibility that when once detached from the heartless world we have served too long, and obliged to labor for ourselves and our children, and be dependent on each other for happiness, the better feelings of our natures may come forth from their long slumbers. Nothing but necessity will compel me to reform, and Margaret will never act the part of a true wife and mother till gay summer friends have flown. In poverty she may learn to imitate, or at least to appreciate the lovely character of the daughter whose tastes and inclinations she has hitherto despised.'

'Then the delicate and tenderly nourished child must be doomed to privations and hardships that the mother may be aroused to a sense of duty. It seems rather a harsh expedient. Surely, Herbert, for the sake of these children, you will arouse yourself. It is than when poverty is staring you in the face.'

'Laura will rejoice in any expedient that renders her parent less worldly, and gives her an opportunity to perform the office of daughter and sister. But Ellis it is useless to talk. A wreck is inevitable, and in my present state of mind, I would not prevent it if I could I am indifferent to every thing, or rather at war will all the world. Good morning.'

Ellis was not altogether surprised to hear of Leigh's pecuniary embarrassment, for a whisper of the fact had previously reached his ears, but he was almost shocked at the strange indifference manifested by the man he knew possessed so many noble qualities. At parting, Ellis repeated his warnings and entreaties in an earnest and impressive manner, but he received no encouraging answer.

Herbert Leigh was left an orphan while very young, and the childless old uncle to whose guardianship he was entrusted, suffered him to grow up in habits of unrestrained indulgence of every whim and wish. The result was the almost complete subserviency of the nobler attributes of his nature to selfish desires and propensities. Soon after he attained his majority, the uncle died, leaving him a considerable portion of wealth in addition to his moderate patrimonial inheritance. Wealth, wit and beauty, three most dangerous gifts, were his, and no wonder he was courted, and flattered, and led on in a round of pleasure and folly that soon dissipated his means. At the time of his marriage, many supposed him still rich, but his intimate friends suspected the contrary. To make a show of business, he risked the last remnant of his own property, and a small portion of his wife's, in a concern which soon swallowed up both. The wife, whose passion for display grew stronger as the years rolled on, supposing her income enhanced, continued to increase her expenses and follies until even the prodigal Leigh became disgusted as well as alarmed at her extravagance. We have seen how his warnings were received. Still, had he possessed sufficient strength of purpose to accomplish his own reformation, had he subdued his temper, and clearly and calmy call up the dormant affections of Mrs. Leigh, he might have averted a catastrophe he now awaited with stoical indifference.

To drown reflection he drank deeper than ever, and he often said to himself. 'When Margaret's pride is humbled, and her selfishness and vanity crushed, she may turn to her duties, and then I shall have a motive to reform, but I have none now.' Poor man! Did he not know that all this while the destroyer was tightening his grasp with a tenacity that bid fair to defy the strength of every motive, and every better principle!

He ceased his efforts to make himself agreeable to his wife, and she, in return, constantly reproached him with his indolence and dissipation. Whenever he tauntingly hinted of their approaching ruin, he was answered by some new and useless expenditure.

But the truth came at length, and with astounding force to Mrs. Leigh, and Herbert had to learn that pride mortified is far more hateful and implacable than pride in all its power and glory. When Margaret Leigh realized the truth of her beggary, she charged her husband with being the sole cause of it, and, in a moment of passion, she insultingly bade him leave her, and never more appear in her presence. He obeyed. In the office of his friend Ellis, he sat down and wrote Laura as follows:

'DEAR LAURA,—You will doubtless be summoned home immediately by your mother. She will tell you her fortune is gone, and it is too true. Hasten to her, and let all your powers be exerted in her behalf. I need not charge you not to neglect my little Walter, your brother, for I know your gentle nature, and am convinced of your deep love for him, and also for your parent.

'Forgive me, Laura, and persuade your mother to forgive me if she can. I will return as soon as I can place you again in affluence. Until then the little property you possess in your own right, and which is still safe, will be sufficient to keep you from want.

'Adieu. Be kind to my poor boy.

'H. LEIGH.'

'So you really mean to leave this frail girl of scarce eighteen years to the task of providing for, and taking care of a perverse, selfish and extravagant mother, and a sickly child,' exclaimed Ellis, to whom Leigh related what had passed.

'What am I to do?' returned the other, 'I have been driven away, and shall not return and humble myself to the woman who has insulted me.'

'You deserve her censure and reproach.'

'Yes, but I cannot submit to insults. She has been equally to blame, and not until she feels this, and gives evidence of a different spirit, will I return to her.'

'But what do you intend to do?'

'I know not. At one moment I feel within me an impulse strong enough to bear me triumphantly through any battle for fame or fortune, and the next, in the dense gloom and blackness that gather around, I can see only a leaden bullet and the suicide's grave.' There was a strange, wild light in the eyes of Leigh as he uttered these words. Ellis seized his arm, exclaiming 'Herbert, why do you talk so wildly, so foolishly? Shake off such feelings. Rise up, look about you, and face your difficulties manfully, then go to work in a spirit of humble contrition for the past, and determination for the future, and you will succeed. Have you no means left?'

'None, I have not reserved to myself a dollar.'

'Have you no hopes of the English relative you spoke of to me years ago?'

'Hopes? I thought I had informed you that I found the old man in declining health, and that I attended him obsequiously to the last, and then learned by his will, that he had bequeathed me not a farthing.'

'You certainly did not tell me of the fact, but it is best perhaps, that you have nothing to depend on now, save your strength and energies, and with health and strength why should you despond? I will aid you if it is in my power.'

'I thank you for your offer; I shall leave here at once. Perhaps one day I may deserve your kindness. Perhaps I shall sink lower and cause you to feel shame for having ever known me. I know not. Farewell.'

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Awful Calamity.

The New York papers are filled with the details of the frightful disaster at Norwalk, Connecticut. It appears the train consisted of two baggage cars, and three first class passenger cars.—The bagage cars preceded the passenger cars, and in the rearmost baggage car was the smoking apartment. The number of passengers in the train was about 216, as near as can be ascertained. The Courier and Enquirer says:

The train proceeded as usual, until it reached Norwalk, 45 miles distant, at half past 10 o'clock. Half a mile east of the Norwalk station is a bridge across the creek, and over the channel there is a draw in the bridge sixty feet in width. The rules of the road require that the speed of the train should be checked at the Norwalk station, and be held well in hand until the engineer obtains sight of a signal—a red ball upon a pole some thirty feet high, which is visible nearly half a mile from the bridge. This precaution is to keep the track clear. Both these precautions were neglected upon this occasion; the speed was not slacked at the station, the signal for safety had been withdrawn full ten minutes before the train approached, but heedless of the warning, the engineer dashed on at a rate of *nearly thirty miles an hour* until he reached the open draw, when such was the momentum that the engine sprang across the chasm of sixty feet, dashing against the abutment on the opposite side but little below the level of the line of the rails.

The frightful scene that ensued may be conceived, but neither those who witnessed the occurrence, nor those who escaped with their lives, can give any adequate description. The cars were so broken that those who had not sustained any injury from the collision, instantly strove to escape through the windows and broken roofs, and it is wonderful, that under the circumstances, so many succeeded in their efforts.

STATEMENT OF A PASSENGER.

The concussion in the last car was very violent, and it was not until I leaped off it that I knew the extent of the awful catastrophe, which baffled description. Without any delay, I hurried to the edge of the bridge, and there, to my horror, I beheld a scene that I shall not forget until the day I die.—Both of the passenger cars, were wholly submerged in the water, the tide being full high at the time, and the loss of life was of course very great. There were, in fact, only about six or seven persons who escaped with their lives; all the rest, amounting to nearly fifty persons, were drowned. These two cars were the only ones in which any lives were lost. The baggage car and smoking car were smashed to pieces, and, curious to say, not a single life was lost.

On Saturday morning, hundreds of mourning friends reached Norwalk in search of missing relatives and others. The bodies of many of the killed were, however, so disfigured as to be recognized—making a male and a female—making 32 in all were recovered, but not all identified.

The scene at the railroad station house in Norwalk, in the afternoon, was appalling.—In one small apartment were twenty-eight corpses, rigid in death; and in another seventeen—thickly covering the floor. Among them, numerous surviving friends were eagerly scrutinizing each countenance, with mingled hope and fear, searching for the lost.—As one after another was identified, the scene was often painfully affecting. Infancy, youth and old age were all represented among the dead. The body of a beautiful child, seeming to be almost animated with life, elicited exclamations from many. Almost all the bodies were greatly disfigured with bruises and cuts, and probably in a majority of instances injuries of this kind were sufficient cause of death. A few evidently died of strangulation by water. Before dark nearly all the bodies were divested of their clothing, put in neat coffins of black walnut, and forwarded to their friends.

Mr. Thomas Hicks, the artist, was in the first car with Miss King, of N. Y. city.—They occupied a seat within four of the rear end of the car, on the right hand side facing the engine. Mr. Hicks describes the scene as follows: The cars were seemingly going at the usual rate, when, without warning or intimation of any kind, he beheld the front part of the car rushing toward him in fragments, the passengers being tossed in the air like chaff, dashed up against the top of the car and thrown about in a hurricane of destruction. In an instant he found Miss King gone from his side, and himself crushed under the partially fallen roof, and surrounded by a choking atmosphere, in the midst of a shapeless mass of ruins, dead bodies on every hand and the darkened car rapidly filling with water. He began feeling among the wreck and under the water for his companion, but she was nowhere to be found.—He continued the search till the water had risen to his chin, a time which he judged to have been ten minutes, when despairing of her recovery, he looked about for a mode to escape. Just behind him, at the corner of of the car, he beheld an aperture through which he crawled to the top. Here he lingered, searching, when he was asked for whom he was looking—

He described the lady's dress, when his interlocutor informed him to his inexpressible astonishment and gratification that she had just gone out upon the track. He ascertained afterwards that the front of the car was stove to atoms by the concussion, and that the top of it was split open literally on the side where he sat, and this occasioned that side of the roof to fall. It also appeared that during the instantaneous process of splitting open the top of the car and the fall of the ceiling, Miss King without any knowledge or agency of her own, had been *projected through the crevices upon the top of the car.* And here, without even having been wet, but with a severe wound in the face, she found herself with another car precipitated upon it, which passed her and tumbled over into the river beside the wreck of the first. Her escape, and manner of it especially was a miracle. Mr. Hicks called out when he discovered the means of escape, to those in the car, if so be there were any living to hear, pointing to the way of getting out. But he saw but one person avail himself of the notice or escape in any way. Miss King while upon the top of the car, I am assured, ab-