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Select Story.

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A THRILLING STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

The most interesting incidents of life are such as occur unexpectedly, and from a rare combination of circumstances. The interest is much increased, when such incidents produce a critical and perplexing state of affairs, when much depends on the speedy decision and conduct of the person concerned; and yet he is unable to judge with certainty, what course is best. The unexpected tide in his affairs is ready to bear him to the islands of the blest; but he sees, or imagines rocks and storms by the way, which may wreck all his hopes. He stands trembling between hope and fear; the tide of fortune begins to ebb; he hesitates:—the tide is gone, then he bewails his indecision; and through life looks back with sorrow on the loss of that golden opportunity; but finally soothes himself with the reflection that if his hesitancy was not fortunate, it was at least safe. He sees in the incident itself, the hand of Divine Providence; and in his conduct, the blindness and weakness of human nature.

A tide of that nature once happened in the affairs of my life. It was sufficiently extraordinary to form a narrative somewhat instructive and affecting; and I will proceed to relate it in substance as it really happened.

I was born and educated in the great Valley of Virginia. My parents were respectable, but in such moderate circumstances that they could afford me nothing more than a good education. I was graduated at Washington College in this State, and had made considerable progress in professional studies, when I was threatened with that enemy of hard students—the consumption. By medical advice it was determined that I should spend the approaching winter in the South. I bade a sorrowful adieu to my friends, and to the romantic scenes of my dear native valley; never had I felt so much melancholy. I had never traveled; my life seemed to be wasting away with disease; my local attachments were strong; my little circle of kindred and friends were nearly all the world to me. What youth would not, under such circumstances, feel a deadly despondency settling on his heart? when from the top of the Blue Ridge I looked, perhaps for the last time, over the woody hills, the cultivated slopes, the cliffs fringed with cedar, and the smoke of my paternal home, by the windings of the upland river, I wept—yes, though now a man grown, I wept bitterly as I turned my horse down the southern declivity of the mountain. I went moping on my journey. I arrived safely, however, though in low spirits, at the place of my destination in South Carolina.

By degrees my health and spirits revived under the influence of new scenes, a genial winter climate, and an agreeable circle of new acquaintances. Much I longed for my native mountains, but now I hoped to see them again when spring should mingle its verdure with the azure mist of their lofty pinnacles.

To confirm my health and to enlarge my scanty knowledge of the world, I resolved to return by way of Charleston, and take a voyage round to the Chesapeake. Accordingly, at the first blush of spring I took a seat in the Charleston stage, which set out from the village two hours before day. I found two other passengers within, but discovering only that they were a male and female, I spoke not until daylight, nor did they. As the dawn gradually disclosed their features, I was more and more struck with their interesting appearance. I soon concluded that they were brother and sister. They were in the bloom of youth—had brown, but soft complexion, raven black hair, eyes of brilliant jet, rotund faces, and altogether a look of most pleasing and intelligent vivacity. The young lady struck me as the most beautiful brunette that I ever beheld. They were well dressed, and had all the air of good breeding. On seeing each other, we appeared willing, on both sides, to enter into conversation; so we began with freedom, and soon got into the full flow of agreeable chat. My prepossessions were more than confirmed. The conversation of my fellow-travellers charmed me with a union of good sense, modesty, intelligence, vivacity and wit. There was a peculiar cast of benevolence, both in their features and their language—accompanied with unaffected gaiety, and simplicity of manners. I soon found a happy buoyancy of spirits in their company, such as I had never experienced since I left home. The young lady talked less than her brother, but when she spoke, the sprightly good sense of her words, the sweet tones of her voice, the kindling lustre of her eyes, and the lively play of her pretty features, made everything she said go warm and animating to the heart. Every sentence she uttered left a glowing sensation within—as if an ethereal fire had penetrated to the sources of animation and given an exhilarating impulse to all the principles of life. Not to admire her, was impossible; to love her—aye, with all the heart, would have been easy; but for me, the accidental companion of a day, it seemed rash and vain. I had never been in love; if the new feelings I experienced in her company were those of love, I was not then conscious of the fact.

I had no doubt of their being foreigners. But of what nation? They spoke English as their mother tongue; yet their features and complexion differed from my ideas of the English people. In the course of the day, however, they informed me that they were born in London, where their forefathers had lived, that their father, having some business to settle in the West Indies, had sent this, his only son for the purpose—and that this romantic sister of his must needs accompany him to see the world: and, as she said, to improve her mind by inspecting nature in the Torrid Zone, and man in the deepest miseries of bondage, as he existed in the West Indies—and in the highest enjoyment of freedom, "as he is in your happy country," said the young gentleman. "Your sister sees man in both extremes here," said I. "Not quite," said he; "for West Indian slavery is worse than yours; though even in its most mitigated form, slavery is a bitter thing."

He then informed me that, having finished their business in the Islands, they had landed in Georgia, made an excursion into the interior of South Carolina, and were now bending their way to Charleston, to embark for the Chesapeake. Thence they would go from city to city, until they reached Boston. At the mention of embarking for the Chesapeake, my heart bounded with joy. When I expressed my pleasure at the prospect of having their company so long, they fully reciprocated my congratulations, and said, they were the more pleased at finding an agreeable companion, even for a few days, as they had not a single acquaintance nearer than Boston.

Feeling now mutually excited to a freer intercourse, we laughed and talked, and were soon on the footing of unreserved familiarity. We spent two weeks in Charleston, lodging at the same hotel, and generally making our excursions together. The estimable and agreeable qualities of my new friends, were daily unfolding themselves, and gaining a stronger hold on my affections. Their manners were polished, yet simple; their speech seasoned with wit, and sweetened with kind feelings; their intellectual acquirements were uncommon for their age, their moral principles pure, and their piety, though seeming to shun observation, was nevertheless clearly inferable from many indirect signs. Though they never seemed disposed to discuss any theological subject, they showed a pointed abhorrence of vice and profanity.

As the attachment grew, I anticipated with increasing pain the days of our separation. As for Judith, the sister, I became conscious that her charms had excited a new passion in my soul. I was fully sensible of the thrilling effect which her radiant eyes had upon my heart—but supposing that of course the wide Atlantic must soon part us forever, I resolved not to indulge my nascent passion, nor to betray some towards her the character of a lover. She, on her part, made no concealment of her friendly sentiments towards me, further than that, she gave me no unequivocal sign. Sometimes, indeed, I imagined that the looks which kindled such fires in me, must have been themselves lighted at the altar of love.

We took passage in a sloop for the Chesapeake, and were the only passengers on board. It was one of the most delightful mornings of a Southern spring; balmy breezes wafted us gently through the bay; whilst from the deck we contemplated the retiring city, and its advanced guard of isles and batteries. When these were all past, I had, for the first time in my life, a full view of the ocean, spreading its desolate waste around to the farthest verge of the horizon, and leading the imagination onward still, over its vast unfathomed depths.

How different from the scenes of varied beauty and grandeur, in the highlands of Virginia! yet even more affectingly sublime! I sat mute and pensive, gazing intently upon the silent expanse, that seemed bending upwards at a distance, to meet the skies. Impressions of the vastness of the object before me, of its liquid uniformity of expansion, its gloomy depth, and oozy bottom where monsters play among human bones, filled my soul with melancholy solemnity. Where I observed the trees and sand hills of the coast, going off, as if sliding away down the other side of the globe, and leaving us alone in this boundless solitude, and precariously floating over these dark abysses, I became not only sad, but terrified. Symptoms of sea-sickness appeared also, and added to my sufferings.

My friend Eli had left me, to arrange some affairs with his sister in the cabin. While my mind was thus sinking to the bottom of the sea he came up, and seeing my despondency, advanced with a smile: "Ah! Mr. Grahme, now you remind me of the day when I first put to sea. I kept thinking, how wide and how deep is the sea, yet I have to go all the way over it, and if I should fall overboard, or a tempest should crack this wooden shell that bears me up, why I should have to sink all the way to the bottom, though it were five thousand fathoms down. But in two or three days I began to find that one might travel by wind and water with as little fear as by wheels and horses. So you will feel to-morrow, unless sea-sickness should conjure up new apparitions." "You have described my feelings in part. I am aware that my apprehensions spring, in some measure, from the awful sublimity of this watery world, and from the novelty of my situation, at the mercy of winds and waves. But in addition to that, I confess to you, Mr. Bensaddi, some undefinable horror, some gloomy presentiment of evil, has occupied my mind ever since I came on board." "What is that presentiment (said he) but the work of fancy, who moulds out of the abundance of your present sadness, some shapeless images of misfortune——?" He was going on with his usual vivacity of manner, stepping about the deck. He had scarcely uttered the word "misfortune," when, being near the side rail, he was tripped by a sudden roll of the vessel, thrown over, and plunged headlong into the sea. He almost brushed me as he fell. Before I could think, he was gone; I saw no sign of him, but the bubbling of the water, where he had sunk. "Ship about!" was instantly cried on deck; and all hands exerted themselves in the operation. For my part, my eyes stared with the fixedness of death on the fast receding spot. Presently my friend rose to the surface; but strangling, and unable to buffet the waves. He struggled for a moment, then gradually disappeared; and before we reached the place, not even a bubble marked it. The cruel wave had already forgotten its victim.

My grief and horror at the fatal accident were unutterable. But they were soon arrested by the shrieks of the unfortunate sister, who this moment learnt her irreparable loss. She ran distractedly over the deck, and would have sprang into the sea, had I not caught her. I bore her into the cabin. She could utter nothing but screams for two or three hours. She was absolutely frantic with agony of mind. She wrung her hands and beat her breast. Convulsive sobs marked the intervals between her keenest paroxysms. My own grief was absorbed in her; I attempted some words of consolation, but they fell unnoticed upon her ears. She seemed insensible to all external impressions, grief had overwhelmed every faculty. Merciful heavens! Even the distant recollection almost freezes my blood. Still do I seem to hear the first words that came in broken accents from her lips—"My brother! Oh, my brother! my good, my dear, my only brother!" I will not, I cannot bear to repeat the strains of heart-rending lamentations, which she poured forth, with sobs and groans, after she recovered the use of speech. She bewailed her brother, her father (the only living parent) and lastly herself. She deplored her condition, as a friendless, unprotected maiden in a foreign land. In vain I assured her of my protection. During the first day and night, she seemed unconscious of my existence.

I need not say that I was her close attendant. I was the only person on board who regarded her situation. The captain and sailors appeared to think that drowning was a thing rather to be expected than lamented; and the grief of a surviving relative a matter that seamen had no concern in.

It was almost morning before poor Judith could rest, even a moment, from her wailing. At length, however, exhausted nature could sustain no more, without an interval of repose. She sunk into short slumbers, broken by starts of horror; she would suddenly call for her brother, ask where she was, or utter some exclamation of grief, and presently fall back again into a momentary oblivion of her sorrows. Finally, she fell into a sound sleep, and awoke after two hours, with calmer feelings. I tried again to console her. She could now hear me; and after awhile she apprehended my earnest assurance of sympathy and protection. I did, with all the feelings of a weeping heart, condole with her; and engage to devote myself to her as a brother, until she was safely lodged with her friends.

These protestations were a sensible relief to her mind, as regarded her own situation. She expressed, and that sincerely, the profoundest gratitude for my attention to her, in her sorrowful and desolate state. She threw herself upon my offered protection with unsuspecting confidence. I must have been the greatest villain on earth, to think of taking any dishonorable advantage of that confidence. I abhorred the idea.

As the native vivacity of Judith's feelings, made the first tempest of her grief inexpressibly violent, so it caused that tempest sooner to spend its force, and settle down into a comparative calm. Never had I seen such agonizing, heart-breaking distress—never had I felt such keen sorrow in my own soul. Two or three days were however sufficient to restore this lovely mourner to a calmness which admitted of her conversing freely, though not without many tears, on her misfortune, and on the ways and means of her return home. Grief had, in this short time, driven the rose from her cheeks, the sparkling radiance from her eyes, the bouyant agility from her members; and left her faded and withered, like the scorched blossom of the desert.

What were my feelings, when I had leisure to think, that this lovely drooping flower was now under my sole care? and by what a surprising stroke of providence, was she driven for shelter into a stranger's friendly arms? In herself to me the loveliest, she was made by these affecting circumstances by far the dearest of human kind. My passion, heretofore uncherished in the bud, was nourished, expanded, matured, and doubly purified, by her sorrow, her dependence on me.

After some consultation, it was concluded that I should accompany her to Philadelphia, where we would wait until she could get an answer from some mercantile friends, which her father had in Boston; from them she had no doubt of obtaining protection, and a conveyance to London.

A voyage of a week brought us to Baltimore, where we immediately took passage in a steamboat line for Philadelphia. The next day we landed there, and took lodgings in a hotel. Neither of us had a single acquaintance in that city. I announced my *protege* as a foreign lady in distress, whom an accident had deprived of her brother, and cast upon my protection. I requested that we might be furnished with a private parlor and private chambers, convenient to the parlor, as the lady's situation did not admit of her mingling with strangers. We were accommodated in every particular.

Here we spent eight days in each other's society, happy days they were to me—transcendantly happy, I will call them, though many sorrows cast their melancholy shades over them. I saw with delight, that Judith's grief yielded to the sober cheerfulness of resignation. The hue of health began gradually to return to her cheek, and the ethereal brightness to her eye. She did not yet cease to weep, but she could, for an hour or two sometimes, forget her sorrow, and smiles could once more illuminate all the beauties of her countenance.

Every day increased my esteem and affection for this extraordinary maiden. I had seen her in days of joyous vivacity, free from care, every sparkling feature and bouyant motion expressing the innocent gaiety of her heart. Now too I had seen her suddenly riven as it were by a thunder bolt, and cast into a most horrible depth of affliction. Finally, I saw her rise by degrees again to the light of consolation, and walk in the mellow shade of patient resignation, and dawning cheerfulness. In these several situations, I conceived that her whole character must have been displayed; and taken altogether, it was a vision so enchantingly amiable and interesting, that I was wrapt up (if I may say it without profaneness,) to the third heaven of love. Whether others have been so entranced with the sweet passion I know not, but for me, I could not possibly have loved a mortal more—no, nor an angel either—my heart was full.

To suppress all declarations of my feelings until Judith was with her friends (as a chivalric delicacy would have required) became at last impossible. I found tokens of my love stealing from me every hour of the day. There are a hundred signs well understood by lovers; though many of them are too delicate and too exclusively pertaining to the mysteries of the passion to be described, or to be understood by the uninitiated. They issue from the eyes, they play about the lips, they are dictated in various attitudes and gestures, they are conveyed with a touch of the hand:—certain tremblings, accents, blushings, paleness, &c., are all expressive. Such I could not suppress, no more than I could have smothered a volcano. I saw they rather soothed than offended her. Could I then avoid the formal declaration, when a few days must send me to my native mountains, and her to cross the wide Atlantic! It would come before its time, so let it come.

"Mr. Grahme (said she in reply) I must have been blind, not to see the involuntary signs of your honorable passion; and it would be affectation in me to deny that you have inspired me with a reciprocal affection. I thought before my misfortune, that I *could* love you: since that dreadful day, I have experienced and seen too much of your amiable character, not to find my heart interested in you, more than mere esteem and gratitude could account for. You need not apologize for declaring your sentiments under our present circumstances. The reasons you mention, fully justify you. Though you require no definite answer at present, I tell you freely that you are master of my heart; but before I consent to give you my hand, I must apprize you of one thing, which will probably be an insuperable obstacle to our union. Hitherto I have not told you the fact, because I saw no necessity for declaring what might give you disagreeable feelings in my society. Prepare now to shudder at the thought of marrying a *Jewess.*" "A Jewess! you a Jewess!" I exclaimed rather abruptly; for the word struck me like an electric shock. When she perceived the effect it had on me, tears gushed from her eyes, and she rose to leave me. Whereupon my former feelings, like refluent waves which the dash of a tornado has displaced, came rushing tumultuously back again, and I exclaimed, "Oh, my dear Judith, do not leave me now, but tell me at once, if it must be so, that I have nothing to hope. Must a mere name blast my dearest prospects, and separate those whom affection unites?" She fell back on her seat; and almost choked with sobs, replied, "That name has not prevented me from giving you my heart; nor shall it prevent me from giving you my hand,—if you and your friends, after full consideration,—find nothing in it fatal to your love and happiness. Several of my kindred have married Christians, and none of them would refuse their consent to my doing the same. My father has told me to marry only a worthy man, and he would consent that he should be a Gentile. I am no bigot, though educated in the religion of my forefathers. But I know that many people have such prejudices against my nation, that they could not be happy in a connection with me. I wish you to reflect seriously on the subject, before you proceed any further—it would kill my poor heart to find, when too late—" Here overcome by her feelings, she broke off, and retired to her chamber.

I got up too, in deep agitation, and paced the room. Presently I went to my chamber also, and tried to reflect on what I had just heard with so much surprise. After many efforts at reasoning, I could only think of these things: "Jewess! what is that? She is my own flesh and blood, she worships my God; she is the loveliest of the daughters of Abraham! I have spent a happy month with her; happy, as far as my sensation were occasioned by her; why not a year, or life-time? She manifests such a Christian temple, and such liberality of sentiment, that she needs only to be domiciliated with me and my Christian friends, to overcome the prejudices of education. And then what a happy life could we lead, in a rural cottage in some nook of the valley! Such beauty! such mental charms! such loveliness, even in a heathen, could make one happy! She shall be mine! Can I bid her go for a Jewess, and mourn her slighted love, and bestow her unrivalled charms on another? No, by all that is precious, I cannot, I will not. Even now she is weeping for the perturbation she gave my spirits."

With this conclusion, firmly settled, I returned to the parlor. I had scarcely patience to wait for her appearance, but I had never intruded into her private sanctuary, and would not now. Hearing me walk impatiently about the parlor, she at length came in, endeavoring to assume a composed countenance. "Well, Mr. Grahme, I have given you a little time for consideration, that you might compose your spirits, but you must have much more time to ponder the matter sufficiently." "No, my lovely Judith, the thought of giving you up distracts me. I see no obstacle to our loving and blessing one another, in what you have told me. The annunciation surprised me, for the possibility of it had never occurred to me, but it cannot shake my love for you, it cannot mar my delight in you. I can freely offer you my hand again, with a heart untouched by fear, and altogether devoted to your happiness." "That I do not doubt in the least, but you ought to have the opportunity of consulting your friends, before I bind you by any absolute engagement. Here is my hand, it is at your disposal, to accept or decline it finally, when you have returned home, and fully considered the matter in the presence of your kindred. You will then see whether your judgment can approve what your heart desires. I make no reserve, write to me then; if you confirm our engagement, I shall rejoice as much as gratified love can make me; if you decline it, be assured that, although I may grieve, I cannot blame you; because I shall be persuaded that you act wisely, from a deliberate view of the case."

On these terms we settled our engagement. My happiness was complete, for I confided perfectly in her fidelity, and my own steadiness of purpose.

"Now, (said she) I will communicate to you another fact, which you are entitled to know; and which, as it was no inducement to you to offer me your hand, will have no influence on your final decision. My father is one of the most affluent bankers in London; and occupies a highly respectable station in the wealthy circles of that city. I have also an independent income of £5000 sterling a year, bequeathed by an uncle. I have had—as you may suppose, from the commonness of fortune-hunting—a crowd of suitors; some of them accomplished and worthy gentlemen. But I could love none of them, because I suspected their motives. Often did I wish that I could disguise my wealth, and meet with some congenial soul, that would love me for my own sake alone, and that I could love without suspicion. Heaven has, in the day of my calamity sent me such an one. With you, whose amiable character I have tried, both in joy and in sorrow, I would rather spend my days in poverty than pass with any other a life of vain show, in all the tiresome splendor of London. Yes, my dear protector, a rural life in your romantic valley, is just such a life as I always thought, if it pleased heaven, I should like to spend. In England, my happiest days were spent amongst honest peasantry, where nature and simplicity characterized every scene."

I was delighted at what she told me, both of her fortune and (what I had seen before) her taste of simplicity and rural life. If any one accuse me for rejoicing at the circumstances of my charmer's new discovered wealth, let him put himself in my situation, and candidly ask himself, "How would I have felt at such intelligence?"

Thus our days at the hotel flew away, in all the delights of innocent affection. But alas! her Boston friends came rapidly to bear her away. On the eighth morning after our arrival, two of them were announced, and soon approached our parlor, under the guidance of a servant. I returned into my chamber, that I might not interrupt their first explanations with Judith. But I could hear much of the mingled weeping and rejoicing of the interview. The men were acquainted with all Judith's family, and I now discovered by their tears and their words of condolence how highly they esteemed her, and how deeply they were affected with the loss of their amiable brother. In short, they treated her as a daughter. After she had particularly related her story, and the violent feelings of the occasion had subsided, I made my appearance and was introduced by Judith to her friends. They seized my hands with tears in their eyes—embraced me, and thanked me most fervently for my kindness to Judith.

At a subsequent hour of the day, when I again entered the parlor, where the three friends were sitting, Judith suddenly rose with a blush on her cheek and retired. The gentlemen again took my hand, and expressed their gratification at the matrimonial engagement, of which Judith had just informed them. "Surely (said they) God formed you for each other. He hath sent a sore affliction upon Judith, but He has made the dear maiden compensation, by giving her the protection and heart of a gentlemen who is worthy of her hand; and she, dear stranger, is worthy of yours; she is the loveliest and best of the daughters of Abraham. We have known her from a child, and a sweeter rose never blossomed on Sharon." Thus they went on long in her praise, and I was confident from what I knew, that their encomium was just. These men were Jews.

There being no sufficient reason for delay, it was concluded by Judith and her friends to depart for Boston in the next morning's steamboat, which would leave the wharf at 4 o'clock. I resolved to take the Lancaster stage, which would set out on hour earlier.

Judith and I had undisturbed possession of our parlor during the evening. We made our final arrangements. I was to write to her within four months at farthest, and ratify or annul our engagement. To annul it was as far from my thoughts as Heaven is from Tartarus. Still Judith insisted that I should not be too hasty in giving the final pledge, but take time after my arrival home, to weigh the subject well. It was my happiness she wished me not to jeopardize.

The hour of parting approached; that night we must bid adieu. What were our feelings! oh, hours of delight and sorrow! How did we snatch every passing moment, to mingle deeper and to fill higher the cup of our youthful love? We clung to each other's embrace, our tears united as they fell; our hearts answered throb for throb. How could we part? The clock struck ten. "Adieu!" She faltered as she said it. "Not yet, not yet—I cannot leave you." The clock struck eleven, Propriety admitted of no longer delay. She tried once to say "Adieu," but the word died on her lips; I felt that longer delay was not permitted,—I caught the expiring accent, as I pressed my lips to hers—the balmy sweetness remains to this day. We retired to our respective chambers, like criminals going to execution—so deadly was the sadness of that parting.

Could I sleep? Not a wink. The sensations of that evening kept thrilling in my heart. Unconquerable musings of the past and future ran perpetually through my mind. I seemed to have lived an age within the last month. To go back alone to home and the scenes of my boyhood—though one month before, it was the object of my fondest desire, seemed now like going into the shades of death; for whilst I should be returning to my hills again, Judith would be on her way to cross the wide ocean, and soon be far hidden from my eyes among the myriads of London. But I imagined myself tracing her course, traversing the seas, searching out her abode, pressing her again to my bosom, and bringing her back to bless my sylvan days in the green vales of Virginia. This was the new and happy age, which my fancy was arraying with all the charms of delighted love, and pastoral scenery.

Fifteen minutes before three, my waking dreams were interrupted by a servant, who announced that the stage would soon be ready. I sprang up, dressed myself, and after writing in a few words another adieu to my love, I went to the bar and called for my bill, which the bar-keeper, strangely as I thought, had declined to furnish until now. With the bill he handed me a sealed packet, which I was requested on the back, not to open until after my departure. I left my own billet-doux, and hurried at the sound of the stage horn to take my seat. I cast a look at Judith's window; it was lighted, and her shadow threw its dark and sadly reclining form upon it. The whip cracked, the wheels rumbled over the pavement, my eyes soon lost even the shadow of my beloved; the parting was indeed over, but the heart-ache remained. I was rapidly whirled to Lancaster, stupid with grief and watching. The dear image floated continually before my imagination. Those radiant eyes still beamed on my soul. I still felt that pure soft heart-beat responsively to mine.

I had taken advantage of the breakfast hour, to open privately the packet handed me at the bar. It contained two sealed billets. The first I opened, was as follows:

"DEAR MR. GRAHME:—Pardon us for using a little art to do you an act of simple justice, which our consciences would not allow us to omit. Your kindness to our dear friend has put you to considerable expense, which the enclosed $100 may remunerate; but the kindness itself, none but God can recompense, and He, we doubt not, will. To Him we commit you, with sincere prayers for His blessing on your future days.

NATHAN LEVI,
ISAAC VON CALEB."

The other note was far more interesting.

"Two o'clock. I cannot sleep, when the rumbling of the wheels that are to carry you away, must soon strike my ears. In your happy valley, think on our engagement; and what wisdom dictates, that do. Whatever you do, I shall not blame you. If you cannot marry a Jewess—yet I know you love one—always love her—I know you will—write at events—I can say no more, but once again—adieu. God bless all my dear friend and protector."

The second day, I read this note a dozen times. The word "Jewess" rather grated. But love soon banished the momentary impression. In the neighborhood of Carlisle and Chambersburg, I recognized the features of the great valley. The mountains were indeed less sublime, and the lowlands less variegated, than in my native country, but the general outlines were the same; the parallel mountains and wide interval of rich slopes, and limestone rivulets, brought to my mind once more the objects of my boyish attachment. Old habits of thought and feeling began to revive, and my new delirium of love to abate. Not that I thought Judith less charming, but the storm of amorous passion and grief, which her presence and our parting had raised within me, had so far subsided that reason could sometimes dart a ray through the troubled atmosphere of the mind. Yet what followed seemed hardly to be the effect of reason either. I don't know what was the cause, but somehow or other, the word, "Jewess" began on the third day to strike very disagreeably on my mind. While I mused on my lovely Judith, and saw her with fancy's eye, decked in all the charms of her beauty—that plagued word "Jewess," would suddenly come like a spell, and dissipate the dear illusion.

On the fourth day, when I was entering Virginia, more frequently would that detestable word come back and trouble me, "Jewess, Jewess!" thought I in spite of myself. "Am in love with a Jewess?" Every successive day, the villainous thought rushed in more obtrusively, whenever I got into a sweet glow of musing on my intended bride. "Jewess, Jewess, shall my children be half Jews?" I groaned with vexation at myself, for admitting such thoughts. But every day they crowded harder into my mind. In vain I mustered up facts, and affections against them. Judith's personal charms, Judith's amiable temper, excellent sense, extraordinary intelligence, exquisite accomplishments, and fascinating manners;—nay deep-rooted love, my troth—all that had so filled and captivated my soul for weeks—were insufficient to banish that cursed word, "Jewess." It haunted me like a spectre. "Jewess," said I to myself, "shall my acquaintances point at her, and say to one another, "There goes Grahme's Jewish wife."

Sometimes, indeed, for an hour or two, my love was victorious, and beat this haggard enemy out of the field. Then would Judith rise again in all her charms before my imagination; memory would tell the affecting history of our grief-born union of heart; reason would demonstrate her inestimable value; impassioned fancy would adorn her, (as nature had done) with all the lineaments and hues of angelic loveliness; and my heart would be feeding on the delicious vision, when all of a sudden, like the harpies of old, and quite as abominable as those monsters, would that thought rush in and spoil every thing. "Jewess," would I think again, "when I go to church, must I bow to my infidel wife at home? When I teach my family the doctrines of salvation, must my Jewish wife be a hindrance to their faith, and when we talk of religion, and think of religion, must we be mutually harassed with the reflection, that him in whom I trust as a Saviour, she has been bred to despise as an impostor?" Many things of this nature vexed my peace, and crossed the path of my love, with an omen too sinister, and too obviously real, to be longer regarded as a mere freak of the brain. Thus did I come in a strange sort of way, to reason on the case. The contest in my mind between opposing principles, assumed a more regular and an excessively violent character. I will not call it a contest between love and reason, for there was evidently much reason on the side of love. But in the ranks of the other side, there was something of giant force and something of ghastly aspect.

The agony of this metal strife was a little relieved by the appearance of my native land. I entered the confines of Rockbridge. The Jump Mountain reared his black and shaggy brow over the border of the land. The House Mountain presented to view its huge buttresses and double roof; like a rude palace, built for the king of the giants. And far beyond in the southern horizon, the dim Peaks of Otter seemed to have fixed their sharp points in the very vault of heaven. Soon I saw just before me, my own verdant hills—and between them the willow-brooks in the meadows; and at the end of the converging dales, the cedar cliffs by the river. I sprang from the coach, I threaded the well-known pathway; I soon saw in its rural quietude, the home of my childhood. In a few minutes, I was in the arms of my mother and my sister—I was as happy for a time, as I had been when

In rustic boyhood, free from care,
I hooked the trout, and chased the hare.

But I soon relapsed into my distressing meditations. Should I tell my kindred of my love adventure. They might have sided me to settle the distracting question, by teaching me their cooler judgment, to distinguish the dictation of reason from the illusions of passion, and the suggestions of prejudice. Much would it have pleased me to tell them all, except that one tormenting and perplexing thing, that the most lovely of maidens, was a "Jewess." But oh! misery! when the story was on the point of my tongue, I shuddered and drew back at the thought of telling that. Days and weeks rolled on, and brought me to no decision. I hoped, and mused and pined away. My friends observed my melancholy air and haggard looks. They ascribed all to returning consumption and often took counsel about the means of cure. Alas! they little knew the malady was consuming the heart, not the lungs.

Thus I drooped and hesitated till the fourth month came. I became dreadfully alarmed at the approach of the final day when I must take the lovely Jewess, or cast her off forever. Often did I seize my pen and resolve, as she requested, to write at all events. Sometimes her Judaism predominated over all at her excellencies, and I thought myself ready to say, "Forget me, lovely Judith." But for my life I could not say it. The very last week arrived, the decision must be made, for to desert it longer was in effect to decide the engagement. The tide of fortune was ebbing fast, and the dear object of my fondest affections, was floating off with the receding wave. This brought back to view, with mingled force and rapidity, all the enrapturing loveliness of what was nearly gone. Yes, Judith was herself again; again I felt the impression of her "love darting eyes," of the sweet music of her voice; memory brought all, all back again, with pristine freshness, and enchanting effect. The journey to Charleston, our stay there, the scene on the sea, the scene at the hotel, and that parting night, the keen sorrows and the thrilling pleasures, and all that made them keen and thrilling. I saw and I felt them every one again. I would not have given her up for the world; I would have crossed the frozen Alps, and torrid deserts; I would have gone down, like Eurydice, to the shadowy regions of death, and have deemed myself well rewarded to win such a lovely creature at last. "Jewess," that fantastic sprite, was banished by the confident belief, that my Judith had manifested so little aversion to the Christian faith, and so much of the Christian spirit; and had in several ways, indirectly hinted an inclination to marry a Christian rather than a Jew, and consequently to change her religious profession, that really nothing was wanting but a proper occasion, to make her all that my heart desired. Perhaps some of this was the logic of passion, I could not tell. My letter was soon dispatched, full of apologies for delay, and assurances of undiminished love and of an unalterable determination to go, and lead her to the altar, whenever she should permit me.

Now the months seemed ages until I should receive her answer. I began to make preparations for the expected voyage, and became weekly more impatient for the summons of my betrothed. I watched the growing and waning moons, and "chid the lazy lagging foot of time." The delightful summer of our mountains seemed interminably long—for it shed its flowers and matured its foliage, but brought me no answer. I had set four months as the utmost limit to which even fear could postpone the return of an answer. Three months I thought sufficient—I was by that time prepared for the voyage, and went to the postoffice every mail-day expecting to find the desired summons to depart. Every mail-day I went disheartened away, but still indulging the hope that the next mail would not disappointment me. Thus the fourth month passed over my impatient spirit—but to the end of it no letter came. I saw the leaves of autumn put on the bright hues of approaching decay, making the forest glorious to all eyes but mine. Still no letter come. Impatience was converted into fearful anxiety. I saw the leaves of autumn fade, and then fly withered and sere, before the northern blast, until the forest looked sad beneath the gathering storm of winter. Sad and sadder grew my heart, for not a word from Judith reached my longing eyes. Winter shed its snows over mountain and valley; Christmas came, and New Year came, when days are shortest and drearest in the out-door world, but hearts are merry by firesides; but my heart was more dreary than the dead earth and the leaden face of a cloudy sky. The winter began to yield to the benign power of the ascending sun, nature began to revive under the genial influence, but not so my desolate heart. Early flowers looked out on sunny banks, meadows drank new verdure from the joyful streams that gushed out of showery hills, and bounded through the valleys. Now came the anniversary of the journey to Charleston—then of the sea voyage—then to the love pledges and the parting hour. The star of my hopes had declined into utter darkness; my letters were never to be answered; what could be the matter?

Whilst I had been able to cherish a lingering remnant of hope, that slow passages, or accidental detentions by sea or land only delayed the answer—I clung to that and waited for the result before I would take any other step. But when five, and then six months passed away, my characteristic hesitancy on such occasions again operated to make me postpone my decisive movement to solve the mystery of my disappointment. One or two things I might do—write again and repeatedly or go myself to London. To write again presupposed that either both my letters or her answer had failed to reach their destination. But not only was I discouraged by the fact, that such failures had become very rare—but there was this further difficulty, that by writing again I could gain no explanation in less than three months; a delay which my impatient heart could not resolve to incur. I concluded at last to renew my preparations for a voyage; but various difficulties—and in my desponding state of mind, mole-hills swelled to mountains—caused delay until the opening of the spring. I was then completing my arrangements and expected soon to depart, when an unfortunate accident gave another turn to my feelings.

I have since my college days been passionately fond of botany, and have never failed, when the mild sunshine and early flowers invite the lovers of nature abroad, to make frequent excursions about the warm dells and romantic cliffs of my homestead. One day late in March, when the sun shone sweetly, and my heart was troubled with gloomy thoughts, I took a farewell stroll upon the rocky steeps of the vicinage, expecting in two or three days to leave them in search of my lost bride. I was clambering along the side of a steep cliff, washed at the base by the river, now swollen muddy from the late rains. Happening to espy on the brow of the cliff above me, a flower of rare species and of attractive form and colors, I started eagerly to reach it by climbing the precipice. But in my haste, I slipped and fell back almost into the river. I saved myself only by catching hold of a sapling, as I slid and rolled. My bodily hurt was small, but my sick heart received a fatal wound. My precious locket-case, which I still wore in my bosom, fell out, was caught by a stub as I descended, and the ribbon being broken, the case rolled down and plunged into the angry flood, out of sight and out of reach. "Oh, my Jewess!" exclaimed, "she is gone!" Vainly did I go the river's edge, and gaze wishfully at the turbid current, as if I expected it to restore my talisman—my Judith. At last I went home gathering new grief and melancholy by this ill-omened accident. The reader knows me well enough by this time, to anticipate the consequence. Despair began to flap her raven wings over me, and dismal phantoms to haunt my imagination.

Hitherto I had refused to entertain a suspicion of Judith's fidelity. When such a thought occurred, one look at her portrait was sufficient to dispel it. I was perplexed, discouraged, and sad enough at the long delay, and ultimate failure of any answer to my letters; but rather than think her false, I would suppose that the letters had been lost on their way, or that death had snatched her beyond the reach of my arms. Now I began to fear that she had repented of her engagement; that her return home to her kindred and friends had affected her as the same circumstance had for weeks affected me; with the restoration of habitual feelings first, and then less pleasing views of the brief episode of our life-adventure. My suspicion, once allowed to take root, and nurtured by a brooding melancholy grew apace into a dark and bitter jealousy. In a few days I could even say in the bitterness of my soul: "Why shu'd I go to see her? Or, why write a third time? Shall I allow her to show myself or my third letter to her cockney beaux?—of which she told me that she had crowds; that they may laugh at the uncouth bumpkin of Virginia, who by his services at a critical period, when her grief was deep and her heart unguarded, had made a transient impression on her; but whom in her cooler moments, she could not think of marrying, though she felt obliged to him for his kindness, and had, under the impulse of graditude, given him more encouragement than prudence allowed. Shall I expose myself to such treatment as this? No, verily, I will not!"

These suggestions of the melancholy demon were sometimes resisted by my better feelings; but never subdued so that I could resolve again to prosecute my ill-fated love. I still indulged, from time to time, my bitter surmisings of Judith's falsehood; although my conscience often whispered that they were unjust. What inconsistences will not a wretched man perpetrate in the bitterness of his soul!

Finally, I resolved that as the case seemed desperate. I would strive to forget that I had ever loved Judith Bansaddi. I was impelled to some decisive course, by the dread of a settled melancholy and imbecile moping, or of downright madness for life. Once conclusively resolved, I was as prompt and energetic in execution, as I was indecisive and procrastinating in cases of doubtful deliberation.

"Perhaps," said I to myself, "it is a merciful interposition of Providence, that has thwarted an effection which might have planted a thorn in my breast for life. A christian is forbidden to marry an infidel, and the prohibition is a wise one. Now for study and learning, and the glorious achievements of professional exertion."

My studies had been much interrupted by consumption first, and then by love and melancholy. During a year I had made little progress; now I betook myself with renewed zeal to my books. But many a time and oft while leaning over my learned author on the table, did I start out of a reverie, and finding that my soul had unconsciously strayed into the regions of love, and drank sweeter waters at the fountain of Venus, than Helicon had ever yielded to poet or philosopher. But by persevering efforts, I conquered this propensity to rivive scenes and emotions, which, however delightful once, were fleeing as a dream should be forgotten.

By the end of the ensuing summer my mind had recovered its usual tone and steady habits, and I had just finished the preparatory studies of my profession; when an incident occurred which again raised my feelings to a tempest, and formed the closing scene of my story.

Going by the postoffice one forenoon, I was called to receive a letter which arrived by the last mail. I turned in, expecting nothing unusual; when lo! it was a ship-letter, with the London post-mark. I instantly recognized upon it the handwriting of Judith Bensaddi. Good Heavens! what a volcanic stirring and heaving, what a rekindling and burning of irrepressible fires, did I feel immediately within me. The flame of love had been soothed by despair, but the fuel was unconsumed, and the fire smouldering in secret; the first breath of hope was sufficient to reawaken its dormant energies.

I hurried out of town on my way home, intending as soon as I reached a private place, to