

Up in the Blue Ridge

I.

“INSTEAD of going through the whole book, you can read this abstract, Miss Honor.”

The speaker drew forth five or six sheets of paper, closely covered with fine, small handwriting. The letters were not in the least beautiful, or even straight, if you examined them closely, for they carried themselves crookedly, and never twice alike; but, owing to their extreme smallness, and the careful way in which they stood on the line, rigidly particular as to their feet, although their spines were misshapen, they looked not unlike a regiment of little humpbacked men, marching with extreme precision, and daring you to say that they were crooked. Stephen Wainwright had partly taught himself this hand, and partly it was due to temperament. He despised a clerkly script. Yet he could not wander down a page, or blur his words, any more than he could wander down a street, or blur his chance remarks; in spite of himself he always knew exactly where he was going, and what he intended to say. He was not a man who attracted attention in any way. He was small, yet not so small as to be noticed for smallness; he was what is called plain-looking, yet without that marked ugliness which, in a man, sometimes amounts to distinction. As to his dress, he was too exact for carelessness—you felt that the smallest spot on his loose flannel coat would trouble him; and yet he was entirely without that trim, fresh, spring-morning appearance which sometimes gives a small man an advantage over his larger brethren, as the great coach-dogs seem suddenly coarse and dirty when the shining little black-and-tan terrier bounds into the yard beside them. Stephen was born into the world with an overweight of caution and doubt. They made the top of his head so broad and square that Reverence, who likes a rounded curve, found herself displaced; she clung on desperately through his schoolboy days, but was obliged at last to let go as the youth began to try his muscles, shake off extraneous substances, and find out what he really was himself, after the long succession of tutors and masters had done with him.

The conceit of small men is proverbial, and Stephen was considered a living etching of the proverb, without color, but sharply outlined. He had a large fortune; he had a good intellect; he had no vices—sufficient reasons, the world said, why he had become, at forty, unendurably conceited. His life, the world considered, was but a succession of conquests, and the quiet manner with which he entered a drawing-room crowded with people, or stood apart and looked on, was but another indication of that vanity of his which never faltered, even in the presence of the most beautiful women or the most brilliant men. The world had no patience with him. If he had not gone out in society at all, if he had belonged to that large class of men who persistently refuse to attire themselves in dress-coats and struggle through the dance, the world would have understood it; but, on the contrary, Stephen went everywhere, looking smaller and plainer than usual in his evening-dress, asked everybody to dance, and fulfilled every social obligation with painstaking exactitude. The world had no patience with him; he was like a golden apple hanging low; but nobody could pull him off the branch.

Stephen's conversation-friend (every unmarried man, though an octogenarian, has his conversation-friend) was Adelaide Kellinger, the widow of his cousin and favorite boyhood-companion, Ralph Kellinger. Adelaide was now thirty-five years of age, an agreeable woman, tall, slender, and exquisitely dressed—a woman who made people forget that an arm should be round, or a cheek red, when her slim amber-colored gracefulness was present with them.

Adelaide's house was Stephen's one lounging-place. Here he came to hear her talk over last evening's party, and here he delivered fewer of those concise *a propos* remarks for which he was celebrated, and which had been the despair of a long series of young ladies in turn; for, what can you do with a man who, on every occasion even the most unexpected, has calmly ready for you a neat sentence, politely delivered, like the charmingly folded small parcels which the suave dry-goods clerk hands to you across the counter? Stephen was never in a hurry to bring out these remarks of his; on the contrary, he always left every pause unbroken for a perceptible half-moment or two, as if waiting for some one else to speak. The unwary, therefore, were often entrapped into the idea that he was slow, or unprepared; and the unwary made a mistake, as the more observing among them soon discovered.

Adelaide Kellinger had studied her cousin for years. The result of her studies was as follows: She paid, outwardly, no especial attention to him, and she remained perfectly natural herself. This last was a difficult task. If he asked a question, she answered with the plainest truth she could imagine; if he asked an opinion, she gave the one she would have given her most intimate woman-friend (if she had had one); if she was tired, she did not conceal it; if she was out of temper, she said disagreeable, sharp-edged things. She was, therefore, perfectly natural? On the contrary, she was extremely unnatural. A charming woman does not go around at the present day in a state of nature mentally any more than physically; politeness has become a necessary clothing to her. Adelaide Kellinger never spoke to her cousin without a little preceding pause, during which she thought over what she was going to say; and as Stephen was slow to speak also, their conversations were ineffective, judged from a dramatic point of view. But Adelaide judged by certain broad facts, and left drama to others. Stephen liked to be with her; and he was a creature of habit. She intended that he should continue to like to be with her; and she relied upon that habit.

.

Afar off, counting by civilization, not by parallels of latitude, there are mountains in this country of ours, east of the Mississippi, as purple-black, wild, and pathless, some of them, as the peaks of the Western sierras. These mountains are in the middle South. A few roads climb from the plain below into their presence, and cautiously follow the small rivers that act as guides—a few roads, no more. Here and there are villages, or rather farm-centres, for the soil is fertile wherever it is cleared; but the farms are old and stationary, they do not grow, stretch out a fence here, or a new field there: they remain as they were when the farmers' sons were armed and sent to swell George Washington's little army. To this day the farmers' wives spin and weave, and dye and fashion, with their own hand each in her own house, the garments worn by all the family; to this day they have seen nothing move by steam. The locomotive waits beyond the peaks; the watermill is the highest idea of force. Half a mile from the village of Ellerby stands one of these watermills; to it come farmers and farmers' boys on horseback, from miles around, with grist to be ground. And sometimes the women come, too, riding slowly on old, pacing cart-horses, their faces hidden in the tubes of deep, long sun-bonnets, their arms moving up and down, up and down, as the old horse stretches his head to his fore-feet and back with every step. When two farm-women meet at the mill-block there is much talking in the chipped-off mountain dialect; but they sit on their horses without dismounting, strong, erect, and not uncomely, with eyes like eagles', yet often toothless in their prime, in the strange rural-American way, which make one wonder what it was in the life of the negro slaves which gives their grandchildren now such an advantage in this over the descendants alike of the whites of Massachusetts Bay and the

plantations of the Carolinas. When the farmers meet at the mill-block, they dismount and sit down in a row, not exactly on their heels, but nearly so—in reality, they sit, or squat, on their feet, nothing of them touching the ground save the soles of their heavy shoes, the two tails of their blue homespun coats being brought round and held in front. In this position they whittle and play with their whips, or eat the giant apples of the mountains. Large, iron-framed men, they talk but slowly; they are content apparently to go without those finer comprehensions and appreciations which other men covet; they are content to be almost as inarticulate as their horses, honest beasts, with few differences save temper and color of hide. Across the road from the mill, but within sound and sight of its wheel, is Ellerby Library. It is a small wooden building, elevated about five feet above the ground, on four corner supports, like a table standing on four legs. Daylight shines underneath; and the Northern boys, accustomed to close foundations, would be seized with temptations to run under and knock on the floor; the mountain boys who come to the mill, however, are too well acquainted with the peculiarities of the library to find amusement in them, and besides this barefooted cavalry cherishes an awkward respect for the librarian under its homespun jacket.

This librarian is Honor Dooris, and it is to her Stephen Wainwright now presents his sheets of manuscript.

“You think I have an odd handwriting?” he said.

“Yes,” answered the librarian; “I should not think you would be proud of it.”

“I am not.”

“Then why not try to change it? I might lend you my old copies—those I used myself and still use. Here they are.” And she took from her desk a number of small slips of paper, on which were written, in a round hand with many flourishes and deeply-shaded lines, moral sentences, such as “He that would thrive must rise at five;” “Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day;” and other of like hilarious nature.

“Thanks,” said Stephen; “I will take the copies, and try—to improve.”

The librarian then began to look through the abstract, and Stephen did not break the silence.

“Would it not be a good idea for me to read it aloud?” she said, after a while. “I can always remember what I have read aloud.”

“As you please,” replied Stephen.

So the librarian began, in a sweet voice, with a strong Southern accent, and read aloud, with frowning forehead and evidently but half-comprehension, the chemical abstract which Stephen had prepared.

“It is very hard,” she said, looking up at him, with a deep furrow between her eyebrows.

“But not too hard for a person of determined mind.”

The person of determined mind answered to the spur immediately, bent forward over the desk again, and went on reading. Stephen, motionless, sat with his eyes fixed on a spider's-web high up in the window. When, too deeply puzzled to go on, the girl stopped and asked a question, he answered it generally without removing his eyes from the web. When once or twice she pushed the manuscript away and leaned back in her chair, impotent and irritated, he took the sheets from her hand, explained the hard parts with clear precision, gave them back, and motioned her to continue. She read on for half an hour. When she finished there was a flush on her cheeks, the flush of annoyance and fatigue.

"I must go now," she said, placing the manuscript in her desk, and taking down her broad-brimmed Leghorn hat, yellow as old corn, adorned with a plain band of white ribbon.

"You are not, or course, foiled by a little chemistry," said Wainwright, rising also, and looking at her without change of expression.

"Oh, no," she answered; but still she crossed the room and opened the door as if rather glad to escape, and, with a parting salutation, left him.

Wainwright sat down again. He did not watch her through the window; he took up a late volume of Herbert Spencer, opened it at the mark, and began reading with that careful dwelling upon each word which is, singularly enough, common alike to the scientific and the illiterate. The mass of middle-class readers do not notice words at all, but only take in the general sense.

Honor went down the road toward Ellerby village, which was within sight around the corner, walking at first rapidly, but soon falling into the unhurrying gait of the Southern woman, so full of natural, swaying grace. At the edge of the village, she turned and took a path which led into a ravine. The path followed a brook, and began to go up-hill gradually; the ravine grew narrow and the sides high. Where the flanks met and formed the main hill-side, there was, down in the hollow, a house with a basement above-ground, with neither paint without nor within. No fences were required for Colonel Eliot's domain—the three near hill-sides were his natural walls, a ditch and plank at the entrance of the ravine his moat and drawbridge. The hill-sides had been cleared, and the high corn waved steeply all around and above him as he stood in front of his house. It went up to meet the sky, and was very good corn, indeed—what he could save of it. A large portion, however, was regularly stolen by his own farm-hands—according to the pleasant methods of Southern agriculture after the war. The colonel was glad when he could safely house one-half of it. He was a cripple, having lost his leg at Antietam. He had married a second wife, and had a house overflowing with children. He was poor as a squirrel, having a nest in these woods and the corn for nuts, and little else besides. He was as brave as a lion, courteous as an old cavalier, hot-headed when aroused, but generally easy-tempered and cheery. He went to church every Sunday, got down on one knee and confessed his sins honestly; then he came home in the old red wagon, sat on the piazza, and watched the corn grow. Honor was his niece; she shared in his love and his poverty like his own children. Mrs. Eliot, a dimpled, soft-cheeked, faded woman, did not quite like Honor's office of librarian even if it did add two hundred dollars to their slender income—none of Honor's family, none of her family, had ever been librarians.

"But we are so poor now," said Honor.

“None the less ladies, I hope, my dear,” said the elder woman, tapping her niece’s shoulder with her pink-tipped, taper fingers.

Honor’s hands, however, showed traces of work. She had hated to see them grow coarse, and had cried over them; and then she had gone to church, flung herself down upon her knees, offered up her vanity and her roughened palms as a sacrifice, and, coming home, had insisted upon washing out all the iron pots and saucepans, although old Chloe stood ready to do that work with tears in her eyes over her young mistress’s obstinacy. It was when this zeal of Honor’s was burning brightest, and her self-mortifications were at their height—which means that she was eighteen, imaginative, and shut up in a box—that an outlet was suddenly presented to her. The old library at Ellerby Mill was resuscitated, reopened, endowed with new life, new books, and a new floor, and the position of librarian offered to her.

In former days the South had a literary taste of its own unlike anything at the North. It was a careful and correct taste, founded principally upon old English authors; and it would have delighted the soul of Charles Lamb, who, being constantly told that he should be more modern, should write for posterity, gathered his unappreciated manuscripts to his breast, and declared that henceforth he would write only for antiquity. Nothing more unmodern than the old-time literary culture of the South could well be imagined; it delighted in old editions of old authors; it fondly turned their pages, and quoted their choice passages; it built little libraries here and there, like the one at Ellerby Mill, and loaded their shelves with fine old works. In the cities it expanded into associations, and large, lofty chambers were filled to the ceiling with costly tomes, which now look so dark, and rich, and ancient, to Northern visitors, accustomed to the lightly-bound, cheap new books constantly succeeding each other on the shelves of Northern libraries. These Southern collections were not for the multitude; there was no multitude. Where plantations met, where there was a neighborhood, there grew up the little country library. No one was in a hurry; the rules were lenient; the library was but a part of the easy, luxurious way of living which belonged to the planters. The books were generally imported, an English rather than a New York imprint being preferred; and, without doubt, they selected the classics of the world. But they stopped, generally, at the end of the last century, often at a date still earlier; they forgot that there may be new classics.

The library at Ellerby Mill was built by low-country planters who came up to the mountains during the warm months, having rambling old country-houses there. They had their little summer church, St. Mark’s in the Wilderness, and they looked down upon the mountain-people, who, plain folk themselves, revered the old names borne by their summer visitors, names known in their State annals since the earliest times. The mountain-people had been so long accustomed to see their judges, governors, representatives, and senators, chosen from certain families, that these offices seemed to them to belong by inheritance to those families; certainly the farmers never disputed the right. For the mountain-people were farmers, not planters; their slaves were few. They were a class by themselves, a connecting link between the North and the South. The old names, then, placed Ellerby Library where it stood full thirty years before Honor was born. They did not care for the village, but erected the small building at a point about equidistant from their country-houses, and near the mill for safety, that boys or idle slaves, drawn by the charm which any building, even an empty shed, possesses in a thinly-settled country, might not congregate there on Sundays and holidays, or camp there at night. But the library had been closed now for thirteen years; the trustees were all dead, the books mouldy, the very door-key was lost. The low-country planters no longer came up to the mountains; there were new names in the State annals,

and the mountain-farmers, poorer than before, and much bewildered as to the state of the world, but unchanged in their lack of the questioning capacity, rode by, to and from the mill, and gave no thought the little building with its barred shutters standing in the grove. What was there inside? Nothing save books, things of no practical value, and worthless. So the library stood desolate, like an unused lighthouse on the shore; and the books turned blue-green, and damp at their leisure.

II.

STEPHEN WAINWRIGHT traveled, on principle. He had been, on principle, through Europe more than once, and through portions of Asia and Africa; in the intervals he made pilgrimages through his own country. He was not a languid traveler; he had no affectations; but his own marked impersonality traveled with him, and he was always the most indistinct, unremembered person on every railroad-car or steamboat. He was the man without a shadow. Of course, this was only when he chose to step out of the lime-light which his wealth threw around his every gesture. But he chose to step out of it very often, and always suffered when he did. He was forever adding up different opinions to find the same constantly-recurring sum total of "no consequence." After each experience of the kind he went back into lime-light, and played at kingship for a while. He had been doing this for twenty years.

One day he came to Ellerby on the top of the stage. Nine Methodist ministers in the inside, returning from a missionary meeting, had made the lonely road over the mountains echo with their hearty hymns; one small brother climbed out at the half-way station on the summit, and, after drinking copiously from the spring, clasped his hands behind him and admired the prospect. Wainwright looked at him, not cynically, but with his usual expressionless gaze. The little minister drank again, and walked up and down. After a few moments he drank a third time, and continued to admire the prospect. Wainwright recalled vaguely the Biblical injunction, "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake," when behold! The small minister drank a fourth time hastily, and then, as the driver gathered up the reins, a last and hearty fifth time, before climbing to the top, where Wainwright sat alone.

"I am somewhat subject to vertigo," he explained, as he took his seat; "I will ride the rest of the way in the open air with your permission, sir."

Wainwright looked at him. "Perhaps he was weighting himself down with water," he thought.

The brother had, indeed, very little else to make weight with; his small body was enveloped in a long linen duster, his head was crowned with a tall hat; he might have weighed one hundred pounds. He could not brace himself when they came to rough places, because his feet did not reach the floor; but he held on manfully with both hands, and begged his companion's pardon for sliding against him so often.

"I am not greatly accustomed to the stage," he said; "I generally travel on horseback."

"Is there much zeal in your district?" said Wainwright. It was the question he always asked when he was placed next to a clergyman, varying it only by "parish," "diocese," or "circuit," according to appearances.

"Zeal," said his companion— "zeal, sir? Why, there isn't anything else!"

“I am glad to hear it,” replied Wainwright.

The little minister took the remark in good faith.

“A believer?” he asked.

“Certainly,” replied Stephen.

“Let me shake you by the hand, brother. This is a noble country in which to believe. Among these great and solemn peaks, who can disbelieve or who go contrary to the will of the Lord?”

Stephen made no answer, and the brother, lifting up his voice after a silence, cried again, “Who?” And after a moment’s pause, and more fervently, a second “Who?” Then a third, in a high, chanting key. It seemed as if he would go on forever.

“Well,” said Stephen, “if you will have answer, I suppose I might say the moonlight-whiskey makers.”

The little brother came down from the heights immediately, and glanced at his companion. “Acquainted with the country, sir?” he asked in a business-like tone.

“Not at all,” said Stephen.

“Going to stay at Ellerby awhile, perhaps?”

“Perhaps.”

“Reckon you will like to ride about; you will need horses. They will cheat you in the village; better apply to me. Head is my name—Bethuel Head; everybody knows me.” Then he shut his eyes and began to sing a hymn of eight or ten verses, the brethren below, hearing him chanting alone on the top, joining in the refrain with hearty good-will. As soon as he had finished, he said again, in a whisper, “Better apply to me,” at the same time giving his companion a touch with the elbow. Then he leaned over and began a slanting conversation with the brother who occupied the window-seat on his side; but, whenever he righted himself for a moment, he ether poked Wainwright or winked at him, not lightly or jocularly, but with a certain anxious, concealed earnestness which was evidently real. “Head is my name,” he whispered again; “better write it down—Bethuel Head.” And when Wainwright, who generally did imperturbably whatever other people asked him to do, finding it in the end the least trouble, finally did write it down, the little man seemed relieved. “Their blood has dyed the pure mountain-streams,” he whispered, solemnly, as the coach crept down a dark gorge with the tree-branches sweeping its sides; “but I shall go out, yea, I shall go out as did David against Goliath, and save one man—one!”

“Do,” said Stephen. What the little brother meant, he neither knew nor cared to know; going through life without questions he had found to be the easiest way. Besides, he was very tired. He had never “rejoiced in his strength,” even when he was young; he had always had just enough to carry him through, with nothing over. The seven straight hours on the mountain-road, which climbed straight up on one side of the Blue Ridge, and straight down on the other, now over solid

rock, now deep in red clay, now plunging through a break-neck gorge, now crossing a rushing stream so often that the route seemed to be principally by water, had driven him into the dull lethargy which was the worst ailment he knew; for even his illnesses were moderate. He fell asleep mentally, and only woke at the sound of a girl's voice.

It was twilight, and the stage had stopped at Ellerby Mill; two of the ministers alighted there, to take horse and go over solitary road homeward to small mountain-villages, one ten, one fifteen miles away. Brother Bethuel was leaning over the side, holding on to his tall hat, and talking down to a young girl who stood at the edge of the roadway on a bank of ferns.

"Masters is better, Miss Honor," he said, "or was the last time I saw him; I do not think there is any present danger."

"I am very glad," answered the girl, with earnestness; her eyes did not swerve from the little minister's face, although Wainwright was now looking down too. "If we could only have him entirely well again!"

"He will be!—he will be!" answered Brother Bethuel. "Pray for him, my sister."

"I do pray," said the girl; "daily, almost hourly." Into her dark eyes, uplifted and close to him, Wainwright could look directly, himself unnoticed as usual; and he read there that she did pray. "She believes it," he thought. He looked at her generally; she did not appear to be either extremely young, or ignorant, or commonplace, exactly. "About eighteen," he thought.

"He has asked if his father has been told," continued the minister.

"No, no; it is better he should know nothing," said the girl. "Can you take a package, Mr. Head?"

"Yes, to-morrow. I abide to-night with Brother Beetle."

"I will have it ready, then," said the girl.

The stage moved on, she waved her hand, and the minister nodded energetically in return until the road curved and he could see her no longer. His tall hat was tightly on his head all this time; politeness in the mountains is not a matter of hat. They were but half a mile from Ellerby now, and the horses began to trot for the first time in eight hours. Brother Bethuel turned himself, and met Wainwright's eyes. Now those eyes of Wainwright's were of a pale color, like the eyes of a fish; but they had at times a certain inflexibility which harassed the beholder, as, sometimes, one fish in an aquarium will drive a person into nervousness by simply remaining immovable behind his glass wall, and staring at him stonily. Brother Bethuel, meeting Wainwright's eyes, immediately began to talk:

"A fine young lady, that Miss Honor Dooris, niece of Colonel Eliot, the low-country Eliots, you know, one of our most distinguished families. I venture to say, sir, that strike at an Eliot, yes, strike at an Eliot, and a thousand will rise to beat back the blow. It would be dangerous, sir, most dangerous, to strike at that family."

"Are they troubled by—by strikers?" asked Stephen.

“Nobody ever harms anybody in this blessedly peaceful country of ours,” said the little minister in a loud, chanting voice. Then he dropped to a conversational tone again. “Miss Honor has been to the library; she is writing some ‘Reflections on the Book of Job,’ and is obliged of course to consult the authorities. You noticed the old library, did you not?—that small building in the grove, opposite the mill; her father was one of the trustees. The front-steps are down, and she is obliged to climb in by a back-window—allowable, of course, to a trustee’s daughter—in order to consult the authorities.”

“And on Job they are such as—?”

“Well, the dictionaries, I reckon,” said Brother Bethuel, after considering a moment. “She is not of my flock; the Eliots are, of course, Episcopalians,” he continued with an odd sort of pride in the fact. “But I have aided her—I have aided her.”

“In the matter of Masters, perhaps?”

Brother Bethuel glanced at his companion quickly in the darkening twilight. He caught him indulging in a long, tired yawn.

“I was about to say, general charity; but the matter of Masters will do,” he said, carelessly. “The man is a poor fellow up in the mountains, in whom Miss Dooris is interested. He is often ill and miserable, and always very poor. She sends him aid when she can. I am to take a bundle to-morrow.”

“And she prays for him,” said Wainwright, beginning to descend as the stage stopped at the door of the village inn.

“She prays for all,” replied Brother Bethuel, leaning over, and following him down with the words, delivered in a full undertone. Brother Bethuel had a good voice; he had preached under the open sky among the great peaks too long to have any feeble tones left.

“I do not believe anybody ever prays for me,” was Wainwright’s last thought before he came sharply into personal contact with the discomforts of the inn. And, as his mother died when he was born, perhaps he was right.

The next morning he wandered about and gazed at the superb sweep of the mountains. Close behind him rose the near wall of the Blue Ridge; before him stretched the line of the Alleghanies going down toward Georgia, the Iron Mountains, the Bald Mountains, and the peaks of the Great Smoky, purple and soft in the distance. A chain of giant sentinels stretched across the valley from one range to the other, and on these he could plainly see the dark color given by the heavy, unmixed growth of balsam-firs around and around up to the very top, a hue which gives the name Black Mountain to so many of these peaks.

It was Sunday, and when the three little church-bells rang, making a tinkling sound in the great valley, he walked over to the Episcopal church. He had a curiosity to see that girl’s eyes again by daylight. Even there, in that small house of God where so few strangers ever came, he was hardly noticed. He took his seat on one of the benches, and looked around. Colonel Eliot was there, in a

black broadcloth coat seventeen years old, but well brushed, and worn with an air of unshaken dignity. The whole congregation heard him acknowledge every Sunday that he was a miserable sinner; but they were as proud of him on his one leg with his crutch under his arm as if he had been a perfected saint, and they would have knocked down any man who had dared to take him at his Sunday word. The colonel's placid, dimpled wife was there, fanning herself with the slowly serene manner of her youth; and two benches were full of children. On the second bench was Honor, and the man of the world watched her closely in his quiet, unobserved way. This was nothing new: Wainwright spent his life in watching people. He had studied hundreds of women in the same way, and he formed his conclusions with minutest care. He judged no one by impulse or intuition, or even by liking or disliking. What persons *said* was not of the slightest importance to him in any way; he noted what they *did*. The service was in progress, and Honor was down upon her knees. He saw her confess her sins; he saw her bow her head to receive the absolution; he saw her repeat the psalms; he watched her through every word of the litany; he heard her sing; and he noted her clasped hands and strong effort of recollection throughout the recital of the commandments. Then he settled himself anew, and began to watch her through the sermon. He had seen women attentive through the service before now: they generally became neutral during the sermon. But this girl never swerved. She sat with folded arms looking at the preacher fixedly, a slight compression about the mouth showing that the attention was that of determination. The preacher was uninteresting, he was tautological; still the girl followed him. "What a narrow little round of words and phrases it is!" thought the other, listening, too, but weary. "How can she keep up with him?" And then, still watching her, he fell to noticing her dress and attitude. Poor Honor wore a gown of limp black alpaca, faithful, long-enduring servant of small-pursed respectability; on her head was a small, black bonnet which she had fashioned herself, and not very successfully. A little linen collar, a pair of old gloves, and her prayer-book, complete the appointments of her costume. Other young girls in the congregation were as poorly dressed as she, but they had a ribbon, a fan, an edge of lace, here and there, or at least a rose from the garden to brighten themselves withal; this girl alone had nothing. She was tall and well-rounded, almost majestic; but childishly young in face. Her dark hair, which grew very thickly—Wainwright could see it on the temples—seemed to have been, until recently, kept short, since the heavy braid behind made only one awkward turn at the back of the head. She had a boldly-cut profile, too marked for regular beauty, yet pleasant to the eye owing to the delicate finish of the finer curves, and the distinct arch of the lips. Her cheeks were rather thin. She had no grace; she sat stiffly on the bench, and resolutely listened to the dull discourse. "A good forehead," thought Wainwright, "and, thank Fortune! Not disfigured by straggling ends of hair. 'Reflections on the book of Job,' did he say? Poor little soul!"

At last the service was ended, the sermon of dull paraphrases over; but Wainwright did not get his look. Honor sat still in her place without turning. He lingered awhile; but as he never did anything, on principle, that attracted attention, he went out with the last stray members of the congregation, and walked down the green lane toward the inn. He did not look back: certain rules of his he would not have altered for the Queen of Sheba (whoever she was). But Brother Bethuel, coming from the Methodist meeting-house, bore down upon him, and effected what the Queen of Sheba could not have done: himself openly watching the church-door, he took Wainwright by the arm, turned him around, and, holding him by a button-hole, stood talking to him. The red wagon of the Eliots was standing at the gate, Mrs. Eliot was on the front-seat, and all the space behind was filled in with children. Black Pompey was assisting his master into the driver's place, while Honor held the crutch. A moment afterward the wagon passed them, Pompey sitting at the end with his feet hanging down behind. Brother Bethuel received a nod from the colonel, but

Madam Eliot serenely failed to see him. The low-country lady had been brought up to return the bows and salutations of all the blacks in the neighborhood, but whites below a certain line she did not see.

Evidently Honor was going to walk home. In another moment she was close to them, and Stephen was having his look. The same slight flush rose in her face when she saw Brother Bethuel which had risen there the day before; the same earnestness came into her eyes and Stephen became haunted by the desire to have them turned upon himself. But he was not likely to have this good fortune; all her attention was concentrated upon the little minister. She said she had the package ready; it would be at the usual place. He would take it up, he replied, at sunset. She hoped the moon would not be hidden by clouds. He hoped so too; but old Marcher knew the way. She had heard that the East Branch was up. He had heard so also; but old Marcher could swim very well. All this was commonplace, yet it seemed to Wainwright that the girl appeared to derive a certain comfort from it, and to linger. There was a pause.

“This is my friend,” said Brother Bethuel at last, indicating Stephen with a backward turn of his thumb; “Mr.—Mr.—”

“Wainwright,” said Stephen, uncovering; then with his straw hat in his hand, he made her a low bow, and deliberate as the salutations in a minuet, coming up slowly and looking with gravity full in her face. He had what he wanted then—a look; she had never seen such a bow before. To tell the truth, neither had Stephen; he invented it for the occasion.

“Met him on the stage,” said Brother Bethuel. “and, as he is a stranger, I thought, perhaps, Miss Honor, the colonel would let him call round this afternoon; he’d take it as a favor, I know.” There was a concealed determination in his voice; the girl immediately gave Stephen another look. “My uncle will be happy to see you,” she said, quickly. Then they all walked on together, and Stephen noted, under his eyelashes, the mended gloves, the coarse shoe, and the rusty color of the black gown; he noted also the absolute purity of the skin over the side of the face which was next to him, over the thin cheek, the rather prominent nose, the little shell-like ear, and the rim of the throat above the linen collar. This clear white went down to the edge of the arched lips, and met the red there sharply and decidedly; the two colors were not mingled at all. What was there about her that interested him? It was the strong reality of her religious belief. In the character-studies with which he amused his life he recognized any real feeling, no matter what, as a rarity, a treasure-trove. Once he had spent six weeks in studying a woman who slowly and carefully planned and executed a revenge. He had studied what is called religion enormously, considering it one of the great spiritual influences of the world; he had found it, in his individual cases so far, mixed. Should he study this new specimen? He had not decided, when they came to the porch of the inn. There was no hurry about deciding, and this was his place to stop; he never went out of his way. But Honor paused too, and, looking at him, said, with a mixture of earnestness and timidity: “You will come and see uncle, I hope, Mr. Wainwright. Come this afternoon.” She even offered her hand, and offered it awkwardly. As Wainwright’s well-fitting, well-buttoned glove touched for an instant the poor, cheap imitation, wrinkled and flabby, which covered her hand, he devoutly hoped she would not see the contrast as he saw it. She did not; a Dooris was a Dooris, and the varieties of kid-skin and rat-skin could not alter that.

Brother Bethuel went on with Honor, but in the afternoon he came back to the inn to pilot Stephen to the Eliot ravine. Stephen was reading a letter from Adelaide Kellinger—a charming

letter, full of society events and amusing little comments, which were not rendered unintelligible either by the lack of commas, semicolons, and quotation-marks, and the substitution of the never-failing dash, dear to the feminine pen. The sheets, exhaling the faintest reminiscence of sandal-wood, were covered with clear handwriting, which went straight from page to page in the natural way, without crossing or doubling or turning back. There was a date at the top; the weather was mentioned; the exact time of arrival of Stephen's last letter told. It can be seen from this that Adelaide was no ordinary correspondent.

Stephen, amused and back in New York, did not care much about the Eliot visit; but Brother Bethuel cared, and so, with his usual philosophy, Stephen went. They talked of the mountains, of the mountain-people, of the villagers; then Brother Bethuel took up the subject of the Eliot family, and declaimed their praises all the rest of the way. They were extremely influential, they were excessively hot-tempered; the State was in a peculiar condition at present, but the Eliots held still the old wires, and it would be extremely dangerous to attack the family in any way. Stephen walked along, and let the little man chant on. He had heard, in this same manner, pages and volumes of talk from the persons who insist upon telling you all about the people in whom you have not the remotest interest, even reading you their letters and branching off farther and farther, until you come to regard those first mentioned as quite near friends when the talker comes back to them (if he ever does), being so much nearer than the outside circles into which he had tried to convey you. Stephen never interrupted these talkers; so he was a favorite prey of theirs. Only gradually did it dawn upon them that his stillness was not exactly that of attention. The only interest he showed now was when the minister got down to what he called the present circumstances of the family. It seemed that they were very poor; Brother Bethuel appeared determined that the stranger should know precisely how poor. He brought forward the pathetic view.

"They have nothing to eat sometimes but cornmeal and potatoes," he said. This made no impression.

"The brook rises now and then, and they live in a roaring flood; all the small articles have more than once been washed away."

"Any of the children?" inquired Wainwright.

"Once, when the horses were lame, I saw Honor go to the mill herself with the meal-sack."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and carry it home again. And I have seen her scrubbing out the kettles."

Wainwright gave an inward shudder. "Has she any education at all?" he asked, with a feeling like giving her money, and getting away as fast as possible; money, because he had for twenty-four hours made her in a certain way a subject of study, and felt as if he owed her something, especially if he went disappointed.

"Sir, she has a finished education," responded the little minister, with dignity; "she can play delightfully upon David's instrument, the harp."

At this moment they came to the plank and the ditch.

“I will go no farther,” said Brother Bethuel, “and—and you need not mention to the colonel, if you please, that I accompanied you hither.” Then he stood on tiptoe, and whispered mysteriously into Stephen’s ear: “As to horses, remember to apply to me—Brother Head, Bethuel Head. A note dropped into the post-office will reach me, a man on horseback bringing the mail up our way twice each week. Bethuel Head—do not forget.” He struck himself on the breast once or twice as if to emphasize the name, gave Stephen a wink, which masqueraded as knowing but was more like entreaty, and, turning away, walked back toward the village.

“An extraordinary little man,” thought the other, crossing the plank, and following the path up the ravine by the side of the brook.

The colonel sat on his high, unrailed piazza, with the red wagon and a dilapidated buggy drawn up comfortably underneath; Honor was with him. He rose to greet his visitor, and almost immediately asked if he was related to Bishop Wainwright. When Stephen replied that he was not, the old gentlemen sat down, and leaned his crutch against the wall, with a good deal of disappointment; being a devoted churchman he had hoped for a long ecclesiastical chat. But, after a moment, he took up with good grace the secondary subject of the mountains, and talked very well about them. With the exception of the relationship to the bishop, he, with the courtesy of the South, did not ask his guest a single question; Stephen could have been a peddler, a ten-or-singer, a carpet-bag politician, or a fugitive from justice, with perfect safety, as far as questions were concerned.

Honor said nothing. It was refreshing to be with a girl who did not want to go anywhere or do anything. She had really asked him to come, then, merely to please the old colonel. A girl of gold. But, alas! The girl of gold proved herself to be of the usual metal after all; for, when half an hour passed, she deliberately proposed to her uncle that she should take their visitor up the hill to see the view. Now, Stephen had been taken, numerous times in his life, to see views; the trouble was that he always looked directly at the real landscape, whatever it was, and found a great deal to say about it, to the neglect of the view nearer his side. He did not think it necessary now to play his usual part of responsive politeness to this little country girl’s open manoeuvre; he could go if she insisted upon it, he supposed. So he sat looking down at the brim of his hat; but noted, also, that even the colonel seemed surprised. Honor, however, had risen, and was putting on her ugly little bonnet; she looked quietly determined. Stephen rose also, and took leave formally; he would go homeward from the hill. They started, he by this time weary of the whole State, and fast inclining toward departure early the next morning.

He did not say much to her, or look at her; but, in truth, the path through the corn was too steep and narrow for conversation—they were obliged to walk in single file. When they had reached the summit, and Stephen was gathering together his adjectives for his usual view-remarks, he turned toward his companion, and was surprised to see how embarrassed she appeared; he began to feel interested in her again—interested in her timid, dark eyes, and the possibilities in their depths. She was evidently frightened.

“If,” she began once, twice—then faltered and stopped.

“Well?” said Stephen, encouragingly; after all, she was very young.

“If you intend to stay in Ellerby any length of time—do you?”

“I really have not decided,” said Stephen, relapsing into coolness.

“I was only going to say that if you *do* stay, we, that is I—we, I mean—shall be happy to see you here often.”

“Thanks.”

“The view is considered fine,” faltered the girl, pulling off her gloves in desperate embarrassment, and putting them deep down in her pocket.

Stephen began his view-remarks.

“But what I was going to say,” she continued, breaking in at the first pause, “was, that if you should stay, and need—need *horses*, or a—guide, I wish you would apply to Mr. Head.”

“They are in a conspiracy against me with their horses,” thought Stephen. Then he threw a hot shot! “Yes; Mr. Head asked me the same thing. He also asked me not to mention that he brought me here.”

“No; pray do not,” said Honor, quickly.

He turned and looked at her; she began to blush—pink, crimson, pink; then white, and a very dead white too.

“You think it strange?” she faltered.

“Not at all. Do not be disturbed, Miss Dooris; I never think anything.”

“Mr. Head is poor, and—and tries to make a little money now and then with his horses,” she stammered.

“So I—judged.”

“And I—try to help him.”

“Very natural, I am sure.”

He was beginning to feel sorry for the child, and her poor little efforts to gain a few shillings; he had decided that the colonel’s old horses were the wagon-team of this partnership, and “Marcher” the saddle-horse.

“I shall certainly need horses,” he said, aloud.

“And you will apply to Mr. Head?”

She was so eager that he forgot himself, and smiled.

“Miss Dooris,” he said, bowing, “I will apply to Mr. Head, and only to him; I give you my word.”

She brightened at once.

The golden shafts of the setting sun shone full in her face—her dark eyes did not mind them; she did not put up her hand to shield herself, but stood and looked directly into the glittering, brilliant western sky. He put his quizzical expression back out of sight, and began to talk to her. She answered him frankly. He tested her a little; he was an old hand at it. Of coquetry she gave back not a sign. Gradually the conviction came to him that she had not asked him up there for personal reasons at all. It was then, the horses.

When he had decided this, he sat down on a stump, and went on talking to her with renewed interest. After a while she laughed, and there came into her face that peculiar brilliancy which the conjunction of dark eyes and the gleam of white, even teeth can give to a thin-cheeked brunette. Then he remembered to look at her hands, and was relieved to find them, although a little roughened by toil, charmingly shaped and finely aristocratic, fit portion of the tall, well-rounded figure, which only needed self-consciousness to be that of a young Diana. The girl seemed so happy and radiant, so impersonal in the marked attention she gave to him, which was not unlike the attention she might have given to her grandfather, that Wainwright recognized it at last as only another case of his being of no consequence, and smiled to himself over it. Evidently, if he wanted notice, he must, as it were, mount the horses. He had no especial intention of making excursions among the mountains; but that was, apparently, the fixed idea of these horse-owners. They were, for some reason, pleased to be mysterious; he would be mysterious also.

“I hope Mr. Head’s horses are good ones?” he said, confidentially; “I shall need *very* good horses.”

All her color gone instantly, and the old cloud of anxiety on her face again.

“Yes, they are good horses,” she answered; and then her eyes rested upon him, and he read trouble, fear, and dislike, succeeding each other openly in their dark depths.

“Is it because I am a Northerner, Miss Dooris?” he said, quietly. He had made up his mind rather unfairly, to break down the fence between them by a close question, which so young a girl would not know how to parry.

She started, and the color rushed up all over her face again.

“Of course, it is all right,” she answered, hurriedly, in a low voice; “I know that the laws must be maintained, and that some persons must do the work that you do. People cannot always choose their occupations, I suppose, and no doubt they—no doubt you—I mean, that it cannot be helped.”

“May I ask what you take me for?” said Wainwright, watching her.

“We saw it at once; Mr. Head saw it, and afterward I did, also. But we are experienced; others may not discover you so soon. Mr. Head is anxious to pilot you through the mountains to save you from danger.”

“He is very kind; disinterested, too.”

“No,” said Honor, flushing again; “I assure you he makes money by it, also.”

“But you have not told me what it is you take me for, Miss Dooris?”

“It is not necessary, is it?” replied Honor, in a whisper. “You are one of the new revenue detectives, sent up here to search out the stills.”

“An informer—after the moonlight-whiskey makers, you mean?”

“Yes.”

Wainwright threw his head back and laughed out loud, as he had not laughed for years.

“I am not sure but that it is a compliment,” he said, at last; “no one has ever taken me for anything particular before in all my life.” Then, when he was sober, “Miss Dooris,” he said, “I am a man of leisure, residing in New York, and I am sorry to say that I am an idle vagabond, with no occupation even so useful as that of a revenue detective.”

In spite of himself, however, a touch of contempt filtered into his voice. Then it came to him how the club-men would enjoy the story, and again he laughed uproariously. When he came to himself Honor was crying.

III.

YES, Honor was crying. The dire mistake, the contempt, and, worse than all, the laughter, had struck the proud little Southern girl to the heart.

“My dear child,” said Wainwright, all the gentleman in him aroused at once, “why should you care for so small and natural a mistake? It is all clear to me now. I gave no account of myself coming over on the stage; I remember, too, that I spoke of the moonlight-whiskey makers myself, and that I made no effort to find out what Mr. Head was alluding to when he talked on in his mysterious way. It is my unusual unpardonable laziness which has brought you to this error. Pray forgive it.”

Honor cried on, unable to stop, but his voice and words had soothed her; he stood beside her, hat in hand, and, after a few moments, she summoned self-control enough to dry her eyes, and put down her handkerchief. But her eyelashes were still wet, her breath came tremulously, and there was a crimson spot on each cheek. She looked, at that moment, not more than fifteen years old, and Wainwright sat down, this time nearer to her, determined to make her feel easier. He banished the subject of her mistake at once, and began talking to her about herself. He asked many questions, and she answered them humbly, as a Lenten penitent might answer a father confessor. She seemed to feel as though she owed him everything he chose to take. She let him enter and walk through her life and mind, through all her hopes and plans; one or two closed

doors he noted, but did not try to open, neither did he let her see that he had discovered them. He learned how poor they were; he learned her love for her uncle, her Switzer's attachment to the mountain-peaks about her; he learned what her daily life was, and he came near enough to her religious faith, that faith which had first attracted him, to see how clear and deep it was, like a still pool in a shaded glen. It was years since Stephen Wainwright had been so close to a young girl's soul, and, to do him justice, he felt that he was on holy ground.

When at last he left her, he had made up his mind that he would try an experiment. He would help this child out of the quagmire of poverty, and give her, in a small way, a chance. The question was, how to do it. He remained at Ellerby; made acquaintances; and asked questions. He pretended this, and pretended that. Finally, after some consideration, he woke up the old library association, reopened the building, and put in Honor as librarian, at a salary of two hundred dollars a year. To account for this, he was obliged, of course, to be much interested in Ellerby; his talk was that the place must eventually become a summer resort, and that money could be very well invested there. He, therefore, invested it. Discovering, among other things, pink marble on wild land belonging to the colonel, he bought a whole hill-side, and promptly paid for it. To balance this, he also brought half a mile of sulphur springs on the other side of the valley (the land comically cheap), and spoke of erecting an hotel there. The whole of Ellerby awoke, talked, and rejoiced; no one dreamed that the dark eyes of one young girl had effected it all.

Honor herself remained entirely unconscious. She was so openly happy over the library that Wainwright felt himself already repaid. "It might stand against some of my omissions," he said to himself.

One thing detained him where he was; then another. He could not buy property without paying some attention to it, and he did not choose to send for his man of business. He staid on, therefore, all summer. And he sent books to the library now and then during the winter that followed, packages which the librarian, or course, was obliged to acknowledge, answering at the same time the questions of the letters which accompanied them. Stephen's letters were always formal; they might have been nailed up on walls of the library for all comers to read. He amused himself, however, not a little over the carefully-written, painstaking answers, in which the librarian remained "with great respect" his "obliged servant, Honor Dooris."

The second summer began, and he was again among the mountains; but he should leave at the end of the month, he said. In the mean time it had come about that he was teaching the librarian. She needed instruction, certainly; and the steps that led up to it had been so gradual that it seemed natural enough now. But no one knew the hundred little things which had been done to make it seem so.

What was he trying to do?

His cousin, Adelaide Kellinger, determined to find out that point, was already domiciled with her maid at the inn. There had been no concealment about Honor; Wainwright had told Adelaide the whole story. He also showed to her the librarian's little letters whenever they came, and she commented upon them naturally, and asked many questions. "Do you know I feel really interested in the child myself?" she said to him, one day. And it was entirely true.

When he told her that he was going to the mountains again, she asked if he would not take her with him. "It will be a change from the usual summer places; and, besides, I find I am lonely if long away from you," she said, frankly. She always put it upon that ground. She had learned that nothing makes a man pur more satisfactorily than the hearing that the woman in whose society he finds himself particularly comfortable has an especial liking for, and dependence upon, himself; immediately he makes it all a favor and kindness to *her*, and is happy. So Adelaide came with Stephen; and did make him more comfortable. His barren room bloomed with fifty things which came out of her trunks and her ingenuity; she coaxed and bribed the cook; she won the landlady to a later breakfast. She arranged a little parlor and was always there when he came home, ready to talk to him a little, but not too much, ready to divine his mood and make the whole atmosphere accord with it at once. They had been there three weeks, and of course Adelaide had met the librarian.

For those three weeks she remained neutral, and studied the ground; then she began to act. She sent for John Royce. And she threw continuous rose-light around Honor.

After the final tableau of a spectacle-play, a second view is sometimes given with the nymphs and fairies all made doubly beautiful by rose-light. Mrs. Kellinger now gave this glow. She praised Honor's beauty.

Stephen had not observed it. How could he be so blind? Why, the girl had fathomless eyes, exquisite coloring, the form of a Greek Statue, and the loveliest mouth! Then she branched off.

"What a beautiful thing it would be to see such a girl as that fall in love!—a girl so impulsive, so ignorant of the world. That is exactly the kind of girl that really could die of a broken heart."

"Could she?" said Stephen.

"Now, Stephen, you know as well as I do what Honor Dooris is," said Adelaide, warmly. "She is not awakened yet, her prince had not made himself known to her; but, when he does awaken her, she will take him up to the seventh heaven."

"That is—if she loves him."

"She has seen so few persons. It would not be a difficult matter," said Adelaide.

A few days later, when she told him that she was thinking of sending for John Royce, he made no comment, although she looked at him with undisguised wistfulness, a lingering gaze that seemed to entreat his questions. But he would not question, and, obedient as always to his will, she remained silent.

John Royce came. He was another cousin, but a young one, twenty-five years old, blue-eyed and yellow-haired. He kept his yellow hair ruthlessly short, however, and he frowned more or less over his blue eyes, owing to much yachting and squinting ahead across the glaring water to gain an inch's length on the next boat. He was brown and big, with a rolling gait; the edge of a boat tilted at one hair's-breadth from going over entirely, was his idea of a charming seat; under a tree before a camp-fire, with something more than a suspicion of savage animals near, his notion of a delightful bed. He did not have much money of his own, he was going to do something for

himself by-and-by; but Cousin Adelaide always petted him, and he had no objection to a hunt among those Southern mountains. So he came.

He met Honor almost immediately; Mrs. Kellinger was a welcome visitor at the Eliot home, she seemed to make the whole ravine more graceful. The colonel's wife and all the children clustered around her with delight every time she came, and the old colonel himself renewed his youth in her presence. She brought John to call upon them at once, and she took him to the library also; she made Honor come and dine with them at the inn. She arranged a series of excursions in a great mountain-wagon shaped like a boat, and tilted high up behind, with a canvas cover over a framework, like a Shaker bonnet, and drawn by six slow-walking horses. The wagoner being a postilion, they had the wagon to themselves; they filled the interstices with Eliot children and baskets, and explored the wilder roads, going on foot up the steep banks above, drinking from the ice-cold spring, looking out for rattlesnakes, plucking the superb rhododendrons and the flowers of the calico-bush, and every now and then catching a new glimpse of the unparalleled crowd of peaks over toward the Tennessee line. Stephen went everywhere patiently; Honor went delightedly; John Royce went carelessly; Mrs. Kellinger went as the velvet string which held them all together. She was so smooth that they slid easily.

But, in the intervals, Wainwright still taught his librarian.

Mrs. Eliot had become Adelaide's warm friend. The sweet-voiced Southern wife, with her brood of children, and her calm, contented pride, confided to the Northern stranger the one grief of her life, namely, that she was the colonel's second wife, and that he had dearly loved the first; anxiety as to the uncertain future of her children weighed far less upon her mind than this. The old-time South preserved the romance of conjugal love even to silver hairs; there may have been no more real love than at the North, but there was more of the manner of it. The second month came to its end; it was now August. Mrs. Kellinger had sent many persons to the library, she had roused up a general interest in it; villagers now went there regularly for books, paying a small subscription-fee, which was added to Honor's salary. Honor thanked her for this in a rather awkward way; Mrs. Eliot, who was present, did not consider the matter of consequence enough for thanks. She had never even spoken to Wainwright of Honor's office of librarian, or the salary which came out of his pocket. Money-matters were nothing; between friends they were less than nothing. Stephen had two hours alone with his librarian every morning, when there was no excursion; Mrs. Kellinger had arranged that, by inventing a rule and telling it to everybody in a decided tone: no one was expected at the library before eleven o'clock.

"Did you do this?" said Stephen, when he discovered it.

"I did."

"Why?"

"Because I thought you would like it," replied Adelaide. He looked at her questioningly; she answered immediately to the look. "You are interested in a new study of character, Stephen; you are really doing the child a world of good, too; although, as usual, I confess that my interest in the matter is confined principally to your own entertainment." She spoke good-humoredly, and almost immediately afterward left him to himself.

His mind ran back over a long series of little arrangements made for his pleasure on all sorts of occasions. "She is the best-hearted woman in the world," he thought. And then he took his notebook and went over to the library.

Their lessons would have amused a looker-on; but there was no looker-on. Honor was interested or absent-minded, irritable or deeply respectful, humble or proud, by turns; she regarded him as her benefactor, and she really wished to learn; but she was young, and impulsive, and—a girl. There was little conversation save upon the lessons; with the exception of one subject. The man of the world had begun his study of this girl's deep religious faith. "If you can give it to me also, or a portion of it," he had said, "you will be conferring a priceless gift upon me, Miss Honor."

Then Honor would throw down her books, clasp her hands, and, with glowing cheeks, talk to him on sacred subjects. Many a time the tears would spring to her eyes with her own earnestness, many a time she lost herself entirely while pleading with her whole soul. He listened to her, thanked her, and went away. Only once did he show any emotion—it was when she told him that she prayed for him.

"Do you really pray for me?" he said, in a low tone; then he put his hand over his eyes, and sat silent.

Honor, a little frightened, drew back. It seemed to her a very simple act, praying for any one—she had prayed for people all her life.

One Sunday afternoon Mrs. Eliot and Honor were sitting in Adelaide's parlor at the inn, whither she had brought them on their way home from service. Royce and Stephen had been discovered, upon their entrance, in two chairs at the windows, the former surrounded by a waste of newspapers, magazines, and novels, thrown down on the floor, a general expression of heat and weariness on his face. His companion was reading a small, compact volume in his usual neat way. Big Royce was sprawled over three chairs; Stephen did not fill one. Big Royce was drumming on the window-sill; Stephen was motionless. Yet Royce, springing up and smiling, his blue eyes gleaming and frank gladness on his face, was a picture that women remember; while Stephen, rising without change of expression, was a silent contradiction to their small power, which is never agreeable. They all sat talking for an hour—Mrs. Eliot and Mrs. Kellinger contributing most of the sentences. Royce was in gay spirits; Honor rather silent. Suddenly there came a sharp cracking sound; they all ran to the window. Through the main street of the village a man was running, following by another, who, three times in their sight and hearing, fired at the one in advance. One, two, three times they saw and heard him fire, and the sickening feeling of seeing a man murdered in plain sight came over them. Royce rushed down to the street. The victim had fallen; the other man was himself staggering, and in the hands of a crowd which had gathered in an instant. After a short delay the two men were borne away, one to his home, one to the jail. Royce returned hot and breathless.

"Oh, how is the poor man who was shot?" exclaimed Mrs. Eliot.

"Poor man, indeed! The other one is the man to be pitied," said Royce, angrily. "He is a revenue detective, and was knocked down from behind with a club by this fellow, who is a liquor-seller here in the village. The blow was on the skull, and a murderous one. Half blinded and maddened, he staggered to his feet, drew his revolver, and fired for his life."

Honor had grown white as ivory. She shook in every limb, her lips trembled, and her chin had dropped a little. Wainwright watched her.

“But what does it all mean?” asked Adelaide.

“Moonlight-whiskey, of course. The detective has been hunting for the stills, and these outlaws will kill the man as they have killed half a dozen before him.”

“What an outrage! Are there no laws?”

“Dead letters.”

“Or officers to execute them?”

“Dead men.”

Royce was excited and aroused. He was young, and had convictions. The laws should not be overridden and men murdered in broad daylight by these scoundrels while he was on the scene. He took charge of the detective, who, with his bruised head, was put in jail, while the liquor-seller was allowed to have his illness out in his own house, one of the balls only having taken effect, and that in a safe place in the shoulder. Royce, all on fire for the side of justice, wrote and telegraphed for troops, using the detective's signature; he went himself fifteen miles on horseback to send the dispatch. There were troops at the State capital; they had been up to the mountains before on the same business; they were, indeed, quite accustomed to going up; but they accomplished nothing. The outlaws kept themselves carefully hidden in their wild retreats, and the village looked on as innocently as a Quaker settlement. A detective was fair game: two of them had been shot in the neighborhood within the previous year, and left bleeding in the road. Would they never learn, then, to keep out of the mountains?

“But is it not an extraordinary state of things that a village so large as Ellerby should be so apathetic?” asked Adelaide.

“The villagers can do little—once off the road, and you are in a trackless wilderness,” said Stephen. “Custom makes law in these regions: moonlight-whiskey has always been made, and the mountaineers think they have a right to make it. They look upon the revenue-men as spies.”

“Yes; and they are government officials and Northerners, too,” added Royce, hotly—“mind that!”

He had taken the matter in hand vigorously. He wrote and sent off a dozen letters per day. The department at Washington had its attention decisively called to this district and the outlawry rampant there. It was used to it.

In a week the troops came—part of a company of infantry and a young lieutenant, a tall stripling fresh from West Point. His name was Allison; he lisped and wore kid-gloves; he was as dainty as a girl, and almost as slender. To see the short, red-faced, burly detective, with his bandaged head and stubbed fingers; Royce, with his eagle eyes and impatient glance; and this delicate-handed,

pink-cheeked boy, conferring together, was like a scene from a play. The detective, slow and cautious, studied the maps; Royce, in a hot hurry about everything, paced up and down; Allison examined his almond-shaped nails and hummed a tune. The detective had his suspicions concerning Eagle Knob: the troops could take the river-road, turn off at Butter Glen, and climb the mountain at that point. In the mean while all was kept quiet, it was given out that the men were to search South Gap, on the other side of the valley.

On the very night appointed for the start, an old lady, who had three granddaughters from the low-country spending the summer with her, opened her house, lit up her candles, and gave a ball, with the village fiddlers for musicians and her old black cook's plum-cake for refreshments. Royce was to accompany the troops; Adelaide had not been able to prevent it. She went to Stephen in distress, and then Stephen proposed to Royce to send half a dozen stout villagers in his place—he, Stephen, paying all expenses.

“There are some things, Wainwright, that even your money cannot do,” replied Royce.

“Very well,” said Stephen.

Royce now announced that they must all go to the ball to divert suspicion; Allison too. But Allison had no invitation. Royce went to Mrs. Eliot, and begged her influence; Mrs. Eliot sent Honor to the old lady, and the invitation came.

“If he could avoid wearing his uniform—” suggested Mrs. Eliot to Adelaide, a little nervously.

“But he has nothing else with him, I fear,” answered Adelaide.

It turned out, however, that the lieutenant had a full evening-suit in his valise, with white tie and white gloves also. Royce surveyed these habiliments and their owner with wonder. He himself, coming from New York, with all the baggage he wanted, had only a black coat. His costume must be necessarily of composite order; but the composite order was well known at Ellerby.

Allison was the belle of the ball. He danced charmingly, and murmured the most delightful things to all his partners in rapid succession. He was the only man in full evening-dress present, and the pink flush on his cheeks, and his tall, slender figure swaying around in the waltz, were long remembered in Ellerby. Honor was there in a white muslin which had been several times washed and repaired; there was no flow to her drapery, and she looked awkward. She was pale and silent. Mrs. Kellinger, clothed to the chin and wrists, with no pronounced color about her, was the one noticeable woman present. Royce did not dance. He found the rooms hot and the people tiresome; he was in a fever to be off. Stephen sat on the piazza, and looked in through the window. At one o'clock it was over; Allison had danced every dance. He went back to the inn with his pockets stuffed with gloves, withered rose-buds, knots of ribbon, and even, it was whispered, a lock of golden hair. The next hour, in the deep darkness, the troops started.

At five minutes before eleven the next morning, Stephen was bringing his algebra-lesson to a close, when a distant clatter in the gorge was heard, a tramping sound; men were running out of the mill opposite and gazing curiously up the road. Honor was at the window in a flash, Stephen beside her. The troops were returning. They had laid hands upon a mountain-wagon and marched upon each side of it like a guard of honor. Royce sat in the wagon, his face hidden in his hands.

“Where is Mr. Allison?” said Honor, and her voice was but a whisper. She stood back of the curtain, trembling violently.

Royce did not look up as the procession passed the library; without a word Wainwright and Honor went out, locked the door behind them, and followed the wagon toward the village. Everybody did the same; the houses were emptied of their dwellers. The whole village came together to see the body of the boy-officer lifted out and carried into the inn. Allison was dead.

The buttons on his uniform gleamed as they bore him in, and his white hands hung lifelessly down. He had fought like a tiger, they said, and had led his men on with the most intrepid, daring courage to the very last. It seemed that they had fallen into an ambush, and had accomplished nothing; singularly enough, the young lieutenant was the only one killed; Royce was sure that he had seen one of the outlaws deliberately single him out and fire—a dark, haggard-looking fellow.

Stephen took Honor up to Adelaide’s parlor; Adelaide was there wringing her hands. She had fastened the boy’s collar for him at two o’clock the night before, when he had rather absurdly pretended that he could not make it stay buttoned; and she had tapped him on the cheek reprovingly for his sentimental looks. “This ball has spoiled you, foolish boy,” she had said; “march off into the mountains and get rid of this nonsense.” Ah, well, he was well rid of it now!

Honor stood as if transfixed, listening. Presently the door opened, and Royce came in. “Let me get somewhere where I am not ashamed to cry,” he said, and, sinking down, he laid his head upon his arms on the table and cried like a child. Honor went out of the room hastily; she hardly noticed that Stephen was with her. When she reached the ravine she, too, sank down on the grass, out of sight of the house, and sobbed as though her heart would break. Stephen looked at her irresolutely, then moved away some paces, and, sitting down on a stump, waited. Honor had danced with Allison; could it be—but no; it was only the sudden horror of the thing.

Allison was buried in the little village churchyard; the whole country-side came to the funeral. The old Episcopal rector read the burial-service, and his voice shook a little as the young head was laid low in the deep grave. Brother Bethuel had come down from the mountains on Marcher, and had asked permission to lead the singing; he stood by the grave, and, with uncovered head and uplifted eyes, sang with marvelous sweetness and power an old Methodist hymn, in which all the throng soon joined. The young girls who had danced at the ball sobbed aloud; Honor alone stood tearless. But she had brought her choicest roses to lay over the dead boy’s feet, where no one could see them, and she had stooped and kissed his icy forehead in the darkened room before he was carried out; Stephen saw her do it. After the funeral, Brother Bethuel and Honor went away together; Stephen returned to the inn. Adelaide had taken upon herself the task of answering the letters; Allison had no father or mother, but his other relatives and friends were writing. Royce, his one young burst of grief over, went about sternly, his whole soul set on revenge. New troops came; an officer of the United States army had been killed and the department was aroused at last. There were several officers at Ellerby now, older men than Allison and more experienced; a new expedition was to be sent into the mountains to rout these banditti and make an end of them. Royce was going as guide; he knew where the former attack had been made, and he knew, also, the detective’s reasons for suspecting Eagle Knob, the detective himself being now out of the field, owing to brain-fever; the United States authorities had ordered him out of jail, and he was at the inn, having his fever comfortable on the ground-

floor. Honor was with Adelaide almost constantly now; the elder woman, who always received her caressingly, seemed puzzled by the girl's peculiar manner. She said little, but sat and listened to every word, turning her dark eyes slowly from one speaker to the next. Royce came and went, brought in his maps, talked, and every now and then made the vases on the table ring as he brought down his strong hand with an emphasis of defiance.

"I cannot study," Honor had said to Stephen when he made some allusion to their morning hours. She said it simply, without excuse or disguise; he did not ask her again.

The expedition was to start on Monday night. The whole village, in the mean time, had been carefully entrusted with the secret that it was to go on Tuesday. But on Sunday evening Honor discovered that before midnight the hounds were to be let slip; the very soldiers themselves did not know it. How did the girl learn it, then? She divined it from some indefinable signs in Royce. Even Adelaide did not suspect it; and Stephen saw only the girl's own restlessness. She slipped away like a ghost—so like one that Stephen himself did not see her go. He followed her, however, almost immediately; it was too late for her to go through the village alone. He was some distance behind her; to his surprise, she did not go homeward, but walked rapidly down toward the river-road. There was fickle moonlight now and then; he dropped still farther behind and followed her, full of conjecture, which was not so much curiosity as pain. It was still early in the evening, yet too late for her to be out there on the river-road alone. This innocent young girl—this child—where, where, was she going? He let her walk on for a mile, and then he made up his mind that he must stop her. They were far beyond the houses now, and the road was lonely and wild; the roar of the river over its broad, rock-dotted, uneven bed, the sound of his footsteps as he climbed up the steep bank, ran forward, and came down into the road in advance of her.

"Where are you going, Miss Honor?" he said, showing himself, and speaking quietly.

She started back, and gasped out his name.

"Yes, it is I," he answered, "Stephen Wainwright. I am alone; you need not be frightened."

She came up close to him and took his hand.

"Do not stop me," she said, entreatingly. "I am on an errand of life and death!"

"I will go in your place, Honor."

"You cannot."

"Yes, I can. But *you* shall not."

"Will you betray me, then?" she said, in an agonized tone.

"No; but you will tell me what it is, and I will go for you."

"I tell you, you cannot go."

“Why?”

“You do not know; and, besides—you would not.”

“I will do anything you ask me to do,” said Stephen.

“Anything?”

“Anything.”

She hesitated, looking at him.

“Do you give me your word?”

“I do.”

“But—but it is an enormous thing you are doing for me.”

“I know it is.”

“Oh, let me go—let me go myself!” she cried, suddenly, with a half-sob; “it is so much better.”

“I will never let you go,” said Stephen. His voice was inflexible. She surveyed him tremulously, hopelessly; then sank down upon her knees, praying, but not to him. Stephen took off his hat, and waited, bareheaded. It was but a moment; then she rose. “My cousin, Richard Eliot, my uncle’s eldest son, has been with these men, at one of their hiding-places, for some months; my uncle knows nothing of it; but Brother Bethuel is in the secret, and keeps watch of him.”

“Your cousin is Masters, then?”

“He is. Ask no more questions, but hasten on; take the first broad trail which leaves the road on the right, follow it until you come to Brother Bethuel’s house; you cannot miss it; it is the only one. He will guide you to the place where Richard is, and you must warn him that the troops are coming.”

“Only one question, Honor. Come out into the moonlight; give me both your hands. Do you love this man?”

He looked at her fixedly; she gave a quick, strong start, as though she must break away from him at all hazards, and turned darkly red, the deep, almost painful, blush of the brunette. Her hands shook in his grasp, tears of shame rose in her eyes; it was as though some one had struck her in the face.

“Do you love this Eliot?” repeated Stephen, compelling her still to meet his eyes.

She drew in her breath suddenly, and answered, with a rush of quick words; “No, no, no! Not in the way you mean. But he is my cousin. Go!”

He went. Nearly two miles farther down the road the trail turned off; it climbed directly up a glen by the side of a brook which ran downward to the river in a series of little waterfalls. It was wide enough for a horse, and showed the track of Marcher's hoofs. It came out on a flank of the mountain and turned westward, then northward, then straight up again through the thick woods to a house whose light shone down like a beacon, and guided him.

Wainwright knocked; Brother Bethuel opened, started slightly, then recovered himself, and welcomed his guest effusively.

"Is there any one in the house besides ourselves?" said Stephen, ignorant as to whether there was, or was not, a Mrs. Head. There was; but she had gone, with her five offspring, to visit her mother in Tennessee.

"Then," said Stephen, "take me immediately to Richard Eliot."

The little minister stared innocently at his guest.

"Take you where?" he repeated, with surprised face.

"Come," said Stephen, "you need not conceal. Miss Dooris herself sent me. I am to warn this Eliot that the troops are on the way; have probably already left Ellerby."

The little man, convinced, sprang for his lantern, lighted it, and hurried out, followed by Wainwright. He ran more than he walked; he climbed over the rocks; he galloped down the gullies and up the other side; he said not a word, but hurried, closely followed by Stephen, who was beginning to feel spent, until he reached the foot of a wall of rock, the highest ledge of Eagle Knob. Here he stood still and whistled; Stephen sat down, and tried to recover his breath. After a moment or two a whistle answered from above, and the missionary imitated the cry of a night-bird, one, two, three times. He then sat down beside Wainwright, and wiped his forehead. "He will be here in a moment," he said. In a short time, coming up as if from the bowels of the mountain, a figure stood beside them. Brother Bethuel had closed the slide of his lantern, and Wainwright could not see the face. "Miss Dooris sent me," he began. "I am to warn you that the troops are on their way hither to-night, and that they have a clue to your hiding-place."

"Who are you?" said the man.

"I am Miss Dooris's messenger; that is enough."

The man muttered an oath.

Brother Bethuel lifted his hands with a deprecating gesture.

"You do not mean it, Richard; you know you do not.—Lord, forgive him!" he murmured.

"Well, what am I to do?" said the man. "Did she send any word?"

"Only that you must escape."

“Escape! Easy enough to say. But where am I to go? Did she send any money?”

“She will,” said Stephen, improvising.

“When?”

“To-morrow.”

“How much?”

“Quite a sum; as much as you need.”

“Is she so flush, then?”

“She is, as you say—flush,” replied Stephen.

Brother Bethuel had listened breathlessly to this conversation, and when Eliot said, fretfully, “But where am I to go now—to-night?” he answered: “Home with me, Dick. I can conceal you for one night; nobody suspects me. The Lord will forgive; it is an Eliot.”

“Wait until I warn the fellows, then,” said the man, disappearing suddenly in the same way he had appeared. Then Stephen, who had not risen from his seat, felt a pair of arms thrown around his neck; the little brother was embracing him fervently.

“God bless you! God bless you!” he whispered. “We will get him safely out of the country this time, with your aid, Mr. Wainwright. An Eliot, mind you; a real Eliot, poor fellow!”

But the real Eliot had returned, and Brother Bethuel led the way down the mountain. They walked in single file, and Stephen saw that the man in front of him was tall and powerful. They reached the house, and the minister took the fugitive down onto his cellar, supplying him with food, but no light.

“Make no sound,” he said. “Even if the house is full of soldiers, you are safe. No one suspects me.” He closed the horizontal door, and then turned to Wainwright. “What are you going to do?” he asked, his small face wrinkled with anxiety.

“I am going back to Ellerby.”

“And when will you return with the money?”

“Some time to-morrow.”

“I will go with you as far as the road,” said Brother Bethuel; “I want to see if the troops are near.”

“Who is this Eliot?” asked Stephen, as they went down the glen.

“The colonel’s eldest son, the only child by the first wife; his father has heard nothing of him for several years; it is the grief of the old man’s life.”

“What is he doing here?”

“Well, he is a wild boy, always was,” said Brother Bethuel, reluctantly. “Lately he has been living with a gang of these whiskey-men.”

“And Miss Dooris knows of it?”

“Yes. He was always fond of Honor when she was a child, and latterly he has—has fallen into a way of depending upon her.”

“Why does he not come out of the woods, go to work, and behave like a civilized man?” said Wainwright, in a tone of disgust. “I have no patience with such fellows.”

“Oh, yes, you have,” said Brother Bethuel, earnestly. “You are going to help him, you know.”

“Well, we will send him far enough away this time—to Australia, if he will go,” said Stephen. “The country will be well rid of him.”

“You do not, perhaps, understand, exactly,” said Brother Bethuel, timidly, after a moment’s silence. “Eliot fought all through the war—fought bravely, nobly. But, when peace came, there seemed to be no place for him. He was not adapted to—to commerce; he felt it a degradation. Hence his present position. But he did not choose it voluntarily; he—he drifted into it.”

“Yes, as you say, drifted,” said Stephen, dryly. “Will the other men get away in time?”

“Oh, yes; they are already gone. There is a cave, and a passage upward through clefts in the rocks to the glen where their still is; it is a natural hiding-place. But they will not even stay there; they will go to another of their haunts.”

“Where?”

“Thank the Lord, I do not know! Really and truly I do not know,” ejaculated the little minister, fervently. “My only interest in them, the only charge upon my conscience, had been Eliot himself. You do not understand, and I may not be able to explain it to you, Mr. Wainwright, but—I love the Eliots! I have loved them all my life. I was born upon their land, I revered them in childhood, I honored them in youth, I love them in age. They bear one of our great State names; they have been our rulers and our leaders for generations. I love them, every one.” Wainwright made no answer; the little man went on: “This son has been a sad, wild boy always—has nearly broken his father’s heart. But he is an Eliot still; the little I can do for him I will do gladly until I die.”

“Or until he does,” suggested Stephen. “One of this gang shot Allison; was this Eliot of yours the marksman?”

Brother Bethuel was silent. Stephen turned and saw by the lantern's gleam the trouble and agitation on his face.

"He did it, I see," said Stephen, "and you know he did it. It was murder."

"No, no—war," said the missionary, with dry lips. They had reached the road and looked down it; the moonlight was unclouded now. They could see nothing, but they thought they heard sounds. Brother Bethuel went back up the glen, and Wainwright, turning into the woods, made his way along in the deep shadows above the road. He met the soldiers after a while, marching sturdily, and remained motionless behind a tree-trunk until they had passed; then, descending into the track, he walked rapidly back to the village. But, with all his haste and all his skill, he did not reach his room unobserved; Adelaide saw him enter, and noted the hour.

The troops came back at noon the next day, not having discovered the foe. Honor was with Adelaide, pretending to sew, but her mind was astray; Adelaide watched her closely. Stephen was present, quiet and taciturn as usual. He had succeeded in conveying to the girl, unobserved, a slip of paper, on which was written, "Eliot is hidden in the cellar of Head's house—I am going out there this afternoon, and you may feel assured that, in a day or two more, he will be out of the mountains, and in permanent safety;" but he had not been able to exchange any words with her.

Royce came in, foiled, tired, and out of temper.

"If it had not been for the little minister, we should have had nothing at all for our pains," he said, when, the first annoyed heat over, he, having been left in the mean while unvexed by questions owing to Adelaide's tact, began to feel himself like telling the story. "He heard us down in the road, came to meet us, and advised us what to do. It seems that he too has had his suspicions about Eagle Knob, and he took his lantern and guided us up there. We hunted about and found one of their hiding-places, showing traces, too, of recent occupation; but we could not find the men or the still. The troops will take rations, however, next time, and make a regular campaign of it; we shall unearth the scoundrels yet."

"But *you* will not think it necessary to go again, John?" said Adelaide.

"Not necessary, but agreeable, Cousin Adelaide. I will not leave these mountains until the murderer of Allison is caught—I was going to say shot, but hanging is better," said Royce.

Honor gazed at him with helpless, fascinated eyes; Mrs. Kellinger noted the expression. There was evidently another secret; she had already divined one.

Soon afterward Honor went home, and Stephen did not accompany her; Adelaide noted that. She noted also that he sat longer than usual in her parlor after the early dinner, smoking cigarettes and becoming gradually more and more drowsy, until at last, newspaper in hand, he sauntered off to his own room, as if for a *siesta*. It was too well acted. She said to herself, with conviction "He is going out!" A woman can deceive admirably in little things, a man cannot. He can keep the secret of an assassination, but not of a clam-supper. The very cat discovers it. Adelaide went to her room, put on her trim little walking-boots and English round hat, and, slipping quietly out of the house, walked down the road to a wooded knoll she remembered, a little elevation that

commanded the valley and the village; here, under a tree, she sat waiting. She had a volume of Landor; it was one of Wainwright's ways to like Landor. After half an hour had passed she heard, as she had expected to hear, footsteps; she looked up. Wainwright was passing. "Why—is it you?" she called out. "I thought you would sleep for two hours at least. Sit down here awhile and breath this delicious air with me."

Wainwright, outwardly undisturbed, left the road, came up the knoll and sat down by her side. Being in the shade he took off his hat and threw himself back on the grass. But that did not make him look any larger. Only a broad-shouldered, big fellow can amount to anything when lying down in the open air: he must crush with his careless length a good wide space of grass and daisies, or he will inevitably be overcome by the preponderant weight of Nature, the fathomless sky above, the stretch of earth on each side. Wainwright took up the volume, which Adelaide did not conceal; that he had found her reading his favorite author was another of the little facts with which she gemmed his life. "What do you discover to like?" he asked.

"'His bugles on the Pyrenees dissolved that trance of Europe.' And, 'When the war is over, let us sail among the islands of the Aegean and be as young as ever.' And, 'We are poor indeed when we have no half-wishes left us,'" said Adelaide, musically quoting. "Then there is the 'Artemidora.'"

"You noticed that?"

"Yes."

Meanwhile, the man was thinking, "How can I get away unsuspected?" And the woman, "How can I make him tell me?"

They talked some time longer, then Adelaide made up her mind to go into action.

Adelaide. (quietly). "There is a change in you, Stephen. I want you to tell me the cause."

Stephen. "We all change as time moves on."

Adelaide. "But this is something different. I have noticed—"

Stephen. "What?"

Adelaide. "No one observes you so closely as I do, Stephen; my life is bound up in yours, your interests are mine. Anything that is for your happiness engrosses me; anything that threatens it disturbs me. Let us speak plainly, then: you are interested in Honor Doorsis."

Stephen. "I am."

Adelaide. "More than that—you love her."

Stephen. "What is love, Adelaide?"

Adelaide (with emotion). "It was Ralph's feeling for me, Stephen. He is gone, but I have the warm memory in my heart. Somebody loved me once, and with all his soul." (Leaning forward with tears in her eyes:) "Take this young girl, Stephen; yes, take her. She will give you what you have never had in your life, poor fellow!—real happiness."

Wainwright was silent.

Adelaide. "Ah! I have known it for a long time, You spent the whole of last summer here; what did that mean? You wrote to her at intervals all through the winter. You are here again. You love to study her girlish heart, to open the doors of her mind." (Rapidly:) "And have I not helped you? I have, I have. Was I not the quiet listener to all those first guarded descriptions of yours? Did I not comment upon each and every word of those careful little letters of hers, and follow every possibility of their meaning out to its fullest extent? All this to please *you*. But, when I came here and saw the child with my own eyes, did I not at once range myself really upon your side? Have I not had her here? Did I not form a close acquaintance with her family? Did I not give you those morning hours with her at the library? And am I not here also to answer for her, to describe her to your friends, to uphold your choice, to bring out and develop her striking beauty?"

Stephen. "But she is not beautiful."

Adelaide. "She is. Let me dress her once or twice, and New York shall rave over her. I have had your interests all the time at heart, Stephen. Was it not I who sent for John Royce? And did you not see why I sent for him? It was to try her. I have given her every chance to see him, to be with him, to admire him. He is near her own age, and he is a handsome fellow, full of life and spirit. But you see as well as I do that she has come out unscathed. Take her, then, Stephen; you can do it safely, young as she is, for the man she first loves she will love always."

As she spoke, an almost imperceptible tremor showed itself around the mouth of the small, plain, young-old man who was lying on the grass beside her; he seemed to be conscious of it himself, and covered his mouth with his hand.

Adelaide. "But there is something which you must tell *me* now, Stephen. *You* cannot be in league with these outlaws; it is Honor, then? You had better tell. Her uncle and aunt evidently know nothing of it, and the child should have a woman-friend by her side. You know I would cut myself up into small pieces for you, Stephen; let me be your ally in this, too. Is it not best for Honor that I should know everything? Shall I not be her true friends when she is your wife—your sweet young wife, Stephen, in that old house of yours which we will fit up for her together, and where you will let me come and see you, will you not, your faithful, loving cousin?" Her voice broke; she turned her hand away. Her emotion was real. The man by her side, urged at last out of his gray reticence by his own deep longing, which welled up irresistibly to meet her sympathy, turned over on his arm and told her all—in a few words as regarded himself, with careful explanation as regarded Honor.

"I have the money with me now," he said, "and Head, who was so anxious to guide me, the supposed detective, *away* from Eliot, now guides me to him, relies upon me to save him."

“And Honor knows—knows too, that he shot Allison,” said Adelaide, musingly. “That was the reason why she was so pale, and why she brought all her roses, and kissed the poor boy’s forehead.”

“She does not *know*, but fears.”

“Ah! We must help the child, Stephen; the burden of this is too heavy for such young shoulders. Go; I will not keep you a moment longer, I will go back to Honor. But, first—God bless you! Do not put yourself into any danger, for *my* sake. I have loved you long, and years hence, when we are old, I shall love you just the same.”

They were both standing now; she came close to him, and laid her head upon his shoulder for an instant, tears shining on her cheeks. He put one arm around her, touched by her affection; she raised her eyes and let him look deep into them for one short moment. “He shall see the truth this once,” she thought; “though nothing to him now, it will come back to him.”

Adelaide Kellinger did that time a bold thing: she let Wainwright see that she loved him, relying upon the certainty that he would not think she knew he saw it, much less that she intended him to see it. She had the balance of reality on her side, too, because she really did love him—in her way.

In another moment he had left her, and was walking rapidly down the river-road. Adelaide went back to the village.

Her first step was to find out whether Honor was at home; she was not. At the library then? Not there. “Already gone to Brother Bethuel’s,” she thought. She next woke up Royce, laughed at his ill-nature, flattered him a little, coaxed him into good temper, and finally told him plainly that she would not stand his bearishness any longer; that he must go and dress himself anew, brush his hair, and come back and be agreeable.

“You will turn into a mountain-outlaw yourself, if I do not see to you,” she said.

“Oh, let me off for to-day,” said Royce, lazily.

“This moment!”

She had her way: Royce took himself off, followed by the injunction to come back looking like an Apollo. Now, to make one’s self look like an Apollo is an occupation which no young man is in his heart above, and when incited thereto by an expressed belief from feminine lips that he has only to try, he generally—tries. Not long afterward Royce returned to the parlor, looking his best, threw himself into a chair, and took up a book carelessly; he knew Adelaide would comment. She did. She called him “a good boy,” touched the crisp, curling ends of his yellow hair, and asked why he kept them so short; stroked his forehead, and said that, on the whole, he looked quite well. Her heart was beating rapidly as she chatted with him; she listened intently; everything depended upon a chance. Ten minutes before she had executed a daringly bold action, one of those things which a woman can do once in her life with perfect impunity, because no one suspects that she can. If she will do it alone, and only once, there is scarcely any deed she may not accomplish safely. A few more moments passed, Adelaide still listening; then came a

shuffling step through the passage, a knock on the door, and, without waiting for a reply, the burly figure of the revenue-detective appeared, wrapped in a dressing-gown, with head still bandaged, and eyes half closed, but mind sufficiently clear to state his errand.

“Beg pardon,” he said; “is Royce here? I can’t see very well.—Is that you, Royce? Look at this.”

He held out a crumpled piece of paper.

“Seems to be something, but I can’t quite make it out,” he said.

Royce took it, glanced over it, cried, “By Jove!” and was out of the room in a second. The detective went stumbling along after her; he had to feel his way, being half blinded by his swollen eyelids.

“Take your pistols!” he called out, keeping his hand on the wall all the way down the passage.

Royce had dropped the paper; Adelaide had instantly destroyed it; and then she followed the detective.

“What was it?” she asked, anxiously.

“Only a line or two, ma’am—from somebody in the town here, I suppose—saying that one of them distillers, the one, too, that shot Allison, was hidden in the house of the rascally, deceiving little minister, up toward Eagle Knob. They’re all in league with each other, ministers or no ministers.”

“Who wrote it? How do you know it is true?”

“I dun know who wrote it, and I dun know as it’s true. The paper was thrown into my room, through the winder, when there didn’t happen to be anybody around. It was somebody as had a grudge against this man in particular, I suppose; ‘twas scrawly writing, and no spelling to speak of. I brought it to Royce myself, because I wouldn’t trust any one to carry it to him, black or white, confound ‘em all!”

The detective had now reached the end of the passage and his endurance; his hand was covered with whitewash where he had drawn it along the wall, his head was aching furiously, and his slippers were coming off. “You had better just go back,” he said, not menacingly, but with a dull desperation, as he sat down on the first step of the stairway which led down to his room and held his forehead and the base of his brain together; they seemed to him two lobes as large as bushel-baskets, and just ready to split apart.

“I will send some one to you,” said Adelaide, departing. She went to her room, darkened it, and took a long, quiet *siesta*.

.....

Royce dropped his information, *en route*, at the little camp in the grove, where the trim companies of United States infantry led their regular orderly life, to the slow wonder of the

passing mountaineers. Who would not be a soldier and have such mathematically square pieces of bread, such well-boiled meat on a tin plate, such an exactly-measured mug of clear coffee? Who would not wear the light-blue trousers with their sharp fold of newness making a straight line to the very boot? Who would not have such well-parted, shining hair? So thought the mountain-boys, and rode homeward pondering.

The officers in command, on principle disgusted for several seasons with still-hunting, which they deemed police-duty, were now ready to catch at any straw to avenge the death of Allison. The mountaineers and the detectives might fire at each other as long as they enjoyed the pastime; but let them not dare to aim at an army-officer—let them not dare! They were astir at once, and called to Royce to wait for them; but he was already gone.

Stephen had a start of not quite forty minutes; but, unconscious of pursuit, he walked slowly, not caring to return before nightfall. His natural gait was slow, his narrow chest did not take in breath widely, as some chests do, and, slight as his figure was, he labored if hurried. His step was short and rather careful, his ankles and feet being delicate and small. There was no produced development of muscle on him anywhere; he had always known that he could not afford anything of that kind, and had let himself alone. As he now walked on, he dreamed; Adelaide's words rang in his ear, he could not forget them "A woman reads a woman," he said to himself. "Adelaide thinks that I can win her." Then he let his thoughts go: "At last my life will have an object; this sweet young girl will love me, and love me for myself alone; she is incapable of any other feeling." He was very human, after all; he longed so to be loved! His wealth and his insignificance had been two millstones around his neck all his life; he had believed nobody. Under every feeling that had ever come to him lurked always, deepest of all, suspicion. Now, late in life, in this far-off wilderness, he had found some one in whom he believed.

He pleased himself with the thought of the jewels he would give her; he journeyed with her in fancy through the whole of the Old World. The moisture came to his eyes as he imagined how she would pray morning and night just the same, and that he would be there to see her; he said to himself that he would never laugh at her, but would bring his unbelieving heart and lay it in her hand; if she could mould it, well and good, she might; he would be glad. So he walked on, down the river-road, his long-repressed, stifled hope and love out of bonds at last.

A sound fell on his dulled ear, and brought him back to reality; it was a footstep. "I had better not be seen," he thought, and, climbing up the back, he kept on through the thick hill-side forest. After a moment or two, around the curve came John Royce, walking as if for a wager; two pistols gleamed in the belt he had hastily buckled around his waist, and the wrinkle between his eyes had deepened into a frown.

"It cannot be possible!" thought Wainwright. But rapid reflection convinced him that, impossible as it seemed, it might be true, and that, in any case, he had not a moment to lose. He was above Royce, he was nearer the trail to Brother Bethuel's, and, what was more, he was familiar with all its turnings. "Not to be able to save Eliot!" he thought, as he hurried forward over the slippery, brown pine-needles. And then it came to him how much he had relied upon that to hold Honor, and he was ashamed. But almost immediately after rose to the surface, for the first time in his life, too, the blunt give-and-take feeling of the man as a man, the thought—"You are doing all this for her; she *ought* to repay you." He hardly knew himself; he was like Bothwell, then, and other burly fellows in history; and he was rather pleased to find himself so. He hastened across a

plateau where the footing was better; he had turned farther up the mountain-side, so that Royce could not by any possibility hear him as he brushed hastily through the undergrowth, or stepped on crackling twigs or a rolling stone. The plateau soon ended, and the slanting hill-side slanted still more steeply. He pushed on, keeping his breath as well as he was able, running wherever he could, climbing over rocks and fallen trees; he was so far above the road now that he could not see Royce at all, but kept his efforts up to the task by imagining that the young man was abreast of him below—which was true. He began to pant a little. The sleeve of his flannel coat had been held and torn by a branch; he had tripped on a round stone, and grazed his knee. He was very tired; he began to lope as the Indians do, making the swing of the joints tell; but he was not long enough to gain any advantage from that gait. At last he met the trail, and turned up the mountain; the ascent seemed steeper now that he was out of breath. His throat was dry; surely, he had time to drink from the brook. He knelt down, but before he could get a drop he heard a sound below, and hurried on. Alarmed, he sprang forward like a hare; he climbed like a cat, drew himself up by his hands; he had but one thought—to reach the house in time. His coat was torn now in more places than one; a sharp edge of rock had cut his ankle so that his stocking was spotted with red above the low walking-shoe. The determination to save Eliot drove him on like a whip of flame; he did not know how much Royce knew, but feared everything. His face had a singular appearance; it was deeply flushed, the teeth were set, the wrinkles more visible than ever, and yet there was a look of the boy in the eyes which had not been there for years. He was in a burning heat, and breathed with a regular, panting sound; he could hear the circulation of his own blood, and began to see everything crimson. The trail now turned straight up the mountain, and he went at it fiercely; he was conscious of his condition, and knew that he might fall in a fit at the house-door; never mind, if he could only get there! His eyes were glassy now, his lips dry. He reached the house, opened the door, and fell into a chair. Brother Bethuel, in alarm, sprang up and brought him a dipper full of water as quickly as hand could fill the tin. Brother Bethuel believed in the water, and this time Wainwright agreed with him; he swallowed every drop.

“Where is he?” he said then, already on his feet again, though staggering a little. Brother Bethuel pointed downward, and Wainwright, with a signal toward the glen, as if of near danger, disappeared. The cellar was dimly lighted by two little windows a foot square, and the man who entered made out two figures—one was Eliot, the other Honor.

“You!” Wainwright said.

“Did you not know that I would come?” said the girl.

He had not known it, or thought of it. He turned his eyes toward the other figure; everything still looked red. He held out a pocket-book.

“Go!” he said; “Royce is on your track!”

He spoke in a whisper; his voice had left him as he gained breath. Eliot, a dark-skinned, handsome, but cutthroat-looking fellow seized the money and sprang toward the door. But Honor sprang, too, and held him back; she had heard something. The next moment they all heard something—Royce coming in above.

When the youth entered, Brother Bethuel was quietly reading his Bible; the table on which it lay was across the cellar-door.

“Welcome,” said the little missionary, rising. “I am happy to see you, Mr. Royce.”

The place looked so peaceful with the Bible, the ticking clock, and the cat, that Royce began to think it must be all a mistake. He sat down for a moment to rest, irresolute, and not quite knowing what to say next. The three, close under the thin flooring down blow, did not stir, hardly breathed. Stephen was thinking that, if Royce could know the truth, he too would let Eliot go. But there was not much time for thought.

Brother Bethuel brought out some apples, and began to converse easily with his visitor; after a while he said, deprecatingly:

“Will you not remove your pistols to the window-seat behind you, Mr. Royce? From my youth, I could never abide the proximity of fire-arms of any kind. They distress me.”

Royce good-naturedly took them out of his belt, and placed them behind him; but within easy reach. The missionary was on the opposite side of the room.

Not a sound below; Wainwright was breathing with his mouth wide open, so as not to pant. He was still much spent.

But it could not last long; Royce felt that he must search the house, even at the risk of offending the little missionary.

“Mr. Head,” he said, awkwardly enough, “I am very sorry, but—but a communication has been received stating that one of the outlaws, and the one, too, who shot poor Allison, is concealed here, in this house. I am very sorry, but—but I must search every part of it immediately.”

Brother Bethuel had risen; his countenance expressed sorrow and surprise.

“Young man,” he said, “search where and as you please; but spare me your suspicions.”

There was a dignity in his bearing which Royce had not seen before; he felt hot and ashamed.

“Indeed, Mr. Head, I regret all this,” he said; “and, of course, it is but a matter of form. Still, for my own satisfaction, and yours, too, now I must go through the house.”

He rose and moved a step forward. Quick as lightning the little missionary had sprung behind him, and pushed the pistols over the sill, through the open window, down forty feet on the rocks below.

“Traitor!” cried Royce, grappling him.

But it was too late; the pistols were gone. Brother Bethuel glowed openly with triumph; he made no more resistance in Royce’s strong arms than a rag. The young man soon dropped him, and hearing a sound below, ran to the cellar-door.

“He has no pistols!” screamed Bethuel down the stair after him; “you can manage him; he is alone.”

Then, setting all the doors wide open so that escape would be easy, he ran out to saddle Marcher.

Down below in the cellar, Stephen had caught hold of Royce’s arm. Royce, full in the narrow entrance-way, stood glaring at Eliot, and minding Stephen’s hold no more than the foot of a fly. The light from the horizontal door above streamed in and showed Eliot’s dark face and Honor’s dilated eyes. The girl stood near her cousin, but slightly behind him as though she feared his gaze.

“You are the man I want,” Royce said; “I recognize you!” His strong voice came in among their previous whispers and bated breath, as his face came in among their three faces—Honor’s ivory-pallid cheeks, the outlaw’s strained attention, and Stephen’s gray fatigue, more and more visible now as he gained breath and sight. “Yield yourself up. We are two to your one.”

“We are two to *your* one,” answered Eliot; “that man beside you is for me.”

Royce looked down with surprise upon his cousin, who still held his arm.

“No mistaken lenity now, Stephen,” he said, curtly, shaking his arm free. “I must have this man; he shot Allison.”

“How are you going to do it?” said Eliot, jeeringly, putting his hands deep down in his pockets and squaring his shoulders. “Even Honor here is a match for two Yankees.”

“Miss Dooris, I will let *you* pass,” said Royce, impatiently. “Go up-stairs. This is no place for a girl like you.”

“Say lady!” cried Eliot. “She is a Southern lady, sir!”

“Bah!” said Royce, “you are a fine person to talk of ladies. —*Are* you going, Miss Dooris?”

Great tears stood in Honor’s eyes; she did not stir.

“She will not go, John,” said Wainwright, “because that man is her cousin—he is an Eliot.”

“He is a murderer!” said Royce, filling up the doorway again, and measuring with his eye the breadth of his opponent’s shoulders and muscle. “Now, then, are you with me or against me, Stephen? If against me, by Heaven! I will fight you both.”

“You do not understand, John. It is Honor’s cousin—that is why *I* am anxious to save him.”

“And what is her cousin or anybody’s cousin to me?” cried Royce, angrily. “I tell you that man shot Allison, and he shall swing for it.”

He sprang forward as if to close with Eliot, then sprang back again. He remembered that it was more important that he should guard the door—there was no other way of escape. If Stephen,

pursuing the extraordinary course he had taken in this matter, should side with Eliot, Brother Bethuel being a traitor too up-stairs, he might not be able to overcome the outlaw in an attack. He set his teeth, therefore, and stood still. His hat was off, the sunset light touched his forehead and yellow hair; the image of strength and young manhood, he confronted them in his elegant attire—confronted the outlaw in his rough, unclean garments; Honor in her old, black gown; and Stephen in his torn clothes, his tired face looking yellow and withered as the face of an old baboon. He considered whether he could keep the door until the troops came; they would not be long behind him. But, if he only had his pistols!

His eye glanced toward Stephen; but Stephen never carried arms. Eliot, probably, had only a knife; if he had had a pistol he would have shown it before now. All this in the flash of a second.

Brother Bethuel could be heard bringing Marcher around the house. Stephen made one more effort. In a few, concise words he explained who Eliot was, and his own great wish to aid him in escaping. With his hand on Royce's arm, he called his attention, by a gesture to Honor.

"Let the man go for my sake and—hers," he said, in a low voice, looking up at his young cousin with his small, pale-colored eyes.

Honor clasped her hands and made a step forward; she did not speak, but implored with an entreating gaze. Royce threw his head back impatiently. All this was nothing to him. He would have his man, or die for it; they all saw that.

Then Eliot, who had watched to see the result of this pleading, made up his mind.

"Stand back from the door, or I fire!" he cried, drawing out his hand, and taking aim at Royce.

He had a pistol, then!

"I give you thirty seconds!"

But Honor, with a wild scream, ran forward, threw herself against Royce's breast, covering it with her shoulders and head, and raising her arms and hands to shield his face. He did not hold her or put his arm around her; but he clung to him with her whole length, as wet ribbon clings to a stone.

"Leave him, Honor!" cried Eliot, in a fury—"leave him, or I'll shoot you both!"

"Shoot, then!" said Honor, looking up into Royce's face, and frantically trying to cover every inch of it with her shielding hands.

Stephen ran and caught Eliot's arm; Royce half blinded, tried to push the girl away; then the sound of a pistol filled the room. Royce swayed and fell over heavily, carrying Honor with him as he went down; a ball had entered his lung under the girl's arm, in the little space left open by the inward curve of her waist. Eliot ran by the two, up the stair, and out of the house; but, as he passed Honor, he took the time to strike her across the cheek, and curse her. At the door he found Marcher, sprang into the saddle, and rode away.

Brother Bethuel, with white face, hurried down and staunched the blood; he had no small knowledge of surgery and the healing craft, and he commanded Royce not to utter a syllable. Honor held the young man's head in her lap, and every now and then softly took up his fallen hand. Wainwright drew away, and watched her with the deepest pain of his life gnawing at his heart. He saw her stroke Royce's hair fondly, as if she could not help it, and saw her begin to sob over his closing eyes and the deepening violet shadows under them, and then stop herself lest she should disturb him. Brother Bethuel was listening to the breathing with bent head to find out if there was any chance for life. The house was as still as a tomb; a bee came in, and hummed above their heads.

"He *has* a chance," said the missionary, at last, fervently, raising his head. "Do not let him stir." He ran up-stairs for restoratives, and Wainwright sat down on a stool which had been Eliot's seat during his imprisonment, and covered his eyes with his hand. It seemed to him that he had sat there a long time, and that Honor must be noticing him now. He glanced up; she was gazing down at the still face on her lap. He stirred; she motioned impatiently for silence with her hand, but did not raise her eyes. He sat looking at her miserably, and growing old, older with every moment. His lips quivered once as he silently gave up forever his dream of hope and love. He passed his hand over his dry eyes, and sat still. By the time he was needed he was able to help Brother Bethuel in making Royce as comfortable as possible on the cellar-floor; they dared not move him.

The troops arrived in time to hear all about it—they then went back again.

Wainwright returned to Ellerby that evening. The army-surgeon and a nurse had been sent out immediately to the mountain-cottage, and Colonel Eliot, distressed and agitated, had accompanied them. Wainwright went to his room, attired himself anew, and sought Adelaide's parlor. Adelaide received him quietly; she said nothing, but came around behind him and kissed his forehead. He looked up at her dumbly. Her eyes filled with tears. In her strange, double, woman's way she felt sorry for his sorrow. She was conscious of no guilt; she had only precipitated matters. Honor would never have loved him, and it was better he should know it. In truth, she had saved him.

And Honor? Oh, she had the usual torments of young love! She was no goddess to Royce, only a girl like any other. He was touched by her impulsive act, and during his illness he began to think more and more about her. It all ended well—that is, he married her after a while, took her away to the North, and was, on the whole, a good husband. But, from the first to last, he ruled her, and she never became quite the beauty Mrs. Kellinger intended her to be, because she was too devoted to him, too absorbed in him, too dependent upon his fancies, to collect that repose and security of heart which are necessary to complete the beauty of even the most beautiful woman.

Ellerby village sank back into quietude. Still the moonlight-whiskey is made up in the mountains, and still the revenue-detectives are shot. The United States troops go up every summer, and—come back again! The wild, beautiful region is not yet conquered.

Wainwright reentered society; society received him with gladness. A fresh supply of mothers smiled upon him, a fresh supply of daughters filed past him. He made his little compact remarks as before, and appeared unaltered; but he let the lime-light play about him rather more continuously now, and took fewer journeys. He will never swerve from Adelaide again. As they

grow older the chances are that some day he will say to her, "Why should we not be married, Adelaide?"

And she will answer, "Why not, indeed?"

This woman loved him; the other would never have given him more than gratitude. What would you have?