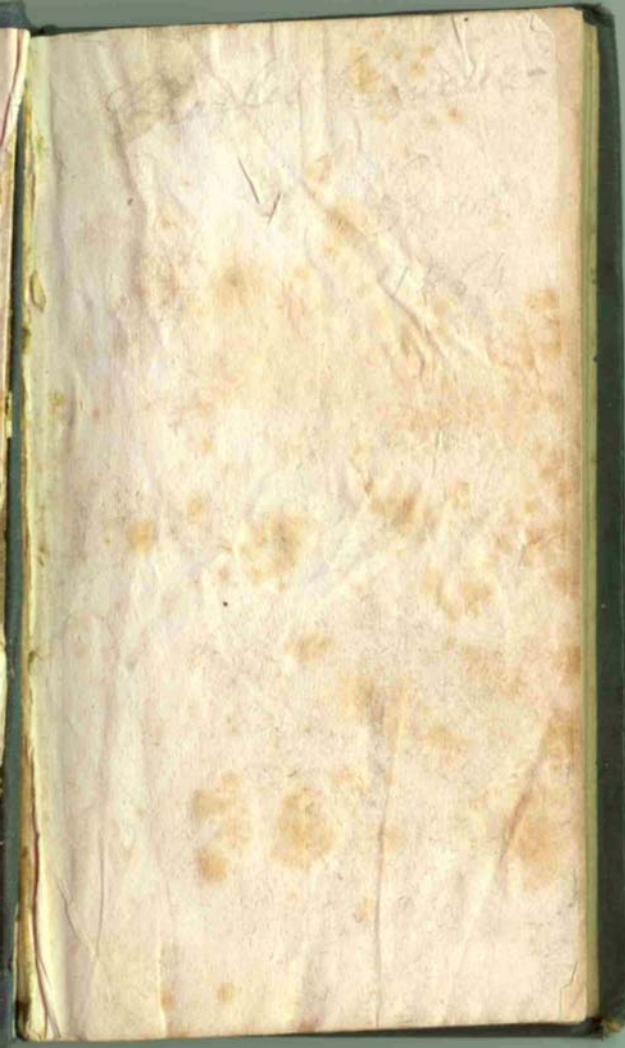


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GREEN MOUNTAIN ANNALS

A

TALE OF TRUTH.

BY G. V. H. FORBES,

ASSISTANT EDITOR OF BADGER'S WEEKLY MESSENGER.

New-York :

PUBLISHED BY BURNETT & SMITH, 17 ANN St.

SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS GENERALLY.

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1832.

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THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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DEDICATION.

TO the Young Men's Societies of New York, Boston, New Haven, Albany, Utica, and other places, this little volume is humbly dedicated—not with the hope of gaining an extrinsic popularity from so honorable an association—but with the hope of affording the young gentlemen who compose the body guard of virtue and morality in our cities and larger towns an auxiliary that may speak its solemn cautions to the thousands of youthful adventurers who exchange the comparative quiet and innocence of the country for the bustle and seductions of a city.

This volume embodies the leading incidents in the brief history of a young man whose morning sun rose without clouds over the fresh verdure of the hills of Vermont—whose sun went down before the dew of his youth was exhaled, leaving behind a light so lurid and dreary as only to be known hereafter for a beacon fire to warn of storm and danger and ruin. The fear of awakening painful memories in the minds of a circle of friends, who have scarcely ceased to weep over the youth, has led to the concealment of real names, and to a slight disguise in the drapery of narration, which, it is hoped, will not impair the power of this parable of warning.

If the moral tendency of this volume shall render it a suitable work to present to young men just commencing a career of service and honorable duty, surrounded by the population and temptations of the crowded mart, it will have fully accomplished its intention.

THE AUTHOR.

New York, June 1st, 1832.

GREEN MOUNTAIN ANNALS.

CHAPRER I.

Sweet is the breath of morn; her rising sweet
With charms of earliest birds.—*Milton.*

There is too much of the solemnity of truth in what I am now to write, to allow me to give it the full dress of fiction—and yet the incidents of the narrative are too recent to allow a disclosure of real names. Many an eye, however, will moisten over the initials of names and places which I would hide only from a cold, unfeeling world. To some, the scenery I describe may rise up in freshness, like a dream of youth recalled in after years. The grass has not waved many summers over one grave to which I shall point, nor has the white marble, that guards a tomb which I shall disclose, yet corroded under the storm and sunshine of many seasons, since the principal events transpired to which I shall allude. I write, not to call up the sighs again from the bosom of affection; I write a tale of warn-

ing. I bring an offering to the shrine of morals. If I renew the sorrows of a friend it will be to prevent other and keener sorrows.

Three hours before daybreak in a balmy spring morning, there was a bright light shooting from the windows of Judge H——'s mansion in the town of W——, in one of the southeastern counties of the state of Vermont. A large beautiful family had arisen from unquiet rest. They had all assembled in the breakfast room. They had knelt in humble devotion before the altar, and were now seated at the table. A spectator, who knew nothing of the cause of this early rising, might have noticed the expression of deep emotion in each countenance of the family group. It was not a positive cast of sadness or of settled sorrow—yet it was solicitude in its tenderest developements.

Charles, my dear, why do you not take some breakfast? said an amiable and matronly looking woman at the head of the table. She addressed a tall, eagle-eyed youth of seven-

teen, whose cheeks were wet with tears at the sound of his mother's voice.

It is too early for much appetite, answered Charles, assuming as much nonchalance as he could under the disadvantage of tearful eyes. This domestic assemblage at the breakfast table might have formed a deep, rich study for a painter. No one had tasted of the food, and the odor of the coffee ascended invitingly, yet almost in vain. There was one plate loaded to excess with every delicacy: each one of the family vied in eagerness to help Charles, and pressed upon him the necessity of preparing for a weary journey over hill and dale, as though there had been a famine through all the wealthy region he was to pass.

Charles had never been a traveller. He had been embowered in the smiling villages of the Connecticut, and studied the world, as he had his books, in the seclusion of academic shades. He was improved in his mind, elegant in his manners—a model of beautiful and confiding manhood, with a soul of passion as yet unembittered by the regrets of disap-

pointed desire or ambition. He was in the noble and generous spring tide of anticipation, the flower of a high-spirited, untarnished family, and destined, by those who now gazed upon him and tendered a thousand little endearing attentions, for the representative of their name and honor in a city whose merchants are princes. The mercantile profession had been selected by Charles as one leading most directly to honorable affluence; but his ardent mind had not bounded the future by the acquisition of wealth. His heart rioted in the exuberance of a power which he hoped one day to wield for the good of mankind.— There were high and holy examples before him of the generous devotion of wealth and talents to the cause of philanthropy and letters. He hoped for the highest distinctions which virtue awards to her votaries. Yet, perhaps, the severe student of human nature would have detected in the structure of his mind, an undue preponderance of enthusiasm. But it was a generous impulse—and the teachings of experience might curb the reins of his

passions while they brightened and matured his judgment,

My son, said the fond mother, whose deep fountains of affection were stirred in her bosom by the approaching separation,—my son, you will not forget us when you are absorbed in the business and gaiety of a city life? She paused—and Charles could only give a low, but impassioned monosyllable in answer—no—no.

When shall we have the honor of seeing the city gentleman at our country residence again? said a volatile yet tender hearted sister.

I will come in two years, my good Marion, and bring you something that shall please you rarely.

Oh, I am not hard to please; if you will bring back yourself a little taller and a little more loquacious, I shall not complain.

Charles, said the venerable Judge, Marion has well said—bring back *yourself*. This is my request. I would rather see you bereft of life than to see you a profligate, or one of those miserable votaries of fashion that abound

in cities. Never degrade your nobility of virtue and early morality by the slavery of vice. You will find thousands in the city to which you are destined, who are the noble ornaments of humanity; you will find thousands more whose fair appearances are but the polished outsides of the noisesome sepulchres; these are the seducers of the young and the unwary; they ever act on the principle of demons, which is to involve as many as possible in their own ruin. You cannot be ignorant of the solemn fact that nearly or quite one half of the youthful adventurers from country to city return no more—they go from the purity of home and friendship to their destruction. Either dying prematurely, or, becoming so lost to honor and truth as to receive no confidence or regard from the virtuous, they are enrolled in the ranks of profligacy, and their friends know them no more, but as a living sorrow. I will give you a motto, Charles, by which you may direct your life. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Fear and honor God, and obey

his commands, and you will find acceptance and respect and confidence in a land of strangers.

At the conclusion of this solemn parental charge, the whole family were in tears. A sense of the immense responsibility of character, as it is developed by daily conduct, rested on the heart of Charles—the parents saw the impression, and forbore to add words that might weaken it. The moment was one of heart-searching silence.

* * * * *

The twanging of a stage horn, mellowed by distance, came on the morning wind. A few moments of bustle and suppressed emotion succeeded;—and Charles had received the kisses of his mother and sisters, his father's blessing, and the fraternal grasp, and was now within the carriage that was to bear him from the sweet rural scenes of his innocent and uneventful childhood. There was a struggle of emotion in his bosom—a crowding sensation of fulness in his throat—a mass of indistinct images floating in his brain; but the

morning air came with a reviving freshness in his face, and he leaned from the vehicle to contemplate the imperfect outlines of wood and vale and mountain hoary, from which he was fleetly passing.

It is a glorious sight to see the young day come into being among the Green mountains. The giant hills retain the night under the cover of their western cliffs, while their eastern sides are sprinkled with the ruddy hues of the morning. Light and shade in gloom and glory seem to be disposed in masses, that have indeed an affinity, yet are slow to mingle. A way up above the mountain summits a fleecy cloud floats on the deep blue bosom of the ærial sea; a flame of sunshine plays with its feathery surfaces, and gilds them with golden splendor. The vales and the streams that feed the storied Connecticut begin to develope themselves, and the gray of the early twilight strikes into the fields that lie teeming and rich between the guardian hills dressed in their uniform of immortal green.

It was sunrise on the plains when Charles

reached the lovely village of B——, on the western bank of the Connecticut. The freshness of an early spring had spread a new foliage on the shrubbery that almost hid from the view of the passenger the beautiful white cottages or country seats that skirted the river in a long romantic street. An immense wall of mountain lay heavy and tremendous on the eastern bank of the river, over which the chariot of the sun was wearily rolling, and the carrols and joy of the feathered songsters filled the vale with such music as the God of nature was well pleased to create for a matin harmony.

At this village the dark and soul speaking eyes of Charles encountered those of a gentleman and lady rather beyond the meridian of life, accompanied by their daughter. Their appearance indicated wealth and high respectability. They were returning from a tour to the White Hills of New Hampshire to their residence in the city whither Charles was destined. The pleasure of all seemed somewhat heightened when it was ascertained that

they were to be fellow passengers for the day—so true it is that congenial minds find a sudden sympathy attracting them towards each other at first sight, like the influence of a moral magnetism.

The morning was wearing away with pleasure—Charles was losing gradually the painful tension of his affectionate heart that had been strained with the emotions of a first parting from his beloved home. Conversation was animated, well bred, and pleasurable, blending amusement with instruction, the mellow wisdom of accomplished age with the enthusiasm of youthful vivacity. The carriage was rolling over the summit of a precipitous hill, when a half naked, horror-struck maniac, leaped from the thick hemlock and juniper brushwood, just before the horses, and uttered an unearthly shriek, which frightened the animals, who now plunged from the road, and dashed along on the frightful edge of a precipice, scorning the control of the reins and heedless of the voice of the driver. A cry of horror burst from the gentleman and

the two ladies in the carriage as it bounded from side to side over the rocks and seemed on the point of thundering down into the terrible ravine below. Charles only had the command of his thoughts; he burst the door—leaped out upon the upper side and recovered just to witness the young lady attempting to escape through the window on the other side. Her robe was entangled, and she seemed exposed like a helpless victim to be crushed between the rocks and the carriage, the upper wheels of which were raised high from the ground. Impelled by every feeling of humanity and native manhood, Charles rushed before the snorting steeds, and after a sharp conflict with their hoofs and the momentum of their velocity, he succeeded in arresting their course, when the carriage righted, and the trembling father disengaged an only daughter from a position in which instant death had awaited her. It was with emotions of the most heartfelt gratitude that the rescued tourists descended from the carriage, and walked towards Charles, who stood, in the attitude

of a young Hercules, on the very brink of a frightful chasm, the savior of their lives! The maniac was on the rocks far above them, with his bare arms stretched out, rigid and frightful, like a horrible apparition painted on the sky.

CHAPTER II.

First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours!
Thompson.

It is a proud moment when we have been permitted to save human life. No joy is so elevating and sweet as that which rushes to the heart the moment after some terrible danger had beset poor, frail humanity, and we know that our instrumentality has averted death. The pleasure of wealth, or of ambition, or influence, are not to be named in the same hour with the richer and purer joys of philanthropy. Like some cheering resting place on a wearisome journey, whose cool umbrage and fragrant flowers refreshed and regaled us, are those favored hours or moments in which we have found opportunities of serving our fellow men without fee or reward—prompted only by the generous, flowing impulses of a benevolent nature. Such instances

leave behind them a deep and blessed reminiscence; and when multiplied, as the noble minded, the gifted and the pure multiply them, they crowd thick and luscious into the vista of the past;—the good man has heaven behind him and before him.

It was a toilsome business to retrace the latest footsteps of our passengers. Their case resembled some desperate plunge in crime—the work of a moment—but laborious and dreadful to undo. The path regained, the acclivity and the precipice left miles behind, a sense of safety and confidence succeeded to anxiety; the past was laid up in the memory as one of those mementos which should teach gratitude to God every time it rose before the mind.

The gentleman, whose name was W——, begged to be favored with the name of the brave youth by whom under heaven the lives of himself and family had been rescued from imminent danger. Charles in a few words revealed his parentage. It was not an unknown stock from whence he sprung,

and although his cheek reddened with diffidence when he announced his name as the son of Judge H——, it was suffused still deeper with pleasure when he heard from the lips of Mr. W—— that he knew his father not only by reputation, but had been intimately acquainted in early life.

Your father, Charles, would applaud you to the very echo for saving the life of his old associate of forty years since.

He would only say, responded Charles, that I had done my duty and been most particularly fortunate. It makes me shudder to think it was possible that my well meant endeavors to avert the dangers of that moment might have rendered the catastrophe more certain and sudden. With all respect I would say, sir, that you should never mention my agency in this matter.

Well, Charles, we will drop the subject now. Companions in danger become soon acquainted. I think I know you as well as if you had lived next door to my house in B—— street all your days.

I am happy, father, that this young gentleman has not lived in B—— street all his days, said the interesting Miss W——, who had all along been silent, but had been looking gratitude and thankfulness from eyes that had shot deeper and darker glances, contrasted with the paleness that had come over her countenance in the late peril.

Why happy at that, my dear daughter? said Mr. W——.

The principal reason, I suppose, is a very selfish one, father; but I cannot help thinking our B—— street young gentlemen could have afforded us little aid in such rough times as we have just encountered.

Mr. W—— smiled and said, that he did know that Mr. Charles would consider her remarks a compliment.

Oh, I told you, father, that my remark was entirely a selfish one; I'm quite sure I did not mean to compliment where I owe so much gratitude.

That is well said, dear, and I will allow you to have as many preferences as you please

in favor of the country, since you have been so much gratified with your week's rustication among the White Hills. I was born and educated in the country, and am most sincerely attached to its rural scenes and its innocence. I confess I feel a painful solicitude when I see a young man leaving the pure green fields for our crowded marts. I have no son, but if I had one, his early days at least should be spent in the country.

Thus, within a few hours, had a circle of acquaintance been formed that promised much pleasure for the day. Charles studied deeply the manners, sentiments and characters of those to whom, by one of the propitious chances of life, he had been introduced; they, in return, admired him, and felt an unwonted interest in his future welfare. The tide of conversation was varied, lively, uninterrupted. The storied fields of the revolution were at hand, and Charles could not resist the impression that he was approaching the seat of moral greatness. He saw before him the faultless specimens of the refinement and digni-

fied virtue of that city whose suburbs he would enter at the close of day; he saw around him the scenery that is woven into the texture of American history; he would soon pass the spot where the first blood flowed which was poured at the foot of the altar of independence. Thick coming fancies, as well as the high inspiration of the scenes around him, gave Charles the glow of beautiful and intellectual excitement which would have been irresistible in a form far less perfect than his; and he was every moment winning golden opinions from the circle around him. There is a charm in natural unsophisticated virtue, that defies the competition of art. There is a freshness in the mountain purity of free-born manners that commends a youth to those who have seen the most finished models of refinement that the world has produced.

The night-fall had settled down upon the verdant hills, and the carriage was sweeping over the delicious champaign that skirts one of the loveliest of our American cities. They had passed the seat where ancient learning

embowered itself in the early days of our fathers. Centuries had thrown the romance of antiquity around the spires of the university, and lent their enchantment to the long sweeping branches of the venerable elms that hands since forgotten in the grave had planted for other generations to repose under, and for other times to admire. The proximity of the noble city, and an ocean which Charles had never seen, except in description, or rolling in the terribly expressive verse of Byron, almost suspended his breath. Thoughts unbidden and strange crowded into his mind. He was absorbed in contemplation, and, for a brief space, forgot the presence of those by whom he was surrounded. The dim outline of the city stretched before him like a vast, ancient mound built against the encroaching Atlantic. As he saw it he drew a deep sigh, and a voice seemed to speak low in his heart—*there is your tomb*. He started as from a sudden trance of sorrow—was rallied by Miss W—— on his silence, and gave but an indifferent excuse.

The night scenery of the approach to the city is one of the most imposing that meets the eye of the traveller in the western world. The long avenues and bridges across the bay with their streaming lights are seen like celestial fires in the deeps of the heavens reflected on the waters beneath—as if the zodiac had loaned its mimic belt to the earth, and strewn its stars like sentinels along the silver waves. A dark red tinge suddenly struck upon the arch of the heavens; the city grew bolder in its outline; the dome of its proudest edifice was seen high and towering on its mountain elevation, and spire and tower and roof on either hand swept away from this grand apex to the limits of vision. The glow in the heavens grew more intense, as if the ærial element was brightening in the fires of a strong furnace. The practised eyes of Mr. W—— detected these signs of a terrible conflagration, and hastily made a remark to that effect, when the hurried peals of the bells convulsed the stillness of the evening with their iron-tongued vibrations.

The rapid revolutions of the carriage wheels soon brought our passengers into the city, which was now in the hot rush of thousands to stay or view the progress of the fire. The firemen, like the fierce assailants of a city although in fact its saviors, rushed furiously in long files under the glare of torches through the crowded streets. Trumpet answered trumpet, and hoarse outcries mingled in a sort of deep toned, horrid thunder, while higher in the atmosphere the clear bells uttered their far-heard and earnest cries of supplication and warning. The carriage paused for a few moments in a street that commanded a view of the scene of the conflagration. A lofty dwelling, apparently the abode of wealth and splendor, blazed like a pyramid of flame, in the very majesty of red ruin.—The lower dwellings on either hand vomited forth masses of black smoke, through which, at short intervals, swift flashes of fire vibrated like the rush of the lightning, or the gleam of swords in the sunbeams. It was a wonderful yet appalling sight to Charles to see the daring intrepidity of man contend with

the element which its maker has reserved to breathe over the earth, the air, and the ocean, in the midnight of time, when he shall kindle the last conflagration. The dauntless guardians of the city were seen ranged on the summit of heaving walls that were trembling like a leaf with the force and suppressed energy of internal volcanoes. Every inch gained by the flames was contested; and high over the roaring and ruddy piles, like rainbows on the brow of the ruinous storm, the arching jets of another element were thrown from the enginery. It was a most impressive scene. Man asserted the omnipotence of art, and braved the fiercest of the servants of God in the full terribleness of its power.

The tumult had died away, and Charles was making ineffectual attempts to compose his mind to slumber after the fatigues and excitements of one of the most animated days of his life. He could not close his eyes. They were kept open by an intensity of feeling which had never before taken possession of his bosom. At length, however, an insensibility to surrounding objects came over him,

and a mental picture of solemn and prophetic import disclosed itself with a severe intensity to his soul. He seemed to see at a great distance on a high mountain, his father, mother, brothers and sisters. His father held a scroll in his hand, which wayed in the wind and fluttered upwards towards some snow-white, lusted clouds. He saw in flaming letters on the scroll—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* He looked again, and the bright clouds grew dark, and a shadow of melancholy settled on the mountain. The dress of his father's family appeared to be black, and wind and confusion seemed to fill the region around them. A white scroll was hurrying along in the breath and turmoil of the tempest on which, in black letters, he read these words—*Her steps take hold on hell.*

The scene changed again. He was in the midst of a city over which rolled a sea of flame. The earth on which it stood burned like lava, and the strong light seemed to search deep into the very heavens.—Suddenly in the midst of his terror he saw a form

of angelic loveliness above him. He thought that he knew the features; he looked once more, and it was the face of Miss W—— with most earnest and tender expression of countenance gazing upon him with sorrow and pity and love so strangely blended that the emotion of utter ruin came over his soul like a cloud. He awaked, with a heavy pang at his heart—yet rejoicing that it was but a dream that had rendered his first night's rest in the city a season of unearthly and mysterious sensations.

CHAPTER III.

Genius, like a fallen child of light,
Has filled the place with magic, and compelled
Most beautiful creations into forms
And images of license, and they come
And tempt you with bewildering grace to kneel
And drink of the wild waters.—*Willis.*

As Charles rose from his unquiet rest he found himself in the giddy whirl of a city. Business and pleasure, and virtue and vice, alike pursued with an absorbing energy, agitate the community of the metropolis.—More restless and fluctuating than the waves of the ocean that dash against the commerce burdened wharves are the crowds of busy men who struggle on the arena of pavements and stocks—of dividends unequally divided, and more sharers than shares. Nature can do but little in the artificial modes of a city life. Although the winds of heaven may fill the sail of the merchant vessel that comes from foreign lands with the wealth of other climes—yet the whole progress and comple-

tion of the adventure seems widely different from the calm process of wealth making in the country. The farmer and his family spend the cheerful evening in the midst of domestic bliss and quietude,—and yet every moment of time is witness to the silent movement of accumulation. The grass in the field and the wide inclosures of corn and fruitage are springing up and ripening whether man wake or sleep. By night or by day, in storm and sunshine, through each varying season of the year, the herds and the flocks increase in number as in value—and yet man may repose an almost unimpassioned spectator. But in a city the night is turned into day and the day into night in the strenuous and heated strife for livelihood. The wheels of business roar with the fierce impulses of human agency. Riches are brought from the world's ends at the bidding of the sleepless, pale-faced mortal who is scarcely permitted to breathe the mountain air, or gaze upon the unobscured and holy skies that spread themselves in the lovely transcendancy of their beauty only over the crested mountain or the

vale of rural innocence. But nature soon wears out in this intensity of labor, and the cemeteries are gorged with the loved ones and the hopes of far distant and confiding friendship.

The presentation of his letters of introduction and his adoption into a mercantile house of the highest standing, occupied the first morning that Charles ever spent in a scene of such bustling confusion. It was unfortunate, however, that when Charles became an inmate of the counting house, he had not at the same moment become an inmate of the domicile of one of his principals. But it was not so. A respectable, or rather fashionable boarding house was recommended to him, as to a young gentleman whose connections and means gave him a choice of the mode of his life. Thus his evenings, with all their moral power, came into his own hands, to be used or abused as a better or a perverse disposition should preside over their destiny.

It was not possible that Charles should see any examples before him in the daily routine of business but those of probity and honor.

Intelligence, respectability, moral worth, and expansive benevolence, were the attributes of the gentlemen with whom a watchful parent had entrusted his son.

The advantages of a prepossessing figure and address are powerful pleaders for a young gentleman in city society, especially when these are connected with family, respectability, and prospective wealth. Charles did not want for introductions to all that was fascinating and enchanting in the metropolis. The charming, yet but half educated, fashionable ladies of the immediate circle in which he moved—ladies with more manners than mind and more accomplishments than principles—were proud to secure the evening attentions of the young *debutante* from the country, who was indeed as blooming in his appearance and as pleasurable in his open and ingenuous deportment as one of his own mountain roses on its native stem. It cannot be denied that Charles as yet saw the city—its society—its customs—and its amusements with the eyes of a worshipper, who had contemplated the divinity of his adoration only at a distance. He had gazed

on the far seen beauty of the accomplished and crowded mart—but as yet he had to learn that the cheek might be bright, the eyes dark and lustrous, the manners bland and alluring, while a moral disease was wasting, —yea, had consumed—the heart and blighted the affections.

Said Charles one evening, while sitting in the dress circle of one of the boxes of the theatre, to an engaging belle who had managed to secure his attentions for the evening—why is it that many excellent persons in the country are so prejudiced against theatrical representations?

Oh, said the arch and self satisfied lady, it is because a remnant of barbarism yet lingers among your Green mountains. Pray tell me how it was possible you could be educated in such a semi-savage community, and yet appear among us with all the graces of a Parisian. Will you tell me your secret?

I have no secret to disclose, said Charles, half offended at the reproach cast upon the beloved land of his nativity—yet perhaps a

little soothed at the personal exception made in his favor—I have no secret to disclose: I think that the advantages and attainments of our genteel country society are rather undervalued here. I know and feel your superior privileges; yet I confess I am not so fully persuaded of the *solid* benefit of the spectacle before me as to feel willing that the eye of my honored father should see me here.

Forgive me, sir, said the smiling belle in a soothing and winning tone; I think you must have come from some upland Arcadia. But I'll watch over you to night as though you had a guardian angel near you, and will restore you safe to your home. You must know the motto—*evil to him that evil thinks*. The theatre has honey for the pure if it has poison for the impure. To be sure the farce now performing is of little consequence; it is only to kill time until the fashionables have arrived. But you will certainly be enchanted with *Metamora*. Pray did you ever see any Indians among your mountains?

I thank you for your offer of protection against the evil genius of the place, said

Charles, with a feeling something like obligation—for his mind was measurably relieved by the delicately expressed sophisms of his fair mentor. The delicious strains of music soon gained upon his ear—his heart was beating high with the excitement of the scene—the violations of what he at first considered female propriety in the persons of the actresses obtruded for amusement upon the public eye grew less odious and repulsive—and his whole soul soon became identified with the enchantments of the place. A curtain fell between the acts where genius had wasted its pictorial power in gorgeous profusion. There lay before him an ancient Grecian city, with its pure and faultless architecture thrown up in beautiful piles into the soft skies, mellowed by the last rays of the setting sun. The rich, deep green of the groves were contrasted with the chisselled purity of the marble pillars and porticos; nor were there wanting the rough waves of the Aegean sea kissing the pedestals of the eternal towers, bearing the gay triremes of antiquity on its heaving bosom. The splendid

representation in one moment kindled every latent spark of classic enthusiasm in the bosom of Charles—and he fondly said that a glance of the eye had taught him more of Grecian power and beauty than he had ever gained from the living verse of Homer, or the more luscious representations of the Hellenic poets when Athens was the throne of mind and the seat of intellectual splendor. ¹

Warmed with the stirring imagery around him, Charles was well prepared to connect the American classics with the noble Grecian, as the faultless form of *Metamora* stood before him in the fearless majesty of a forest king and uttered his wrongs in the thunders of nature's eloquence; and there too was the soul touching Namaoke, bound heart and soul into the welfare of her proud mountain chief. Powerful pleaders for your blasted race! murmured Charles, quite overcome by the illusions of the scene, go on and take your high revenge of their oppressors. Still command the tears of pity to flow for ancient wrongs that stained these pilgrim hills; and still hold up to a degenerate age the tribunal

which sternly arraigns the deeds of cruelty and power.

After the battle and agony and death of the tragedy were over, the afterpiece had no power to attract the attention of Charles, whose bosom was swelling with the storm of passions that had been excited by the magic of genius—genius alone, for the hollow semblance of virtue is only seen on the buskined stage. He was looking in a melancholy, listless mood towards a higher tier of boxes where he saw an opera glass in the hand of a female, directed towards him. When it was removed, a cast of features met his eye that awoke strange and mingled reminiscences in his bosom. Why it was he could not tell—but his eyes were chained with a painful, riveted gaze upon a countenance that sent thrills of sorrow to his heart. He was checked by the remark of his observing, self-constituted guardian for the evening, who lifted her finger in a threatening manner, and said—Mr. Charles H——, I shall not allow you to gaze upward. Remember—honey to the pure, but poison to the impure. There may

be regions as much too high for your unstained morals as there are others too low.

Oh, I thank you, said Charles; I believe I was dreaming. Pray excuse my inattention.

Yes, sir, I will excuse your inattention, but I cannot just now excuse your *attention*. You must remember my pledge to return you safe home. Evil only to him that evil thinks.

Charles was half abashed at the tormenting insinuations of his bright-eyed mentor, who knew far too much of human nature and the devious wanderings of thought. He entreated her mercy, which she at length tendered on condition that he would think only of present company, and gratify her pride by such undivided attentions to her as should at least attract the notice of some malicious belles in an opposite box. This last motive, with the natural or acquired tact of the sex, was, of course, unspoken. While this conversation was continued Charles was startled by a rustling noise and saw the huge folds of a curtain rolling down upon the stage—it was

black! It was a portentous sign—one of the proprieties of circumstance that still lingers around the drama. The same dark, pall-like curtain that overshadows the last act, comes also over the latter end of the player and the devotee of the spectacle. Though the commencement and the progress may be light and joyous, the finale is curtained with gloom. Charles felt this reproof deep in his soul, and shuddered as he walked out—yet, although this was the first evening he had ever spent beneath the roof of a theatre, it was not the last. Each time, however, the drop scene was black.

One beautiful June morning, Charles received at his counting room a rose-colored billet, containing the compliments of Mr. and Mrs. and Miss W——, with an invitation to an evening soiree at their elegant mansion in B—— street. He went—and surely if virtue and happiness were enthroned on earth they were in that lovely and polished family.—Charles was received with the most unfeigned expressions of pleasure, while a thousand kind and tender inquiries for his wel-

fare and happiness succeeded.—He was introduced to a select company, with commendations and an emphasis which brought his mountain color more than once to his cheeks. The mild lustre of the beautiful astral and moonlight lamps that fell on the snowy marble of the sideboards and the entablatures lent an eloquent enchantment to the apartment which was yet more radiant with smiles and cultivated intellect. Here might the epicures of mind who hungered for the ideal good in the barren wastes of idolatry have found the summum bonum of human happiness. The interchange of holy affections in the polished modes of higher life presents a scene that angels might contemplate with delight. The heart is overflowed with kindly emotions. The chaste form of virtue is lighted up with its own internal blessedness—and moves, and breathes only to fan the kindred flame in the bosoms of kindred spirits.

It was in this choice circle of intellectual worth that Charles found himself embosomed in the highest happiness his nature could know.—Miss W—— was a most interesting

being in his eyes—an intellectual sylph—an incarnation of sensibility and hallowed affections. He could almost have wished that his little adventure in which he was the happy instrument of averting harm from this peerless family had involved more danger or even suffering to himself. Yet he was contented to be the grateful recipient and witness of so much refined pleasure.

He went away at a late hour, with visions of bliss floating through his mind. He was startled at the corner of a street by a female figure gazing with the same intense and sorrowful look upon his face as at the theatre. He was speechless, and stood as if charmed to the spot by an eye that went to his soul like a dagger.

CHAPTER IV.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since : with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged.—*Cowper.*

The full view which Charles obtained of the sorrowfully impressive countenance before him, at this late evening hour, recalled to his mind an almost forgotten circumstance. He had been intimately conversant with a young lady three years before at W—— academy. She was conspicuous among a hundred blooming maids for sprightliness and wit; she was indeed the life of every circle. Charles had heard of her following a lover to the metropolis; and then a few dark hints or innuendoes succeeded, importing that she had been ruined, and was leading a life of infamy. She had suffered such a change of countenance and figure that Charles was slow in coming to these recollections, for neither of them had spoken while their gaze of sorrow and mutual emotion had been

longer than the common manners of society would have justified. With a heavy heart, sighing over the too probable fate of the lost—utterly ruined—Helen S——, Charles slowly wandered home and resigned himself to an overpowering sensibility in the loneliness of his chamber. Let this, thought he, be a solemn lesson of virtue to me. I have seen the fearful contrast. On the one hand, the sweet and angelic Miss W——, pure and fascinating, because intellectual and virtuous; on the other hand, Helen S——, a wandering star, shot from the lovely orbit of female propriety, a lone night wanderer in the streets, with an anguish on her brow that makes my heart bleed to see. What can she want with me? Perhaps she would implore me to save her from a life which she abhors. No doubt she has recognized me, and my features are associated in her mind with the lonely elms and moon-lighted walks of W——. Is not this a fitting season, while her memory must recal a thousand scenes of innocent delight, to address her on the subject of a return to her excellent friends in

Windsor county? Am I not the one designated by Providence to lead this lost one gently back to her former peace of mind and restore to her a forfeited reputation?

The reflections came unbidden over the softened heart of Charles before he retired to rest. He knew little of that serpent wickedness which sometimes, yes, oftentimes, lurks in the bosoms of seeming peace and tranquillity. The project, half formed, which floated in his imagination might have been, in its results, like the ill-requited kindness which once warmed a viper to life, and was rewarded with poison.

One year had passed away, and Charles, like the exiled Joseph in Egypt, had found great favor among strangers. Judge H—— was a visitor to the metropolis, and if ever his heart dilated with proud paternal triumph, it was when he saw his excellent son already honored by immense confidence, and effecting transactions that carried his youthful name beyond the seas. There was in his open, dignified countenance the princely air of

virtuous manhood, yet a sweet condescension was in all his manners, as if to secure the affections of those whom he addressed, and bind them at will. But no pen can do justice to a father's feelings as they were called forth on a visit to the accomplished family of Mr. W——, the former associate of Judge H——. It was near sunset, as Charles, arm and arm with a father to whose proud heart he seemed bound by more than nature's ties, walked down B—— street to the elegant mansion of Mr. W——. The sweet-scented gales of spring came across the bay, bearing the aroma of the green fields beyond. The notes of the woodland birds were faintly heard beyond the waters; and the joyous echoes of country life blended with the sounds of the sea, and the mellowed thunder of the busy streets. The public walks of the city, shadowed by the weeping branches of the elms, and the area, sacred to health, and the play of the pure winds, lay on their left; their minds were soothed to friendship's holiest issues by the sympathetic influence of an unrivalled scenery, to which nature, art, and

lofty deeds of patriotism had imparted a glory like that which lingers around the holiest spots on the earth's surface.

They entered the lofty porch between corinthian pillars of parian marble; they were seated in a room which seemed animate with the breathing and passion-speaking forms of the chissel and the pencil; but more than Grecian and Italian refinement was developed in the manners of the inmates of a palace that ranks among the chastest structures of a city, unrivalled in its architectural beauty on this western continent. Mr. W—— with the most hearty good will and cordiality embraced his old friend Judge H——; and, while they rapidly proceeded to fill up the chasm of years which had separated them, the Judge could not but remark, with a proud satisfaction, the respectful and even affectionate intimacy that appeared to exist between his beloved son and one of the first families of the city. The relation of the stage adventure could scarcely account for such a confiding, open-hearted display of friendship towards Charles by the accomplished Mrs. W——,

and her no less intellectual and accomplished daughter.

Could not a father's heart be pardoned for treasuring up in its deepest recesses these gratifying tokens of the future happiness of a son who had already, as he believed, conferred honor on his family name? Perhaps, too, a father in such circumstances might be pardoned for the rising anticipation of a family union with one of the choicest names of the city, or the commonwealth; but, as yet, no tongue had clothed such a thought in words. With reluctance, yet with joy, the excellent Judge took leave of his son, and of a circle of generous spirits, who seemed to have conspired to enchant the proud father's heart by attentions and favors to the son.

Well, my dear father, said Marion, who had met her father at the gate under the lilac shrubbery, now do tell me how Charles does, before you tell any one else; pray do; that's a sweet father.

He is well, my daughter, and an honor to us all.

But has he not altered, and become very

different from what he was when he left us last spring? Do tell me that—for if he has he is not my Charles any more.

Oh, he has altered, I suppose; but I hope every alteration has been an improvement. Come, Marion, you should not keep me from your mother so; it is selfish in you.

The Judge embraced his family and related with a joyful particularity every circumstance connected with his charming visit and his truly hopeful son. The glow of happiness sat on every cheek. The evening prayer was fragrant with thanksgiving.—Sleep came like a white-winged cherub sitting lightsome on each eyelid, and the dreams that visited the white mansion among the Green Mountains were the bright revelations of the future, clad in the reflected glory of the present. What a world would this be were there no sin!

Summer came—and the fortunate Charles had the pleasure of a month's relaxation from business, which he spent in a fashionable flight along the line of some of the Atlantic cities and through the lakes to Niagara, in

company with the family of Mr. W——. Charles and Miss W—— seemed to be formed in nature's happy hour for each other. They both delighted in nature more than in art—drank in beauty and freedom of thought from the prospect of silver lakes, tumbling cascades, and the green-belted forests; while they trembled at the roar of the world's loudest cataract, and adored in their inmost souls the omnipotence that created this wonder.

It will not excite surprise in the mind of the reader of these annals, when it is said that Charles generally associated with spirits of such moral purity as never to have learned the black deeps of treachery and moral infamy which lie hidden from casual observation in our cities. Reared in the calm and pure scenes of country life, what could he know of the arts and stratagems of those *whose steps take hold on hell*? Happy is his inexperience, every bright face he met was regarded by him as an index of happiness; he knew not that the abominable and horrid dens of moral defilement were there, concealed by a fair outside of respectable opulence;