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LUCY MAYNARD.

BY MISS MARTHA RUSSELL.

**“A lily fair which God did bless,
And which from Nature’s heart did draw
Love, wisdom, peace and heaven’s perfect law.”**

READER, have you ever travelled in Connecticut, over that part of New Haven county which lies west of the fair city of that name? I say *travelled* – but in another sense than that which the word seems to have with that class of blank neutralities who appear to feel that they must traverse the country every season, from Maine to Louisiana, and exclaim, “Oh, beautiful!” – “Ah, exquisite!” as often as their guide book says it is proper. For this class of persons the word has no other than literally the definition of Webster; “Travel – to journey;” “Journey – to travel.” Alas! for them! This world, in which the true soul walks, seeing God and listening to the universe, “the great Æolian harp,” with its solemn and mysterious music sounding from its countless strings, to them appears spread out in its glory only to serve as a race ground for fashion, and what Carlyle so expressively denominates “gigmanity” [1].” There is another class of travelers who, from defect of vision, caused not by sun spots but by dollar spots, see before their eyes, in the most beautiful landscapes, nothing but mill-seats, timber-lots, railroad tracks, choice situations for manufacturing establishments; and were it practicable, would sell the blessed sunlight which brightens the flowers on their father’s graves, for “a handsome consideration.” Heaven defend us from all such travellers.

But you, gentle reader, have you ever stood on any of those broken chains of hills in the region I refer to, and gazed over the rich landscapes, the sunny valleys and fair villages, and

felt how much unwritten scripture there is on earth to gladden and elevate the human heart? Whoever is familiar with this region cannot fail to remember the little village of Liston, with its white cottages nestling on the hillside and scattered through the valley.

In the scenery around it, the hills, or as the inhabitants call them, the mountains, in some places rise in isolated peaks; but to the northwest they sweep far away in an unbroken chain, here bare as the heath where Fingal and Ossian fought, and there grey old rocks, cliffs piled on cliffs, “here dark with the thick moss of ages, and there of chalky whiteness where the thunderbolt has splintered them.” Then again, for miles the range presents a continued sea of green, wave upon wave, up to the very summits. – At intervals, in the most precipitous places, are the “sliding paths.” These are spaces, some yard in width, where brushwood and soil are worn away by the furious descent of logs, which in winter the farmer, after having freed them from branches, precipitates from the summits, to the no small content of his boasted Bent and Bright, these finding it far more satisfactory to stand quietly chewing their cuds below, waiting to drag the loaded sled over the smooth road to their master’s door, than to be breaking snow-paths up the almost impassable side of the mountain.

The village is entirely enclosed by these hills, except the southwestern side, where a noble tract of land is displayed to view, stretching away until its borders are lovingly embraced by the blue waves of Long Island Sound. The village, with its well kept plot of grass, proudly termed a green; the neat church and school-house gleaming forth from among the trees; the little river which hies on its winding way, like a happy child, gaily singing to each flower on its banks: and, above all, that gateway which leads from the transient to the eternal – that portal through which so many of earth’s weary children long to enter and be at rest – the graveyard – that place so dear to glorified spirits – not merely because through this gate they expect to receive those dear ones whom they left on earth, but also because there lie those mouldering bodies in which, when on earth, they joyed, sorrowed, loved and beloved, and which they know they shall receive again, purified and beautified by the loving kindness of God; the graveyard, here so appropriately situated and adorned, that nothing is allowed to profane its spirit or wear away its “monitory virtue;” these, and all things that unite with them to make the scenery around Liston so beautiful to the soul, speak emphatically to the heart of the traveler that great watchword of Christianity – **PEACE**; and few can resist the influence, whatever may have been their experience in life. Oh! how many such scenes there are in this beautiful world of ours, speaking, like him of Bethlehem, “Peace and good will to men!”

In one of these fair valleys there is a nook which, for its retirement and singular beauty, well deserves the name of Fairy Glen. – Here, one beautiful day in the spring of 18—, sat a young maiden under the shade of a huge oak, which mother-like, spread out its branches to screen the bubbling spring near its foot. Her apron was filled with flowers, of which she was busily twining a wreath to adorn a pet lamb that stood gravely gazing at the reflection of its own face in the pure waters of the spring. She was one of those who, in a crowded saloon or on a fashionable promenade, would be passed by unnoticed, but who reveal a beauty that at once surprises and gladdens us when met in situations adapted to their character, so that we wonder at our own stupidity in not discovering it before. And surely no scene could furnish a finer setting for the beauty of Lucy Maynard than that around her. No circumstances could be more finely adapted to call forth those quick changes of expression in which her beauty consisted,

than those under which she appeared now. —The dell and mountain side displayed every variety of green, from the pale yellowish hue of the aspen to the dark green of the cedar. The deep blue sky, spotted with light fleecy clouds, which, like wanton children, chased each other toward the southwest, was in perfect keeping with the changeful beauty of the maiden's face. Had you seen her as she sat there, now bent over her pet to ascertain if the wreath had reached the required length, now suddenly pausing and laying her wreath on her knee, seeming not so much to think as to dream, with an expression in her deep blue eye that was pensive yet too clear and serene for sadness, and now again, shaking back from her face the profusion of bright hair, which in hue was

“Like the waterfall, leaf-tinged with brown,
And lit with the sunrise,”

While a roguish smile, wakened by some wayward fancy, flitted across her face, you would have said that her heart was a dwelling-place for nothing but joy. At length, in answer to a bird in the branches above her head, she sang —

Gaze round thee and listen! Sweet spring is returning!
A chorus of welcome burst forth from each spray —
With offerings of flowers, see, the fruit trees are bending,
With shiny young leaves with a freshening life play.

The tint on the cheek of the floweret is deepening.
The hoarfrost has hied to his cavern away —
A life-giving impulse all Nature is moving,
As thrills in her bosom the spring's loving ray.

Down the mount to the valley, the brooklet comes dancing,
And gaily it sings to each flower on its way,
While deep in the wood sits the nightingale singing,
Where, through the close leaves, peeps the [sole?] light of day.

O'er Nature's new glories the sunbeams are streaming —
All sisterly graces the gardens display,
And thousands of blossoms their tints are [com-ing-ling>comely?],
Whose young dewy dyes spread the rainbow's array.

As the last murmur of her song died away in the air, she placed the last wild honeysuckle in her wreath. Her work was completed. She sat for some moments gazing earnestly down the path that led to the village, until her attention was suddenly drawn to the opposite direction by the sound of approaching footsteps. She had scarcely sprung to her feet when a youth in a hunting dress, clearing the head of the spring at a bound, deposited his gun and game at her side, exclaiming —

“Ah! Lucy, dear, I thought you would be here! So I have come round by the mountain path, to bring you some of your favorite flowers, those wild violets and blood root blossoms.”

“Thanks, Charles. Now, if you had brought them before I had finished Daisy’s wreath, how beautifully the blue violets would have contrasted with the white thorn and wild honeysuckle.”

“Ah! Lucy, what a serious misfortune! — But they shall have the higher honor of being worn by Daisy’s mistress, my own pet, Lucy,” said the youth, laughing as he twined them in her hair.

“Lucy,” said he, suddenly pausing from his graceful employment, “do you remember the day when you and little Alice Granger, in spite of aunt Esther’s commands, ran away and followed me to Green’s Pond, to see father and Mr. Granger wash sheep?”

“And what a ducking I got, as Alice tumbled over me in our haste to escape from the big water snake that lay asleep on the rock; and how you dragged me out, and wrapped me in your jacket, and carried me home; and the doses of motherwort tea aunt Esther forced me to swallow? Oh! yes I remember it all. I have detested the very sight of motherwort tea ever since.”

“Ah! Little Alice!” said Charles, “I wonder if she is as happy at the far west, as she was in those days when her brother Fred and I drew you and her back and forth to school, on our sleds.”

“Yes, and turned us over into the snow drifts, why don’t you add?” said the laughing girl. “But come, Daisy, you and I must go home, or aunt Esther will rally the neighborhood to seek us.”

“Stay one moment, Lucy;” said the young man, while his face expressed the working of some painful emotion. “Stay one moment. This talk of our school days has well made me forget that we are not children. You know that my mother’s death has left me almost isolated in the world.—My stepfather is a kind, well meaning man, but he cannot understand me. He cannot appreciate my plans, and thinks it folly for me to pursue my studies. Besides, if he were willing to aid me, he has a large family of his own children to care for.—There is a brother of my mother who is a merchant in Cincinnati. He went there many years ago, and has recently written to me to come to him. Mr. Clayton, who has always been kind to me, and has advanced me in my studies by every means in his power, advises me to go. But it pains me, Lucy, to leave a place associated with so many remembrances — the place of my mother’s grave. And you, Lucy, you will not forget me?”

“Charles! Charles!” was the answer, and those deep eyes filled with tears.

“Forgive me if I have pained you, Lucy,” he continued, “but it is so sad to be alone in the world! With a heart full of kind thoughts and feelings, to feel that no one understands you, and that your existence is necessary to no one’s happiness. Oh! Lucy, if you knew how deeply I have felt this, you would forgive me.”

But while we leave Charles to detail his future plans to his gentle listener, as they slowly wend their way home, we will look a little into their earlier history.

Charles Stanton, who now, at the age of eighteen, stood almost penniless in the world, at his birth was envied as the sole prospective heir to the great Stanton estate, situated in one of the most thriving towns in eastern Massachusetts. His father was one of those pleasant, genial souls, whom everybody calls “good fellows.” Born in vast wealth, and unaccustomed to labor, it never once occurred to him that he or his family could by any possibility become poor; or that there was anything in life for him to do but live as a “good fellow,” and make the world a pasture for his self-indulgence. He kept horses and hogs. He hunted, drove and fished; always sure of finding companions in abundance. Among the humble shops which surrounded the green of S——, stood that of Messrs. Gresham, and Bartlett, which was denominated “the store,” *par excellence*. This was his favorite lounging place, where he took precedence as king of the idlers, and paid the bill. Henry Stanton was not then what was called a drunkard. In common parlance he was termed a “high fellow,” one who liked a ‘good spree.’ —Alas! the gentle attentions of his wife could not win him from the love of strong drink. He went on spending, and never so much as dreaming that the condition of his property might require examination. His estate was left to the careless care of others. — Therefore it was not mysterious to any one but himself when, after a few years, the funds necessary to support his mode of life were not forthcoming. He looked grave. — But his credit was good; he could raise money without difficulty. He borrowed; mortgages followed; and on each new mortgage he doubled his drams, until at length a violent fever, the consequence of one of his “high sprees,” laid him in his grave. His sorrowful widow and little boy were left with nothing save a small pittance, the proceeds of her claims on the estate, which was paid annually by the new owner.

Ellen Stanton, wishing to avoid a place which could only remind her of the past, and influenced perhaps by some movement of wounded pride, accepted the invitation of an early and beloved friend, who offered her a share of her humble home, and, what was still better, one of the warmest places in her heart. This friend was no other than Lucy Maynard’s aunt Esther. She was one of “us women” who, as some one has said, or if it has not been said we say it now, are born to keep the world in equilibrium. She was an old maid; and God bless all such, we say, for we do not see how the world could well get on without them. Lucy was the rich legacy left by an only sister, the widow of a sea captain, whose last resting place was beneath the blue waves he had loved so well. His wife, a part of whose very existence he was, seemed no longer a creature of earth after the news of his death reached her. She grew paler and paler, her eye brighter and brighter, as the hour drew near when she felt assured she should again meet him who had been her life on earth, until at last her wish was realized, and she slept in the grave, and awoke in heaven.

At the time of her mother’s death, Lucy was about five years old. A few hours before she died, the mother called the little girl to her side, and imprinting a last kiss on her lips, said to her sister, in the low, husky tones of death, “Esther! Esther! Make her a true-hearted woman!” Nobly did aunt Esther fulfil the dying injunction of her sister. To this end she directed all her efforts. —Her true heart, superior mind, experience and strong good sense counterbalanced the want of education; but she was not wholly deficient in this, as she had

received the benefit of the schools, such as they were, for persons in her circumstances, fifty years ago. With rare tact she united the qualities of companion and mother; and while she taught her adopted daughter all the mysteries of pastry, soup and soap, she could also sing with her “old songs, the music of the heart,” and sympathize with her admiration of the beautiful, whether in nature or in books, if not always with equal enthusiasm, at least with hearty good will. When Charles Stanton and his mother came to reside with her, aunt Esther’s heart, which before seemed to be wholly occupied by Lucy, immediately expanded to make room for Charles. He was two years older than Lucy, and became her protector in all the civil wars of the village school, participated in all her studies and amusements, and was the companion of her visits to the old pastor, Mr. Clayton.

The old man dearly loved the child, as he always called Lucy, and would even lay aside his favorite volume of Jeremy Taylor when her light knock was heard at the study door. Charles soon became almost as dear to him as Lucy; and it was pleasant to see the old man, with Charles and Lucy seated by him, alternately reading aloud some of his favorite volumes of history, poetry or romance, or listening intently as he pointed out some new beauty of the author, or attempted to satisfy their craving for knowledge from the rich and varied lore of his own mind.

At length his mother’s second marriage, which by the way was a marriage of expediency, brought another change for Charles.—She accepted the hand of a worthy farmer, and took Charles to reside with her. But he still continued to call aunt Esther’s cottage “home;” and every leisure moment was passed either there or at the parsonage. His mind began to advance into that world where all is so much brighter than the “light of common day;” but his admiration of nature and passionate love of books often made him the butt of his stepfather’s good natured ridicule. The honest man would say, “He did not see what good there was in so much learning. It neither helped hoe the corn nor plant the potatoes; and as for ‘landskips,’ as Charles calls them, he had rather see the deep red, shining sides of his four year olds than all the skips in the world.” But Charles found a dear and appreciating friend in Mr. Clayton. The old pastor, delighted with the boy’s quickness of perception and eagerness to acquire knowledge, willingly retraced with him the studies of his earlier years. In the interest he felt for the boy, and the delight he found superintending his studies, he seemed to find again some of the long lost pleasures of his boyhood and youth. Charles’s mental life advanced rapidly. As he grew older he became different from the young people around him in the village. He no longer took the same interest in their pleasures, though he sometimes mingled with them, and listened kindly to their plans of amusement. He was respected by them, yet like all those who live from within than from without, he was neither understood nor appreciated. After the death of his mother he felt more alone than ever. He had indeed nothing left, save love of Mr. Clayton, aunt Esther and Lucy. But this was a priceless possession. Its inspiration made his soul strong and buoyant. He saw a struggle before him as he looked into the future, but his eye grew clear, and his heart swelled with gladness and courage. One week after his interview with Lucy at the spring, he was on his way to the West.

(Concluded next week.)

We must now be allowed to transport our readers to the good town of S——. It is no longer the same as when Mrs. Stanton left it to reside with aunt Esther of Liston. —The spirit of “the times” has been there. —The erection of factories, and its proximity to the Boston and Providence railroad, have greatly swelled its importance. Now it not only boasts of three lawyers’ offices and four physicians, but “the store” has grown to twice its former size. Messrs. Gresham and Bartlett have been compelled to enlarge it, in order to compete successfully with numerous rivals round the green, who threatened to annihilate them by the superior splendor of their sign-board and extent of their buildings. That large white house on the south corner of the green is the residence of ‘Squire Benson, attorney and counselor at law, as he styles himself. That lady who is peeping from behind the curtain of the parlor window, and, with an expression of displeasure on her face, watching the two young ladies who stand chatting on the sidewalk, is Mrs. Benson, his wife. That young lady who has now left her companion and is coming toward the house is miss Julia Esther Benson, his daughter, the would-be belle of the town.

“Julia, my dear,” says Mrs. Benson, as her daughter enters the room, “was not that Caroline Hawley with whom you spoke just now?”

“Yes, ma; I met her as she was going to the shop, and stopped her to ask if Mrs. Shirley has yet received the latest fashions from Boston.”

“But I should think your own sense of propriety would teach you that it is not fitting for Julia Benson to be seen speaking familiarly to a milliner’s apprentice in the public street, directly in front of Dr. Seward’s too; and Mrs. Weldon, his wife’s cousin, the senator’s lady and his daughters, who are so exclusive, now visiting there!”

“Why ma, I am sure the Weldons did not see me. Besides, Caroline Hawley dresses very genteelly. Only last year you were so anxious to have me intimate with her that you gave your Christmas party, merely to secure to me the right of entrée to her father’s brilliant parties.”

“True, Julia, but there is some difference between Caroline Hawley, the reputed heiress of a hundred thousand dollars, and Caroline Hawley, the milliner’s apprentice. Really, failures are so frequent that it is necessary for people of rank and fashion to be exclusive.”

“Well, ma, I suppose you know best.—But Caroline was always so pleasant; I liked her very much,” said Julia, as she left the room.

This short conversation will enable the reader to gain some glimpses of the ruling spirit of lawyer Benson’s home. Striving, ever striving! But alas! not for the imperishable, the eternal; not to realize that by which the pure in heart see God—but for the glitter, the glare, the pretension of that contemptible thing called fashion.

Under a soft, complaisant and insinuating manner, Mrs. Benson concealed the most inflexible will—a will that yielded to no obstacles and scrupled at no means in attaining her ends, so long as she could conceal them from the eyes of the world. She was ever ready, and first, to subscribe to all the fashionable charities and popular societies of the day; to do

anything, in short, that could tend to place her and her daughter in the first rank of *gigmanity*; while all her household operations, which lay behind the curtain, were conducted with all the stint of the most penurious retrenchment. In his family Mr. Benson was a complete nonentity. In more ways than one his wife made him feel that she was indeed his better half. Julia was a pretty, good tempered girl, with a fair share of intelligence. She would have made an interesting woman if her mother had not been constantly instilling into her mind the lessons of vanity and pride. In this family—a lonely pupil of that stern teacher, poverty—lived Lucy Maynard. Ay, *lived*—in the fullest sense of the word—for the pure heart and earnest soul, like a fir flower struggling for the blessed sunlight, amid the weeds which surround it, will ever stretch upward toward the great Father of Light, even when crushed beneath those rank weeds, pride and disdain. Yes! Even in the family of lawyer Benson, Lucy lived. Two years after Charles Stanton's departure for the West, she was rendered doubly an orphan by the death of aunt Esther. Before her death, aunt Esther made every provision in her power to screen her beloved charge from want; and, after commending her warmly to the care of her uncle, a brother of Captain Maynard, who resided in D——, Massachusetts, and much more strongly, and with far firmer faith, to the care of the Father of the fatherless, she slept the last sleep, and was laid to rest by the side of her sister.

That was a sorrowful day for poor Lucy when the earth closed over that dear face and kind heart with which had been her home so long, when she found herself alone! She heeded not the setting sun that night, as in her utter loneliness she knelt between the two graves, and passionately wept. At length a hand was laid gently on her shoulder—the old pastor stood by her. He assisted her to rise, and led her quietly, without speaking to his own house. The first burst of grief was over, and she grew calm for her soul was too clear and strong for despair.

Her uncle John Maynard received the orphan kindly; and both he and his wife employed all kind and gentle attentions to render her happy. And she was happy—happy to repay their kindness, in some measure, by her care for their small children. If, when busy with memories of her dear aunt Esther, and the days of her childhood and early youth, thought, wandering to Charles Stanton, would sometimes cause the work to drop from her hand, and the tears to fill her eyes! She was not unhappy, but fervently thanked God that the bright beams of his mercy still rested on her path. She had resided with her uncle about a year when sudden reverses reduced him from comparative affluence to poverty. But John Maynard was not of a disposition to sit down in despair without an effort, or appeal to the sympathy of others, or complain of fate. Nor did his family hang upon him like a mill-stone. With sunny faces and cheerful hearts, from the oldest down to wee Jamie, the youngest, each felt strong to aid in retrieving their father's fallen fortunes. Lucy, unwilling to remain dependent on her friends in this change of circumstances, entreated permission to leave them and learn some trade, by which she might gain a livelihood. But her gentle manners and kind heart had won their warmest affection. They were not willing to part with her, and gladly would have persuaded her to share their humble fortunes in the western world, to which they had decided to remove. But Lucy, aware of the rigid economy they would be compelled to practice, persisted in her entreaties until at last they consented, and procured her a situation with Mrs. Shirley, the most fashionable milliner in S——.

And now poor Lucy is indeed left alone, wearing away her life as a milliner's apprentice, with not one kind, familiar face near her. Every day she must devote the usual number of hours to the trade; and besides this, like many a poor girl under similar circumstances, she must work for her board, and this is her position in lawyer Benson's family. Mrs. Benson was very willing to give her board for her services when she was not in the shop, as it saved the expense of one servant. She was a consummate mistress of the art of getting the greatest possible amount of work out of all those who had the fortune or misfortune to serve her. Poor Lucy bitterly felt the difference between the kindness of her relatives and the cold, unsympathising manners of the Bensons. Uncomplaining, she ministered to the wants of the thoughtless, though not really unkind Julia. With unwearied diligence she performed all those duties of the household which it pleased Mrs. Benson to term "chores;" and many a poor girl will bear witness to our truth when we say that these "chores" include much of the heaviest and most laborious portion of the housework.

Nor was this all. Mrs. Benson had one child, a son, many years younger than Julia, who was afflicted with a disease of the spine, and to whom Lucy's sweet voice and winning manners were peculiarly attractive.—An invalid almost from birth, Edward was peevish and fretful; but his eye always brightened when he heard her step on the stairs that led to his room, as, weary with the labors of the day, she came to bring his supper and prepare his drink for the night. Lucy soon began to feel that even here was something to love, as she infrequently did, of her dependent situation, and talked of her great benevolence in keeping her mere for "doing a few chores," though her heart swelled and her eyes filled, she felt that there was one whose joyless childhood was rendered brighter and happier by her existence, and her heart grew strong. Yet Lucy was not without her moments of—we were about to say unalloyed happiness.—The apprentice girl had not forgotten the lessons of the old pastor; and it was a joyful moment for her when, after the last "chore" of the day was done, her mistress bade her go and sit by Edward until he fell asleep. Then, though the boy would sometimes insist on having the story of little Red Riding Hood related twice over, and be more than usually anxious to know how a wolf could talk—yet he was usually reasonable, and many sweet hours did Lucy spend with her books, with which, thanks to Caroline Hawley and her father, she was well supplied—storing her mind with rich lessons, freely communing with the noblest and best of earth.

One morning, as Lucy was removing the breakfast things from the table, Mrs. Benson and Julia were discussing a brilliant party which they had attended, the evening previous, at the house of 'Squire Lee, a rival attorney.

"Was there ever any thing equal to the pride and vanity of the Lees?" exclaimed Mrs. Benson. "Their French china!—Nothing but earthen, I dare say."

"But, ma, their dessert service is really silver. I heard Mrs. Seward say so."

"Yes! child, as I said before, there is nothing like their extravagance. But Mrs. Lee, with all her silver plate, will never be anything more than Fanny Daggett, the dress maker. She retains even now the habit of feeling for her scissors while talking. But Julia, who was that

handsome young man that came in so late with Dr. Seward? He must be somebody, if one may judge from the attentions shown him by Mrs. Weldon and the Swards.”

“Oh! that was Dr. Stanton. He and his uncle arrived at the hotel yesterday from New York. Mary Seward told me that her family and the Lees are old friends of his father, and that this is his native place.”

“Why it must be Charles Stanton, the son of Henry Stanton, who died—but heaven help the girl,” she cried, springing to the table to catch part of the dishes which the sound of that long cherished name had caused Lucy to drop, as she was about to place them on the waiter—“was there ever such carelessness? Two plates and three cups broken! my new breakfast set entirely ruined! I don’t believe there is another as careless girl in town. There, take the fragments and waiter, and see if you can carry them to the kitchen without dropping them.”

“Mother,” said Julia, as the frightened girl left the room, “Lucy is very pale; I don’t think she is well.”

“She ought to look pale. Three of my new coffer cups and two plates broken into inch pieces! How many cracked I don’t know.”

“But you know ma, since Edward has been worse she is often obliged to get up in the night, to wait on him. He told me this morning that she was up with him the greater part of last night.”

“He told me the same. But I keep her to wait on him. Edward has taken a great fancy to her; and, after all, she is as good as most girls. Servants are always more plague than profit. But who did you say accompanied Charles Stanton?”

“His uncle, a Mr. Gordon, from the West.”

“Ah! now I remember, his mother was a Gordon, and had a brother at the West who was said to be wealthy. We must pay them some attention. If Edward gets no better, I will ask Dr. Seward to call in his young friend to consult with him.”

“Do, ma, I should like very much to be acquainted with him.”

But let us look into the kitchen, where poor Lucy is almost breathless with delight at the thought of Charles Stanton’s return. It has brought back to the care worn face much of the changeful beauty of earlier days, and she sits forgetful of the broken china—of her mistress’s displeasure—of all save the happy days passed in her own sweet home at Liston. “He has returned! I knew he would come back!” she murmured to herself, when the well known step of Mrs. Benson roused her to consciousness of her situation. In that short, sweet dream, she had forgotten all but the past. She took no account of the change in their relative positions in society. For the moment she even forgot that, as she had reason to suppose, Charles himself no longer thought of her as formerly. But now her cheek blanched and her lip quivered with sudden thoughts of the vast distance by which the forms of society separated them.

Once Lucy’s mind could not have entertained such thoughts; but she had, of late, heard the subject too often discussed—had heard Mrs. Benson and her friends too often speak of rank in

society, and of the exclusiveness of “their circle,” not to be aware that she, Mrs. Benson’s servant, was too far from Dr. Stanton to think of intercourse with him.

True, Charles’s letters, which had never failed during aunt Esther’s life, were full of kind remembrances of her, in which she was always connected with his plans for the future. And even during her residence with her uncle, their correspondence had continued. But a short time after her uncle’s failure, she had written to Charles, informing him of her design to learn a trade. To this letter she received no reply. Anxiously had she hoped and waited for an answer, but none came. Slowly and painfully the conviction forced itself on her mind that he wished to forget her. Charles had been ideal of all her dreams. Unconsciously his name ever trembled on her lips when, in the moments devoted to her books, some new thought, beautiful in its purity and truth, gladdened her heart and shed light over the dim vista of the future. Unconsciously the thought of Charles’s approbation had stimulated her to improve every moment, to make every possible exertion for a high degree of cultivation. And now he had returned—the beautiful dream had vanished—faded before the cold, false, heartless forms of society!

Oh! those only who have dreamed, hoped, longed and lived for such an ideal can understand the bitterness of the disappointment when, just at the moment of realization, we find ourselves separated from it by the inexorable hand of destiny!

But Lucy’s experience had taught her more than one of the great lessons of life.—She now strove to school herself to submission, and to fulfil with patient endurance all the duties of her station. Early in the ensuing spring the term of her apprenticeship would expire; and as Mrs. Shirley wished to retain her in her employment, she looked forward with pleasure to the time when the avails of her labor would render her independent at least of Mrs. Benson.

A few days after this, lawyer Benson informed his wife that Mr. Gordon had purchased part of the old Stanton estate, and that he was now busy furnishing the new cottage on the hill. This was true. Mr. Gordon, wishing to gratify his nephew, and disliking the noise and bustle of a hotel, on finding a part of Charles’s parental estate for sale, immediately became the purchaser, and in a few weeks they were enjoying all the quiet and comfort of a New England home.

As rumor had represented Mr. Gordon to be far more wealthy than he really was, their establishment in the place was an event of the first importance to the “exclusives.”—They immediately received all sorts of attention from the many, and more gradually found some who could appreciate their worth and become sincerely their friends. Mrs. Benson was not the only managing mamma to whom Charles, especially, became the object of the highest consideration.

The warm recommendations of Dr. Seward soon procured for Charles quite an extensive practice. Little Edward, who daily grew worse, was almost entirely given over to his care, Dr. Seward only looking in occasionally. As Charles’s calls were always during those hours when Lucy was at the shop, she never met him; and although she frequently heard Mrs. Benson and her daughter mention his name, and sound his praises, yet with the sensitiveness of one who keenly felt the injustice and falseness of those conventional laws of society which

oppressed her, and which now regulated the character of Charles, as she had such painful reason to believe, she avoided all that could lead to a discovery of her early connection with him.

Meanwhile, rumor began to prophecy, in whispers, that the beautiful cottage on the hill would soon have a mistress in Miss Julia. Mrs. Benson managed—Charles paid Julia some attentions, which gave rise to banter on the part of her young friends; and the manner in which Mrs. Benson replied to such remarks certainly was not calculated to silence them. Rumor continued to whisper, louder and louder, until the matter was spoken of as a thing probably settled.—Lucy heard all this in silence, and sought refuge from all painful thoughts in her ministry of love to Edward.

As he grew worse, he clung to her with increasing fondness, and at length Mrs. Benson procured another to take her place in the kitchen, that all her moments of leisure from the shop might be devoted exclusively to the little sufferer, who was evidently near death. One day, toward the last of February, Dr. Stanton was detained from calling at his ordinary hour, and drove to the door much later than usual. Finding Mrs. Benson engaged with company, he followed the servant directly to Edward's room. He found his patient asleep. After feeling his pulse and arranging some powders, he turned to the nurse, who sat at the foot of the bed almost wholly concealed by its ample drapery, and commenced giving directions.—But suddenly interrupting himself, he inquired how long the boy had slept. The answer was inaudible.

“How long did you say, nurse? he asked again.

“About half an hour,” was the answer, in low, tremulous tones which thrilled through his whole soul.

Charles sprang to her side, and grasping her arm, drew her to the light, exclaiming—“It is! it must be Lucy Maynard—my own Lucy! Speak again! For God's sake, speak again!”

Oh! there are moments when the whole soul comes forth to brood on the face!—Words could not have brought so sweet an assurance to his heart as did one glance of those deep blue eyes, as he pressed her half fainting to his bosom.

“And you have been near me so long,” he continued—“even in the house, and I have not known it! Lucy, was this quite right?”

“I have wronged you, Charles. As you did not answer my letter, informing you of the change of my circumstances, I thought you had changed. Forgive me, Charles, but I have been made to feel, somewhat keenly, the disdain which those of your social rank and advantages feel authorized to bestow on such as occupy my position. Oh! if you only knew what I have suffered, in thinking that you too were influenced by this falseness of society—that you too could neglect me, because of my friendless poverty—you would forgive me.

“I changed! I disdain you! Society create a distance between you and me!—Oh! how could you mistake me thus? You must indeed have learned some bitter lessons, my poor Lucy, or you could not have wronged me so!”

“But my letter, Charles, why did you not answer my letter?”

“Because, dearest Lucy, I never received it. I was a long time travelling with my uncle, in various parts of the country, before we came here, and must have left Cincinnati before it arrived there. Before I came here I visited Liston. Our kind friend, the old pastor, had been dead nearly a year. In answer to my inquiries I was informed that you still resided in D——, and was there told that you accompanied your uncle to Iowa. Wearied and dispirited, I rejoined my uncle, whose business had detained him in New York. We came here, as it was a favorite plan of my uncle to repurchase if possible a part of my father’s estate. But I had resolved to visit Iowa in the spring, to find you if possible, and ascertain whether the sweet playmate of my youth would not sustain to me a still nearer and dearer relation.”

“But Julia———“

“Julia neither is, has been, nor can be any thing more than a lively, good-tempered girl, spoiled by the over-management of her mother. But first of all—even before you answer the question which interests me so deeply—allow me to provide you a more suitable home.”

“Lucy pointed to the sleeping boy. “No! Charles,” she said, “I cannot leave him now. He will allow no one else to wait on him. You say he has but a few days to live. Let me, at least, soothe his last hours, for he has ever loved me.”

“Let it be so, then;—and now good night.”

Lucy’s unwearied ministry of love was soon over. One week after this meeting, Edward was in his grave.

“But were they married? were they married?” the fair girls ask. Indeed they were. And, if one may judge from the animated conversation going on in Mrs. Benson’s parlor, their marriage had caused no small stir among the exclusives.

“An old acquaintance, did you say, Mrs. Benson? Exclaims Mrs. Elliott, her most intimate friend; “old acquaintances are they? And did you never suspect it? Did the girl never mention it?”

“I am not accustomed to make myself either the companion or confidant of my servants, Mrs. Elliott,” was the dignified answer.

“But do tell us, Julia, what sort of creature is this new edition of Cinderella? Is she beautiful?”

“Oh! pray don’t come to me for a catalogue of her charms! I really cannot tell whether her eyes are blue, black or grey.—

“You have seen her a thousand times.”

“Yes, no doubt;—but one never thinks of looking at a servant. Still, she must be superior to most of her class, for she has interested Dr. Stanton, and it is acknowledged that he is a man of taste.”

“Yes, yes,” says Mrs. Benson, in reply to the last part of Mrs. Elliott’s remark, “and it is to be regretted that one with his talents and refinement should contract with a *mesalliance*. Of course, he cannot retain his position in society—at least not here. We, who have shown him some attention, as the descendant of the old Stanton family, shall now be obliged to drop him. I wonder how we will bear the changed manners of Mrs. Weldon and the Swards.”

“Then you will not call on the bride?”

“No, indeed, I shall not do myself that honor, unless it be to order a new bonnet.”

“Why, where can the Swards be going?” exclaims Julia from the window,—“there are Mrs. Seward, Mary, and the Weldons, in the carriage.”

“They are probably going to talk over this queer affair with the Lees,” replied her mother.

The two elder ladies continued their discussion of “this queer affair,” finding no terms to express their wonder at the infatuation of Charles Stanton, until another exclamation from Julia, who had remained at the window, watching the carriage, drew them both to her side.

“Look, ma! look, Mrs. Elliott! The carriage has stopped at the cottage.”

“Sure enough, Mrs. Benson,” adds her friend, “and there is Dr. Stanton receiving them from the carriage. Well, there is a strange movement! But, if the Weldons condescend to call on them, no one else can refuse.”

“Certainly this alters the case,” replies Mrs. Benson. “And now I think of it, perhaps it is better that Julia and I should call likewise, as there has been some little talk about some slight attentions Dr. Stanton paid her. If we refuse to call, people may indulge themselves in ill-natured remarks.”

That afternoon the bridal pair received the congratulations of Mrs. Benson and Miss Julia. These visitors felt some awkward embarrassment on the way, which Lucy’s calm and dignified self-respect, blended, as it was, with the most graceful politeness, did not contribute to lessen on their arrival. But the Swards have returned; let us step over, for a moment, and hear them.

“Believe me, my dear Mrs. Seward,” says Mrs. Weldon, “I never in my life paid my congratulations, on an occasion like this, with such heart-felt pleasure. I feared, indeed, that our young friend’s mind had been misled by some romantic idea of obligation to one who stood in such close connection with his boyish associations. But she is indeed worthy of him. She is a delightful creature. I could hardly refrain from calling her an angel myself.”

“No,” replies Mrs. Seward, “he was not one to deceive himself in such a matter.—His mind is too clear;—his ideal too pure, too perfect, to allow any false views to guide his conduct in so important an affair as this. The question with him was, not whether she had wealth, station or beauty, but whether she could speak to his heart, sympathize with his life of thought, and sustain to his soul that beautiful relation which, like all spiritual unions, must be eternal. I cannot sufficiently admire his independence of mind, in following out his own convictions in this case, though some of his acquaintance will censure him severely.”

“But aunt Seward,” exclaims Grace Weldon, “his wife is beautiful, and her manners altogether charming and lady-like. How quietly and gracefully she received our congratulations. She was really beautiful in her simple white dress—was she not, Mary?”

“Oh, yes! Grace, and the strangest thing of all is that we have never noticed her before, when she has lived so long with Mrs. Benson, only just across the way.”

“Ah, my daughter, I fear that we, and a great many others in the world, are ever looking too much abroad or above us for the good and the beautiful; and in so doing we miss diamonds that lie in the dust at our feet—neglect many of the noblest and best of earth, leaving them to be crushed beneath the stern hand of poverty—or, what is worse, to pass through life without kindness or sympathy. The pride of fashionable life makes us too blind and cold to see and love others as we ought.”

And now, dear reader, if you are still anxious or curious, walk with me, in this soft June moonlight, to the beautiful cottage on the hill, and we will see them in their home. We know all about them. They have no secrets from us. Therefore we may be as lawless as fairies, and peep in at the window. Take care! Do not be so hasty, and mind where you step, or you will crush all the violets and sweet clover. Now push away this honey-suckle, and look into the room. “How happy she seems!” did you say? Ay, she is indeed happy! See that white headed old man! It is Mr. Gordon.

How he raises his eyes from his book, and gazes at her, through the open door of the library, with an expression that seems to say, “God bless her!” Hark! there are footsteps in the passage! How eagerly she starts and springs to the door, just in time to be caught in the arms of her husband.

“I have not forgotten that it is your birthday, Lucy,” he says. In the happy days at Liston, aunt Esther used to give us a kiss and a whipping. Which do you think you deserve?”

“Why, Charles, if I remember rightly, it was I who received the kiss, and you the whipping.”

“Ah! yes, I believe you are half right.—But I have brought you something surpassingly beautiful; the poems of one whose poetic vision of divine things, and whose deep, serene, entrancing utterance of what is granted to that vision, are unrivalled among the rising generation of poets—one who, if his mature years do not belie his early promise, will become *the* poet and prophet of his age. Read me one of those sonnets, dearest.”

Lucy took the book, and began, in an exquisitely modulated voice one of those beautiful sonnets.

As she read the closing lines,

“I dare not say how much thou art to me,
Even to myself—and, Oh! much less to thee!”

there was so much earnest truth and deep tenderness in the glance with which she met his eye, that Charles felt assured, as he involuntarily caught her to his bosom, that he held in his embrace

“Earth’s noblest thing,
A woman perfected.”

North Branford, Connecticut.

1) *gigmanity* from *gigman*:

OED: *gigman* – One who keeps or uses a gig [=a light two-wheeled one-horse carriage]; whimsically used by Carlyle for one whose respectability is measured by keeping a gig; a narrow-minded person belonging to the middle class, who views ‘respectability’ as the chief concern of life, a ‘Philistine’.