

1845

Gertrude (Chapters 20-22)

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Repository Citation

Tucker, N. Beverley, "Gertrude (Chapters 20-22)" (1845). *Faculty Publications*. 1333.
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what relieved by a short note from Harlston, written professedly to express his concern at what he chose to call her indisposition, and to enquire after her health, but in truth, to make her understand that his feelings towards her were not less kind and respectful than they had been. Had it been Ludwell's aim to separate the young ladies, he could not have succeeded more effectually; but in the attempt to inspire Harlston with a disposition unfriendly to Miss Bernard he had totally failed. He had seen nothing but a display of deep sensibility, which he thought creditable to her. Her emotion indeed had verified Ludwell's tale, but of that he had not doubted: and in a full view of the whole affair, he thought he saw more cause for pity than censure. Miss Bernard was indeed a highly gifted woman, in whom a nature ardent and generous had been spoiled by a false education, and then utterly perverted by the barbarous usage she had experienced in return for her romantic devotion to Ludwell. *His* conduct Harlston saw in the worst light, and was not sorry that he was about to be separated, perhaps forever, from one whom he was still desirous to serve, but whom he could no longer meet with his accustomed cordiality. Supposing that Miss Bernard was not insensible to the hint Ludwell had intended to give her, and that she suspected that her whole history had been laid open to him, he was by no means willing that she should believe him capable of entering into the views of her persecutor, or approving the outrage on her feelings which he had witnessed. Hence he not only wrote as I have said, but he called to enquire after her health, expressed his regret at not seeing her, and took pains to speak of her to the other ladies in a way which indicated the kindest feelings. All these things when reported to her might have shaken her purpose of leaving Washington, but she had begun to despair of her great object, and thought it wise to withdraw at once, and prepare for new adventures on some other theatre. The thought of meeting Ludwell in society was not to be endured, though she cherished a hope that she might some day find an opportunity for the vengeance which she deeply vowed. She was not aware of his intended departure from Washington. But he was under orders, and both left the city on the same day. Whether they ever met again, and whether the reader is to hear any thing more of either, time will show.

CHAPTER XX, CONTINUED.

With a quiet shrug, Ludwell took her at her word and slipped back to the company without having been missed. At a proper time, Gertrude was informed that Miss Bernard had been overcome by the heat of the room, and had gone home. The next morning she did not appear at breakfast, and it was understood that she found the dissipations of Washington injurious to her health, and had determined to write home for her carriage. In a day or two it came. Meantime she kept her room, in a state of manifest suffering, to which she gave such name as suited her own taste, and then, with renewed professions of never-dying friendship for Gertrude, took her leave of Washington.

In the meantime, her vexation had been some-

CHAPTER XXI.

A few days after the departure of Miss Bernard, Mrs. Austin was sitting alone in the drawing-room. It was in the afternoon, and the rays of the sun were beginning to shine somewhat too brightly into the windows that looked out toward the West. The house of Mrs. Pendarvis fronted on one of those thoroughfares which, in Washington, are distin-

guished by the name of Avenues, and being placed at the intersection of the Avenue with one of the principal streets, it possessed the advantage of a double front. The drawing-room was on the second floor, in the angle between the street and Avenue, and the Western windows looked across the *street* to one of the largest hotels in the city. This too had a double front, the principal one being on the avenue. The other, being more convenient to the offices and stables, opened into the bar-room, and was chiefly used by the servants and other members of the establishment. Here, too, the stage coach drew up to receive passengers, and from this same door those who travelled on horseback commonly took their departure. The more conspicuous front upon the avenue was indeed of little consequence but for its showy appearance, and its congeniality to the tastes of those who travelled in splendid equipages. Whatever curiosity the ladies at the house of Mrs. Pendarvis might feel to take note of the comers and goers of the hotel, was therefore easily gratified. I will just add to this account of the locality, that the chamber of Gertrude was on the side of the house next the street, and that its windows looked directly into the door of the bar-room.

Mrs. Austin was somewhat annoyed by the increasing glare of the declining sun, and approached the window to close the blinds, when to her surprise and dismay she saw Henry Austin, accompanied by another gentleman, ride up to the door of the hotel. As he delivered his horse to a servant, he seemed to say something, the answer to which was accompanied by a nod of the head, which seemed intended to point across the street. Henry instantly turned his head and looked that way. The full view of his face left no doubt of his identity, and its expression plainly showed that he had caught a glimpse of a female figure at the window. The lady drew back, and aside, but not so much as to lose sight of him. He stood a moment, looked impatiently at the house and then at his muddy boots and travel-soiled dress, applied his whip in two or three smart strokes to the leg of his pantaloons, passed his hand across his chin as if to feel his beard, looked eagerly at the house again, and then sprang hastily up the steps and disappeared into the hotel. The whole action spoke plainly that he would be at the door of Mrs. Pendarvis in twenty minutes precisely. Mrs. Austin looked at her watch and took her measures accordingly.

It was not without trepidation that she hurried to Gertrude's room, for if Gertrude had seen Henry, all was lost. Never did any mother feel more pleasure at finding her daughter quietly seated with a book in her hand, and quite absorbed in her studies. How fondly she kissed her! how warmly she praised her assiduity! Such signs of cordiality had not of late been very frequent. There was that in the

mind of Mrs. Austin that made it impossible, even for her, to discharge from her manner all appearance of constraint; while Gertrude, on her part, felt as every young lady must feel, who keeps an important secret hid from her mother. Her heart smote her at moments like this, and whatever her parent might ask of her, was sure to command a ready and joyful compliance.

"Come, my good child," said Mrs. Austin, "do not put your eyes quite out. Go now with me into the drawing-room, and let me hear you play and sing the last pieces that you have learned."

As she said this, Mrs. Austin, with a careless hand, closed the blinds and, leaving Gertrude to smoothe her hair, returned to the drawing-room. But she only stopped to reconnoitre for the moment, and then went in quest of the porter, whom she charged to be in his place, informing him that the ladies were *not at home* to any one but Colonel Harlston. She then returned in time to meet Gertrude, who immediately took her seat at the piano with her back to the window. In the recess of this window Mrs. Austin, all attention to her daughter's performance, placed herself. But though her ear was thus occupied, her eye was free to glance through the blinds. She did not watch long before Henry made his appearance, dressed as if to see company, and walked directly across the street. In a moment she glided from the room, and placing herself on the stairs, had the satisfaction to find, that the prompt attention of the porter had saved Henry the necessity of ringing the door bell. She heard the ready "not at home," and was not a little startled when Henry exclaimed in reply: "Not at home! Are you not mistaken? Surely I hear Miss Courtney's voice. Pray take my card, and ascertain if she at least is not at home."

The card which Henry handed to the porter was accompanied with one of those persuasives to the influence of which such persons are so sensible, and he immediately ascended the stairs, card in hand. But there stood Mrs. Austin, looking most mysteriously, with her finger on her lip. She received the card, and beckoning the man to follow her out of hearing of the door, whispered him to say that Miss Courtney was indeed in the house, but too much indisposed to see company. At the same moment unluckily the music ceased, so as to leave no doubt on Henry's mind that it had been interrupted by the entrance of the servant with the card. His heart beat high with expectation, and he stood eagerly looking to the spot where the porter had disappeared, expecting to see his fond, artless Gertrude come bounding into his arms. Had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet he could not have been more astounded than by the answer he received. For a moment he stood rooted to the spot, and then turning away walked mechanically toward the hotel.

Meantime Mrs. Austin was again at her post almost without having been missed. Gertrude was

commencing another air, when suddenly she heard her mother's voice. "Gracious goodness! No! It is not possible. It cannot be he. Passing right by the door, and never calling! But I could not be mistaken. He looked back just as he went into the door, and I saw his face as plain as any thing. What can he mean by behaving so?"

"Who is it, Mother?" asked Gertrude in a tone of some interest.

"Who is it! Well you may ask. I can hardly believe my own eyes."

The good lady's indignation could find no farther utterance in words, but expressed itself but the more strongly in her looks, as she glanced alternately at the window and at her daughter. "Who is it, Mother?" The words were repeated in a voice which told that Gertrude's feelings too were roused.

"Who is it!!! Why, who but Henry Austin!"

Whether she mistrusted her own power of face, or wished to spare the feelings of Gertrude, or merely desired to avoid a scene and a consequent explanation, the lady, as she said this, turned her back upon her daughter and affected to look steadily through the window blinds into the street. Poor Gertrude! Her mother did not look at her, and there was none else to witness what she suffered. She sunk into her chair, and bowed her head upon her hands. The mother glanced at her for a moment, and then threw herself into the window-seat, couching down in the sullen attitude of one deeply mortified and offended. How long it was before Gertrude moved from her chair is not known, but such was the attitude in which, on raising her head, she saw her mother, apparently buried in her own thoughts and unconscious of the daughter's presence. Eagerly did Gertrude seize the opportunity to escape to her own room, and eagerly did she gaze across the street in the hope of catching some glimpse of Henry, if indeed it was he, or of discovering some figure which might have been mistaken for his. She gazed in vain. No one appeared.

"Perhaps it was not Henry." Yes it was. On leaving home it had been his plan to reach Baltimore in time for the mail coach going North on the next morning after the day we speak of. He was well mounted, and had not ridden far before he conceived the thought, that by a little extra effort he might gain time to spend an hour in Washington, and ride from thence to Baltimore in the night. Pursuing this plan he found himself near noon at a spot about equidistant from the two places, a little out of the direct line between them. Here he stopped, hired a fresh horse, and leaving his own to rest, pressed on so as to reach Washington two hours before sunset. His reception we have seen. Scarcely had he returned to the hotel, before he began to doubt the evidence of his senses. The singer could not have been Gertrude. The voice

was not so sweet, and the performance on the piano was too artistical for one who, until she left home, had never ventured on more than to accompany herself in a simple Scotch air. His heated imagination had deceived his ear. The ladies then *were* out—and he would wait and watch their return. But the front of Mrs. Pendarvis's house, facing on the avenue, could not be seen from the door of the bar-room, and therefore he passed through to the principal front, resolved to pace backward and forward upon the pavement until some thing should appear to remove his doubts.

He had not walked his post more than half an hour before his attention was attracted by an elegant and costly equipage, which, dashing past him, drew up at the door of Mrs. Pendarvis. It was a phaeton drawn by four superb bays, and accompanied by two servants in livery on horse-back. The top was down, and in the carriage sat a well-dressed, handsome man in the prime of life. He stepped from the phaeton and was at once admitted. Soon after he returned, leading a lady in a rich riding dress. Was not that Gertrude? Her attire, so different from the simple apparel she had worn at home, made it hard to decide. But her veil was thrown back—perhaps she might turn her face toward Henry. And so she did, for it was for that purpose that the veil was raised. It was in the act of turning to seat herself, that she looked up. Their eyes met. There could be no mistake on either side. The horses sprang off, the veil was dropped, and Henry was left gazing wildly after the flying carriage. The time had admitted of no salutation: of no conventional token of recognition. But each was conscious of having been recognized, and each had seen enough of the other's countenance to be aware of an expression indicating some feeling far, far different from those with which they had parted.

In the next moment Henry was hurrying toward the office of his friend Fielding. Too much agitated to call a hack, he walked on blindly, lost his way, and did not reach his destination till the office was closed for the night. Again he wandered on to seek the lodgings of his friend, found them, heard the tale of the scene in which Gertrude had been personated by Miss Bernard, and in wild despair again rushed into the street and returned to his hotel.

It was ten o'clock when he reached it. The windows of Mrs. Pendarvis blazed with lights. There was a large party—a dancing party. He looked up. Gertrude stood before the window leaning on the arm of the companion of her drive. He led her away to the dance; they returned to their position near the window, and each seemed wholly engrossed with the other.

He had seen enough, and entering the bar-room he called for his horse, and was soon on the road to Baltimore. Passing by the house where he had left his own horse he recovered him, and continu-

ing his journey reached that city in time for the Northern coach.

I beg that the fashionable lover of modern days will not judge Henry by himself. He did not curse Gertrude in his heart. He did not vow revenge. He did not resolve to throw himself away, and begin by steeping his senses in intoxication. He remembered his vow. He remembered that in devoting his life to Gertrude he had asked no pledge from her, and that his had been absolute and unconditional. If he had a wish in reference to her, it was that Providence would make him the instrument of good to her. But his mind was not yet calm enough for such romantic fancies, and he acted for the moment under an indistinct consciousness that he had a duty to perform to his noble father. Under this impulse he continued his journey, borne along by a public conveyance, which saved him from all exertion of his own will, leaving thought and fancy free.

And what an evening poor Gertrude passed, forced into company under such circumstances. Had the party been any where else, she might easily have made an excuse to stay at home. But she was the queen of the entertainment, which was professedly got up on her account, and at which each one who attended felt himself to be her guest. It was not only necessary to be present, but to be gay, animated and in full possession of all her faculties. How was this possible when her own senses afforded evidence that she was deserted by the man of her heart, and when this knowledge was furnished by his own act, almost amounting to studied insult. This was one view of the matter. But then Henry was near her. A narrow street and two thin walls alone divided them. She would certainly see him. That was enough. She did not stop to think what he might desire to explain, and how; or what, and why she might forgive. She felt, as the instinct of love teaches to all that feel his power, that to meet is to part no more. Let eye meet eye, let blush answer blush, then comes the electric touch, that from the fingers end shoot shivering through the frame, then lip to lip, and heart to heart!! Nothing is explained—nothing forgiven—all is forgotten. The past is gone. The rapturous present—the precious future are the whole of life.

We know not what we are capable of, under circumstances which depress without crushing us. They are precisely those in which powers display themselves which astonish even the possessor. Thus it was with Gertrude. Never had her step been seen so free, so bounding and so graceful; her eye so bright, her complexion so brilliant, her pure brow so lofty and serene, and her whole countenance so instinct with thought and feeling. To Harlston she never seemed so perfectly lovely. Mrs. Pendarvis exulted at the thought of having brought out one who threw into the shade all that

prided itself on youth, beauty and attraction; and Mrs. Austin, who had her own private thoughts, rejoiced to see that the gaieties and splendors of Washington had dispelled the charm of Henry's power, and prepared the mind of Gertrude to set the due, (that is, a supreme value,) on those sources of happiness which wealth alone can secure.

So true it is,

"That the cheek may be dressed in a warm sunny smile,
Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."

O the horrible collapse that follows such excitement! He who has felt it, and he alone, can appreciate the feelings of Gertrude, when at last she found herself alone in the silent darkness of her own chamber. How grateful, yet how horrible was that solitude! I know not, *she* knew not, whether she slept. But the dawn of day found her watching the first glimmerings of its light, and as soon as she could see to write, she seized a pen and wrote the following note.

"Is it possible you are so near me and yet not with me? O come to me, my —— brother, and let your words dispel the frightful dreams that have filled my mind, sleeping and waking, for the last month. *Ever—EVER* your own, G."

I am afraid that those female readers whose approbation I most desire, may feel somewhat scandalized at the undissembled tenderness of this note, addressed to one by whom the writer had been neglected, by whom, perhaps, her love was scorned. I should be the last to complain of any fastidious criticism, prompted by that respect which every right-minded woman feels for the dignity of her sex. But even such will, I hope, pardon poor Gertrude when they reflect, that her intercourse with Henry had ceased almost in the same moment in which she discovered the secret of her own heart. She had not had time to adapt her manners to the new sentiment so recently developed, and the new relation but just established. To any thing like reserve in her intercourse with her "brother," she had been an utter stranger; and the tone of this note was but an expression of the long-established habit of her mind. They had had their little bickerings and their moments of coldness, as all children must, and these were adjusted and reconciled not by explanations, but by throwing themselves into each other's arms. How often had they done this, and how natural to poor Gertrude to feel as if it were impossible that any thing could happen to render a more cold and formal proceeding necessary. And was she not right in this? Did not the instincts of her heart inform her truly that Henry could not be base, and therefore could not be faithless? How many a broken heart would have escaped its trial, and wretchedness, if the mere conventionalities of courtship had not been permitted to pre-

vent those timely explanations which both parties were burning to make!

This note being written, directed and sealed, poor Gertrude threw herself on the bed, and awaited the entrance of her chamber-maid. It was immediately committed to her with instructions to take it to the bar-room of the hotel and request that it might be delivered according to the address. The bar-keeper, who had been in attendance the night before, had gone to rest, and his place was occupied by another who knew nothing of Henry's departure. He was in act to ring for a servant to take the letter to his room when a young man entered, to whom the bar-keeper immediately handed it, uttering a few words which the girl did not hear, but the tone and manner of which convinced her that he was the person to whom the letter was addressed. He took it with a careless air, and turning immediately walked away, looking at the superscription, and, as it seemed to the girl, reading the letter. On her return, being questioned by Gertrude, she gave such an account of the matter as made it impossible to doubt that Henry had already read her note, and would be with her as soon the earliest hour for visiting should arrive. With this idea in her mind she resolved, if possible, to pass the interval in sleep, and, for the first time, since she lay down, she did sleep deeply and calmly. Phœbe, the chamber-maid, watched by her, but at the same time made the most of her opportunity to gaze through the blinds at whatever might be passing in the street. Presently a horse was brought to the door, and the young man to whom the letter had been delivered came out, mounted him and rode swiftly away. Phœbe was sure of his identity, though the circumstance scarcely attracted her notice.

Gertrude slept long; the sun was high in the heavens, and the hour for familiar morning visitors was come before she awoke. She looked at her watch and started as if to leave her bed. "Has any one called Phœbe?"

"I believe not ma'am. I have not heard the bell."

"Step to the drawing-room, and bring me all the cards you find there."

She left the room, while Gertrude, sick with impatience and doubt, again sunk on her pillow. When Phœbe returned, she held out her hand in silence for the cards, and the girl then observed that it trembled, and that her cheek was deadly pale. With affected carelessness she ran her eye over the names, but Henry's was not there. One or two had called, but he was not of the number. There was an expression of disappointment not to be mistaken, in the manner in which she turned her face to the pillow, and threw up her arm over her head. Phœbe good naturedly sought to console her. "It's most too early, Miss Gertrude, for any of your acquaintances to call this morning, being they were

all up so late last night; unless it be the young gentleman you sent the letter to, and he is gone long ago."

The attitude in which Gertrude lay, the sleeve of her gown hiding nearly her whole face, made it impossible for Phœbe to see any thing of the expression of her countenance at this announcement. We read of the fortitude of the Indian warrior under his tortures, and of the resolute silence of the Spartan boy when the fox was gnawing at his vitals, and *men* of high courage and of strong nerves avow their astonishment at such things. How many *women* are there, who, remembering what they have borne, and enduring what they have to bear, see no cause of wonder in this! Gertrude uttered no cry,—she moved not, and her suffering was not of that quality that finds a vent in tears. Stunned—overwhelmed—crushed by intelligence that, in a moment, destroyed all hope; that left no doubt of Henry's base desertion; that showed her to herself the object of his insulting scorn, perhaps of derision and exposure to the companions to whom he might display her artless and impassioned note; with all this passing in a moment through her thoughts, she had presence of mind enough to preserve her position, and bear, in dumb agony the tortures of that cruel moment. Her continued silence at length attracted Phœbe's attention, who saw, not without alarm, that her lips were bloodless, and that there was around the mouth the livid paleness of disease. "I'm 'fraid you aint well, Miss Gertrude," said the kind-hearted girl. "May be you'd better try to go to sleep again. I'll just go out, if you please ma'am, and if you want me before I can get back, please to ring the bell." Saying this she relieved the poor sufferer of her presence.

It may be as well, before closing this chapter, to explain Phœbe's mistake. The gentleman to whom Gertrude's note was handed was the same who had been seen to arrive with Henry the day before. Being friends and travelling together, the same room had been appointed for their lodging, but they had seen nothing of each other since they had changed their dresses on their arrival. The reader knows what became of Henry. The other had spent the night with a friend, and returned to the hotel at that early hour to continue his journey, not doubting that he should find his friend in his room. In passing through the bar-room he was recognized as the travelling companion of Henry, and the letter was handed to him, with the request that he would take it to the chamber. Learning that Henry had gone to Baltimore, and being on the way there himself, he chose to retain the letter until they should meet, and therefore took it with him.

CHAPTER XXII.

On leaving Gertrude, Phœbe reported to Mrs. Austin that her young mistress appeared somewhat

indisposed and was inclined to sleep. She was therefore not disturbed until the day was far advanced, and she was found by her mother in a high fever. Nothing in her appearance gave any indication of the cause. She would have given the world for the luxury of a tear, but her eyes were dry and bore no trace of weeping; and the general expression of distress was readily attributed to the manifest violence of the disease. Her illness was indeed alarming. Day after day, and night after night, did Mrs. Austin watch by her suffering child, without at all suspecting that she was herself the cause of all she suffered. As little did Gertrude imagine that to the officious meddling of that tender mother, she owed the affliction that had blighted all her hopes and brought her to the very mouth of the grave. In this calamity, she saw no hand but that of Henry, while in her who watched beside her bed, she recognized one whose uniform and unwearied tenderness she had requited by disregarding her wishes in the matter nearest her heart.

Disease that crushes the powers of life and extinguishes all capacity for pleasurable sensation, has an effect little understood by those who have had no experience of it. When every object is insipid or distasteful, and every faculty of enjoyment suspended, there is nothing to awaken desire. The deep and sincere, though often short-lived repentance of the sick-bed, which sneerers attribute to the fear of death, has its rise in this state of feeling. Indifferent to every thing, and incapable of conceiving how he can ever be otherwise, the sufferer surrenders himself unreservedly to the will of his Maker, and the wishes of his friends. In such a condition self-love spends all its force on the desire to escape from pain. For any other object selfishness is impossible, and whatever resolutions are then formed, whatever purposes are entertained, are at least free from this base and grovelling feeling. The most cherished hope is surrendered with the same indifference with which even the sick glutton gives up to another the food he loathes.

While Gertrude lay in this alarming condition, Harlston never failed in his daily visits, that he might learn from the lips of Mrs. Pendarvis or of Mrs. Austin herself, the particulars of her case. Besides this, notes and messages innumerable were sent at all hours, and when the disease was in its crisis he could not tear himself from the house. All this was duly reported to Gertrude, and painfully, yet gratefully contrasted in her mind, with the apparent baseness of the innocent and unconscious cause of all her sufferings.

Henry, meantime, pursued his journey to New-York, where he found no difficulty in accomplishing his errand. The rapidity of his progress, the crowd of strangers by whom he was surrounded in the coach, and the importance of the business in which he was engaged, all aided him to gain the mastery over his feelings, and to recover the full

command of his faculties. It is one of the blessings of the unselfish, that the interest they take in the well being of others is ever at hand to save them from the wretchedness of despair, even when for themselves they have nothing to hope. But when he who lives only for himself slips and tumbles from the pinnacle on which he had thought himself securely established, what is there to break his fall? Henry was not of this latter class. In the full spirit of his romantic vow, which he had no disposition to violate, he at once surrendered all hope of connubial bliss. But what then? Was there no other source of enjoyment? Was there not his father to whom he owed every thing, and to whom he saw the opportunity of rendering the most valuable and essential service? Was there not his country; and above all, was there not Gertrude herself, whom it might one day be his fortune to serve in spite of herself? Musing on these things, his mind recovered its strength and elasticity. A mighty change indeed came over him, but it was a change by which the strong points of his character were more fully developed. Sad, but not dejected—grave, but not gloomy, all that there might have been of frivolity in the temper of his mind disappeared for ever, giving place to the wondrous energy that characterizes those, “who, in the midst of despair, perform the tasks of hope.”

Returning to Baltimore, where he had left his horse, he pursued his journey from thence on horseback. For a short distance his homeward road lay in the direction of Washington. As he approached the point at which he was to leave the road to the metropolis, new thoughts occurred to him. Having encountered no obstacle in his business, his diligence had procured him a day to spare. He might spend that day in Washington. He might at least satisfy himself that there was no mistake in the view he had taken of Gertrude's conduct—and, *perhaps*, it was a faint possibility—but might he not possibly find that he had been deceived by appearances, and that she was still true to her first love? This idea was too captivating to be at once dismissed, and he rode on toward Washington, still ruminating on it, till the point at which he should have turned to the right was several miles behind him. Coming at length to the last of the little bye-roads by which he might again throw himself into that which he had left, he reined up his horse—reflected, debated with himself, and at last, with a sudden effort, discarding all hope from his mind, he turned resolutely into the homeward road. This lead over much broken ground, and, like all the bye-roads of the Southern States, was in wretched condition; and he moved on slowly, partly to consult the comfort of his favorite horse, and partly from the influence of the sad thoughts that occupied his mind.

He had just ascended a steep and rugged hill, hardly passable for wheel-carriages, without the

most careful driving, when his attention was arrested by a loud rattling and a rumbling noise, followed by a cry of alarm. Looking up, he saw a coach advancing to meet him, drawn by two fiery and frightened horses at full speed. The driver sat upon the box transfixed with terror, and while he called to Henry to stop the horses, explained the extremity of his danger by holding up his hands so as to show that he had lost the reins and was at the mercy of the horses. Henry's resolution was instantly taken. To permit them to pass him and rush down the hill at full speed would be to give up all in the carriage to instant destruction.

At the spot where he was, the road was tolerably smooth, and separated by a narrow stripe of smooth ground from a strong worm-fence. He planted himself near the middle of the road toward the side farthest to the fence, and as the horses approached, endeavored, by shouting and waving his umbrella, to stop them or turn them aside. In the last he succeeded. They did turn as if intending to pass between him and the fence, and at the moment he became aware of a female figure leaning from the window, and, with outstretched arms, imploring his assistance. The horse he rode was large, powerful, high-spirited and under perfect command. Dashing the spur into his flank, Henry charged against the counter of the nearest horse, with a force that nearly upset him, and turned the heads of both horses directly toward the fence. At the same moment, to prevent them from recovering the road, he seized the bit by the check, and with the whole strength of his arm and weight of his own horse, bore the other toward the fence. The effort was decisive. The horses rushing on with unchecked speed, were brought up by the fence, and the pole, thrust through it, was so entangled as to give the coachman, who had been dismounted by the shock, time to cut the traces. The lady, the only person in the carriage, escaped with a slight bruise, and Henry was the only sufferer. Bending over his horse's neck, at the moment of the concussion, he was thrown violently against the fence, and lay on the ground without sense or motion.

When restored to consciousness, he found himself lying on a couch in a neatly furnished room surrounded by persons, who seemed busied about his person. His attention was particularly arrested by the form and countenance of a beautiful young woman, who, with dishevelled hair, and a disordered dress, was bending over him, and watching the signs of returning animation with an expression of eager but anxious hope. He would have spoken, but the power of speech was not yet restored. He would have moved, but was restrained by a sense of pain shooting through his body and more than one limb. He stilled himself, and calm, though bewildered, looked on at what was done. Of this he was informed by more than one sense, for the manipula-

tions to which he was subjected, had been so painful, as to awaken his consciousness in the first instance. When all was over, he found himself swathed in bandages, and, at length, ascertained that, in addition to the stunning blow that had stretched him, insensible, and to all appearance dead, upon the ground, and to numerous contusions on various parts, he had sustained a compound fracture of one of his legs. In this situation he was left to himself, under the influence of a composing draught, which procured him not only exemption from present suffering, but also that deep repose to which he had long been a stranger, and which the fatigues of his journey, and the agitation of his mind made necessary.

When he awoke, the night was far advanced. Immediately he heard a light step moving hastily across the floor; a servant, yawning and stretching, as in the act of arousing himself from sleep, approached to ask his wishes; and in the same moment he caught a glimpse of a female figure gliding out of the room. As soon as he became fully aware of his situation, he remembered the object of his journey to and from New York—enquired for his valice, found that all was safe, and, on learning the day of the week, ascertained that he had lost but one day, and that there was still time to reach home before the day appointed for the sale. But he was conscious that it was impossible for him to move, and he therefore intimated to the attendant his wish to engage the services of one worthy to be entrusted with a matter of high importance.

"I cannot say, sir," was the answer to his enquiry," as I know of any one that will do; but I dare say Miss Laura, or the old Lady can tell you."

"I am afraid it's too late to enquire of either of them; but I would wish the messenger to set out by day-light, as there is no time to be lost. What's the hour?"

"It's past two o'clock, sir, and the old Lady has gone to bed long ago. But Miss Laura just went out of the room, sir, though she would be mad with me if she knew I had told you she was here."

"Perhaps she is still up, and would be so kind as to let me speak to her for a few minutes."

On the word the servant left the room and presently returned, followed by the same lady whom Henry had observed in the morning. Her dress, though simple, was now arranged with studious neatness, and her whole air and manner spoke the lady of elegance and refinement.

"I am ashamed," said Henry, "to add any thing to the trouble which I am sensible I must have given to those to whose kindness I owe so much, but my situation leaves me no choice. I beg, then, to know if I can procure a trusty and intelligent messenger to go for me as far as Bloomingdale?"

"Without doubt. Our overseer is just the per-

son you want, and he can set out immediately. As to trouble," added the young lady, while her voice faltered, and tears sprang to her beautiful eyes, "I beg you will not give that name to any thing we can do for one to whom my mother owes the life of her only daughter."

These words brought to Henry's mind an idea of what had happened, more distinct than the confused images which had been floating through his brain. The affair had been so sudden, that he was hardly conscious of any thing more than his actual condition, without well knowing how he had fallen into it. But he knew enough to feel, that any thing more in the style of apology could only seem meant to invite acknowledgments. Hence, plainly and simply, he stated his wish to have some one to take a letter and a large sum of money to his father. But who was to write the letter? The question was anticipated by the young lady, to whom, at her suggestion, he dictated all that it was necessary to say of the accident which detained him. He could not help being struck with the grace, with which she held her pen, and yet more with the feminine beauty of her hand-writing, when the letter was handed to him. While he read it over, she gazed intently on his pale, but still handsome and manly countenance, and, as he returned it, he saw that her eyes were full, and her lip quivering with emotion. She held it a moment, looking earnestly at him, and then exclaimed, in a broken voice, "I cannot *spea*k what my heart is bursting to say. May I add a postscript? It may be a relief to me."

The permission was given, and as she wrote, the pen flew over the paper, and the tears fell free and fast upon her hand. She had been right. She found relief: and all agitation was at an end, when she finished her task by addressing the letter, according to Henry's direction, to "Dr. Henry Austin, at the Grove near Bloomingdale."

Yet, in the simple annunciation of this name, there was something which awakened a new emotion, in which surprise and curiosity predominated. That the Doctor Austin, to whom she had just been pouring out her feelings, was the same she had seen in Washington, Miss Bernard, (for it was no other,) could not doubt; and the words, "my dear Father," with which the letter commenced, conveyed the first intimation that he had a son.

Here was abundant matter for wonder and conjecture. How had it happened, that, neither from Dr. Austin, his wife, or Gertrude, had she ever heard the name of this son? Was it by accident or design, that the very existence of such a person should seem unknown in Washington? Yet she had seen enough to think that he was one of whom his friends would speak with pride and pleasure. With her characteristic quickness Miss Bernard passed these thoughts through her mind. Then came the recollection of the clandestine correspon-

dence, intercepted through her instrumentality. Instantly she recollected the seal to the letter, which had strongly arrested her attention. She hastened from the room, returned with a bit of wax, and borrowing Henry's seal, applied it. The impression appeared to be the very same, and the whole truth at once flashed upon her mind.

What were the sleeping or waking thoughts that accompanied her to her pillow may be seen hereafter.

[To be continued.]
