



EDITED BY MRS. LOUDON, ASSISTED BY THE MOST EMINENT WRITERS AND ARTISTS.

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HELEN FAIRFAX.

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY MRS. JAMES WHITTLE.

SURELY the interest of the romance of fiction can never excel that of real life: seldom indeed does it approach it in depth of pathos, or in tenderness of sentiment. The romances which are found in the sequestered walks of daily life, could they be truthfully recorded, would startle many a worn-out sentimentalist, by their simple unaffected portraiture of human sorrow; and the heart, satiated with tales of feigned woe, might respond in its inmost chords to the noble deeds of life's true heroes.

In a remote village in the north of England dwelt a poor curate, whose slender income had been no hinderance to his marrying in early life. No lessons yet inculcated have taught Love not to nestle in hearts where prudence should forbid its entrance; men will love and women will listen, even though poverty lift its warning finger and tell of hardships to come. Born to no wealth but that which lies buried in the depths of a pure and noble soul, Edmund Fairfax had won honours at college, by his distinguished talents, and life in those youthful days promised a bright career to his ardent spirit; he saw no limits to his success, as he felt none to his aspirations; all seemed to lie within the grasp of his intellect, and he had yet to learn that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." The Church had been the profession of his early choice, and he vainly believed that the earnest spirit in which he regarded the duties of his holy office, and the zeal with which he devoted himself to their discharge, would ensure him a position, and satisfy the moderate ambition of his nature. He had been the favourite of his tutor at Cambridge, by whose influence he was early appointed to a curacy in Westmoreland, and his speedy good fortune tended to increase his security of ultimate success. By this appointment he felt himself justified in asking her whom he loved from his boyhood to share his humble home. Mary Horsmann was not deaf to his voice: their attachment had sprung up at that season when the heart asks no questions of the future,—the present suffices it, to love and to be loved seems all that the wisest can desire; she heard his proposal with a thrill of happiness, and placing her hand in his, said, "I am yours, Edmund, as I have ever been; I cannot recal the hour when I did not love you; life will be happiness when shared with you; let joy or sorrow come, all will be welcome while you are by my side." Were these mere words? Time proved them truths. Care and trouble came, and sorrow too; children grew up around them, and the income that had sufficed for the wants of this simple loving couple failed to supply comforts to the increasing circle. Edmund found his hopes of preferment decline; forgotten by those who had admired and flattered his talents, his prospects grew daily less and

less cheering; his heart smote him when he looked at his wife and children, and felt that his imprudence had subjected them to the evils of poverty. Mary's face grew pale and thin, but her eye never lost its brightness, her heart never bowed before the troubles of her daily lot; when, wearied with household cares, she for a moment gave way to anxious fears, one glance at her husband's face sent gladness to her heart, and all was well with her.

The children of these parents were such as might be expected—the same sweet melody in many variations. The future of these dear children occupied their parents' most anxious thoughts; the fatigues of the day ended, they would sit over the dying embers of their fire, meditating on the means within their power of helping their sons and daughters to establish themselves respectably in the world, and often did their hearts sink at the cheerless prospect before them; yet did their faith in God never desert them, in their darkest moments they faltered not. "He who careth for the sparrows, who numbereth the hairs of our head, will not forsake these little ones. His will be done." Thus comforting each other, they retired to rest in peace and sleep.

The heroine of our tale is one of this simple and delightful family. Helen was the eldest of six children, the brightest flower that bloomed in that sweet Eden, the pride and darling of the neighbourhood—of rare loveliness: a pure soul, a warm heart, and a clear intellect gave a stamp of rare beauty to her features, and cold would have been the heart that denied the homage of admiration and love to Helen Fairfax. Is it a good or an evil spirit that waits on the birth of such rare beings, dooming them to troubles, to sorrows, to conquests, that more earthly natures dream not of? Were earth our final resting-place, we might name the spirit that subjects such natures to suffering evil: but earth is not our all; there is a better world beyond, and to that world we can alone aspire through patient endurance of present trials.

Edmund Fairfax's parish was situated in the most beautiful part of Westmoreland, and was the resort of travellers drawn thither by the beauty of the lake-scenery in the vicinity. Some families, tempted not only by the charms of nature but by the promise of society in the neighbourhood, fixed their residence near W. . . . during the winter. Edmund Fairfax was sought by all; his profession rendered him a welcome guest in every family, and his individual character won the respect and love of every one; nor were his wife and family scarcely less valued, for rarely are such companions as Westmere Parsonage afforded found in scenes so secluded and remote. Amongst these strangers was one family who remained from year to year;—with health and station to have made the gay world their natural sphere, they preferred their lonely cottage by Windermere to the allurements of a London life;—surrounded by their children, with a fine library at their command, neither Lady Ainslie nor her husband needed more: three beautiful girls were the objects of their unwearied love and care; and all the advantages that affection, guided by good sense and judgment, could secure,

with wealth to aid, were lavished on these daughters. A governess resided in the house, whose rare mental endowments and accomplishments were equalled by her sterling virtues and moral graces. Such friends were a priceless acquisition to the Fairfax family; congenial in pursuits, and with equally simple tastes, though fortune had so differently endowed them with the goods of this world, they became true friends.

Helen was the especial favourite of all, and she was invited by Lady Ainslie to join her young companions in their studies, and to take advantage of Mrs. Charmion's instructions. Days and months flew on; Helen was a child no longer; her nature had expanded to full beauty; her gay young spirit had been awakened to earnest thought, by the difficulties with which her parents had to struggle; often had she meditated, in the silence of her own heart, how she could best assist them; it was not enough to help her mother in her household duties, to promote the comfort of those around her, to minister like a spirit of love to her father, and watch her mother's face to forestall every wish. All this she did; but Helen felt within her a power beyond that which these daily duties needed; she longed to labour with her head and hands to provide for the old age of those who had so carefully tended her childhood. The idea of quitting her home had long been present to her mind; at first the thought was overpowering to her, but her self-denying heart had struggled successfully against the temptation to remain in her beloved home; her resolution was taken, and she now sought from Lady Ainslie the help she needed to carry out her design. This kind and truly wise friend approved her object; she saw in Helen the force of character, patience, and fortitude necessary to carry her through the difficulties of the path she sought to follow, but feared that her youth, beauty, and inexperience would throw temptations and trials in her way, which her pure and ardent spirit could little comprehend. These difficulties she placed before her, but Helen feared not; strong in the purity of her own soul and the principles she had from childhood imbibed from her parents' lips, she steadily, and somewhat indignantly, resisted the reasoning of her friend, and persisted in her desire to become a governess, in the hope of providing for her parents. Helen's wish was to travel; foreign scenes had a powerful attraction for her lively imagination, and when Lady Ainslie told her that a friend of hers, married to a Russian nobleman, was then in England, and desirous of finding an English governess willing to return with her to Russia, Helen's heart beat high with hope, that she might, through Lady Ainslie's influence, obtain the situation. When the moment came for her to communicate her resolution to her parents, Helen's courage was severely tried; the proposal was received with dismay, and met with determined opposition from her family, but it was strongly supported by Lady Ainslie, and, touched by the noble motives of her conduct, her parents at length yielded to her eloquent appeal, and withdrew their prohibition to the plan. The situation was obtained through Lady Ainslie's warm recommendation, and Helen quitted her beloved home for ever.

In the Princess Soltikoff, Helen found a kind and maternal friend, and when time had softened the first grief of separation from her home there was much in her new life to charm and interest her. She was treated like an elder daughter by the Princess, and her pupils were fine promising creatures, who well repaid her care: Helen found a peace and happiness in her present occupation, which those only enjoy, who earn them by patient self-denial. From her ample salary she sent to her parents sums of money which assisted them in the education of their sons and daughters; through her means anxiety and poverty were banished from Westmere. Her highest wishes were attained; her act of self-sacrifice had brought an abundant harvest, and though she sometimes longed to see once more the happy home she thus gladdened by her exertions, yet she knew how much they were still required, and how necessary she herself was to the family with whom she lived: to these friends she was bound by many ties of gratitude and affection, and she felt every year more difficulty in breaking the gentle bonds that detained her in Russia.

The family of Prince Soltikoff consisted of two daughters and a son; the latter was older than his sisters by several years, and had been travelling with his tutor since Helen had been a resident in the family; his return was now anticipated with great joy by all. Ladislaus was the darling of his

parents, beloved by all who knew him, the promising heir of an ancient and noble family who had early distinguished themselves in Russian history. Fortune had smiled upon the youthful Ladislaus, his life had flowed in one smooth uninterrupted course; with wealth at his command, he had never forgotten the claims of those beneath him; generous, kind, considerate, he was as good as he was great, and formed a bright exception to the general character of his youthful countrymen. Travel had enriched a naturally fine intellect, and, far in advance of his country's age, Ladislaus stood alone in all that dignifies a man. Well might his mother's heart beat high with joy as she once more clasped him to her bosom! Well might his father's cheek flush with proud delight as he gazed upon his manly form, and read high chivalric virtues in his noble countenance. His return was the signal for fêtes and festivals. St. Petersburg rang with praises of Ladislaus Soltikoff, and Helen shared with reflected pleasure the universal joy.

Time rolled on, the fêtes were ended, summer was come, and the Soltikoff family had quitted St. Petersburg for their beautiful castle on the banks of the Neva; here something of English domestic life was to be found, and pleasant conversation, mingled with mirth and gaiety, gave wings to the short but lovely summer months. Helen made one in all their pleasures; now floating in a galley on the Neva, now wandering far into the deep woods with books and work, they spent the hours in free unfettered converse. Then Ladislaus would tell of his travels, sing the national songs he had learned in his wanderings, or, at the entreaty of the party, Helen warbled the sweet melodies of Ireland and Scotland. Graver themes, too, occupied their time, literature and art alternating in their conversations with discussions on morals and religion: all that concerned the vital interests of mankind had interest for Ladislaus, and in Helen's clear intellect and pure moral feeling he found companionship in all his highest aspirations. Such hours were fraught with true delight, but danger lurked in them too. Could Ladislaus behold such a woman as Helen, daily and hourly share with her the purest pleasures of life, watch her as she gracefully and unconsciously ministered to the happiness of all around her—could he see her and not love? Such was not his nature; woman had as yet attracted his fancy only, he had admired and dreamed he loved, but never before had he recognised woman's power, never trembled as he felt that life could have no charm unless shared with the one he loved. He knew the spell was on him now—he lived but in Helen's presence; the world seemed brighter, the sun shed a more glorious effulgence, the moon a softer radiance, when she was by his side: he loved, and gloried in his love.

But Helen—what did she feel? For many months she had closed her eyes in fear; she trembled when she felt his eye fixed upon her: she dared not question her own heart; all there was chaos: she knew that she could never be his wife, and perhaps the strength of this conviction had lulled asleep the dragon prudence. Be it as it may, the dream continued. At length one day, when the rest of the party had wandered from them, and they were alone with nature in one of those dark magnificent forests which civilised lands possess not, Ladislaus, taking her hand, said,—“Let us rest here, Helen; here let me learn my fate; I can no longer live near you and keep the secret of my heart; tell me, has earth still hope for me? Helen, that earth is a desert without your love.”

Poor Helen, faint and sick with overwhelming emotion, buried her face in her hands, and for a few moments remained silent; but as the habit of indulging no feeling unsanctioned by duty had by long practice become second nature to her, she raised her head, and with a scarcely trembling voice answered,—“Do not tempt me to forget my duty; I cannot, dare not listen to you. Leave me, I implore you; for your sake, for mine, banish this feeling from your mind.”

“Oh, Helen! can you indeed believe it possible I should obey you—are feelings like mine thus easily to be uprooted and destroyed? Hear me, Helen; I have well considered the step I am taking: wealth, rank, what are they compared to the riches and nobility of the soul!—these you possess, and what have I to offer in return?” At these words Helen involuntarily raised her eyes to his. It was for a moment, but in that glance a new world seemed revealed to them both. Bursting into tears she hastily turned away, and walked rapidly towards the house, signing to him not to follow her. Ladislaus remained rooted to the spot. Alone

in her room, Helen sank on the floor; long did she strive, in agony of soul, to still the throbbing of her heart; at length, raising herself, she said,—"I dare not, must not, see him again; another flame from those eyes and all my strength would vanish. Great God, is thy child indeed so weak that she must fall before her first temptation. Forsake me not! in this dread hour be near me; and, Father! 'speak peace to him.'" She rose calm and strengthened; her resolution was taken, and unfalteringly did this noble girl pursue the path she then marked out for herself: she steadily fulfilled her daily duties, entreating permission to live for a time in the retirement of her own apartments, pleading as a cause the necessity of study, in order to keep pace with her pupils' rapid progress. Courageously adhering to her resolution, she resisted every effort made by the Princess and her daughters to induce her to join the family circle; the entreaties of her pupils were as earnest as they were vain. Perhaps their mother saw the struggle, for she soon ceased to urge her wishes, while her love and care for Helen seemed to redouble. All that could enliven and cheer her solitude was placed in silence within her reach, and a spirit of gentle loving-kindness surrounded her steps. Every attempt made by her lover to see her was firmly resisted; she would receive no letters, and maintained the strictest seclusion, lest chance should bring about a meeting. Weeks dragged heavily along, and Helen, with fear and dread, asked her own heart how it would end.

(To be continued.)

THE HEADSMAN'S SON.*

A TALE BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

[Translated by J. E. Taylor.]

II.

AFTER Franz, overpowered by sleep, had so unexpectedly interrupted the conversation of the two lovers, Gerhard did not repeat his farewell; he wished to spare Lina the pain, yet the parting seemed irrevocable, for he had firmly resolved never to allow the noble-hearted maiden to share his ignominious lot. He hastened with faltering but quick steps through the streets which led from the Vliersteg to his home, and was standing, ere he was aware, near the ramparts, at a door, the red streak on which denoted that the Headsman of Antwerp lived there. He knocked: a lad opened the door, and Gerhard asked, "Jan, has the magistrate been here?"

"Yes, sir, he has just gone away. Your father bade me tell you that he is expecting you."

Gerhard hastened up-stairs, and stepped into the room in which his father lay ill in bed. The old man was pale and emaciated: the furrows upon his cheeks, and his sunken, glassy eyes betokened the effects of the anguish which had gnawed his heart. Consumptive ailments waste the body and leave at last only skin and bone, yet the mind retains possession of all its powers; nay, the more the body wastes, the stronger does the spirit seem to grow. Thus was it with the old Headsman; although ill and feeble in limb, his mind was very clear, as in the days of his youth. When Gerhard entered the chamber, the old man fixed his eyes upon him, but without speaking.

Gerhard seated himself at his father's head: then he put his hand under the counterpane to feel for the old man's withered hand: he pressed it convulsively in his, and inquired, in a trembling voice, "The Burgomaster was here, father: tell me, what is my fate? must I be a Headsman?"

"My son," answered the old man, sorrowfully, "I have tried every means with the magistrate, but in vain; he will not allow the lad to take your place. Neither money nor prayers will move him; you must be a Headsman, my poor boy!"

The unhappy youth had, indeed, expected this sentence, yet its announcement struck him to the soul; an icy shudder ran through his whole frame. "To-morrow, then, my last hope must perish!" he exclaimed, despairingly: "to-morrow I must become a paid murderer!"

* Continued from page 357, and concluded.

"Son," said the old man, deeply moved, "prepare yourself for a life of torment. Every head you strike off will be like a stone falling on your heart, and when the cup of your anguish is filled to overflowing, then you will die as I now . . . but, my son, there is a Judge over us all, who recompenses our sufferings."

"My God! is there no way left, no means untried, no hope more,—must it then be so?" cried Gerhard, with increasing anguish.

"Son," said the old man, turning his eyes to the table, "take the book which lies there,—the magistrate left it,—and read the open page."

Gerhard read; his cheeks glowed with rage, and he flung the book on the ground. "Accursed law, that doomed me at my mother's breast to infamy and murder! O men, men! in my very cradle ye cried out to me, 'That child is none of us,—'tis a Headsman's first-born son! Shame rest on him! May he creep through life like a poisonous serpent, shunned and hated!' And there I lay, and laughed at the bright sun, and played with my little Headsman's hands."

In vain the old man endeavoured to pacify Gerhard. At last, hoping that sleep might tranquillise him, he said, "I have spoken too much—my breathing grows hard—I will give you but one other piece of advice. When you mount the scaffold to-morrow, look not upon the people: the crowd of eyes, all straining with bloodthirsty curiosity, would make you tremble and perplex you. Imagine that you are alone with the poor sinner; and measure your stroke with a steady eye; for if you miss, and fail to strike off the head at one blow, a thousand voices will be raised against you, and I may perhaps never see you more. I will meanwhile pray God, in his mercy, to give you strength, to execute a work which cannot but be hateful in his sight. Go then, my son, and take my blessing with you!"

Gerhard would not have ended, but the old man wiped away a tear from his eyes, and this at once stopped his son and silenced his complaint. He took his leave, saying, with deep emotion, "Good night, dear father; sleep well!"

When Gerhard entered his own room, he bolted the door, sat down at a little table, and rested his head on his open hands: his eyes closed not—but gazed fixedly. The next morning the sun found him still seated there.

III.

It was a glorious spring morning: the sun shone bright and warm from out the blue heavens, across which, here and there, a little grey cloud skimmed lightly. The pure and balmy air drew the good citizens of Antwerp from their houses. Every street was alive with holiday-folks, all dressed out in their gayest Sunday clothes: the children played about in the open air, and an innumerable quantity of little flies, which had covered the fields around the city, now came like winged messengers to say that nature had unfolded her bosom anew.

As ten o'clock drew nigh, the whole multitude had collected before the Church of Our Lady, to see the procession which was just then coming out. As the splendid standards and banners were carried past, all uncovered their heads; but when at last the Host approached, every one fell on his knees upon the stones of the market-place, in silent prayer. The members of the six Guilds followed immediately after the procession. When these had passed, the movement in the crowd became more violent, and there was a general cry, "The procession! the procession!"

It was the procession—preceded by an immense fish, swimming in painted water, which bore a cupid upon his back, and plenty of real water in his belly. From time to time it spouted the latter in large quantities from his nostrils, and woe to any one who stood within its reach! After the whale came the giant Drion-Antigon, who quietly peeped into all the garret-windows as he passed; then the Dolphins, Neptune and his car, Parnassus with the Muses, Fortuna, and a great many others.

Whilst the crowd were hailing each figure as it passed with loud shouts and huzzas, the noise and clamour seeming to have no end, poor Gerhard was sitting with his arms folded at the bed-side of his father. He was no longer the youth, with those handsome black locks which had given such a manly expression to his pale features; a single night had wholly changed his look. His face was furrowed with care, and his hair was snow-white. Agony had worked so fearfully upon his nerves, that the slightest sound made him start and



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SUDDENLY they told her Ladislaus was gone without taking leave of any one, or revealing, even to his mother, the reason of his departure.

Relieved by his absence, Helen yet trembled to think to what imprudence hopelessness might drive him; she knew him well, and that love having once taken possession of his heart, would leave it but with life. She could not cheat herself into the belief that he would forget her; by her own true heart she judged of his, nor was she deceived. Eternal and unchangeable love! how is thy name desecrated; how often is the meteor light of passion mistaken for thy pure and holy flame; and sin and crime are veiled from the infamy they merit by the borrowed sanctity of thy divine attributes! Love and Duty are heaven-born twins; one cannot be separated from its celestial associate; part them, and Love dies, for unhallowed passion bears but the semblance of Love's majesty.

At the period of which we write, the second struggle for freedom in Poland had broken out; Ladislaus had long been in secret the friend of this oppressed nation: his heart had burned with indignation at the miseries inflicted on the wretched Poles, and with difficulty he had hitherto stifled the expression of his feelings, in obedience to prudence. He had often given utterance to the wish that he had been born a peasant in a free land, that he might have drawn his sword and spent his energies in the cause of liberty. Helen's rejection of his suit had planted another sting in his heart; he scorned rank, wealth, and the distinctions which had severed him from the woman he loved, and reckless now as to his future fate, he madly rushed into danger, the consequences of which he waited not to consider.

One night, when all the family had retired to rest, Helen sat at her desk, meditating on the wisdom of returning to England, and endeavouring to bring herself to write the letter which should seal her fate, and separate her from Ladislaus. She knew that it must be done, but who would blame the heart that lingered ere it crushed for ever the brightest hopes of life? Lost in a reverie, she did not hear a low knock at the door, but a voice calling her gently by name, startled and roused her; she opened the door, and Ladislaus entered; covered with dust, breathless with emotion, he threw himself at her feet. "Helen," he cried, "my destiny is fulfilled; I am an outcast, an exile; the soldiers are on my track; in a few hours I shall be on my way to Siberia; my career in life is ended; in gloomy solitude I shall spend the remainder of my days, yet give me the hope that your thoughts and prayers will follow me; tell me that I shall be remembered by you, though only with

pity. Helen, hear me; I no longer ask your love,—the exile dares not think of Paradise; I come to bid you a last farewell,—bid me God speed,—bid me be firm to meet my fate, and I will go forth with courage." Pale and cold as a marble statue Helen stood: could these words she heard be true, or was it all a painful dream. She listened, she gazed on him, as if to penetrate his soul, and the tide of blood rushing back upon her heart, she sank into a chair. "Ladislaus," she exclaimed, "is there no hope? Your father is powerful,—you are yourself beloved by the Emperor; you will be pardoned—fear not."

"Talk not of pardon,—my own hand has signed my death-warrant. My name stands on the list of conspirators; the papers are already before the Emperor; there is no hope for me, Helen,—none, save in Him who heareth the sighing of the captive's lonely soul!" Helen listened breathlessly; as he proceeded her face beamed with seraphic joy; for a moment she bowed her head in silence, then raising her eyes to his, and holding out her hand to him, she said, "Now I am thine! take me Ladislaus for your wife, man dares not part us now!" She fell upon his neck, and in silence were the vows of these two noble hearts ratified.

Ladislaus gazed upon her with unutterable tenderness, but gently disengaging himself from her embrace, he said, "No Helen! I were less than a man to accept such a sacrifice; I will bear with me to Siberia the memory of this moment; it will cheer my dreariest hours; but your gentle nature could never survive the hardships I must endure; enough that your love is mine; tell me once more this blessed truth, and I will go on my lonely way rejoicing."

"Ladislaus, I love you—for months I have laboured to overcome my love; dearer to me far than my own happiness was yours: I believed that your parents, that the world had claims upon you, with which an union with me would have interfered; I loved you well enough to resign you.—Now in sorrow, in exile, in disgrace, it is my privilege, my right, to stand beside you. Earth has no home for me, Ladislaus, but in your heart. I am yours, only yours, in time and in eternity, cast me not from you!"

Would it have been human to resist such pleading? Ladislaus did not try; his faith in the power of love and in Helen was such, that he no longer opposed her wishes; he felt she would be happier in a Siberian desert with him, than in earth's brightest regions without him. He clasped her to his heart. "May God in Heaven reward you according to your love, noblest and best of women!" was all that he uttered.

A few hours only were granted to them; Ladislaus sought his parents, revealed to them his danger, told them of Helen's devotion; amidst tears and anguish they received her as their daughter; blessed her for her faithful, honourable conduct, and accepted her sacrifice, for they knew her heart. As a wife Helen could claim the right of accompanying Ladislaus, and before the altar of the chapel, in solemn secrecy, their nuptials were performed. The ceremony was scarcely ended when the officers of justice appeared—their orders were to

* Continued from page 371, and concluded.

convey Ladislaus to Siberia without delay—that night they were to begin their march.

Bitter was the parting between Ladislaus and his parents, the misery was alleviated to them by the thought that he went not forth to exile alone, that faithful devoted love would henceforth share and lessen all he might be called upon to endure. Scarcely less tender than the farewell to her son was that bestowed by the Princess on her new daughter; and as Helen hung upon her neck and whispered "My parents, my beloved parents, who will tell them the fate of their child!" she pressed her with a deeper tenderness to her heart, pity for those who were unconsciously about to suffer the same bereavement as herself, mingling with her own anguish even in that hour of sorrow.

The hour came when the prisoner and his escort were to begin their melancholy journey. Helen accompanied them with unflinching step and courageous heart; he was beside her,—what could she fear?

Years passed, and all intervention on behalf of Ladislaus had proved unavailing. The conspiracy in which he had been engaged was too widely spread, its plans had been too deeply subversive of Russian policy to be forgotten or forgiven; it was darkly hinted to the unhappy parents that any further attempt to obtain pardon or even mitigation of the sentence would be regarded as implicating them in the treason of their son. The Princess, in her sorrow, remembered the griefs of others; she maintained a regular correspondence with Helen's father and mother, seeking to comfort these afflicted parents, and finding in their sympathy a balm, which nought else could impart. Every report which reached her ears concerning their children, was carefully transmitted to England, but they were few and far between, and gave but feeble comfort to those disconsolate hearts. Once, happier news reached them, that the exiles were well, that two lovely children claimed their tender care; but mingled with the joy occasioned by such an event, was the pain of knowing that these children were born to slavery and ignominy. At the end of several years, a letter from Helen arrived at Westmere by post. Great was the amazement at the sight; the well-known writing awakened a host of slumbering memories, and Mary Fairfax long held the letter in her hand, ere she could break the seal. Seated by her husband's side she at length opened it, and the hearts of these sorrowing parents ascended to Heaven in grateful praise, as they read the following words:—

"My beloved Parents!—How shall I write? what shall I say to you? My heart o'erflows as I now, after so many years, once more address you. Do you still live? will these lines, penned amidst so many varied emotions, ever meet your eyes? What have you thought of your Helen? in one moment, all ancient ties discarded for a new and alien friend! Yet who shall question the holiness of the claims which love makes upon our hearts? Not you, beloved parents, whose life has been blessed by its finest influences. Well do I know that had you been beside me in the hour when my decision was made, your blessing would have followed my choice, nor would you by word or sign have sought to keep me from the side of him who was my heart's master. Yet often has my soul pined for an assurance that your blessing rested upon my act, and in the silence of the night I have prayed that I might yet receive it. A happy chance enables me to send this letter, and I hasten to profit by what may never return. A priest of the Greek Church, a worthy excellent man, has visited us many times; on each return he has shown an increasing interest in us; and I have at length ventured to speak to him of you, and ask him to convey this letter to some post-office, whence it can safely reach you; he is forbidden to be the bearer of any written document, but he thinks the transgression of the law pardonable when enabled by it to transmit a child's greetings to her parents. This excellent Father Ivanoff has been a comfort beyond all price to us; he has brought us books, warm clothing and medicines; he has received our children into the Church of Christ. Do not be alarmed, my dearest father, that your grandchildren have been thus baptised into a different Church from yours. Oh! how in these vast solitudes, alone with the Creator, one feels the littleness of all distinctions erected by creeds between man and man. Christ's fold is ample, and he will not exclude my children because a priest of another form of faith has blessed them in his holy name.

"I wish I could give you an idea of our life: I am sure you think of our dwelling-place as wild, savage, and dreary! but far otherwise is the reality. God is here as everywhere, and He scatters innumerable blessings in our path. At first, it is true, we

found many hardships; the inclement winter frowned roughly on our early married days; but time has softened much that was then painful, and now that Ladislaus is inured to the climate, and that I no longer fear for its effect upon his life, all is happiness. Could I but make you know my husband, you would feel that where he is, there must be sunshine and joy; his love brightens our darkest days. In our children too we are indeed blest. Would that I could show you these dear ones! Edmund is already the companion of his father in his hunting excursions; he is like him in all things, what mother's heart could ask more? Our little Mary, beloved mother, is yourself in miniature; when I see her soft eyes searching mine, I think of you, and pray that our sweet child may resemble you in all ways. Gertrude, our last born, is as gay and beautiful a creature as ever drew the breath of heaven. A sun-beam gladdening our home. Do you need to ask if I am happy? Would that those who thus persecute us knew half the joy that dwells in this solitary hut! One thing I will tell you, since it will make you better understand Ladislaus' character than any praise of mine. From the moment when he accepted my vow at the altar, he has never once done me the wrong to speak of it as a sacrifice; he takes my love freely as I give it, never wounding me by an allusion to the privations of our life: he has faith in me, dearest parents, and believes me happier with him than were I Empress of Russia, or even Queen of England. Once only have I seen his bright soul darkened. I lay on a bed of sickness,—he feared my death; my little Mary was just born,—no physician, no human aid was near; then hope forsook his spirit, and he murmured against Heaven, which had doomed him to such a fate,—upbraided man as the instrument of God's wrath, and heaped reproaches upon himself for having subjected me to such a life; but the shadow passed,—God in mercy spared me to him, and never again will such thoughts visit his mind.

"To the kindness of Father Ivanoff I owe the power to write this short imperfect transcript of my full thoughts. We are denied the use of paper; I have but this small sheet, which he has given me, and it is already full. To-morrow he leaves us, and we shall be once more alone with God. Farewell, beloved parents, brothers, sisters! my heart is ever true to you; in another world we shall be reunited, and then you will know Ladislaus. Once more, farewell!

"HELEN SOLTIKOFF."

GRAPHIOLOGY;

OR, THE DELINEATION OF CHARACTER FROM HAND-WRITING.

IN human nature there exists no such thing as a real contradiction; no member of the human body is at variance with another, consequently every motion of the body, even to the movement of the hand in the operation of writing, must be modified by individual character and temperament. Upon this principle proceeds the estimate of human character by hand-writing, to which there has been at all times and in different countries a general tendency. With this view, men of acknowledged learning and sound judgment have, in various places and at different periods, been collectors of autographs, as materials for the study of these characteristic delineations. Amongst them are found Lavater, Goethe, and Von Humboldt, amid the Germans, giving their testimony to the value of these graphiological indications. Lavater, in his *Fragments of Physiognomy*, says, "How many different strokes, lines, and curves go to the formation of the simplest word, that it takes but a moment to write. Is not the difference between every hand-writing universally acknowledged? Nay, are not formal decisions pronounced in courts of justice upon the physiognomy of hand-writing, even by those who deride as absurd any inferences from the physiognomy of the whole man? Is not this to assume as the highest probability that, with some rare exceptions, every man has a hand-writing, individual, peculiar to himself, and if not wholly inimitable, at least never to be perfectly imitated without the greatest difficulty? And is this diversity, that cannot be controverted or denied, to have no connexion with the diversity of human character? It is objected, that the same individual who yet has but one and the same character will write at different times as differently as possible. To this I answer,—the same man who has but one and the same character often acts, to all appearance, at least, as differently as possible; and yet even those different actions have the one impress, the one line, the one spring. But be this as it may, the diversity in the writing of one and the