

THE EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, - - - JUNE 17, 1871.

[From the Lakeside Monthly.]
S U B S I C T I O N .

[CONTINUED.]

"It was no easy matter to find out anything about my sister, for poor folks don't have the same means of tracking that rich ones do, and all I could hear of her by letters was uncertainty and unsatisfactory. I wrote to her a good many times, but the letters did not reach her, and for years and years I was trying to have my mother get her and bring her up. But I had bad luck. Two or three long fits of sickness swallowed up all I had laid by; and once when I had enough in the bank to keep me for a year or two, and was just getting ready to start, the bank broke, and I lost every cent I had been working ten years to get together. Then I won't make my story any longer. At last, however, of trying and making inquiries everywhere, I found my sister by the miserable wretch who stole her away, and making a living for herself and her two children as best she could. But neither of those was Rainford's child. But they say, 'If a man makes his bed, he has to lie in it,' and at the door of the Refuge you took it from not quite two years afterwards."

Charlotte was rigid as marble. More than once she tried to speak, but her throat was dry and parched, and she made no sound. At last she gasped out in a broken voice:

"What profit have you of this?"

"The profit of a wicked child being the same that my sister left is this: Unknown to her seducer, she fastened a card under his clothes with the initials 'H. M. E.' on it; Richard Marsh Ellis they stood for, after her husband. I have been to the Refuge and examined the records, telling the master, however, that I had learned of a foulling left there at a certain date with that description, and she turned to it at once. As to my having changed the children, I can offer no proof but my own word. I don't know what motive I could have for changing myself with the commission of a shameful crime, except my desire to make known the truth and relieve my mind. But mark that I have seen the young man, and his father is in every line of his face. Put them side by side, and you cannot mistake the likeness."

"Where shall I find you?" said Charlotte in the same hollow tone as before.

"I wish to be alone now."

The woman gave her address.

"Shan't I send some one, as I go out, to come and wait on you?" She said.

"I don't like to leave you alone, looking like this."

Charlotte shook her head, and waved the stranger off impatiently. Alone she must be alone, or her heart would burst.

Leaving a note for her companion saying she did not feel well and would rather not be disturbed, she shut herself into her room and tried to get the meaning of what she had heard clearly into her mind. For hours she sat in a kind of despairing bewilderment, seeming to come no nearer to a solution of the difficulty than at first.

"St. Clair's son!" she said to herself in a low tone, "and Georgie's brother! I don't understand it. I must be dreaming." And she remembered her first life-dream with a feeling almost of bitterness.

"Will he want to leave me?" she thought, "and will St. Clair take him home? Have I not given up enough in my life? This is mortified to be demanded of me too? Or need I徘徊 at all?"

The sound of the dinner-bell found her still in her morning-dress. Making a hasty toilet, she descended the stairs into the room in which she had broken to her grandfather the news of her engagement twenty-two years before. She was still undecided as to what course she ought to pursue.

"Sad news to-night, Aunt Charlotte," said Robert, as he came into the room.

"What is it?" she asked, in a hasty tone, different from her usual clear, distinct voice.

The sound struck him in a moment, and he looked earnestly at her. "What is the matter?" he exclaimed. "You are not well; you look so pale!"

"I am not quite well," she said, "but it is nothing of any consequence. What is your news?"

"Georgia Rainford's taken awfully sick. I have had this morning. She's been calling daily for two or three days. She doesn't know what it is, but they're afraid of scarlet fever."

The dinner was unusually quiet, and as soon as it was over, Robert started up, saying, "I must go round and see how Georgia gets on. Rainford was very ill yesterday when I saw him this afternoon."

"I want to speak to you first, Robin," said Miss Ashley. She dared not let him leave the house without knowing what she had heard. Then taking him aside, she told him, in the gentlest speech her woman's heart could devise, of the revelation that had been made to her that day.

He bore it better than she had expected. When she told him of his non-excitement or demotion, he put his arm around her with a profound tenderness that he had never shown before, and said, "Thank God for my mother—my real mother, who took the place of the one I never knew. He has been very good to me."

Charlotte's eyes were now streaming with tears, but she had shed during the past half-hour, a few silent, moistened and comforted her with loving words.

"Don't imagine," he said, "that I shall ever love you any the less because I have found my father. I shall love you better and better, every year I live. I am only just beginning to know all you have been to me."

"It will be so hard to part with you, Robin," she said.

"You shall never part with me!" he exclaimed, warmly. "Here is where I belong and here is where I shall stay, as long as you want me. I will never leave you till I have made my fortune and found my wife and am ready to set up an establishment of my own!" he added smiling.

"I think, Robin," said Miss Ashley, with some hesitation, "that perhaps it would be best not to say anything to Mr. Rainford until his health is so ill. He is very excitable, and it may be too much for him."

"I'm not going to say a word about it," said Robert. "When you think it best to tell him you can do it yourself, and don't like to be a shabby. I'd like to get a little used to the idea before any one else knows it."

To be continued.

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