

afternoon train. Mr. and Mrs. McKee highly delighted, as we have no doubt every doting father and mother would be under similar circumstances, soon retired, leaving Howard alone in the with-drawing room. For some time after they had gone he stood at an open window, looking out upon the moonlit landscape, and pondering upon the events of the last two days. A day is a very small section of a life, and ordinarily but little is accomplished in it, yet it sometimes happens that the fortunes, or character of a life, are flexed, or turned into some new channel, by the issues of a single day. It so happened that this evening was the turning point in Howard McKee's life. One might suppose that the realization of a long cherished ideal in this completion of his college course would have elated his downcast spirit, and banished from his mind the bitter thoughts of yesterday's adversity. And perhaps this was the case while the excitement of the entertainment lasted, and while his mind was continually occupied with the practical duties before him. But this was all over with now. He had received the degree, and the honor for which he had been striving for four years. These were now things of the past, and his thoughts turned from them to the painful contemplation of the future. To-morrow he started for Europe, leaving behind, in the little village of D—, the one that he had fondly hoped might accompany him. His thoughts became more and more turbulent, as the future seemed more and more gloomy and cheerless; and we may safely infer that at this moment he would have given up his contemplated tour, his degree, his honor, his all, to have been set back six months in life, and been granted the privilege of living and enjoying anew its squandered pleasures. Pleasures whose brightness now like a meteor had passed away, leaving him in the darkness of despondency. His mental torture at length became so great that he seized his hat from a table near by and rushed out into the quiet eve-

ning air to cool his heated brain. Down along the quiet suburban street he rushed, as if seeking relief for his mind in his fleetness of foot. He passed on, by houses, and by pleasant gardens, and soon put a mile or more between himself and the outskirts of the town. At length he struck off into a by-path, leading across a sweet scented clover meadow to the river beyond. Coming to this he seated himself upon its bank, and gazed for some time into its swift-rushing water. Then he arose and began to pace up and down along its bank; listening betimes to the water's solemn gurgle, the katy-dids in the meadow, and the plaintive cry of a night-hawk on the opposite side of the river. The moonlight seemed so soft, so gentle, so holy, and the bedewed clover blossoms so sweet and fragrant, and all nature so quiet and beautiful, that Howard, pacing to and fro upon the river-bank, could not help feeling gradually their silent influences. How many a life has been saved from ruin and destruction; how many a foul crime averted, how many a despairing hope revived, by these silent influences of the natural world! For one to commit suicide on a dark and stormy night, when the elements without vie in warfare with the thoughts and feelings within, or among the dark alleys, and filthy hovels, and underground dens, of some of our larger cities, where the pure sunlight of heaven and beautiful nature are seldom seen, does not seem so strange. But for one to do this enormous deed with both eyes open to the fair world around him, would seem to show him destitute of manhood, destitute of a sense of human responsibility and divine goodness. Howard McKee's turbulent thoughts were calmed; and as he turned to retrace his steps homeward, he slowly repeated several times to himself these words of Milton, as if striving to comprehend their full import:

"Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou
 liv'st,
 Live well; how long, how short, permit to
 heaven."