

THE PURITAN LOVERS.

DRAWN out, like lingering bees, to share
 The last, sweet summer weather,
 Beneath the reddening maples walked
 Two Puritans together —

A youth and maiden, heeding not
 The woods which round them brightened,
 Just conscious of each other's thoughts,
 Half happy and half frightened.

Grave were their brows, and few their words,
 And coarse their garb and simple;
 The maiden's very cheek seemed shy
 To own its worldly dimple.

For stern the time; they dwelt with Care;
 And Fear was oft a comer;
 A sober April ushered in
 The Pilgrim's toilsome summer.

And stern their creed; they tarried here
 Mere desert-land sojourners:
 They must not dream of mirth or rest,
 God's humble lesson-learners.

The temple's sacred perfume round
 Their week-day robes was clinging;
 Their mirth was but the golden bells
 On priestly garments ringing.

But as to-day they softly talked,
 That serious youth and maiden,
 Their plainest words strange beauty wore,
 Like weeds with dew-drops laden.

The saddest theme had something sweet,
 The gravest, something tender,
 While with slow steps they wandered on,
 'Mid summer's fading splendor.

He said, "Next week the church will hold
 A day of prayer and fasting";
 And then he stopped, and bent to pick
 A white life-everlasting —

A silvery bloom, with fadeless leaves;
 He gave it to her, sighing;
 A mute confession was his glance,
 Her blush a mute replying.

“Mehetabel!” (at last he spoke),
 “My fairest one and dearest!
 One thought is ever to my heart
 The sweetest and the nearest.

“You read my soul; you know my wish;
 O, grant me its fulfilling!”
 She answered low, “If Heaven smiles,
 And if my father’s willing!”

No idle passion swayed her heart,
 This quaint New-England beauty!
 Faith was the guardian of her life;
 Obedience was a duty.

Too truthful for reserve, she stood,
 Her brown eyes earthward casting,
 And held with trembling hand the while
 Her white life-everlasting.

Her sober answer pleased the youth,—
 Frank, clear, and gravely cheerful;
 He left her at her father’s door,
 Too happy to be fearful.

She looked on high, with earnest plea,
 And Heaven seemed bright above her;
 And when she shyly spoke his name,
 Her father praised her lover.

And when, that night, she sought her couch,
 With head-board high and olden,
 Her prayer was praise, her pillow down,
 And all her dreams were golden.

And still upon her throbbing heart,
 In bloom and breath undying,
 A few life-everlasting flowers,
 Her lover’s gift, were lying.

O Venus’ myrtles, fresh and green!
 O Cupid’s blushing roses!
 Not on your classic flowers alone
 The sacred light reposes;

Though gentler care may shield your buds
 From north-winds rude and blasting,
 As dear to Love, those few, pale flowers
 Of white life-everlasting.

THE FOE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Friend Holcombe went home he found a light burning, and his wife waiting for him. She had been looking over one of those books which Edna read so much of late, — a volume Edward Rolfe had given Bishop Rose; the margins were covered with commentary on the text, and the text was William Shakespeare's. When she heard her husband in the porch, she rose and carried the volume to a shelf near the door, and then, as if she had forgotten her purpose, brought it back again. She had not forgotten; she wanted to talk about Edna with Friend, and learn his opinion of the book, and whether it was quite well to allow the girl large liberty among those plays. But when he came, looking so weary, she hastily put the volume aside.

"You must be very hungry, and how tired you are! I have tea waiting; come take something, dear, before you drop asleep."

"I shall have to get rid of what I have on my mind by sharing it with you, before I can sleep," said he, following her to the table.

"How did you find Mr. Guildersleeve? The doctor told me where you had gone." So easily, after all, the question came to her lips! Ever since the doctor left her, Delia had been thinking that question over, fearing it would be difficult to ask how the sick man was. But indeed it was to her a great matter that Guildersleeve should have sent in his extremity to her husband, — a great matter to her, because the fact would redound to the honor of the church when known. And then, his repentance, how significant!

"He is really dying, Delia, and quite broken down and penitent. I am to present his contrition to-morrow to the brethren, and ask them to receive him back."

"O Friend, is it possible!"

"It is a marvel, — if we forget that with God all things are possible."

"But you did expect it. You said, 'Moses Guildersleeve is n't dead yet!' when you heard that Father Trost had been to see him."

"There's something that weighs heavier than that on my mind, Delia. Deacon Ent loves Mary Trost." And now he had unburdened himself, had told her all.

Delia looked at her husband as if she could not comprehend what he had said.

"It is true," he said, with a heavy sigh.

"He came and told me of it himself."

"Did he do that? Thank God!"

"August was the last person I ought to have expected such a thing of, and I did not expect it; but I am sure, Delia, I am sure," he said, repeating the words he had spoken that afternoon to the young man, "with the temptation there will also be provided a way of escape."

"O, do you think so? But he told you, — that seems a hopeful sign; but, Friend, this is terrible."

So terrible did it evidently seem to his wife, that when Friend heard her voice and saw her face, he regretted that he had cast this heavy burden anywhere except upon the Lord.

"Yes," he said, unconsciously expressing more hope than he actually felt, "I am sure that with this temptation a way of escape will open."

"There is one way," said Delia; "just one, Friend, only one."

"What is it?" he asked with a brightening face and almost eager voice. It was not the first time that Delia had opened a door of deliverance for a tempted and tortured soul.

"Let him go with Mary. Advise him to go. Advise him, Friend!"

"Why, Delia! O no, I hope the Lord will show a better way than that."

"The Lord will show a way!" she