

HAWTHORNDEN.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD OCEAN VISITED, AND NEW FRIENDS FOUND.

THE month of August had come, and Rosine, never fully recovered from the spring campaign, was drooping. Dr. Hartland advised his father, who was overworked, to try sea-bathing for himself and his daughter. Accordingly a small quiet farmhouse was rented, adjoining one of the finest beaches in the country, and a place of great resort for those seeking health or pleasure. Mrs. Hartland remained in town to keep house for the Doctor, who could not leave his station during the most unhealthy season. This retirement and freedom from care gave the Colonel an opportunity for nearer and more intimate acquaintance with the daughter who was growing daily into his heart. We have said retirement, and they were retired, although in a town a little more than a mile above them, multitudes sought not a place of rest and repose, but the occasion of displaying themselves and their appointments. The snug farmhouse, ill-contrived and small, was selected by our friends for its freedom from company and its proximity to the beach, only a few barren acres separating them from the full sea. Here, with only a maid-servant, Rosine and her dear Colonel were fairly domiciled; he declaring she would be bored to death with his company, she asserting that she wanted no other society. To Rosine the sea in all its sublimity and beauty was a newly-opened volume, and she never tired of its study, gazing at the brilliant pictures, and perusing the unwritten pages with an ever new delight. Colonel Hartland gave her daily lessons in swimming, and in an incredibly short time the timid venturer, who scarcely felt secure when supported by a stout arm, would leap into the surf alone and venture further than even her teacher thought quite prudent. She soon learned the hours when she could have a quiet stroll, meeting only an occasional straggler, who, like herself, sought solitude.

From the windows she loved to watch the fashionables who at set times came to the beach and donned their hideous dresses for bathing, as well as the same fashionables when they came with their splendid turn-outs for driving. The fine horses were objects of admiration to both Rosine and her companion, and though they did not bet on the winners in the race, they would always, in true Yankee fashion, give a "guess" as to the fortunate one.

They had been in their new quarters nearly two weeks, when they were surprised one evening by the entrance of Dr. Hartland and his mother.

"We have come for the whole of to-morrow," said the Doctor, as Rosine rushed to the door to meet them, "and perhaps longer," he added. "I am driven to death, and as for mother, she can't live another day without a sight of the Colonel. I can go up town for lodgings, if you can't accommodate me."

"Of course we can," replied Rosine, "and I will see about dinner."

"Dinner!" he exclaimed; "we attended to that vain affair in the mundane sphere from which we have just emerged; but hurry, Rosita, for I want you to show me the sea before the sun dips."

She ran for her hat with delight.

"You really look better already, both you and father," said he, drowing her arm within his; "not a word have I heard, only business letters from father. I expected you to keep a journal for me, and tell me if you were disappointed in old ocean."

"Disappointed, Ned? Impossible! I can't say this beach reaches my expectations, but the sea—boundless, fathomless, sublime—all language seems spiritless when speaking of its majesty."

"Yes, Rosa, there is everything in it to excite wonder, awe, and admiration, but do you love it?"

"Not exactly," she replied; "not as I do the dear brook at grandfather's, or the lovely Quineboag that we see from Hawthorndean. I love it as I might the Empress Eugenie, or some great, far-off personage, not as I do the Colonel and my home friends. Fear never leaves me when I look far off into its depths. I don't think I would like to live near it, it makes me feel how very little and weak I am; and I think," she added, reverentially, "it gives me grander thoughts of the Creator."

"Yes," said her companion, thoughtfully, "it must inspire every thinking mind with the vastness of the unfathomable nature that could create such an image of infinity; but I don't love it, I am free to say it has no charm for me; it is too changing and inconstant; it has shattered too many human hopes, and swept to many dear ones into its unknown depths. It is infinity without mercy. Give me

'The woodland scene,

Where wanders the stream with its waters of green.'

O, Rosa, one clear trout-brook, shadowed by an alder copse or the fringed willow, is dearer to me than all old ocean's waters; that makes me calmer, happier, better; this excites my stormy nature to rebellion. It is antagonistic; not without cause, perhaps," he added, dropping his voice, and putting his hand to his brow, as if to suppress some painful emotion, "for it covers in its depths the dearest earthly friend I shall ever know."

Rosine let her hand slip into his with a gentle pressure, and said, "Tell me about it;" but he shook off the sudden sadness as instantly as it had come upon him, and continued the conversation in his usual tone, as if nothing had occurred to disturb him.

"Come, tell me, sister mine, are you happy here? What do you find to do? Do you dive every day, and has the Colonel taught you to swim?"

"So many questions!" replied she, in a gay tone, assisting his effort to disguise his emotion. "I will begin with the last; yes, we swim, and father and I take a dive every morning before the gentry quit their beds," she added, disengaging her arm from his, and running forward to meet the coming breaker, and scampering back again to escape a wetting.

"Behave yourself, Rosa," cried the Doctor, laughing, as she

barely escaped a ducking by giving a great leap, "here are strangers coming. I wish they'd staid away."

"O, no," replied she, eagerly, "these are not strangers. I meant to have told you of them; they are Miss Greenwood and her grandfather." The Doctor looked sharply at her, turned instantly upon his heel, and walked rapidly in another direction. Accustomed, however, as Rosine was to his sudden and hasty movements, this did not surprise her, and she continued, "They come out always for a walk at this hour, the old gentleman is imbecile, has almost entirely lost his mind, and she devotes herself to him so assiduously—she is very lovely."

"Another sudden friendship!" said the Doctor, pulling his cap over his brows, "and you meant to tell me of it—go on."

"I met her every day for several days, she with her grandfather, I with the Colonel, before we spoke; but one morning I wandered from him, and came upon her alone, her grandfather was sitting in a cleft of the rocks they call Devil's Armchair; she had been gathering sea-weeds and mosses, but never where she could not see him. There was a beautiful sea anemone beyond where her grandfather was seated; we had never spoken, but I saw by her earnest gaze how much she wanted it, so I clambered along the rocks into the cleft where it had fastened itself, and brought it to her, and she was so grateful, so afraid I had been in danger for it."

"That's the way you scramble about, risking your neck for strangers," said the Doctor. "I shall advise the Colonel to keep with you hereafter."

"No great risk, Ned, the tide was out; besides, Miss Greenwood is so dignified and tall, I don't think she ever climbed a rock in her life. From that time, which is four days since, we have met every day, twice a day."

"Systematic, regular, and conscientious, I dare say, like everything Miss Greenwood does," replied he, in a tone slightly sarcastic.

"Do you know her, Ned?" exclaimed his companion, stopping in her hasty walk, and looking at him with surprise.

"I knew her once, Rosa," he said, in a tone changed to regret.

"Yes," he added, making a vain effort to speak gayly, with something like a smothered sigh, "I've known her all my life. Indeed, she was an old flame of mine in those days when,

'With sanguine cheer, and streamers gay

We cut our cable, launch into the world,

And fondly deem each wind and star our friend.'

You see, the sea makes me poetic; but I must smoke," he continued, pulling out his cigar-case, "or I shall have the blues. But you remember you promised me not to make another sudden friendship; however, even Father Roberts and Sister Agnes can find no serious objection to this intimacy, as she is a staunch Catholic."

"A Catholic!" said Rosine, with a start of surprise. "I'm so glad! Is she really? How came it about?"

"That's a change since I knew her, but you may believe it was not from worldly motives, for by it she alienated many of her dearest Protestant friends, exasperated the Commodore, more particularly, I think, because her brother Harry followed her lead."

"Why, is she Commodore Greenwood's daughter!" again exclaimed Rosine. "I remember—," she paused, for her only memory of him was in connection with her father's disgrace. She blushed painfully, but the Doctor taking no notice apparently of her confusion replied, "Yes, Commodore Greenwood's only daughter, and a greater scamp than he was never suffered to live. I tell you, Dora Greenwood did not choose a path of roses, when she went against his will, and from what she at least thought was pure conviction, joined herself as her father said in his cruel, bitter taunts, with the offscouring of all creation; (showed his stupid ignorance there). After all, the old wretch is to be pitied, to be so disappointed in his children. Dora as good as dead, as he says; meaning thereby that she will never marry, and Harry in the navy, and hating the service with such dislike, that he is only kept in it by obedience to his father's wishes. Ah, Rosa," he added, sadly, pointing far out to the purple white crested, "the deep treacherous sea covers his first-born, my dearest friend—had he but lived; 'the saddest of words, it might have been.'"

Nothing was heard for a few moments but the booming of the waters as they dashed against the rocks; at last Rosine ventured to speak, but very timidly. "Why have I never heard of him?"

"Because I must not be sympathised with," he said, turning about a little snappishly. "O, I forgot these," he added, more mildly, diving down into his pockets and bringing up two letters. She took them without a word; one was in the handwriting of Lieutenant Hartland, and she immediately broke the seal and gave the enclosure to his brother, simply saying, "for Laura."

"Poor Laura!" he ejaculated, "she has her death-blow, I fear."

"O Ned," cried his companion, turning eagerly towards him, "what do you mean? Is she really so ill? We parted in anger; O, if I could but see her! Can I?" she said pleadingly.

"There could be no satisfaction in an interview," he replied, "she is entirely oblivious to everything, raves continually of Aleck—it is fearful to hear her self-reproaches, and her pleadings for forgiveness. I was called in consultation and declined at first, but could not resist the old Captain's entreaties. But I am cruel to tell you all this," he added, feeling her arm trembling violently, "let us sit here."

They had come to a cleft in the huge rock, forming a seat shutting out everything but sky and sea. "This is the Devil's Armchair," he said, making Rosine sit down; "I am glad his majesty had it made large enough for two," he added, seating himself by her side.

"Tell me just how she is, will you Ned?" sobbed Rosine.

— In the United States there are 1,288 Catholic Theological Students, while other denominations have only 3,589 altogether.