

After the Storm

Young — but Wise

By [Timothy Shay Arthur](#)

1868

Chapter 18.

The night had passed wearily for Mr. Delancy, broken by fitful dreams, in which the image of his daughter was always present — dreams that he could trace to no thoughts or impressions of the day before; and he arose unrefreshed, and with a vague sense of *trouble* in his heart, lying there like a weight which no involuntary deep inspirations would lessen or remove. No June day ever opened in fresher beauty, than did this one, just *four years* since the actors in our drama came smiling before us, in the flush of youth and hope and confidence in the far-off future. The warmth of early summer had sent the nourishing sap to every delicate twig and softly expanding leaf until, full foliated, the trees around Ivy Cliff stood in kingly attire, lifting themselves up grandly in the sunlight which flooded their gently-waving tops in waves of golden glory. The air was soft and of crystal clearness; and the lungs drank it in as if the draught were ethereal nectar.

On such a morning in June, after a night of broken and unrefreshing sleep, Mr. Delancy walked forth, with that strange pressure on his heart which he had been vainly endeavoring to push aside since the singing birds awoke him, in the faint rosy dawn, with their joyous welcome to the coming day. He drew in long draughts of the delicious air; expanded his chest; moved briskly through the garden; threw his arms about, to hurry the sluggish flow of blood in his veins; looked with constrained admiration on the splendid landscape that stretched far and near in the sweep of his vision; but all to no purpose. The hand still lay heavy upon his heart; he could not get it removed.

Returning to the house, feeling more uncomfortable for this fruitless effort to rise above what he tried to call an unhealthy depression of spirits consequent on some unhealthful state of the body, Mr. Delancy was entering the library, when a fresh young face greeted him with light and smiles.

"Good-morning, Rose," said the old gentleman, as his face brightened in the glow of the young girl's happy countenance. "I am glad to see you;" and he took her hand and held it tightly.

"Good-morning, Mr. Delancy. When did you hear from Irene?"

"Ten days ago."

"She was well?"

"Oh yes. Sit down, Rose; there." And Mr. Delancy drew a chair before the sofa for his young visitor, and took a seat facing her.

"I haven't had a letter from her in six months," said Rose, a sober hue falling on her countenance.

"I don't think she is quite thoughtful enough of her *old friends*."

"And too thoughtful, it may be, of *new ones*," replied Mr. Delancy, his voice a little depressed from the cheerful tone in which he had welcomed his young visitor.

"These *new* friends are not always the *best* friends, Mr. Delancy."

"No, Rose. For my part, I wouldn't give one old friend, whose heart I had proved — for a dozen untried new ones."

"Nor I, Mr. Delancy. I love Irene. I have always loved her. You know we were children together."

"Yes, dear, I know all that; and I'm not pleased with her for treating you with so much neglect, and all for a set of . . ."

Mr. Delancy checked himself.

"Irene," said Miss *Rose Carman*, whom the reader will remember as one of Irene's bridesmaids, "has been a little unfortunate in her New York friends. I'm afraid of these *strong-minded* women, as they are called, among whom she has fallen."

"I *detest* them!" replied Mr. Delancy, with suddenly aroused feelings. "They have done my child more harm, than they will ever do good in the world. She is not my daughter of old."

"I found her greatly changed at our last meeting," said Rose. "Full of vague plans of *reforms* and social reorganizations, and impatient of opposition, or even mild argument, against her favorite ideas."

"She has lost her way," sighed the old man, in a low, sad voice, "and I'm afraid it will take her a long, long time to get back again to the *old true paths*, and that the road will be through *deep suffering*. I dreamed about her all night, Rose, and the

shadow of my dreams is upon me still. It is foolish, I know — but I cannot get my heart again into the sunlight."

And Rose had been dreaming troubled dreams of her old friend, also; and it was because of the pressure that lay upon her feelings, that she had come over to Ivy Cliff this morning to ask if Mr. Delancy had heard from Irene. She did not, however, speak of this, for she saw that he was in an unhappy state on account of his daughter.

"Dreams are but shadows," she said, forcing a smile to her lips and eyes.

"Yes — yes." The old man responded with an abstracted air. "Yes; they are only shadows. But, my dear, was there ever a *shadow* without a *substance*?"

"Not in the outside world of nature. Dreams are unreal things — the fantastic images of a brain where reason sleeps."

"There have been *dreams* that came as *warnings*, Rose."

"And a thousand, for every one of these, that signified *nothing*."

"True. But I cannot rise out of these shadows. They lie too heavily on my spirit. You must bear with me, Rose. Thank you for coming over to see me; but I cannot make your visit a pleasant one, and you must leave me when you grow weary of the old man's company."

"Don't talk so, Mr. Delancy. I'm glad I came over. I meant this only for a call; but as you are in such poor spirits, I must stay a while and cheer you up."

"You are a good girl," said Mr. Delancy, taking the hand of Rose, "and I am vexed that Irene should neglect you for the *false friends* who are leading her mind *astray*. But never mind, dear; she will see her error one of these days, and learn to prize true hearts."

"Is she going to spend much of her time at Ivy Cliff this summer?" asked Rose.

"She is coming up in July to stay three or four weeks."

"Ah! I'm pleased to hear you say so. I shall then revive old-time memories in her heart."

"God grant that it may be so!" Rose half startled at the solemn tone in which Mr. Delancy spoke. What could be the meaning of his strangely troubled manner? Was anything seriously wrong with Irene? She remembered the confusion into which her impulsive conduct had thrown the wedding-party; and there was a *vague rumor* afloat that Irene had left her husband a few months afterward and

returned to Ivy Cliff. But she had always discredited this rumor. Of her life in New York, she knew but little as to particulars. That it was not making of her a truer, better, happier woman, nor a truer, better, happier wife — observation had long ago told her.

"There is a broad foundation of good principles in her character," said Miss Carman, "and this gives occasion for hope in the future. She will not go far astray, with her *wily enticers*, who have only stimulated and given direction, for a time, to her undisciplined impulses. You know how impatient she has always been under *control* — how *restively* her spirit has chafed itself when a restraining hand was laid upon her. But there are real things in life of too serious import, to be set aside for idle fancies, such as her new friends have taught her — real things, which take hold upon the solid earth like anchors, and hold the vessel firm amid wildly rushing currents."

"Yes, Rose, I know all that," replied Mr. Delancy. "I have hope in the future for Irene; but I shudder in heart to think of the rough, thorny, desolate ways through which she may have to pass with *bleeding feet* — before she reaches that serene future! Ah! if I could save my child from the pain she seems resolute on plucking down and wearing in her heart!"

"Your dreams have made you gloomy, Mr. Delancy," said Rose, forcing a smile to her sweet young face. "Come now, let us be more hopeful. Irene has a good husband. A little too much like her in some things — but growing manlier and broader in mental grasp, if I have read him aright. He understands Irene, and, what is more, loves her deeply. I have watched them closely."

"So have I." The voice of Mr. Delancy was not so *hopeful* as that of his companion.

"Still looking on the *darker side*?" She smiled again.

"Ah, Rose, my wise young friend," said Mr. Delancy, "to whom I speak my thoughts with a freedom that surprises even myself, a *father's eyes* read many *signs* that have no meaning for others."

"And many read them, through fond suspicion, *wrong*," replied Rose.

"Well — yes — that may be." He spoke in partial abstraction, yet doubtfully.

"I must look through your garden," said the young lady, rising; "you know how I love flowers."

"Not much yet to hold your admiration," replied Mr. Delancy, rising also. "*June* gives us wide green carpets and magnificent draperies of the same deep color — but her red and golden broideries are few; it is the hand of *July* that throws them

in with rich profusion."

"But June flowers are sweetest and dearest — tender nurslings of the summer, first-born of her love," said Rose, as they stepped out into the portico. "It may be that the eye gets sated with beauty, as nature grows lavish of her gifts; but the *first* white and red petals that unfold themselves, have a more delicate perfume — seem made of purer elements and more wonderful in perfection — than their *later* sisters. Is it not so?"

"If it only *appears* so — it is all the same as if *real*," replied Mr. Delancy, smiling.

"How?"

"It is real to you. What more could you have? Not more enjoyment of summer's gifts of beauty and sweetness."

"No; perhaps not."

Rose let her eyes fall to the ground, and remained silent.

"Things are real to us — as we see *them*; not always as they *are*," said Mr. Delancy.

"And is this true of life?"

"Yes, child. It is in life, that we create *real things* for ourselves, out of what to some are *airy nothings*. Real things, against which we often bruise or maim ourselves, while to others, they are as intangible as shadows."

"I never thought of that," said Rose.

"It is true."

"Yes, I see it. *Imaginary evils* — we thus make real things, and hurt ourselves by contact — as, maybe, you have done this morning, Mr. Delancy."

"Yes — yes. And false ideas of things which are unrealities in the abstract — for only what is true, has actual substance — become real to the perverted understanding. Ah, child, there are strange contradictions and deep problems in life, for each of us to solve."

"But, God helping us, we may always reach the true solution," said Rose Carman, lifting a bright, confident face to that of her companion.

"That was spoken well, my child," returned Mr. Delancy, with a new life in his voice; "and without Him we can never be certain of our way."

"Never — never." There was a tender, trusting solemnity in the voice of Rose.

"Young — but wise," said Mr. Delancy.

"No! Young — but not wise. I cannot see the way plain before me for a single week, Mr. Delancy. For a *week*? No, not for a *day*!"

"Who does?" asked the old man.

"Some."

"None. There are many who walk onward with erect heads and confident bearing. They are sure of their way, and smile if one whispers a caution as to the ground upon which they step so fearlessly. But they soon get astray or into *pitfalls*. God keeping and guiding us, Rose, we may find our way safely through this world. But we will soon lose ourselves if we trust in our *own* wisdom."

Thus they talked — that old man and gentle-hearted girl — as they moved about the garden-walks, every new flower, or leaf, or opening bud — they paused to admire or examine, suggesting themes for wiser words than usually pass between one so old and one so young. At Mr. Delancy's earnest request, Rose stayed for lunch, the servant being sent to her father's house, not far distant, to take word that she would not be at home until in the afternoon.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).