THE

OLD HELMET

E07624

THE OLD HELMET

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD."

'Nothing before, nothing behind:
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void and find
The rock beneath."

WHITTIER

New Edition.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET.
1879.

THE OLD HELMET.

CHAPTER I.

"She looked, and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shattered archway plumed with fern;
And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;
And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent,
Bare to the sun."

THE first thing noticeable is a gleam of white teeth. Now that is a pleasant thing generally; yet its pleasantness depends, after all, upon the way the lips part over the ivory. There is a world of character discoverable in the curve of those soft lines. In the present case, that of a lady, as it is undoubtedly the very first thing you notice, the matter must be investigated. The mouth is rather large, with well-cut lips, however; and in the smile which comes not infrequently, the lips part freely and frankly, though not too far, over a wealth of white, beautiful teeth. So free is the curve of the upper lip, and so ready its revelation of the treasures beneath, that there is an instant suspicion of a certain frankness and daring, and perhaps of a little mischief, on the part of their possessor; so free, at the same time, as to forbid the least notion of consciousness or design in that beautiful revelation. But how fine and full and regular are those white treasures of hers! seeming to speak for a

strong and perfect physical organization; and if your eye goes further—for her flat hat is on the ground—you will see in the bountiful rich head of hair another token of the same thing. Her figure is finely developed; her colour clear and healthy; not blonde; the full brown hair and eyes agree with the notion of a nature more lively than we assign to the other extreme of complexion. The features are not those of a beauty, though better than that, perhaps; there is a world of life and sense and spirit in them.

It speaks for her good nature and feeling, that her smile is as frank as ever just now, and as pleasant as ever; for she is with about the last one of her party on whom she would have chosen to bestow herself. The occasion is a visit to some celebrated ruins; a day of pleasure; and Eleanor would a good deal rather be walking and talking with another much more interesting member of the company, in whose society, indeed, her day had begun; but Mr. Carlisle had been obliged suddenly to return home for an hour or two; and Eleanor is sitting on a grassy bank, with a gentleman beside her whom she knows very little, and does not care about at all. That is, she has no idea he can be very interesting; and he *is* a grave-looking personage, but we are not going to describe him at present.

A word must be given to the place where they are. It is a little paradise. If the view is not very extended, it is rich in its parts; and the eye and the mind are filled. The grass is shaven smooth on the bank where the two are sitting; so it is all around, under trees which stand with wilful wildness of luxuriance, grouped and scattered apparently as they would. They are very old, in several varieties of kind, and in the perfect development and thrift of each kind. Among them are the ruins of an old priory. They peep forth here and there from the trees. One broken tower stands free, with ivy masking its sides and crumbling top, and stains of weather and the hues of lichen and moss enriching what was once its plain grey colour. Other portions of the ruins are seen by glimpses further on among the trees. Standing somewhat off by itself, yet encompassed by the congeners of

those same trees, almost swallowed up among them, is a comfortable, picturesque little building, not in ruins, though it has been built up from the ruins. It is the parsonage, where the rector of the parish lives. Beyond this wood and these buildings, old and new, the eye can catch only bits of hills and woods that promise beauty further on; but nearer than they, and making a boundary line between the present and the distant, the flash of a little river is seen, which curves about the old priory lands. A somewhat doubtful sunlight is struggling over it all; casting a stray beam on the grass, and a light on the ivy of the old tower.

"What a queer old place it must have been," said Eleanor.

"How old is it?"

"O, I don't know—ages! Do you mean really how old? I am sure I can't tell; I never can keep those things in my head. If Dr. Cairnes would come out, he could tell you all about it, and more."

"Dr. Cairnes, the rector?"

"Yes. He keeps it all in *his* head, I know. The ruins are instead of a family to him."

"They must date back pretty far, judging by those Norman arches,"

"Norman arches?—what those round ones? O, they do. The priory was founded by some old courtier or soldier in the time of Henry the First, who got disgusted with the world. That is the beginning of all these places, isn't it?"

"Do you mean, that it is the beginning of all religious feeling?"

"I really think it is. I wouldn't tell Dr. Cairnes so, however. How sweet these violets are. Dear little blue things!"

"Do you suppose," said the young man, stooping to pick one or two, "that they are less sweet to me than to you?"

"Why should they be?"

"Because religion is the most precious thing in the world to me; and by your rule, I must be disgusted with the world, and all sweet things have lost their savour."

He spoke with quiet gravity, and Eleanor's eye went to

his face with a bright glance of inquiry. It came back with no change of opinion.

"You don't convert me," she said. "I do not know what you have given up for religion, so I cannot judge. But all the other people I ever saw grew religious only because they had lost all care about everything else."

"I wonder how that discontented old soldier found himself, when he got into these solitudes?" said the young man, with a smile of his own then. It was sweet, and a little arch, and withal harmonized completely with the ordinary gravity of his face, not denying it at all. Eleanor looked, once and again, with some curiosity, but the smile passed away as quietly as it had come.

"The solitude was not *this* solitude then."

"O no, it was very wild."

"These were Augustine canons, were they not?"

"Who?"

"The monks of this priory."

"I am sure I don't know. I forget. What was the difference?"

"You know there were many orders of religious houses. The Augustines were less severe in their rule, and more genial in their allowed way of life, than most of the others."

"What was their rule?"

"Beginning with discontent of the world, you know, they went on with the principle that nothing worldly was good."

"Well, isn't that the principle of all religious people now?"

"I like violets," said the young man, smiling again.

"But do tell me, what did those old monks do? What was their 'rule?' I don't know anything about it, nor about them."

"Another old discontented soldier, who founded an abbey in Wales, is said by the historian to have dismissed all his former companions, and devoted himself to God. For his military belt, he tied a rope about his waist; instead of fine linen he put on haircloth. And it is recorded of him, that the massive suit of armour which he had been used to wear

in battle, to protect him against the arrows and spears and axes of the enemy, he put on now and wore as a defence against the wiles and assaults of the devil—and wore it till it rusted away with age."

"Poor old soul!" said Eleanor.

"Does that meet your ideas of a religious life?"

Eleanor laughed, but answered by another question. "Was *that* the rule of all the Augustine monks?"

"It gives the key to it. Is that your notion of a religious life? You don't answer me."

"Well," said Eleanor laughing again, "*it gives the key to it*, as you say. I do not suppose you wear a suit of armour to protect yourself."

"I beg your pardon. I do."

"*Armour?*" said Eleanor, looking incredulous. But her friend fairly burst into a little laugh at that.

"Are you rested?" said he.

And Eleanor got up, feeling a little indignant and a little curious. Strolling towards the ruins, however, there was too much to start conversation and too much to give delight, to permit either silence or pique to last.

"Isn't it beautiful!" burst from both at once.

"How exquisite that ivy is, climbing up that old tower!"

"And what a pity it is crumbling away so!" said Eleanor. "See that nearer angle—it is breaking down fast. I wish it would stay as it is."

"Nothing will do that for you. What is all that collection of rubbish yonder?"

"That is where Mr. Carlisle is going to build a cottage for one of his people—somebody to take care of the ruins, I believe."

"And he takes the ruins to build it with, and the old priory grounds too!"

Eleanor looked again at her companion.

"I think it is better than to have the broken stones lying all over—don't you?"

"I do not."

"Mr. Carlisle thinks so. Now here we are in the body of

the church—there you see where the roof went, by the slanting lines on the tower wall; and we are standing where the congregation used to assemble."

"Not much of a congregation," said her companion. "The neighbouring country furnished few attendants, I fancy; the old monks and their retainers were about all. The choir would hold most of them; the nave, where we are standing, would have been of little use except for processions."

"Processions?" said Eleanor.

"On particular days there were processions of the brotherhood, with lighted candles—round and round in the church. In the church at York twelve rounds made a mile, and there were twelve holes at the great door, with a little peg, so that any one curious about the matter might reckon the miles."

"And so they used to go up and down here, burning their fingers with melted tallow!" said Eleanor. "Poor creatures! What a melancholy existence! Are you preparing to renounce the world yourself, Mr. Rhys?"

He smiled, but it was a compound smile, light and earnest both at once, which Eleanor did not comprehend.

"Why do you suspect me?" he asked.

"You seem to be studying the thing. Are you going to be a white or a black monk—or a grey friar?"

"There is a prior question. It is coming on to rain, Miss Powle."

"Rain! It is beginning this minute! And all the umbrellas are nobody knows where—only that it is where we ought to be. I was glad just now that the old roof is gone—but I think I would like a piece of it back."

"You can take shelter at the parsonage."

"No, I cannot—they have got fever there."

"Then come with me. I believe I can find you a piece of roof somewhere."

Eleanor smiled to herself that he should think so, as all traces of beam and rafter had long since disappeared from the priory and its dependencies. However, she followed her

conductor, who strode along among the ruins at a pace which it taxed her powers to keep up with. Presently he plunged down into a wilderness of bushes and wild thorn and piled up stones which the crumbling walls had left in confusion strewn over the ground. It was difficult walking. Eleanor had never been there; for in that quarter the decay of the buildings was more entire, and the growth of shrubs and brambles had been allowed to mask the disorder. As they went on, the footing grew very rough; they were obliged to go over heaps and layers of the crumbling, moss-grown ruins. Eleanor's conductor turned and gave her his hand to help; it was a strong hand, and quickened her progress. Presently turning round a corner, through a thicket of thorn and holly bushes, with young larches and beeches, a small space of clearance was gained, bounded on the other side by a thick wall, one angle of which was standing. On this clear spot the rain-drops were falling fast. The hand that held Eleanor's hurried her across it, to where an old window remained sunk in the wall. The arch over the window was still entire, and as the wall was one of the outer walls and very thick, the shelter of a "piece of roof" was literally afforded. Eleanor's conductor seated her on the deep window sill, where she was perfectly screened from the rain; and apologizing for the necessity of the occasion, took his place beside her. The window was narrow as well as deep; and the two, who hardly knew each other, were brought into very familiar neighbourhood. Eleanor would have been privately amused, if the first passing consciousness of amusement had not been immediately chased away by one or two other thoughts. The first was the extreme beauty of her position as a point of view.

The ruins were all behind them. As they looked out of the window, nothing was seen but the most exquisite order and the most dainty perfection of nature. The ground, shaven and smooth, sloped away down to a fringe of young wood, amidst which peeped out a pretty cottage, and above which a curl of smoke floated. The cottage stood so low, and the trees were so open, that above and beyond appeared

the receding slopes and hills of the river valley, in their various shades of colour, grass and foliage. There was no sun on all this now, but a beautiful light under the rain cloud from the distant horizon. And the dark old stone window was the frame for this picture. It was very perfect. It was very rare, Eleanor exclaimed in delight.

"But I never was here—I never saw this before! How did you know of it, Mr. Rhys?"

"I have studied the ruins," he said lightly.

"But you have been at Wiglands only a few months."

"I come here very often," he answered. "Happily for you."

He might add that well enough, for the clouds poured down their rain now in torrents, or in sheets; the light which had come from the horizon a few minutes before was hidden, and the grey gloom of a summer storm was over everything. The little window seemed dark, with the two people sitting there. Then there came a blinding flash of lightning. Eleanor started and cowered, and the thunder rolled its deep tones over them, and under them, for the earth shook. She raised her head again, but only to shrink back the second time, when the lightning and the thunder were repeated. This time her head was not raised again, and she kept her hand covered over her eyes. Yet whenever the sound of the thunder came, Eleanor's frame answered it by a start. She said nothing; it was merely the involuntary answer of the nerves. The storm was a severe one, and when the severity of it passed a little further off, the torrents of rain still fell.

"You do not like thunder storms," Mr. Rhys remarked, when the lightnings had ceased to be so vivid or so near.

"Does anybody like them?'

"Yes. I like everything."

"You are happy," said Eleanor.

"Why are not you?"

"I can't help it," said the girl, lifting up her head, though she did not let her eyes go out of the window. "I cannot bear to see the lightning. It is foolish, but I cannot help it."

"Are you sure it is foolish? Is there not some reason at the bottom of it?"

"I think there is a reason, though still it is foolish. There was a man killed by lightning just by our door, once —when I was a child. I saw him—I never can forget it, never!"

And a sort of shudder ran over Eleanor's shoulders as she spoke.

"You want my armour," said her companion. The tone of voice was not only grave, but sympathizing. Eleanor looked up at him.

"Your armour?"

"You charged me with wearing armour—and I confessed it," he said with something of a smile. "It is a sort of armour that makes people safe in all circumstances."

He looked so quiet, so grave, so cool, and his eye had such a light in it, that Eleanor could not throw off his words. He *looked* like a man in armour. But no mail of brass was to be seen.

"What *do* you mean?" she said.

"Did you never hear of the helmet of salvation?"

"I don't know," said Eleanor wonderingly. "I think I have heard the words. I do not think I ever attached any meaning to them."

"Did you never feel," he said, speaking with a peculiar deliberation of manner, "that you were exposed to danger—and to death—from which no effort of yours could free you; and that after death, there is a great white throne to meet, for which you are not ready?"

While he spoke slowly, his eyes were fixed upon Eleanor with a clear piercing glance which she felt read her through and through; but she was fascinated instead of angered, and submitted her own eyes to the reading without wishing to turn them away. Carrying on two trains of thought at the same time, as the mind will, her inward reflection was, "I had no idea that you were so good-looking!"—the answer in words was a sober, "I have felt so."

"Was the feeling a happy one?"

Eleanor's lip suddenly trembled; then she put down that involuntary natural answer, and said evasively, looking out of the window, "I suppose everybody has such feelings sometimes."

"Not with that helmet on," said her companion.

With all the quietness of his speech, and it was very unimpassioned, his accent had a clear ring to it, which came from some unsounded spirit-depth of power; and Eleanor's heart for a moment sunk before it in a secret convulsion of pain. She concealed this feeling, as she thought, successfully; but that single ray of light had showed her the darkness; it was keen as an arrow, and the arrow rankled. And her neighbour's next words made her feel that her heart lay bare; so quietly they touched it.

"You feel that you want something, Miss Powle."

Eleanor's head drooped, as well as her heart. She wondered at herself; but there was a spell of power upon her, and she could by no means lift up either. It was not only that his words were true, but that he knew them to be so.

"Do you know *what* you want?" her friend went on, in tones that were tender along with that deliberate utterance that carried so much force with it. "You know yourself an offender before the Lord—and you want the sense of forgiveness in your heart. You know yourself inclined to be an offender again—and you want the renewing grace of God to make your heart clean, and set it free from the power of sin. Then you want also something to make you happy; and the love of Jesus alone can do that."

"What is the use of telling over the things one has not got?" said Eleanor in somewhat smothered tones. The words of her companion came again clear as a bell—

"Because you may have them if you want them."

Eleanor struggled with herself, for her self-possession was endangered, and she was angry at herself for being such a fool; but she could not help it; yet she would not let her agitation come any more to the surface. She waited for clearness of voice, and then could not forbear the question—

"How, Mr. Rhys?"

"Jesus said, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' There is all fulness in him. Go to him for light—go to him for strength—go to him for forgiveness, for healing, for sanctification. 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.'"

"'Go to him?'" repeated Eleanor vaguely.

"Ask him."

Ask *Him!* It was such a far-off, strange idea to her heart, there seemed such a universe of distance between, Eleanor's face grew visibly shadowed with the thought. *She?* She could not. She did not know how. She was silent a little while. The subject was getting unmanageable.

"I never had anybody talk to me so before, Mr. Rhys," she said, thinking to let it pass.

"Perhaps you never will again," he said. "Hear it now. The Lord Jesus is not far off—as you think—he is very near; he can hear the faintest whisper of a petition that you send to him. It is his message I bring you to-day—a message to *you*. I am his servant, and he has given me this charge for you to-day—to tell you that he loves you—that he has given his life for yours—and that he calls Eleanor Powle to give him her heart, and then to give him her life, in all the obedience his service may require."

Eleanor felt her heart strangely bowed, subdued, bent to his words. "I will"—was the secret language of her thoughts—"but I must not let this man see all I am feeling; if I can help it." She held herself still, looking out of the window, where the rain fell in torrents yet, though the thunder and the lightning were no longer near. So did he; he added no more to his last words, and a silence lasted in the old ruined window as if its chance occupants were gone again. As the silence lasted, Eleanor felt it grow awkward. She was at a loss how to break it. It was broken for her then.

"What will you do, Miss Powle?"

"I will think about it," she answered, startled and hesitating.

"How long, before you decide?"

"How can I tell?" she said.

"You are shrinking from a decision already formed. The answer is given in your secret thoughts, and something is rising up in the midst of them to thwart it. Shall I tell my Master that his message is refused?"

"Mr. Rhys!" said Eleanor, looking up, "I never heard any one talk so in all my life! You speak as if——"

"As if, what?"

"You speak as if——I never heard any one speak as you do."

"I speak as if I were in the habit of telling my Master how his message is received? I often do that."

"But it seems superfluous to tell what is known already," said Eleanor, wondering secretly much more than she dared to say at her companion's talk.

"Do you never, in speaking to those you love, tell them what is no information?"

Eleanor was now dumb. There was too great a gulf of difference between her companion and herself, to try to frame any words or thoughts that might bridge it over. She must remain on one side and he on the other; yet she went on wondering.

"Are you a clergyman, Mr. Rhys?" she said after a pause.

"I am not what you would call such?"

"Do you not think the rain is over?"

"Nearly, for the present; but the grass is as wet as possible."

"O, I don't mind that. There is somebody now in the shrubbery yonder, looking for me."

"He will not find you here," said Mr. Rhys. "I have this window all to myself. But we will find him."

The rain-drops fell now but scatteringly, the last of the shower; the sun was breaking out, and the green world was all in a glitter of wet leaves. Wet as they were, Eleanor and Mr. Rhys pushed through the thick bramble and holly bushes, which with honeysuckles, eglantine, and broom, and

bryony, made a sweet wild wilderness. They got plentifully besprinkled in their way, shook that off as well as they could, and with quick steps sought to rejoin their companions. The person Eleanor had seen in the shrubbery was the first one found, as Mr. Rhys had said. It was Mr. Carlisle. He at once took charge of Eleanor.

"What has become of you?"

"What has become of *you*, Mr. Carlisle?" Eleanor's gleaming smile was as bright as ever.

"Despair, nearly," said he: "for I feared business would hold me all day; but I broke away. Not time enough to protect you from this shower."

"Water will wet," said Eleanor, laughing; for the politeness of this speech was more evident than its plausibility. She was on the point of speaking of the protection that had been actually found for her, but thought better of it. Meantime they were joined by a little girl, bright and rather wild-looking, who addressed Eleanor as her sister.

"O come!" she said, "where have you been? We can't go on till you come. We are going to lunch at Barton's Tower; and mamma says she will make Mr. Carlisle build a fire, so that we may all dry ourselves."

"Julia!—how you speak!"

"She did say so," repeated the child. "Come—make haste."

Eleanor glanced at her companion, who met the glance with a smile. "I hope Mrs. Powle will always command me," he said, somewhat meaningly; and Eleanor hurried on.

She was destined to long *tête-à-têtes* that day; for as soon as her little party was seen in the distance, the larger company took up their line of march again. Julia and Mr. Rhys had fallen behind; and the long walk to Barton's Tower was made with Mr. Carlisle alone, who was in no haste to abridge it, and seemed to enjoy himself very well. Eleanor once or twice looked back, and saw her little sister, hand in hand with her companion of the old window, walking and talking in very eager and gay style, to judge by Julia's lively movements.

"Who is that Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor.

"I have hardly the honour to know him. May I ask, why you ask?"

"He is peculiar," said Eleanor.

"He can hardly be worthy your study." And the question was dismissed with a coolness which reminded Eleanor of Mr. Rhys's own words, that he was not what she would call a clergyman. She would have asked another question, but the slight disdain which spoke in Mr. Carlisle's eye and voice deterred her. She only noticed how well the object of it and her sister were getting along. However, Eleanor's own walk was pleasant enough to drive Mr. Rhys out of her head. Mr. Carlise was polished, educated, spirited, and had the great additional advantage of being a known and ascertained somebody; as he was in fact the heir of all the fine domain whose beauties they were admiring. And a beautiful heirdom it was. The way taken by the party led up the course of a valley which followed the windings of a small stream: its sides most romantic and woody in some places; in others taking the very mould of gentle beauty, and covered with rich grass, and sweet with broom; in others again, drawing near together, and assuming a picturesque wildness, rocky and broken. Sweet flowers grew by the way in profusion, on the banks and along the sides of the stream; and the birds were very jocund in their solitudes. Through all this it was very pleasant wandering with the heir of the land: and neither wet shoes nor wet shoulders were much remembered by Eleanor till they reached Barton's Tower.

This was a ruin of a different character; one of the old strongholds of the rough time when men lived by the might of hand. No delicate arches and graceful mouldings had ever been here; all was, or had been, grim, stern strength and massiveness. The strength was broken long ago; and grace, in the shape of clustering ivy, had mantled so much of the harsh outlines that their original impression was lost. It could be recalled only by a little abstraction. Within the enclosure of the thick walls, which in some places gave a

sort of crypt-like shelter, the whole rambling party was now collected.

"Shall we have a fire?" Mr. Carlisle had asked Eleanor, just before they entered. And Eleanor could not find in her heart to deny that it would be good, though not quite prepared to have it made to *her* order. However, the word was given. Wood was brought, and presently a roaring blaze went up within the old walls; not where the old chimney used to be, for there were no traces of such a thing. The sun had not shined bright enough to do away the mischief the shower had done; and now the ladies gathered about the blaze, and declared it was very comfortable. Eleanor sat down on a stone by the side of the fire, willing to be less in the foreground for a little while; as well as to dry her wet shoes. From there she had a view of the scene that would have pleased a painter.

The blazing fire threw a warm light and colour of its own upon the dark walls and on the various groups collected within them, and touched mosses and ferns and greensward with its gipsy glare. The groups were not all of one character. There was a light-hued gay company of muslins and scarfs around the burning pile; in a corner a medley of servants and baskets and hampers; and in another corner Eleanor watched Julia and Mr. Rhys; the latter of whom was executing some adventurous climbing, after a flower probably, or a fern, while Julia stood below eagerly following his progress. Mr. Carlisle was all about. It was a singularly pretty scene, and to Eleanor's eye it had the sharp painting which is given by a little secret interest at work. That interest gave particular relief to the figures of the two gentlemen whose names have been mentioned; the other figures, the dark walls and ivy, the servants and the preparing collation, were only a rich mosaic of background for those two.

There was Mr. Powle, a sturdy, well-to-do country gentleman; looking it, and looking besides good-natured, which he was if not crossed. There was Eleanor's mother, good-natured under all circumstances; fair and handsome, every

inch of her, from the close fair curls on each side of her temples, to the tips of her neat walking shoes, showing the ample perfection of abundant means and indulgent living. There were some friends that formed part of their household just then, and the young people of a neighbouring family; with the Miss Broadus's; two elderly ladies from the village, who were always in everything. There was Dr. Cairnes the rector, and his sister, a widow lady who spent part of every year with him. All these Eleanor's eye passed over with slight heed, and busied itself furtively with the remaining two; the great man of the party, and the other, the one certainly of least consideration in it. Why did she look at him, Eleanor asked herself? Mr. Carlisle was a mark for everybody's eyes; a very handsome man, the future lord of the manor, knowing and using gracefully his advantages of many kinds. What had the other,—that tall, quiet man, gathering flowers with Julia in the angle of the old tower? He could not be called handsome; a dark thick head of hair, and somewhat marked features alone distinguished him; except a pair of very clear keen eyes, the penetrating quality of which Eleanor had felt that morning. "He has a good figure, though," she said to herself, "a very good figure—and he moves well and easily; but what is there about him to make me think of him? What is the difference between his face and that other face?"

"That other face" made frequent appeals for her attention; yet Eleanor could not forget the group in the corner, where her sister seemed to be having a time of more lively enjoyment than any one else of the company. No other person paid them any attention, even in thought; and when the collation was spread, Eleanor half wondered that her morning's friend neither came forward nor was for some moments asked to do so. She thought indeed she heard Julia ask him, but if so it was without effect. Mr. Rhys remained in the distant angle, studying the stones there; till Mr. Powle shouted to him and brought him into the company. Having done this good action, the squire felt benevolently disposed towards the object of his care, and

entered into conversation with him. It grew so satisfactory to Mr. Powle, that it absorbed his attention from all but the meats and wines which were offered him, the enjoyment of which it probably heightened; the talk was prolonged, and seemed to grow more interesting as it went on. Eleanor could not hear what it was about, her own ear was so much engaged with business nearer at hand. The whole play had not escaped her, however; and between question and answer of the rattling gaiety going on about her ears, and indeed on her own tongue, she found time to wonder whether Mr. Rhys were shy, or kept back by a feeling of inferiority; so marked his conduct was by the absence of all voluntary self-assertion. She could not determine that he was either. No look or word favoured the one or the other supposition. And Eleanor could not look at those keen eyes, without feeling that it was extremely unlikely they would quail before anybody or anything. Very different from those fine hazel irids that were flashing fun and gallantry into hers with every glance. Very different; but what was the difference? It was something deeper than colour and contour. Eleanor had no chance to make further discoveries; for her father engrossed his new acquaintance all the way home, and only did not bring him to Ivy Lodge to tea because Mr. Rhys refused it; for the invitation was given.

CHAPTER II.

"To die—to sleep.
To sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come!"

THE family at Ivy Lodge gathered round the tea-table with spirits rather whetted, apparently, for both talking and eating. Certainly the one exercise had been intermitted for some hours; the other however had gone on without cessation. It went on still. The party was now reduced to the home party, with the addition of Miss Broadus; which lady, with her sister, was at home at Ivy Lodge, as she was everywhere else. Elderly, respectable and respected old ladies they were: and though they dealt in gossip, would not willingly have hurt a fly. They dealt in receipts and in jellies too; in fashions, and in many kindnesses, both received and given by all the neighbourhood. They were daughters of a former rector of the parish, and poor, and asked nobody to help them; which indeed they had no need to ask.

"You seemed to like your afternoon's acquaintance, papa?" said Eleanor.

"He is a fine fellow," said the squire. "He's a fine fellow. Knows something. My dear, he teaches a small school at Wiglands, I hear."

"Does he? I wonder who goes to it," said Mrs. Powle.

"I don't know," said the squire; "but I mean to send Alfred."

"My dear Mr. Powle! to such a school as that? Nobody

can go to it but some of the farmers' children around—there is no one else."

"It won't hurt him, for a little while," said the squire. "I like the master, and that's of more importance than the children. "Don't *you* worry."

"My dear Mr. Powle! But I never heard of such a thing in my life. I do not believe Dr. Cairnes will like it at all. He will think it very strange, your sending your boy to a man that is not a Churchman, and is not anything, that anybody knows of."

"Dr. Cairnes be hanged!" said the squire," and mind his own affairs. He wouldn't want me to send Alfred to *him*."

"My dear Mrs. Powle," said Miss Broadus, "I can tell you this for your comfort—there are two sons of Mr. Churchill, the Independent minister of Eastcombe—that come over to him; besides one or two more that are quite respectable."

"Why does not Mr. Churchill send his boys to school at Eastcombe?"

"O well, it doesn't suit him, I suppose; and like goes to like, you know, my dear."

"That is what I think," said Mrs. Powle, looking at her husband, "and I wonder Mr. Powle does not think so too."

"If you mean me," said the squire, "I am not 'like' anybody—that I can tell you. A good schoolmaster is a good schoolmaster—I don't care what else he calls himself."

"And Mr. Rhys is a good schoolmaster, I have no doubt," said Miss Broadus.

"I know what he is," said Julia; "he is a nice man; I like him."

"I saw he kept you quiet," said Eleanor. "How did he manage it?"

"He didn't manage it. He told me about things," said Julia; "and he got flowers for me, and told me about ferns. You never saw such lovely ferns as we found; and you would not know where to look for them, either. I never saw such a nice man as Mr. Rhys in my life."

"There, my dear," said her mother, "do not encourage Julia in talking. She is always too ready."

"I am going to walk with him again, to get flowers," said the child.

"I shall invite him to the Lodge," said the squire. "He is a very sensible man, and knows what he is about."

"Do you know anything more about him, Mr. Powle?"

"He does more than teach three or four boys," said Miss Broadus. "He serves a little Dissenting Chapel of some sort, over at Lily Vale."

"Why does he not live there then?" said Mrs. Powle. "Lily Vale is two and a half miles off. Not very convenient, I should think."

"I don't know, my dear. Perhaps he finds living cheap at Wiglands, and I am sure he may. Do you know, I get butter for less than one-half what I paid when I was in Leicester?"

"It is summer time now, Miss Broadus," said the squire.

"Yes, I know, but still—I am sure Wiglands is the nicest, easiest place for poor people to live, that ever was."

"Why, you are not poor, Miss Broadus," said the squire.

Miss Broadus chuckled. The fact was, that the Miss Broadus's not being poor was a standing pleasant joke with them; it being well known that they were not largely supplied with means, but contrived to make a little do the apparent work of much more than they had. A way of achieving respectability upon which they prided themselves.

"Eleanor," said her mother as they left the table, "you look pale. Did you get your feet wet?"

"Yes, mamma—there was no helping that."

"Then you'll be laid up!"

"She must not, just now, my dear," said Miss Broadus smilingly.

Eleanor could not laugh off the prophecy, which an internal warning told her was well founded. She went to bed thinking of Mr. Rhys's helmet. She did not know why; she was not given to such thoughts; neither did she comprehend exactly what the helmet might be; yet now the thought came uneasily across her mind, that just such a cold as she had taken had been many a one's death; and

with that came a strange feeling of unprotectedness—of want of defence. It was very uncomfortable to go to bed with that slight sensation of sore throat and feverishness, and to remember that the beginning of multitudes of last sicknesses had been no other and no greater; and it was most unlike Eleanor to permit such a cause to make her uncomfortable. She charged it upon the conversation of the morning, and supposed herself nervous or feverish; but this, if an explanation, was no cure; and through the frequent wakings of a disturbed night, the thought of that piece of armour which made one of her fellow-creatures so blessedly calm, came up again and again to her mind.

"I am feverish—this is nightmare," said Eleanor to herself. But it must be good to have no such nightmare. And when the broad daylight had come, and she was pronounced to be very ill, and the doctor was sent for, Eleanor found her night's visions would not take their departure. She could not get up; she was a prisoner; would she ever be free?

She was very ill; the fever gained head; and the old doctor, who was a friend of the family, looked very grave at her. Eleanor saw it. She knew that a battle was to be fought between the powers of life and death; and the thought that no one could tell how the victory would be, came like an ice wind upon flowers. Her spirit shrank and cowered before it. Hopes and pleasures and plans, of which she was so full yesterday, were chilled to the ground; and across the cleared pathway of vision, what appeared? Eleanor would not look.

But the battle must be fought; and it had to be fought amid pain and fever and weariness and the anxious looks of friends; and it was not soon decided. And the wish for that helmet of shelter, whatever it might be, came at times bitterly strong over Eleanor's heart. Many a heavily drawn sigh, which her mother charged to the body's weariness, came from the mind's longing. And in the solitude of the night, when her breath was quick and her pulse was high and she knew everything was going wrong, the thought came with a sting of agony,—if there *was* such a helmet,

and she could not have it. O to be well and strong, and need none!—or while lying before death's door to see if it would open, O to have that talisman that would make its opening peace! It was not at Eleanor's hand, and she did not know where to find it. And when the daylight came again, and the doctor looked grave, and her mother turned away the anxious face she did not wish Eleanor to read, the cold chill of fear crept over Eleanor's heart. She hid it there. No creature in the house, she knew, could meet or quiet it; if indeed her explanation of it could have been understood. She banished it as often as it was possible; but during many days that Eleanor lay on a sick bed [illegible] so frequent a visitor that her heart grew so[illegible]

There were June roses and summer sunshine outside; and sweet breaths came in at the open windows, telling the time of year. Julia reported how fine the strawberries were, and went and came with words about walks and flowers and joyous doings; while Eleanor's room was darkened, and phials of medicine and glasses stood on the table, and the doctor went and came, and Mrs. Powle hardly left her by day, and at night the nurse slept, and Eleanor tossed and turned on her pillow and thought of another "night" that "cometh."

The struggle with fever and pain was over at last. Then came weakness; and though hope revived, fear would not die. Besides, Eleanor said to herself, though she should get entirely well of this sickness, who would guaranty her that another would not come? And must not one come—some time—that must be final? And how should that be met? Nay, though getting well again and out of present danger, she would have liked to have that armour of shelter still!

"What are you crying for?" said her little sister, coming suddenly into her room one day. Eleanor was so far recovered as to be up.

"I am weak and nervous,—foolish."

"I wouldn't be foolish," said Julia.

"I do not think I am foolish," said Eleanor slowly.

"Then why do you say you are? But what is the matter with you?"

"Like all the rest of the world, child,—I want something I cannot get. What have you there?"

"Ferns," said Julia. "Do you know what ferns are?"

"I suppose I do—when I see them."

"No, but when you *don't* see them; that's the thing."

"Do you, pray?"

"Yes! A fern is a plant which has its seeds come on the back of the leaf, and no flower; and it comes up curled like a caterpillar. Aren't those pretty?"

"Where did you learn all that?"

"I know more than that. This leaf is called a *frond*."

"Who told you?"

"Mr. Rhys."

"Did you learn it from Mr. Rhys?"

"Yes, to be sure I did, and a great deal more. He is going to teach me all about ferns."

"Where do you see Mr. Rhys?"

"Why! wherever I have a mind. Alfred goes walking with him, and the other boys, and I go too; and he tells us things. I always go along with Mr. Rhys, and he takes care of me."

"Does mamma know?"

"Yes, but papa lets Mr. Rhys do just what he pleases. Papa says Mr. Rhys is a wonderful man."

"What is he wonderful for?" said Eleanor languidly.

"Well, *I* think, because he is making Alfred a good boy."

"I wonder how he has done it," said Eleanor.

"So do I. He knows how. What do you think? he punished Alfred one day right before papa."

"Where?" said Eleanor, in astonishment.

"Down at the school. Papa was there. Papa told about it. Alfred thought he wouldn't dare, when papa was there; and Alfred took the opportunity to be impudent; and Mr. Rhys just took him up by his waistband and laid him down on the floor at his feet; and Alfred has behaved himself ever since."

"Was not papa angry?"

"He said he was at first, and I think it is likely; but after

that, he said Mr. Rhys was a great man, and he would not interfere with him."

"And how does Alfred like Mr. Rhys?"

"He likes him," said Julia, turning over her ferns. "I like him. Mr. Rhys said he was sorry you were sick. Now, *that* is a frond. That is what it is called. Do you see? those are the seeds."

Eleanor sighed. She would have liked to take lessons of Mr. Rhys on another subject. She half envied Julia's liberty. There seemed a great wall built up between her and the knowledge she wanted. Must it be so always?

"Julia, when are you going to take a walk with Mr. Rhys again?"

"To-morrow," was the quick answer.

"I will give you something to ask him about."

"I don't want it. I always have enough to ask him. We are going after ferns; we always have enough to talk about."

"But there is a question I would like you to ask."

"What is it? Why don't you ask him yourself?"

Eleanor was silent, watching Julia's uncompromising business-like air as she turned over her bunch of ferns. The little one was full of her own affairs; her long locks of hair waving with every turn of her busy head. Suddenly she looked up.

"What is your question, Eleanor?"

"You must not ask it as if from me."

"How then?"

"Just ask it—as if you wanted to know yourself; without saying anything."

"As if I wanted to know what?"

Eleanor hesitated, and Mrs. Powle came into the room.

"What, Eleanor—what?" Julia repeated.

"Nothing. Study your ferns."

"I *have* studied them. This is the rachis—and down here below this, is the rhizoma; and the little seed places that come on the back of the frond, are thecæ. I forget what Mr. Rhys called the seeds now. I'll ask him."

"What nonsense is that you are talking, Julia?"

"Sense, mamma. Or rather, it is knowledge."

"Mamma, how do *you* like Mr. Rhys? Julia says he is often here."

"He is a pleasant man," said Mrs. Powle. "I have nothing against him—except that your father and the children are crazy about him. I see nothing in him to be crazy about."

"Alfred is a good deal less crazy than he used to be," remarked Julia; "and *I* think papa hasn't lost anything."

"You are a saucy girl," said her mother. "Mr. Carlisle is very anxious to know when you will be down stairs again, Eleanor."

Julia ran off with her ferns; Eleanor went into a muse; and the conversation ceased.

It happened a few days after this, that the event about which Mr. Carlisle was anxious came to pass. Eleanor was able to leave her room. However, feeling yet very wanting in strength, and not quite ready to face a company of gay talkers, she shunned the drawing-room where such a company was gathered, and betook herself to a small summer-parlour in another part of the house. This room she had somewhat appropriated to her own use. It had once been a school-room. Since the misbehaviour of one governess, years ago, Mr. Powle had vowed that he never would have another in the house, come what would. Julia might run wild at home; he should be satisfied if she learned to read, to ride, and to walk: and when she was old enough, he would send her to boarding-school. What the squire considered old enough did not appear. Julia was a fine child of eleven, and still practising her accomplishments of riding and walking to her heart's content at home; with little progress made in the other branches to which reading is the door. The old school-room had long forgotten even its name, and had been fitted up simply and pleasantly for summer occupation. It opened on one side by a glass door upon a gay flower-garden; Eleanor's special pet and concern; where she did a great deal of work herself. It was

after an elaborate geometrical pattern; and beds of all sorts of angles were filled and bright with different coloured verbenas, phloxes, geraniums, heliotrope, and other flowers fit for such work; making a brilliant mosaic of scarlet, purple and gold, in Eastern gorgeousness, as the whole was seen from the glass door. Eleanor sat down there to look at it and realize the fact that she was getting well again; with the dreamy realization that goes along with present weakness and remembered past pain.

On another side the room opened to a small lawn; it was quite shut off by its situation and by the plantations of shrubbery, from the other part of the house; and very rarely visited by the chance comers who were frequent there. So Eleanor was a good deal surprised this evening to see a tall strange figure appear at the further side of her flower garden; then not at all surprised to see that it was Mr. Rhys accompanied by her sister Julia. Julia flitted about through the garden, in very irregular fashion, followed by her friend; till their wanderings brought them near the open door within which Eleanor sat. To the door Julia immediately darted, drawing her companion with her; and as soon as she came up exclaimed, as if she had been armed with a search-warrant and had brought her man,—

"Here's Mr. Rhys, Eleanor. Now you can ask him yourself whatever you like."

Eleanor felt startled. But it was with such a pleasant face that Mr. Rhys came up, such a cordial grasp of the hand greeted her, that the feeling vanished immediately. Perhaps that hand clasp was all the warmer for Eleanor's changed appearance. She was very unlike the girl of superb health who had wandered over the old priory grounds a few weeks before. Eleanor's colour was gone; the blue veins showed distinctly on the temples; the full lips, instead of their brilliant gay smile, had a languid and much soberer line. She made quite a different impression now, of a fair delicate young creature, who had lost and felt she had lost the proud strength in which she had been so luxuriant a little while before. Mr. Rhys looked at her attentively.

"You have been very ill, Miss Powle."

"I suppose I have—some of the time."

"I am rejoiced to see you well again."

"Thank you."

"Julia has been leading me over the garden and grounds, I did not know where she was bringing me."

"How do you like my garden?"

"For a garden of that sort—it seems to me well arranged."

He was very cool, certainly, in giving his opinion, Eleanor thought. Her gardening pride was touched. This was a pet of her own.

"Then you do not fancy gardens of this sort."

"I believe I think Nature is the best artist of all."

"But would you let Nature have her own way entirely?"

"No more in the vegetable than I would in the moral world. She would grow weeds."

The quick clear sense and decision, in the eye and accent were just what Eleanor did not want to cope with. She was silent. So were her two companions; for Julia was busy with a nosegay she was making up. Then Mr. Rhys turned to Eleanor.

"Julia said you had a question to ask of me, Miss Powle."

"Yes, I had," said Eleanor, colouring slightly and hesitating. "But you cannot answer it standing—will you come in, Mr. Rhys?"

"Thank you—if you will allow me, I will take this instead," said he, sitting down on one of the steps before the glass door. "What was the question?"

"That was the other day, when she brought in her ferns —it was a wish I had. But she ought not to have troubled you with it."

"It will give me great pleasure to answer you—if I can.', Eleanor half fancied he knew what the question was; and she hesitated again, feeling a good deal confused. But when should she have another chance? She made a bold push.

"I felt a curiosity to ask you—I did not know any one else who could tell me—what that 'helmet' was, you spoke of one day;—that day at the old priory?"

Eleanor could not look up. She felt as if the clear eyes opposite her were reading down in the depth of her heart. They were very unflinching about it. It was curiously disagreeable and agreeable both at once.

"Have you wanted it, these weeks past?" said he.

The question was unexpected. It was put with a penetrating sympathy. Eleanor felt if she opened her lips to speak she could not command their steadiness. She gave no answer but silence.

"A helmet?" said Julia, looking up. "What is a helmet?"

"The warriors of old time," said Mr. Rhys, "used to wear a helmet to protect their heads from danger. It was a covering of leather and steel. With this head-piece on, they felt safe; where their lives would not have been worth a penny without it."

"But Eleanor—what does Eleanor want of a helmet?" said Julia. And she went off into a shout of ringing laughter.

"Perhaps you want one," said Mr. Rhys, composedly.

"No, I don't. What should I want it for? What should I cover my head with leather and steel for, Mr. Rhys?"

"You want something stronger than that."

"Something stronger? What do I want, Mr. Rhys?"

"To know that, you must find out first what the danger is."

"I am not in any danger."

"How do you know that?"

"Am I, Mr. Rhys?"

"Let us see. Do you know what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us all?"

"No."

"Do you know whether God has given us any commandments?"

"Yes; I know the ten commandments. I have learned them once, but I don't remember them."

"Have you obeyed them?"

"Me?"

"Yes. You."

"I never thought about it."

"Have you disobeyed them, then?"

Eleanor breathed more freely, and listened. It was curious to her to see the wayward, giddy child stand and look into the eyes of her questioner as if fascinated. The ordinary answer from Julia would have been a toss and a fling. Now she stood aside and said sedately, "I don't know."

"We can soon tell," said her friend. "One of the commandments is, to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Have you always done that?"

"No," said Julia, bluntly. "I don't think anybody else does."

"Never mind anybody else. Have you always honoured the word and wish of your father and mother? That is another command."

"I have done it more than Alfred has."

"Let Alfred alone. Have *you* always done it?"

"No, sir."

"Have you loved the good God all your life, with all your heart?"

"No."

"You have loved to please yourself, rather than anything else?"

The nod with which Julia answered this, if not polite, was at least significant, accompanied with an emphatic "Always!" Mr. Rhys could not help smiling at her, but he went on gravely enough.

"What is to keep you then from being afraid?"

"From being afraid?"

"Yes. You want a helmet."

"Afraid?" said Julia.

"Yes. Afraid of the justice of God. He never lets a sin go unpunished. He is *perfectly* just."

"But I can't help it," said Julia.

"Then what is to become of you? You need a helmet?"

"A helmet?" said Julia again. "What sort of a helmet?"

"You want to know that God has forgiven you; that he is not angry with you; that he loves you and has made you his child."

"How can I?" said the child, pressing closer to the speaker where he sat on the step of the door. And no wonder, for the words were given with a sweet earnest utterance which drew the hearts of both hearers. He went on without looking at Eleanor; or without seeming to look that way.

"How can you what?"

"How can I have that?"

"That helmet? There is only one way."

"What is it, Mr. Rhys?"

They were silent a minute, looking at each other, the man and the child; the child with her eyes bent on his.

"Suppose somebody had taken your punishment for you? borne the displeasure of God for your sins?"

"Who would?" said Julia. "Nobody would."

"One has."

"Who, Mr. Rhys?"

"One that loved you, and that loved all of us, well enough to pay the price of saving us."

"What price did he pay?"

"His own life. He gave it up cruelly—that ours might be redeemed."

"What for, Mr. Rhys? What made him?"

"Because he loved us. There was no other reason."

"Then people will be saved," said Julia.

"Every one who will take the conditions. It depends upon that. There are conditions."

"What conditions, Mr. Rhys?"

"Do you know who did this for you?"

"No."

"It is the Lord himself—the Lord Jesus Christ—the Lord of glory. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death—even the death of the cross. So now he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour—able to save all who will accept his conditions."

"What are the conditions, Mr. Rhys?"

"You must be his servant. And you must trust all your little heart and life to him."

"I must be his servant?" said Julia.

"Yes, heart and soul, to obey him. And you must trust him to forgive you and save you for his blood's sake."

Doubtless there had been something in the speaker himself that had held the child's attention so fast all this while. Her eyes had never wandered from his face; she had stood in docile wise, looking at him and answering his questions and listening, won by the commentary she read in his face on what her friend was saying. A strange light kindled in it as he spoke; there were lines of affection and tenderness that came in the play of lips and eyes; and when he named his Master, there had shined in his face as it were the reflection of the glory he alluded to. Julia's eyes were not the only ones that had been held; though it was only Julia's tongue that said anything in reply. Standing now and looking still into the face she had been reading, her words were an unconscious rendering of what she had found there.

"Mr. Rhys, I think he was very good."

The water filled those clear eyes at that, but he only returned the child's gaze and said nothing.

"I will take the conditions, Mr. Rhys," Julia went on.

"The Lord make it so," he said gravely.

"But what is the helmet, Mr. Rhys?"

"When you have taken the conditions, little one, you will know." He rose up.

"Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor, rising also, "I have listened to you, but I do not quite understand you."

"I recommend you to ask better teaching, Miss Powle."

"But I would like to know exactly what you mean, and what you meant, by that 'helmet' you speak of so often?"

He looked steadily now at the fair young face beside him, which told so plainly of the danger lately passed through. Eleanor could not return, though she suffered the examination. His answer was delayed while he made it.

"Do you ask from a sense of need?" he said.

Eleanor looked up then, and answered, "Yes."

"To say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'—that is" he said. "Then the head is covered—even from fear of evil."

It was impossible that Eleanor ever should forget the look that went with the words, and which had prevented her own gaze from seeking the ground again. The look of inward rejoicing and outward fearlessness; the fire and the softness that at once overspread his face. "He was looking at his Master then"—was the secret conclusion of Eleanor's mind. Even while she thought it, he had turned and was gone again with Julia. She stood still some minutes, weak as she was. She was not sure that she perfectly comprehended what that helmet might be, but of its reality there could be no questioning. She had seen its plumes wave over one brow.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth"—Eleanor sat down and mused over the words. She had heard them before; they were an expression of sombody's faith, she was not sure whose; but what faith was it? Faith that the Redeemer *lived?* Eleanor did not question that. She had repeated the Apostle's Creed many a time. Yet a vague feeling from the words she could not analyze—or arising perhaps from the look that had interpreted them—floated over her mind, disturbing it with an exceeding sense of want. She felt desolate and forlorn. What was to be done? Julia and Mr. Rhys were gone. The garden was empty. There was no more chance of counsel-taking to-night. Eleanor felt in no mood for gay gossip, and slowly mounted the stairs to her own room, from whence she declined to come down again that night. She would like to find the settlement of this question, before she went back into the business of the world and was swallowed up by it, as she would soon be. Eleanor locked the door, and took up a Bible, and tried to find some good by reading in it. Her eyes and head were tired before her mind received any help. She was weak yet. She found the Bible very unsatisfactory; and gave it up.

CHAPTER III.

> "Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
> And he that might the vantage best have took,
> Found out the remedy."

"You can come down stairs to-night, Eleanor," said Mrs. Powle the next morning.

"I was down stairs last night—in the afternoon, I mean —mamma."

"Yes, but you did not stay. I want you in the drawing-room this evening. You can bear it now."

"I am in no hurry, mamma."

"Other people are, however. If you wear a white dress, do put a rose or some pink ribbons somewhere, to give yourself a little colour."

"Have you invited any one for this evening?"

"No, but people have promised themselves without being asked. Dr. Cairnes wants to see you; he said he would bring Mrs. Wycherly. Miss Broadus will be here, of course; she declared she would; both of them. And Mr. Carlisle desired my permission to present himself."

"Mr. Rhys is coming," said Julia.

"I dare say. Mr. Powle wants him here all the time. It is a mercy the man has a little consideration—or some business to keep him at home—or he would be the sauce to every dish. As it is, he really is not obtrusive."

"Are all these people coming with the hope and intent of seeing me, mamma?"

"I can only guess at people's hopes, Eleanor. I am

guiltless of anything but confessing that you were to make your appearance."

"Mr. Rhys is not coming to see you," said Julia. "He wants to see the books—that is what he wants."

There was some promise for Eleanor in the company announced for the evening. If anybody could be useful to her in the matter of her late doubts and wishes, it ought to be Dr. Cairnes, the rector. He at least was the only one she knew whom she could talk to about them; the only friend. Mr. Rhys was a stranger and her brother's tutor, that was all; a chance of speaking to him again was possible, but not to be depended on. Dr. Cairnes was her pastor and old friend; it is true, she knew him best, out of the pulpit, as an antiquarian; then she had never tried him on religious questions. Nor he her, she remembered; it was a doubtful hope altogether; nevertheless the evening offered what another evening might not in many a day. So Eleanor dressed, and with her slow languid step made her way down stairs to the scene of the social gaieties which had been so long interrupted for her.

Ivy Lodge was a respectable, comfortable, old house; pretty by the combination of those advantages; and pleasant by the fact of making no pretensions beyond what it was worth. It was not disturbed by the rage after new fashions, nor the race after distant greatness. Quiet respectability was the characteristic of the family; Mrs. Powle alone being burdened with the consciousness of higher birth than belonged to the name of Powle generally. She fell into her husband's ways, however, outwardly, well enough; did not dislodge the old furniture, nor introduce new extravagancies; and the Lodge was a pleasant place. "A most enjoyable house, my dear,"—as Miss Broadus expressed it. So the gentry of the neighbourhood found it universally.

The drawing-room was a pretty spacious apartment; light and bright; opening upon the lawn directly, without intervention of piazza or terrace. Windows, or rather glass doors, in deep recesses, stood open; the company seemed to be half in and half out. Dr. Cairnes was there, talking with

the squire. In another place Mrs. Powle was engaged with Mr. Carlisle. Further than those two groups Eleanor's eye had no chance to go; those who composed the latter greeted her instantly. Mrs. Powle's exclamation was of doubtful pleasure at Eleanor's appearance; there was no question of her companion's gratification. He came forward to Eleanor, gave her his chair; brought her a cup of tea, and then sat down to see her drink it; with a manner which bespoke pleasure in every step of the proceedings. A manner which had rather the effect of a barrier to Eleanor's vision. It was gratifying certainly; Eleanor felt it; only she felt a little too gratifying. Mr. Carlisle was getting on somewhat too fast for her. She drank her tea and kept very quiet; while Mrs. Powle sat by and fanned herself, as contentedly as a mother duck swims that sees all her young ones taking to the water kindly.

Now and then Eleanor's eyes went out of the window. On the lawn at a little distance was a group of people, sitting close together and seeming very busy. They were Mr. Rhys, Miss Broadus, Alfred and Julia. Something interesting was going forward; they were talking and listening, and looking at something they seemed to be turning over. Eleanor would have liked to join them; but here was Mr. Carlisle; and remembering the expression which had once crossed his face at the mention of Mr. Rhys's name, she would not draw attention to the group even by her eyes; though they wandered that way stealthily whenever they could. What a good time those people were having there on the grass: and she sitting fenced in by Mr. Carlisle. Other members of the party who had not seen Eleanor, came up one after another to congratulate and welcome her; but Mr. Carlisle kept his place. Dr. Cairnes came, and Eleanor wanted a chance to talk to him. None was given her. Mr. Carlisle left his place for a moment to carry Eleanor's cup away, and Dr. Cairnes thoughtlessly took the vacated chair; but Mr. Carlisle stationed himself on the other side in the window; and she was as far from her opportunity as ever.

"Well, my dear," said the doctor, "you have had a hard time, eh? We are glad to have you amongst us again."

"Hardly," put in Mrs. Powle. "She looks like a ghost."

"Rather a substantial kind of a ghost," said the doctor, pinching Eleanor's cheek; "*some* flesh and blood here yet—flesh at least;—and now the blood speaks for itself! That's right, my dear—you are better so."

Mr. Carlisle's smile said so too, as the doctor glanced at him. But the momentary colour faded again. Eleanor remembered how near she had come to being a ghost actually. Just then Mr. Carlisle's attention was forcibly claimed, and Mrs. Powle moved away. Eleanor seized her chance.

"Dr. Cairnes, I want your instruction in something."

"Well, my dear," said the doctor, lowering his tone in imitation of Eleanor's—"I shall be happy to be your instructor. I have been that, in some sort, ever since you were five years old—a little tot down in your mother's pew, sitting under my ministrations. What is it, Miss Eleanor?"

"I am afraid I did not receive much in those days, sir."

"Probably not. Hardly to be expected. I have no doubt you received as much as a child could, from the mysteries which were above its comprehension. What is it now, Miss Eleanor?"

"Something in your line, sir. Dr. Cairnes, you remember the helmet spoken of in the Bible?"

"Helmet?" said the doctor. "Goliath's? He had helmet of brass upon his head. Must have been heavy, but I suppose he could carry it. The same thing essentially as those worn by our ancestors—a little variation in form. What about it, my dear? I am glad to see you smiling again."

"Nothing about that. I am speaking of another sort of helmet—do you not remember?—it is called somewhere the helmet of salvation."

"*That?* O!—um! *That* helmet! Yes—it is in, let me see—it is in the description of Christian armour, in a fine

passage in Ephesians, I think. What about that, Miss Eleanor?"

"I want to know, sir, what shape that helmet takes."

It was odd, with what difficulty Eleanor brought out her questions. It was touching, the concealed earnestness which lingered behind her glance and smile.

"Shape?" said the doctor, descending into his cravat;—"um! a fair question; easier asked than answered. Why, my dear, you should read a commentary."

"I like living commentaries, Dr. Cairnes."

"Do you? Ha, ha!—well. Living commentaries, eh? and shapes of helmets. Well. What shape does it take? Why, my dear, you know of course that those expressions are figurative. I think it takes the shape of a certain composure and peace of mind which the Christian soul feels, and justly feels, in regarding the provision made for its welfare in the gospel. It is spoken of as the helmet of salvation; and there is the shield of faith; and so forth."

Eleanor felt utterly worried, and did not in the least know how to frame her next question.

"What has put you upon thinking of helmets, Miss Eleanor?"

"I was curious—" said Eleanor.

"You had some serious thoughts in your illness?" said the doctor. "Well, my dear—I am glad of it. Serious thoughts do not in the least interfere with all proper present enjoyments; and with improper ones you would not wish to have anything to do."

"May we not say that serious thoughts are the *foundation* of all true present enjoyment?" said another voice. It was Mr. Rhys who spoke. Eleanor started to hear him, and to see him suddenly in the place where Mr. Carlisle had been standing in the window.

"Eh? Well—no,—not just that," said Dr. Cairnes, coolly. "I have a good deal of enjoyment in various things—this fair day and this fair company, for example, and Mrs. Powle's excellent cup of tea—with which, I apprehend, serious thoughts have nothing to do."

"But we are commanded to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."

"Well—um! That is to be taken of course in its rational significance. A cup of tea is a cup of tea—and nothing more. There is nothing at the bottom of it—ha, ha!—but a little sugar. Nothing more serious."

Mr. Rhys's figure standing in the window certainly hindered a part of the light. To judge by the doctor's face, he was keeping out the whole.

"What do you suppose the apostle means, sir, when he says, 'Henceforward know I no man after the flesh?'"

"Hum!—ah,—well, he was an apostle. I am not. Perhaps you are?"

There was a degree of covert disdain in this speech, which Eleanor wondered at in so well-bred a man as Dr. Cairnes. Mr. Rhys answered with perfect steadiness, with no change of tone or manner.

"Without being inspired—I think, in the sense of *messenger*, every minister of Christ is his apostle."

"Ah! well!—I am not even apostolic," said the doctor, with one or two contented and discontented grunts. Eleanor understood them; the content was his own, the discontent referred to the speaker whose words were so inopportune. The doctor rose and left the ground. Mr. Rhys had gone even before him; and Eleanor wondered anew whether this man were indeed shy or not. He was so little seen and heard; yet spoke, when he spoke, with such clearness and self-possession. He was gone now, and Mr. Carlisle was still busy. Up came Miss Broadus and took the vacant seat.

It is impossible to describe Miss Broadus's face. It was in a certain sense fair, and fat, and fresh coloured; but the "windows of her soul" showed very little light from within; they let out nothing but a little gleam now and then. However, her tongue was fluent, and matter for speech never wanting. She was kindly too, in manner at least; and extremely sociable with all her neighbours, low as well as high; none of whose affairs wanted interest for her. It was

in fact owing to Miss Broadus's good offices with Mrs. Powle, that Mr. Rhys had been invited to join the pleasure party with which the adventures of this book begin. The good lady was as neat as a pink in her dress; and very fond of being as showy, in a modest way.

"Among us again, Eleanor?" she said. "We are glad to see you. So is Mr. Carlisle, I should judge. We have missed you badly. You have been terribly ill, haven't you? Yes, you show it. But *that* will soon pass away, my dear. I longed to get in to do something for you—but Mrs. Powle would not let me; and I knew you had the best of everything all the while. Only I thought I would bring you a pot of my grape jelly; for Mrs. Powle don't make it; and it is so refreshing."

"It was very nice, thank you."

"O, it was nothing, my dear; only we wanted to do something. I have been having such an interesting time out there: didn't you see us sitting on the grass? Mr. Rhys is quite a botanist—or a naturalist—or something; and he is quite the centre of our entertainment. He was showing us ferns—fern leaves, my dear; and talking about them. Do you know, as I told him, I never looked at a fern leaf before; but now really it's quite curious; and he has almost made me believe I could see a certain kind of beauty in them. You know there is a *sort* of beauty which some people think they find in a great many things; and when they are enthusiastic, they almost make you think as they do. I think there is a great power in enthusiasm."

"Is Mr. Rhys enthusiastic?"

"O, I don't know, my dear,—I don't know what you would call it; I am not a philosopher; but he is very fond of ferns himself. He is a very fine man. He is a great deal too good to go and throw himself away."

"Is that what he is going to do?"

"Why, yes, my dear; that is what I should call it. It is a great deal more than that. I can never remember the place; but it is the most dreadful place, I do suppose, that ever was heard of. I never heard of such a place. They do

every horrible thing there—my dear, the accounts make your blood creep. I think Mr. Rhys is a great deal too valuable a man to be lost there, among such a set of creatures—they are more like devils than men. And Eleanor," said Miss Broadus, looking round to see that nobody was within hearing of her communication,—"you have no idea what a pleasant man he is. I asked him to tea with Juliana and me—you know one must be kind and neighbourly at any rate—and he has no friends here; I sometimes wonder if he has any anywhere; but he came to tea, and he was as agreeable as possible. He was really excellent company, and very well behaved. I think Juliana quite fell in love with him; but I tell her it's no use; she never would go off to that dreadful place with him."

And Miss Broadus laughed a laugh of simple amusement; Miss Juliana being, though younger than herself, still very near the age of an old lady. They kept the light-hearted simplicity of young years, however, in a remarkable degree; and so had contrived to dispense with wrinkles on their fresh old faces.

"Where is that place, Miss Broadus?"

"My dear, I never can remember the name of it. They do say the country is beautiful, and the fruit, and all that; it is described to be a beautiful place, where, as Heber's hymn says, "only man is vile." But he is as vile as he can be, there. And I am sure Mr. Rhys would be a great loss at Wiglands. My dear, how pleasant it would be, I said to Juliana this morning, how pleasant it would be, if Mr. Rhys were only in the Church, and could help good Dr. Cairnes. 'Tisn't likely they will let him live long out there, if he goes."

"When is he going?"

"O, I don't know when, my dear; he is waiting for something. And I never can remember the name of the place; if a word has many syllables I cannot keep them together in my memory; only I know the vegetables there grow to an enormous size, and as if that wasn't enough, men devour each other. It seems like an abusing the gifts of Providence,

don't it? But there is nothing they do not abuse. I am afraid they will abuse poor Mr. Rhys. And his boys would miss him very much, and I am sure we all should. I have got quite acquainted with him, seeing him here; and now Juliana has taken a fancy to ask him to our cottage—and I have come to quite like him. What a different looking man he is from Mr. Carlisle—now look at them talking together!"

"Where did you learn all this, Miss Broadus? did Mr. Rhys tell you?"

"No, my dear; he never will talk about it or about himself. He lent me a pamphlet or something,—Mr. Rhys is the tallest—but Mr. Carlisle is a splendid-looking man—don't you think so, Eleanor?"

Miss Broadus's energetic whisper Eleanor thought fit to ignore, though she did not fail to note the contrast which a moment's colloquy between the two men presented. There was little in common between them; between the marked features and grave keen expression of the one face, and the cool, bright, somewhat supercilious eye and smile of the other. There was power in both faces, Eleanor thought, of different kinds; and power is attractive. Her eye was held till they parted from each other. Two very different walks in life claimed the two men; so much Eleanor could see. For some time after she was obliged to attend exclusively to that walk of life which Mr. Carlisle represented, and to look at the views he brought forward for her notice.

They were not so engrossing, however, that Eleanor entirely forgot the earlier conversation of the afternoon or the question which had troubled her. The evening had been baffling. She had not had a word with Mr. Rhys, and he had disappeared long since from the party. So had Dr. Cairnes. There was no more chance of talk upon that subject to-night; and Eleanor, feeling very feeble still, thought best to cut short Mr. Carlisle's enjoyment of other subjects for the evening. She left the company, and slowly passed through the house, from room to room, to get to her own. In the course of this progress she came to the library,

There, seated at one of the tables and bending over a volume, was Mr. Rhys. He jumped up as she passed through, and came forward with extended hand and a word of kind inquiry. His "good-night" was so genial, his clasp of her hand so frank and friendly, that instead of going on, Eleanor stood still.

"Are you studying?"

"Your father has kindly given me liberty to avail myself of his treasures here. My time is very scanty—I was tempted to seize the moment that offered itself. It is a very precious privilege to me, and one which I shall not abuse."

"Pray do not speak of abusing," said Eleanor; "nobody minds the books here,—I am glad they are good to anybody else. I am interrupting you."

"Not at all!" said he, bringing up a great chair for her, "or only agreeably. Pray sit down—you are not fit to stand."

Eleanor however remained standing, and hesitating for a moment.

"I wish you would tell me a little more about what we were talking of," she said with some effort.

"Do you feel your want of the helmet?" he said gravely.

"I feel that I haven't it," said Eleanor.

"What is it that you are conscious of wanting?"

She hesitated; it was a home question; and, very unaccustomed to speak of her secret thoughts and feelings to any one, especially on religious subjects, which however had never occupied her before, Eleanor was hardly ready to answer. Yet in the tones of the question there was a certain quiet assurance and simplicity before which she yielded.

"I felt—a little while ago—when I was sick—that I was not exactly safe."

Eleanor spoke, hesitating between every few words, looking down, and falling her voice at the end. So she did not see the keen intentness of the look that was fixed upon her.

"You felt that there was something wanting between you and God?"

"I believe so."

His accent was as deliberately clear as hers was hesitating. Every word went into Eleanor's soul.

"Then you can understand now, that when one can say, joyfully, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;'—when he is no vague abstraction, but felt to be a *Redeemer;*—when one can say assuredly, he is *my* Redeemer; I know he has bought back my soul from sin and from the punishment of sin, which is death; I feel I am forgiven; and I know he liveth—my Redeemer—and according to his promise lives to deliver me from every evil and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom;—do you see, now, that one who can say this has on his head the covering of an infinite protection—an infinite shelter from both danger and fear?—a helmet, placed on his head by his Lord's own hand, and of such heavenly temper that no blows can break through it."

Eleanor was a little time silent, with downcast eyes.

"You do not mean to say, that this protection is against *all* evil, do you? sickness and pain are evils, are they not?"

"Not to him."

"Not to him?"

"No. The evil of them is gone. They can do him no harm; if they come, they will do good. He that wears this helmet has absolutely no evil to fear. All things shall work good to him. There shall no evil happen to the just. Blessed be the Lord, who only doeth wondrous things!"

Eleanor stood silenced, humbled, convinced; till she recollected she must not stand there so, and she lifted her eyes to bid good-night. Then the face she met gave a new turn to her thoughts. It was a changed face; such a light of pure joy and deep triumph shone over it, not hiding nor hindering the loving care with which those penetrating eyes were reading herself. It gave Eleanor a strange compression of heart; it told her more than his words had done; it showed her the very reality of which he spoke. Eleanor went away overwhelmed.

"Mr. Rhys is a happy man!" she said to herself;—"happy, happy! I wish—I wish I were as happy as he!"

CHAPTER IV.

"She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
Take care!
She gives a side-glance and looks down,
Beware! beware!"

A FEW days more saw Eleanor restored to all the strength and beauty of health which she had been accustomed to consider her natural possession. And then—it is likely to be so—she was so happy in what mind and body had, that she forgot her wish for what the spirit had not. Or almost forgot it. Eleanor lived a very full life. It was no dull languid existence that she dragged on from day to day; time counted none but golden pennies into her hand. Every minute was filled with business or play, both heartily entered into, and pursued with all the energy of a very energetic nature. Study, when she touched it, was sweet to her: but Eleanor did not study much. Nature was an enchanted palace of light and perfume. Bodily exertion, riding and walking, was as pleasant to her as it is to a bird to use its wings. Family intercourse, and neighbourly society, were nothing but pleasure. Benevolent kindness, if it came in her way, was a labour of love; and a hundred home occupations were greatly delighted in. They were not generally of an exalted character; Eleanor's training and associations had not led her into any dignified path of human action; she had led only a butterfly's life of content and pleasure, and her character was not at all matured; but the capabilities were there; and the energy and will that might have done greater things, wrought beautiful embroidery, made

endless fancy work, ordered well such part of the household economy as was committed to her, carried her bright smile into every circle, and made Eleanor's foot familiar with all the country where she could go alone, and her pony's trot well known in every lane and roadway where she could go with his company.

All these enjoyments of her life were taken with new relish and zeal after her weeks of illness had laid her aside from them. Eleanor's world was brighter than ever. And round about all of these various enjoyments now, circling them with a kind of halo of expectancy or possibility, was the consciousness of a prospect that Eleanor knew was opening before her—a brilliant life-possession that she saw Fortune offering to her with a gracious hand. Would Eleanor take it? That Eleanor did not quite know. Meanwhile her eyes could not help looking that way; and her feet, consciously or unconsciously, now and then made a step towards it.

She and her mother were sitting at work one morning—that is to say, Eleanor was drawing and Mrs. Powle cutting tissue paper in some very elaborate way, for some unknown use or purpose; when Julia dashed in. She threw a bunch of bright blue flowers on the table before her sister.

"There," she said—"do you know what that is?"

"Why, certainly," said Eleanor. "It is borage."

"Well, do you know what it means?"

"What it *means?* No. What does any flower mean?"

"I'll tell you what *this* means," said Julia.

'I, borage,
Bring courage.'

That is what people used to think it meant."

"How do you know that?"

"Mr. Rhys says so. This borage grew in Mrs. Williams's garden; and I dare say she believes it."

"Who is Mrs. Williams?"

"Why, she's the old woman where Mr. Rhys lives; he lives in her cottage; that's where he has his school. He has

a nice little room in her cottage, and there's nobody else in the cottage but Mrs. Williams."

"Do, Julia, carry your flowers off, and do not be so hoydenish," said Mrs. Powle.

"We have not seen Mr. Rhys here for a great while, mamma," said Eleanor. "I wonder what has become of him."

"I'll tell you," said Julia—"he has become not well. I know Mr. Rhys is ill, because he is so pale and weak. And I know he is weak, because he cannot walk as he used to do. We used to walk all over the hills; and he says he can't go now."

"Mamma, it would be right to send down and see what is the matter with him. There must be something. It is a long time—mamma, I think it is weeks—since he was at the Lodge."

"Your father will send, I dare say," said Mrs. Powle, cutting her tissue paper.

"Mamma, did you hear," said Eleanor, as Julia ran off, "that Mr. Rhys was going to leave Wiglands and bury himself in some dreadful place somewhere?"

"I heard so."

"What place is it?"

"I can't tell, I am sure. It is somewhere in the South Seas, I believe—that region of horrors."

"Is it true he is going there, mamma?"

"I am sure I can't tell. Miss Broadus says so; and she says, I believe, he told her so himself. If he did, I suppose it is true."

"Mamma, I think Mr. Rhys is a great deal too fine a man to go and lose his life in such a place. Miss Broadus says it is horrible. Do you know anything about it?"

"I have no taste for horrors," said Mrs. Powle.

"I think it is a great pity," Eleanor repeated. "I am sorry. There is enough in England for such a man to do, without going to the South Seas. I wonder how anybody *can* leave England!"

Mrs. Powle looked up at her daughter and laughed. Eleanor had suspended her drawing, and was sending a

loving gaze out of the open window, where nature and summer were revelling in their conjoined riches. Art showed her hand too, stealthily, having drawn out of the way of the others whatever might encumber the revel. Across a wide stretch of wooded and cultivated country, the eye caught the umbrageous heights on the further side of the valley of the Ryth. Eleanor's gaze was fixed. Mrs. Powle's glance was sly.

"I should like to ask your opinion of another place," she said,—"which, being in England, is not horrible. You see that bit of brown mason-work, high away there, peeping out above the trees in the distance?—You know what house that is?"

"Certainly."

"What is it?"

"It is the Priory. The new Priory, it ought to be called; I am sure the old one is down there in the valley yet—beneath it." But Eleanor's colour rose.

"What do you think of that place?"

"Considering that the old priory and its grounds belong to it, I think it must be one of the loveliest places in England."

"I should like to see it in your possession," Mrs. Powle remarked, going on with her tissue paper.

Eleanor also went on assiduously with her drawing, and her colour remained a rich tint. But she went on frankly with her words too.

"I am not sure, mamma, that I like the owner of it well enough to receive such a valuable gift from him."

"He likes you quite well enough to bestow it on you, without asking any questions," said Mrs. Powle. "He hardly thinks it is worth having, unless you have it too."

"That is inconvenient," said Eleanor.

"It strikes me the other way," said her mother.

"How do you know this, which you affirm so securely, mamma?"

"How should I know it? The person in question told me himself."

"Told you in so many words?"

"No, in a great many more," said Mrs. Powle, laughing. "I have merely presented a statement. He had a great deal more to do than that."

The tissue paper rustled quietly for some time after this, and Eleanor's pencil could be heard making quick marks. Neither lady interrupted the other.

"Well, Eleanor,—how does it seem to you?" began the elder lady, in a tone of quiet satisfaction.

"Inconvenient, mamma,—as I said."

"How?"

But Eleanor did not say how.

"Mr. Carlisle will be here for his answer this evening."

"I like him very well, mamma," said Eleanor, after another pause,—"but I do not like him enough."

"Nonsense! You would like to be Lady Rythdale, wouldn't you?"

The silence which followed this was longer than that which had been before. Knife and pencil pursued their work, but Mrs. Powle, glancing up furtively from her tissue paper saw that Eleanor's brow was knitted and that her pencil was moving under the influence of something besides Art. So she let her alone for a long time. And Eleanor's fancy saw a vision of fairy beauty and baronial dignity before her. They lay in the wide domains and stately appendages of Rythdale Priory. How could she help seeing it? The vision floated before her with point after point of entrancing loveliness, old history, present luxury, hereditary rank and splendour, and modern power. It was like nothing in Eleanor's own home. Her father, though a comfortable country gentleman, boasted nothing and had nothing to boast in the way of ancestry, beyond a respectable descent of several generations. His means, though ample enough for comfort and reasonable indulgence, could make no pretensions to more. And Ivy Lodge was indeed a pleasant home, and every field and hedgerow belonging to it was lovely to Eleanor; but the broad manors of Rythdale Priory for extent would swallow up many such, and for

beauty and dignity were as a damask rose to a bit of eglantine. Would Eleanor be Lady Rythdale?

"He will be here this evening for his answer, Eleanor," Mrs. Powle remarked in a quiet voice the second time.

"Then you must give it to him, mamma."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. You must see him yourself. I will have no such shifting of your work upon my shoulders."

"I do not wish to see him to-night, mamma."

"I choose that you should. Don't talk any nonsense to me, Eleanor."

"But, mamma, if I am to give the answer, I am not ready with any answer to give."

"Tell Mr. Carlisle so; and he will draw his own conclusions, and make you sign them."

"I do not want to be made to sign anything."

"Do it of free-will then," said Mrs. Powle, laughing. "It is coming Eleanor—one way or the other. If I were you, I would do it gracefully. Is it a hard thing to be Lady Rythdale?"

Eleanor did not say, and nothing further passed on the subject; till, as both parties were leaving the room together, Mrs. Powle said significantly—

"You must give your own answer, Eleanor, and to-night. I will have no skulking."

It was beyond Mrs. Powle's power, however, to prevent skulking of a certain sort. Eleanor did not hide herself in her room, but she left it late in the afternoon, when she knew the company consisted of more than one, and entered a tolerably well-filled drawing-room. Mrs. Powle had not wished to have it so, but these things do not arrange themselves for our wishes. Miss Broadus was there, and Dr. Cairnes, and friends who had come to make him and his sister a visit; and one or two other neighbours. Eleanor came in without making much use of her eyes, and sheltered herself immediately under the wing of Miss Broadus, who was the first person she fell in with. Two pairs of eyes saw her entrance; with oddly enough the same thought and

comment. "She will make a lovely Lady Rythdale." All the baronesses of that house had been famous for their beauty, and the heir of the house remarked to himself that *this* would prove not the least lovely of the race. However, Eleanor did not even feel sure that he was there, he kept at such a distance; and she engaged Miss Broadus in a conversation that seemed of interminable resources. The sole thing that Eleanor was conscious of concerning it, was its lasting quality; and to maintain that was her only care.

Would Eleanor be Lady Rythdale? She had made up her mind to nothing, except, that it would be very difficult for her to say either yes or no. Naturally enough, she dreaded the being obliged to say anything; and was ready to seize every expedient to stave off the moment of emergency. As long as she was talking to Miss Broadus, she was safe; but conversations cannot last always, even when they flow in a stream so full and copious as that in which the words always poured from that lady's lips. Eleanor saw signs at last that the fountain was getting exhausted; and as the next resort proposed a game of chess. Now a game of chess was the special delight of Miss Broadus; and as it was the detestation of her sister Miss Juliana, the delight was seldom realized. The two sisters were harmonious in everything except a few tastes, and perhaps their want of harmony in those points gave their life the variety it needed. At any rate, such an offer as Eleanor's was rarely refused by the elder sister; and the two ladies were soon deep in their business. One really, the other seemingly. Though indeed it is true that Eleanor was heartily engaged to prevent the game coming to a termination, and therefore played in good earnest, not for conquest but for time. This had gone on a good while, before she was aware that a footstep was drawing near the chess table, and then that Mr. Carlisle stood beside her chair.

"Now don't *you* come to help!" said Miss Broadus, with a thoughtful face and a piece between her finger and thumb.

"Why not."

"I know!" said Miss Broadus, never taking her eyes from the board which held them as by a charm,—"I can play a sort of a game; but if you take part against me, I shall be vanquished directly."

"Why should I take part against you?"

Miss Broadus at that laughed a good-humoured little simple laugh. "Well," she said, "it's the course of events, I suppose. I never find anybody taking my part now-a-days. There! I am afraid you have made me place that piece wrong, Mr. Carlisle. I wish you would be still. I cannot fight against two such clever people."

"Do you find Miss Powle clever?"

"I didn't know she was, so much, before," said Miss Broadus, "but she has been playing like a witch this evening. There, Eleanor—you are in check."

Eleanor was equal to that emergency, and relieved her king from danger with a very skilful move. She could keep her wits, though her cheek was high-coloured and her hand had a secret desire to be nervous. Eleanor would not let it; and Mr. Carlisle admired the very pretty fingers which paused quietly upon the chessmen.

"Do not forget a proper regard for the interests of the church, Miss Broadus," he remarked.

"Why, I never do!" said Miss Broadus. "What do you mean? O, my bishop!—Thank you, Mr. Carlisle."

Eleanor did not thank him, for the bishop's move shut up her play in a corner. She did her best, but her king's resources were cut off; and after a little shuffling she was obliged to surrender at discretion. Miss Broadus arose, pleased, and reiterating her thanks to Mr. Carlisle, and walked away; as conscious that her presence was no more needed in that quarter.

"Will you play with me?" said Mr. Carlisle, taking the chair Miss Broadus had quitted.

"Yes," said Eleanor, glad of anything to stave off what she dreaded; "but I am not—"

"I am no match for you," she was going to say. She stopped suddenly, and coloured more deeply.

"What are you not?" asked the gentleman, slowly setting his pawns.

"I am not a very good player. I shall hardly give you amusement."

"I am not sorry for that—supposing it is true. I do not like to see women good chess-players."

"Pray why do you not like it?"

"Chess is a game of planning—scheming—contriving—calculating. Women ought not to be adepts in those arts. I hate women that are."

He glanced up as he spoke, at the fair, frank lines of the face opposite him. No art to scheme was shown in them; there might be resolution; he liked that. He liked it too that the fringe of the eyes drooped over them, and that the tint of the cheek was so very rich.

"But they say, no one can equal a woman in scheming and planning, if she takes to it," said Eleanor.

"Try your skill," said he. "It is your move."

The game began, and Eleanor tried to make good play; but she could not bring to it the same coolness or the same acumen that had fought with Miss Broadus. The well-formed, well-knit hand with the coat sleeve belonging to it, which was all of her adversary that came under her observation, distracted Eleanor's thoughts; she could not forget whose it was. Very different from the weak flexile fingers of Miss Broadus, with their hesitating movement and doubtful pauses; these did their work and disappeared, with no doubt or hesitancy of action, and with agile firmness in every line of muscle and play. Eleanor showed very poor skill for her part, at planning and contriving on this occasion; and she had a feeling that her opponent might have ended the game many a time if he had chosen it. Still the game did not end. It was a very silent one.

"You are playing with me, Mr. Carlisle," she said at length.

"What are you doing with me?"

"Making no fight at all; but that is because I cannot. Why don't you conquer me and end the game?"

"How can I?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I believe you do. It is all a muddle to me; and not a very interesting piece of confusion to you, I should think."

He did not answer that, but moved a piece; Eleanor made the answering move; and the next step created a lock. The game could go no further. Eleanor began to put up the pieces, feeling worsted in more ways than one. She had not dared to raise her eyes higher than that coat-sleeve; and she knew at the same time that she herself had been thoroughly overlooked. Those same fingers came now helping her to lay the chessmen in the box, ordering them better than she did.

"I want to show you some cottages I have been building beyond Rythdale tower," said the owner of the fingers. "Will you ride with me to-morrow to look at them?"

He waited for her answer, which Eleanor hesitated to give. But she could not say no, and finally she gave a low yes. Her yes was so low, it was significant; Eleanor knew it; but Mr. Carlisle went on in the same tone.

"At what hour? At eleven?"

"That will do," said Eleanor, after hesitating again.

"Thank you."

He went on, taking the chessmen from her fingers as fast as she gathered them up, and bestowing them in the box after a leisurely manner; then rose and bowed and took his departure. Eleanor saw that he did not hold any communication with her mother on his way out; and in dread of Mrs. Powle's visitation of curiosity upon herself, she too made as quick and as quiet an escape as possible to her own room. There locked the door, and walked the floor to think.

In effect she had given her answer, by agreeing to ride; she knew it. She knew that Mr. Carlisle had taken it so, even by the slight freedom with which his fingers touched hers in taking the chessmen from them. It was a very little thing; and yet Eleanor could never recall the willing contact of those fingers, repeated and repeated, without a thrill of feeling that she had committed herself; that she

had given the end of the clue into Mr. Carlisle's hand, which duly wound up would land her safe enough, mistress of Rythdale Priory. And was she unwilling to be that? No—not exactly. And did she dislike Rythdale Priory's master or future master? No, not at all; nevertheless, Eleanor did not feel quite willing to have him hers just yet; she was not ready for that; and she chafed at feeling that the end of that clue was in the hand of her chess-playing antagonist, and alternatives pretty well out of her power. An alternative Eleanor would have liked. She would have liked the play to have gone on for some time longer, leaving her liberty in all kinds; liberty to make up her mind at leisure, among other things. She was not just now eager to be mistress of anything but herself.

Eleanor watched for her mother's coming, but Mrs. Powle was wiser. She had marked the air of both parties on quitting the drawing-room; and though doubtless she would have liked a little word revelation of what she desired to know, she was content to leave things in train. She judged that Mr. Carlisle could manage his own affairs, and went to bed well satisfied; while Eleanor, finding that her mother was not coming, at last laid herself also down to rest, with a mixed feeling of pleasure and pain in her heart, but vexation towering above all. It would have been vexation still better grown, if she had known the hint her mother had given Mr. Carlisle, when that evening he had applied to her for what news she had for him? Mrs. Powle referred him very smilingly to Eleanor to learn it; at the same time telling him that Eleanor had been allowed to run wild —like her sister Julia—till now she was a little wilful and needed taming.

She looked the character sufficiently well when she came down the next morning. The colour on her cheek was raised yet, and rich; and Eleanor's beautiful lips did not unbend to their brilliant mischievous smile. She was somewhat quick and nervous too about her household arrangements and orders, which yet Eleanor did not neglect. It was time then to dress for her ride; and Eleanor dressed,

not hurriedly but carefully, between pleasure and irritation. By what impulse she could not have told, she pulled the feather from her riding-cap. It was a long, jaunty black feather, that somewhat shaded and softened her face in riding with its floating play. Her cap now, and her whole dress, was simplicity itself; but if Eleanor had meant to cheat Mr. Carlisle of some pleasure, she had misjudged and lost her aim; the close little unadorned cap but showed the better her beautiful hair, and a face and features which nobody that loved them could wish even shaded from view.

Mrs. Powle had maintained a discreet silence all the morning; nevertheless Eleanor was still afraid that she might come to ask questions, and not enduring to answer them, as soon as her toilet was finished she fled from her room into the garden. This garden, into which the old schoolroom opened, was Eleanor's particular property. No other of the family were ever to be found in it. She had arranged its gay curves and angles, and worked in it and kept it in great part herself. The dew still hung on the leaves; the air of a glorious summer morning was sweet with the varied fragrance of the flowers. Eleanor's heart sprung for the dear old liberty she and the garden had had together; she went lingeringly and thoughtfully among her petunias and carnations, remembering how joyous that liberty had been; and yet she was not willing to say the word that would secure it to her. She roved about among the walks, picking carnations in one hand and gathering up her habit with the other. So her little sister found her.

"Why, Eleanor!—are you going to ride with Mr. Carlisle?"

"Yes."

"Well, he has come—he is waiting for you. He has brought the most *splendid* black horse for you that you ever saw; papa says she is magnificent."

"I ordered my pony," said Eleanor.

"Well, the pony is there, and so is the black horse. O such a beauty, Eleanor! Come."

Eleanor would not go through the house, to see her mother and father by the way. Instinctively she sheered

off by the shrubbery paths, which turning and winding at last brought her out upon the front lawn. On the whole, a more marked entrance upon the scene the young lady could not have contrived. From the green setting of the shrubbery her excellent figure came out to view, in its dark riding drapery; and carnations in one hand, her habit in the other, she was a pleasant object to several pairs of eyes that were watching her; Julia having done them the kind office to say which way she was coming.

Of them all, however, Eleanor only saw Mr. Carlisle, who was on the ground to meet her. Perhaps he had as great an objection to eyes as she had; for his removal of his cap in greeting was as cool as if she had been a stranger; and so were his words.

"I have brought Black Maggie for you—will you do me the honour to try her?"

Eleanor did not say she would not, and did not say anything. Hesitation and embarrassment were the two pleasant feelings which possessed her and forbade her to speak. She stood before the superb animal, which showed blood in every line of its head and beautiful frame; and looked at it, and looked at the ground. Mr. Carlisle gently removed the carnations from her hand, taking them into his own, then gave her the reins of Black Maggie and put her into the saddle. In another minute they were off, and out of the reach of observation. But Eleanor had felt again, even in that instant of giving into her fingers the reins which he had taken from the groom, the same thing which she had felt last night—the expression of something new between them. She was in a very divided state of mind. She had not told him he might take that tone with her.

"There are two ways to the head of the valley," said the subject of her thoughts. "Shall we take the circuit by the old priory, or go by the moor?"

"By the moor," said Eleanor.

There, for miles, was a level plain road; they could ride any pace, and she could stave off talking. Accordingly, as soon as they got quit of human habitations, Eleanor gave

Black Maggie secretly to understand that she might go as fast as she liked. Black Maggie apparently relished the intimation, for she sprang forward at a rate Eleanor by experience knew nothing of. She had never been quite so well mounted before. As swiftly and as easily as if Black Maggie's feet had been wings, they flew over the common. The air was fresh, the motion was quite sufficient to make it breezy; Eleanor felt exhilarated. All the more because she felt rebellious, and the stopping Mr. Carlisle's mouth was at least a gratification, though she could not leave him behind. He had not mounted her better than himself. Fly as Black Maggie would, her brown companion was precisely at her side. Eleanor had a constant sense of that; but however, the ride was so capital, the moor so wild, the summer air so delicious, that by degrees she began to grow soothed, and come down from rebellion to good humour. By and by, Black Maggie got excited. It was with nothing but her own spirits and motion; quite enough though to make hoofs still more emulous of wings. Now she flew indeed. Eleanor's bridle rein was not sufficient to hold her in, or make any impression. She could hardly see how they went.

"Is not this too much for you?" the voice of Mr. Carlisle said quietly.

"Rather—but I can't check her," said Eleanor; vexed to make the admission, and vexed again when a word or two from the rider at her side, who at the same moment leaned forward and touched Maggie's bridle, brought the wild creature instantly not only from her mad gallop, but back to a very demure and easy trot. So demure, that there was no longer any bar to conversation; but then Eleanor reflected she could not gallop always, and they were almost off the plain road of the moor. How beautiful the moor had been to her that morning! Now Eleanor looked at Black Maggie's ears.

"How do you like her?" said Mr. Carlisle.

"Charming! She is perfection. She is delightful!"

"She must learn to know her mistress," he rejoined, leaning forward again and drawing Maggie's reins through

his fingers. "Take her up a little shorter—and speak to her the next time she does not obey you."

The flush rose to Eleanor's cheeks, and over her brow, and reddened her very temples. She made no sort of answer, yet she knew silence was answer, and that her blood was speaking for her. It was pretty speaking, but extremely inconvenient. And what business had Mr. Carlisle to take things for granted in that way? Eleanor began to feel rebellious again.

"Do you always ride with so loose a rein?" began Mr. Carlisle again.

"I don't know—I never think about it. My pony is perfectly safe."

"So is Maggie—as to her feet; but in general, it is well to let everything under you feel your hand."

"That is what you do, I have no doubt," thought Eleanor, and bit her lip. She would have started into another gallop; but they were entering upon a narrow and rough way where galloping was inadmissible. It descended gradually and winding among rocks and broken ground, to a lower level, the upper part of the valley of the Ryth; a beautiful clear little stream flowing brightly in a rich meadow ground, with gently shelving, softly broken sides; the initiation of the wilder scenery further down the valley. Here were the cottages Mr. Carlisle had spoken of. They looked very picturesque and very inviting too; standing on either side the stream, across which a rude rustic bridge was thrown. Each cottage had its paling enclosure, and built of grey rough stone, with deep sloping roofs and bright little casements, they looked the very ideal of humble homes. No smoke rose from the chimneys, and nobody was visible without or within.

"I want some help of you here," said Mr. Carlisle. "Do you like the situation?"

"Most beautiful!" said Eleanor, heartily. "And the houses are just the thing."

"Will you dismount and look a little closer? We will cross the bridge first."

They drew bridle before one of the cottages. Eleanor had all the mind in the world to have thrown herself from Black Maggie's back, as she was accustomed to do from her pony; but she did not dare. Yesterday she would have dared; to-day there was a slight indefinable change in the manner of Mr. Carlisle towards herself, which cast a spell over her. He stood beside Black Maggie, the carnations making a rosy spot in the buttonhole of his white jacket, while he gave some order to the groom—Eleanor did not hear what, for her mind was on something else; then turned to her and took her down, that same indescribable quality of manner and handling saying to all her senses that he regarded the horse and the lady with the same ownership. Eleanor felt proud, and vexed, and ashamed, and pleased; her mind divided between different feelings; but Mr. Carlisle directed her attention now to the cottages.

It was impossible not to admire and be pleased with them. The exterior was exceedingly homelike and pretty; within, there was yet more to excite admiration. Nicely arranged, neatly and thoroughly furnished, even to little details, they looked most desirable homes for any persons of humble means, even though the tastes had not been equally humble. From one to another Mr. Carlisle took Eleanor; displaying his arrangements to a very silent observer; for though she thought all this admiration, she hardly said anything. Between irritation, and pleasure, and a pretty well-grown shyness, she felt very tongue-tied. At last, after showing her the view from the lattice of a nice little cottage kitchen, Mr. Carlisle asked for her judgment upon what had been done.

"It is thoroughly excellent," said Eleanor. "They leave nothing to wish. I have never seen such nice cottages. There is nobody in them yet?"

"Is there any improvement to be made?"

"None to be desired, I think." said Eleanor. "They are just perfect little homes. They only want the people now."

"And that is where I want your help. Do you think of any good families, or poor people you approve of, that you would like to put in some of these?"

Eleanor's thought flew instantly to two or three such families among her poor friends; for she was a good deal of a Lady Bountiful, as far as moderate means and large sympathy could go; and knew many of the lower classes in her neighbourhood; but again she struggled with two feelings, for the question had been put not in a tone of compliment, but with a manner of simple consultation. She flushed and hesitated, until it was put again.

"I know several, I think, that you would not dislike to have here, and that would be very glad to come, Mr. Carlisle."

"Who are they?"

"One is Mrs. Benson, who lives on nothing with her family of eight children, and brings them up well."

Mr. Carlisle took out his note-book.

"Another is Joe Shepherd and his wife; but they are an old couple; perhaps you do not want old people here?"

He looked up from his note-book with a little smile, which brought the blood tingling to Eleanor's brow again, and effectually drove away all her ideas. She was very vexed with herself; she was never used to be so troubled with blushing. She turned away.

"Suppose you sit down," said he, taking her hands and placing her in a chair by the window. "You must have some refreshment, I think, before we go any further." He left the cottage, and Eleanor looked out of the open casement, biting her lips. The air came in with such a sweet breath from the heathery moor, it seemed to blow vexation away. Yet Eleanor was vexed. Here she was making admissions with every breath, when she would fain have not made any. She wanted her old liberty, and to dispose of it at her leisure, if at all; and at least not to have it *taken* from her. But here was Mr. Carlisle at her elbow again, and one of his servants bringing dishes and glasses. The meats were spread on the little table before which Eleanor sat, and Mr. Carlisle took another chair.

"We will honour the house for once," he said, smiling; "the future shall be as the occupants deserve. Is this one to belong to some of your protégés?"

"I have not the gift of foresight," said Eleanor.

"You have another sort of gift which will do quite as well. If you have any choice, choose the houses in which Joe Shepherd, and Mrs. Benson, and anybody else, shall thank you—and I will order the doors marked. Which do you prefer?"

Eleanor was forced to speak. "I think this is one of the pleasantest situations," she said, flushing deeply again; "but the house highest up the valley——"

"What of it?" said Mr. Carlisle, smiling at her.

"That would be best for Joe Shepherd, because of his business. It is nearer the common."

"Joe Shepherd shall have it. Now will you do me the favour to eat that," said he, putting a piece of cold game on her plate. "Do not look at it, but eat it. Your day's labour is by no means over."

It was easier to eat than to do nothing; and easier to look at her plate than where her carnations gleamed on that white breast-ground. So Eleanor eat obediently.

"The day is so uncommonly fine, how would you like to walk down the valley as far as the old priory, and let the horses meet us there?"

"I am willing," said Eleanor. Which she was, only because she was ashamed or afraid to say that she wanted to gallop back by the moor, the same way she had come. A long walk down the valley would give fine opportunity for all that she dreaded in the way of conversation. However, the order was given about the horses, and the walk began.

The way was at first a continuation of the valley in which the cottages were situated; uncultivated, sweet, and wild. They were a good distance beyond Barton's Tower. The stream of the Ryth, not so large as it became further down, sparkled along in a narrow meadow, beset with flowers. Here and there a rude bridge crossed it; and the walkers passed as they listed from side to side, wandering down the valley at great leisure, remarking upon all sorts of things except what Eleanor was dreading. The walk and talk went on without anything formidable. Mr. Carlisle seemed

to have nothing on his mind; and Eleanor, full of what was on hers, only felt through his quiet demeanour that he was taking things for granted in a very cool way. She was vexed and irritated, and at the same time subdued. And then an opposite feeling would stir, of pleasure and pride, at the place she was taking and the relations she was assuming to the beautiful domain through which they wandered. As they went down the valley it grew more and more lovely. Luxuriant growths of ash and oak, mingled with larches, crowned the rising borders of the valley and crept down their sides, hanging a most exquisite clothing of vegetation over the banks which had hitherto been mostly bare. As they went from point to point, and in one after another region of beauty, her companion's talk, quietly flowing on, called her attention to one and another observation suggested by what they were looking at; not as if it were a foreign matter, but with a tacit intimation that it concerned her or had a right to her interest. It was a long walk. They were some time before reaching the old tower; then a long stretch of beautiful scenes lay between them and the old priory ruins. This part of the valley was in the highest degree picturesque. The sides drew together, close and rocky and overshadowed with a thicket of trees. The path of the river became steep and encumbered; the way along its banks grew comparatively rough and difficult. The day was delicious, without even a threatening of rain; yet the sun in some places was completely shut out from the water by the overgrown, overhanging sides of rock and wood which shut in the dell. Conversation was broken here, by the pleasant difficulty of pursuing the way. Here too flowers were sweet and the birds busy. The way was enough to delight any lover of nature; and it was impossible not to be delighted. Nevertheless Eleanor hailed for a sake not its own, every bit of broken ground and rough walking that made connected conversation impossible; and then was glad to see the grey walls of the priory, where the horses were to meet them. Once in the saddle again——she would be glad to be there!

The horses were not in sight yet; they strolled into the ruin. It was lovely to-day; the sunlight adding its brightening touch to all that moss and ivy and lichen and fern had done. They sauntered up what had been an aisle of the church; carpeted now with soft shaven turf, close and smooth.

"The priory was founded a great while ago," said Mr. Carlisle, "by one of the first Lords of Rythdale, on account of the fact that he had slain his own brother in mortal combat. It troubled his mind, I suppose, even in those rough times."

"And he built the church to soothe it."

"Built the church and founded the establishment; gave it all the lands we have passed through to-day, and much more; and great rights on hill and dale and moor. We have them nearly all back again—by one happy chance and another."

"What was this?" said Eleanor, seating herself on a great block of stone, the surface of which was rough with decay.

"This was a tombstone—tradition says, of that same slain Lord of Rythdale—but I think it very hypothetical. However, your fancy can conjure back his image, if you like, lying where you sit; covered with the armour he lived his life in, and probably with hands joined to make the prayers his life had rendered desirable."

"He had not the helmet," thought Eleanor. She got up to look at the stone; but it was worn away; no trace of the knight in armour who had lain there was any longer to be seen. What long ago times those were!

"And then the old monks did nothing else but pray," she remarked.

"A few other things," said her companion; "if report is true. But they said a great many prayers, it is certain. It was what they were specially put here for—to do masses for that old stone figure that used to lie there. They were paid well for doing it. I hope they did it."

The wind stirred gently through the ruin, bringing a

sweet scent of herbs and flowers, and a fern or an ivy leaf here and there just moved lightly on its stalk.

"They must have lived a pleasant sort of life," said Eleanor, musingly, "in this beautiful place!"

"Are you thinking of entering a monastery?" said her companion, smiling. It brought back Eleanor's consciousness, which had been for a moment forgotten, and the deep colour flashed to her face. She stood confused. Mr. Carlisle did not let her go this time; he took both her hands.

"Do you think I am going to be satisfied with only negative answers from you?" said he, changing his tone. "What have you got to say to me?"

Eleanor struggled with herself. "Nothing, Mr. Carlisle."

"Your mother has conveyed to you my wishes?"

"Yes," said Eleanor softly.

"What are yours?"

She hesitated, held at bay, but he waited; and at last, with a little of her frank daring breaking out, she said, still in her former soft voice, "I would let things alone."

"Suppose that could not be,—would you send me away, or let me come near to you?"

Eleanor could not send him away; but he would not come near. He stood keeping her hands in a light firm grasp; she felt that he knew his hold of her; her head bowed in confusion.

"Speak, darling," he said. "Are you mine?"

Eleanor shrank lower and lower from his observation; but she anwered in a whisper,—"I suppose so."

Her hands were released then, only to have herself taken into more secure possession. She had given herself up; and Mr. Carlisle's manner said that to touch her cheek was his right as well as his pleasure. Eleanor could not dispute it; she knew that Mr. Carlisle loved her, but she certainly thought the sense of power had great charms for him. So, she presently thought, had the exercise of it.

"You are mine now," he said, "you are mine. You are Eleanor Carlisle. But you have not said a word to me. What is my name?"

"Your name!" stammered Eleanor,—"Carlisle."

"Yes, but the rest?"

"I know it," said Eleanor,

"Speak it, darling!"

Now Eleanor had no mind to speak that or anything else upon compulsion; it should be a grace from her lips, not the compliance with a requisition; her spirit of resistance sprung up. A frank refusal was on her tongue, and her head, which had been drooping, was thrown back with an infinitely pretty air of defiance, to give it. Thus she met Mr. Carlisle's look; met the bright hazel eyes that were bent upon her, full of affection and smiling, but with something else in them as well; there was a calm power of exaction. Eleanor read it, even in the half glance which took in incongruously the graceful figure and easy attitude; she did not feel ready for contention with Mr. Carlisle; the man's nature was dominant over the woman's. Eleanor's head stooped again; she spoke obediently the required words.

"Robert Macintosh."

The kisses which met her lips before the words were well out, seemed to seal the whole transaction. Perhaps it was Eleanor's fancy, but to her they spoke unqualified content both with her opposition and her yielding. She was chafed with the consciousness that she had been obliged to yield; vexed to feel that she was not her own mistress; even while the kisses that stopped her lips told her how much love mingled with her captor's power. There was no questioning that fact; it only half soothed Eleanor.

Mr. Carlisle bade her sit down and rest, while he went to see if the horses were there. Eleanor sat down dreamily on the old tombstone, and in the space of three minutes went over whole fields of thought. Her mind was in a perverse state. Before her the old tower of the ruined priory rose in its time-worn beauty, with the young honours of the ivy clinging all about it; on either side of her stretched the grey, ivied and mossy, crumbling walls. It was a magnificent place; if not her own mistress, it was a pleasant

thing to be mistress of such as that; and a vision of gay grandeur floated over her mind. Still, in contrast with that vision, the quiet, ruined priory tower spoke of a different life—brought up a separate vision; of unworldly possessions, aims, hopes, and occupations; it was not familiar to Eleanor's mind, yet now somehow it rose upon her, with the feeling of that once wanted, still desired—only she had forgotten it—armour of security. Why did she think of it now? was it because Eleanor's mind was in that disordered state which lets everything come to the surface by turns; or because she was still suffering from vexation, and her spirit chose contraries with a natural readiness and relish? It was not more than three minutes, but Eleanor travelled far in dream-land; so far that the sudden feeling of two hands upon her shoulders, brought her back with even a visible start. She was rallied and laughed at: then her hand was put upon Mr. Carlisle's arm, and so Eleanor was walked out to where Black Maggie stood waiting for her. Of course she felt that her engagement was to be made known to all the world immediately. Mr. Carlisle's servants must know it now. It seemed to Eleanor that fine bands of cobwebs had been cast round her, binding her hands and feet, which loved their liberty. The feeling made one little imprudent burst. As Mr. Carlisle put Maggie's reins into her hand, he repeated what he had before said, that Eleanor should use her voice if the bridle failed to win obedience.

"She is not of a rebellious disposition," he added.

"Do you read dispositions?" said Eleanor, gathering up the reins. He stood at her saddle-bow.

"Sometimes."

"Do you know mine?"

"Partially."

"It is what you say Black Maggie's is not."

"Is it? Take the reins a little shorter, Eleanor."

It is difficult to say how much there may be in two short words; but as Mr. Carlisle went round to the other side and mounted, he left his little lady in a state of fume. Those two words said so plainly to Eleanor's ear, that her announce-

ment was neither denied nor disliked. Nay, they expressed pleasure; the sort of pleasure that a man has in a spirited horse of which he is master. It threw Eleanor's mind into a tumult, so great that for a minute or two she hardly knew what she was about. But for the sound, sweet good temper, which in spite of Eleanor's self-characterising was part of her nature, she would have been in a rage. As it was, she only handled Black Maggie in a more stately style than she had cared about at the beginning of the ride; putting her upon her paces; and so rode through all the village, in a way that certainly pleased Mr. Carlisle, though he said nothing about it. He contrived however to aid in the soothing work done by Black Maggie's steps, so that long before Ivy Lodge was reached, Eleanor's smile came free and sweet again, and her lip lost its ominous curve.

"You are a darling!" Mr. Carlisle whispered as he took her down from her horse.

Eleanor went on into the drawing-room. He followed her. Nobody was there.

"What have you to say to me, Eleanor?" he said as he held her hand before parting.

"Nothing whatever, Mr. Carlisle." Eleanor's frank, brilliant smile gleamed mischievously upon him.

"Will you not give me a word of kindness before I go?"

"No! Mr. Carlisle, if I had my own way," said Eleanor, switching her riding-whip nervously about her habit, "I would be my own mistress for a good while longer."

"Shall I give you back your liberty?" said he, drawing her into his arms. Eleanor was silent. Their touch manifested no such intention. He bent his head lower, and said softly, "Kiss me, Eleanor."

There was, as before, just that mingling of affection and exaction which conquered her. She knew all she was giving, but she half dared not and half cared not to refuse.

"You little witch," said he as he took possession of the just permitted lips, "I will punish you for your naughtiness, by taking you home very soon—into my own management."

Mrs. Powle was in Eleanor's room when she entered; waiting there for her.

"Well, Eleanor," she began, "is it settled? Are you to be Lady Rythdale?"

"If Mr. Carlisle has his will, ma'am."

"And what is *your* will?"

"I have none any longer. But if you and he try to hurry on the day, mamma, it shall never come—never!"

Mrs. Powle thought she would leave that matter in more skilful hands; and went away well satisfied.

CHAPTER V.

"This floating life hath but this port of rest,
A heart prepared, that fears no ill to come."

THE matter was in skilful hands; for the days rolled on, after that eventful excursion, with great smoothness. Mr. Carlisle kept Eleanor busy, with some pleasant little excitement, every day varied. She was made to taste the sweets of her new position, and to depend more and more upon the hand that introduced her to them. Mr. Carlisle ministered carefully to her tastes. Eleanor daily was well mounted, generally on Maggie; and enjoyed her heart's delight of a gallop over the moor, or a more moderate pace through a more rewarding scenery. Mr. Carlisle entered into the spirit of her gardening pursuits; took her to his mother's conservatory; and found that he never pleased Eleanor better than when he plunged her into the midst of flowers. He took good care to advance his own interests all the time; and advanced them fast and surely. He had Eleanor's liking before; and her nature was too sweet and rich not to incline towards the person whom she had given such a position with herself, yielding to him more and more of faith and affection. And that in spite of what sometimes chafed her; the quiet sway she felt Mr. Carlisle had over her, beneath which she was powerless. Or rather, perhaps she inclined towards him secretly the more on account of it; for to women of rich natures there is something attractive in being obliged to look up; and to women of all natures it is imposing. So Mr. Carlisle's threat, by Eleanor so stoutly

resisted and resented, was extremely likely to come to pass. Mrs. Powle was too wise to touch the game.

Several weeks went by, during which Eleanor had no chance to think of anything but Mr. Carlisle and the matters he presented for her notice. At the end of that time he was obliged to go up to London on sudden business. It made a great lull in the house; and Eleanor began to sit in her garden parlour again and dream. While dreaming one day, she heard the voice of her little sister sobbing at the door-step. She had not observed before that she was sitting there.

"Julia!" said Eleanor, "what is the matter?"

Julia would not immediately say, but then faltered out, "Mr. Rhys."

"Mr. Rhys! What of him?"

"He's ill. He's going to die, I know."

"How do you know he is unwell? Come, stop crying, Julia, and speak. What makes you think he is ill?"

"Because he just lies on the sofa, and looks so white, and he can't keep school. He sent away the boys yesterday."

"Does he see the doctor?"

"No. I don't know. No, I know he don't," said Julia; "because the old woman said he ought to see him."

"What old woman, child?"

"His old woman—Mrs. Williams. And mamma said I might have some jelly and some sago for him—and there is nobody to take it. Foster is out of the way, and Jack is busy, and I can't get anybody."

Julia's tears were very sincere.

"Stop, crying, child, and I will go with you myself. I have not had a walk to-day, or a ride, or anything. Come, get ready, and you and I will take it."

Julia did not wait even for thanks; she was never given to be ceremonious; but sprang away to do as her sister had said. In a few minutes they were off, going through the garden, each with a little basket in her hand. Julia's tears were exchanged for the most sunshiny gladness.

It was a sunshiny day altogether, in the end of summer, and the heat was sultry. Neither sister minded weather of any

sort; nevertheless, they chose the shady side of the road, and went very leisurely, along by the hedgerows and under the elms and beeches with which all the way to the village was more or less shaded. It was a long walk, even to the village. The cottage where Mr. Rhys had his abode was yet further on. The village must be passed on the way to it.

It was a long line of cottages, standing for the most part on one side the street only; the sweet hedgerow on the other side only here and there broken by a white wicket gate. The houses were humble enough; yet in universal neat order on the outside at least; in many instances grown over with climbing roses and ivy, and overhung with deep thatched roofs. They stood scatteringly; gardens and sometimes small crofts intervening; and noble growth of old oaks and young elms shading the way; the whole as neat, fresh, and picturesque in rural comfort and beauty, as could be seen almost anywhere in England. The lords of Rythdale held sway here, and nothing under their rule, of late, was out of order. But there were poor people in the village, and very poor old houses, though skilfully turned to the account of beauty in the outward view. Eleanor was well known in them; and now Mrs. Benson came out to the gate and told how she was to move to her new home in another fortnight; and begged the sisters would come in to rest themselves from the sun. And old Mrs. Shepherd curtsied in her doorway; and Matthew Grimson's wife, the blacksmith that was, came to stop Eleanor with a roundabout representation how her husband's business would thrive so much better in another situation. Eleanor was seldom on foot in the village now. She passed that as soon as she could, and went on. From her window on the other side of the lane, Miss Broadus nodded, and beckoned too; but the sisters would not be delayed.

"It is good Mr. Carlisle has gone to London," said Julia. "He would not have let you come."

Eleanor felt stung.

"Why do you say so, Julia?"

"Why, you always do what he tells you," said Julia, who

was not apt to soften her communications. "He says 'Eleanor'—and you go that way; and he says 'Eleanor'—and you go the other way."

"And why do you suppose he would have any objection to my going this way?"

"I know," said Julia. "I am glad he is in London. I hope he'll stay there."

Eleanor made no answer but to switch her dress and the bushes as they went by, with a little rod in her hand. There was more truth in the allegation than it pleased her to remember. She did not always feel her bonds at the time, they were so gently put on and the spell of another's will was so natural and so irresistible. But it chafed her to be reminded of it and to feel that it was so openly exerted and her own subjugation so complete. The switching went on vigorously, taking the bushes and her muslin dress impartially; and Eleanor's mind was so engrossed that she did not perceive how suddenly the weather was changing. They had passed through the village and left it behind, when Julia exclaimed, "There's a storm coming, Eleanor! maybe we can get in before it rains." It was an undeniable fact; and without further parley both sisters set off to run, seeing that there were very few minutes to accomplish Julia's hope. It began sprinkling already.

"It's going to be a real storm," said Julia gleefully. "Over the moor it's as black as thunder. I saw it through the trees."

"But where are you going?"—For Julia had left the road, or rather lane, and dashed down a path through the trees leading off from it.

"O, this is the best—this leads round to the other side of the house," Julia said.

Just as well to go in at the kitchen, Eleanor thought; and let Julia find her way with her sago and jelly to Mr. Rhys's room if she so inclined. So they ran on, reached a little strip of open ground at the back of the cottage, and rushed in at the door like a small tornado; for the rain was by this time coming down merrily.

The first thing Eleanor saw when she had pulled off her hat,—was that she was not in a kitchen. A table with writing implements met her eye; and turning, she discovered the person one of them at least had come to see, lying on a sort of settee or rude couch, with a pillow under his head. He looked pale enough, and changed, and lay wrapped in a dressing-gown. If Eleanor was astonished, so certainly was he. But he rose to his feet, albeit scarce able to stand, and received his visitors with a simplicity and grace of nature which was in sigular contrast with all the dignities of conventional life.

"Mr. Rhys!" stammered Eleanor, "I had no idea we were breaking into your room. I thought Julia was taking me into Mrs. Williams's part of the house."

"I am very glad to see you!" he said; and the words were endorsed by the pleasant grave face and the earnest grasp of the hand. But how ill and thin he looked! Eleanor was shocked.

"It was beginning to rain," she repeated, "and I followed where Julia led me. I thought she was bringing me to Mrs. Williams's premises. I beg you will excuse me."

"I have made Mrs. Williams give me this part of the house because I think it is the pleasantest. Won't you do me the honour to sit down?"

He was bringing a chair for her, but looked so little able for it that Eleanor took it from his hand.

"Please put yourself on the sofa again, Mr. Rhys—we will not interrupt you a moment."

"Yes, you will," said Julia, "unless you want to walk in the rain. Mr. Rhys, are you better to-day?"

"I am as well as usual, thank you, Julia."

"I am sorry to see that is not very well, Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor.

"Not very strong," he said, with the smile that she remembered, as he sank back in the corner of the couch and rested his head on his hand. His look and manner altogether gave her a strange feeling. Ill and pale and grave as he was, there was something else about him different

from all that she had touched in her own life for weeks. It was a new atmosphere.

"Ladies, I hope you are not wet?" he said presently.

"Not at all," said Eleanor; "nothing to signify. We shall dry ourselves in the sun walking back."

"I think the sun is not going to be out immediately."

He rose, and with slow steps made his way to the inner door and spoke to some one within. Eleanor took a view of her position. The rain was coming down furiously; no going home just yet was possible. That was the out-of-door prospect. Within, she was a prisoner. The room was a plain little room, plain as a room could be; with no adornments or luxuries. Some books were piled on deal shelves; others covered two tables. A large portfolio stood in one corner. On one of the tables were pens, ink, and paper, not lying loose, but put up in order, as not used nor wanted at present. Several boxes of various sorts and sizes made up the rest of the furniture, with a few chairs of very simple fashion. It was Mr. Rhys's own room they were in; and all that could be said of it was its nicety of order. Two little windows with the door might give view of something in fair weather; at present they showed little but grey rain and a dim vision of trees seen through the rain. Eleanor wanted to get away; but it was impossible. She must talk.

"You cannot judge of my prospect now," Mr. Rhys said as she turned to him.

"Not in this rain. But I should think you could not see much at any time, except trees."

"'Much' is comparative. No, I do not see much; but there is an opening from my window, through which the eye goes a long way—across a long distance of the moor. It is but a gleam; however, it serves a good purpose for me."

An old woman here came in with a bundle of sticks, and began to lay them for a fire. She was an old-crone looking person. Eleanor observed her, and thought what it must be to have no nurse or companion but that.

"We have missed you at the Lodge, Mr. Rhys."

"Thank you. I am missing from all my old haunts,"

he answered gravely. And the thought and the look went to something from which he was very sorry to be missing.

"But you will be soon well again—will you not?—and among us again."

"I do not know," he said. "I am sometimes inclined to think my work is done."

"What work, Mr. Rhys?" said Julia. "Ferns, do you mean?"

"No."

"What work, Mr. Rhys?"

"I mean the Lord's work, Julia, which he has given me to do."

"Do you mean preaching?"

"That is part of it."

"What else is your work, Mr. Rhys?" said Julia, hanging about the couch with an affectionate eye; so affectionate, that her sister's rebuke of her forwardness was checked.

"Doing all I can, Julia, in every way, to tell people of the Lord Jesus."

"Was that the work you were going to that horrid place to do?"

"Yes."

"Then I am glad you are sick!"

"That is very unkind of you," said he with a gravity which Eleanor was not sure was real.

"It is better for you to be sick than to go away from England," said Julia, decidedly.

"But if I am not well enough to go there, I shall go somewhere else."

"Where?"

"What have you got in that saucer?"

"Jelly for you. Won't you eat it, Mr. Rhys? There is sago in the basket. It will do you good."

"Will you not offer your sister some?"

"No. She gets plenty at home. Eat it, Mr. Rhys, won't you?"

He took a few spoonfuls, smiled at her, and told her it

was very good. It was a smile worth having. But both sisters saw that he looked fearfully pale and worn.

"I must see if Mrs. Williams has not some berries to offer you," he said.

"Where are you going, Mr. Rhys, if you do not go to that place?" Julia persisted.

"If I do not go there, I think I shall go home."

"Home?"

"Yes."

"Where is that?" said Julia, hanging about him.

"I meant my everlasting home, Julia."

"O don't, Mr. Rhys!" cried the child in a half vexed tone. "Eat some more jelly—do!"

"I am very willing to stay, Julia, if my Master has work for me to do."

"You had charge of a chapel at Lily Dale, Mr. Rhys, I am told?" Eleanor said, feeling awkward.

"No—at Croydon, beyond."

"At Croydon! that is nine miles off. How did you get there?"

The question escaped Eleanor. He hesitated, and answered simply, "I had no way but to walk. I found that very pleasant in summer mornings."

"Walk to Croydon and back, and preach there! I do not wonder you are ill, Mr. Rhys."

"I did not walk back the same day."

"But then where did you go in the evenings to preach?" said Julia.

"That was not so far off."

"Did you preach in *two* chapels on the same day, Mr. Rhys?" Eleanor asked.

"No. The evenings Julia speaks of, I preached nearer home."

"And school all the week!" said Eleanor.

"It was no hardship," he said with a most pleasant smile at her. "The King's work required haste—there were many people at both places who had not heard the truth, or had not learned to love it. There are still."

His face grew very grave as he spoke; grave even to sadness as he added, "They are dying without the knowledge of the true life!"

"Where was the other chapel you went to?"

"Rythmoor."

Eleanor hurried on. "But Mr. Rhys, will you allow me to ask you a question that puzzles me?"

"I beg you will do so!"

"It is just this. If there are so many in England that want teaching—But I beg your pardon! I am afraid talking tires you."

"I assure you it is very pleasant to me. Will you go on?"

"If there are so many in England that want teaching, why should you go to such a place as that Julia talks of?'

"They are further yet from help."

"But is not the work here as good as the work there?"

"I am cut off from both," he said. "I long to go to them. But the Lord has his own plans. 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God!'"

The grave, sweet, tender, strong intonation of these words, slowly uttered, moved Eleanor much. Not towards tears; the effect was rather a great shaking of heart. She saw a glimpse of a life she had never dreamed of; a power touched her that had never touched her before. This life was something quite unearthly in its spirit and aims; the power was the power of holiness.

It is difficult or impossible to say in words how this influence made itself felt. In the writing of the lines on the face, in the motion of the lips, in the indefinable tones of voice, in the air and manner, there comes out constantly in all characters an atmosphere of the truth, which the words spoken, whether intended or not intended, do not convey. Even unintentional feigning fails here, and even self-deception is belied. The truth of a character will make itself felt and influential, for good or evil, through all disguises. So it was, that though the words of Mr. Rhys might have been said by anybody, the impression they produced belonged to

him alone, of all the people Eleanor had ever seen in her life. The "helmet of salvation" was on this man's head, and gave it a dignity more than that of a kingly crown. She sat thinking so, and recalling her lost wishes of the early summer; forgetting to carry on the conversation.

Meanwhile the old woman of the cottage came in again with a fresh supply of sticks, and a blaze began to brighten in the chimney. Julia exclaimed in delight, Eleanor looked at the window. The rain still came down heavily. She remembered the thunderstorm in June, and her fears. Then Mr. Rhys begged her to go to the fire and dry herself, and again spoke some unintelligible words to the old attendant.

"What is that, Mr. Rhys?" said Julia, who seldom refrained from asking anything she wished to know.

"I was enquiring of Mrs. Williams whether she had not some fresh gathered berries she could bring for your refreshment."

"But I mean, what language did you speak to her?"

"Welsh."

"Are you Welsh?"

"No," said he, smiling; "but I have Welsh blood; and I had a Welsh nurse, Julia."

"I do not want any refreshment, Mr. Rhys; but I would like some berries."

"I hope you would like to ask pardon of Mr. Rhys for your freedom," said Eleanor. "I am sure you need it."

"Why, Mrs. Williams very often gives me berries," said Julia; "and they always taste better than ours. I mean, Mr. Rhys gives me some."

Eleanor busied herself over the fire, in drying her muslin dress. That did very well instead of talking. Mrs. Williams presently came in again, bearing a little tray with berries and a pot of cream. Julia eagerly played hostess and dealt them out. The service was most homely; nevertheless the wild berries deserved her commendation. The girls sat by the fire and eat, and their host from the corner of his couch watched them with his keen eyes. It was rather a romantic

adventure altogether, Eleanor thought, in the midst of much graver thoughts. But Julia had quite got her spirits up.

"Aren't they good, Eleanor? They are better berries than those that came from the Priory. Mr. Rhys, do you know that after Eleanor is Mrs. Carlisle, she will be Lady Rythdale?"

This shot drove Eleanor into desperation. She would have started aside, to hide her cheeks, but it was no use. Mr. Rhys had risen to add some more cream to her saucer—perhaps on purpose.

"I understand," he said simply. "Has she made arrangements to secure an everlasting crown, after the earthly coronet shall have faded away?"

The question was fairly put to Eleanor. It gave a turn to her confusion, yet hardly more manageable; for the gentle, winning tones in which it was made found their way down to some very deep and unguarded spot in her consciousness. No one had ever probed her as this man dared to do. Eleanor could hardly sit still. The berries had no more any taste to her after that. Yet the question demanded an answer; and after hesitating long, she found none better than to say, as she set down her saucer—

"No, Mr. Rhys."

Doubtless he read deeper than the words of her answer, but he made no remark. She would have been glad if he had.

The shower seemed to be slackening; and while Julia entered into lively conversation over her berries, Eleanor went to the window. She was doubtfully conscious of anything but discomfort; however, she did perceive that the rain was falling less thickly, and light beginning to break through the clouds. As she turned from the window she forced herself to speak.

"What is there we can do for you at home, Mr. Rhys? Mrs. Williams's resources, I am sure, must be very insufficient."

"I am very much obliged to you," he said heartily. "There is nothing that I know of. I have all that I require."

"You are better than you were? you are gaining strength?"

"No, I think not. I am quite useless now."

"But you will get better soon, and be useful again."

"If it pleases my Master;—but I think not."

"Do you consider yourself so seriously ill, Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor, looking shocked.

"Do not take it so seriously," said he, smiling at her. "No harm can come to me any way. It is far worse than death for me to be cut off from doing my work; and a while ago the thought of this troubled me; it gave me some dark hours. But at last I rested myself on that word, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God!' and now I am content about it. Life or death—neither can bring but good to me; for my Father sends it. You know," he said, again with a smile at her, but with a keen observ[illegible] eye, "they who are the Lord's wear an invisible ca[illegible] which preserves them from all fear."

He saw that Eleanor's face was grave and troubled; he saw that at this last word there was a sort of avoidance of feature, as if it reached a spot of feeling somewhere that was sensitive. He added nothing more, except the friendly grasp of the hand, which drove the weapon home.

The rain had ceased; the sun was out; and the two girls set forward on their return. They hurried at first, for the afternoon had worn away. The rain-drops lay thick and sparkling on every blade of grass, and dripped upon them from the trees.

"Now you will get your feet wet again," said Julia; "and then you will have another illness; and Mr. Carlisle will be angry."

"Do let Mr. Carlisle's anger alone!" said Eleanor. "I shall not sit down in wet shoes, so I shall not get hurt. Did you ever see him angry?"

"No," said Julia; "and I am glad he won't be angry with me?"

In spite of her words, the wet grass gave Eleanor a disagreeable reminder of what wet grass had done for her some months before. The remembrance of her sickness [illegible] up with the immediate possibility of its returning

again; the little feeling of danger and exposure gave power to the things she had just heard. She could not banish them; she recalled freshly the miserable fear and longing of those days when she lay ill and knew not how her illness would turn; the fearful want of a shelter; the comparative littleness of all things under the sun. Rythdale Priory had not been worth a feather in that day; all the gay pleasures and hopes of the summer could have found no entrance into her heart then. And as she was then, so Eleanor knew herself now—defenceless, if danger came. And the wet grass into which every footstep plunged said that danger might be at any time very near. Eleanor wished bitterly that she had not come this walk with Julia. It was strange, how utterly shaken, miserable, forlorn, her innermost spirit felt, at this possible approach of evil to her shelterless head. And with double force, though they had been forcible at the time, Mr. Rhys's words recurred to her—the words that he had spoken half to himself as it were—"Hope thou in God." Eleanor had heard those words read by different lips, at different times; they were not new; but the meaning of them had never struck her before. Now for the first time, as she heard the low, sweet, confident utterance of a soul fleeing to its stronghold, of a spirit absolutely secure there, she had an idea of what "hope in God" meant; and every time she remembered the tones of those words, spoken by failing lips too, it gave a blow to her heart. There was something she wanted. What else could be precious like that? And with them belonged in this instance, Eleanor felt, a purity of character till now unimagined. Thoughts and footsteps hurrying along together, they were past the village and far on their way towards home, the two sisters, before much was said between them.

"I wish Mr. Rhys would get well and stay here," said Julia. "It is nice to go to see him, isn't it, Eleanor? he is so good."

"I don't know whether it is nice," said Eleanor. "I wish almost I had not gone with you. I have not thought of disagreeable things before for a long time."

"But isn't he good?"

"Good!" said Eleanor. "He makes me feel as black as night."

"Well, you aren't black," said Julia, pleased; "and I'll tell Mr. Carlisle what you say. He won't be angry that time."

"Julia!" said Eleanor, "do if you dare! You shall repeat no words of mine to Mr. Carlisle."

Julia only laughed; and Eleanor hoped that the gentleman would stay in London till her purpose, whatever it might be, was forgotten. He did stay some days; the Lodge had a comparatively quiet time. Perhaps Eleanor missed the constant excitement of the weeks past. She was very restless, and her thoughts would not be diverted from the train into which the visit to Mr. Rhys had thrown them. Obstinately the idea kept before her, that a defence was wanting to her which she had not, and might have. She wanted some security greater than dry shoes could afford. Yea, she could not forget, that beyond that earthly coronet which of necessity must some time fade, she might want something that would endure in the air of eternity. Her musings troubled Eleanor. As Black Maggie did not wait upon her, these days, she ordered up her own little pony, and went off upon long rides by herself. It soothed her to be alone. She let no servant attend her; she took the comfort of good stirring gallops all over the moor; and then when she and the pony were both tired, she let him walk and her thoughts take up their train. But it did not do her any good. Eleanor grew only more uneasy from day to day. The more she thought, the deeper her thoughts went; and still the contrast of purity and high Christian hope rose up to shame her own heart and life. Eleanor felt her danger as a sinner; her exposure as guilty; and the insufficiency of all she had or hoped for, to meet future and coming contingencies. So far she got; there she stopped; except that her sense of these things grew more keen and deep day by day; it did not fade out. Friends she had none to help her. She wanted to see Dr. Cairnes and attack him in private, and bring him to a point on the subjects which agitated her; but she knew that Dr. Cairnes too was absent from Wig-

lands at this time; and Eleanor had to think and wait all by herself. She had her Bible, it is true; but she did not know how to consult it. She took care not to go near Mr. Rhys again; though she was sorry to hear through Julia that he was not mending. She wished herself a little girl, to have Julia's liberty; but she must do without it. And what would Mr. Carlisle say to her thoughts? She must not ask him. He could do nothing with them. She half feared, half wished for his influence to overthrow them.

He came; but Eleanor did not find that he could remove the trouble, the existence of which he did not suspect. His presence did not remove it. In all her renewed engagements and gaieties, there remained a secret core of discomfort in her heart, whatever she might be about.

They were taking tea one evening, half in and half out of the open window, when Julia came up.

"Mr. Carlisle," said she, "I am going to pay you my forfeit." He had caught her in some game of forfeits the day before. "I am going to give you something you will like very much."

"What can it be, Julia?"

"You don't believe me. Now you do not deserve it. I am going to give you something Eleanor said."

Eleanor's hand was on her lips immediately, and her voice forbade the promised forfeit; but there were two words to that bargain. Mr. Carlisle captured the hand and gave a counter order.

"Now, you don't believe me, but you believe Eleanor," said the lawless child. "She said,—she said it when you went away,—that she had not thought of anything disagreeable for a long while!"

Mr. Carlisle looked delighted, as well he might. Eleanor's temples flushed a painful scarlet.

"Dear me, how interesting these goings away and comings home are, I suppose!" exclaimed Miss Broadus, coming up to the group. "I see! there is no need to say anything. Mr. Carlisle, we are all rejoiced to see you back at Wiglands. Or at the Lodge, for you do not honour Wiglands much,

except when I see you riding through it on that beautiful brown horse of yours. The black and the brown; I never saw such a pair. And you do ride! I should think you would be afraid that creature would lose a more precious head than its own."

"I take better care than that, Miss Broadus."

"Well, I suppose you do; though for my part I cannot see how a person on one horse can take care of a person on another horse; it is something I do not understand. I never did ride myself; I suppose that is the reason. Mr. Carlisle, what do you say to this lady riding all alone by herself—without any one to take care of her?"

Mr. Carlisle's eyes rather opened at this question, as if he did not fully take in the idea.

"She does it—you should see her going by as I did—as straight as a grenadier, and her pony on such a jump! I thought to myself, Mr. Carlisle is in London, sure enough. But it was a pretty sight to see. My dear, how sorry we are to miss some one else from our circle, and he did honour us at Wiglands—my sister and me. How sorry I am poor Mr. Rhys is so ill. Have you heard from him to-day, Eleanor?"

"You should ask Julia, Miss Broadus. Is he much more ill than he was? Julia hears of him every day, I believe."

"Ah, the children all love him. I see Julia and Alfred going by very often; and the other boys come to see him constantly, I believe. And my dear Eleanor, how kind it was of you to go yourself with something for him! I saw you and Julia go past with your basket—don't you remember?—that day before the rain; and I said to myself, no, I said to Juliana, some very complimentary things about you. Benevolence has flourished in your absence, Mr. Carlisle. Here was this lady, taking jelly with her own hands to a sick man. Now I call that beautiful."

Mr. Carlisle preferred to make his own compliments; for he did not echo those of the talkative lady.

"But I am afraid he is very ill, my dear," Miss Broadus went on, turning to Eleanor again. "He looked dreadfully

when I saw him; and he is so feeble, I think there is very little hope of his life left. I think he has just worked himself to death. But I do not believe, Eleanor, he is any more afraid of death, than I am of going to sleep. I don't believe he is so much."

Miss Broadus was called off; Mr. Carlisle had left the window; Eleanor sat sadly thinking. The last words had struck a deeper note than all the vexations of Miss Broadus's previous talk. "No more afraid of death than of going to sleep." Ay! for his head was covered from danger. Eleanor knew it—saw it—felt it; and felt it to be blessed. O, how should she make that same covering her own? There was an engagement to spend the next afternoon at the Priory—the whole family. Dr. Cairnes would most probably be there to meet them. Perhaps she might catch or make an opportunity of speaking to him in private, and asking him what she wanted to know. Not very likely, but she would try. Dr. Cairnes was her pastor; it ought to be in his power to resolve her difficulties; it must be. At any rate, Eleanor would apply to him and see. She had no one else to apply to, unless Mr. Rhys would get well. Eleanor wished that might be. *He* could help her, she knew, without a peradventure.

Mr. Carlisle appeared again, and the musings were banished. He took her hand and put it upon his arm, and drew her out into the lawn. The action was caressingly done; nevertheless Eleanor felt that an enquiry into her behaviour would surely be the next thing. So half shrinking and half rebellious, she suffered herself to be led on into the winding walks of the shrubbery. The evening was delicious; nothing could be more natural or pleasant than sauntering there.

"I am going to have Julia at the Priory to-morrow as a reward for her good gift to me," was Mr. Carlisle's sneering remark.

"I am sure she does not deserve it," said Eleanor, very sincerely.

"What do you deserve?"

Nothing—in the way of rewards."

Mr. Carlisle did not think so, or else regarded the matter in the light of a reward to himself.

"Have you been good since I have been away?"

"No!" said Eleanor, bluntly.

"Do you always speak truth after this fashion?"

"I speak it as you will find it, Mr. Carlisle."

The questions were put between caresses; but in all his manner nevertheless, in kisses and questions alike, there was that indefinable air of calm possession and power, before which Eleanor always felt unable to offer any resistance. He made her now change "Mr. Carlisle" for a more familiar name, before he would go on. Eleanor felt as a colt may be supposed to feel, which is getting a skilful "breaking in;" yielding obedience at every step, and at every step secretly wishing to refuse obedience, to refuse which is becoming more and more impossible.

"Haven't you been a little too good to somebody else, while I have been away?"

"No!" said Eleanor. "I never am."

"Darling, I do not wish you to honour any one so far as that woman reports you to have done."

"That?" said Eleanor. "That was the merest act of common kindness—Julia wanted some one to go with her to take some things to a sick man; and I wanted a walk, and I went."

"You were too kind. I must unlearn you a little of your kindness. You are mine now, darling; and I want all of you for myself."

"But the better I am," said Eleanor, "I am sure the more there is to have."

"Be good for *me*," said he, kissing her, "and in my way. I will dispense with other goodness. I am in no danger of not having enough in you."

Eleanor walked back to the house, feeling as if an additional barrier were somehow placed between her and the light her mind wanted, and the relief her heart sought after.

CHAPTER VI.

"Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free;
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he."

LADY RYTHDALE abhorred dinner parties, in general and in particular. She dined early herself, and begged that the family from Ivy Lodge would come to tea. It was the first occasion of the kind; and the first time they had ever been there, otherwise than as strangers visiting the grounds. Lady Rythdale was infirm and unwell, and never saw her country neighbours or interchanged civilities with them. Of course this was laid to something more than infirmity, by the surrounding gentry who were less in consequence than herself; but however it were, few of them ever saw the inside of the Priory House for anything but a ceremonious morning visit. Now the family at the Lodge were to go on a different footing. It was a great time, of curiosity, pleasure, and pride.

"What are you going to wear this evening, Eleanor?" her mother asked.

"I suppose, my habit, mamma."

"Your habit!"

"I cannot very well ride in anything else."

"Are you going to *ride*?"

"So it is arranged, ma'am. It will be infinitely less tiresome than going in any other way."

"Tiresome!" echoed Mrs. Powle. "But what will Lady Rythdale say to you in a riding-habit?"

"Mamma, I have very little notion what she would say to me in anything."

"I will tell you what you must do, Eleanor. You must change your dress after you get there."

"No, mamma—I cannot. Mr. Carlisle has arranged to have me go in a riding-habit. It is his responsibility. I will not have any fuss changing, nor pay anybody so much of a compliment."

"It will not be liked, Eleanor."

"It will follow my fate, mamma, whatever that is."

"You are a wilful girl. You are fallen into just the right hands. You will be managed now, for once."

"Mamma," said Eleanor, colouring all over, "it is extremely unwise in you to say that; for it rouses all the fight there is in me; and some day——"

"Some day it will break out," said Mrs. Powle.

"Well, I should not like to fight with Mr. Carlisle," said Julia. "I am glad I am going, at any rate."

Eleanor bit her lip. Nevertheless, when the afternoon came, and Mr. Carlisle appeared to summon her, nothing was left of the morning's irritation but a little loftiness of head and brow. It was very becoming; no more; and Mr. Carlisle's evident pleasure and satisfaction soon soothed the feeling away. The party in the carriage had gone on before; the riders followed the same route, passing through the village of Wiglands, then a couple of miles or more beyond through the village of Rythdale. Further on, crossing a bridge, they entered upon the old priory grounds; the grey tower rose before them, and the horses' feet swept through the beautiful wilderness of ruined art and flourishing nature. As the cavalcade wound along, for the carriage was just before them now, through the dale and past the ruins, and as it had gone in state through the village, Eleanor could not help a little throbbing of heart at the sense of the place she was holding and about to hold; at the feeling of the relation all these beauties and dignities now held to her.

If she had been inclined to forget it, her companion's look would have reminded her. She had no leisure to

analyze her thoughts, but these stirred her pulses. It was beautiful, as the horses wound through the dale and by the little river Ryth, where all the ground was kept like a garden. It was beautiful, as they left the valley and went up a slow, gentle, ascending road, through thick trees, to the higher land where the new Priory stood. It stood on the brow of the height, looking down over the valley and over the further plain where the village nestled among its trees. Yes, and it was fine when the first sight of the house opened upon her, not coming now as a stranger, but as future mistress; for whom every window and gable and chimney had the mysterious interest of a future home. Would old Lady Rythdale like to see her there? Eleanor did not know; but felt easy in the assurance that Mr. Carlisle, who could manage everything, could manage that also. It was his affair.

The house showed well as they drew towards it, among fine old trees. It was a new house; that is, it did not date further back than three generations. Like everything else about the whole domain, it gave the idea of perfect order and management. It was a spacious building, spreading out amply upon the ground, not rising to a great height; and built in a simple style of no particular name or pretensions; but massive, stately, and elegant. No unfinished or half realized idea; what had been attempted had been done, and done well. The house was built on three sides of a quadrangle. The side of approach by which the cavalcade had come, winding up from the valley, led them round past the front of the left wing. Mr. Carlisle made her draw bridle and fall a little behind the carriage.

"Do you like this view?" said he.

"Very much. I have never seen it before."

He smiled at her, and again extending his hand, drew Black Maggie's rein till he brought her to a slow walk. The carriage passed on out of sight. Eleanor would have remonstrated, but the view before her was lovely. Three gables, of unequal height, rose over that façade; the only ornamental part was in their fanciful but not elaborate

mouldings. The lower story, stretching along the spread of a smooth little lawn, was almost masked with ivy. It embedded the large but perfectly plain windows, which reached so near the ground that one might step out from them; their clear amplitude was set in a frame of massive green. One angle especially looked as if the room within must be a nest of verdurous beauty. The ivy encased all the doorways or entrances on that side of the house; and climbing higher, threatened to do for the story above what it had accomplished below; but perhaps some order had been taken about that, for in the main its course had been stayed at a certain stone moulding that separated the stories, and only a branch here and there had been permitted to show what more it would like to do. One of the upper windows was partly encased; while its lace curtains gave an assurance that all its garnishing had not been left to nature. Eleanor could not help thinking it was a very lovely-looking place for any woman to be placed in as her home; and her heart beat a little high.

"Do you not like it?" said Mr. Carlisle.

"Yes,—certainly!"

"What are you considering so attentively in Black Maggie's ears?"

Eleanor caused Maggie to prick up the said ears, by a smart touch of her whip. The horses started forward to overtake the carriage. Perhaps, however, Mr. Carlisle was fascinated—he might well be—by the present views he had of his charge; there was a blushing shy grace observable about her which was pretty to see and not common; and maybe he wanted the view to be prolonged. He certainly did not follow the nearest road, but turned off instead to a path which went winding up and down the hill and through plantations of wood, giving Eleanor views also of a different sort; and so did not come out upon the front of the house till long after the carriage party had been safely housed. Eleanor found she was alone, and was not to be sheltered under her mother's wing or any other; and her conductor's face was much too satisfied to invite comments. He swung

her down from the saddle, allowed her to remove her cap, and putting her hand on his arm, walked her into the drawing-room and the presence of his mother.

Eleanor had seen Lady Rythdale once before, in a stately visit which had been made at the Lodge; never except that one time. The old baroness was a dignified-looking person, and gave her a stately reception now; rather stiff and cold, Eleanor thought; or careless and cold, rather.

"My dear," said the old lady, "have you come in a riding-habit? That will be very uncomfortable. Go to my dressing-room, and let Arles change it for something else. She can fit you. Macintosh, you show her the way."

No questions were asked. Mr. Carlisle obeyed, putting Eleanor's hand on his arm again, and walked her off out of the room and through a gallery and up the stairs, and along another gallery. He walked fast. Eleanor felt exceedingly abashed and displeased and discomfited at this extraordinary proceeding, but she did not know how to resist it. Her compliance was taken for granted, and Mr. Carlisle was laughing at her discomfiture, which was easy enough to be seen. Eleanor's cheeks were glowing magnificently. "I suppose he feels he has me in his own dominions now," she thought; and the thought made her very rebellious. Lady Rythdale too!

"Mr. Carlisle," she began, "there is really no occasion for all this. I am perfectly comfortable. I do not wish to alter my dress."

"What do you call me?" said he, stopping short.

"Mr. Carlisle."

"Call me something else,"

The steady, bright hazel eyes which were looking at her asserted their power. In spite of her irritation and vexation she obeyed his wish, and asked him somewhat loftily, to take her back again to the company.

"Against my mother's commands? Do you not think they are binding on you, Eleanor?"

"No, I do not!"

"You will allow they are on me. My darling," said he,

laughing and kissing her, "you must submit to be displeased for your good." And he walked on again. Eleanor was conquered; she felt it, and chafed under it. Mr. Carlisle opened a door and walked her into an apartment, large and luxurious, the one evidently that his mother had designated. He rang the bell.

"Arles," said he, "find this lady something that will fit her. She wishes to change her dress. Do your best."

He went out, and left Eleanor in the hands of the tire-woman. Eleanor felt utterly out of countenance, but powerless; though she longed to defy the maid and the mistress, and say, "I will wear my own, and nothing else." Why could she not say it? She did not like to defy the master.

So Arles had her way, and after one or two rapid glances at the subject of her cares and a moment's reflection on her introduction there, she took her cue. "Blushes like that are not for nothing," thought Arles; "and when Mr. Macintosh says, 'Do your best'—why, it is easy to see!"

She was quick and skilful and silent; but Eleanor felt like a wild creature in harness. Her riding-dress went off—her hair received a touch, all it wanted, as the waiting-maid said; and after one or two journeys to wardrobes, Mrs. Arles brought out and proceeded to array Eleanor in a robe of white lawn, very flowing and full of laces. Yet it was simple in style, and Eleanor thought it useless to ask for a change; although when the robing was completed she was dressed more elegantly than she had ever been in her life. She was sadly ashamed, greatly indignant, and mortified at herself, that she should be so facile to the will of a person who had no right to command her. But if she was dissatisfied, Arles was not; the deep colour in Eleanor's cheeks only relieved her white drapery to perfection; and her beautiful hair and faultless figure harmonized with flowing folds and soft laces which can do so much for outlines that are not soft. Eleanor was not without a consciousness of this; nevertheless, vanity was not her foible; and her state of mind was anything but enviable when she left the dressing-room for the gallery. But Mr. Carlisle was there, to

meet her and her mood too; and Eleanor found herself taken in hand at once. He had a way of mixing affection with his power over her, in such a way as to soothe and overawe at the same time; and before they reached the drawing-room now, Eleanor was caressed and laughed into good order; leaving nevertheless a little root of opposition in her secret heart, which might grow fast upon occasion.

She was taken into the drawing-room, set down, and left under Lady Rythdale's wing. Eleanor felt her position much more conspicuous than agreeable. The old baroness turned and surveyed her; went on with the conversation pending, then turned and surveyed her again; looked her well over; finally gave Eleanor some worsted to hold for her, which she wound; nor would she accept any substitute offered by the gentlemen for her promised daughter-in-law's pretty hands and arms. Worse and worse. Eleanor saw herself now not only a mark for people's eyes, but put in an attitude as it were to be looked at. She bore it bravely; with steady outward calmness and grace, though her cheeks remonstrated. No movement of Eleanor's did that. She played worsted reel with admirable good sense and skill, wisely keeping her own eyes on the business in hand, till it was finished; and Lady Rythdale, winding up the last end of the ball, bestowed a pat of her hand, half commendation and half raillery, upon Eleanor's red cheek, as if it had been a child's. That was a little hard to bear; Eleanor felt for a moment as if she could have burst into tears. She would have left her place if she dared; but she was in a corner of a sofa by Lady Rythdale, and nobody else near; and she felt shy. She could use her eyes now upon the company.

Lady Rythdale was busied in conversation with one or two elderly ladies, of stately presence like herself, who were, as Eleanor gathered, friends of long date, staying at the Priory. They did not invite curiosity. She saw her mother with Mrs. Wycherly, the rector's sister, in another group, conversing with Dr. Cairnes and a gentleman unknown. Mr. Powle had found congeniality in a second stranger. Mr. Carlisle, far off in a window—one of those beautiful deep,

large windows—was very much engaged with some ladies and gentlemen likewise strange to Eleanor. Nobody was occupied with her; and from her sofa corner she went to musing. The room and its treasures she had time to look at quietly; she had leisure to notice how fine it was in proportions and adornments, and what luxurious abundance of everything that wealth buys and cultivation takes pleasure in had space to abound, without the seeming of multiplicity. The house was as stately within as on the outside. The magnificence was now to Eleanor, and drove her somehow to musings of a very opposite character. Perhaps her unallayed spirit of opposition might have been with other causes at the bottom of this. However that were, her thoughts went off in a perverse train upon the former baronesses of Rythdale; the ladies lovely and stately who had inhabited this noble abode. Eleanor would soon be one of the line, moving in their place, where they had moved; lovely and admired in her turn; but their turn was over. What when hers should be?—could she keep this heritage for ever? It was a very impertinent thought; it had clearly no business with either place or time; but there it was, staring at Eleanor out of the rich cornices, and looking in at her from the magnificent plantations seen through the window. Eleanor did not welcome the thought; it was an intruder. The fact was, that having once made entrance in her mind, the idea only seized opportunities to start up and assert its claims to notice. It was always lying in wait for her now; and on this occasion held its ground with great perverseness. Eleanor glanced again at Dr. Cairnes; no hope of him at present; he was busily engaged with a clever gentleman, a friend of Mr. Carlisle's and an Oxford man, and with Mr. Carlisle himself. Eleanor grew impatient of her thoughts; she wondered if anybody else had such, in all that company. Nobody seemed to notice her; and she meditated an escape both from her sofa corner and from herself to a portfolio near by, which promised a resource in the shape of engravings; but just as she was moving, Lady Rythdale laid a hand upon her lap.

"Sit still, my dear," she said, turning partly towards her, —"I want you by me. I have a skein of silk here I want wound for my work—a skein of green silk—here it is; it has tangled itself, I fear; will you prepare it for me?"

Eleanor took the silk, which was in pretty thorough confusion, and began the task of unravelling and untieing, preparatory to its being wound. This time Lady Rythdale did not turn away; she sat considering Eleanor, on whose white drapery and white fingers the green silk threads made a pretty contrast, while they left her helplessly exposed to that examining gaze. Eleanor felt it going all over her; taking in all the details of her dress, figure, and face. She could not help the blood mounting, though she angrily tried to prevent it. The green silk was in a great snarl. Eleanor bent her head over her task.

"My dear, are you near-sighted?"

"No, madam!" said the girl, giving the old lady a moment's view of the orbs in question.

"You have very good eyes—uncommon colour," said Lady Rythdale. "Macintosh thinks he will have a good little wife in you;—is it true?"

"I do not know, ma'am," said Eleanor, haughtily.

"I think it is true. Look up here, and let me see." And putting her hand under Eleanor's chin, she chucked up her face as if she were something to be examined for purchase. Eleanor fel in no amiable mood certainly, and her cheeks were flaming; nevertheless the old lady coolly held her under consideration, and even with a smile on her lips which seemed of satisfaction. Eleanor did not see it, for her eyes ould not l ok up; but she felt through all her nerves the iss with wl ich the examination was dismissed.

"I think i is true," the old baroness repeated. "I hope it is true; f r my son would not be an easy man to live with on any other terms, my dear."

"I suppose its truth depends in a high degree upon himself, madam," said Eleanor, very much incensed. "Does your ladyship choose to wind this silk now?"

"You may hold it. I see you have got it into order.

That shows you possessed of the old qualification of patience. —Your hands a little higher.—My dear, I would not advise you to regulate your behaviour by anything in other people. Macintosh will make you a kind husband if you do not displease him; but he is one of those men who must be obeyed."

Eleanor had no escape; she must sit holding the silk, a mark for Lady Rythdale's eyes and tongue. She sat drooping a little with indignation and shame, when Mr. Carlisle came up. He had seen from a distance the tint of his lady's cheeks, and judged that she was going through some sort of an ordeal. But though he came to protect, he stood still to enjoy. The picture was so very pretty. The mother and son exchanged glances.

"I think you can make her do," said the baroness contentedly.

"Not as a permanent winding reel!" exclaimed Eleanor, jumping up. "Mr. Carlisle, I am tired;—have the goodness to take this silk from my fingers."

And slipping it over the gentleman's astonished hands, before he had time quite to know what she was about, Eleanor left the pair to arrange the rest of the business between them, and herself walked off to one of the deep windows. She was engaged there immediately by Lord Rythdale, in civil conversation enough; then he introduced other gentlemen; and it was not till after a series of talks with one and another, that Eleanor had a minute to herself. She was sitting in the window, where an encroaching branch of ivy at one side reminded her of the elegant work it was doing round the corner. Eleanor would have liked to go through the house—or the grounds—if she might have got away alone, and indulged herself in a good musing fit. How beautiful the shaven turf looked under the soft sun's light! how stately stood old oaks and beeches here and there! how rich the thicker border of vegetation beyond the lawn! What beauty of order and keeping everywhere! Nothing had been attempted here but what the resources of the proprietors were fully equal to; the impression was of ample

power to do more. While musing, Eleanor's attention was attracted by Mr. Carlisle, who had stepped out upon the lawn with one or two of his guests, and she looked at the place and its master together. He suited it very well. He was an undeniably handsome man; his bearing graceful and good. Eleanor liked Mr. Carlisle, not the less perhaps that she feared him a little. She only felt a little wilful rebellion against the way in which she had come to occupy her present position. If she might but have been permitted to take her own time, and say yea for herself, without having it said for her, she would have been content. As it was, Eleanor was not very discontented. Her heart swelled with a secret satisfaction and some pride, as without seeing her the group passed the window, and she was left with the sunlit lawn and beautiful old trees again. Close upon that feeling of pride came another thought:—What when this earthly coronet should fade?—

"Dr. Cairnes," said Eleanor, seizing an opportunity, "come here and sit down by me. I have not seen you for a great while."

"You have not missed me, my dear lady," said the doctor, blandly.

"Yes, I have," said Eleanor. "I want to talk to you. I want you to tell me something."

"How soon I am to make you happy? or help you to make somebody else happy? Well, I shall be at your service any time about Christmas."

"No, no!" said Eleanor, colouring, "I want something very different. I am talking seriously, Dr. Cairnes. I want you to tell me something. I want to know how I may be happy—for I am unhappy now."

"You unhappy!" said the doctor. "I must talk to my friend Mr. Carlisle about that. We must call him in for counsel. What would he say to your being unhappy? hey?"

He was there to speak for himself; there with a slight cloud on his brow too, Eleanor thought. He had come from within the room; she thought he was safe away in the grounds with his guests.

"Shall I break up this interesting conversation?" said he.

"It was growing very interesting," said the doctor; "for this lady was just acknowledging to me that she is not happy. I give her over to you—this is a case beyond my knowledge and resources. Only, when I can do anything, I shall be most gratified at being called upon."

The doctor rose up, shook himself, and left the field to Mr. Carlisle. Eleanor felt vexed beyond description, and very little inclined to call again upon Dr. Cairnes for anything whatever in any line of assistance. Her face burned. Mr. Carlisle took no notice; only laid his hand upon hers, and said "Come!"—and walked her out of the room and on the lawn, and sauntered with her down to some of the thickly planted shrubbery beyond the house. Then went round about upon the soft turf, calling Eleanor's attention to this or that shrub or tree, and finding her very pleasant amusement; till the question in her mind, of what was coming now, had almost faded away. The lights and shadows stretched in long lines between the trees, and lay witchingly over the lawn. An opening in the plantations brought a fair view of it, and of the left wing of the house, which Eleanor had admired, dark and rich in its mantle of ivy, while the light gleamed on the edges of the ornamented gables above. It was a beautiful view. Mr. Carlisle paused.

"How do you like the house?" said he.

"I think I prefer the ruined old priory down yonder," said Eleanor.

"Do you still feel your attraction for a monastic life?"

"Yes!" said Eleanor, colouring, "I think they must have had peaceable old lives there, with nothing to trouble them. And they could plant gardens as well as you can."

"As the old ruins are rather uninhabitable, what do you think of entering a modern Priory?"

It pleased him to see the deep rich glow on Eleanor's cheek, and the droop of her saucy eyelids. No wonder it pleased him; it was a pretty thing to see; and he enjoyed it.

"You shall be Lady Abbess," he went on presently, "and make your own rules. I only stipulate that there shall be no Father Confessor except myself."

"I doubt your qualifications for that office," said Eleanor

"Suppose you try me. What were you confessing to Dr. Cairnes just now in the window?"

"Nonsense, Robert!" said Eleanor. "I was talking of something you would not understand."

"You underrate me," said he, coolly. "My powers of understanding are equal to the old gentleman's, unless I am mistaken in myself. What are you unhappy about, darling?

"Nothing that you could make anything of," said Eleanor. "I was talking to Dr. Cairnes in a language that you do not understand. Do let it alone!"

"Did he report you truly, to have used the English word 'unhappy'?"

"Yes," said Eleanor; "but Mr. Carlisle, you do not know what you are talking about."

"I am coming to it. Darling, do you think you would be unhappy at the Priory?"

"I did not say that," said Eleanor, confused.

"Do you think I could make you happy there?—Speak, Eleanor—speak!"

"Yes—if I could be happy anywhere."

"What makes you unhappy? My wife must not hide her heart from me."

"Yes, but I am not that yet," said Eleanor with spirit, rousing up to assert herself.

He laughed and kissed her. "How long first, Eleanor?"

"I am sure I don't know. Very long."

"What is very long?"

"I do not know. A year or two, at least."

"Do you suppose I will agree to that?"

Eleanor knew he would not; and further saw a quiet purpose in his face, She was sure he had fixed upon the time, if not the day. She felt those cobweb bands all around her. Here she was, almost in bridal attire, at his side already. She made no answer.

"Divide by twelve, and get a quotient, Eleanor."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to have a merry Christmas—by your leave."

Christmas! that was what the doctor had said. Was it so far without her leave? Eleanor felt angry. That did not hinder her feeling frightened.

"You cannot have it in the way you propose, Mr. Carlisle. I am not ready for that."

"You will be," he said coolly. "I shall be obliged to go up to London after Christmas; then I mean to instal you in Berkeley Square; and in the summer you shall go to Switzerland with me. Now tell me, my darling, what you are unhappy about?"

Eleanor felt tongue-tied and powerless. The last words had been said very affectionately, and as she was silent they were repeated.

"It is nothing you would understand."

"Try me."

"It is nothing that would interest you at all."

"Not interest me!" said he; and if his manner had been self-willed, it was also now as tender and gentle as it was possible to be. He folded Eleanor in his arms caressingly, and waited for her words. "Not interest me! Do you know that from your riding-cap to the very gloves you pull on and off, there is nothing that touches you that does not interest me? And now I hear my wife—she is almost that, Eleanor—tell Dr. Cairnes that she is not happy. I must know why."

"I wish you would not think about it, Mr. Carlisle! It is nothing to care about at all. I was speaking to Dr. Cairnes as a clergyman."

"You shall not call me Mr. Carlisle. Say that over again, Eleanor."

"It is nothing to think twice about, Mr. Macintosh."

"You were speaking to Dr. Cairnes as a clergyman?" he said, laughing. "How was that? I can think but of one way in which Dr. Cairnes' profession concerns you and me—was it on *that* subject, Eleanor?"

"No, no. It was only—I was only going to ask him a religious question that interested me."

"A *religious* question! Was it that which made you unhappy?"

"Yes, if you will have it. I knew you would not like it."

"I don't like it; and I will not have it," said he. "*You*, my little Eleanor, getting up a religious uneasiness! that will never do. You, who are as sound as a nut, and as sweet as a Cape jessamine! I shall prove your best counsellor. You have not had rides enough over the moor lately. We will have an extra gallop to-morrow:—and after Christmas I will take care of you. What were you uneasy about?"

"Don't, Robert!" said Eleanor; "do not ask me any more about it. I do not want you to laugh at me,"

"Laugh at you!" he said. "I should like to see anybody else do that! but I will, as much as I like. Do you know you are a darling, and just as lovely in mind as you are in person? Do not you have any questions with the old priest; I do not like it; come to me with your difficulties, and I will manage them for you. Was that all, Eleanor?"

"Yes."

"Then we are all right—or we soon shall be."

They strolled a little longer over the soft turf, in the soft light.

"We are not quite all right," said Eleanor; "for you think I will do—what I will not."

"What is that?"

"I have not agreed to your arrangements."

"You will."

"Do not think it, Macintosh. I will not."

He looked down at her, smiling, not in the least disconcerted, She had spoken no otherwise than gently, and with more secret effort than she would have liked him to know.

"You shall say that for half the time between now and Christmas," he said; "and after that you will adopt another form of expression."

"If I say it at all, I shall hold to it, Macintosh."

"Then do not say it at all, my little Eleanor," said he, lightly; "I shall make you give it up. I think I will make you give it up now."

"You are not generous, Robert."

"No, I suppose I am not," he said contentedly. "I am forced to go to London after Christmas, and I cannot go without you. Do you not love me well enough to give me that, Eleanor?"

Eleanor was silent. She was not willing to say no; she could not with truth say yes. Mr. Carlisle bent down to look into her face.

"What have you to say to me?"

"Nothing," said Eleanor, avoiding his eye.

"Kiss me, Nellie, and promise that you will be my good little wife at Christmas."

His mother's very phrase. Eleanor rebelled secretly, but felt powerless under those commanding eyes. Perhaps he was aware of her latent obstinacy; if he was, he also knew himself able to master it; for the eyes were sparkling with pleasure as well as with wilfulness. The occasion was not sufficient to justify a contest with Mr. Carlisle; Eleanor was not ready to brave one; she hesitated long enough to show her rebellion, and then yielded, ingloriously she felt, though on the whole wisely. She met her punishment. The offered permission was not only taken; she was laughed at and rejoiced over triumphantly, to Mr. Carlisle's content. Eleanor bore it as well as she could; wishing that she had not tried to assert herself in such vain fashion, and feeling her discomfiture complete.

It was more than time to return to the company. Eleanor knew what a mark she was for people's eyes, and would gladly have screened herself behind somebody in a corner; but Mr. Carlisle kept full possession of her. He walked her into the room, and gently retained her hand in its place while he went from one to another, obliging her to stand and talk or to be talked to with him through the whole company. Eleanor winced; nevertheless bore herself well and a little proudly until the evening was over.

The weather had changed, and the ride home was begun under a cloudy sky. It grew very dark as they went on; impossible in many places to see the path. Mr. Carlisle was riding with her, and the roads were well known to him and to the horses, and Eleanor did not mind it. She went on gaily with him, rather delighting in the novelty and adventure, till she heard a muttering of thunder. It was the only thing Eleanor's nerves dreaded. Her spirits were checked; she became silent and quiet, and hardly heard enough to respond to her companion's talk. She was looking incessantly for that which came at last as they were nearing the old ruins in the valley—a flash of lightning. It lit up the beautiful tower with its clinging ivy; revealed for an instant some bits of wall and the thick clustering trees; then left a blank darkness. The same illumination had entered the hidden places of memory, and startled into vivid life the scenes and the thoughts of a few months ago. All Eleanor's latent uneasiness was aroused. Her attention was absorbed now, from this point until they got home, in watching for flashes of lightning. They came frequently, but the storm was after all a slight one. The lightning lit up the way beautifully for the other members of the party. To Eleanor it revealed something more.

Mr. Carlisle's leave-taking at the door bespoke him well satisfied with the results of the evening. Eleanor shunned the questions and remarks of her family, and went to her own room. There she sat down, in her riding-habit and with her head in her hands. What use was it for her to be baroness of Rythdale, to be mistress of the Priory, to be Mr. Carlisle's petted and favoured wife, while there was no shield between her head and the stroke that any day and any moment might bring? And what after all availed an earthly coronet, ever so bright, which had nothing to replace it when its fading time should come? Eleanor wanted something more.

CHAPTER VII.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute."

It was impossible for Eleanor to shake off the feeling. It rose fresh with her the next day, and neither her own nor Mr. Carlisle's efforts could dispose of it. To do Eleanor justice, she did not herself wish to lose it, unless by the supply of her want; while she took special care to hide her trouble from Mr. Carlisle. They took great gallops on the moor, and long rides all about the country: the rides were delightful; the talks were gay; but in them all, or at the end of them certainly, Eleanor's secret cry was for some shelter for her unprotected head. The thought would come up in every possible connexion, till it haunted her. Not her approaching marriage, nor the preparations which were even beginning for it, nor her involuntary subjection to all Mr. Carlisle's pleasure, so much dwelt with Eleanor now as the question,—how she should meet the storm which must break upon her some day; or rather the sense that she could not meet it. The fairest and sweetest scene, or condition of things, seemed but to bring up this thought more vividly by very force of contrast.

Eleanor hid the whole within her own heart, and the fire burned there all the more. Not a sign of it must Mr. Carlisle see; and as for Dr. Cairnes, Eleanor could never get a chance for a safe talk with him. Somebody was always near, or might be near. The very effort to hide her

thoughts grew sometimes irksome; and the whirl of engagements and occupations in which she lived gave her a stifled feeling. She could not even indulge herself in a solitary consideration of that which there was nobody to help her consider.

She hailed one day the announcement that Mr. Carlisle must let the next day go by without riding or seeing her. He would be kept away at a town some miles off, on county business. Mr. Carlisle had a good deal to do with county politics and country business generally; made himself both important and popular, and lost no thread of influence he had once gathered into his hand. So Brompton would have him all the next day, and Eleanor would have her time to herself.

That she might secure full possession of it, she ordered her pony and went out alone after luncheon. She could not get free earlier. Now she took no servant to follow her, and started off alone to the moors. It was a delicious autumn day, mild and still and mellow. Eleanor got out of sight or hearing of human habitations; then let her pony please himself in his paces while she dropt the reins and thought. It was hardly in Eleanor's nature to have bitter thoughts; they came as near it on this occasion as they were apt to do; they were very dissatisfied thoughts. She was on the whole dissatisfied with everybody; herself most of all, it is true; but her mother and Mr. Carlisle had a share. She did not want to be married at Christmas; she did not even care about going to Switzerland, unless by her own good leave asked and obtained; she was not willing to be managed as a child; yet Eleanor was conscious that she was no better in Mr. Carlisle's hands. "I wonder what sort of a master he will make," she thought, "when he has me entirely in his power? I have no sort of liberty now." It humbled her; it was her own fault; yet Eleanor liked Mr. Carlisle, and thought that she loved him. She was young yet and very inexperienced. She also liked all the splendour of the position he gave her. Yet above the gratification of this, through the dazzle of wealth and pleasure and power,

Eleanor discerned now a want these could not fill. What should she do when they failed? there was no provision in them for the want of them. Eleanor forgot her loss of independence, and pondered these thoughts till they grew bitter with pain. By turns she wished she had never seen Mr. Rhys, who she remembered first started them; or wished she could see him again.

In the stillness and freedom and peace of the wide moor, Eleanor had fearlessly given herself up to her musings, without thinking or caring which way she went. The pony, finding the choice left to him, had naturally enough turned off into a track leading over some wild hills where he had been bred; the locality had pleasant associations for him. But it had none of any kind for Eleanor; and when she roused herself to think of it, she found she was in a distant part of the moor, and drawing near to the hill aforesaid; a bleak and dreary-looking region, and very far from home. Neither was she very sure by which way she might soonest regain a neighbourhood that she knew. To follow the path she was on, and turn off into the first track that branched in the right direction, seemed the best to do; and she roused up her pony to an energetic little gallop. It seemed little after the long bounds Black Maggie would take through the air; but it was brisk work for the pony. Eleanor kept him at his speed. It was luxurious to be alone; ride as she liked, slow or fast, and think as she liked, even forbidden thoughts. Her own mistress once more. Eleanor exulted, all the more because she was a rebel. The wild moor was delicious; the freedom was delicious; only she was far from home, and the afternoon was on the wane. She kept the pony to his speed.

By the base of the hills near to which the road led her, stood a miserable little house. It needed but a look at the place, to decide that the people who lived in it must be also miserable, and probably in more ways than one. Eleanor, who had intended asking there for some news of her whereabouts and the roads, changed her mind as she drew near, and resolved to pass the house at a gallop. So much for

wise resolves. The miserable children who dwelt in the house had been that day making a bonfire for their amusement, right on her track. The hot ashes were still there; the pony set his feet in them, reared high, and threw his rider, who had never known the pony to do such a thing before, and had no reason to expect it of him. Eleanor was thrown clean off on the ground, and fell stunned.

She picked herself up after a few minutes, to find no bones broken, the miserable hut close by, and two children and an old crone looking at her. The pony had concluded it a dangerous neighbourhood, and departed, showing a clean pair of heels. Eleanor gathered her dress in her hand, and looked at the people who were staring at her. Such faces!

"What place is this?" she asked, forcing herself to be bold. The answer was utterly unintelligible. All Eleanor could make out was the hoarsely or thickly put question, "Be you hurted?"

"No, thank you—not at all, I believe," she said breathlessly, for she had not got over the shock of her fall. "How far am I from the village of Wiglands?"

Again the words that were spoken in reply gave no meaning to her ear.

"Boys, will one of you show me the nearest way there? I will give you something as soon as I get home."

The children stared at her and at each other; but Eleanor was more comprehensible to them than they to her. The old woman said some hoarse words to the children; and then one of them stepped forth and said strangely, "I 'ze go wiz ye."

"I'll reward him for it," said Eleanor, nodding to the old grandmother; and set off, very glad to be walking away. She did not breathe freely till a good many yards of distance were between her and the hut, where the crone and the other child still remained watching her. There might be others of the family coming home; and Eleanor walked at a brave pace until she had well left the little hut behind, out of all fear of pursuit. Then she began to feel that she was somewhat shattered by her fall, and getting tired, and she

went more gently. But it was a long, long way; the reach of moor seemed endless; for it was a very different thing to go over it on Black Maggie's feet from going over it on her own. Eleanor was exceedingly weary, and still the brown common stretched away on all sides of her; and the distant tuft of vegetation which announced the village of Wiglands stood afar off, and seemed to be scarcely nearer after miles of walking. Before they reached it, Eleanor's feet were dragging after one another in weariest style. She could not possibly go on to the Lodge without stopping to rest. How should she reward and send back her guide? As she was thinking of this, Eleanor saw the smoke curling up from a stray cottage hid among the trees; it was Mrs. Williams's cottage. Her heart sprang with a sudden temptation—doubted, balanced, and resolved. She had excuse enough; she would do a rebellious thing. She would go there and rest. It might give her a chance to see Mr. Rhys and hear him talk; it might not. If the chance came, why, she would be very glad of it. Eleanor had no money about her; she hastily detached a gold pencil-case from her watch chain, and put it into the ragged creature's hand who had guided her; saw him turn his back, then went with a sort of stealthy joy to the front of Mrs. Williams's cottage, pushed the door open softly, and went in.

Nobody was there; not a cat; it was all still. An inner door stood ajar; within there was a sound of voices, low and pleasant. Eleanor supposed Mrs. Williams would make her appearance in a minute, and sank down on the first chair that offered; sank even her head in her hands, for very weariness and the very sense of rest and security gained. The chair was one standing by the fire, and near the open inner door; the voices came quite plainly through; and the next minute let Eleanor know that one of them was the voice of her little sister Julia; she heard one of Julia's joyous utterances. The other voice belonged to Mr. Rhys. No sound of Mrs. Williams. Eleanor sat still, her head bowed in her hands, and listened.

It seemed that Julia was looking at something—or some

collection of things. Eleanor could hear the slight rustling of paper handled—then a pause and talk. Julia had a great deal to say. Eleanor presently made out that they were looking at a collection of plants. She felt so tired that she had no inclination to move a single muscle. Mind and body sat still to listen.

"And what is that?" she heard Julia say.

"Mountain fern."

"Isn't it beautiful! O, that's as pretty as a feather."

"If you saw them growing, dozens of them springing from the same root, you would think them beautiful. Then those brown edgings are as black and glossy as jet."

"Are those the *thecæ*, Mr. Rhys?"

"Yes. The Lastræas, and all their family, have the fruit in those little round spots, each with its own covering; that is their mark."

"It is so funny that plants should have families," said Julia. "Now is this one of the family, Mr. Rhys?"

"Certainly; that is a Cystopteris."

"It's a dear little thing! Where did you get it, Mr. Rhys?"

"I do not remember. They grow pretty nearly anywhere; you find them on rocks, and walls."

"*I* don't find them," said Julia. "I wish I could. Now what is that?"

"Another of the family, but not a Cystopteris. That is the Holly fern. Do you see how stiff and prickly it is? That was a troublesome one to manage. I gathered it on a high mountain in Wales, I think."

"Are high mountains good places?"

"For the mountain ferns. That is another Lastræa you have now; that is very elegant. That grows on mountains too, but also on many other places; shoots up in elegant tufts almost a yard high. I have seen it very beautiful. When the fruit is ripe, the indusium is something of a lilac colour, spotting the frond in double rows—as you see it there. I have seen these Lastræas and others, growing in great profusion on a wild place in Devonshire, in the

neighbourhood of the rushing torrent of a river. The spray flew up on the rocks and stones along its banks, keeping them moist, and sometimes overflowed them; and there, in the vegetable matter that had by little and little collected, there was such a show of ferns as I have not often seen. Another Lastræa grew, I should think, five feet high; and this one, and the Lady fern. Turn the next sheet—there it is. That is the Lady fern."

"How perfectly beautiful!" Julia exclaimed. "Is that a Lastræa too?"

Mr. Rhys laughed a little as he answered "No." Until then his voice had kept the quiet even tone of feeble strength.

"Why is it called Lady fern?"

"I do not know. Perhaps because it is so delicate in its structure—perhaps because it is so tender. It does not bear being broken from its root."

"But I think Eleanor is as strong as anybody," said Julia.

"Don't you remember how ill she was, only from having wetted her feet, last summer?" said Mr. Rhys, with perfect gravity.

"Well, what is that?" said Julia, not liking the inference they were coming to.

"That is a little fern that loves the wet. It grows by waterfalls—those are its homes. It grows close to the fall, where it will be constantly watered by the spray from it; sometimes this little half-brother it has, the Oak fern, is found there along with it. They are elegant species."

"It must be nice to go to the waterfalls and climb up to get them," said Julia. "What do you call these little wet beauties, Mr. Rhys?"

"Polypodies."

"Polypodies! Now, Mr. Rhys,—O what is this? This is prettiest of all."

"Yes, one of the very prettiest. I found that in a cave, a wet cave, by the sea. That is the sort of home it likes."

"In Wales?"

"In Wales I have found it, and elsewhere in the south

of England; but always by the sea; in places where I have seen a great many other beautiful things."

"By the sea, Mr. Rhys? Why, I have been there, and I did not see anything but the waves and the sand and the rocks."

"You did not know where to look."

"Where did you look?"

"Under the rocks—and in them."

"*In* the rocks, sir?"

"In the clefts and hollows and caves. In caves which I could only reach in a boat, or by going in at low tide; then I saw things more beautiful than a fairy palace, Julia."

"What sort of things?"

"Animals—and plants.'

"Beautiful animals?"

"Very beautiful."

"Well, I wish you would take me with you, Mr. Rhys. I would not mind wetting my feet. I will be a Hard fern—not a Lady fern. Eleanor shall be the lady. O, Mr. Rhys, won't you hate to leave England?"

"There are plenty of beautiful things where I am going, Julia—if I get well."

"But the people are so bad!"

"That is why I want to go to them."

"But what can you do to them?"

"I can tell them of the Lord Jesus, Julia. They have never heard of him; that is why they are so evil."

"Maybe they won't believe you, Mr. Rhys."

"Maybe they will. But the Lord has commanded me to go, all the same."

"How, Mr. Rhys?"

He answered in the beautiful words of Paul—"How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" There was a sorrowful depth in his tones, speaking to himself rather than to his little listener.

"Mr. Rhys, they are such dreadfully bad people, they might kill you, and eat you."

"Yes."

"Are you not afraid?"

"No."

There is strangely much sometimes expressed, one can hardly say how, in the tone of a single word. So it was with this word, even to the ears of Eleanor in the next room. It was round and sweet, untrembling, with something like a vibration of joy in its low utterance. It was but a word, said in answer to a child's idle question; it pierced like a barbed arrow through all the involutions of another heart, down into the core. It was an accent of strength and quiet and fearless security, though spoken by lips that were very uncertain of their tenure of life. It gave the chord that Eleanor wanted sounded in her own soul; where now there was no harmony at all, but sometimes a jarring clang, and sometimes an echo of fear.

"But, Mr. Rhys, aren't they very *dreadful*, over there where you want to go?" Julia said.

"Very dreadful; more than you can possibly imagine, or than I can, perhaps."

"Well, I hope you won't go. Mr. Rhys, I think Mrs. Williams stays a great while—it is time the kettle was on for your tea."

Eleanor had hardly time to be astonished at this most novel display of careful housewifery on her little sister's part, whom indeed she would have supposed to be ignorant that such a thing as a kettle existed; when Julia came bounding into the outer room to look after the article, or after the old dame who should take charge of it. She stopped short, and Eleanor raised her head. Julia's exclamation was hearty.

"Hush!" whispered Eleanor.

"What should I hush for? there's nobody here but Mr. Rhys in the other room; and he was saying the other day that he wanted to see you."

Back she bounded. "Mr. Rhys, here's Eleanor in the other room, and no Mrs. Williams."

Eleanor heard the quiet answer—"Tell your sister, that

as I cannot walk out to see her, perhaps she will do me the favour to come in here."

There was nothing better, in the circumstances; indeed Eleanor felt she must go in to explain herself; she only waited for Julia's brisk summons—"Eleanor, Mr. Rhys wants to see you!"—and gathering up her habit, she walked into the other room as steadily as if she had all the right in the world to be there; bearing herself a little proudly, for a sudden thought of Mr. Carlisle came over her. Mr. Rhys was lying on the couch, as she had seen him before; but she was startled at the paleness of his face, made more startling by the very dark eyebrows and bushy hair. He raised himself on his elbow as she came in, and Eleanor could not refuse to give him her hand.

"I ought to apologize for not rising to receive you," he said,—"but you see I cannot help it."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Rhys. Are you less strong than you were a few weeks ago?"

"I seem to have no strength at all now," he answered with a half laugh. "Will you not sit down? Julia, suppose you coax the fire to burn a little brighter, for your sister's welcome?"

"She can do it herself," said Julia. "I am going to see to the fire in the other room."

"No, that would be inhospitable," Mr. Rhys said with a smile; "and I do not believe your sister knows how, Julia. She has not learned as many things as you have."

Julia gave her friend a very loving look, and went at the fire without more words. Eleanor sat under a strange spell. She hardly knew her sister in that look; and there was about the pale pure face that lay on the couch, with its shining eyes, an atmosphere of influence that subdued and enthralled her. It was with an effort that she roused herself to give the intended explanation of her being in that place. Mr. Rhys heard her throughout.

"I am very glad you were thrown," he said; "since it has procured me the pleasure of seeing you."

"Mr. Carlisle will never let you ride alone again—that is one thing!" said Julia. And having finished the fire and her exclamatory comments together, she ran off into the other room. Her last words had called up a deep flush on Eleanor's face. Mr. Rhys waited till it had passed quite away, and then he asked very calmly, and putting the question also with his bright eyes—

"How have you been since I saw you last?"

The eyes were bright, not with the specular brightness of many eyes, but with a sort of fulness of light and keenness of intelligent vision. Eleanor knew perfectly well to what they referred. She shrank within herself, cowered, and hesitated; then made a brave effort, and threw back the question.

"How have *you* been, Mr. Rhys?"

"I have been well," he said. "You know it is the privilege of the children of God, to glory in tribulations. That is what I am doing."

"Have you been so very ill?" asked Eleanor.

"My illness gives me no pain," he answered; "it only incapacitates me for doing anything. And at first that was more grievous to me than you can understand. With so much to do, and with my heart in the work, it seemed as if my Master had laid me aside, and said, 'You shall do no more; you shall lie there and not speak my name to men any longer.' It gave me great pain at first—I was tempted to rebel; but now I know that patience worketh experience. I thank him for the lessons he has taught me. I am willing to go out and be useful, or to lie here and be comparatively useless,—just as my Lord will!"

The slow deliberate utterance, which testified at once of physical weakness and mental power; the absolute repose of the bright face, touched Eleanor profoundly. She sat spell-bound, forgetting her overthrow and her fatigue and everything else; only conscious of her struggling thoughts and cares of the weeks past, and of the presence and influence of the one person she knew who had the key to them.

"Having so few opportunities" he went on, "you will not

be surprised that I hail every one that offers, of speaking in my Master's name. I know that he has summoned you to his service, Miss Powle—is he your Master yet?"

Eleanor pushed her chair round, grating it on the floor, so as to turn her face a little away, and answered, "No."

"You have heard his call to you?"

Eleanor felt her whole heart convulsed in the struggle to answer or not answer this question. With great difficulty she kept herself outwardly perfectly quiet; and at last said hoarsely, looking away from Mr. Rhys into the fire—

"How do you know anything about it?"

"Have you yielded obedience to his commands?" he said, disregarding her words.

"I do not know what they are," Eleanor answered.

"Have you sought to find them out?"

She hesitated and said "No." Her face was completely turned away from him now; but the tender intonation of the next words thrilled through every nerve of her heart and brain.

"Then your head is uncovered yet by that helmet of security which you were anxious about a little time ago?"

It was the speech of somebody who saw right into her heart and knew all that was going on there; what was the use of holding out and trying to maintain appearances? Eleanor's head sank; her heart gave way; she burst into tears. Now was her chance, she thought; the ice was broken; she would ask of Mr. Rhys all she wanted to know, for he could tell her. Before another word was spoken, in rushed Julia.

"I've got *that* going," she said; "you shall have some tea directly, Mr. Rhys. I hope Mrs. Williams will stay away till I get done. Now it will take a little while—come here, Eleanor, and look at these beautiful ferns."

Eleanor was sitting upright again; she had driven the tears back. She hoped for another chance of speaking, when Julia should go to get her tea ready. In the mean while she moved her seat, as her sister desired her, to look over the ferns. This brought her into the neighbourhood of

the couch, where Julia sat on a low bench, turning the great sheets of paper on the floor before her. It brought Eleanor's face into full view, too, she knew; but now she did not care for that. Julia went on rapturously with the ferns, asking information as before; and in Mr. Rhys's answers there was a grave tone of preoccupation which thrilled on Eleanor's ear, and kept her own mind to the point where it had been.

"Are there ferns out there where you are going if you get well, Mr. Rhys? new ones?"

"I have no doubt of it,"

"Then you will gather them and dry them, won't you?"

"I think it is very possible I may."

"I wish you wouldn't go! O, Mr. Rhys, tell Eleanor about that place; she don't know about it. Tell her what you told me."

He did; perhaps to fill up the time and take Eleanor's attention from herself for the moment. He gave a short account of the people in question; a people of fine physical and even fine mental development for savages; inhabiting a country of great beauty and rich natural resources; but at the same time sunk in the most abject depths of moral debasement. A country where the "works of the devil" had reached their utmost vigour; where men lived but for vile ends, and took the lives of their fellow men and each other with the utmost ruthlessness and carelessness and horrible cruelty; and more than that, where they dishonoured human life by abusing, and even eating, the form in which human life had residence. It was a terrible picture Mr. Rhys drew, in a few words; so terrible, that it did take Eleanor's attention from all else for the time.

'Is other life safe there?" she asked. "Do the white people who go there feel themselves secure?"

"I presume they do not."

"Then why go to such a horrible place?"

"Why not?" he asked. "The darker they are, the more they want light."

"But it is to jeopardize the very life you wish to use for them."

Mr. Rhys was silent for a moment, and when he spoke it was only to make a remark about the fern which lay displayed on the floor before Julia.

"That Hart's-tongue," said he, "I gathered from a cavern on the sea-coast—where it grew hanging down from the roof —quantities of it."

"In a dark cavern, Mr. Rhys?" said Julia.

"Not in a dark part of the cavern. No, it grew only where it could have the light.—Miss Powle, I am of David's mind—'In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do to me.'"

He looked up at Eleanor as he spoke. The slight smile, the look, in Eleanor's mood of mind, were like a coal of fire dropped into her heart. It burned. She said nothing; sat still, and looked at the fern on the floor.

"But will you not feel *afraid*, Mr. Rhys?" said Julia.

"Why, no, Julia. I shall have nothing to be afraid of. You forget who will be with me."

Julia with that jumped up and ran off to see about her fire and kettle in the other room. Eleanor and Mr. Rhys were left alone. The latter did not speak. Eleanor longed to hear more, and made a great effort.

"I do not understand you," she said hoarsely, for in the stir of her feelings she could not command a clear voice. "You say, He will be with you. What do you mean? We cannot see him now. How will he be with you?"

She had raised her eyes, and she saw a strange softness and light pass over the face she was looking at. Indefinable, unaccountable, she yet saw it; a shining from the spiritual glory within, which Eleanor recognized, though she had never seen it before. Fire and water were in those bright eyes at once; and Eleanor guessed the latter evidence of emotion was for his ignorant questioner. She had no heart left. By such a flash of revelation the light from one spirit showed the other its darkness; dimly known to her before; but now, once and for ever, she knew where *she* stood and where *he* stood, and what the want of her life must be, till she should stand there too. Her face showed but a little of

the work going on with heavings and strugglings in her mind; yet doubtless it was as readable to her companion as his had been to her. She could only hear at the time—afterwards she pondered—the words of his reply.

"I cannot show him to you;—but he will show himself to you, if you seek him."

There was no chance for more words; Julia came in again, and was thereafter bustling in and out, getting her cup of tea ready. Eleanor could not meet her little sister's looks and probable words; she turned hastily from the ferns and the couch, and put herself at the window with her back to everybody. There was a wild cry in her heart—"What shall I do! what shall I do!" One thing she must have, or be miserable; how was she to make it her own? As soon as she turned her face from that cottage room and what was in it, she must meet the full blast of opposing currents; unfavourable, adverse, overwhelming. Her light was not strong enough to stand that blast, Eleanor knew; it would be blown out directly;—and she left in darkness. In a desperate sense of this, a desperate resolve to overcome it somehow, a despairing powerlessness to contend, she sat at the window seeing nothing. She was brought to herself at last by Julia's, "Eleanor—Mr. Rhys wants you to take a cup of tea." Eleanor turned round mechanically, took the cup, and changed her place for one near the fire.

She never forgot that scene. Julia's part in it gave it a most strange air to Eleanor; so did her own. Julia was moving about, quite at home, preparing cups of tea for everybody, herself included; and waiting upon Mr. Rhys with a steady care and affectionateness which evidently met with an affectionate return. The cottage room with its plain furniture—the little common blue cups in which the tea was served—the fire in the chimney on the coarse iron fire-dogs—the reclining figure on the couch, and her own riding-habit in the middle of the room; were all stereotyped on Eleanor's memory for ever. The tea refreshed her very much.

"How are you going to get home, Miss Powle?" asked her host. "Have you sent for a carriage?"

"No—I saw nobody to send; I can walk it quite well now," said Eleanor. And feeling that the time was come, she set down her tea-cup and came to bid her host good-bye; though she shrank from doing it. She gave him her hand again, but she had no words to speak.

"Good-bye," said he. "I am sorry I am not well enough to come and see you; I would take that liberty."

"And so I shall never see him again," thought Eleanor as she went out of the cottage; "and nobody will ever speak any more words to me of what I want to hear; and what will become of me! What chance shall I have very soon—what chance have I now—to attend to these things? to get right? and what chance would all these things have with Mr. Carlisle? I could manage my mother. What will become of me!"

Eleanor walked and thought, both hard, till she got past the village; finding herself alone, thought got the better of haste, and she threw herself down under a tree to collect some order and steadiness in her mind, if possible, before other interests and distractions broke in. She sat with her face buried in her hands a good while. And one conclusion Eleanor's thoughts came to; that there was a thing more needful than other things; and that she would hold that one thing first in her mind, and keep it first in her endeavours, and make all her arrangements accordingly. Eleanor was young and untried, but her mind had a tolerable back-bone of stiffness when once aroused to take action; her conclusion meant something. She rose up then; looked to see how far down the sun was; and turning to pursue her walk vigorously—found Mr. Carlisle at her side. He was as much surprised as she.

"Why, Eleanor! what are you doing here?"

"Trying to get home. I have been thrown from my pony."

"Thrown! where?"

"Away on the moor—I don't know where. I never was there before. I am not hurt."

"Then how came you here?"

"Walked here, sir."

"And where are your servants?"

"You forget. I am only Eleanor Powle—I do not go with a train after me."

But she was obliged to give an account of the whole affair.

"You must not go alone in that way again," said he decidedly. "Sit down again."

"Look where the sun is. I am going home," said Eleanor.

"Sit down. I am going to send for a carriage."

Eleanor protested in vain. Mr. Carlisle sent his groom on to the Lodge with the message, and the heels of the horses were presently clattering in the distance. Eleanor stood still.

"I do not want rest," she insisted. "I am ready to walk home, and able. I have been resting."

"How long?"

"A long while. I went into Mrs. Williams's cottage and rested there. I would rather go on."

He put her hand upon his arm and turned towards the Lodge, but permitted her after all to move only at the gentlest of rates.

"You will not go out in this way again?" he said; and the words were more an expression of his own will than an enquiry as to hers.

"There is no reason why I should not," Eleanor answered.

"I do not like that you should be walking over moors and taking shelter in cottages, without protection."

"I can protect myself. I know what is due to me."

"You must remember what is due to *me*," he said, laughing, and stopping her lips when she would have replied. Eleanor walked along, silenced, and for the moment subdued. The wish was in her heart, to have let Mr. Carlisle know in some degree what bent her spirit was taking; to have given him some hint of what he must expect in her when she

became his wife. She could not find out how to do it; she could not see the way to begin. So far was Mr. Carlisle from the whole world of religious interests and concerns, that to introduce it to him seemed like bringing opposite poles together. She walked by his side very silent and doubtful. He thought she was tired; put her into the carriage with great tenderness when it came; and at parting from her in the evening desired her to go early to rest.

Eleanor was very little likely to do it. The bodily adventures of the day had left little trace, or little that was regarded; the mental journey had been much more lasting in its effects. That night there was a young moon, and Eleanor sat at her window, looking out into the shadowy indistinctness of the outer world, while she tried to resolve the confusion of her mind into something like visible order and definiteness. Two points were clear, and seemed to loom up larger and clearer the longer she thought about them: her supreme need of that which she had not, the faith and deliverance of religion; and the adverse influence and opposition of Mr. Carlisle in all the efforts she might make to secure or maintain it. And under all this lurked a thought that was like a serpent for its unrecognized coming and going and for the sting it left—a wish that she could put off her marriage. No new thing in one way; Eleanor had never been willing it should be fixed for so early a day; nevertheless she had accepted and submitted to it, and become accustomed to the thought of it. Now repugnance started up anew and with fresh energy. She could hardly understand herself; her thoughts were a great turmoil; they went over and over some of the experiences of the day, with an aimless dwelling upon them; yet Eleanor was in general no dreamer. The words of Mr. Rhys, that had pierced her with a sense of duty and need—the looks, that even in the remembrance wrung her heart with their silent lesson-bearing—the sympathy testified for herself, which intensified all her own emotions—and in contrast the very tender and affectionate but supreme manner of Mr. Carlisle, in whose power she felt she was—the alternation of these

images and the thoughts they gave rise to, kept Eleanor at her window, until the young moon went down behind the western horizon and the night was dark with only stars. So dark she felt, and miserable; and over and over again her cry of that afternoon was re-echoed—"What shall I do! what will become of me!"

Upon one thing she fixed. That Mr. Carlisle should know that he was not going to find a gay wife in her, but one whose mind was set upon somewhat else and upon another way of life. This would be very distasteful to him; and he should know it. How she would manage to let him know, Eleanor left to circumstances; but she went to bed with that point determined.

CHAPTER VIII.

"It hath been the longest night
That e'er I watched, and the most heaviest."

Good resolutions are sometimes excellent things, but they are susceptible of overturns. Eleanor's met with one.

She was sitting with Mr. Carlisle the very next day, in a disturbed mood of mind; for he and her mother had been laying plans and making dispositions with reference to her approaching marriage; plans and dispositions in which her voice was not asked, and in which matters were carried rapidly forward towards their consummation. Eleanor felt that bands and chains were getting multiplied round her, fastening her more and more in the possession of her captor, while her own mind was preparing what would be considered resistance to the authority thus secured. The sooner she spoke the better; but how to begin? She bent over her embroidery frame with cheeks that gradually grew burning hot. The soft wind that blew in from the open window at her side would not cool them. Mr. Carlisle came and sat down beside her.

"What does all this mean?" said he, laughingly, drawing his finger softly over Eleanor's rich cheek.

"It's hot!" said Eleanor.

"Is it? I have the advantage of you. It is the perfection of a day to me."

"Eleanor," cried Julia, bounding in through the window, "Mr. Rhys is better to-day. He says so."

"Is he?" said Eleanor.

"Yes; you know how weak he was yesterday; he is not quite so weak to-day."

"Who is Mr. Rhys?" said Mr. Carlisle

"O, he is nice! Eleanor says nice rhymes to Rhys. Wasn't my tea nice, Eleanor? We had Miss Broadus to tea this afternoon. We had you yesterday, and Miss Broadus to-day. I wonder who will come next?"

"Is this a sick friend you have been visiting?" said Mr. Carlisle, as Julia ran off, having accomplished the discomfiture of her sister.

"No, not at all—only I stopped at Mrs. Williams's cottage to rest yesterday; and he lives there."

"You saw him?"

"Yes; Julia found me, and I could not help seeing him."

"But you took *tea* there, Eleanor? With whom?"

"I took tea with Julia and her sick friend. Why not? She was making a cup of tea for him, and gave me one. I was very glad of it. There was no one else in the house."

"How is your sister allowed to do such things?"

"For a sick friend, Mr. Carlisle? I think it is well anybody's part to do such things."

"I think I will forbid embroidery frames at the Priory, if they are to keep me from seeing your eyes," said he, with one arm drawing her back from the frame, and with the other hand taking her fingers from it, and looking into her face, but kissing her. "Now tell me, who is this gentleman?"

Eleanor was irritated; yet the assumption of authority, calm and proud as it was, had a mixture of tenderness which partly soothed her. The demand, however, was imperious. Eleanor answered—

"He was Alfred's tutor—you have seen him—he has been very ill all summer. He is a sick man, staying in the village."

"And what have you to do with such a person?"

"Nothing in the world! I stopped there to rest myself, because I was too tired to walk home."

He smiled at her kindling indignation, and gave her a kiss by way of forgiveness for it; then went on gravely.

"You have been to that cottage before, Eleanor?"

"Yes."

"How was that?"

"I went with Julia when she was carrying some refreshments to her sick friend. I will do that for anybody, Mr. Carlisle."

"Say that over again," he said calmly, but with a manner that showed he would have it. And Eleanor could not resist.

"I would do that for anybody, Macintosh," she said gently, laying her hand upon his arm.

"No, darling. You shall send nurses and supplies to all the folk in the kingdom—if you will—but you shall pay such honour as this to nobody but me."

"Mr. Carlisle," said Eleanor, rousing again, "if I am not worthy your trust, I am not fit to do either you or anybody else honour."

She had straightened herself up to face him as she said this, but it was mortifying to feel how little she could rouse him. He only drew her back into his arms, folding her close, and kissing her again and again.

"You are naughty," he said, "but you are good. You are as sweet as a rose, Eleanor. My wife will obey me in a few things, and she shall command me in all others. Darling, I wish you not to be seen in the village again alone. Let some one attend you, if I am not at hand."

He suffered her to return to her embroidery; but though Eleanor's heart beat and her cheek was flushed with contending feelings, she could not find a word to say. Her heart rebelled against the authority held over her; nevertheless it subdued her; she dared not bring her rebellion into open light. She shrank from that; and hid now in her own thoughts all the new revelations she had meant to draw forth for Mr. Carlisle's entertainment. Now was no time. In fact, Eleanor's consciousness made her afraid that if she mentioned her religious purposes and uneasiness, this man's acuteness would catch at the connecting link between the new dereliction of duty, and the former which

had been just rebuked. That would lay her open to imputations and suspicions too dishonouring to be risked, and impossible to disprove, however false. She must hold her tongue for the present; and Eleanor worked on at her embroidery, her fingers pulling at it energetically, while feeling herself much more completely in another's power than it suited her nature to be. Somehow at this time the vision of Rythdale Priory was not the indemnification it had seemed to her before. Eleanor liked Mr. Carlisle, but she did not like to be governed by him; although, with an odd inconsistency, it was that very power of government which formed part of his attraction. Certainly women are strange creatures. Meanwhile she tugged on at her work, with a hot cheek and a divided mind, and a wisely silent tongue; and Mr. Carlisle sat by and made himself very busy with her, finding out ways of being both pleasant and useful. Finally, he put a stop to the embroidery, and engaged Eleanor in a game of chess with him; began to teach her how to play it, and succeeded in getting her thoroughly interested and diverted from her troublesome thoughts. They returned as soon as he left her.

"I can never speak to him about my religious feelings," mused Eleanor, as she walked slowly to her own room,—"never! I almost think, if I did, he would find means to cheat me out of them, in spite of all my determinations—until it would be too late. What is to become of me? What a double part I shall have to play now—my heart all one way, my outer life all another. It must be so. I can show these thoughts to no one. Will they live, shut up in the dark so?"

Mr. Rhys's words about "seeking" recurred to her. Eleanor did not know how, and felt strange. "I could follow his prayers, if I heard them," she said to herself;—"I do not know how to set about it. I suppose reading the Bible is good—that and good books."

And Eleanor tried. Good books, however, were by and by given up; none that she had in the least suited her wants; only the Bible proved both a light and a power to her. It

had a great fascination for Eleanor, and it sometimes made her hopeful; at any rate she persevered in reading it, through gloom and cheer; and her mind when she was alone knew much more of the former condition than of the latter. When not alone, she was in a whirl of other occupations and interests. The preparations for her marriage went on diligently; Eleanor saw it and knew it, and would not help though she could not hinder. But she was very far from happy. The style and title of Lady Rythdale had faded in her imagination; other honour and glory, though dimly seen, seemed more desirable to Eleanor now, and seemed endangered by this. She was very uneasy. She struggled between the remaining sense of pride, which sometimes arose to life, and this thought of something better; at other times she felt as if her marriage with Mr. Carlisle would doom her for ever to go without any treasure but what an earthly coronet, well lined with ermine, might symbolize and ensure. Meanwhile weeks flew by; while Eleanor studied the Bible, and sought for light in her solitary hours at night, and joined in all Mr. Carlisle's plans of gaiety by day. September and October were both gone. November's short days begun. And when the days should be at the shortest—"Then," thought Eleanor, "my fate will be settled. Mr. Carlisle will have me; and I can never disobey him. I cannot now."

November reached the middle, and there wanted but little more than a month to the wedding-day. Eleanor sat one morning in her garden parlour, which a mild day made pleasant; working by the glass door. The old thought, "What will become of me!" was in her heart. A shadow darkened the door. Eleanor looked up, fearing to see Mr. Carlisle: it was her little sister Julia.

Julia opened the door and came in. "It is nice in the garden, Eleanor," she said. "The chrysanthemums are more beautiful than I ever saw them—white and yellow and orange and rose-colour, and a hundred colours. They are beautiful, Eleanor."

"Yes."

"May I have a great bunch of them to take to Mr. Rhys?"

"Have what you like. I thought you used to take them without asking."

Julia looked serious.

"I wish I could go down to the village to-night, I know," she said.

"*To-night!* What do you wish that for?"

"Because Mr. Rhys is going to preach; and I do want to go so much; but I can't."

"Going to preach!—why, is he so well as that?"

"He isn't well at all," said Julia, "not what you would call well. But he says he is well. He is white and weak enough yet; and *I* don't think that is being well. He can't go to Lily Dale, nor to Rythdale; so some of the people are coming to Wiglands."

"Where is he going to preach?"

"Where do you think? In Mr. Brooks's barn. They won't let him preach at the inn, and he can't have the church; and I *do* want to see how he can preach in a barn!"

Mr. Brooks was a well-to-do farmer, a tenant of the Rythdale estate, living near the road to the old priory, and half a mile from the village of Wiglands. A consuming desire seized Eleanor to do as her little sister had said—hear Mr. Rhys preach. The desire was so violent, that it half frightened her with the possibility of its fulfilment.

She told Julia that it was an absurd wish, and impracticable, and dismissed her; and then her whole mind focussed itself on Mr. Brooks's barn. Eleanor saw nothing else through the morning, whatever she was doing. It was impossible she should get there, perfectly impossible! yet it was a first, last, and only chance, perhaps in her life, of hearing the words of truth so spoken as she knew they would be in that place that night. Besides, she had a craving curiosity to know *how* they would be spoken. One month more, Eleanor once securely lodged in Rythdale Priory, and her chance of hearing any words whatever spoken in a barn, was over for ever; unless indeed she condescended to become an inspector of agricultural proceedings. Yet

she said to herself over and over that she had no chance now; that her being present was a matter of wild impossibility; she said it and re-said it, and with every time a growing consciousness that impossibility should not stop her. At last impossibility shaped itself into a plan.

"I am going down to see Jane Lewis, mamma," was Eleanor's announcement at luncheon.

"To-day, Eleanor?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"But Mr. Carlisle will be here, and he will not like it."

"He will have enough of me by and by, ma'am. I shall maybe never have another chance of taking care of Jane. I know she wants to see me, and I am going to-day. And if she wants me very much, I shall stay all night; so you need not send."

"What will Mr. Carlisle say to all that?"

"He will say nothing to it, if you do not give him an opportunity, mamma. I am going, at all events."

"Eleanor, I am afraid you have almost too much independence, for one who is almost a married woman."

"Is independence a quality entirely given up, ma'am, when 'the ring is on'?"

"Certainly! I thought you knew that. You must make up your mind to it. You are a noble creature, Eleanor; but my comfort is that Mr. Carlisle will know how to manage you. I never could, to my satisfaction. I observe he has brought you in pretty well."

Eleanor left the room; and if the tide of her independence could have run higher, her mother's words would have furnished the necessary provocative.

Jane Lewis was a poor girl in the village; the daughter of one who had been Eleanor's nurse, and who now, old and infirm, and unable to do much for herself or others, watched the declining days of her child without the power to give them much relief. Jane was dying with consumption. The other member of the family was the old father, still more helpless; past work and dependent on another child for all but the house they lived in. That, in earlier days,

had been made their own. Eleanor was their best friend, and many a day, and night too, had been a sunbeam of comfort in the poor house. She now, when the day was far enough on its wane, provided herself with a little basket of grapes, ordered her pony, and rode swiftly down to the village; not without attendance this time, though confessing bitterly to herself the truth of her mother's allegations. At the cottage door she took the basket; ordered the pony should come for her next morning at eight o'clock, and went into the cottage; feeling as if she had for a little space turned her back upon troublesome people and things, and made herself free. She went in softly, and was garrulously welcomed by her old nurse and her husband. It was so long since they had seen her! and she was going to be such a great lady! and they knew she would not forget them nevertheless. It was not flattery. It was true speech. Eleanor asked for Jane, and with her basket went on into the upper little room were the sick girl lay. There felt, when she had got above the ground floor, as if she was tolerably safe.

It was a little low room under the thatch, in which Eleanor now hid herself. A mere large closet of a room, though it boasted of a fireplace, happily. A small lattice under the shelving roof let in what it could of the light of a dying November day. The bed with its sick occupant, two chairs, a little table, and a bit of carpet on the floor, were all the light revealed. Eleanor's welcome here was also most sincere; less talkative, it was yet more glad than that given by the old couple down stairs; a light shone all over the pale face of the sick girl, and the weary eye kindled, at sight of her friend.

Extreme neatness was not the characteristic of this little low room, simply for want of able hands to ensure it. Eleanor's first work was to set Jane to eating grapes; her next, to put the place in tidy order. "Lady Rythdale shall be useful once more in her life," she thought. She brushed up the floor, swept the hearth, demolished cobwebs on the walls, and rubbed down the chairs. She had borrowed an

apron and cap from old Mrs. Lewis. The sick girl watched her with eager eyes.

"I can't abear to see you a doing of that, Miss Eleanor," she exclaimed.

"Hush, Jane! Eat your grapes."

"You've a kind heart," said the girl, sighing; "and it's good when them that has the power has the feelings."

"How are your nights now, Jane?"

"They're tedious—I lie awake so; and then I get coughing. I am always so glad to see the light come in the mornings! but it's long a coming now. I can't get nobody to hear me at night if I want anything."

"Do you often want something?"

"Times I do. Times I get out of wanting, because I can't have—and times I only want worse."

"*What* do you want, Jane?"

"Well, Miss Eleanor, I conceit I want to see somebody. The nights is very long—and in the dark and by myself—I gets feared."

To Eleanor's dismay she perceived Jane was weeping.

"What in the world are you afraid of, Jane? I never saw you so before."

"'Tisn't of anything in *this* world, Miss Eleanor," said Jane. Her face was still covered with her hands, and the grapes neglected.

Eleanor was utterly confounded. Had Jane caught her feeling? or was this something else?

"Are you afraid of spirits, Jane?"

"No, Miss Eleanor."

"What is it, then? Jane, this is something new. I never saw you feeling so before."

"No, ma'am—and I didn't. But there come a gentleman to see me, ma'am."

"A gentleman to see you? What gentleman?"

"I don't know, Miss Eleanor; only he was tall, and pale-like, and black hair. He asked me if I was ready to die—and I said I didn't know what it was I wanted if I wasn't; and he told me——O, I know I'll never have rest no more!"

A burst of weeping followed these words. Eleanor felt as if a thunderbolt had broken at her feet; so terrible to her, in her own mood, was this revelation of kindred feeling. She stood by the bedside, dismayed, shocked, a little disposed to echo Jane's despairing prophecy in her own case.

"Did he say no more to you, Jane?"

"Yes, Miss Eleanor, he did; and every word he said made me feel worser. His two eyes was like two swords going through me; and they went through me so softly, ma'am, I couldn't abear it. They killed me."

"But, Jane, he did not mean to kill you. What did he say?"

"I don't know, Miss Eleanor—he said a many things; but they only made me feel——how I ain't fit——"

There was no more talking. The words were broken off by sobs. Eleanor turned aside to the fire place, and began to make up the fire, in a blank confusion and distress; feeling, to use an Arabic phrase, as if the sky had fallen. She could give no comfort; she wanted it herself. The best she could think of, was the suggestion that the gentleman would come again, and then he would make all things plain. Would he come while Eleanor was there, that afternoon? What a chance! But she remembered it was very unlikely. He was to preach in the evening; he would want to keep all his strength for that. And now the question arose, how should she get to the barn?

The first thing was to soothe Jane. Eleanor succeeded in doing that after a while. She made her a cup of tea and a piece of toast, and took some herself; and sat in the darkening light, musing what she should do. One good thing was secure. She had not been followed up this afternoon, nor sent for home; both which disagreeables she had feared. Jane dozed, and she thought; and the twilight fell deeper and deeper.

There was after all only one way in which Eleanor could accomplish her desire; though she turned the matter all round in her head before she would see it, or determine upon adopting it. No mortal that she knew could be trusted

with the secret—if she meant to have it remain a secret; and that at all costs was Eleanor's desire. Julia might have been trusted, but Julia could not have been brought along. Eleanor was alone. She thought, and trembled, and made up her mind.

The hour must be waited for when people from the village would be setting forth to go to Brooks's farm. It was dark then, except some light from the stars. Eleanor got out a bonnet of Jane's which the owner would never use again; a close little straw bonnet; and tied over it a veil she had taken the precaution to bring. Her own hat and mantle she laid away out of sight, and wrapped round her instead a thick camlet cloak of the sick girl's, which enveloped her from head to feet. Pretty good disguise—thought Eleanor to herself; Mr. Carlisle would not find her out in this. But there was no danger of *his* seeing her. She was all ready to steal out, when she suddenly recollected that she might be missed, and the old people in terror make a hue and cry after her. That would not do. She stripped off the bonnet again, and awoke the sleeping girl.

"Jane," she said, bending over her, "I have somebody else to see—I am going out for a little while. I will be back and spend the night with you. Tell your mother to leave the door open for me, if she wishes to go to bed; and I will look after you. Now go to sleep again."

Without waiting for Jane to think about it, Eleanor slipped out, bonnet in hand, and went softly down stairs. The old man was already gone to bed in a little inner chamber; the old mother sat dozing by the fire. Standing behind her, Eleanor put on the bonnet, and then gently opening the house door, with one step was in the road. A moment stood still; but the next moment set off with quick, hasty steps.

It was damp and dark; the stars were shining, indeed, yet they shed but a glimmering and doubtful light upon Eleanor's doubtful proceeding. She knew it was such; her feet trembled and stumbled in her way, though that was as much with the fever of determination as with the hinderings

of doubt. There was little occasion for bodily fear. People, she knew, would be going to the preaching all along the way; she would not be alone, either going or coming. Nevertheless it was dark, and she was where she had no business to be; and she hurried along rather nervously till she caught sight of one or two groups before her, evidently bent for the same place with herself. She slackened her footsteps then, so as to keep at a proper distance behind them, and felt that for the present she was secure. Yet it was a wild, strange walk to Eleanor. Secure from personal harm she might be, and was, no doubt; but who could say what moral consequences might follow her proceeding? What if her mother knew it? what if Mr. Carlisle? Eleanor felt she was doing a very questionable thing; but the desire to do it on her part amounted to a necessity. She *must* hear these words that would be spoken in the barn tonight. They would be on the subject that of all others interested her, and spoken by the lips that of all others could alone speak to the purpose. So Eleanor felt; so was in some measure for her the truth; and amid all her sense of doubt and danger and inward trembling, there was a wild thrill of delight at accomplishing her object. She would hear—yes, she would hear—what Mr. Rhys had to say to the people that night. Nobody should ever know it; neither he nor others; but if they *did*, she would run all risks rather than be baulked.

It was a walk never to be forgotten. Alone, though near people that knew not she was near; in the darkness of night; the stars showing only the black forms of trees and hedgerows, and a line of what could not be called light, where the road ran; keeping in the shadow of the hedge, and hurrying along over the undiscerned footway;—it was a novel experience for one who had been all her life so tended and sheltered as she. It was strange and disagreeable. Waymarks did not seem familiar; distances seemed long. Eleanor wished the walk would come to an end.

It did at last. The people,—there was a stream of them now pouring along the road, indeed, so many that Eleanor

was greatly surprised at them,—turned off into a field, within which, at a few roods from the road, stood the barn in question; at the door of which one or two lamps hung out showed that something unusual was going on there. Mr. Brooks had several barns, the gables and roofs of which looked like a little settlement in the starlight, not far off; but this particular barn stood alone, and was probably known to the country people from former occasions; for they streamed towards it, and filed in without any wavering or question. So Eleanor followed, trembling and wondering at herself; passed the curtain that hung at the door, and went in with the others.

The place that received them was a great threshing-floor, of noble proportions, for a threshing-floor. Perhaps Mr. Brooks had an eye to contingencies when he built it. On two sides it was lined with grain, rising in walls of cereal sweetness to a great height; and certainly, if Eleanor had been in many a statelier church, she had never been in one better ventilated, or where the air was more fragrantly scented. But a new doubt struck her. Could it be right to hold divine service in such a place? Was this a fit or decorous temple, for uses of such high and awful dignity? The floor was a bare plank floor; footfalls echoed over it. The roof was high, indeed; but no architect's groining of beams reminded one that the place was set apart to noble if not sacred purposes. Nothing but common carpenter's joinery was over her head, in the roof of the barn; the heads of wheat-ears instead of carved cornices and pendents; and if the lights were dim, which they certainly were, it did not seem at all a religious light. Only at the further end, where a table and chair stood ready for the preacher, some tall wax candles threw a sufficient illumination for all present to see him well. Was that his pulpit? What sort of preaching could possibly be had from it?

Eleanor looked round the place. There was no really lighted part of it except about that table and chair. It was impossible for people to see each other well from a little distance off, unless thoroughly well known.

Eleanor felt there was very little danger indeed that anybody should recognize her identity, in Jane's bonnet and cloak. That was so much comfort. Another comfort was, that the night was mild. It was not like November. A happy circumstance for everybody there; but most of all for the convalescent preacher, whose appearance Eleanor looked for now with a kind of fearful anxiety. If he should have been hindered from coming, after all! Her heart beat hard. She stood far back behind most of the people, near the door by which she had entered. A few benches and chairs were on the floor, given up to the use of the women and the aged people. Eleanor marvelled much to see that there were some quite old people among the company. The barn was getting very full.

"There is a seat yonder," said some one, touching her on the elbow. "Won't you have it?"

Eleanor shook her head.

"You had better," he said, kindly; "there's a seat with nobody in it; there's plenty of room up there. Come this way."

Eleanor was unwilling to go further forward, yet did not like to trust her voice to speak, nor choose to draw attention to herself in any way. She was needlessly afraid. However, she yielded to the instance of her kind neighbour, and followed him among the crowd to the spot he had picked out for her. She would have resisted further, if she had known where this spot was; for it was far forward in the barn, more than half-way between the door and the candle-lighted table, and in the very midst of the assembly. There was no help for it now; she could not go back; and Eleanor was thankful for the support the seat gave her. She was trembling all over. A vague, queer feeling of her being about something wrong, not merely in the circumstances of her getting there, but in the occasion itself, haunted her with a sort of superstition. Could such an assembly be rightfully gathered for such a purpose in such a place? Could it be right, to speak publicly of sacred things with such an absence of any public recognition of their sacredness? In a bare barn—an unconsecrated building, with no

beauty or dignity of observance to give homage to the work and the occasion? Eleanor was a compound of strange feelings; till she suddenly became conscious of a stir in the gathered throng, and then heard on the plank floor a step that she intuitively knew. As the step and the tall figure that it bore passed close by her on the way to the table, an instant sense of quiet and security settled down on her. Nervousness died away. There was one person there now that she knew; the question of his coming was settled, and her coming was not for nothing; and moreover, whatever business he was concerned in was right, in all its parts! She was sure of that. She watched him, with a great bound of exultation in her heart; watched him kneel down for prayer as he reached his place; and wondered, while awe mixed with her wonder, how he could do it, before and amongst all those people as he was; not shut off in a distant chancel alone by himself, but there with everybody crowding upon him. Her wonder had but little space to exercise itself. After a few minutes Mr. Rhys rose and gave out a hymn; and every thought of Eleanor's was concentrated on the business and on the speaker.

She knew nothing about hymns, except that they were sung in church; all such lyrics were unfamiliar to her, though the music of them was not. It was always stately music, with an organ, in the swell of which the words were lost. There could be no organ in a barn. Instead of that, the whole assembly rose to their feet and struck out together into a sweet air, which they sang with a vast deal of spirit. No difficulty about hearing the words now; the music was not at a distance; the words were coming from every lip near Eleanor, and were sung as if they were a personal matter. Perhaps she was in a mood to be easily touched; but the singing did reach her and move her profoundly.

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

The sense of this, Eleanor did not thoroughly understand, yet the general spirit of it was not to be mistaken. And the soft repetition of the last line struck her heart sorrowfully. Here was her want breathed out again. "And wipe my weeping eyes.—I'll bid farewell to every fear, and wipe my weeping eyes." Eleanor was, perhaps, the only one who did not sing; nobody paid better attention.

The hymn was followed by a prayer. If the one had touched Eleanor, the other prostrated her in the dust. She heard a child of God speaking to his Father; with a simplicity of utterance, a freedom of access, and a glow of happy affections, evident in every quietly spoken word, that testified to his possession of the heavenly treasures that were on his tongue; and made Eleanor feel humbled and poor with an extreme and bitter sense of want. Her heart felt as empty as a deep well that had gone dry. This man only had ever showed her what a Christian might be; she saw him standing in a glory of heavenly relationships and privileges and character, that were a sort of transfiguration. And although Eleanor comprehended but very imperfectly wherein this glory might lie, she yet saw the light, and mourned her own darkness. Eleanor's mind went a great way during the minutes of that prayer; according to the strange fashion in which the work of many days is sometimes done in one. She was sorry when it ended; however, every part of the service had a vivid new interest for her. Another hymn, and reading, during which her head was bowed on her breast in still listening—it was curious, how she had forgot all about being in a barn—and then the sermon began. She had to raise up her head when that began; and after a while Eleanor could not bear her veil, and threw it back, trusting that the dim light would secure her from being known. But she felt that she *must* see as well as hear, this one time.

Of all subjects in the world to fall in with Eleanor's mood, the sermon to-night was on *peace*. The peace that the Lord Jesus Christ left as his parting gift to his people; the peace that is not as the world giveth. How the world gives, Mr. Rhys briefly set forth;—with one hand, to take away

with the other—as a handful of gold, what proves but a clutch of ashes—as the will-o'-the-wisp gives, promise but never possession. Eleanor would not have much regarded these words from any other lips; they accorded with her old theory of disgust with the world. From Mr. Rhys she did regard them, because no word of his fell unheeded by her. But when he went on from that to speak of Christ's gift, and how that is bestowed, his speech was as bitter in her heart as it was sweet in his mouth. The peace he held up to her view, the joy in which a child of God lives, and walks, and dies; the security of every movement, the confidence in every action, the rest in all turmoil, the fearlessness in all danger; the riches in the midst of poverty, the rejoicing even in the time of sorrow; the victory over sin and death, wrought in him as well as for him;—Eleanor's heart seemed to die within her, and at the same time started in a struggle for life. Had the words been said coldly, or as a matter of speculative belief, or as a privilege not actually entered into, it would have been a different thing. Eleanor might have sat back in her chair, and listened and sorrowed for herself in outward quiet. But there was unconscious testimony from every tone and look of the speaker, that he told the people but of what he knew. The pale face was illumined by a high, grave light, that looked like a halo from the unseen world—it was nothing less to Eleanor; and the mouth, in its general set so sober, broke occasionally into a smile so sweet, that it straitened Eleanor's heart with its unconscious tale-telling. As the time went on, the speaker began to illustrate his words by instances; instances of the peace which Christians have shown to be theirs in all sorts of circumstances, where the world would have given them none, or would have surely withdrawn the gift once made. In poverty—in pain—in loneliness—in the want of all things—in the close prospect of suffering, and in the presence of death. Wonderful instances they were! glorious to the power of that Redeemer, who had declared, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good

cheer; I have overcome the world." How the speaker's eye flushed and fired—flushed with tears, and fired with triumph; what a tint rose on the pale cheek, testifying to the exultation he felt; with what tremulous distinctness the words were sometimes given—and heard in the breathless stillness to the furthest corner of the place! It was too much at last. Feeling was wrought too high. Eleanor could not bear it. She bowed her head on her hand to hide the tears that would come, and only struggled to keep her sobs quiet that she might not lose a word. There were other sobs in the assembly that were less well controlled; they were audible; Eleanor could not endure to hear them, for she feared her excitement would become unmanageable. Nevertheless, by strong effort she succeeded in keeping perfectly still; though she dared not raise her head again till the last hymn and prayers were over, and the people made a general stir all round her. Then she too rose up and turned her face in the direction whither they were all turning, towards the door.

She made her way out with the crowd blindly, conscious that it was all over—that was the prominent thought—and yet that work was done which would never be "over" for her. So conscious of this, that she had no care either of her whereabouts or of her walk home, except in an incidental sort of way, she got out into the starlight, and stepped over the grassy sward of the field in a maze; she hardly felt the ground; it was not till she reached the fence, and found herself in the road, that Eleanor really roused up. Then it was necessary to turn in one direction or the other; and Eleanor could not tell which to take. She stood still, and tried to collect herself. On which side of the road was the barn? She could not remember; she was completely confused and turned about; and in the starlight she could be sure of no tree, or fence, or other landmark. She stood still, while the people poured past her, and in groups or in pairs took the one direction or the opposite. Part went one way, and part went the other, to Wiglands and to Rythdale. Eleanor longed to ask which way somebody was going, but

she was afraid of betraying herself. She did not dare. Yet, if she took the wrong turning, she might find herself in the Rythdale valley, a great distance from Wiglands, and with a lone road to traverse all the way back again. Her heart beat. What should she do? The people poured past her, dividing off, right and left; they would be all scattered soon to their several homes, and she would be left alone. She must do something quickly. Yet she shrank very much from speaking, and still stood by the fence, trembling and hesitating.

"Are you alone?" said a voice at her shoulder that she knew very well. If a cannon had gone off at her feet, it would not have startled Eleanor more. The tone of the question implied that *she* was known. She was too startled to answer. The words were repeated. "Are you alone?"

Eleanor's "yes" got out, with nothing distinguishable except the last letter.

"I have a chaise here," said he. "Come with me."

The speaker waited for no answer to the words, which were not a request; and acting as decidedly as he had spoken, took hold of Eleanor's arm, and led her forward to a little vehicle which had just drawn up. He helped her into it, took his place beside her, and drove away; but he said not another word.

It was Mr. Rhys, and Eleanor knew that he had recognized her. She sat in a stupor of confusion and shame. What would he think of her! and what could she make him think? Must she be a bold, wild girl in his estimation for ever? Why would he not speak? He drove on in perfect silence. Eleanor must say something to break it. And it was extremely difficult, and she had to be bold to do that.

"I see you recognize me, Mr. Rhys," she said.

"I recognized you in the meeting," he answered in perfect gravity. Eleanor felt it. She was checked. She was punished.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked after a little more time.

"I will take you wherever you tell me you desire."

Grave and short. Eleanor could not bear it.

"You think very hardly of me, Mr. Rhys," she said; "but I was spending the night at a poor girl's house in the village —she is ill, and I was going to sit up with her—and I knew you were to preach at that place—and——" Eleanor's voice choked and faltered.

"And what could prompt you to go alone, Miss Powle?"

"I wanted to go," faltered Eleanor. "I knew it would be my last chance. I felt I *must* go. And I could go no way but alone."

"May I ask what you mean by 'your last chance?'"

"My last chance of hearing what I wanted to hear—what I can't help thinking about lately. Mr. Rhys, I am not happy."

"Did you understand what you heard to-night?"

"In part I did—I understood, Mr. Rhys, that you have something I have not,—and that I want." Eleanor spoke with great emotion.

"The Lord bless you!" he said, with a tenderness of tone that broke her down at once. "Trust Jesus, Miss Powle. He can give it to you. He only can. Go to him for what you want, and for understanding of what you do not understand. Trust the Lord! Make your requests known to him, and believe that he will hear your prayers and answer them, and more than fulfil them Now where shall I set you down?"

"Anywhere," Eleanor said as well as she could. "Here, if you please."

"Here is no house. We are just at the entrance of the village."

"This is a good place, then," said Eleanor. "I do not want anybody to see me."

"Miss Powle," said her guardian, and he spoke with such extreme gravity that Eleanor was half-frightened,—"did you come without the knowledge of your friends at home?"

"Yes, to the place we have come from. Mamma knew I was going to spend the night with a sick girl in the village —she did not know any more."

"It was very dangerous!" he said in the same tone.

"I knew it. I risked that. I felt I must come."

"You did very wrong," said her companion. It hurt her that he should say it, and have cause; but she was so miserable before, that it could be felt only in the dull way in which pain added to pain sometimes makes itself known. She was subdued, humbled, ashamed. She said nothing more, nor did he, until after passing two or three houses they arrived at a spot where the trees and the road were the only village representatives; a clear space, with no house very near, and no person in sight. Mr. Rhys drew up by the side of the road, and helped Eleanor out of the chaise. He said only "Good night," but it was said kindly and sympathizingly, and with the earnest grasp of the hand that Eleanor remembered. He got into the chaise again, but did not drive away as she expected; she found he was walking his horse and keeping abreast of her as she walked. Eleanor hurried on, reached Mrs. Lewis's cottage, paused a second at the door to let him see that she had reached her stopping-place, and went in.

All still; the embers dying on the hearth, a cricket chirrupping under it. Mrs. Lewis was gone to bed, but had not covered up the fire, for fear her young lady might want it. Eleanor did not dare sit down there. She drew the bolt of the house door; then softly went up the stairs to Jane's room. Jane was asleep. Eleanor felt thankful, and moved about like a shadow. She put the brands together in a sort of mechanical way; for she knew she was chilly and needed fire bodily, though her spirit was in a fever. The night had turned raw, and the ride home had been not so cheering mentally as to do away with the physical influence of a cold fog. Eleanor put off bonnet and cloak, softly piled the brands together and coaxed up a flame; and sat down on a low stool on the hearth to spread her hands over it, to catch all the comfort she could.

Comfort was not near, however. Jane waked up in a violent fit of coughing; and when that was subdued or died away, as difficult a fit of restlessness was left behind. She

was nervous and uneasy; Eleanor had only too much sympathy with both moods, nevertheless she acted the part of a kind and delicate nurse; soothed Jane and ministered to her, even spoke cheerful words; until the poor girl's exhausted mind and body sank away again into slumber, and Eleanor was free to sit down on the hearth and fold her hands.

Then she began to think. Not till then. Indeed, what she did then at first was not to think, but to recall in musing all the scenes and as far as possible all the words of that evening; with a consciousness behind this all the while that there was a hard thinking coming. Eleanor went dreamily over the last few hours, looking in turn at each image so stamped upon her memory; felt over again the sermon, the hymns, the prayers; then suddenly broke from her musings to face this consciousness that was menacing her—set herself to think in earnest.

What was it all about? Eleanor might well have shunned it, might well grasp it in desperation with a sudden inability to put it off any longer. Down in her heart, as strong as the keep of an old castle, and as obstinate-looking, was the feeling—"I do not want to marry Mr. Carlisle." Eleanor did not immediately discern its full outline and proportions, in the dim confusion which filled her heart; but a little steady looking revealed it, revealed it firm and clear and established there. "I do not want to marry him—I will not marry him"—she found the words surging up from this stronghold. Pride and ambition cowering somewhere said, "Not ever? Do you mean not at all? not ever?"—"Not ever!"—was the uncompromising answer; and Eleanor's head dropped in agony. "Why?" was the next question. And the answer was clear and strong and ready. "I am bent upon another sort of life than his life—I am going another way—I *must* live for aims and objects which he will hate and thwart and maybe hinder—I *will not* walk with him in his way—I cannot walk with him in mine—I cannot, O, I do not wish to walk with him at all!" Eleanor sat face to face with this blank consciousness, staring at it, and

feeling as if the life was gradually ebbing out of her. What was she to do? The different life and temper and character, and even the face, of Mr. Rhys, came up to her as so much nobler, so much better, so much more what a man should be, so much more worthy of being liked. But Eleanor strove to put that image away, as having, very truly she said to herself, nothing to do with the present question. However, she thought she could not marry Mr. Carlisle; and intrenched herself a little while in that position, until the next subject came up for consideration; how she could escape from it? What reason could be assigned? Only this religious one could be given—and it might be, it might well be, that Mr. Carlisle would not on his part consider that reason enough. He would certainly hope to overcome the foundation on which it stood; and if he could not, Eleanor was obliged to confess to herself that she believed he loved her to that degree that he would rather have her a religious wife than not his wife at all. What should Eleanor do? Was she not bound? had she not herself given him claims over her which she had no right to disallow? had he not a right to all her fulfilment of them? Eleanor did not love him as he loved her; she saw that with singular and sudden distinctness; but there again, when she thought of *that* as a reason for not fulfilling her contract, she was obliged to own that it would be no reason to Mr. Carlisle. He never had had ground to suppose that Eleanor gave him more than she had expressed; but he was entirely content with what he had, and his own confidence that he could cultivate it into what he pleased. There was no shaking loose from him in that way. As Eleanor sat on the hearth and looked at the ashes, in reality looking at Mr. Carlisle, her own face grew wan at what she saw there. She could give him no reason for changing their relations to each other, that would make him hold her a bit the less closely, no, nor the less fondly. What could Eleanor do? To go on and be Mr. Carlisle's wife, if necessary; give him all the observance and regard that she could, that she owed him, for having put herself in a false position where she could not give him more;—

Eleanor saw nothing else before her. But one thing beside she would do. She would make Mr. Carlisle clearly and fully understand what sort of a woman he must expect in her. She would explain thoroughly what sort of a life she meant to lead. Justly stated, what would that be?

Eleanor thought; and found herself determined, heart and soul, to follow the path of life laid before her that evening. Whether "peace" could visit her, in the course that seemed to lie through her future prospects, Eleanor much doubted; but at any rate she would have the rest of a satisfied conscience. She would take the Bible for her rule. Mr. Rhys's God should be her God, and with all she had of power and ability she would serve him. Dim as religious things were to her vision, one thing was not dim, but shiningly clear—the duty of every creature to live the devoted servant of that Lord to whom he belongs by creation and redemption both. Here Eleanor's heart fixed, if it had a fixed point that tumultuous night; but long before it settled anywhere her thoughts were bathed in bitter tears; in floods of weeping that seemed fit to wash her very heart away. It occurred to Eleanor, if they could, how much trouble would be saved! She saw plenty before her. But there was the gripe of a fear and a wish upon her heart, that overmastered all others. The people had sung a hymn that evening, after the first one; a hymn of Christian gladness and strength, to an air as spirited as the words. Both words and air rang in her mind, through all the multifarious thoughts she was thinking; they floated through and sounded behind them like a strain of the blessed. Eleanor had taken one glance at Mr. Rhys while it was singing; and the remembrance of his face stung her as the sight of an angel might have done. The counter recollection of her own misery in the summer at the time she was ill; the longing want of that security and hope and consequent rest of mind, was vividly with her too. Pushed by fear and desire, Eleanor's resolution was taken. She saw not the way clear, she did not know yet the "wicket-gate" towards

which Bunyan's Pilgrim was directed; like him, however, she resolved to "keep the light in her eye, and run."

The fire had died all out; the grey ashes were cold; she was very cold herself, but did not know it. The night had waned away, and a light had sprung in at the window, which Eleanor thought must be the dawn. It was not; it was the old moon just risen, and struggling through the fog. But the moon was the herald of dawn; and Eleanor got up from the earth, feeling old and stiff, as if she had suddenly put on twenty years of age more than she came to the village with. The room was quite too cold for Jane, she remembered; and softly she went up and down for kindling, and lighted up the fire again. Till she had done that, she felt grey and stern, like the November morning; but when the fire crackled and sparkled before her, and gave its cheery look and comforting warmth to her chilled senses, some curious sympathy with times that were gone and that she dared not hope to see again, smote Eleanor with a softer sorrow; and she wept a very rain of new tears. These did her good; they washed some of the bitterness out of her; and after that she sat thinking how she should manage; when Mr. Rhys's parting words suddenly recurred to her. A blanker ignorance how they should be followed, can scarcely be imagined in a person of general sense and knowledge. Nevertheless, she bowed herself on the hearth, surely not more in form than in feeling, and besought of that One whose aid she knew not how to ask, that he would yet give it to her and fulfil all her desires. Eleanor was exhausted then. She sat in a stupor of resting, till the faint illumination of the moon was really replaced by a growing and broadening light of day. The night was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

"Look! a horse at the door,
And little King Charles is snarling;
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling."

ELEANOR set out early to go home. She would not wait to be sent for. The walk might set her pulses in motion again, perhaps. The fog was breaking away under the sun's rays, but it had left everything wet; the morning was excessively chill. There was no grass in her way, however, and Eleanor's thick shoes did not fear the road, nor her feet the three miles of way. The walk was good. It could not be said to be pleasant; yet action of any kind was grateful and helpful. She saw not a creature till she got home.

Home struck her with new sorrow, in the sense of the disappointment she was going to bring to so many there. She made her own room without having to speak to anybody; bathed and dressed for breakfast. How grave her face was, this morning! She could not help that. And she felt that it grew graver, when entering the breakfast-room she found Mr. Carlisle there.

"What have you done to yourself?" said he, after they were seated at the breakfast-table.

"Taken a walk this morning."

"Judicious! in this air, which is like a suspended shower-bath! Where did you go?"

"On the Wiglands road."

"If I had come in time, I should have taken you up before me, and cut short such a proceeding. Mrs. Powle, you do not make use of your authority."

"It seems hardly worth while, when it is on the point of expiring," said Mrs. Powle blandly, with a smiling face.

"Why, Eleanor had to come home," said Julia; "she spent the night in the village. She could not help walking—unless mamma had sent the carriage or something for her."

"Spent the night in the village!" said Mr. Carlisle.

"Eleanor took it into her head that she must go to take care of a sick girl there—the daughter of her nurse. It is great foolishness, I think, but Eleanor will do it."

"It don't agree with her very well," said Julia. "How you do look, Eleanor, this morning!"

"She looks very well," said the Squire, "for all I see. Walking won't hurt her."

What Mr. Carlisle thought he did not say. When breakfast was over, he drew Eleanor off into the library.

"How do you do, this morning?" said he, stopping to look at her.

"Not very well."

"I came early, to give you a great gallop to the other end of the moor—where you wished to go the other day. You are not fit for it now?"

"Hardly."

"Did you sit up with that girl last night?"

"I sat up. She did not want much done for her. My being there was a great comfort to her."

"Far too great a comfort. You are a naughty child. Do you fancy, Eleanor, your husband will allow you to do such things?"

"I must try to do what is right, Macintosh."

"Do you not think it will be right that you should pleasure me in what I ask of you?" he said very gently, and with a caressing action which took away the edge of the words.

"Yes—in things that are right," said Eleanor, who felt

that she owed him all gentleness because of the wrong she had done.

"I shall not ask you anything that is not right; but if I should—the responsibility of your doing wrong will rest on me. Now, do you feel inclined to practise obedience a little to day?"

"No, not at all," said Eleanor honestly, her blood rousing.

"It will be all the better practice. You must go and lie down and rest carefully, and get ready to ride with me this afternoon, if the weather will do. Eh, Eleanor?"

"I do not think I shall want to ride to-day."

"Kiss me, and say you will do as I bid you."

Eleanor obeyed, and went to her room feeling wretched. She must find some way quickly to alter this state of things —if she could alter them. In the mean time she had promised to rest. It was a comfort to lock the door, and feel that for hours at any rate she was alone from all the world. But Eleanor's heart fainted. She lay down, and for a long time remained in motionless passive dismay; then nature asserted her rights, and she slept.

If sleep did not quite "knit up the ravelled sleeve of care" for her, Eleanor yet felt much less ragged when she came out of her slumber. There was some physical force now to meet the mental demand. The first thing demanded was a letter to Mr. Carlisle. It was in vain to think to tell him in spoken words what she wanted him to know; he would cut them short or turn them aside as soon as he perceived their drift, before she could at all possess him with the facts of the case. Eleanor sat down before dressing, to write her letter, so that no call might break her off until it was done.

It was a weary, anxious, sorrowful writing; done with some tears and some mute prayers for help; with images constantly starting into her mind that she had to put aside, together with the hot drops they called forth. The letter was finished, when Eleanor was informed that Mr. Carlisle waited for her.

"To ride, I suppose," she thought. "I will not go." She put on a house dress and went down to the library, where her mother and Mr. Carlisle were together; looking both of them so well pleased!

"You are not dressed for riding!" he said, taking her into his arms.

"As you see," returned Eleanor.

"I have brought a new horse for you. Will you change your dress?"

"I think not. I am not equal to anything new."

"Have you slept?"

"Yes, but I have not eaten; and it takes both to make muscle. I cannot even talk to you till after tea."

"Have you had no luncheon?"

"I was asleep."

"Mrs. Powle," said the gentleman, "you do not take care of my interests here. May I request you to have this want supplied? I am going to take Eleanor a great gallop presently; she must have something first." He put Eleanor in an easy chair as he spoke, and stood looking at her. Probably he saw some unusual lines of thought or care about the face, but it was by no means less fine for that. Mr. Carlisle liked what he saw. Refreshments came; and he poured out chocolate for her, and served her with an affectionate supervision that watched every item. But when, after a very moderate meal, Eleanor's hand was stretched out for another piece of bread, he stopped her.

"No," he said; "no more now. Now go and put on your habit."

"But I am very hungry," said Eleanor.

"No matter—you will forget it in five minutes. Go and put on your habit."

Eleanor hesitated; thought that perhaps after all the ride would be the easiest way of passing the afternoon; and went.

"Well, you do understand the art of command!" said Mrs. Powle, admiringly. "She would never have done that for me."

Mr. Carlisle did not look surprised, nor gratified, nor in fact show anything whatever in his looks. Unless it were, that the difference of effects produced by himself and his future mother-in-law, was very much a matter of course. He stood before the fire, with no change at all in his clear hazel eyes, until Eleanor appeared. Then they sparkled. Eleanor was for some reason or other particularly lovely in his eyes to-day.

The horse he had brought for her was a superb Arabian, showing nerve and fire in every line of his form and starting muscle, from the tips of the ears down to the long fetlock and beautiful hoof. Showing fire in the bright eye, too. A brown creature, with luxuriant flowing mane and tail.

"He is not quite so quiet as Black Maggie," Mr. Carlisle said as he put Eleanor upon his back; "and you must not curb him, Eleanor, or he will run."

They went to the moor; and by degrees getting accustomed to her fiery charger and letting him display his fine paces and increase his speed, Eleanor found the sensation very inspiriting. Even Black Maggie was not an animal like this; every motion was instinct with life and power, and not a little indication of headstrongness and irritability gave a great additional interest and excitement to the pleasure of managing him. Mr. Carlisle watched her carefully, Eleanor knew; he praised her handling. He himself was mounted on a quiet, powerful creature that did not make much show.

"If this fellow—what is his name?"

"Tippoo Sultan."

"If he were by any chance to run, would that horse you are riding keep up with him?"

"I hope you will not try."

"I don't mean it—but I am curious. There, Mr. Carlisle, there is the place where I was thrown."

"A villanous-looking place. I wish it was mine. How do you like Tippoo?"

"O, he is delightful!"

Mr. Carlisle looked satisfied, as he might; for Eleanor's colour had become brilliant, and her face had changed greatly since setting out. Strength and courage and hope seemed to come to her on Tippoo's back, facing the wind on the moor and galloping over the wild, free way. They took in part the route Eleanor had followed that day alone, coming back through the village by a still wider circuit. As they rode more moderately along the little street, if it could be called so—the houses were all on one side—Eleanor saw Mr. Rhys standing at Mrs. Lewis's door; he saw her. Involuntarily her bow in return to his salutation was very low. At the same instant Tippoo started on a run, to which all his former galloping had been a gentle amble. This was not ungentle; the motion had nothing rough; only Eleanor was going in a straight line over the ground at a rate that took away her breath. She had presence of mind not to draw the curb rein, but she felt that she could hardly endure long the sort of progress she was making through the air. It did not seem to be on the ground. Her curiosity was gratified on one point; for after the first instant she found Mr. Carlisle's powerful grey straining close beside her. Nevertheless Tippoo was so entirely in earnest that it was some little time—it seemed a very long one—before the grey could get so close to the brown and so far up with him that Mr. Carlisle could lay his hand upon the thick brown mane of Tippoo, and stoop forward to speak to him. As soon as that was done once or twice, Tippoo's speed gradually relaxed; and a perseverance in his master's appeals to his reason and sense of duty, brought the wild creature back to a moderate pace and the air of a civilized horse. Mr. Carlisle transferred his grasp from the mane to Eleanor's hand.

"Eleanor, what did you do that for?"

"Do what? I did nothing."

"You curbed him. You drew the rein, and he considered himself insulted. I told you he would not bear it."

"He has had nothing to bear from me. I have not drawn the curb at all, Robert."

"I must contradict you. I saw you do it. That started him."

Eleanor remained silent and a little pale. Was Mr. Carlisle right? The ride had until then done her a great deal of good; roused up her energies and restored in some degree her spirit; the involuntary race, together with the sudden sight of Mr. Rhys, had the effect to bring back all the soberness which for the moment the delight and stir of the exercise had dissipated. She went on pondering various things. Eleanor's letter to Mr. Carlisle was in the pocket of her habit, ready for use; she determined to give it him when he left her that evening; that was one of her subjects of thought. Accordingly he found her very abstracted and cold the rest of the way; grave and uninterested. He fancied she might have been startled by her run on Tippoo's back, though it was not very like her; but he did not know what to fancy. And true it is, that a remembrance of fear had come up to Eleanor after that gallop. *Afraid* she was not, at the time; but she felt that she had been in a condition of some peril, from which her own forces could not have extricated her; that brought up other considerations, and sadly in Eleanor's mind some words of the hymn they had sung last night in the barn floated over among her thoughts.

"When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

Very simple words; words that to some ears have become trite with repetition; but thoughts that went down into the depths of Eleanor's heart and garrisoned themselves there, beyond the power of any attacks to dislodge. Her gravity and indifference piqued Mr. Carlisle's curiosity and affection both. He spent the evening in trying to overcome them; with very partial success. When he was leaving her, Eleanor drew the letter from her pocket.

"What is this?" said he, taking it.

"Only a letter for you."

"From you! The consideration of that must not be postponed." He broke the seal. "Come, sit down again I will read it here."

"Not now! Take it home, Macintosh, and read it there. Let it wait so long."

"Why?"

"Never mind why. Do! Because I ask you."

"I don't believe I can understand it without you beside me," said he, smiling, and drawing the letter from its envelope while he looked at her.

"But there is everybody here," said Eleanor, glancing at another part of the room where the rest of the family were congregated. "I would rather you took it home with you"

"It is something that requires serious treatment?"

"Yes."

"You are a wise little thing," said he, "and I will take your advice." He put the letter in his pocket; then took Eleanor's hand upon his arm and walked her off to the library. Nobody was there; lamplight and firelight were warm and bright. Mr. Carlisle placed his charge in an easy chair by the library table, much to her disappointment; drew another close beside it, and sat down with his arm over the back of hers to read the letter. Thus it ran:

"It is right you should know a change which has taken place in me since the time when I first became known to you. I have changed very much, though it is a change perhaps which you will not believe in; yet I feel that it makes me very different from my old self, and alters entirely my views of almost everything. Life—and life's affairs and aims—do not look to me as they looked a few months ago; if indeed I could be said to have taken any view at all of them then. They were little more than names to me, I believe. They are great realities now.

"I do not know how to tell you in what this change in me consists, for I doubt you will neither like it nor believe in it. Yet you *must* believe in it; for I am not the woman I was a little while ago; not the woman you think me now.

If I suffered you to go on as you are, in ignorance of it, I should be deceiving you. I have opened my eyes to the fact that this life is not the end of life. I see another beyond,—much more lasting, unknown, strange, perhaps not very distant. The thought of it presses upon me like a cloud. I want to be ready for it—I feel I am not ready—and that before I can be ready, not only my views but my character must be changed. I am determined it shall. For, Mr. Carlisle, there is a Ruler whose government extends over this life and that, whose requisitions I have never met, whose commands I have never obeyed, whom consequently I fear; and until this fear is changed for another feeling, I cannot be happy. I will not live the life I have been leading, careless and thoughtless; I will be the servant of this Ruler whom hitherto I have disregarded. Whatever his commands are, those will I follow, at all costs, at any sacrifice; whatever I have or possess shall be used for his service. One thing I desire; to be a true servant of God, and not fear his face in displeasure. To secure that, I will let everything else in the world go.

"I wish you to understand this thoroughly. It will draw on consequences that you would not like. It will make me such a woman as you would not, I feel, wish your wife to be. I shall follow a course of life and action that in many things, I know, would be extremely distasteful to you. Yet I must follow them—I can do no other—I dare do no other. I cannot live as I have lived. No, not for any reward or consideration that could be offered me; nor to avoid any human anger.

"I think you would probably choose never to see me at the Priory, rather than to see me there such a woman as I shall be. In that case, I shall be very sorry for all the disagreeable consequences which would to you attend the annulling of the contract formed between us. My own part of them I am ready to bear.

"ELEANOR POWLE."

The letter was read through almost under Eleanor's own

eyes. She looked furtively, as she could, to see how Mr. Carlisle took it. He did not seem to take it at all; she could find no change in his face. If the brow slightly bent before her did slightly knit itself in sterner lines than common, she could not be sure of it, bent as it was; and when he looked up, there was no such expression there. He looked as pleasant as possible.

"Do you want me to laugh at you?" he said.

"That was not the precise object I had in writing," said Eleanor soberly.

"I do not suppose it, and yet I feel very much like laughing at you a little. So you think you can make yourself a woman I would not like,—ch, my darling?"

He had drawn Eleanor's head down to his shoulder, within easy reach of his lips, but he did not kiss her. His right hand smoothed back the masses of her beautiful hair, and then rested on her cheek while he looked into the face thus held for near inspection; much as one handles a child. The touch was light and caressing, and calm as power too. Eleanor breathed quick. She could not bear it. She forced herself back where she could look at him.

"You are taking it lightly, but I mean it very seriously," she said. "I think I could—I think I shall. I did not write you such a letter without very deep reason."

He still retained his hold of her, and in his right hand had captured one of hers. This hand he now brought to his lips, kissing and caressing it.

"I do not think I understand it yet," he said. "What are you going to do with yourself? Is it your old passion for a monastic life come up again? do you want the old Priory built up, and me for a Father Confessor?"

Did he mean ever to loose his hold of the little hand he held so lightly and firmly? Never! Eleanor's head drooped.

"What is it, Eleanor?"

"It is serious work, Mr. Carlisle; and you will not believe me."

"Make me serious too. Tell me a little more definitely

what dreadful thing I am to expect. What sort of a woman is my wife going to be?"

"Such a one as you would not have, if you knew it;—such a one as you never would have sought, if *I* had known it myself earlier, I feel sure." Eleanor's colour glowed all over her face and brow; nevertheless she spoke steadily.

"Enigmatical!" said Mr. Carlisle. "The only thing I understand is this—and this," and he kissed alternately her cheek and lips. "*Here* is my wife—*here* is what I wish her to be. It will be all right the twenty-first of next month. What will you do after that, Eleanor?"

Eleanor was silent, mortified, troubled, silenced. What was the use of trying to explain herself?

"What do you want to do, Eleanor? Give all your money to the poor? I believe that is your pet fancy. Is that what you mean to do?"

Eleanor's cheeks burnt again. "You know I have very little money to give, Mr. Carlisle. But I have determined to give *myself*."

"To me?"

"No, no. I mean, to duties and commands higher than any human obligation. And they may, and probably will, oblige me to live in a way that would not please you."

"Let us see. What is the novelty?"

"I am going to live—it is right I should tell you, whether you will believe me or not—I am going to live henceforth not for this world but the other."

"How?" said he, looking at her with his clear brilliant eyes.

"I do not know, in detail. But, you know, in the Church service, the pomps and vanities of the world are renounced; whatever that involves, it will find me obedient."

"What has put this fancy in your head, Eleanor?"

"A sense of danger, first, I think."

"A sense of danger! Danger of what?"

"Yes. A feeling of being unready for that other life to which I might at any time go;—that other world, I mean. I cannot be happy so." She was agitated; her colour was high; her nerves trembled.

"How came this 'sense of danger' into your head? what brought it, or suggested it?"

"When I was ill last summer—I felt it then. I have felt it since. I feel my head uncovered to meet the storm that may at any time break upon it. I am going to live, if I can, as people live whom you would laugh at; you would call them fanatics and fools. It is the only way for me to be happy; but you would not like it in one near you."

"Go in a black dress, Eleanor?"

She was silent. She very nearly burst into tears, but prevented that.

"You can't terrify me," said Mr. Carlisle, lazily throwing himself back in his chair. "I don't get up a 'sense of danger' as easily as you do, darling. One look in your face puts all that to flight at once. I am safe. You may do what you like."

"You would not say that by and by," said Eleanor.

"Would I not?" said he, rousing up and drawing her tenderly but irresistibly to his arms again. "But make proper amends to me for breaking rules to-night, and you shall have *carte-blanche* for this new fancy, Eleanor. How are you going to ask my forgiveness?"

"You ought to ask mine—for you will not attend to me."

"Contumacious?" said he, lightly touching her lips as if they were a goblet and he were taking sips of the wine;—"then I shall make my own amends. You shall live as you please, darling, only take me along with you."

"You will not go."

"How do you know?"

"Neither your feeling nor your taste agree with it."

"What *are* you going to do!" said he, half laughing, holding her fast and looking down into her face. "My little Eleanor! Make yourself a grey nun, or a blue Puritan? Grey becomes you, darling; it makes a duchess of you; and blue is set off by this magnificent brown head of yours. I will answer for my taste in either event; and I think you could bear, and consequently I could, all the other colours in the rainbow. As for your idea, of making yourself a

woman that I would not like, I do not think you can compass it. You may try. I will not let you go too far."

"You cannot hinder it, Macintosh," said Eleanor in a low voice.

"Kiss me!" said he, laughingly.

Eleanor slowly raised her head from his shoulder and obeyed, so far as a very dainty and shyly given permission went; feeling bitterly that she had brought herself into bonds from which only Mr. Carlisle's hand could release her. She could not break them herself. What possible reason could she assign? And so she was in his power.

"Cheeks hot, and hands cold," said Mr. Carlisle to himself as he walked away through the rooms. "I wish the twenty-first were to-morrow!" He stopped in the drawing-room to hold a consultation of some length with Mrs. Powle; in which, however, he confided to her no more than that the last night's attention to her nurse's daughter had been quite too much for Eleanor, and he should think it extremely injudicious to allow it again. Which Mrs. Powle had no idea of doing.

Neither had Eleanor any idea of attempting it. But she spent half that night in heart-ache and in baffled searchings for a path out of her difficulties. What could she do? If Mr. Carlisle *would* marry her, she saw no help for it; and to disgust him with her would be a difficult matter. For oh, Eleanor knew, that though he would not like a religious wife, he had good reason to trust his own power of regulating any tendency of that sort which might offend him. Once his wife, once let that strong arm have a right to be round her permanently; and Eleanor knew it would be an effectual bar against whatever he wished to keep at a distance.

Eleanor was armed with no Christian armour; no helmet or shield of protection had she; all she had was the strength of fear, and the resolute determination to seek until she should find that panoply in which she would be safe and strong. Once married to Mr. Carlisle, and she felt that her determination would be in danger, and her resolution meet

another resolution with which it might have hard fighting to do. Ay, and who knew whether hers would overcome? She must not finish this marriage; yet how induce Mr. Carlisle to think of her as she wished?

"I declare," said Mrs. Powle, coming into her room the next day, "that one night's sitting up has done the work of a week's illness upon you, Eleanor! Mr. Carlisle is right."

"In what?"

"He said you must not go again."

"I think he is somewhat premature in arranging my movements."

"Don't you like it?" said Mrs. Powle, laughing a little. "You must learn to submit to that. I am glad there is somebody that can control you, Eleanor, at last. It does me good. It was a happiness that you never took anything desperate into your head, for your father and you together were more than a match for me; and it's just the same with Julia. But Julia is growing tame and more reasonable, I think, lately."

"Good reason why," thought Eleanor, moodily. "But that is a better sort of control she is under."

"I am charged with a commission to you, Eleanor."

"What is it, ma'am?"

"To find out what particular kind of jewels you prefer. I really don't know, so am obliged to ask you—which was not in my commission,"

"Jewels, mamma!"

"Jewels, my lady."

"O mamma! don't talk to me of jewels!"

"Nor of weddings, I suppose; but really I do not see how things are to be done unless they are to be talked about. For instance, this matter of your liking in jewellery—I think rubies become you, Eleanor; though to be sure there is nothing *I* like so well as diamonds. What is the matter?"

For Eleanor's brown head had gone down on the table before her, and her face was hidden in her hands. She slowly raised it at her mother's question.

"Mamma, Mr. Carlisle does not know what he is doing!"

"Pray what do you mean?"

"He thinks he is marrying a person who will be gay, and live for and in the world, as he lives—and as he would wish me. Mamma, I will not—I never will! I never shall be what he likes in that respect. I mean to live a religious life."

"A religious life! What sort of a life is that?"

"It is what you do not like—nor he."

"A religious life! Eleanor, you do not suppose Mr. Carlisle would wish his wife to lead an irreligious life?"

"Yes—I do.

"I should not like you to tell *him* that," said Mrs. Powle, colouring with anger. "How dare you say it? What sort of a religious life do you want to live?"

"Such a one as the Bible bids, mamma," Eleanor said in a low voice and drooping her head. "Such a one as the Prayer-book recommends, over and over."

"And you think Mr. Carlisle would not like that? What insinuations you are making against us all, Eleanor! For of course, I, your mother, have wished you also to live this irreligious life. We are a set of heathens together. Dr. Cairnes too. He was delighted with it."

"It changes nothing, mamma," said Eleanor. "I am resolved to live in a different way; and Mr. Carlisle would not like it; and if he only knew it, he would not wish to marry me; and I cannot make him believe it."

"You have tried, have you?"

"Yes, I have tried. It was only honest."

"Well, I did not think you were such a fool, Eleanor! and am sure he did not. Believe you, you little fool? he knows etter. He knows that he will not have had you a week at the Priory before you will be too happy to live what life he pleases. He is just the man to bring you into order. I only wish the wedding-day was to-morrow."

Eleanor drew herself up, and her face changed from soft and sorrowful to stubborn. She kept silence.

"In this present matter of jewels," said Mrs. Powle,

returning to the charge, "I suppose I am to tell him that a plain set of jet is as much as you can fancy; or that, as it would be rather uncommon to be married in black, you will take bugles. What he will say I am sure I don't know."

"You had better not try, mamma," said Eleanor. "If the words you last said are true, and I should be unable to follow my conscience at Rythdale Priory, then I shall never go there; and in that case the jewels will not be wanted, except for somebody else whose taste neither bugles nor jet would suit."

"Now you have got one of your obstinate fits on," said Mrs. Powle, "and I will go. I shall be a better friend to you than to tell Mr. Carlisle a word of all this, which I know will be vanished in another month or two; and if you value your good fortune, Eleanor, I recommend you to keep a wise tongue between your teeth in talking to him. I know one thing—I wish Dr. Cairnes, or the Church, or whoever has it in hand, would keep all dissenting fools from coming to Wiglands to preach their pestiferous notions here, and that your father would not bring them to his house! That is what I wish. Will you be reasonable, and give me an answer about the jewels, Eleanor?"

"I cannot think about jewels, mamma."

Mrs. Powle departed. Eleanor sat with her head bowed in her hands, her mind in dim confusion, through which loomed the one thought, that she must break this marriage. Her mother's words had roused the evil as well as the good of Eleanor's nature; and along with bitter self-reproaches and longings for good, she already by foretaste champed the bit of an authority that she did not love. So, while her mind was in a sea of turmoil, there came suddenly, like a sun-blink upon the confusion, a soft question from her little sister Julia. Neither mother nor daughter had taken notice of her being in the room. The question came strangely soft, for Julia.

"Eleanor, do you love Jesus?"

Eleanor raised her head in unspeakable astonishment, startled and even shocked, as one is at an unheard-of thing.

Julia's face was close beside her, looking wistful and anxious, and tender also. The look struck Eleanor's heart. But she only stared.

"Do you?" said Julia, wistfully.

It wrought the most unaccountable convulsion in Eleanor's mind, this little dove's feather of a question, touching the sore and angry feelings that wrestled there. She flung herself off her chair, and on her knees by the table sobbed dreadfully. Julia stood by, looking as sober as if she had been a ministering angel.

Eleanor knew what the question meant—that was all. She had heard Mr. Rhys speak of it; she had heard him speak of it with a quiver on his lip and a flush in his face, which showed her that there was something in religion that she had never fathomed, nor ever before suspected; there was a hidden region of joy, the entrance to which was veiled from her. To Eleanor the thing would have been a mere mystery, but that she had seen it to be a reality; once seen, that was never to be forgotten. And now, in the midst of her struggles of passion and pain, Julia's question came innocently asking whether *she* were a sharer in that unearthly wonderful joy which seemed to put its possessor beyond the reach of struggles. Eleanor's sobs were the hard sobs of pain. As wisely as if she had really been a ministering angel, her little sister stood by silent; and said not another word till Eleanor had risen and taken her seat again. Nor then either. It was Eleanor that spoke.

"What do you know about it, Julia?"

"Not much," said the child. "*I* love the Lord Jesus—that is all, and I thought, perhaps, from the way you spoke that you did. Mr. Rhys would be so glad."

"He? Glad? What do you mean, Julia?"

"I know he would; because I have heard him pray for you a great many times."

"No—no," said Eleanor, turning away,—"I know nothing but fear. I do not feel anything better. And they want me to think of everything else in the world but this one thing!"

"But you will think of it, Eleanor, won't you?"

Eleanor was silent and abstracted. Her sister watched her with strange eyes for Julia, anxiously observant. The silence lasted some time.

"When does Mr. Rhys—is he going to preach again, Julia, that you know of?"

"I think not. He was very tired after he preached the other night; he lay on the couch and did not move the whole of the next day. He is better to-day."

"You have seen him this morning?"

"O yes. I see him every day; and he teaches me a great many things. But he always prays for you."

Eleanor did not wish to keep up the conversation, and it dropped. And after that, things went on their train.

It was a very fast train, too; and growing in importance and thickening in its urgency of speed. Every day the preparations converged more nearly towards their great focus, the twenty-first of December. Eleanor felt the whirl of circumstances, felt borne off her feet and carried away with them; and felt it hopelessly. She knew not what to urge, that should be considered sufficient reason either by her mother or Mr. Carlisle for even delaying, much less breaking off the match. She was grave and proud, and unsatisfactory, as much as it was in her nature to be, partly on purpose; and Mr. Carlisle was not satisfied, and hurried on things all the more. He kept his temper perfectly, whatever thoughts he had; he rode and walked with Eleanor, when she would go, with the same cool and faultless manner; when she would not, he sometimes let it pass and sometimes made her go; but once or twice he failed in doing this, and recognized the possibility of Eleanor's ability to give him trouble. He knew his own power, however; on the whole, he liked her quite as well for it.

"What is the matter with you, my darling?" he said one day. "You are not like yourself."

"I am not happy," said Eleanor. "I told you I had a doubt unsettled upon my mind; and till that doubt is put at rest, I cannot be happy, I cannot have peace; you will take no pleasure in me."

"Why do you not settle it, then?" said Mr. Carlisle, quietly.

"Because I have no chance. I have not a moment to think, in this whirl where I am living. If you would put off the twenty-first of next month to the twenty-first of some month in the spring—or summer—I might have a breathing-place, and get myself in order. I cannot, now."

"You will have time to think, love, when you get to the Priory," Mr. Carlisle observed in the same tone—an absolute tone.

"Yes. I know how that would be!" Eleanor answered bitterly. "But I can take no pleasure in anything—I cannot have any rest or comfort—as long as I know that if anything happened to me—if death came suddenly—I am utterly unready. I cannot be happy so."

"I think I had better send Dr. Cairnes to see you," said Mr. Carlisle. "He is in duty bound to be the family physician in all things spiritual where they need him. But this is morbid, Eleanor. I know how it is. These are only whims, my darling, that will never outlive that day you dread so much."

He had drawn her into his arms as he spoke; but in his touch and his kiss Eleanor felt or fancied something masterful, which irritated her.

"If I thought that, Mr. Carlisle," she said,—"if I knew it was true—that day would never come!"

Mr. Carlisle's self-control was perfect; so was his tact. He made no answer at all to this speech; only gave Eleanor two or three more of those quiet ownership kisses. No appearance of discomposure in his manner or in his voice when he spoke; still holding her in his arms.

"I shall know how to punish you one of these days for this," he said. "You may expect to be laughed at a little, my darling, when you turn penitent. Which will not hinder the moment from coming."

And so, dismissing the matter and her with another light touch of her lips, he left her.

"Will it be so?" thought Eleanor. "Shall I be so within

his control, that I shall even sue to him to forget and pardon this word of my true indignation? Once his wife—once let the twenty-first of December come—and there will be no more help for me. What shall I do?"

She was desperate, but she saw no opening. She saw, however, the next day that Mr. Carlisle was coldly displeased with her. She was afraid to have him remain so; and made conciliations. These were accepted immediately and frankly, but so, at the same time, as made her feel she had lost ground and given Mr. Carlisle an advantage; every inch of which he knew and took. Nobody had seen the tokens of any part of all this passage of arms; in three days all was just as it had been, except Eleanor's lost ground. And three days more were gone before the twenty-first of December.

CHAPTER X.

"And, once wed,
So just a man and gentle could not choose
But make my life as smooth as marriage-ring."

"MACINTOSH, do you ever condescend to do such a thing as walk?—take a walk, I mean?"

"You may command me," he answered somewhat lazily.

"May I? For the walk; but I want further to make a visit in the village."

"You may make twenty, if you feel inclined. I will order the horses to meet us there—shall I? or do you not wish to do anything but walk to-day?"

"O yes. After my visit is paid, I shall be ready."

"But it will be very inconvenient to walk so far in your habit. Can you manage that?"

"I expect to enlighten you a good deal as to a woman's power of managing," said Eleanor.

"Is that a warning?" said he, making her turn her face towards him. Eleanor gratified him with one of her full, mischievous smiles.

"Did anybody ever tell you," said he, continuing the inspection, "that you were handsome?"

"It never was worth anybody's while."

"How was that?"

"Simply, that he would have gained nothing by it."

"Then I suppose I should not, or you think so?"

"Nothing in the world. Mr. Carlisle, if you please, I will go and put on my hat."

The day was November in a mild mood; pleasant enough for a walk; and so one at least of the two found it. For Eleanor, she was in a divided mood; yet even to her the exercise was grateful, and brought some glow and stir of spirits through the body to the mind. At times, too, now, she almost bent before what seemed her fate, in hoplessness of escaping from it: and at those times she strove to accommodate herself to it, and tried to propitiate her captor. She did this from a two-fold motive. She did fear him, and feared to have him anything but pleased with her; half slumbering that feeling lay; another feeling she was deeply conscious of. The love that he had for her—a gift that no woman can receive and be wholly unmoved by it—the affection she herself had allowed him to bestow, in full faith that it would not be thrown away; that stung Eleanor with grief and self-reproach, and made her at times question whether her duty did not lie where she had formerly engaged it should. At such times she was very subdued in gentleness and in observance of Mr. Carlisle's pleasure; subdued to a meekness foreign to her natural mood, and which, generally, to tell the truth, was accompanied by a very unwonted sedateness of spirits also; something very like the sedateness of despair.

She walked now silently the first half of the way; managing her long habit in a way that she knew Mr. Carlisle knew, though he took no open notice of it. The day was quite still, the road footing good. A slight rime hung about the distance, veiled faintly the Rythdale woods, enshrouded the far-off village, as they now and then caught glimpses of it, in its tuft of surrounding trees. Yet near at hand, the air seemed clear and mellow; there was no November chill. It was a brown world, however, through which the two walked; life and freshness all gone from vegetation; the leaves in most cases fallen from the trees, and where they still hung, looking as sear and withered as frost and decay could make them.

"Do you abhor *all* compliments?" said Mr. Carlisle, breaking a silence that for some time had been broken only by the quick ring of their footsteps upon the ground.

"No, sir."

"That is frank; yet I am half afraid to present the one which is on my lips."

"Perhaps it is not worth while," said Eleanor, with a gleam of a smile which was very alluring. "You are going to tell me, possibly, that I am a good walker."

"I do not know why I should let you silence me. No, I was not going to tell you that you are a good walker; you know it already. The compliment of beauty, that you scorned, was also perhaps no news to you. What I admire in you now, is something you do not know you have; and I do not mean you shall, by my means."

Eleanor's glance of amused curiosity, rewarded him.

"Are you expecting, now, that I shall ask for it?"

"No; it would not be like you. You do not ask me for anything that you can help, Eleanor. I shall have to make myself cunning in inventing situations of need that will drive you to it. It is pleasanter to me than you can imagine, to have your eyes seek mine with a request in them."

Eleanor coloured.

"There are the fieldfares!" she exclaimed presently.

"What is there melancholy in that?" said Mr. Carlisle, laughingly.

"Nothing. Why?"

"You made the announcement as if you found it so."

"I was thinking of the time I saw the fieldfares last,—when they were gathering together preparing for their taking flight; and now here they are back again! It seems such a little while—and yet it seems a long while too. The summer has gone."

"I am glad it has!" said Mr. Carlisle. "And I am glad Autumn has had the discretion to follow it. I make my bow to the fieldfares."

"You will not expect me to echo that," said Eleanor.

"No—not now. I will make you do it, by and by."

He thought a good deal of his power, Eleanor said to herself as she glanced at him; and sighed as she remem-

bered that she did so too. She was afraid to say anything more. It had not been so pleasant a summer to her that she would have wished to live it over again; yet was she very sorry to know it gone, for more reasons than it would do to let Mr. Carlisle see.

"You do not believe that?" he said, coming with his brilliant eyes to find her out where her thoughts had plunged her. Eleanor came forth of them immediately, and answered—

"No more than that one of those fieldfares, if you should catch it and fasten a leash round its neck, would say it was well done that its time of free flying was over."

"My bird shall soar higher from the perch where I will place her, than ever she ventured before."

"Ay, and stoop to your lure, Mr. Carlisle!"

He laughed at this flash, and took instant tribute of the lips whose sauciness tempted him.

"Do you wonder," he said softly, "that I want to have my tassel-gentle on my hand?"

Eleanor coloured again, and was wisely silent.

"I am afraid you are not ambitious, Eleanor."

"Is that such a favourite vice, that you wish I were?"

"Vice! It is a virtue, say rather; but not for a woman," he added in a different tone. "No, I do not wish you any more of it, Nellie, than a little education will give."

"You are mistaken, though, Macintosh. I am very ambitious," Eleanor said gravely.

"Pray in what line? Of being able to govern Tippoo without my help?"

"Is it Tippoo that I am to ride to-day?"

"Yes. I will give you a lesson. What line does your ambition take, darling?"

"I have a great ambition—higher and deeper than you can think—to be a great deal better than myself."

She said it lowly and seriously, in a way that sufficiently spoke her earnestness. It was just as well to let Mr. Carlisle know now and then which way her thoughts travelled. She did not look up till the consciousness of his examining

eyes upon her made her raise her own. His look was intent and silent; at first grave, and then changing into a very sunny smile with the words—

"My little Saint Eleanor?"

They were inimitably spoken; it is difficult to say how. The graciousness, and affection, and only a very little tender raillery discernible with them, at once smote and won Eleanor. What could she do to make amends to this man for letting him love her, but to be his wife and give him all the good she could? She answered his smile; and if hers was shy and slight, it was also so gentle that Mr. Carlisle was more than content.

"If you have no other ambition than that," he said, "then the wise man is proved wrong who said that moderation is the sloth of the soul, as ambition is its activity."

"Who said that?"

"Rochefoucald, I believe."

"Like him," said Eleanor.

"How is that? wise?"

"No, indeed; false."

"He was a philosopher, and you are not even a student in that school."

"He was not a true man; and that I know by the lights he never knew."

"He told the time of day by the world's clock, Eleanor. You go by a private sun-dial of your own."

"The sun is right, Mr. Carlisle! He was a vile old maligner of human nature."

"Where did you learn to know him so well?" said Mr. Carlisle, amused.

"You may well ask. I used to study French sentences out of him, because they were in nice little detached bits; and when I came to understand him, I judged him accordingly."

"By the sun. Few men will stand that, Eleanor. Give an instance."

"We are in the village."

"I see it."

"I told you I wanted to make a visit, Macintosh."

"May I go, too?"

"Why, certainly; but I am afraid you will not know what to do with yourself. It is at the house of Mrs. Lewis, my old nurse."

"Do you think I never go into cottages?" said he, smiling.

Eleanor did not know what to make of him; however, it was plain he would go with her into this one; so she took him in, and then had to tell who he was, and blushed for shame and vexation to see her old nurse's delighted and deep curtseys at the honour done her. She made her escape to see Jane; and leaving Mr. Carlisle to his own devices, gladly shut herself into the little stairway which led up from the kitchen to Jane's room. The door closed behind her; Eleanor let fall the spirit mask she wore before Mr. Carlisle —wore consciously for him and half unconsciously for herself—and her feet went slowly and heavily up the stair. A short stairway it was, and she had short time to linger; she did not linger; she went into Jane's room. Eleanor had not been there since the night of her watch.

It was like coming out of the woods upon an open champaign, as she stood by the side of the sick girl. Jane was lying bolstered up, as usual; disease showed no stay of its ravages since Eleanor had been there last; all that was as it had been. The thin cheek with its feverish hue; the unnaturally bright eyes; the attitude of feebleness. But the mouth was quiet and at rest to-day; and that mysterious region of expression around the eyes had lost all its seams and lines of care and anxiety; and the eyes themselves looked at Eleanor with that calm, full simplicity that one sees in an infant's eyes, before care or doubt has ever visited them. Eleanor was silent with surprise, and Jane spoke first.

"I am glad to see you, Miss Eleanor."

"You are better, Jane, to-day."

"I think—I am almost well," said Jane, pausing for breath as she spoke, and smiling at the same time.

"What has happened to you since I was here last? You do not look like the same."

"Ma'am, I am not the same. The Lord's messenger has come—and I've heard the message—and O, Miss Eleanor, I'm happy!"

"What do you mean, Jane?" said Eleanor; though it struck coldly through all her senses what it did mean.

"Dear Miss Eleanor," said Jane, looking at her lovingly, "I wish you was as happy as I be!"

"What makes you happy?"

"O ma'am, because I love Jesus—I love Jesus!"

"You must tell me more, Jane. I do not understand you. The other night, when I was here, you were not happy."

"Miss Eleanor, I didn't know him then. Since then I've seen how good he is—and how beautiful—and what he has done for me;—and I'm happy!"

"Can't you tell me more, Jane? I want to understand it."

"Miss Eleanor, it's hard to tell. I'm thinking, one can't tell another—but the Lord must just show himself."

"What has he shown to you?" said Eleanor, gloomily.

The girl lifted her eyes with a placid light in them, as she answered—

"He has showed me how he loves me—and that he has forgiven me—O, how good he is, Miss Eleanor!—and how he will take me home. And now I don't want for to stay no more now."

"You were afraid of dying, the other night, Jane."

"That's gone," said the girl, expressively.

"But how did it go?"

"I can't say, ma'am. I just saw how Jesus loves me—and I felt I loved him—and then how could I be feared, Miss Eleanor, when all's in his hand?"

Eleanor stood still, looking at the transformed face before her, and feeling ready to sink on the floor and cry out for very sorrow of heart. Had this poor creature put on the invisible panoply which made her dare to go among the angels, while Eleanor's own hand was empty—could not

reach it—could not grasp it? She stood still, with a cold brow and dark face.

"Jane, I wish you could give me what you have got—so as not to lose it yourself."

"Jesus will give it to you, Miss Eleanor," said the girl, with a brightening eye and smile; "I know he will."

"I do not know of him, Jane, as you do," Eleanor said gravely. "What did you do to gain this knowledge?"

"I? I did nought, ma'am—what could I do? I just laid and cried in my bitterness of heart—like the night you was here, ma'am; till the day that Mr. Rhys came again and talked—and prayed—O, he prayed!—and my trouble went away and the light came. O, Miss Eleanor, if you would hear Mr. Rhys speak! I don't know how;—but if you'd hear him, you'd know all that man can tell."

Eleanor stood silent. Jane looked at her with eyes of wistful regard, but panting already from the exertion of talking.

"But how are you different to-day, Jane, from what you were the other night—except in being happy?"

"Ma'am," said the girl, speaking with difficulty, for she was excited, "then I was blind. Now I see. I ain't different no-ways—only I have seen what the Lord has done for me—and I know he loves me—and he's forgiven me my sins. He's forgiven me!—And now I go singing to myself, like, all the day and the night too, 'I love the Lord, and my Lord loves me.'"

The water had slowly gathered in Jane's eyes, and the cheek flushed; but her sweet happy regard never varied except to brighten.

"Jane, you must talk no more," said Eleanor. "What can I do for you? only tell me that."

"Would Miss Eleanor read a bit?"

What would become of Mr. Carlisle's patience? Eleanor desperately resolved to let it take care of itself, and sat down to read to Jane at the open page where the girl's look and finger had indicated that she wished her to begin. And the very first words were, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Eleanor felt her voice choke; then clearing it with a determined effort, she read on to the end of the chapter. But if she had been reading the passage in its original Greek, she herself would hardly have received less intelligence from it. She had a dim perception of the words of love and words of glory of which it is full; she saw that Mr. Rhys's "helmet" was at the beginning of it, and the "peace" he had preached of at the end of it; yet those words, which ever since the day they were spoken have been a bed of rest to every heart that has loved their Author, only straitened Eleanor's heart with a vision of rest afar off.

"I must go now, dear Jane," she said as soon as the reading was ended. "What else would you like, that I can do for you?"

"I'm thinking I want nothing, Miss Eleanor," said the girl calmly, without moving the eyes which had looked at Eleanor all through the reading. "But——"

"But what? speak out."

"Mother says you can do anything, ma'am."

"Well, go on."

"Dolly's in trouble, ma'am."

"Dolly? why, she was to have been married to that young Earle?"

"Yes, ma'am, but—mother 'll tell you, Miss Eleanor—it tires me. He has been disappointed of his money, has James; and Dolly, she couldn't lay up none, 'cause of home; and she's got to go back to service at Tenby; and they don't know when they'll come together now."

A fit of coughing punished Jane for the exertion she had made, and put a stop to her communication. Eleanor stayed by her till it was over, would not let her say another word, kissed her, and ran down to the lower room in a divided state of spirits. There she learnt from Mrs. Lewis the details of Jane's confused story. The young couple wanted means to furnish a house; the money hoarded for the purpose had been lent by James in some stress of his parents' affairs, and could not now be got back again; and the secret hope of the family, Eleanor found, was that James

might be advanced to the gamekeeper's place at Rythdale, which they took care to inform her was vacant, and which would put the young man in possession of better wages and enable him to marry at once. Eleanor just heard all this, and hurried out to the gate where Mr. Carlisle was waiting for her. Her interview with Jane had left her with a desperate feeling of being cut off from the peace and light her heart longed for; and yet she was glad to see somebody else happy. She stood by Mr. Carlisle's side in a sort of subdued mood. There also stood Miss Broadus.

"Now, Eleanor! here you are. Won't you help me? I want you two to come in and take luncheon with us. I shall never get over it, if you do—I shall be so pleased. So will Juliana. Now do persuade this gentleman!—will you? We'll have luncheon in a little while—and then you can go on your ride. You'll never do it, if you do not to-day."

"It is hardly time, Miss Broadus," said Mr. Carlisle. "We must ride some miles before luncheon."

"I think it must be very near time," said Miss Broadus. "Do, Eleanor, look and tell us what it is. Now you are here, it would be such a good chance. Well, Eleanor? And the horses can wait."

"It is half-past twelve by me, Miss Broadus. I do not know how it is by the world's clock."

"You cannot take her word," said Mr. Carlisle, preparing to mount Eleanor. "She goes by an old-fashioned thing, that is always behind the time—or in advance of it."

"Well, I declare!" said Miss Broadus. "That beautiful little watch Mr. Powle gave her! Then you will come in after your ride?"

If they were near enough at luncheon time, Mr. Carlisle promised that should be done; and leaving Miss Broadus in startled admiration of their horses, the riders set forth. A new ride was promised Eleanor; they struck forward beyond Wiglands, leaving the road to Rythdale on the left hand. Eleanor was busily meditating on the question of making suit to Mr. Carlisle in James Earle's favour; but

not as a question to be decided; she had resolved she would not do it, and was thinking rather how very unwilling she should be to do it; sensible at the same time that much power was in her hands to do good and give relief, of many kinds; but fixed in the mind that so long as she had not the absolute right and duty of Mr. Carlisle's wife, she would not assume it. Yet between pride and benevolence Eleanor's ride was likely to be scarce a pleasant one. It was extremely silent, for which Tippoo's behaviour on this occasion gave no excuse. He was as gentle as the day.

"What did you find in that cottage to give your thoughts so profound a turn?" said Mr. Carlisle at last.

"A sick girl."

"Cottages do not seem to agree with you, Eleanor."

"That would be unfortunate," said Eleanor, rousing up, "for the people in them seem to want me very much."

"Do not let that impose on you," said Mr. Carlisle, smiling. "Speaking of cottages—two of my cottages at Rythmoor are empty still."

"O, are they?" Eleanor exclaimed, with sudden life.

"What then?"

"Is there anybody you mean to put in them, Mr. Carlisle?"

"No. Is there anybody *you* mean to put in them?"

"I know just who would like to have one."

"Then I know just who shall have it—or I shall know, when you have told me."

Did he smile to himself that his bait had taken? He did not smile outwardly. Riding close up to her, he listened with a bright face to the story which Eleanor gave with a brighter. She had a private smile at herself. Where were her scruples now? There was no help for it.

"It is one of your—one of the under-gardeners at Rythdale; his name is James Earle. I believe he is a good fellow."

"We will suppose that. What has he done to enlist your sympathy?"

"He wants to marry a sister of this girl I have been to see. They have been long betrothed; and James has been

laying up money to set up housekeeping. They were to have been married this autumn—now; but James had lent all his earnings to get his old father out of some distress, and they are not forthcoming; and all Dolly's earnings go to support hers."

"And what would you like to do for them, Eleanor?"

Eleanor coloured now, but she could not go back. "If you think well of Earle, and would like to have him in one of the empty cottages at Rythmoor, I should be glad."

"They shall go in the day we are married; and I wish you would find somebody for the other. Now, having made a pair of people happy and established a house, would you like a gallop?"

Eleanor's cheeks were hot, and she would very much; but she answered, "One of Tippoo's gallops?"

"You do not know them yet. You have tried only a mad gallop. Tippoo!" said Mr. Carlisle, stooping and striking his riding-glove against the horse's shoulder,—"I am going a race with you, do you hear?"

His own charger at the same time sprang forward, and Tippoo to match! But such a cradling flight through the air, Eleanor never knew until now. There seemed no exertion; there was no jar; a smooth, swift, arrowy passage over the ground, like what birds take under the clouds. This was the gentlest of gallops, certainly, and yet it was at a rare speed that cleared the miles very fast and left striving grooms in the distance. Eleanor paid no attention to anything but the delight of motion; she did not care where or how far she was carried on such magical hoofs; but indeed the ride was beyond her beat, and she did not know the waymarks if she had observed them. A gradual slackening of this pace of delight brought her back to the earth and her senses again.

"How was that?" said Mr. Carlisle. "It has done you no harm?"

"I do not know how it was," said Eleanor, caressing the head and neck of the magnificent animal she rode; "but I

think this creature has come out of the Arabian Nights. Tippoo is certainly an enchanted prince."

"I'll take care he is not disenchanted, then," said Mr. Carlisle. "That gallop did us some service. Do you know where we are?"

"Not in the least."

"You will know presently."

And accordingly a few minutes of fast riding brought them to a lodge and a gate.

"Is this Rythdale?" said Eleanor, who had noticed the manner of the gate-opener.

"Yes, and this entrance is near the house. You will see it in a moment or two."

It appeared presently, stately and lovely, on the other side of an extensive lawn; a grove of spruce firs making a beautiful setting for it on one side. The riders passed round the lawn, through a part of the plantations, and came up to the house at the before-mentioned left wing. Mr. Carlisle threw himself off his horse and came to Eleanor.

"What now, Macintosh?"

"Luncheon."

"O, I do not want any luncheon."

"I do. And so do you, love. Come!"

"Macintosh," said Eleanor, bending down with her hand resting on his shoulder to enforce her request, "I do not want to go in."

"I cannot take you any further without rest and refreshment; and we are too far from Miss Broadus's now. Come, Eleanor!"

He took her down, and then observing the discomposed colour of Eleanor's cheek, he went on affectionately, as he was leading her in,—"What is there formidable in it, Nellie? Nothing but my mother and luncheon; and she will be much pleased to see you."

Eleanor made no answer; she doubted it; at all events, the pleasure would be all on one side. But the reception she got justified Mr. Carlisle. Lady Rythdale was pleased. She was even gracious. She sent Eleanor to her dressing-

room to refresh herself, not to change her dress this time; and received her when she came into her presence again with a look that was even benign.

Bound, bound,—Eleanor felt it in everything her eye lit upon; she had thought it all over in the dressing-room, while she was putting in order the masses of hair which had been somewhat shaken down by the gallop. She was irritated, and proud, and afraid of displeasing Mr. Carlisle; and above all this, and keeping it down, was the sense that she was bound to him. He did love her, if he also loved to command her; and he would do the latter, and it was better not to hinder his doing the other. But higher than this consideration rose the feeling of *right*. She had given him leave to love her; and now it seemed that his love demanded of her all she had, if it was not all he wanted; duty and observance and her own sweet self, if not her heart's absorbing affection. And this would satisfy Mr. Carlisle, Eleanor knew; she could not ease her conscience with the thought that it would not. And here she was in his mother's dressing-room putting up her hair, and down stairs he and his mother were waiting for her; she was almost in the family already. Eleanor put several feelings in bonds, along with the abundant tresses of brown hair which made her hands full, and went down.

She looked lovely as she came in; for the pride and irritation and struggling rebellion which had all been at work, were smothered or at least kept under by her subdued feeling, and her brow wore an air of almost shy modesty. She did not see the two faces which were turned towards her as soon as she appeared, though she saw Mr. Carlisle rise. She came forward and stood before Lady Rythdale.

The feeling of shyness and of being bound were both rather increased by all she saw and felt around her. The place was a winter parlour or sitting-room, luxuriously hung and furnished with red, which made a rich glow in the air. At one side a glass door revealed a glow of another sort, from the hues of tropical flowers gorgeously blooming in a

small conservatory; on another side of the room, where Lady Rythdale sat and her son stood, a fire of noble logs softly burned in an ample chimney. All around the evidences of wealth and a certain sort of power were multiplied —not newly there, but native—in a style of things very different from Eleanor's own simple household. She stood before the fire, feeling all this without looking up, her eye resting on the exquisite mat of Berlin wool on which Lady Rythdale's foot rested. That lady surveyed her.

"So you have come," she said. "Macintosh said he would bring you."

Eleanor answered, for the moment with tact and temper almost equal to her lover's, "Madam—you know Mr. Carlisle."

How satisfied they both looked, she did not see; but she felt it through every nerve, as Mr. Carlisle took her hands and placed her in a great chair, that she had pleased him thoroughly. He remained standing beside her, leaning on her chair, watching her varying colour, no doubt. A few commonplaces followed, and then the talk fell to the mother and son, who had some affairs to speak about. Eleanor's eye went to the glass door beyond which the flowers beckoned her; she longed to go to them; but though feeling that bands were all round her, which were drawing her and would draw her to be at home in that house, she would not of her own will take one step that way; she would assume nothing, not even the right of a stranger. She only looked at the distant flowers, and thought, and ceased to hear the conversation she did not understand. But all this while Lady Rythdale was taking note of her. A pause came, and Eleanor became conscious that she was a subject of consideration.

"You will have a very pretty wife, Macintosh," said the baroness bluntly and benignly.

The rush of colour to her face Eleanor felt as if she could hardly bear. She had much ado not to put up her hands like a child.

"You must have mercy on her, mamma," said Mr.

Carlisle, walking off to a bookcase. "She has the uncommon grace of modesty."

"It is no use," said Lady Rythdale. "She may as well get accustomed to it. Others will tell her, if you do not."

There was silence. Eleanor felt displeased.

"Is she as good as she is pretty?" enquired Lady Rythdale.

"No, ma'am," said Eleanor in a low voice. The baroness laughed. Her son smiled. Eleanor was vexed at herself for speaking.

"Mamma, is not Rochefoucauld here somewhere?"

"Rochefoucauld? what do you want of him?"

"I want to call this lady to account for some of her opinions. Here he is. Now, Eleanor," said he, tossing the book into her lap and sitting down beside her,—"justify yourself."

Eleanor guessed he wanted to draw her out. She was not very ready. She turned over slowly the leaves of the book. Meanwhile Lady Rythdale again engaged her son in conversation which entirely overlooked her; and Eleanor thought her own thoughts; till Mr. Carlisle said with a little tone of triumph, "Well, Eleanor?"

"What is it?" said Lady Rythdale.

"Human nature, ma'am; that is the question."

"Only Rochefoucauld's exposition of it," said Eleanor.

"Well, go on. Prove him false."

"But when I have done it by the sun-dial, you will make me wrong by the clock."

"Instance! instance!" said Mr. Carlisle, laughing.

"Take this. 'La magnanimité est assez bien définie par son nom même; néanmoins on pourroit dire que c'est le bon sens de l'orgueil, et la voie la plus noble pour recevoir des louanges.' Could anything be further from the truth than that?"

"What is your idea of magnanimity? You do not think 'the good sense of pride' expresses it?"

"It is not a matter of calculation at all; and I do not

think it is beholden to anything so low as pride for its origin."

"I am afraid we should not agree in our estimation of pride," said Mr. Carlisle, amused; "you had better go on to something else. The want of ambition may indicate a deficiency in that quality—or an excess of it. Which, Eleanor?"

"Rochefoucauld says, 'La modération est comme la sobriété: on voudroit bien manger davantage, mais on craint de se faire mal.'"

"What have you to say against that?"

"Nothing. It speaks for itself. And these two sayings alone prove that he had no knowledge of what is really noble in men."

"Very few have," said Mr. Carlisle dryly.

"But you do not agree with him?"

"Not in these two instances. I have a living confutation at my side."

"Her accent is not perfect by any means," said Lady Rythdale.

"You are right, madam," said Eleanor, with a moment's hesitation and a little colour. "I had good advantages at school, but I did not avail myself of them fully."

"I know whose temper is perfect," said Mr. Carlisle, drawing the book from her hand, and whispering, "Do you want to see the flowers?"

He was not pleased, Eleanor saw; he carried her off to the conservatory, and walked about with her there, watching her pleasure. She wished she could have been alone. The flowers were quite a different society from Lady Rythdale's, and drew off her thoughts into a different channel. The roses looked sweetness at her; the Dendrobium shone in purity; myrtles and ferns and some exquisite foreign plants that she knew not by name, were the very prime of elegant refinement and refreshing suggestion. Eleanor plucked a geranium leaf, and bruised it and thoughts together under her finger. Mr. Carlisle was called in, and for a moment she was left to herself. When he came back, his first

action was to gather a very superb rose and fasten it in her hair. Eleanor tried to arrest his hand, but he prevented her.

"I do not like it, Macintosh. Lady Rythdale does not know me. Do not adorn me here!"

"Your appearance here is my affair," said he, coolly. "Eleanor, I have a request to make. My mother would like to hear you sing."

"Sing! I am afraid I should not please Lady Rythdale."

"Will you please me?"

Eleanor quitted his hand and went to the door of communication with the red parlour, which was by two or three steps, on which she sat down. Her eyes were on the floor, where the object they encountered was Mr. Carlisle's spurs. That would not do; she buried them in the depths of a wonderful white lily, and so sang the old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence. And so sweet and pure, so natural and wild, was her giving of the wild old song, as if it could have come out of the throat of the flower. The thrill of her voice was as a leaf trembling on its stem. No art there; it was unadulterated nature. A very delicious voice had been spoiled by no master; the soul of the singer rendered the soul of the song. The listeners did both of them, to do them justice, hold their breath till she had done. Then Mr. Carlisle brought her in to luncheon in triumph, rose and all.

"You have a very remarkable voice, my dear!" said Lady Rythdale. "Do you always sing such melancholy things?"

"You must take my mother's compliments, Nellie, as you would olives—it takes a little while to get accustomed to them."

Eleanor thought so.

"Do not you spoil her with sweet things," said the baroness. "Come here, child—let me look at you. You have certainly as pretty a head of hair as ever I saw. Did you put in that rose?"

"No, ma'am," said Eleanor, blushing with somewhat besides pleasure.

Much to her amazement, the next thing was Lady Rythdale's taking her in her arms and kissing her. Nor was Eleanor immediately released; not until she had been held and looked over and caressed to the content of the old baroness, and Eleanor's cheeks were in a state of furious protestation. She was dismissed at last, with the assurance to Mr. Carlisle that she was "an innocent little thing."

"But she is not one of those people who are good because they have not force to be anything else, Macintosh."

"I hope not."

After this, however, Eleanor was spared further discussion. Luncheon came in; and during the whole discussion of that she was well petted, both by the mother and son. She felt that she could never break the nets that enclosed her; this day thoroughly achieved that conclusion to Eleanor's mind. Yet, with a proud sort of mental reservation, she shunned the delicacies that belonged to Rythdale House, and would have made her luncheon with the simplicity of an anchorite on honey and bread, as she might at home. She was very gently overruled, and made to do as she would not at home. Eleanor was not insensible to this sort of petting and care; the charm of it stole over her, even while it made her hopeless. And hopelessness said, she had better make the most of all the good that fell to her lot. To be seated in the heart of Rythdale House, and in the heart of its master, involved a worldly lot as fair at least as imagination could picture. Eleanor was made to taste it to-day, all luncheon time, and when after luncheon Mr. Carlisle pleased himself with making his mother and her quarrel over Rochefoucauld, in a leisurely sort of enjoyment that spoke him in no haste to put an end to the day. At last, and not till the afternoon was waning, he ordered the horses. Eleanor was put on Black Maggie, and taken home at a gentle pace.

"I do not understand," said Eleanor as they passed through the ruins, "why the House is called 'the Priory.' The priory buildings are here."

"There too," said Mr. Carlisle. "The oldest foundations

are really up there; and part of the superstructure is still hidden within the modern walls. After they had established themselves up there, the monks became possessed of the richer sheltered lands of the valley, and moved themselves and their headquarters accordingly."

The gloom of the afternoon was already gathering over the old tower of the priory church. The influence of the place and time went to swell the under-current of Eleanor's thoughts and bring it nearer to the surface. It would have driven her into silence, but that she did not choose that it should. She met Mr. Carlisle's conversation, all the way, with the sort of subdued gentleness that had been upon her, and which the day's work had deepened. Nevertheless, when Eleanor went in at home, and the day's work lay behind her, and Rythdale's master was gone, and all the fascinations the day had presented to her presented themselves anew to her imagination, Eleanor thought with sinking of heart—that what Jane Lewis had was better than all. So she went to bed that night.

"What shall I do to please you, before I leave home? What would you choose I should give you?"

"Give *me?* Are you going to give me anything?"

"I would like to please you before I go away—if I knew how. Do you know how I can?"

"O, Eleanor! Mr. Rhys wants something very much—if I could give it to him!"

"What is it?"

"He has nothing to write on—nothing but an old portfolio, and that don't keep his pens and ink; and for travelling, you know, when he goes away, if he had a writing-case like yours—wouldn't it be nice? O, Eleanor, I thought of that the other day, but I had no money. What do you think?"

"Excellent!" said Eleanor. "Keep your own counsel, Julia; and you and I will go some day soon, and see what we can find."

"Where will you go? to Brompton?"

"Of course. There is no other place to go to. But keep your own counsel, Julia."

If Julia kept her own counsel, she did not so well know how to keep her sister's; for the very next day, when she was at Mrs. Williams's cottage, the sight of the old portfolio brought up her talk with Eleanor and all that had led to it; and Julia out and spoke.

"Mr. Rhys, I don't believe that Eleanor wants to be married and go to Rythdale Priory."

Mr. Rhys's first movement was to rise and see that the door of communication with the next room was securely shut; then, as he sat down to his writing again, he said gravely—

"You ought to be very careful how you make such remarks, Julia. You might, without knowing it, do great harm. You are probably very much mistaken."

"I *am* careful, Mr. Rhys. I only said it to you."

"You had better not say it to me. And I hope you will say it to nobody else."

"But I want to speak to somebody," said Julia; "and

she was crying in her room yesterday as hard as she could. I do not believe, she wants to go to Rythdale!"

Julia spoke the last words with slow enunciation, like an oracle. Mr. Rhys looked up from his writing and smiled at her a little, though he answered very seriously.

"You ought to remember, Julia, that there might be many things to trouble your sister on leaving home for the last time, without going to any such extravagant supposition as that she does not want to leave it. Miss Eleanor may have other cause for sorrow, quite unconnected with that."

"I know she has, too," said Julia. "I think Eleanor wants to be a Christian."

He looked up again with one of his grave keen glances.

"What makes you think it, Julia?"

"She said she wanted to be good, and that she was not ready for anything till she felt better; and I know *that* was what she meant. Do you think Mr. Carlisle is good, Mr. Rhys?"

"I have hardly an acquaintance with Mr. Carlisle. Pray for your sister, Julia, but do not talk about her. And now let me write."

The days rolled on quietly at Ivy Lodge, until Monday came. Eleanor had kept herself in order and given general satisfaction. When Monday came, she announced boldly that she was going to give the afternoon of that day to her little sister. It should be spent for Julia's pleasure, and so they two would take the carriage and go to Brompton and be alone. It was a purpose that could not very well be interfered with. Mr. Carlisle grumbled a little, not ill-humouredly, but withdrew opposition; and Mrs. Powle made none. However, the day turned very disagreeable by afternoon, and she proposed a postponement.

"It is my last chance," said Eleanor. "Julia shall have this afternoon, if I never do it again." So they went.

The little one full of joy and anticipation; the elder grave, abstracted, unhappy. The day was gloomy and cloudy and windy. Eleanor looked out upon the driving grey clouds,

and wondered if she was driving to her fate, at Brompton. She could not help wishing the sun would shine on her fate, whatever it was; but the chill gloom that enveloped the fields and the roads was all in keeping with the piece of her life she was traversing then. Too much, too much! She could not rouse herself from extreme depression; and Julia, feeling it, could only remark over and over that it was "a nasty day."

It was better when they got to the town. Brompton was a quaint old town, where comparatively little modernizing had come, except in the contents of the shops, and the exteriors of a few buildings. The tower of a very beautiful old church lifted its head above the mass of house-roofs as they drew near the place; in the town the streets were irregular and narrow and of ancient fashion in great part. Here, however, the gloom of the day was much lost. What light there was, was broken and shadowed by many a jutting out stone in the old mason-work, many a recess and projecting house-front or roof or doorway; the broad grey uniformity of dulness that brooded over the open landscape, was not here to be felt. Quaint interest, quaint beauty, the savour of things old and quiet and stable, had a stimulating and a soothing effect too. Eleanor roused up to business, and business gave its usual meed of refreshment and strength. She and Julia had a good shopping time. It was a burden of love with the little one to see that everything about the proposed purchase was precisely and entirely what it should be; and Eleanor seconded her and gave her her heart's content of pleasure; going from shop to shop, patiently looking for all they wanted, till it was found. Julia's joy was complete, and shone in her face. The face of the other grew dark and anxious. They had got into the carriage to go to another shop for some trifle Eleanor wanted.

"Julia, would you like to stay and hear Mr. Rhys speak to-night?"

"O, wouldn't I! But we can't, you know."

"I am going to stay."

"And going to hear him?"

"Yes."

"O, Eleanor! Does mamma know?"

"No."

"But she will be frightened, if we are not come home."

"Then you can take the carriage home and tell her; and send the little waggon or my pony for me."

"Couldn't you send one of the men?"

"Yes, and then I should have Mr. Carlisle come after me. No, if I send, you must go."

"Wouldn't he like it?"

"It is no matter whether he would like it or no. I am going to stay. You can do as you please."

"I would like to stay," said Julia eagerly. "O, Eleanor, I want to stay! But mamma would be so frightened. Eleanor, do you think it is right?"

"It is right for me," said Eleanor. "It is the only thing I can do. If it displeased all the world, I should stay. You may choose what you will do. If the horses go home, they cannot come back again; the waggon and old Roger, or my pony, would have to come for me—with Thomas."

Julia debated, sighed, showed great anxiety for Eleanor, great difficulty of deciding, but finally concluded even with tears that it would not be *right* for her to stay. The carriage went home with her and her purchases; Thomas, the old coachman, having answered with surprised alacrity to the question, whether he knew where the Wesleyan chapel in Brompton was. He was to come back for Eleanor and be with the waggon there. Eleanor herself went to spend the intermediate time before the hour of service, and take tea, at the house of a little lawyer in the town, whom her father employed, and whose wife she knew would be overjoyed at the honour thus done her. It was not perhaps the best choice of a resting-place that Eleanor could have made, for it was a sure and certain fountain-head of gossip; but she was in no mood to care for that just now, and desired above all things not to take shelter in any house where a message or an emissary from the Lodge or the Priory would be likely

to find her; nor in one where her proceedings would be gravely looked into. At Mrs. Pinchbeck's hospitable tea-table she was very secure from both. There was nothing but sweetmeats there!

Mrs. Pinchbeck was a lively lady, in a profusion of little fair curls all over her head, and a piece of flannel round her throat. She was very voluble, though her voice was very hoarse. Indeed, she left nothing untold that there was time to tell. She gave Eleanor an account of all Brompton's doings; of her own; of Mr. Pinchbeck's; and of the doings of young Master Pinchbeck, who was happily in bed, and who, she declared, when *not* in bed was too much for her. Meanwhile Mr. Pinchbeck, who was a black-haired, ordinarily somewhat grim-looking man, now with his grimness all gilded in smiles, pressed the sweetmeats, and looked his beaming delight at the occasion. Eleanor felt miserably out of place; even Mrs. Pinchbeck's flannel round her throat helped her to question whether she were not altogether wrong and mistaken in her present undertaking. But though she felt miserable, and even trembled with a sort of speculative doubt that came over her, she did not in the least hesitate in her course. Eleanor was not made of that stuff. Certainly she was where she had no business to be, at Mrs. Pinchbeck's tea-table, and Mr. Pinchbeck had no business to be offering her sweetmeats; but it was a miserable necessity of the straits to which she found herself driven. She must go to the Wesleyan chapel that evening; she would, *coute qui coute*. *There*, she dared public opinion; the opinion of the Priory and the Lodge. *Here*, she confessed said opinion was right.

One good effect of the vocal entertainment to which she was subjected, was that Eleanor herself was not called upon for many words. She listened, and tasted sweetmeats; that was enough, and the Pinchbecks were satisfied. When the time of durance was over—for she was nervously impatient, and the hour of the chapel service was come—Eleanor had not a little difficulty to escape from the offers of attendance and of service which both her host and hostess pressed u

her. If her carriage was to meet her at a little distance, let Mr. Pinchbeck by all means see her into it; and if it was not yet come, at least let her wait where she was while Mr. P. went to make inquiries. Or stay all night! Mrs. Pinchbeck would be delighted. By steady determination Eleanor at last succeeded in getting out of the house and into the street alone. Her heart beat then, fast and hard; it had been giving premonitory starts all the evening. In a very sombre mood of mind, she made her way in the chill wind along the streets, feeling herself a wanderer, every way. The chapel she sought was not far off; lights were blazing there, though the streets were gloomy. Eleanor made a quiet entrance into the warm house, and sat down; feeling as if the crisis of her fate had come. She did not care now about hiding herself; she went straight up the centre aisle and took a seat about half way in the building, at the end of a pew already filled all but that one place. The house was going to be crowded, and a great many people were already there, though it was still very early.

The warmth after the cold streets, and the silence and the solitude, after being exposed to Mrs. Pinchbeck's tongue and to her observation, made a lull in Eleanor's mind for a moment. Then, with the waywardness of action which thought and feeling often take in unwonted situations, she began to wonder whether it could be right to be there—not only for her, but for anybody. That large, light, plain apartment, looking not half so stately as the saloon of a country house—could that be a proper place for people to meet for divine service? It was better than a barn, still was that a fit *church?* The windows blank and staring with white glass; the woodwork unadorned and merely painted; a little stir of feet coming in and garments rustling, the only sound. She missed the full swell of the organ, which itself might have seemed to clothe even bare boards. Nothing of all that; nothing of what she esteemed dignified, or noble, or sacred; a mere business-looking house, with that simple raised platform and little desk—was Eleanor right to be there? Was anybody else? Poor child, she felt wrong

every way, there or not there; but these thoughts tormented her. They tormented her only till Mr. Rhys came in. When she saw him, as it had been that evening in the barn, they quieted instantly. To her mind he was a guaranty for the righteousness of all in which he was concerned, different as it might be from all to which she had been accustomed. Such a guaranty, that Eleanor's mind was almost ready to leap to the other conclusion, and account wrong whatever the difference put on another side from him. She watched him now, as he went with a quick step to the pulpit, or platform as she called it, and mounting it, kneeled down beside one of the chairs that stood there. Eleanor was accustomed to that action; she had seen clergymen a million of times come into the pulpit, and always kneel; but it was not like this. Always an ample cushion lay ready for the knees that sank upon it; the step was measured; the movement slow; every line was of grace and propriety; the full-robed form bowed reverently, and the face was buried in a white cloud of cambric. Here, a tall figure, attired only in his ordinary dress, went with quick, decided step up to the place; there dropped upon one knee, hiding his face with his hand; without seeming to care where, and certainly without remembering that there was nothing but an ingrain carpet between his knee and the floor. But Eleanor knew what this man was about; and an instant sense of sacredness and awe stole over her, beyond what any organ-peals or richness of Gothic work had ever brought. Then she rejoiced that she was where she was. To be there could not be wrong.

The house was full and still. The beginning of the service again was the singing; here richer and fuller voiced than it had been in the barn. Somebody else made the prayers, to her sorrow; but then Mr. Rhys rose, and her eye and ear were all for him. She threw back her veil now. She was quite willing that he should see her; quite willing that if he had any message of help or warning for her in the course of his sermon, he should deliver it. He saw her, she knew, immediately. She rather fancied that he saw everybody.

It was to be a missionary sermon, Eleanor had understood; but she thought it was a very strange one. The text was, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's."

The question was, "What are the Lord's things?"

Mr. Rhys seemed to be only talking to the people, as his bright eye went round the house and he went on to answer this question. Or rather to suggest answers.

Jacob's offering of devotion and gratitude was a tenth part of his possessions. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

Mr. Rhys announced this. He did not comment upon it at all. He went on to say, that the commandment given by Moses appointed the same offering.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed."

So that it appeared, that the least the Lord would receive as a due offering to him from his people, was a fair and full tenth part of all they possessed. This was required, from those that were only nominally his people. How about those that render to him heart-service?

David's declaration, when laying up provision for the building of the temple, was that *all* was the Lord's. "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and

of thine own have we given thee. . . O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thy holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." And God himself, in the fiftieth Psalm, claims to be the one sole owner and proprietor, when he says, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

But some people may think, that this is a sort of natural and providential right, which the Creator exercises over the works of his hands. Come a little closer.

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."—So it was declared by his prophet Haggai. And by another of his servants, the Lord told the people that their own prospering in the various goods of this world, would be according to their faithfulness in serving him with them.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

So that it is not grace nor bounty the Lord receives at our hands in such offerings; it is simply *his own.*

Then it must be considered that those were the times of the old dispensation; of an expensive system of sacrifices and temple worship; with a great body of the priesthood to be maintained and supplied in all their services and private household wants. We live in changed times, under a different rule. What do the Lord's servants owe him now?

The speaker had gone on with the utmost quietness of manner from one of these instances to another; using hardly any gestures; uttering only with slow distinctness and deliberation his sentences one after the other; his face and eye meanwhile commanding the whole assembly. He went on

now with the same quietness, perhaps with a little more deliberateness of accentuation, and an additional spark of fire now and then in his glance.

There was a widow woman once, who threw into the Lord's treasury two mites, which make a farthing; but it was *all her living*. Again, we read that among the first Christians, "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

Were these people extravagant? They overwent the judgment of the present day. By what rule shall we try them?

Christ's rule is, "Freely ye have received; freely give." What have we received?

Friends, "you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." And the judgment of the old Christian church accorded with this; for they said—"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Were they extravagant?

But Christ has given us a closer rule to try the question by. He told his disciples, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*." Does any one ask how that was? The Lord tells us in the next breath. It was no theoretical feeling. "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*." "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Pausing there in his course, with fire and tenderness breaking out in his face and manner, that gave him a kind of seraphic look, the speaker burst forth into a description of the love of Christ, that before long bowed the heads and

hearts of his audience as one man. Sobs and whispers and smothered cries, murmured from all parts of the church; the whole assembly was broken down, while the preacher stood like some heavenly messenger and spoke his Master's name. When he ceased, the suppressed noise of sobs was alone to be heard all over the house. He paused a little, and began again very quietly, but with an added tenderness in his voice—

"He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

He paused again; every one there knew that he was ready to act on the principle he enounced—that he was speaking only of what he had proved; and the heads of the assembly bent lower still.

Does any one ask, What shall we do now? There is no temple to be maintained, nor course of sacrifices to be kept up, nor ceremonial worship, nor Levitical body of priests to be supported and fed. What shall we give our lives and our fortunes to now, if we give them?

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Is the gospel dear to you? Is salvation worth having? Think of those who know nothing of it; and then think of Christ's command, "Feed my sheep." They are scattered upon all lands, the sheep that he died for; who shall gather them in? In China they worship a heap of ashes; in India they adore monsters; in Fiji they live to kill and eat one another; in Africa they sit in the darkness of centuries, till almost the spark of humanity is quenched out. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

"The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It was in the midst of the deepest stillness, and in low, kept-under tones, that the last words were spoken. And when they ceased, a great hush still remained upon the assembly. It was broken by prayer; sweet, solemn, rapt, such as some there had never heard before; such as some there knew well. When Mr. Rhys had stopped, another began. The whole house was still with tears.

There was one bowed heart there, which had divided subjects of consideration; there was one hidden face which had a double motive for being hid. Eleanor had been absorbed in the entrancing interest of the time, listening with moveless eyes, and borne away from all her own subjects of care and difficulty on the swelling tide of thought and emotion which heaved the whole assembly; till her own head was bent beneath its power, and her tears sought to be covered from view. She did not move from that attitude; until, lifting her head near the close of the sermon, as soon as she could get it up, in fact, that she might see as much as possible of those wonderful looks she might never see again; a slight chance turn of her head brought another idea into her mind. A little behind her in the aisle, standing but a pace or two off, was a figure that for one instant made all Eleanor's blood stand still. She could not see it distinctly; she did not see the face of the person at all; it was only the merest glimpse of some outlines, the least line of a coat and vision of an arm and hand resting on a pew door. But if that arm and hand did not belong to somebody she knew, in Eleanor's belief it belonged to nobody living. It was not the colour of cloth nor the cut of a dress; it was the indefinable character of that arm and man's glove, seen with but half an eye. But it made her sure that Mr. Carlisle, in

living flesh and blood, stood there, in the Wesleyan chapel though it was. Eleanor cared curiously little about it, after the first start. She felt set free, in the deep, high engagement of her thoughts at the time, and the roused and determined state of feeling they had produced. She did not fear Mr. Carlisle. She was quite willing he should have seen her there. It was what she wished, that he should know of her doing. And his neighbourhood in that place did not hinder her full attention and enjoyment of every word that was spoken. It did not check her tears, nor stifle the swelling of her heart under the preaching and under the prayers. Nevertheless, Eleanor was conscious of it all the time; and became conscious too that the service would before very long come to a close; and then, without doubt, that quiet glove would have something to do with her. Eleanor did not reason nor stop to think about it. Her heart was full, full, under the appeals made and the working of conscience with them; conscience and tenderer feelings, which strove together and yet found no rest; and this action the sight of Mr. Carlisle rather intensified. Were her head but covered by that helmet of salvation, under which others lived and walked so royally secure,—and she could bid defiance to any disturbing force that could meet her, she thought, in this world.

It was while Eleanor's head was yet bowed, and her heart busy with these struggling feelings, that she heard an invitation given to all people who were not at peace in their hearts, and who desired that Christians should pray for them,—to come forward and so signify their wish. Eleanor did not understand what this could mean; and hearing a stir in the church, she looked up, if perhaps her eyes might give her information. To her surprise, she saw that numbers of people were leaving their seats, and going forward to what she would have called the chancel rails, where they all knelt down. All these persons, then, were in like condition with her; unhappy in the consciousness of their wants, and not knowing how to supply them. So many! And so many willing openly to confess it. Eleanor's heart

moved strangely towards them. And then darted into her head an impulse, quick as lightning and almost as startling, that she would join herself to them, and go forward as they were doing. Was not her heart mourning for the very same want that they felt? She had reason enough. No one in that room sought the forgiveness of God and peace with him more earnestly than she, nor with a sorer heart; nor felt more ignorant how to gain it. Together with that, another thought, both of them acting with the swiftness and power of a lightning flash, moved Eleanor. Would it not utterly disgust Mr. Carlisle, if she took this step? would he wish to have any more to do with her, after she should have gone forward publicly to ask for prayers in a Wesleyan chapel? It would prove to him at least how far apart they were in all their views and feelings; it would clear her way for her. And the next moment, doing it cunningly that she might not be intercepted, Eleanor Powle slipped out of her seat with a quick movement, just before some one else who was coming up the aisle, and so put that person for that one second of danger between her and the waiting figure, whom she knew without looking at. That second was gained, and she went trembling with agitation, yet exultingly, up the aisle, and knelt on the low bench where the others were.

Mr. Carlisle and escape from him, had been Eleanor's one thought till she got there. But as her knees sank upon the cushion, and her head bowed upon the rails, a flood of other feeling swept over her, and Mr. Carlisle was forgotten. The sense of what she was committing herself to—of the open stand she was taking as a sinner, and one who desired to be a forgiven sinner—overwhelmed her; and her heart's great cry for peace and purity broke forth to the exclusion of everything else.

In the confusion of Eleanor's mind, she did not know in the least what was going on around her in the church. She did not hear if they were praying or singing. She tried to pray for herself; she knew not what others were doing; till she heard some low whispered words near her. That

sound startled her into attention; for she knew the accent of one voice that spoke. The other, if one answered, she could not discern; but she found, with a start of mingled fear and pleasure, that Mr. Rhys was speaking separately with the persons kneeling around the rails. She had only time to clear her voice from tears, before that same low whisper came beside her.

"What is your difficulty?"

"Darkness—confusion—I do not see what way to go."

"Go *no* way," said the whisper impressively, "until you see clearly. Then do what is right. That is the first point. You know that Christ is the fountain of light?"

"But I see none."

"Seek him trustingly, and obediently; and then look for the light to come, as you would for the dawning after a dark night. It is sure, if you will trust the Lord. 'His going forth is prepared as the morning.' It is sure to come, to all that seek him, trust him, and obey him. Seek him in prayer constantly, and in studying your Bible; and what you find to be your duty, do; and the Lord be with you!"

He passed away from Eleanor; and presently the whole assembly struck up a hymn. It sounded like a sweet shout of melody at the time; but Eleanor could never recall a note of it afterwards. She knew the service was nearly ended, and that in a few minutes she must quit her kneeling, sheltered position, and go out into the world again. She bent her heart to catch all the sweetness of the place and the time; for strange and confused as she felt, there was, nevertheless, an atmosphere fragrant with peace about both. The hymn came to an end; the congregation were dismissed, and Eleanor perforce turned her face to go down the aisle again.

Her veil was down and she did not look, but she knew without looking just when she reached the spot where Mr. Carlisle stood. He stood there yet; he had only stepped a little aside to let the stream of people go past him; and now as Eleanor came up he assumed his place by her side,

and put her hand upon his arm as quietly as if he had been waiting there for her by appointment all along. So he led her out to the carriage in waiting for her, helped her into it, and took his place beside her; in silence, but with the utmost gentleness of demeanour. The carriage door was closed, they drove off; Eleanor's evening was over, and she was alone with Mr. Carlisle.

CHAPTER XII.

Mar. "Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan."
Sir And. "O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog."
Sir Tob. "What, for being a Puritan? thy exquisite reason, dear knight?"
Sir And. "I have no exquisite reason for't, but I've reason good enough."

WHAT was to come now; as in darkness and silence the carriage rolled over the road towards Wiglands? Eleanor did not greatly care. She felt set free; outwardly, by her own daring act of separation; inwardly and more effectually, perhaps, by the influence of the evening upon her own mind. In her own settled and matured conclusions, she felt that Mr. Carlisle's power over her was gone. It was a little of an annoyance to have him sitting there; nevertheless, Eleanor's mind did not trouble itself much with him. Leaning back in the carriage, she gave herself up to the impressions of the scene she had been through. Her companion was quiet, and made no demands upon her attention. She recalled over and over the words, and looks, of the sermon; the swell of the music—it had been like angels' melody; and the soft words which had been so energetic in their whispered strength as she knelt at the railing. She remembered with fresh wonder and admiration, with what effect the Bible words in the first part of the sermon had come upon the audience through that extreme quietness of voice and delivery; and then with what sudden fire and life, as if he had become another man, the speaker had burst out to speak of his Master; and how it had swayed and bent the assembly. It was an entirely new view of Mr.

Rhys, and Eleanor could not forget it. In general, as she had always seen him, though perfectly at ease in his manners, he was very simple and undemonstrative. She had not guessed there was such might in him. It awed her; it delighted her. To live such a life, and to do such work as that man lived for,—that was living indeed! That was noble, high, pure; unlike, and oh, how far above all the manner of lives Eleanor had ever seen before! And such, in so far as the little may resemble the great—such at least so far as in her sphere and abilities and sadly inferior moral qualities it might lie—such in aim and direction at least, her own life should be. What had she to do with Mr. Carlisle?

Eleanor never spoke to him during the long drive, forgetting as far as she could, though a little uneasiness grew upon her by degrees, that he was even present. And he did not speak to her, nor remind her of his presence otherwise than by pulling up the glass on her side when the wind blew in too chill. It was *his* carriage they were in, Eleanor then perceived; and she wanted to ask a question; but on the whole concluded it safe to be still; according to the proverb, *Let sleeping dogs lie.* One other time he drew her shawl round her, which she had let slip off.

Mr. Carlisle was possessed of large self-control, and had great perfection of tact; and he never showed either more consummately than this night. What he underwent while standing in the aisle of the chapel, was known to himself; he made it known to nobody else. He was certainly silent during the drive—that showed him displeased; but every movement was calm as ordinary; his care of Eleanor was the same, in its mixture of gentle observance and authority. He had laid down neither. Eleanor could have wished he had been unable to keep one or the other. Would he keep her too, and everything else that he chose? Nothing is more subduing in its effect upon others, than evident power of self-command. Eleanor could not help feeling it, as she stepped out of the carriage at home, and was led into the house.

"Will you give me a few minutes when you have changed your dress?" her conductor asked.

It must come, thought Eleanor, and as well now as ever; and she assented. Mr. Carlisle led her in. Nobody was in waiting but Mrs. Powle; and she waited with devouring anxiety. The Squire and Julia she had carefully disposed of in good time.

"Eleanor is tired, Mrs. Powle, and so am I," said Mr. Carlisle. "Will you let us have some supper here, by this fire?—and I think Eleanor had better have a cup of tea, as I cannot find out the wine that she likes." And as Eleanor moved away, he added,—"And let me beg you not to keep yourself from your rest any longer—I will take care of my charge; at least I will try."

Devoutly hoping that he might succeed to his wishes, and not daring to show the anxiety he did not move to gratify, Mrs. Powle took the hint of his gentle dismission; ordered the supper and withdrew. Meanwhile Eleanor went to her room, relieved at the quiet entrance that had been secured her, where she had looked for a storm; and a little puzzled what to make of Mr. Carlisle. A little afraid, too, if the truth must be known; but she fell back upon Mr. Rhys's words of counsel—"Go *no* way, till you see clearly; and then do what is right." She took off her bonnet and smoothed her hair; and was about to go down, when she was checked by the remembrance of Mr. Carlisle's words, "when you have changed your dress." She told herself it was absurd; why should she change her dress for that half-hour that she would be up? why should she mind that word of intimation? She called herself a fool for it; nevertheless, while saying these things Eleanor did the very thing she scouted at. She put off her riding-dress, which the streets of Brompton and the chapel aisles had seen that day, and changed it for a light grey drapery that fell about her in very graceful folds. She looked very lovely when she re-entered the drawing-room; the medium tint set off her own rich colours, and the laces at throat and wrist were just simple enough to aid the whole effect. Mr. Carlisle was a

judge of dress; he was standing before the fire, and surveyed her as she came in; and as Eleanor's foot faltered half-way in the room, he came forward, took both her hands and led her to the fire, where he set her in a great chair by the supper-table; and then before he let her go, did what he had not meant to do, gave a very frank kiss to the lips that were so rich and pure and so near him. Eleanor's heart had sunk a little at perceiving that her mother was not in the room; and this action was far from reassuring. She would rather Mr. Carlisle had been angry. He was far more difficult to meet in this mood.

Meanwhile Mr. Carlisle brought her chair into more convenient neighbourhood to the table, and set a plate before her, on which he went on to place whatever he thought fit. "I know what you are wanting," he said; "but you shall not have a cup of tea unless I see you eat." And Eleanor eat, feeling the need of it, and the necessity of doing something likewise.

Mr. Carlisle poured himself out a glass of wine and slowly drank it, watching her. Midway set it down; and himself made and poured out and sugared and creamed a cup of tea which he set beside Eleanor. It was done in the nicest way possible, with a manner that any woman would like to have wait on her. Eleanor tasted, and could not hold her tongue any more.

"I did not know this was one of your accomplishments," she said, without raising her eyes.

"For you," said Mr. Carlisle. "I believe it will never be exercised for anybody else."

He slowly finished his wine while he watched her. He eat nothing himself, though Eleanor asked him, till she turned from her plate, and did what she had not done till then, but could no longer withhold—let her eyes meet his.

"Now," said he, throwing himself into an opposite chair, "I will take a cup of tea, if you will make it for me."

Eleanor blushed—what made her?—as she set about performing this office. The tea was cold; she had to make fresh, and wait till it was ready; and she stood by the table

watching and preparing it, while Mr. Carlisle sat in his chair observing her. Eleanor's cheeks flushed more and more. There was something about this little piece of domesticity, and her becoming the servitor in her turn, that brought up things she did not wish to think of. But her neighbour liked what she did not like, for he sat as quiet as a mouse until Eleanor's trembling hand offered him the cup. She had to take a step or two for it, but he never stirred to abridge them. Eleanor sat down again, and Mr. Carlisle sipped his tea with an appearance of gratification.

"That is a young man of uncommon abilities," he remarked composedly, "whom we heard this evening. Do you know who he is, Eleanor?"

Eleanor felt as if the sky was falling. "It is Mr. Rhys—Alfred's old tutor," she answered, in a voice which she felt was dry and embarrassed to the quick ears that heard her. "You have seen him."

"I thought I had, somewhere. But that man has power. It is a pity he could not be induced to come into the Church—he would draw better houses than Dr. Cairnes. Do you think we could win him over, Eleanor?"

"I believe—I have heard," said Eleanor, "that he is going away from England. He is going a missionary to some very far away region." She was quite willing Mr. Carlisle should understand this.

"Just as well," he answered. "If he would not come into his right place, such a man would only work to draw other persons out of theirs. There is a sort of popular power of speech, which wins with the common and uneducated mind. I saw it won upon you, Nellie; how was that?"

The light tone, in which a smile seemed but half concealed, disconcerted Eleanor. She was not ashamed, she thought she was not, but she did not know how to answer.

"You are a little *tête-montée*," he said. "If I had been a little nearer to you to-night, I would have saved you from taking one step; but I did not fancy that you could be so

suddenly wrought upon. Pray how happened you to be in that place to-night?"

"I told you," said Eleanor, after some hesitation, "that I had an unsatisfied wish of heart which made me uneasy—and you would not believe me."

"If you knew how this man could speak, I do not wonder at your wanting to hear him. Did you ever hear him before?"

"Yes," said Eleanor, feeling that she was getting in a wrong position before her questioner. "I have heard him once—I wanted to hear him again."

"Why did you not tell me your wish, that you might gratify it safely, Eleanor?"

"I supposed—if I did—I should lose my chance of gratifying it at all."

"You are a real *tête-montée*," he said, standing now before her, and taking hold lightly and caressingly of Eleanor's chin as he spoke. "It is well nobody saw you to-night but me. Does my little wife think she can safely gratify many of her wishes without her husband's knowledge?"

Eleanor coloured brightly and drew herself back. "That is the very thing," she said; "now you are coming to the point. I told you I had wishes with which yours would not agree, and it was better for you to know it before it was too late."

"Too late for what?"

"To remedy a great evil."

"There is generally a remedy for everything," said Mr. Carlisle, coolly; "and this sort of imaginative fervour which is upon you is sure to find a cold bath of its own in good time. My purpose is simply in future, whenever you wish to hear another specimen of the kind of oratory we have listened to this evening, to be with you, that I may protect you."

"Protect me from what?"

"From going too far, further than you know, in your present *exaltée* state. The Lady of Rythdale must not do anything unworthy of herself, or of me."

"What do you mean, Mr. Carlisle?" Eleanor exclaimed, with burning cheeks. But he stood before her quite cool, his arms folded, looking down at her.

"Do you wish me to speak?"

"Certainly! I do."

"I will tell you, then. It would not accord with my wishes to have my wife grant whispered consultations in public to any man; especially a young man, and one of insinuating talents, which this one well may be. I could have shot that man, as he was talking to you to-night, Eleanor."

Eleanor put up her hands to her face to hide its colour for a moment. Shame and anger and confusion struggled together. *Had* she done anything unworthy of her? Others did the same, but they belonged to a different class of persons; had she been where Eleanor Powle, or even Eleanor Carlisle, would be out of place? And then there was the contrasted consciousness, how very pleasant and precious that whispered "consultation" had been to her. Mr. Carlisle stooped and took away her hands from her face, holding them in his own.

"Eleanor—had that young man anything to do with those unmanageable wishes you expressed to me?"

"So far as his words and example set me upon thinking," said Eleanor. "But there was nothing in what was said to-night that all the world might not hear." She rose, for it was an uncomfortable position in which her hands were held.

"All the world did not hear it, you will remember. Eleanor, you are honest, and I am jealous—will you tell me that you have no regard for this young man more than my wife ought to have?"

"Mr. Carlisle, I have never asked myself the question!" exclaimed Eleanor, with indignant eyes. "If you doubt me, you cannot wish to have anything more to do with me."

"Call me Macintosh," said he, drawing her within his arm.

Eleanor would not. She would have freed herself, but she could not without exerting too much force. She stood silent.

"Will you tell me," he said in a gentle changed tone, "what words did pass between you and that young man—that you said all the world might hear?"

Eleanor hesitated. Her head was almost on Mr. Carlisle's shoulder; his lips were almost at her downcast brow; the brilliant hazel eyes were looking with their powerful light into her face. And she was his affianced wife. Was Eleanor free? Had this man, who loved her, no rights? Along with all other feelings, a keen sense of self-reproach stole in again.

"Macintosh," she said droopingly, "it was entirely about religious matters—that you would laugh at, but would not understand."

"Indulge me—and try me," he said, pressing his lips first on Eleanor's cheek and then on her mouth. She answered in the same tone as before, drooping in his arms as a weary child.

"He asked me—as I suppose he asked others—what the difficulties in my mind were—religious difficulties; and I told him my mind was in confusion, and I did not see clearly before me. He advised me to do nothing in the dark, but when I saw duty clear, then to do it. That was what passed."

"What did all these difficulties and rules of action refer to?"

"Everything, I suppose," said Eleanor, drooping more and more inwardly.

"And you do not see, my love, what all this tended to?"

"I do not see what you mean."

"This is artful proselytism, Eleanor. In your brave honesty, in your beautiful enthusiasm, you did not know that the purpose of all this has been, to make a Methodist of Eleanor Powle, and as a necessary preliminary or condition, to break off her promised marriage with me. If that fellow had succeeded, he should have been made to feel my indignation—as it is, I shall let him go."

"You are entirely mistaken," began Eleanor.

"Am I? Have you not been led to doubt whether you could live a right life, and live it with me?"

"But would you be willing in everything to let me do as I think right?"

"Would I let you? You shall do what you will, my darling, except go to whispering conventicles. Assuredly I will not let you do that. But when you tell me seriously that you think a thing is wrong, I will never put my will in the way of your conscience. Did you think me a Mahometan? Eh?"

"No—but——"

"But what?"

Eleanor only sighed.

"I think I have something to forgive to-night, Eleanor, —but it is easy to forgive you." And wrapping both arms round her now, he pressed on brow and lip and cheek kisses that were abundantly reconciled.

"My presence just saved you to-night. Eleanor—will you promise not to be naughty any more?—Eleanor?"

"I will try," burst out Eleanor,—"O, I will try to do what is right! I will try to do what is right!"

And in bitter uncertainty what that might be, she gave way under the strain of so many feelings, and the sense of being conquered which oppressed her, and burst into tears. Still held fast, the only hiding-place for her eyes was Mr. Carlisle's breast, and they flowed there bitterly, though restrained as much as possible. *He* hardly wished to restrain them; he would have been willing to stand all night with that soft brown head resting like a child's on him. Nevertheless he called her to order with words and kisses.

"Do you know, it is late?" he said,—"and you are tired. I must send you off. Eleanor! look up. Look up and kiss me."

Eleanor overcame the passion of tears as soon as possible, yet not till a few minutes had passed, and looked up; at least raised her head from its resting-place. Mr. Carlisle whispered, "Kiss me!"

How could Eleanor refuse? what could she do? though it was sealing allegiance over again. She was utterly humbled and conquered. But there was a touch of pride to be satisfied first. Laying one hand on Mr. Carlisle's shoulder, so as to push herself a little back where she could look him in the face, with eyes glittering yet, she confronted him; and asked, "Do you doubt me now?"

Holding her in both arms, at just that distance, he looked down at her, a smile as calm as brilliant playing all over his face, which spoke perfect content as well as secure possession. But the trust in his eyes was as clear.

"No more than I doubt myself," he answered.

Pride was laid asleep; and yielding to what seemed her fate, Eleanor gave the required token of fealty—or subjugation—for so it seemed to her. Standing quite still, with bent head and moveless attitude, the slightest smile in the world upon the lips, Mr. Carlisle's whole air said silently that it was not enough. Eleanor yielded again, and once more touched her lips to those of her master. He let her go then; lit her candle and attended her to the foot of the staircase, and dismissed her with all care.

"I wonder if he is going to stay here himself to-night, and meet me in the morning," thought Eleanor as she went up the stairs. "It does not matter—I will go to sleep and forget everything, for a while."

Would she? There was no sleep for Eleanor that night, and she knew it as soon as she reached her room. She set down her candle and then herself, in blank despair.

What had she done? Nothing at all. The stand she had meant to take at the beginning of the evening, she had been unable even to set foot upon. The bold step by which she had thought to set herself free from Mr. Carlisle, had only laid her more completely at his feet. Eleanor got up and walked the room in agony.

What had she done? She was this man's promised wife; she had made her own bonds; it was her own doing; he had a right to her, he had claims upon her, he had given his affection to her. Had *she* any rights now, inconsistent with

his? Must she not fulfil this marriage? And yet, could she do so, feeling as she did? would *that* be right? For no sooner was Eleanor alone than the subdued cry of her heart broke out again, that it could not be. And that cry grew desperate. Yet this evening's opportunity had all come to nothing. Worse than nothing, for it had laid an additional difficulty in her way. By her window, looking out into the dark night, Eleanor stopped and looked at this difficulty. She drew from its lurking-place in the darkness of her heart the question Mr. Carlisle had suggested, and confronted it steadily.

Had "that young man," the preacher of this evening, Eleanor's really best friend, had he anything to do with her "unmanageable wishes? *Had* she any regard for him that influenced her mind in this struggle—or that raised the struggle? With fiercely throbbing heart Eleanor looked this question for the first time in the face. "No!" she said to herself,—"no! I have not. I have no such regard for him. How debasing to have such a doubt raised! But—I *might* have—I think that is true—if circumstances put me in the way of it. And I think, seeing him and knowing his superior beauty of character—how superior!—has wakened me up to the consciousness of what I do like, and what I like best; and made me conscious too that I do not love Mr. Carlisle as well as I ought, to be his wife—not as he loves me. *That* I see now—too late. O, mother, mother! why were you in such a hurry to seal this marriage—when I told you, I told you, I was not ready? But then I did not know any more than that. And now I cannot marry him—and yet I shall—and I do not know but I ought. And yet I cannot."

Eleanor walked her floor or stood by her window that live-long night. It was a night of great agony and distracted searching for relief. Where should relief come from? To tell Mr. Carlisle frankly that she did not bear the right kind of love towards him, she knew would be the vainest of expedients. "He can make me do anything—he would say he can make me love him; and so, perhaps, he

could—I believe he would—if I had not seen this other man." And then Eleanor drew the contrast between one person and the other; the high, pure, spiritual nobleness of the one, and the social and personal graces and intellectual power of the other, all used for selfish ends. It was a very unprofitable speculation for Eleanor; it left her further than ever from the conclusion, and distressed her bitterly. From her mother she knew sadly there was no help to be had. No consideration, of duty or pleasure, would outweigh with her the loss of a splendid alliance and the scandal of breaking off the preparations for it. The Sphynx would not look out more calmly over the desert waste of all things, than Mrs. Powle's fair face would overview a moral desolation more hopeless and more cheerless, if but the pyramid of her ambition were firmly planted there. And Eleanor's worst trouble after all was her doubt about duty. If Mr. Carlisle had not loved her—but he did love her truly and tenderly, and she, however misled, had given him permission. Could she now withdraw it? Could she do anything but, at whatever risk, go on and meet the obligations she had brought upon herself? Nature cried out strongly that it must not be; but conscience and remorse, aided by circumstances, withstood nature, and said it must be no other way. Eleanor must marry Mr. Carlisle, and be as good to him as she could. And Eleanor's whole soul began to rise up stronger and stronger in protest against it, and cry that she never would marry him.

The weary long night seemed but as one thought of pain; and when the morning broke, Eleanor felt that she had grown old.

CHAPTER XIII.

"We will have rings, and things, and fine array;
And kiss me, Kate, we will be married o' Sunday."

ELEANOR was too sick to go down even to a late breakfast; and a raging headache kept off any inquiries or remonstrances that Mrs. Powle might have made to her if she had been well. Later in the day her little sister Julia came dancing in.

"Aren't you going to get up, Eleanor? What's the matter? I am going to open your window. You are all shut up here."

Back went the curtain and up went the window; a breath of fresh mild air came sweetly in, and Julia danced back to the bedside. There suddenly sobered herself.

"Eleanor, aren't you better? Can't you get up? It is so nice to-day."

Julia's fresh, innocent, gay manner, the very light play of her waving hair, not lighter than the childlike heart, were almost too much for her sister. They made Eleanor's heart ache.

"Where is everybody?"

"Nowhere," said Julia. "I am all the house. Mr. Carlisle went home after breakfast; and mamma and Alfred are gone in the carriage to Brompton; and papa is out somewhere. Are you better, Nellie?"

"I shall never be better!" said Eleanor. She turned and hid her face.

"O, why, Eleanor? What makes you say that? What is the matter? I knew yesterday you were not happy."

"I am never going to be happy. I hope you will."

"I *am* happy," said Julia. "And you will be. I told Mr. Rhys you were not happy,—and he said you would be by and by."

"Julia!" said Eleanor, raising herself on her elbow and with a colour spreading all over her face, "don't talk to Mr. Rhys about me or my concerns! What makes you do such a thing?"

"Why, I haven't anybody else to talk to," said Julia. "Give me your foot, and I'll put on your stocking. Come! you are going to get up. And besides, he thinks a great deal of you, and we pray for you every day."

"Who?"

"He does, and I. Come!—give me your foot."

"*He, and you!*" said Eleanor.

"Yes," said Julia, looking up. "We pray for you every day. What's the matter, Eleanor?"

Her hand was laid sorrowfully and tenderly on the shoulder of the sister, whose face was again hid from her. But at the touch Eleanor raised her head.

"You seem a different child, Julia, from what you used to be."

"What's the matter, Nellie?"—very tenderly.

"I wish I was different too," said Eleanor, springing out of bed; "and I want time to go away by myself and think it out and battle it out, until I know just what is right and am ready to do it; and instead of that, mamma and Mr. Carlisle have arranged——"

"Stop and sit down," said Julia, taking hold of her; "you look white and black and all colours. Wait and rest, Eleanor."

But Eleanor would not till she had tried the refreshment of cold water, and had put her beautiful hair in order; then she sat down in her dressing-gown. Julia had watched, and now stood anxiously beside her.

"O, what *is* the matter, Eleanor?"

"I don't know, Julia. I do not know what is right."

"Have you asked God to make you know?"

"No," said Eleanor, drooping.

"That's what Mr. Rhys always does, so he is never troubled. I will tell you what he says—he says, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' Then he feels safe, you know."

"It is a pity you cannot go to the South Seas with Mr. Rhys. You talk of nothing but him."

"I would like to go with him," said Julia, simply. "But I have learned how to feel safe too, for I trust in Jesus too; and I know he will teach me right. So he will teach you, Eleanor."

Eleanor bowed her head on her hands, and wept and wept; but while she wept, resolutions were taking form in her mind. Mr. Rhys's words came back to her—"Go *no* way, till you see clear." The renewed thought of that helmet of salvation, and of that heavenly guidance, that she needed and longed for—so supremely, so much above everything else—gradually gained her strength to resolve that she would have them at all hazards. She must have time to seek them and be sure of her duty; and then, she would do it. She determined she would not see Mr. Carlisle; he would conquer her; she would manage the matter with her mother. Eleanor thought it all over, the opposition and the difficulties, and resolved with the strength of desperation. She had grown old during this night. She had a long interval of quiet before her mother came.

"Well, Eleanor! in your dressing-gown yet, and only your hair done! When do you expect to be down stairs? Somebody will be here presently, and expect to see you."

"Somebody will be disappointed. My head is splitting, mamma."

"I should think it would! after yesterday's gambade. What did Mr. Carlisle say to you, I should like to know? I thought you would have offended him past forgiveness. I was relieved beyond all expression this morning, at break-

fast, when I saw all was right again. But he told me not to scold you, and I will not talk about it."

"Mamma, if you will take off your bonnet and sit down—I will talk to you about something else."

Mrs. Powle sat down, took her bonnet in her lap, and pushed her fair curls into place. They were rarely out of place; it was more a form than anything else. Yet Mrs. Powle looked anxious; and her anxiety found natural expression as she said—

"I wish the twenty-first was to-morrow!"

"That is the thing I wish to speak about. Mamma, that day, the day for my marriage, has been appointed too early—I feel hurried, and not ready. I want to study my own mind and know exactly what I am doing. I am going to ask you to have it put off."

"Put it off!" cried Mrs. Powle. Language contained no other words of equal importance to be spoken in the same breath with those three.

"Yes. I want it put off."

"Till when, if you please? It might as well be doomsday at once."

"Till doomsday, if necessary; but I want it put off. I do not stipulate for so long a time as that," said Eleanor, putting her hand to her head.

"What day would you name, in lieu of the twenty-first? I should like to know how far your arrangements extend."

"I want time to collect my thoughts and be ready for so great a change. I want time to study, and think—and pray. I shall ask for at least three months."

"Three months! Till April! And pray, what has ailed your ladyship, not to study and think and pray, if you like, all these months that have passed?"

"I have no chance. My time is all taken up. I can do nothing, but go round in a whirl—till my head is spinning."

"And what will you do in these three months to come? I should like to know all you propose."

"I propose to go away from home—somewhere that I can

be quiet and alone. Then, if there is no reason against it, I promise to come back and fulfil my engagement with Mr. Carlisle."

"Eleanor, you are a fool!" burst out her mother. "You are a fool, or worse. How dare you talk such stuff to me? I can hardly believe you serious, only for your face. Do you suppose I will think for one moment of such a thing as putting off the day?—and if I would, have you any idea that Mr. Carlisle would give *his* assent to it?"

"If you do not, both you and he, I shall break off the marriage altogether."

"I dare you to do it!" said Mrs. Powle. "With the wedding-dresses made, and almost the wedding-cake—every preparation—the whole world to be scandalized and talking at any delay—your family disgraced, and yourself ruined for ever;—and Mr. Carlisle—Eleanor, I think you are crazy! only you sit there with such a wicked face!"

"It is in danger of being wicked," said Eleanor, drawing both her hands over it;—"for I warn you, mother, I am determined. I have been hurried on. I will be hurried no further. I will take poison, before I will be married on the twenty-first! As well lose my soul one way as another. You and Mr. Carlisle must give me time—or I will break the match altogether. I will bear the consequences."

"Have you spoken to him of this precious arrangement?"

"No," said Eleanor, her manner failing a little. "You must do it."

"I thought so!" said Mrs. Powle. "He knows how to manage you, my young lady! which I never did yet. I will just bring him up here to you—and you will be like a whipped child in three minutes. O, you know it; I see it in your face. Eleanor, I am ashamed of you!"

"I will not see him up here, mamma."

"You will, if you cannot help it. Eleanor, I wouldn't try him too far. He is very fond of you—but he will be your husband in a few days; and he is not the sort of man I should like to have displeased with me, if I were you."

"He never will, mamma, unless he waits three months for it."

"Now I will tell you one thing," said Mrs. Powle, rising in great anger, "I can put down my foot, too. I am tired of this sort of thing, and I cannot manage you, and I will give you over to one who can. To-day is Tuesday—the twenty-first is exactly one fortnight off. Well, my young lady, *I* will change the day. Next Monday I will give you to Mr. Carlisle, and he will be your master; and I fancy he is not at all afraid to assume the responsibility. He may take you to as quiet a place as he likes; and you may think at your leisure, and more properly than in the way you propose. So, Eleanor, you shall be married o' Monday."

Mrs. Powle flourished out with her bonnet in her hand. Eleanor's first movement was to go after her and turn the key in the door securely; then she threw up the window, and flung herself on her face on the bed. Her mother was quite capable of doing as she had said, for her fair features covered a not very tender heart. Mr. Carlisle would second her, no doubt, all the more eagerly for the last night's adventures. Could Eleanor make head against those two? And between Tuesday and Monday was very little time to mature plans or organize resistance. Her head felt like splitting now, indeed, for very confusion.

"Eleanor," said Julia's voice gravely and anxiously, "you will take cold—mayn't I shut the window?"

"There's no danger. I am in a fever."

"Is your head no better?"

"I hardly think I have a head. There is nothing there but pain and snapping."

"Poor Eleanor!" said her little sister, standing by the bedside like a powerless guardian angel. "Mr. Carlisle isn't good, if he wouldn't do what you want him."

"Do not open the door, Julia, if anybody knocks!"

"No. But wouldn't he, Eleanor, if you were to ask him?"

Eleanor made no answer. She knew it needed but a glance at last night's experience to remind her that she could not make head against Mr. Carlisle. If *he* came to

talk to her about her proposed scheme, all was lost. Suddenly Eleanor threw herself off the bed, and began to dress with precipitation.

"Why, are you better, Eleanor?" Julia asked in surprise.

"No—but I must go down stairs. Bring me my blue dress, Julia; and go and get me some geranium leaves—some strong-scented ones. Here—go down the back way."

No matter for head-splitting. Eleanor dressed in haste, but with delicate care, in a dress that Mr. Carlisle liked. Its colour suited her, and its simple make showed her beauty, better than a more furbelowed one. The aromatic geranium leaves were for her head—but with them Julia had brought some of the brilliant red flowers; and fastened on her breast, where Eleanor could feel their sweetness, they at the same time made a bright touch of adornment to her figure. She was obliged to sit down then and rest; but as soon as she could she went to the drawing-room.

There were as usual several people there besides the family; Dr. Cairnes and Miss Broadus and her sister making part. Entering with a slow, quiet movement, most unlike the real hurry of her spirits, Eleanor had time to observe how different persons were placed, and to choose her own plan of action. It was to slip silently into a large chair which stood empty at Mr. Carlisle's side, and which favoured her by presenting itself as the nearest attackable point of the circle. It was done with such graceful noiselessness that many did not at the moment notice her; but two persons were quick of vision where she was concerned. Mr. Carlisle bent over her with delight, and though Mrs. Powle's fair curls were not disturbed by any sudden motion of her head, her grey eyes dilated with wonder and curiosity as she listened to a story of Miss Broadus which was fitted to excite neither. Eleanor was beyond her, but she concluded that Mr. Carlisle held the key of this extraordinary docility.

Eleanor sat very quiet in her chair, looking lovely, and by degrees using up her geranium leaves, with which she went through a variety of manipulations. They were picked to pieces, and rubbed to pieces, and their aromatic essence

crushed out of them with every kind of formality. Mr. Carlisle, finding that she had a headache, did not trouble her to talk, and relieved her from attention; any further than his arm or hand mounting guard on her chair constantly gave. For it gathered the broken geranium leaves out of her way, and picked them up from her feet. At last his hand came after hers and made it a prisoner.

"You have a mood of destructiveness upon you," said he. "See there—you have done to death all the green of your bouquet."

"The geranium leaves are good to my head," said Eleanor. "I want some more. Will you go with me to get them?"

It gave her heart a shiver, the hold in which her hand lay. Though taken in play, the hold was so very cool and firm. Her hand lay there still, for Mr. Carlisle sat a moment after she spoke, looking at her.

"I will go with you—wherever you please," he said; and putting Eleanor's hand on his arm, they walked off towards the conservatory. This was at some distance, and opened out of the breakfast-room. It was no great matter of a conservatory, only pretty and sweet. Eleanor began slowly to pull geranium leaves.

"You are suffering, Eleanor," said Mr. Carlisle.

"I do not think of it—you need not. Macintosh, I want to ask a favour of you."

She turned to him, without raising her eyes, but made the appeal of her whole pretty presence. He drew his arm round her, and suspended the business of geranium leaves.

"What is it, my darling?"

"You know," said Eleanor, "that when the twenty-first of December was fixed upon—for what you wished—it was a more hurried day than I would have chosen; if the choice had been left to me. I wanted more time—but you and my mother said that day, and I agreed to it. Now, my mother has taken a notion to make it still earlier—she wants to cut off a whole week from me—she wants to make it next Monday. Don't join with her! Let me have all the time that was promised me!"

Eleanor could not raise her eyes; she enforced her appeal by laying her hand on Mr. Carlisle's arm. He drew her close up to him, held her fast, stooped his head to hers.

"What for, Eleanor? Laces and plums can be ready as well Monday as Monday s'ennight."

"For myself, Macintosh."

"Don't you think of me?"

"No!" said Eleanor, "I do not. It is quite enough that you should have your wish after Monday s'ennight—I ought to have it before."

He laughed and kissed her. He always liked any show of spirit in Eleanor.

"My darling, what difference does a week make?"

"Just the difference of a week; and more than that in my mind. I want it. Grant me this favour, Macintosh! I ask it of you."

Mr. Carlisle seemed to find it amazingly pleasant to have Eleanor suing to him for favours; for he answered her as much with caresses as with words—both very satisfied.

"You try me beyond my strength, Eleanor. Your mother offers to give you to me on Monday—do you think I care so little about this possession that I will not take it a week earlier than I had hoped to have it?"

"But the week is mine—it is due to me, Macintosh. No one has a right to take it from me. You may have the power; and I ask you not to use it."

"Eleanor, you break my heart. My love, do you know that I have business calling for me in London?—it is calling for me now, urgently. I must carry you up to London at once; and this week that you plead for, I do not know how to give. If I *can* go the fifteenth instead of the twenty-second, I must. Do you see, Nellie?" he asked very tenderly.

Eleanor hardly saw anything; the world and all in it seemed to be in a swimming state before her eyes. Only Mr. Carlisle's "can's" and "must's" obeyed him, she felt sure, as well as everything else. She felt stunned. Holding her

on one arm, Mr. Carlisle began to pluck flowers and myrtle sprays, and to adorn her hair with them. It was a labour of love; he liked the business and played with it. The beautiful brown masses of hair invited and rewarded attention.

"Then my mother has spoken to you?" she said at length.

"Yes," he said, arranging a spray of heath with white blossoms. "Do you blame me?" Eleanor sought to withdraw herself from his arm, but he detained her.

"Where are you going?"

"Up stairs—to my room."

"Do you forgive me, Eleanor?" he said, looking down at her.

"No,—I think I do not."

He laughed a little, kissing her downcast face.

"I will make you my wife on Monday, Eleanor; and after that I will make you forgive me; and then—my wife shall ask me nothing that she shall not have."

Keeping her on his arm, he led her slowly from the conservatory, through the rooms, and up the staircase, to the door of her own apartment.

Eleanor tore out the flowers as soon as she was alone, locked the door, meaning at least not to see her mother that night; took off her dress, and lay down. Refuge failed her. She was in despair. What could she arrange between Tuesday night and Monday, short of taking poison, or absconding privately from the house, and so disgracing both herself and her family? Yet Eleanor was in such desperation of feeling, that both these expedients occurred to her in the course of the night, although only to be rejected. Worn-out nature must have some rest, however; and towards morning she slept.

It was late when she opened her eyes. They fell first upon Julia, standing at her bedside.

"Are you awake, Eleanor?"

"Yes. I wish I could sleep on."

"There's news."

"News! What sort of news?" said Eleanor, feeling that none concerned her.

"It's bad news—and yet—for you—it is good news."

"What is it, child? Speak!"

"Lady Rythdale—she is dead."

Eleanor raised herself on her elbow and stared at Julia. "How do you know? how do you know?" she said.

"A messenger came to tell us—she died last night. The man came a good while ago, but——"

She never finished her sentence; for Eleanor threw herself out of bed, exclaiming. "I am saved! I am saved!" and went down on her knees by the bedside. It was hardly to pray, for Eleanor scarce knew how to pray; yet that position seemed an embodiment of thanks she could not speak. She kept it a good while, still as death. Julia stood motionless, looking on.

"Don't think me wicked," said Eleanor, getting up at last. "I am not glad of anything but my own deliverance. O, Julia!——"

"Poor Eleanor!" said her little sister, wonderingly. "Then you don't want to be married and go to Rythdale?"

"Not on Monday!" said Eleanor. "And now I shall not. It is not possible that a wedding and a funeral should be in one house on the same day. I know which they would put off if they could, but they have got to put off the other. O, Julia, it is the saving of me!"

She caught the little one in her arms and sat with her so, their two heads nestling together, Eleanor's bowed upon er sister's neck.

"But, Eleanor, will you not marry Mr. Carlisle after all?"

"I cannot, for a good while, child."

"But then?"

"I shall *never* be married in a hurry. I have got breathing time—time to think. And I'll use it."

"And O, Eleanor! won't you do something else?"

"What?"

"Won't you be a servant of the Lord?"

"I will—if I can find out how," Eleanor answered low.

It poured with rain. Eleanor liked it that day, though generally she was no lover of weather that kept her within. A spell of soothing had descended upon her. Life was no longer the rough thing it had seemed to her yesterday. A constant drop of thankfulness at her heart kept all her words and manner sweet with its secret perfume. Eleanor's temper was always as sound as a nut; but there was now a peculiar grace of gentleness and softness in all she did. She was able to go faultlessly through all the scenes of that day and the following days; through her mother's open discomfiture and half expressed disappointment, and Mr. Carlisle's suppressed impatience. His manner was perfect too; his impatience was by no word or look made known; grave, quiet, self-contained, he only allowed his affectionateness towards Eleanor to have full play, and the expression of that was changed. He did not appeal to her for sympathy, which perhaps he had a secret knowledge she could not give; but with lofty good breeding and his invariable tact he took it for granted. Eleanor's part was an easy one through those days which passed before Mr. Carlisle's going up to London. He went immediately after the funeral.

It was understood, however, between him and Mrs. Powle, that the marriage should be delayed no longer than till some time in the spring. Then, Mr. Carlisle declared, he should carry into effect his original plan of going abroad, and take Eleanor with him. Eleanor heard them talk, and kept silence, letting them arrange it their own way.

"For a little while, Eleanor!" were the parting words which Mr. Carlisle's lips left upon hers. And Eleanor turned then to look at what was before her.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The earth has lost its power to drag me downward;
Its spell is gone;
My course is now right upward, and right onward,
To yonder throne."

She had three months of quiet time. Not more; and they would quickly speed away. What she had to do, she could not do too soon. Eleanor knew it. The soothed feeling of the first few days gave place to a restless mood almost as soon as Mr. Carlisle was gone. Three years seemed more like what she wanted than three months. She felt ignorant, dark, and unhappy; how was she to clear up this moral mist and see how the plan of life lay, without any hand to lead her or help her? There was only one she knew in the world that could; and from any application to him, or even any chance contact with him, Eleanor consciously shrank. *That* would never do; that must never be heard of her. With all this, she began to dread the disturbing and confusing effects of Mr. Carlisle's visits to the country. He would come; he had said so; and Mrs. Powle kept reminding her of it upon every occasion.

Eleanor had been forbidden to ride alone. She did not dare; she took to long, lonely walks. It was only out of doors that she felt quite free; in her own room at home, though never so private, her mother would at any time come with distracting subjects of conversation. Eleanor fled to the moor and to the wilds—walked, and rested on the stones, and thought, till she found thinking degenerate

into musing; then she started up and went on. She tired herself. She did not find rest.

One day she took her course purposely to the ruined priory. It was a long walk; but Eleanor courted long walks. And when she got there, musing, it must be confessed, had a good time. She stepped slowly down the grass-grown nave of the old church, recalling with much bitterness the day of her betrothal there; blaming herself and blaming her mother more. Yet, at any rate, that day she had set seal to her own fate; would she be able, and had she a right—that was the worst question—to break it now? She wandered on, out of the church, away from the beautiful old ivied tower, which seemed to look down on her with grave reproach from the staidness of years and wisdom; wound about over and among the piles of shapeless ruin, and the bits of lichened and moss-grown walls yet standing here and there; not saying to herself exactly where she was going, but trying if she could find out the way; till she saw a thicket of thorn and holly bushes that she remembered. Yes, the larches, too, and the young growth of beech trees. Eleanor plunged through this thicket as well as she could—it was not easy—and there before her was the clear spot of grass, the angle of the thick old wall, and the deep window that she wanted to see again. All still and lonely and wild. Eleanor went across, and took a seat in the window, as she had done once before, to rest and think.

And then what she thought of, was not the old monks, nor the exquisite fair view out of the window that had belonged to them; though it was a soft December day, and the light was as winning fair on house and hill and tree-top as if it had been a different season of the year. No cloud in the sky, and no dark shadows upon the earth. But Eleanor's thoughts went back to the thunderstorm, and her need then first felt of an inward sunshine that would last in cloudy times. She recalled the talk about the Christian's helmet, with a weary, sorrowful, keen renewal of regret at her own want of it. The words Mr. Rhys had spoken about it at that time she could not very well remember; but well she

remembered the impression of them, and the noble, clear calmness of his face and manner. Very unlike all other calmness and nobleness that she had seen. The nobleness of one whose head was covered by that royal basnet; the fearlessness of one whose brows were consciously shaded by it. The simplicity that had nothing to feign or conceal; the poise of manner that came from an established heart and conscience. Eleanor presently caught herself up. What was she thinking about Mr. Rhys for? True, the thought of him was very near the thought of his teaching; nevertheless, the one thing concerned her, the other did not. Did it not? Eleanor sighed, and wished she could have a little of his wise guidance; for notwithstanding all she had heard him say, she felt in the dark.

In the midst of all this, Eleanor heard somebody humming a scrap of a tune on the other side of the holly bushes. Another instant told her it was a tune she had heard never but once before, and that once in Mr. Brooks's barn. There was, besides, a little rustling of the thorn bushes. Eleanor could think of but one person coming to that spot of the ruins; and in sudden terror she sprang from the window, and rushed round the other corner of the wall. The tune ceased; Eleanor heard no more; but she dared not falter or look back. She was in a thicket on this side, too, and in a mass of decayed ruins and rubbish which almost stopped her way. By determination and perseverance, with some knocks and scratches, she at last got free, and stopped to breathe and think. Why was she so frightened? Mr. Carlisle. But what should she do now? Suppose she set off to walk home; she might be joined by the person she wished to shun; it was impossible to foresee that he would sit an hour meditating in the old window. Over against Eleanor, a little distance off, only plantations of shrubbery and soft turf between, was the Rector's house. Best go there and take refuge, and then be guided by circumstances. She went accordingly, feeling sorrowful that she should have to run away from the very person whose counsel of all others she most needed.

The door was opened to Eleanor by the Rector himself.

"Ha! my dear Miss Powle," said the good doctor—"this is an honour to me. I don't know what you will do now, for my sister is away at Brompton. Will you come in and see an old bachelor like myself?"

"If you will let me, sir."

"I shall be delighted, my dear Miss Eleanor. You were always welcome, ever since you were so high; and now that you are going to occupy so important a position here, I do not know a lady in the neighbourhood that deserves so much consideration as yourself. Come in—come in. How did you get here?"

"Taking a long walk, sir. Perhaps you will give me some refreshments?"

"I shall be delighted. Come in here, and we will have luncheon together in my study, which was never so honoured before; but *I* think it is the pleasantest place in the house. The other rooms my sister fills with gimcracks, till I cannot turn round there without fear of breaking something. Now, my old folios and octavos have tried a fall many a time, and many a one has tried a fall with them—ha! ha!—and no harm to anybody. Sit down there now, Miss Eleanor, and rest. That's what I call a pretty window. You see I am in no danger of forgetting my friend Mr. Carlisle here."

Eleanor looked out of the window very steadily; yet she was not refreshing her remembrance of Mr. Carlisle neither. There were glimpses of a tall, alert figure, passing leisurely in and out among the trees and the ruins, finally coming out into full view, and walking with brisk step over the greensward till he was out of sight. Eleanor knew it very well, the figure and the quick step, the energy and life in every movement. She heard no more of Dr. Cairnes for some time, though doubtless he was talking; for he had ordered luncheon, and now it was served, and he was pressing her to partake of it. Dr. Cairnes' cheese was excellent, his hung beef was of prime quality, and the ale was of a superior brand; and the wine which he poured out for Eleanor was, he assured her, as its sparkling drops fell into the glass, of

a purity and flavour "that even his friend Mr. Carlisle would not refuse to close his lips upon." Eleanor felt faint and weary, and she knew Mr. Carlisle's critical accuracy; but she recollected at the same time Mr. Rhys's cool abstinence, and she put the glass of wine away.

"*Not?*" said the doctor. "You would prefer a cup of chocolate. Bad taste, Miss Eleanor; wine is better for you, too. Ladies will sup chocolate, I believe; I wonder what they find in it. The thing is, my sister being away to-day, I don't know ——"

Eleanor begged he would not mind that, nor her; however, the chocolate was ordered, and in due time brought.

"Now, that will make you dull," said the doctor—"sleepy. It does not have, even on you, the reviving, brilliant effect of *this* beverage." And he put the bright glass of wine to his lips. It was not the first filled.

"Before I get dull, dear doctor, I want to talk to you."

"Aye?" said the doctor, looking at her over the wine. "You do? What about? Say on, Miss Eleanor. I am yours doubly now, by the past and the future. You may command me."

"It is about the present I wish to talk," said Eleanor.

"What is it?"

"My mind is not at rest," said Eleanor, laying her hands in her lap, and looking off again towards the ruins, with their green and grey silent reminders,—"about religious subjects."

"Ah!" said Dr. Cairnes. "How is that, Miss Eleanor? Be a little more explicit with me, will you not?"

"I will. Dr. Cairnes, I am young now, but by and by decay must come to me, as it has come to that old pile yonder—as it comes to everything. I want security for my head and heart when earthly security fails."

Eleanor spoke slowly, looking out as she spoke all the while.

"Security!" said the doctor. "But, my dear Miss Eleanor, you know the articles of our holy religion?"

"Yes," she said, without stirring her position.

"Security is given by them, most amply and abundantly, to every sincere applicant. Your life has been a sheltered one, Miss Eleanor, and a kind one; you can have no very grievous sins to charge yourself with."

"I would like to get rid of such as I have," answered Eleanor, without moving.

"You were baptized in infancy?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have never been confirmed?"

"No, sir."

"Every baptized child of the Church, Miss Eleanor, owes it to God, to herself, and the Church, upon arriving at a proper age, to come forward and openly take upon herself, or himself—but I am talking of you—the vows made for her in her infancy, at her baptism, by her sponsors. Upon doing this, she is received into full membership with the Church, and entitled to all its privileges; and undoubtedly security is one of them. That is what you want to do, Miss Eleanor; and I am truly rejoiced that your mind is setting itself to the contemplation of its duties and responsibilities. In the station you are preparing to occupy, the head of all this neighbourhood—Wiglands and Rythdale both—it is most important, most important, that your example should be altogether blameless, and your influence thrown altogether on the right side. That influence, my dear Miss Eleanor, is very great."

"Dr. Cairnes, my one single present desire is, to do right and feel safe, myself."

"Precisely; and to do right is the way to feel safe. I will give you a little work, preparatory to the ordinance of confirmation, Miss Eleanor, which I entreat you to study and prayerfully follow. That will relieve all your difficulties, I have no fear. There it is, Miss Eleanor."

"Will this rite—will this ordinance," said Eleanor, closing her fingers on the book, and for the first time looking the doctor straight in the face—"will it give me that helmet of salvation of which I have heard?"

"Hey? what is that?" said the doctor.

"I have heard—and read—of the Christian 'helmet of salvation.' I have seen that a person whose brows are covered by it, goes along fearless, hopeful, and happy, dreading nothing in this life or the next. Will being confirmed put this helmet upon my head—make me fearless and happy, too?"

"My dear Miss Eleanor, I cannot express how you astonish me. I always have thought you were one of the strongest-hearted persons I knew; and in your circumstances I am sure it was natural But to your question. The benefit of confirmation, my dear young lady, as well as of every other ordinance of the Church, depends of course on the manner and spirit with which we engage in it. There is confirming and strengthening grace in it undoubtedly for all who come to the ordinance in humble obedience, with prayer and faith, and who truly take upon them their vows."

"But, Dr. Cairnes, I might die before I could be confirmed; and I want rest and security now. I do not have it, day nor night. I have not, ever since the time when I was so ill last summer. I want it *now*."

"My dear Miss Eleanor, the only way to obtain security and rest, is in doing one's duty. Do your duty now, and it will come. Your conscience has taken up the matter, and will have satisfaction. Give it satisfaction, and rest will come."

"How can I give it satisfaction?" said Eleanor, sitting up and looking at the doctor. "I feel myself guilty—I know myself exposed to ruin, to death that means death. What can I give to my conscience, to make it be still?"

"The Church offers absolution for their sins to all that are truly sorry for them," said the doctor. "Are you penitent on account of your sins, Miss Eleanor?"

"Penitent?—I don't know," said Eleanor, drooping a little from her upright position. "I feel them, and know them, and wish them away; but if I were penitent, they would be gone, wouldn't they? and they are not gone."

"I see how it is," said the doctor. "You have too much

leisure to think, and your thoughts are turning in upon themselves and becoming morbid. I think this is undue sensitiveness, my dear Miss Eleanor. The sins we wish away will never be made a subject of judgment against us. I shall tell my friend Mr. Carlisle that his presence is wanted here, for something more important than the interests of the county. I shall tell him he must not let you think too much. I think he and I together can put you right. In the mean while, you read my little book."

"Dr. Cairnes, what I have said to you is said in strict confidence. I do not wish it spoken of, even to my mother."

"Of course, of course!" said the doctor. "*That* is all understood. The Church never reveals her children's secrets. But I shall only give him a little gentle hint, which will be quite sufficient, I have no doubt; and I shall have just the co-operation that I desire."

"How excellent your cheese is, Dr. Cairnes."

"Ah! you like it?" said the doctor. "I am proud. I always purchase my cheese myself—that is one thing I do not leave to my sister. But *this* one, I think, is particularly fine. You won't take a half glass of ale with it?—no; I know Mr. Carlisle does not like ale. But it would be a good sequent of your ride, nevertheless."

"I did not ride, sir. I walked."

"Walked from Ivy Lodge! All this way to see me, Miss Eleanor?"

"No, sir—only for a walk, and to see the ruins. Then I was driven to take shelter here."

"I am very glad of it—I am very glad of it," said the doctor. "I have not enjoyed my luncheon so much in a year's time; and you delight me too, my dear Miss Eleanor, by your present dispositions. But walk all the way here! I shall certainly write to Mr. Carlisle."

Eleanor's cheeks flushed, and she rose. "Not only all the way here, but all the way back again," said she; "so it is time I bade you good-bye."

The doctor was very anxious to carry her home in the chaise; Eleanor was more determined that he should not;

and determination, as usual, carried the day. The doctor shook his head as he watched her off.

"Are you going to show this spirit to Mr. Carlisle?" he said.

Which remark gave Eleanor an impetus that carried her a third of her way home. During the remaining two-thirds she did a good deal of thinking; and arrived at the Lodge with her mind made up. There was no chance of peace and a good time for her, without going away from home. Dr. Cairnes' officiousness would be sure to do something to arouse Mr. Carlisle's watchfulness; and then—"the game will be up," said Eleanor to herself. "Between his being here and the incessant expectation of him, there will be no rest for me. I must get away." She laid her plans.

After dinner she slipped away, and sought her father in his study. It was called his study, though very little of that character truly belonged to it. More truly it balanced between the two purposes of a smoking-room and an office; for county business was undoubtedly done there, and it was the nook of retirement where the Squire indulged himself in his favoured luxury—the sweet weed. The Squire took it pure, in a pipe—no cigars for him; and filling his pipe Eleanor found him. She lit the pipe for him, and, contrary to custom, sat down. The Squire puffed away.

"I thought you didn't care for this sort of thing, Eleanor," he remarked. "Are you learning not to mind it already? It is just as well. Perhaps your husband will want you to sit with him when he smokes."

"I would not do that for any man in the world, papa, except you!"

"Ho! ho!" said the Squire. "Good wives, my dear, do not mind trifles. They had better not, at any rate."

"Papa," said Eleanor, whose cheeks were flaming, "do you not think, since a girl must give up her liberty so completely in marrying, that she ought to be allowed a good little taste of it beforehand?"

"St. George and the Dragon! I do," said the Squire. "Your mother says it tends to lawlessness—and I say, I

don't care. That is not *my* concern. If a man cannot rule his wife, he had better not have one—that is my opinion; and in your case, my dear, there is no fear. Mr. Carlisle is quite equal to his duties, or I am mistaken in him."

Eleanor felt nearly wild under her father's speeches; nevertheless she sat perfectly quiet, only fiery about her cheeks.

"Then, papa, come to the point. Don't you think, in the little time that remains to me for my own, I might be allowed to do what I please with myself?"

"I should say it was a plain case," said the Squire. "Take your pleasure, Nellie; *I* won't tether you. What do you want to do, child? I take it, you belong to me till you belong to somebody else."

"Papa, I want to run away, and make a visit to my aunt Caxton. I shall never have another chance in the world; and I want to go off and be by myself, and feel free once more, and have a good time."

"Poor little duck!" said her father. "You are a sensible girl, Nellie. Go off; nobody shall hinder you."

"Papa, unless you back me, mamma and Mr. Carlisle will not hear of it."

"I'd go before he comes down, then," said the Squire, knocking the ashes out of his pipe energetically. "St. George! I believe that man half thinks, sometimes, that I am one of his tenantry! The lords of Rythdale always did lord it over everything that came in their way. Now is your only chance, Eleanor; run away, if you're a mind to. Mr. Carlisle is master in his own house, no doubt, but he is not master in mine; and I say you may go. It will do him no harm to be kept on short commons for a little while."

With a joyful heart Eleanor went back to the drawing-room, and sat patiently still at some fancy work till Mrs. Powle waked up from a nap.

"Mamma, Dr. Cairnes wants me to be confirmed."

"Confirmed!"—Mrs. Powle echoed the word, sitting bolt upright in her chair, and opening her sleepy eyes wide at her daughter.

"Yes. He says I ought to be confirmed. He has given me a book upon confirmation to study."

"I wonder what you will do next!" said Mrs. Powle, sinking back. "Well, go on, if you like. Certainly, if you are to be confirmed, it ought to be done before your marriage. I wish anything *would* confirm you in sober ways."

"Mamma, I want to give this subject serious study, if I enter into it; and I cannot do it properly at home. I want to go away for a visit."

"Well?" said Mrs. Powle, thinking of some cousins in London.

"I want to be alone and quiet and have absolute peace for awhile; and this death of Lady Rythdale makes it possible. I want to go and make a visit to my aunt Caxton."

"Caxton!"—Mrs. Powle almost screamed. "Caxton! *There!* In the mountains of Wales! Eleanor, you are perfectly absurd. It is no use to talk to you."

"Mamma, papa sees no objection."

"*He* does not! So you have been speaking to him! Make your own fortunes, Eleanor. I see you ruined already. With what favour do you suppose Mr. Carlisle will look upon such a project? Pray have you asked yourself?"

"Yes, ma'am; and I am not going to consult him in the matter."

The tea-equipage and the Squire came in together, and stopped the conversation. Eleanor, took care not to renew it, knowing that her point was gained. She took her father's hint, however, and made her preparations short and sudden. She sent that night a word, telling of her wish, to Mrs. Caxton; and waited but till the answer arrived—waited on thorns—to set off. The Squire looked rather moody the next day after his promise to Eleanor; but he would not withdraw it; and no other hindrance came. Eleanor departed safely, under the protection of old Thomas, the coachman, long a faithful servitor in the family. The journey was only part of the distance by railway; the rest was by posting; and a night had to be spent on the road.

Towards evening of the second day, Eleanor began to find

herself in what seemed an enchanted region. High mountains, with picturesque bold outlines, rose against the sky; and every step was bringing her deeper and deeper among them, in a rich green meadow valley. The scenery grew only wilder, richer, and lovelier, until the sun sank behind the high western line; and still its loveliness was not lost, while grey shades and duskiness gathered over the mountain sides, and gradually melted the meadows and their scattered wood-growth into one hue. Then only the wild mountain outline cut against the sky, and sometimes the rushing of a little river, told Eleanor of the varied beauty the evening hid.

Little else she could see when the chaise stopped and she got out. Dimly a long, low building stretched before her at the side of the road; the rippling of water sounded softly at a little distance, the fresh mountain air blew in her face; then the house-door opened.

CHAPTER XV.

"Face to face with the true mountains
I stood silently and still,
Drawing strength from fancy's dauntings,
From the air about the hill,
And from Nature's open mercies, and most debonair good will."

THE house-door opened first to show a girl in short petticoats and blue jacket holding up a light. Eleanor made towards it, across a narrow strip of courtyard. She only saw the girl, and did not feel certain whether she had come to the right house. For neither Mrs. Caxton nor her home had ever been seen by any of Mr. Powle's children, though she was his own sister. But Mrs. Caxton had married quite out of *Mrs.* Powle's world; and though now a widow, she lived still the mistress of a great cheese-farm; quite out of Mrs. Powle's world still. The latter had therefore never encouraged intercourse. Mrs. Caxton was an excellent woman, no doubt, and extremely respectable; still, Ivy Lodge and the cheese-farm were further apart in feeling than in geographical miles; and though Mrs. Caxton often invited her brother's children to come and pick buttercups in her meadows, Mrs. Powle always proved that to gather primroses in Rythdale was a higher employment, and much better for the children's manners, if not for their health. The Squire at this late day had been unaffectedly glad of Eleanor's proposal; avowing himself not ashamed of his sister, or his children either. For Eleanor herself, she had no great expectation, except of rural retirement in a place

where Mr. Carlisle would not follow her. That was enough. She had heard besides that the country was beautiful, and her aunt well off.

As she stepped up now doubtfully to the girl with the light, looking to see whether she were right or wrong, the girl moved a little aside, so as to light the entrance, and Eleanor passed on, discerning another figure behind. A good, wholesome voice exclaimed, "You are welcome, my dear! It is Eleanor?"—and the next instant Mr. Powle's daughter found herself taken into one of those warm, gentle, genial embraces, that tell unmistakeably what sort of a heart moves the enfolding arms. It was rest and strength at once; and the lips that kissed her—there is a great deal of character in a kiss—were at once sweet and firm.

"You have been all day travelling, my dear. You must be in want of rest."

There was that sort of clear strength in the voice, to which one gives, even in the dark, one's confidence. Eleanor's foot fell more firmly on the tiled floor, as she followed her aunt along a passage or two; a little uncertainty in her heart was quieted; she was ready prepared to expect anything pleasant; and as they turned in at a low door, the expectation was met.

The door admitted them to a low-ceiled room, also with a tiled floor, large and light. A good wood fire burned in the quaint chimney-piece; before it a table stood prepared for supper. A bit of carpet was laid down under the table, and made a spot of extra comfort in the middle of the floor. Dark plain wainscoting, heavy furniture of simplest fashion, little windows well curtained—all nothing to speak of—all joined inexplicably to produce the impression of order, stability, and repose, which seized upon Eleanor almost before she had time to observe details. But the mute things in a house have an odd way of telegraphing to a stranger what sort of a spirit dwells in the midst of them. It is always so; and Mrs. Caxton's room assured Eleanor that her first notions of its mistress were not ill-founded. She had opportunity to test and strengthen them now, in the full blaze

of lamp and firelight; as her aunt stood before her taking off her bonnet and wrappers, and handing them over to another attendant with a candle and a blue jacket.

In the low room Mrs. Caxton looked even taller than belonged to her; and she was tall, and of noble full proportions, that set off her height. Eleanor thought she had never seen a woman of more dignified presence; the head was well set back on the shoulders, the carriage straight, and the whole moral and physical bearing placid and quiet. Of course the actual movement was easy and fine; for that is with every one a compound of the physical and moral. Scarcely Elizabeth Fry had finer port or figure. The face was good, and strong; the eyes full of intelligence under the thick dark brows; all the lines of the face kind and commanding. A cap of very plain construction covered the abundant hair, which was only a little grey. Nothing else about Mrs. Caxton showed age. Her dress was simple to quaintness; but relieved by her magnificent figure, that effect was forgotten, or only remembered as enhancing the other. Eleanor sat down in a great leather chair, where she had been put, and looked on in a sort of charmed state; while her aunt moved about the table, gave quiet orders, made quiet arrangements, and finally took Eleanor's hand and seated her at the tea-table.

"Not poppies, nor mandragora," could have had such a power of soothing over Eleanor's spirits. She sat at the table like a fairy princess under a friendly incantation; and the spell was not broken by any word or look on the part of her hostess. No questions of curiosity; no endeavours to find out more of Eleanor than she chose to show; no surprise expressed at her mid-winter coming; nor so much pleasure as would have the effect of surprise. As naturally and cordially, and with as much simplicity, her visit was taken, as if it had been a yearly accustomed thing, and one of Mr. Powle's children had not now seen her aunt for the first time. Indeed, so rare was the good sense and kindness of this reception, that Eleanor caught herself wondering whether her aunt could already know more of her than she

seemed to know; and not caring if she did! Yet it was impossible, for her mother would not tell her story, and her father could not; and Eleanor came round to admiring with fresh admiration this noble-looking, new-found relation, whose manner towards herself inspired her with such confidence, and exercised already such a powerful attraction. And *this* was the mistress of a cheese-farm! Eleanor could not help being moved with a little curiosity on her part. This lady had no children; no near relations; for she was ignored by her brother's family. She lived alone; was she not lonely? Would she not wear misanthropical or weary traces of such a life? None; none were to be seen. Clear placidness dwelt on the brow, that looked as if nothing ever ruffled it; the eye was full of business and command; and the mouth—its corners told of a fountain of sweetness somewhere in the region of the heart. Eleanor looked, and went back to her cup of tea and her supper with a renewed sense of comfort.

The supper was excellent too. It would have belied Mrs. Caxton's look of executive capacity if it had not been. No fault was to be discerned anywhere. The tea-service was extremely plain and inexpensive; such as Mrs. Powle could not have used—that was certain. But then the bread, and the mutton chops, and the butter, and even the tea, were such as Mrs. Powle's china was never privileged to bear. And though Mrs. Caxton left in the background every topic of doubtful agreeableness, the talk flowed steadily with abundance of material and animation, during the whole supper-time. Mrs. Caxton was the chief talker. She had plenty to tell Eleanor of the country and people in the neighbourhood; of things to be seen and things to be done; so that supper moved slowly, and was a refreshment of mind as well as of body.

"You are very weary, my dear," said Mrs. Caxton, after the table was cleared away, and the talk had continued through all that time. And Eleanor confessed it. In the calm which was settling down upon her, the strain of hours and days gone by began to be felt.

"You shall go to your room presently," said Mrs. Caxton; "and you shall not get up to breakfast with me. That would be too early for you."

Eleanor was going to enter a protest, when her aunt turned and gave an order in Welsh to the blue jacket then in the room. And then Eleanor had a surprise. Mrs. Caxton took a seat at a little distance, before a stand with a book; and the door opening again, in poured a stream of blue jackets, three or four, followed by three men and a boy. All ranged themselves on seats round the room; and Mrs. Caxton opened her book, and read a chapter in the Bible. Eleanor listened in mute wonder where this would end. It ended in all kneeling down, and Mrs. Caxton offering a prayer; an extempore prayer, which for simplicity, strength, and feeling, answered all Eleanor's sense of what a prayer ought to be; though how a woman could speak it before others and before *men*, filled her with astonishment. But it filled her with humility too, before it was done; and Eleanor rose to her feet with an intense feeling of the difference between her aunt's character and her own; only equalled by her deep gladness at finding herself under the roof where she was.

Her aunt then took a candle and lighted her through the tiled passages, up some low wooden stairs, uncarpeted; along more passages; finally into a large low matted chamber, with a row of little lattice windows. Comfort and simplicity were in all its arrangements; a little fire burning for her; Eleanor's trunks in a closet. When Mrs. Caxton had showed her all that was necessary, she set down her candle on the low mantelshelf, and took Eleanor in her arms. Again those peculiar, gentle, firm kisses fell upon her lips. But instead of "good night," Mrs. Caxton's words were—

"Do you pray for yourself, Eleanor?"

Eleanor dropped her head like a child on the breast before her. "Aunt Caxton, I do not know how!"

"Then the Lord Jesus has not a servant in Eleanor Powle?"

Eleanor was silent, thoughts struggling.

"You have not learned to love him, Eleanor?"

"I have only learned to wish to do it, aunt Caxton! I do wish that. It was partly that I might seek it, that I wanted to come here."

Then Eleanor heard a deep-spoken "Praise the Lord!" that seemed to come out from the very heart on which she was leaning. "If you have a mind to seek him, my dear, he is willing that you should find. 'The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.'"

She kissed Eleanor on the two temples, released her, and went down stairs. And Eleanor sat down before her fire, feeling as if she were in a paradise.

It was all the more so, from the unlikeness of everything that met her eye to all she had known before. The chimney-piece at which she was looking as she sat there—it was odd and quaint as possible, to a person accustomed only to the modern fashions of the elegant world; the fire-tongs and shovel would have been surely consigned to the kitchen department at Ivy Lodge. Yet the little blazing fire, framed in by its rows of coloured tiles, looked as cheerfully into Eleanor's face as any blaze that had ever greeted it. All was of a piece with the fire-place. Simple to quaintness, utterly plain and costless, yet with none of the essentials of comfort forgotten or neglected; from the odd little lattice windows to the tiled floor, everything said she was at a great distance from her former life and Mr. Carlisle. The room looked as if it had been made for Eleanor to settle her two life-questions in it. Accordingly she took them up without delay; but Eleanor's mind that night was like a kaleidoscope. Images of different people and things started up, with wearying perversity of change and combination; and the question, whether she would be a servant of God, like her aunt Caxton, was inextricably twisted up with the other question, whether she would escape being the baroness of Rythdale, and the wife of Mr. Carlisle. And Eleanor did nothing but tire herself with thinking that night; until the fire was burnt out, and she went to bed. Nevertheless, she fell asleep with a sense of relief more blissful than she

had known for months. She had put a little distance at least between her and her enemies.

Eleanor had meant to be early next day, but rest had taken too good hold of her; it was long past early when she opened her eyes. The rays of the morning sun were peeping in through the lattices. Eleanor sprang up and threw open, or rather threw back, one of the windows, for the lattice slid in grooves instead of hanging on hinges. She would never have found out how to open them, but that one lattice stood slightly pushed back already. When it was quite out of her way, Eleanor's breath almost stopped. A view so wild, so picturesque, so rare in its outlines of beauty, she thought she had never seen. Before her, at some distance, beyond a piece of broken ground, rose a bare-looking height of considerable elevation, crowned by an old tower massively constructed, broken, and ivy-grown. The little track of a footpath was visible that wound round the hill; probably going up to the tower. Further beyond, with evidently a deep valley or gorge between, a line of much higher hills swept off to the left; bare also, and moulded to suit a painter of weird scenes, yet most lovely, and all seen now in the fair morning beams which coloured and lighted them and the old tower together. Nothing else. The road indeed by which she had come passed close before Eleanor's window; but trees embowered it, though they had been kept down so as not to hinder this distant view. Eleanor sat a long while spell-bound before the window.

A noise disturbed her. It was one of the blue jackets bringing a tray with breakfast. Eleanor eagerly asked if Mrs. Caxton had taken breakfast; but all she got in return was a series of unintelligible sounds; however, as the girl pointed to the sun, she concluded that the family breakfast hour was past. Everything strange again! At Ivy Lodge the breakfast hour lasted till the lagging members of the family had all come down; and here there was no family! How could happiness belong to anybody in such circumstances? The prospect within doors, Eleanor suddenly

remembered, was yet more interesting than the view without. She eat her breakfast, and dressed and went down.

But to find the room where she had been the evening before, was more than her powers were equal to. Going from one passage to another, turning and turning back, afraid to open doors to ask somebody; Eleanor was quite bewildered, when she happily was met by her aunt. The morning kiss and greeting renewed in her heart all the peace of last night.

"I cannot find my way about in your house, aunt Caxton. It seems a labyrinth."

"It will not seem so long. Let me show you the way out of it."

Through one or two more turnings Mrs. Caxton led her niece, and opening a door took her out at the other side, the back of the house, where Eleanor's eyes had not been. Here there was a sort of covered gallery, extending to some length under what was either an upper piazza or the projection of the second story floor. The ground was paved with tiles as usual, and wooden settles stood along the wall, and plain stone pillars supported the roof. But as Eleanor's eyes went out further, she caught her aunt's hand in ecstasy.

From almost the edge of the covered gallery, a little terraced garden sloped down to the edge of a small river. The house stood on a bank above the river, at a commanding height; and on the river's further shore a rich sweep of meadow and pasture land stretched to the right and left and filled the whole breadth of the valley; on the other side of which, right up from the green fields, rose another line of hills. These were soft, swelling, round-topped hills, very different in their outlines from those in another quarter which Eleanor had been enjoying from her window. It was winter now, and the garden had lost its glory; yet Eleanor could see, for her eye was trained in such matters, that good and excellent care was at home in it; and some delicate things were there, for which a slight protection had been thought needful. The river was lost to view immediately at the right; it wound down from the other hand through

the rich meadows under a thick embowering bosky growth of trees; and just below the house it was spanned by a rude stone bridge, from which a hedged lane led off on the other side. All along the fences or hedges which enclosed the fields grew also beautiful old trees; the whole landscape was decked with wood growth, though the hills had little or none. All the more the sweet contrast; the rare harmony; the beautiful mingling of soft cultivation with what was wild and picturesque and barren. And the river gurgled on, with a fresh sound that told of its activity; and a very large herd of cows spotted the green turf in some of the meadows on the other side of the stream.

"I never saw any place so lovely," exclaimed Eleanor; "never!"

"This is my favourite walking place in winter," said Mrs. Caxton; "when I want to walk under shelter, or not to go far from home."

"How charming that garden must be when the spring comes!"

"Are you fond of gardening?" said Mrs. Caxton.

A talk upon the subject followed, in which Eleanor perceived with some increase of respect that her aunt was no ignoramus; nay, that she was familiar with delicacies both in the practice and the subjects of horticulture that were not well known to Eleanor, in spite of her advantages of the Lodge and Rythdale conservatories and gardens both together. In the course of this talk, Eleanor noticed anew all the indications that had pleased her last night; the calm good sense and self-possession; the quiet dignity; the decision; the kindness. And perhaps Mrs. Caxton too made her observations. But this was the mistress of the cheese-farm!

A pause fell in their talk at length; probably both had matter for reflection.

"Have you settled that question, Eleanor?" said her aunt, meaningly.

"That question?—O no, aunt Caxton! It is all confusion; and it is all confused with another question."

There was more than talk in this evidently, for Eleanor's face had all darkened. Mrs. Caxton answered calmly—

"My dear, the first thing I would do, would be to separate them."

"Aunty, they are like two wrestlers; I cannot seem to separate them. If I think of the one, I get hold of the other; and if I take up the other, I am obliged to think of the one; and my mind is the fighting ground."

"Then the two questions are in reality one?"

"No, aunt Caxton—they are not. Only they both press for attention at once."

"Which is the most important?"

"This one—about which you asked me," Eleanor said, drooping her head a little.

"Then decide that to-day, Eleanor."

"Aunty, I have decided it—in one way. I am determined what I will be—if I can. Only I do not see how. And before I *do* see how—perhaps—the other question may have decided itself; and then—aunty, I cannot tell you about it to-day. Let me wait a few days, till I know you better and you have time to know me."

"Then, as it is desirable you should lose no time, I shall keep you with me, Eleanor. Would you like to-morrow to go through the dairies and see the operation of cheese-making? Did you ever see it?"

"Aunt Caxton, I know no more about cheese than that I have eaten it sometimes. I would like to go to-morrow, or to-day; whenever you please."

"The work is nearly over for to-day."

"Do they make cheese in your dairy every day, aunt Caxton?"

"Two every day."

"But you must have a great number of cows, ma'am?"

"There they are," said her aunt, looking towards the opposite meadows. "We milk between forty and fifty at present; there are about thirty dry."

"Seventy or eighty cows!" exclaimed Eleanor. "Why,

aunt Caxton, you must want the whole valley for their pasturing."

"I want no more than I have," said Mrs. Caxton, quietly. "You see, those meadows on the other side of the river look rich. It is a very good cheese-farm."

"How far does it extend, aunty?"

"All along the meadow land, as far as you see."

"I do not believe there is a pleasanter or prettier home in all the kingdom!" Eleanor exclaimed. "How charming, aunt Caxton, all this must be in summer, when your garden is in bloom."

"There is a way of carrying summer along with us through all the year, Eleanor; do you know that?"

"Do you wear the 'helmet' too?" thought Eleanor. "I have no doubt but you do, over that calm brow!" But she only looked wistfully at her aunt, and Mrs. Caxton changed the conversation. She sat down with Eleanor on a settle, for the day was mild and the place sheltered; and talked with her of home and her family. She showed an affectionate interest in all the details concerning her brother's household and life, but Eleanor admired with still increasing and profound respect, the delicacy which stopped every inquiry at the point where delicacy might wish to withhold the answer. The uprightest self-respect went hand in hand with the gentlest regard and respect for others. To this reserve Eleanor was more communicative than she could have been to another manner; and on some points her hesitancy told as much, perhaps, as her disclosures on other points; so that Mrs. Caxton was left with some general idea, if not more, of the home Eleanor had lived her life in, and the various people who had made it what it was. On all things that touched Rythdale, Eleanor was silent; and so was Mrs. Caxton.

The conversation flowed on to other topics; and the whole day was a gentle entertainment to Eleanor. The perpetual good sense, information, and shrewdness of her hostess was matter of constant surprise and interest. Eleanor had never talked with anybody who talked so well; and she felt

obliged unconsciously all the time to produce the best of herself. That is not a disagreeable exercise; and on the whole the day reeled off on silver wheels. It concluded as the former day had done; and in the warm prayer uttered by her aunt, Eleanor could not help feeling there was a pulse of the heart for *her*—for her darkness and necessities. It sent her to her room touched, and humbled, and reminded; but Eleanor's musings this night were no more fruitful of results than those of last night had been. They resolved themselves into a long waking dream. Mr. Carlisle exercised too much mastery over her imagination, for any other concern to have fair chance till his question was disposed of. Would he come to look for her there? It was just like him; but she had a little hope that her mother's pride would prevent his being furnished with the necessary information. That Eleanor should be sought and found by him on a cheese-farm, the mistress of the farm her own near relation, would not probably meet Mrs. Powle's notions of what it was expedient to do or suffer. A slender thread of a hope; but that was all. Supposing he came? Eleanor felt she had no time to lose. She could only deal with Mr. Carlisle at a distance. In his presence, she knew now, she was helpless. But a vague sense of wrong combated all her thoughts of what she wished to do; with a confused and conflicting question of what was right. She wearied herself to tears with her dreaming, and went to bed to aggravate her troubles in actual dreams; in which the impossible came in to help the disagreeable.

CHAPTER XVI.

"What if she be fastened to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?"

THE next morning, nevertheless, was bright, and Eleanor was early down stairs. And now she found that the day was begun at the farmhouse in the same way in which it was ended. A reverent, sweet, happy committing of all her affairs and her friends to God, in the presence and the company of her household, was Mrs. Caxton's entrance, for her and them, upon the work of the day. Breakfast was short and very early, which it had to be if Eleanor wanted to see the operations of the dairy; and then Mrs. Caxton and she went thither; and then first Eleanor began to have a proper conception of the magnitude and complication of the business her aunt presided over.

The dairies were of great extent, stretching along the ground floor of the house, behind and beyond the covered gallery where she and her aunt had held their first long conversation the day before. Tiled floors, as neat as wax; oaken shelves, tubs, vats, baskets, cheese-hoops, presses—all as neat and sweet as it was possible for anything to be—looked like a confusion of affairs to Eleanor's eye. However, the real business done that morning was sufficiently simple; and she found it interesting enough to follow patiently every part of the process through to the end. Several blue jackets were in attendance—some Welsh, some English—each as diligent at her work as if she only had the

whole to do. And among them Eleanor noticed how admirably her aunt played the mistress and acted the executive head. Quietly, simply as her words were spoken, they were nevertheless words that never failed to be instantly obeyed; and the service that was rendered her was given with what seemed the alacrity of affection, as well as the zeal of duty. Eleanor stood by—watching, amused, intent; yet taking in a silent lesson of character all the while, that touched her heart, and made her draw a deep breath now and then. The last thing visited was the cheese-house, the room where the cheeses were stored for ripening, quite away from all the dairies. Here there was a forest of cheeses, standing on end and lying on shelves, in various stages of maturity.

"Two a day!" said Eleanor, looking at them. "That makes a wonderful many in the course of the year."

"Except Sundays," said Mrs. Caxton. "No cheese is made on Sunday in my dairy, nor any dairy-work done, except milking the cows and setting the milk."

"I meant except Sundays, of course."

"It is not 'of course' here," said Mrs. Caxton. "The common practice in large dairy-farms is to do the same work on the seventh day that is done all the six."

"But that is wrong, aunty, it seems to me."

"Wrong? Of course it is wrong; but the defence is, that it is necessary. If Sunday's milk is not made at once into cheese, it must wait till Monday; and not only double work must be done then—for Monday will have its own milk—but double sets of everything will be needed—tubs and presses and all. So people think they cannot afford it."

"Well, how can they, aunt Caxton? There seems reason in that."

"Reason for what?"

"Why, I mean, it seems they have some reason for working on the Sabbath—not to lose all that milk. It is one seventh of all they have."

Mrs. Caxton replied, in a very quiet manner—"'Thou

shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.'"

"But, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, a little doubtfully, "he gives it in the use of means."

"Do you think he blesses the use of means he has forbidden?"

Eleanor was silent a moment.

"Aunt Caxton, people do get rich so—do they not?"

"'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich,'" said Mrs. Caxton, contentedly; "'and he addeth no sorrow with it.' That is the sort of riches I like best."

Eleanor did not answer; a kind of moisture came up in her eyes, for she felt poor in those riches.

"It is mere want of faith, Eleanor, that pleads such a reason," Mrs. Caxton went on. "It is taking the power to get wealth into our own hands. If it is in God's hands, it is just as easy certainly for him to give it to us in the obedient use of means as in the disobedient use of them; and much more likely that he will. Many a man has become poor by his disobedience, for one that has been allowed to prosper awhile in spite of it. If the statistics were made up, men would see. Meanwhile, never anybody trusted the Lord and was confounded."

"Then what do you do with the seventh day's milk, aunt Caxton?"

"I make butter of it. But I would pour it away down the river, Eleanor, before I would make it an excuse for disobeying God."

This was said without any heat, but as the quietest of conclusions. Eleanor stood silent, wondering at her aunt's cheeses and notions together. She was in a new world, surely. Yet a secret feeling of respect was every moment mounting higher.

"The principle is universally true, Eleanor, that the safe way in everything is the way of obedience. Consequences are not in our hands. It is only unbelief that would make consequences a reason for going out of the way. 'Trust in the Lord, and keep his way; so shall he exalt thee to inherit

the land.' I have had nothing but prosperity, Eleanor, ever since I began the course which my neighbours and servants thought would destroy me."

"I wanted to ask you that, aunt Caxton—how it had been."

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Caxton, the smile with which she had turned to Eleanor fading into placid gravity again, "if it had been otherwise it would have made no difference. I would rather be poor, with my Lord's blessing, than have all the principality without it."

Eleanor went away thinking. All this applied to the decision of her own affairs; and perhaps Mrs. Caxton had intended it should. But yet, how should she decide? To do the thing that was right—Eleanor wished that, and did not know what it was. Her wishes said one thing, and prayed for freedom. A vague, trammelling sense of engagements entered into and expectations formed and pledges given, at times confused all her ideas, and made her think it might be her duty to go home and finish wittingly what she had begun in ignorance of what she was doing. It would be now to sacrifice herself. Was she called upon to do that? What was right?

Mrs. Caxton never alluded any further to Eleanor's private affairs; and Eleanor, never forgetting them, kept them in the darkness of her own thoughts, and did not bring them up to the light and her aunt's eye. Only for this drawback, the days would have passed delightfully. The next day was Sunday.

"We have a long drive to church, Eleanor," said her aunt. "How will you go?"

"With you, aunty."

"I don't know about that; my car has no place for you. Are you a horsewoman?"

"O aunty! nothing would be so delightful, if you have anything I can ride. Nothing would be so delightful. I half live in the saddle at home."

"You do? Then you shall go errands for me. I will furnish you with a Welsh pony."

And this very day Eleanor mounted him to ride to church. Her aunt was in a light car that held but herself and the driver. Another vehicle, a sort of dogcart, followed with some of the servants. The day was mild and pleasant, though not brilliant with sunbeams. It made no matter. Eleanor could not comprehend how more loveliness could have been crowded into the enjoyment of two hours. On her pony she had full freedom for the use of her eyes; the road was excellent, and winding in and out through all the crookedness of the valley they threaded, she took it at all points of view. Nothing could be more varied. The valley itself, rich and wooded, with the little river running its course, marked by a thick embowering of trees; the hills that enclosed the valley taking every form of beauty, sometimes wild and sometimes tame, heathery and barren, rough and rocky, and again rounded and soft. Along these hills came into view numberless dwellings, of various styles and sizes, with once in a while a bold castle breaking forth in proud beauty, or a dismantled ruin, telling of pride and beauty that had been. Eleanor had no one to talk to, and she did not want to talk. On horseback, and on a Welsh pony, no Black Maggie or Tippoo, and in these wonderful new strange scenes, she felt free—free from Mr. Carlisle and his image for the moment; and though knowing that her bondage would return, she enjoyed her freedom all the more. The little pony was satisfactory; and as there was no need of taking a gallop to-day, Eleanor had nothing to desire.

The ride ended at the loveliest of all picturesque villages —so Eleanor thought—nestled in what seemed the termination of the valley. A little village, with the square tower of the church rising up above the trees—all the houses stood among trees—and the river was crossed by a bridge just above, and tore down a precipice just below, so near, that its roar was the constant lullaby of the inhabitants. It was the only sound to-day, rising in Sabbath stillness over the hills. After all this ride, the service in the little church did not disappoint expectation; it was sound, warm, and good; and Eleanor mounted her pony and rode home again, almost

wishing she could take service with her aunt as a dairymaid for ever. All the day was sweet to Eleanor. But at the end of it, a thought darted into her mind with the keenness of an arrow. Mr. Carlisle in a few days more might have learned of her runaway freak and of her hiding-place, and have time to come after her. There was a barb to the thought, for Eleanor could not get rid of it.

She begged the pony the next day, and the next, and went very long, rambling rides, in the luxury of being alone. They would have been most delightful but for the idea that haunted her, and which made her actually afraid to enter the house on her return home. This state of things was not to be borne much longer.

"You have let the pony tire you, Eleanor," Mrs. Caxton remarked. It was the evening of the second day, and the two ladies were sitting in the light of the wood fire.

"Ma'am, he could not do that. I live half my life on horseback at home."

"Then how am I to understand the long-drawn breaths which I hear from you every now and then?"

Mrs. Caxton was twisting up paper lighters. She was rarely without something in her fingers. Eleanor was doing nothing. At her aunt's question she half laughed, and seized one of the strips of paper to work upon. Her laugh changed into a sigh.

"Aunt Caxton, do you always find it easy to know what is the right thing to do—in all circumstances?"

"I have always infallible counsel that I can take."

"You mean the Bible? But the Bible does not tell one everything."

"I mean prayer."

"Prayer! But, my dear aunt Caxton!——"

"What is it, my dear?"

"I mean, that one wants an answer to one's perplexing questions."

"Mine never fail of an answer," said Mrs. Caxton. "If it is to be found in the Bible, I find it; if not, I go to the Lord, and get it from him."

"How, my dear aunt Caxton? How can you have an answer—in that way?"

"I ask to be directed, and I always am, Eleanor—always right. What do you think prayer is good for?"

"But, aunt Caxton!—I never heard of such a thing in my life! Please forgive me."

"'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him.*' Did you never hear that, Eleanor?"

"Aunty—excuse me—it is something I know nothing bout."

"You never had an answer to your own prayers?"

"No, ma'am," said Eleanor, drooping.

"My dear, there may be two reasons for that. Whoever wishes direction from the Lord, must be absolutely willing to follow it, whatever it be. We may not ask counsel of him as we do of our fellow-creatures, bent upon following our own all the while. The Lord knows our hearts, and withholds his answer when we ask so."

"How do you know what the answer is, aunty?"

"It may be given in various ways. Sometimes circumstances point it out; sometimes attention is directed to a word in the Bible; sometimes 'thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.'"

Eleanor did not answer; she thought her aunt was slightly fanatical.

"There is another reason for not getting an answer, Eleanor. It is, not believing that an answer will be given."

"Aunty, how can one help that?"

"By simply looking at what God has promised, and trusting it. 'But let a man ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.'"

"Aunt Caxton, I am exactly like such a wave of the sea. And in danger of being broken to pieces like one."

"Many a one has been," said Mrs. Caxton. But it was

tenderly said, not coldly; and the impulse to go on was irresistible. Eleanor changed her seat for one nearer.

"Aunt Caxton, I want somebody's help dreadfully."

"I see you do."

"Do you see it, ma'am?"

"I think I have seen it ever since you have been here."

"But at the same time, aunty, I do not know how to ask it."

"Those are sometimes the neediest cases. But I hope you will find a way, my dear."

Eleanor sat silent, nevertheless, for some minutes, and then she spoke in a lowered and changed tone.

"Aunt Caxton, you know the engagements I am under?"

"Yes; I have heard."

"What should a woman do—what is it her duty to do—who finds herself in every way bound to fulfil such engagements, except——"

"Except what?"

"Except her own heart, ma'am," Eleanor said, low and ashamed.

"My dear, you do not mean that your heart was not in these engagements when you made them?"

"I did not know where it was, aunty. It had nothing to do with them."

"Where is it now?"

"It is not in them, ma'am."

"Eleanor, let us speak plainly. Do you mean that you do not love this gentleman whom you have promised to marry?"

Eleanor hesitated, covered her face, and hesitated; at last spoke.

"Aunt Caxton, I thought I did—but I know now I do not; not as I think I ought;—I do not as he loves me." Eleanor spoke with burning cheeks, which her aunt could see even in the firelight, and though Eleanor's hand endeavoured to shield them.

"What made you enter into these engagements, my dear?"

"The will and power of two other people, aunt Caxton—and, I am afraid, now, a little ambition of my own was at

work in it. And I liked him, too. It was not a person that I did not like. But I did not know what I was doing. I liked him, aunt Caxton."

"And now it is a question with you whether you will fulfil these engagements?"

"Yes, ma'am—because I do not wish to fulfil them. I do not know whether I ought, or ought not."

Mrs. Caxton was silent in her turn.

"Eleanor, do you like some one else better?"

"Nobody else likes me better, aunt Caxton—there is nothing of that kind——"

"Still my question is not answered, Eleanor. Have *you* more liking for any other person?"

"Aunt Caxton—I do not know—I have seen—I do not know how to answer you!" Eleanor said, in bitter confusion; then hiding her face, she went on—"Just so much as this is true, aunt Caxton,—I have seen what makes me know that I do not love Mr. Carlisle; not as he loves me."

Mrs. Caxton stooped forward, took Eleanor's hands down from her face, and kissed her. It was a sad, drooping, pained face, hot with shame.

"My child," she said, "your honesty has saved you. I could not have advised you, Eleanor, if you had not been frank with me. Poor child!"

Eleanor came down on the floor, and hid her face in Mrs. Caxton's lap. Her aunt kept one hand softly resting on her hair while she spoke. She was silent first, and then she spoke very tenderly.

"You did not know, at the time you engaged yourself to this gentleman, that you were doing him wrong?"

"No, ma'am—I thought rather of wrong to myself."

"Why?"

"They were in such a hurry, ma'am."

"Since then, you have seen what you like better."

"Yes, ma'am," said Eleanor, doubtfully—"or what I know I *could* like better, if there was occasion. That is all."

"Now the question is, in these circumstances, what is your duty to Mr. Carlisle?"

Eleanor lifted her head to look into her aunt's face for the decision to come.

"The rule of judgment is not far off, Eleanor; it is the golden rule. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' My dear, take the case of the person you could like best in the world;—would you have such a person marry you if his heart belonged to somebody else?"

"Not for the whole world!" said Eleanor, raising her head, which had fallen again. "But, aunt Caxton, that is not my case. My heart is not anybody's."

"Put it differently, then. Would you marry such a man, if you knew that his mere liking for another was stronger than his love for you?"

"I think—I would rather die!" said Eleanor, slowly.

"Then I think your question is answered."

"But, aunt Caxton, it is not answered. Mr. Carlisle would not feel so. I know he would have me marry him, if he knew that my heart was a thousand times another person's—which it is not."

"Don't alter the case," said Mrs. Caxton, "except to make it stronger. If he were the right sort of man, he would not have you do so. There is no rule that we should make other people's wishes our standard of right."

"But, aunt Caxton, I have done Mr. Carlisle grievous wrong. O, I feel that!"

"Yes. What then?"

"Am I not bound to make him all the amends in my power?"

"Short of doing further wrong. Keep right and wrong always clear, Eleanor. They never mean the same thing."

"Aunty, what you must think of me!"

"I think of you just now as saved from shipwreck. Many a girl has drifted on in the course you were going, without courage to get out of the current, until she has destroyed herself; and perhaps somebody else."

"I do not think I had much courage, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, blushing.

"What had you, then?"

"It was mainly my horror of marrying that man, after I found I did not love him. And yet, aunt Caxton, I do like him; and I am very, very, very sorry! It has almost seemed to me sometimes that I ought to marry him, and give him what I can; and yet, if I were ready, I would rather die."

"Is your doubt settled?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Eleanor, sadly.

"My dear, you have done wrong—I judge, somewhat ignorantly—but mischief can never be mended by mischief. To marry one man, preferring another, is the height of disloyalty to both him and yourself; unless you can lay the whole truth before him; and then, as I think, in most cases it would be the height of folly."

"I will write to Mr. Carlisle to-morrow."

"And then, Eleanor, what was the other question you came here to settle?"

"It is quite a different question, aunty, and yet it was all twisted up with the other."

"You can tell it me; it will hardly involve greater confidence," said Mrs. Caxton, bending over and kissing Eleanor's brow, which rested upon her knee. "Eleanor, I am very thankful you came to Plassy."

The girl rose up, and kneeling beside her, hid her face in Mrs. Caxton's bosom. "Aunt Caxton, I am so glad! I have wanted just this help so long! and this refuge. Put your arms both round me, and hold me tight."

Mrs. Caxton said nothing for a little while. She waited for Eleanor to take her own time and speak. Very still the two were. There were some straining sobs that came from the one and went to the heart of the other; heavy and hard; but with no sound till they were quieted.

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, at last, "the other question was that one of a refuge."

"A heavenly one?"

"Yes. I had heard of a 'helmet of salvation'—I wanted it; but I do not know how to get it."

"Do you know what it is?"

"Not very clearly. But I have seen it, aunt Caxton;—I know it makes people safe and happy. I want it for myself."

"Safe from what?"

"From—all that I feared when I was dangerously ill last summer."

"What did you fear, Eleanor?"

"All the future, aunt Caxton. I was not ready, I knew, to go out of this world. I am no better now."

They had not changed their relative positions. Eleanor's face still lay on her aunt's bosom; Mrs. Caxton's arms still enfolded her.

"Bless the Lord! there is such a helmet," she said; "but we cannot manufacture it, Eleanor, nor even buy it. If you have it at all, you must take it as a free gift."

"How do you mean?"

"If you are willing to be a soldier of Christ, he will give you his armour."

"Aunt Caxton, I do not understand."

"It is only to take the promises of God, my dear, if you will take them obediently. Jesus has declared that 'whosoever believeth on him, hath everlasting life.'"

"But I cannot exactly understand what believing in him means. I am very stupid." Eleanor raised her head, and looked now in her aunt's face.

"Do you understand his work for us?"

"I do not know, ma'am."

"My dear, it is the work of love that was not willing to let us be miserable. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He gave himself a ransom for all. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

"Yes, I believe I understand that," said Eleanor, wearily.

"The only question is, whether we will let him bring us. The question is, whether we are willing to accept this substitution of the innocent One for our guilty selves, and be his obedient children. If we are—if we rely on him and his

blood only, and are willing to give up ourselves to him, then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. No matter though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

"But I do not walk so," said Eleanor.

"Do you want to walk so?"

"O yes, ma'am! yes!" said Eleanor, clasping her hands. "I desire it above all possible things. I want to be such a one."

"If you truly desire it, my dear, it is certain that you may have what you want; for the Lord's will is not different. He died for this very thing, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. There is an open door before you; all things are ready; you have only to plead the promises and enter in. The Lord himself says, Come."

"Aunt Caxton, I understand, I think; but I do not feel; not anything but fear—and desire."

"This is the mere statement of truth, my dear; it is like the altar with the wood laid in readiness and the sacrifice—all cold; and till fire falls down from heaven, no incense will arise from earth. But if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

"I am a poor creature, aunt Caxton!" said Eleanor, hiding her face again. And again Mrs. Caxton's arm came tenderly round her. And again Eleanor's tears flowed, this time in a flood.

"Certainly you are a poor creature, Eleanor. I am glad you are finding it out. But will you flee to the stronghold, you poor little prisoner of hope?"

"I think I am rather the prisoner of fear, aunty."

"Hope is a better gaoler, my dear."

"But that is the very thing that I want."

"The Lord give it you!"

They sat a good while in stillness after that, each thinking

her own thoughts; or perhaps those of the elder lady took the form of prayers. At last Eleanor raised her head, and kissed her aunt's lips earnestly.

"How good of you to let me come to Plassy!" she said.

"I shall keep you here now. You will not wish to be at home again for some time."

"No, ma'am. No, indeed I shall not."

"What are you going to do about Mr. Carlisle?"

"I shall write to-morrow. Or to-night."

"And tell him?——"

"The plain truth, aunt Caxton. I mean, the truth of the fact, of course. It is very hard!" said Eleanor, sorrowfully.

"It is doubtless hard; but it is the least of all the choice of evils you have left yourself. Write to-night,—and here, if you will. If you can without being disturbed by me."

"The sight of you will only help me, aunt Caxton. But I did not know the harm I was doing when I entered into all this."

"I believe it. Go and write your letter."

Eleanor brought her paper-case and sat down at the table. Mrs. Caxton ordered other lights, and was mutely busy at her own table. Not a word was spoken for a good while. It was with a strange mixture of pain and bursting gladness that Eleanor wrote the letter which she hoped would set her free. But the gladness was enough to make her sure it ought to be written; and the pain enough to make it a bitter piece of work. The letter was finished, folded, sealed; and with a sigh Eleanor closed her paper-case.

"What sort of a clergyman have you at home?" Mrs. axton asked. She had not spoken till then.

"He is a kind old man—he is a good man," Eleanor said, icking for words; "I like him. He is not a very interest- ıg preacher."

"Did you ever hold any talk with him on your thoughts of hope, and fear?"

"I could not, ma'am. I have tried; but I could not bring him to the point. He referred me to confirmation and to doing my duty; he did not help me."

"It is not a happy circumstance, that his public teaching should raise questions which his private teaching cannot answer."

"O, it did not!" said Eleanor. "Dr. Cairnes never raised a question in anybody's mind, I am sure; never in mine."

"The light that sprung up in your mind, then, came you do not know whence?"

"Yes, ma'am, I do," said Eleanor with a little difficulty. "It came from the words and teaching of a living example. But in me it seems to be only darkness."

Mrs. Caxton said no more, and Eleanor added no more. The servants came in to family prayer; and then they took their candles and bade each other an affectionate good-night. And Eleanor slept that night without dreaming.

CHAPTER XVII.

"For something that abode endued
With temple-like repose, an air
Of life's kind purposes pursued
With order'd freedom sweet and fair.
A tent pitched in a world not right
It seem'd, whose inmates, every one,
On tranquil faces, bore the light
Of duties beautifully done."

How did the days pass after that? In restless anxiety, with Eleanor; in miserable uncertainty and remorse and sorrow. She counted the hours till her despatch could be in Mr. Carlisle's hands; then she figured to herself the pain it would cause him; then she doubted fearfully what the immediate effect would be. It might be, to bring him down to Plassy with the utmost speed of post-horses; and again Eleanor reckoned the stages and estimated the speed at which Mr. Carlisle's postillions could be made to travel, and the time when it would be possible for this storm to burst upon Plassy. That day Eleanor begged the pony and went out. She wandered for hours among unnumbered, and almost unheeded, beauties of mountain and vale; came home at a late hour, and crept in by a back entrance. No stranger had come; the storm had not burst yet; and Mrs. Caxton was moved to pity all the supper-time and hours of the evening, at the state of fear and constraint in which Eleanor evidently dwelt.

"My dear, did you like this man?" she said when they were bidding each other good-night.

"Mr. Carlisle?—yes, very well; if only he had not wanted me to marry him."

"But you fear him, Eleanor."

"Because, aunt Caxton, he always had a way of making me do just what he wished."

"Are you so easily governed, Eleanor, by one whom you do not love? I should not have thought it."

"I do not know how it was, aunty. I had begun wrong, in the first place; I was in a false position;—and lately Mr. Carlisle has taken it into his head, very unnecessarily, to be jealous; and I could not move a step without subjecting myself to a false imputation."

"Good-night, my dear," said her aunt. "If he comes, I will take all imputations on myself."

But Mr. Carlisle did not come. Day passed after day and the intense fear Eleanor had at first felt changed to a somewhat quieter anticipation; though she never came home from a ride without a good deal of circumspection about getting into the house. At last, one day when she was sitting with her aunt, the messenger came from the post, and one of those letters was handed to Eleanor that she knew so well; with the proud seal and its crest. Particularly full and well made she thought this seal was; though that was not so very uncommon, and perhaps she was fanciful; but it was a magnificent seal, and the lines of the outer handwriting were very bold and firm. Eleanor's cheeks lost some colour as she opened the envelope, which she did without breaking the bright black wax. Her own letter was all the enclosure.

The root of wrong even unconsciously planted, will bear its own proper and bitter fruits; and Eleanor tasted them that day, and the next, and the next. She was free; she was secure from even an attempt to draw her back into the bonds she had broken; when Mr. Carlisle's pride had taken up the question, there was no danger of his ever relenting or faltering; and pride had thrown back her letter of withdrawal in her face. She was free; but she knew she had given pain, and that more feeling was stung in Mr. Carlisle's heart than his pride.

"He will get over it, my dear," said her aunt coolly But Eleanor shed many tears for a day or two, over the wrong she had done. Letters from Ivy Lodge did not help her.

"Home is very disagreeable now," wrote her little sister Julia; "mamma is crying half the day, and the other half she does not feel comfortable,"—(a gentle statement of the case.) "And papa is very much vexed, and keeps out of doors the whole time, and Alfred with him; and Mr. Rhys is gone away, and I have got nobody. I shouldn't know what to do, if Mr. Rhys had not taught me; but now I can pray. Dear Eleanor, do you pray? I wish you were coming home again, but mamma says you are not coming for a great while; and Mr. Rhys is never coming back. He said so."

Mrs. Powle's letter was in strict accordance with Julia's description of matters; desperately angry and mortified. The only comfort was, that in her mortification she desired Eleanor to keep away from home and out of her sight; so Eleanor, with a certain rest of heart in spite of all, prepared herself for a long quiet sojourn with her aunt at the cheese-farm of Plassy. Mrs. Caxton composedly assured her that all this vexation would blow over; and Eleanor's own mind was soon fain to lay off its care and content itself in a nest of peace. Mrs. Caxton's house was that, to anybody worthy of enjoying it; and to Eleanor it had all the joy not only of fitness but of novelty. But for a lingering care on the subject of the other question that had occupied her, Eleanor would in a little while have been happier than at any former time in her life. How was it with that question, which had pressed so painfully hard during weeks and months past? now that leisure and opportunity were full and broad to take it up and attend to it. So they were; but with the removal of difficulty came in some degree the relaxing of effort; opportunity bred ease. It was so simple a thing to be good at Plassy, that Eleanor's cry for it became less bitter. Mrs. Caxton's presence, words, and prayers, kept the thought constantly alive; yet with more of soothing and

hopeful than of exciting influence; and while Eleanor constantly wished she were happy like her, she nevertheless did not fail to be happy in her own way.

The aunt and niece were excellently suited to each other, and took abundant delight in each other's company. Eleanor found that what had been defective in her own education was in the way to be supplied and made up to her singularly; here, of all places, on a cheese-farm! So it was. To her accomplishments and materials of knowledge, she now found suddenly superadded the necessity and the practice of thinking. In Mrs. Caxton's house it was impossible to help it. Judgment, conscience, reason, and good sense, were constantly brought into play; upon things already known, and things until then not familiar. In the reading of books, of which they did a good deal; in the daily discussion of the newspaper; in the business of every hour, in the intercourse with every neighbour, Eleanor found herself always stimulated and obliged to look at things from a new point of view; to consider them with new lights; to try them by a new standard. As a living creature, made and put here to live for something, she felt herself now; as in a world where everybody had like trusts to fulfil and was living mindful or forgetful of his trust. How mindful Mrs. Caxton was of hers, Eleanor began every day with increasing admiration to see more and more. To her servants, to her neighbours, with her money and her time and her sympathies, for little present interests and for world-wide and everlasting ones, Mrs. Caxton was ever ready, active, watchful; hands full and head full and heart full. That motive power of her one mind and will, Eleanor gradually found, was the centre and spring of a vast machinery of good, working so quietly and so beneficently as proved it had been in operation a long, long time. It was a daily deep lesson to Eleanor, going deeper and deeper every day. The roots were striking down that would shoot up and bear fruit by and by.

Eleanor was a sweet companion to her aunt all those months. In her fresh, young, rich nature, Mrs. Caxton had

presently seen the signs of strength, without which no character would have suited her; while Eleanor's temper was of the finest, and her mind went to work vigorously upon whatever was presented for its action. Mrs. Caxton wisely took care to give it an abundance of work; and furthermore employed Eleanor in busy offices of kindness and help to others; as an assistant in some of her own plans and habits of good. Many a ride Eleanor took on the Welsh pony, to see how some sick person was getting on, or to carry supplies to another, or to give instruction to another, or to oversee and direct the progress of matters on which yet another was engaged. This was not new work to her; yet now it was done in the presence at least, if not under the pressure, of a higher motive than she had been accustomed to bring to it. It took, in some degree, another character. Eleanor was never able to forget now, that these people to whom she was ministering had more of the immortal in them than of even the earthly; she was never able to forget it of herself. And busy and happy as the winter was, there often came over her those weary longings for something which she had not yet—the something which made her aunt's course daily so clear and calm and bright. What sort of happiness would be Eleanor's when she got back to Ivy Lodge? She asked herself that question sometimes. Her present happiness was superficial.

The spring meanwhile drew near, and signs of it began to be seen, and felt, and heard. And one evening Mrs. Caxton got out the plan of her garden, and began to consider in detail its arrangements, with a view to coming operations. It was pleasant to see Mrs. Caxton at this work, and to hear her; she was in her element. Eleanor was much surprised to find not only that her aunt was her own head gardener, but that she had an exquisite knowledge of the business.

"This *sulphurea* I think is dead," remarked Mrs. Caxton. "I must have another. Eleanor—what is the matter?"

"Ma'am?"

"You are drawing a very long breath, my dear. Where did it come from?"

The reserve which Eleanor had all her life practised before other people, had almost from the first given way before her aunt.

"From a thought of home, aunt Caxton. I shall not be so happy when I get back there."

"The happiness that will not bear transportation, Eleanor, is a very poor article. But they will not want you at home."

"I am afraid of it."

"Without reason. You will not go home this spring, my dear; trust me. You are mine for a good long time yet."

Mrs. Caxton was wiser than Eleanor; as was soon proved. Mrs. Powle wrote, desiring her daughter, whatever she did, not to come home then; nor soon. People would think she was come home for her wedding; and questions innumerable would be asked, the mortification of which would be unbearable, Whereas, if Eleanor kept away, the dismal certainty would by degrees become public, that there was to be no match at all between Rythdale and the Lodge. "Stay away till it is all blown over, Eleanor," wrote her mother; "it is the least you can do for your family." And the squire even sent a word of a letter, more kind, but to the same effect. He wanted his bright daughter at home, he said; he missed her; but in the circumstances, perhaps it would be best, if her aunt would be so good as to keep her.

Eleanor carried these letters to Mrs. Caxton, with a tear in her eye, and an humbled, pained face.

"I told you so," said her aunt. "How could people expect that Mr. Carlisle's marriage would take place three months after the death of his mother? that is what I do not understand."

"They arranged it so, and it was given out, I suppose. Everything gets known. He was going abroad in the spring, or immediately after; and meant not to go without me."

"Now you are my child, my dear, and shall help me with my roses," said her aunt, kissing Eleanor, and taking her in her arms. "Eleanor, is that second question settled yet?"

"No, aunt Caxton."

"You have not chosen yet which master you will serve, the world or the Lord?"

"O yes, ma'am—I have decided *that*. I know which I want to be."

"But not which you will be."

"I mean that, ma'am."

"You are not a servant of the Lord now, Eleanor?"

"No, aunt Caxton—I don't see how. I am dark."

"Christ says, 'He that is not with me is against me.' A question that is undecided, decides itself. Eleanor, decide this question to-night."

"To-night, ma'am?"

"Yes. I am going to send you to church."

"To church! There is no service to-night, aunt Caxton."

"Not at the church where you have been—in the village. There is a little church in the valley beyond Mrs. Pynce's cottage. You are going there."

"I do not remember any. Why, aunt Caxton, the valley is too narrow there for anything but the road and the brook; the mountains leave no room—hardly room for her house."

"You have never been any further. Do you not remember a sharp turn just beyond that place?"

"Yes, I do."

"You will see the chapel when you get round the turn."

The place Mrs. Caxton alluded to, was a wild, secluded, most beautiful valley, the bottom of which, as Eleanor said, was almost filled up with the road, and the brook which rushed along its course to meet the river; itself almost as large as another river. Where the people could be found to go to a church in such a region, she could not imagine. Heather clothed the hills; fairy cascades leaped down the rocks at every turning, lovely as a dream; the whole scene was wild and lonely. Hardly any human habitations or signs of human action broke the wild reign of nature all the valley through. Eleanor was sure of a charming ride at least, whether there was to be a congregation in the church at the end of it or no; and she prepared herself accordingly.

Mrs. Caxton was detained at home; the car did not go; three or four of the household, men and women, went on ponies as Eleanor did.

They set off very early, while the light was fair and beautiful yet, for the ride was of some length. It was not on the way to the village; it turned off from the fine high road to a less practised and more uneven track. It was good for horses; and riding in front, a little ahead of her companions, Eleanor had the luxury of being alone. Why had Mrs. Caxton bade her "settle that question" to-night? How could she, when her mind was in so much darkness and confusion on the subject? Yet Eleanor hardly knew specifically what the hindrance was; only it was certain that while she wished and intended to be a Christian, she was no nearer the point, as far as she could see, than she had been months ago. Nay, Eleanor confessed to herself, that in the sweet quiet and peace of her aunt's house, and in her own release from pressing trouble, she had rather let all troublesome thoughts slip away from her; so that, though not forgotten, the subject had been less painfully on her mind than through the weeks that went before her coming to Plassy. She had wished for leisure and quiet to attend to it, and put that pain to rest for ever; and in leisure and quiet she had suffered pain to go to sleep in a natural way, and left all the business of dealing with it to be deferred till the time of its waking. How was all this? Eleanor walked her pony slowly along, and thought. *Then* she had been freshly under the influence of Mr. Rhys and his preaching; the very remembrance of which, now and here, stirred her like an alarum bell. Ay, and more than that; it wakened the keen longing for that beauty and strength of life which had so shown her her own poverty, Humbled and sad, Eleanor walked her pony on and on, while each little crystal torrent that came with its sweet clear rush and sparkle down the rocks, tinkled its own little silver bell note in her ears; a note of purity and action. Eleanor had never heard it from them before; now, somehow, each rushing streamlet, with its bright leap over obstacles, and its joyous dash on-

ward in its course, sounded the same note. Nothing could be more lovely than these cascades; every one different from the others, as if to show how many forms of beauty water could take. Eleanor noticed and heard them every one, and the call of every one, and rode on in a pensive mood till Mrs. Pynce's cottage was passed, and the turn in the valley just beyond opened up a new scene for her.

How lovely! how various! The straitened dell spread out gradually from this point into a comparatively broad valley, bordered with higher hills as it widened in the distance. The light still showed its entrancing beauty; wooded, and spotted with houses and habitations of all kinds; from the very humble to the very lordly, and from the business factories of to-day, back to the ruined strongholds of the time when war was business. Wide and delicious the view was, as much as it was unexpected; and spring's softened colouring was all over it. Eleanor made a pause of a few seconds as soon as all this burst upon her; her next thought was to look for the church. And it was plain to see; a small dark edifice, in excellent keeping with its situation, because of its colour and its simple structure, which half merged it among the rocks and the hills.

"That is the church, John?" Eleanor said to Mrs. Caxton's factotum.

"That is it, ma'am. There's been no minister there for a good piece of the year back."

"And what place is this?"

"There's no *place*, to call it, ma'am. It's the valley of Glanog."

Eleanor jumped off her pony and went into the church. She had walked her pony too much; it was late; the service had begun; and Eleanor was taken with a sudden tremor at hearing the voice that was reading the hymn. She had no need to look to see whose it was. She walked up the aisle, seeking a vacant place to sit down, and exceedingly desirous to find it, for she was conscious that she was right under the preacher's eye and observation; but as one never does well what one does in confusion, she overlooked one or

two chances that offered, and did not get a seat till she was far forward, in the place of fullest view for both seeing and being seen. And there she sat down, asking herself what should make her tremble so. Why had her aunt Caxton sent her that evening, alone, to hear Mr. Rhys preach? And why not? what was there about it? She was very glad, she knew, to hear him; but there would be no more apathy or languor in her mind now on the subject of that question her aunt had desired her to settle. No more. The very sound of that speaker's voice woke her conscience to a sharp sense of what she had been about all these months, since she had heard it last. She bent her head in her hand for a little while, in a rushing of thoughts—or ideas—that prevented her senses from acting; then the words the people were singing around her made their entrance into her ear; an entrance opened by the sweet melody. The words were given very plain.

"No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone;
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
Th' inexorable throne!

"No matter which my thoughts employ,
A moment's misery or joy;
But O! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place?
Shall I my everlasting days
With fiends or angels spend?"

Eleanor sat cowering before that thought. "Now are we going to have a *terrible* sermon?" was her inward question. She would not look up. The preliminary services were all over, she found, and the preacher rose and gave out his text.

"A glorious high throne from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary."

Eleanor could not keep her eyes lowered another second.

The well-known deliberate utterance, and a little unconscious indefinable ring of the tones in which the words were spoken, brought her eyes to the speaker's face; and they were never turned away again. "Do we need a sanctuary?" was the first question the preacher started; and very quietly he went on to discuss that. Very quietly; his manner and his voice were neither in the slightest degree excited; how it was, Eleanor did not know, but as he went on a tide of feeling swept over the assembly. She could see it in the evidences of tears, and she heard it in a deep sough of the breath that went all over the house. The preacher was reaching each one's secret consciousness, and stirring into life that deep hidden want of every heart, which every heart knew differently. Some from sorrow; some from sin; some from weariness; some from loneliness; some from the battle of life; some from the struggle with their own hearts; all, from the wrath to come. Nay, Eleanor's own heart was throbbing with the sense that he had reached it and touched it, and knew its condition. How was it, that with those quiet words he had bowed every spirit before him, her own among the number? It is true, that in the very containedness of his tones and words there was an evidence of suppressed power; it flashed out once in a while; and wrought possibly with the more effect, from the feeling that it was contained and kept down. However it were, the minds of the assembly were already at a high state of tension, when he passed to the other part of his subject—the consideration of the sanctuary. It was no discourse of regular heads and divisions; it is impossible to report, except as to its effects. The preacher's head and heart were both full, and words had no stint. But in this latter part of his subject, the power which had been so contained was let loose, though still kept within bounds. The eye fired now, and the voice quivered with its charge, as he endeavoured to set before the minds of the people the glorious vision which filled his own; to make known to others the "riches of glory" in which his own soul rested and rejoiced. So evidently, that his hearers half caught at what he would show them, by the

catching of sympathy; and from different parts of the house now there went up a suppressed cry, of want, or of exultation, as the case might be, which it was very thrilling to hear. It was the sense of want and pain in Eleanor's mind; not spoken indeed except by her countenance; but that toned strongly with the notes of feeling that were uttered around her. As from the bottom of a dark abyss into which he had fallen, a person might look up to the bright sky, of which he could see but a little, which yet would give him token of all the firmamental light and beauty up there which he had not. From her darkness Eleanor saw it—saw it in the preacher's face and words; yes, and heard it in many a deep-breathed utterance of gladness or thanksgiving at her side. She had never felt so dark in her life as when she left the church. She rushed away as soon as the service was over, lest any one should speak to her; however, she had to wait some time outside the door before John came out. The people all tarried strangely.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said John, "but we was waiting a bit to see the minister."

Eleanor rode home fast, through fair moonlight without, and great obscurity within her own spirit. She avoided her aunt; she did not want to speak of the meeting; she succeeded in having no talk about it that night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I glanced within a rock's cleft breast,
A lonely, safely-sheltered nest.
There, as successive seasons go,
And tides alternate ebb and flow,
Full many a wing is trained for flight
In heaven's blue field—in heaven's broad light."

THE next morning at breakfast, Eleanor and her aunt were alone as usual. There was no avoiding anything.

"Did you have a pleasant evening?" Mrs. Caxton asked.

"I had a very pleasant ride, aunt Caxton."

"How was the sermon?"

"It was—I suppose it was very good; but it was very peculiar."

"In what way?"

"I don't know, ma'am; it excited the people very much. They could not keep still."

"Do you like preaching better that does not excite people?"

Eleanor hesitated. "No, ma'am; but I do not like them to make a noise."

"What sort of a noise?"

Eleanor paused again, and to her astonishment found her own lip quivering and her eyes watering as she answered, "It was a noise of weeping and of shouting—not loud shouting; but that is what it was."

"I have often known such effects under faithful presenting of the truth," said Mrs. Caxton, composedly. "When

people's feelings are much moved, it is very natural to give them expression."

"For uncultivated people, particularly."

"I don't know about the cultivation," said Mrs. Caxton. "Robert Hall's sermons used to leave two-thirds of his hearers on their feet. I have seen a man in middle life, a judge in the courts, one of the heads of the community in which he lived, so excited that he could not undo the fastenings of his pew door; and he put his foot on the seat and sprang over into the aisle."

"Do you like such things, aunt Caxton?"

"I prefer another mode of getting out of church, my dear."

"But shouting, or crying out, is what people of refinement would not do, even if they could not open their pew doors."

Eleanor was a little sorry the moment she had uttered this speech; her spirits were in a whirl of disorder and uncomfortableness, and she had spoken hastily. Mrs. Caxton answered with great composure.

"What do you call those words that you are accustomed to hear, the 'Gloria in Excelsis?'—'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King.'"

"What do *you* call it, aunt Caxton?"

"If it is not a shout of joy, I can make nothing of it; or the one hundred and fiftieth Psalm—'O praise God in his holiness; praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him in his noble acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him in the sound of the trumpet; praise him upon the lute and harp. Praise him in the cymbals and dances; praise him upon the strings and pipe. Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals; praise him upon the loud cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.'—What is that but a shout of praise?"

"It never sounded like a shout," said Eleanor.

"It did once, I think," said Mrs. Caxton.

"When was that, ma'am?"

"When Ezra sang it, with the priests and the people to help him, after they were returned from captivity. Then the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. All the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord."

"But, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, who felt herself taken down a little, as a secure talker is apt to be by a manner very composed in his opponent—"it is surely the habit of refined persons in these times not to get excited, or not to express their feelings very publicly?"

"A very good habit," said Mrs. Caxton. "Nevertheless, I have seen a man—a gentleman, and a man in very high standing—in a public assembly, go white with anger and become absolutely speechless with the strength of passion at some offence he had taken.

"O, such passions, of course, will display themselves sometimes," said Eleanor. "Bad passions often will. They escape control."

"I have seen a lady—a lovely and refined lady—faint away at the sudden tidings that a child's life was secure, whom she had almost given up for lost."

"But, dear aunt Caxton, you do not call that a parallel case?"

"A parallel case with what?"

"Anybody might be excited at such a thing. You would wonder if they were not."

"I do not see the justness of your reasoning, Eleanor. A man may turn white with passion, and it is natural; a woman may faint with joy at receiving back her child from death, and you are not surprised. But the joy of suddenly seeing *eternal* life one's own—the joy of knowing that God has forgiven our sins—you think may be borne calmly. I have known people faint under that joy as well."

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, her voice growing hoarse, "I do not see how anybody can have it. How can they *know* their sins are forgiven?"

"You may find it in your Bible, Eleanor; did you never see it there? 'The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God.'"

"But Paul was inspired?"

"Yes, thank God!—to declare that dividend of present joy to all shareholders in the stock of eternal life. But, doubtless, only faith can take it out."

Eleanor sat silent, chewing bitter thoughts. "O, this is what these people have!" she said to herself; "this is the helmet of salvation! And I am as far from it as ever!" The conversation ended there. Eleanor was miserable all day. She did not explain herself; Mrs. Caxton only saw her preoccupied, moody, and silent.

"There is preaching again at Glanog to-night," she said, a few days afterwards; "I am not yet quite well enough to go. Do you choose to go, Eleanor?"

Eleanor looked down, and answered "Yes."

She went; and again, and again, and again. Sundays or week-days, Eleanor missed no chance of riding her pony to the little valley church. Mrs. Caxton generally went with her after the first week; but going in her car she was no hindrance to the thoughtfulness and solitude of the rides on horseback; and Eleanor sometimes wept all the way home, and oftener came with a confused pain in her heart, dull or acute, as the case might be. She saw truth that seemed beautiful and glorious to her; she saw it in the faces and lives, as well as in the words of others; she longed to share their immunity, and the peace she perceived them possessed of; but how to lay hold of it she could not find. She seemed to herself too evil ever to become good; she tried, but her heart seemed as hard as a stone. She prayed, but no relief came. She did not see how she *could* be saved while evil had such a hold of her; and to dislodge it she was powerless. Eleanor was in a constant state of uneasiness and distress now. Her usually fine temper was more easily roughened than she had ever known it; the services she had long been accustomed to render to others who needed her, she felt it now very hard to give. She was dissatisfied

with herself and very unhappy, and she said to herself that she was unfit to properly minister to anybody else. She became a comparatively silent and ungenial companion to her aunt. Mrs. Caxton, perhaps, understood her, for she made no remark on this change, seemed to take no notice, was as evenly and tenderly affectionate to her niece as ever before, with perhaps a little added expression of sympathy now and then. She did not even ask an explanation of Eleanor's manner of getting out of church.

Eleanor and her aunt, as it happened, always occupied a seat very near the front and almost under the pulpit. It had been Eleanor's custom ever since the first time she came there, to slip out of her seat and make her way down the aisle with eager though quiet haste, leaving her aunt to follow at her leisure; and she was generally mounted and off before Mrs. Caxton reached the front door. During the service always now, Eleanor's eyes were fastened upon the preacher; his often looked at her—he recognized her, of course—and Eleanor had a vague fear that if she were not out of the way he would some time or other come down and accost her. It was an unreasoning fear; she gave no account of it to herself, except that her mind was in an unsettled, out-of-order state, that would not bear questioning; and if he came, he would be certain to question her. So Eleanor fled, and let her aunt do the talking—if any there were. Eleanor never asked and never knew.

This went on for some weeks. Spring had burst upon the hills, and the valleys were green in beauty and flushing with flowers; and Eleanor's heart was barren and cold, more than she had ever felt it to be. She began to have a most miserable opinion of herself.

It happened one night, what rarely happened, that Mr. Rhys had some one in the pulpit with him. Eleanor was sorry; she grudged to have even the closing prayer or hymn given by another voice. But it was so this evening; and when Eleanor rose as usual to make her quick way out of the house, she found that somebody else had been quick. Mr. Rhys stood beside her. It was impossible to help

speaking. He had clearly come down for the very purpose. He shook hands with Eleanor.

"How do you do?" he said. "I am glad to see you here. Is your mind at rest yet?"

"No," said Eleanor. However it was, this meeting which she had so shunned was not entirely unwelcome to her when it came. If anything would make her feel better, or any counsel do her good, she was willing to stand even questioning that might lead to it. Mr. Rhys's questioning on this occasion was not very severe. He only asked her, "Have you ever been to class?"

"To what?" said Eleanor.

"To a class-meeting. You know what that is?"

"Yes,—I know a little. No, I have never been to one."

"I should like to see you at mine. We meet at Mrs. Powlis's, in the village of Plassy, Wednesday afternoon."

"But I could not, Mr. Rhys. It would not be possible for me to say a word before other people—it would not be possible."

"I will try not to trouble you with difficult questions. Promise me that you will come. It will not hurt you to hear others speak."

Eleanor hesitated.

"Will you come and try?"

"Yes."

"There!" said Eleanor to herself as she rode away, "now I have got my head in a net, and I am fast. *I* going to such a place! What business have I there?" And yet there was a secret gratification in the hope that somehow this new plan might bring her good. But on the whole Eleanor disliked it excessively, with all the power of nature and cultivation. For though frank enough to those whom she loved, a proud reserve was Eleanor's nature in regard to all others whom she did not love; and the habits of her life were, as far as possible, at variance with this proposed meeting, in its familiar and social religious character. She could not conceive how people should wish to speak of their intimate feelings before other people. Her own shrank from

exposure as morbid flesh shrinks from the touch. However, Wednesday came.

"Can I have Powis this afternoon, aunt Caxton?"

"Certainly, my dear; no need to ask. Powis is yours. Are you going to Mrs. Pynce?"

"No, ma'am."—Eleanor struggled.—"Mr. Rhys has made me promise to go to his class. I do not like to go at all; but I have promised."

"You will like to go next time," said Mrs. Caxton, quietly. And she said no more than that.

"Will I?" thought Eleanor as she rode away. But if there was anything harsh or troubled in her mood of mind, all nature breathed upon it to soften it. The trees were leafing out again; the meadows brilliant with fresh green; the soft spring airs wooing into full blush and beauty the numberless spring flowers; every breath fragrant with new sweetness. Nothing could be lovelier than Eleanor's ride to the village; nothing more soothing to a ruffled condition of thought; and she arrived at Mrs. Powlis's door with an odd kind of latent hopefulness that something good might be in store for her there.

Her strange and repugnant feelings returned when she got into the house. She was shown into a room where several other persons were sitting, and where more kept momently coming in. Greetings passed between these persons, very frank and cordial; they were all at home there, and accustomed to each other and to the business; Eleanor alone was strange, unwonted, not in her element. That feeling, however, changed as soon as Mr. Rhys came in. Where he was, there was at least one person with whom she had sympathy, and who had some little degree of sympathy with her. Eleanor's feelings were destined to go through a course of discipline before the meeting was over.

It began with some very sweet singing. There were no books; everybody knew the words that were sung, and they burst out like a glad little chorus. Eleanor's lips only were mute. The prayer that followed stirred her very much. It

was so simple, so pure, so heavenward in its aspirations, so human in its humbleness, so touching in its sympathies. For they reached *her*, Eleanor knew by one word. And when the prayer was ended, whatever might follow, Eleanor was glad she had come to that class-meeting.

But what followed she found to be intensely interesting. In words, some few, some many, one after another of the persons present gave an account of his progress or of his standing in the Christian life. Each spoke only when called upon by Mr. Rhys; and each was answered in his turn with a word of counsel or direction or encouragement, as the case seemed to need. Sometimes the answer was in the words of the Bible; but always, whatever it were, it was given, Eleanor felt, with singular appositeness to the interests before him. With great skill too, and with infinite sympathy and tenderness if need called for it; with sympathy invariably. And Eleanor admired the apt readiness and kindness and wisdom with which the answers were framed; so as to suggest without fail the lesson desired to be given, yet so suggest that it should be felt by nobody as an imputation or a rebuke. And ever and again the little assembly broke out into a burst of song, a verse or two of some hymn, that started naturally from the last words that had been said. Those bursts of song touched Eleanor. They were so plainly heartfelt, so utterly glad in their utterances, that she had never heard the like. No choir, the best trained in the world, could give such an effect with their voices, unless they were also trained and meet to be singers in heaven. One of the choruses pleased Eleanor particularly. It was sung in a wild sweet tune, and with great energy.

"There's balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.
There's power enough in Jesus—
To save a sin-sick soul."

It was just after this was finished, that Mr. Rhys in his moving about the room came and stood before Eleanor. He asked her, "Do you love Jesus?"

It is impossible to express the shame and sorrow with which Eleanor answered, "No."

"Do you wish to be a Christian?"

Eleanor bowed her head.

"Do you *intend* to be one?"

Eleanor looked up, surprised at the word, and answered, "If I can."

"Do you think," said he very tenderly, "that you have a right to that '*if*'—when Jesus has said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest?*'"

He turned from her, and again struck the notes they had been singing.

"There's balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.
There's power enough in Jesus
To save a sin-sick soul."

The closing prayer followed, which almost broke Eleanor's heart in two; it so dealt with her and for her. While some of those present were afterwards exchanging low words and shakes of the hand, she slipped away and mounted her pony.

She was in dreadful confusion during the first part of her ride. Half resentful, half broken-hearted. It was the last time, she said to herself, that ever she would be found in a meeting like that. She would never go again; to make herself a mark for people's sympathy and a subject for people's prayers. And yet—surely the human mind seems an inconsistent thing at times—the thought of that sympathy and those prayers had a touch of sweetness in it, which presently drew a flood of tears from Eleanor's eyes. There was one old man in particular, of venerable appearance, who had given a most dignified testimony of faith and happiness, whose "Amen!" recurred to her. It was uttered at the close of a petition Mr. Rhys had made in her favour; and Eleanor recalled it now with a strange mixture of feelings. Why was she so different from him and from the rest

of those good people? She knew her duty; why was it not done? She seemed to herself more hard-hearted and evil than Eleanor would formerly have supposed possible of her; she had never liked herself less than she did during this ride home. Her mind was in a rare turmoil, of humiliation and darkness and sorrow; one thing only was clear—that she never would go to a class-meeting again! And yet it would be wrong to say that she was on the whole sorry she had gone once, or that she really regretted anything that had been done or said. But this once should suffice her. So she went along, dropping tears from her eyes and letting Powis find his way as he pleased; which he was quite competent to do.

By degrees her eyes cleared to see how lovely the evening was falling. The air sweet with exhalations from the hedgerows and meadows, yes, and from the more distant hills too; fragrant and balmy. The cattle were going home from the fields; smoke curled up from a hundred chimney-tops along the hill-sides and the valley bottom; the evening light spread here and there in a broad glow of colour; fair snatches of light were all that in many a place the hills and the bottom could catch. Every turn in the winding valley brought a new combination of wonderful beauty into view; and shadows and light, and flower-fragrance, and lowing cattle along the ways, and wreaths of chimney-smoke—all spoke of peace. Could the spell help reaching anybody's heart? It reached Eleanor's; or her mood in some inexplicable way soothed itself down; for when she reached the farmhouse, though she thought of herself in the same humbled forlorn way as ever, her thought of the class-meeting had changed.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea."

ELEANOR could not stay away from the Wednesday meetings at Mrs. Powlis's house. In vain she had thought she would—she determined she would; when the day came round she found herself drawn with a kind of fascination towards the place. She went; and after that second time never questioned at all about it. She went every week.

It was with no relief to her mental troubles, however. She was sometimes touched and moved—often. At other times she felt dull and hopeless. Yet it soothed her to go; and she came away generally feeling inspirited with hope by something she had heard, or feeling at least the comfort that she had taken a step in the right direction. It did not seem to bring her much more comfort. Eleanor did not see how she could be a Christian while her heart was so hard and so full of its own will. She found it perverse, even now, when she was wishing so much to be different. What hope for her?

It was a great help, that during all this time Mrs. Caxton left her unquestioned and uncounselled. She made no remarks about Eleanor's going to class-meeting; she took it as a perfectly natural thing; never asked her anything about it or about her liking it. A contrary course would

have greatly embarrassed Eleanor's action; as it was, she felt perfectly free, unwatched, and at ease.

The spring was flushing into mature beauty and waking up all the flowers on the hills and in the dales, when Eleanor, one afternoon, came out to her aunt in the garden. A notable change had come over the garden by this time; its comparatively barren-looking beds were all rejoicing in gay bloom and sending up a gush of sweetness to the house with every stir of the air that way. From the house to the river, terrace below terrace sloped down, brimfull already of blossoms and fragrance. The roses were making great preparations for their coming season of festival; the mats which had covered some tender plants were long gone. Tulips and hyacinths, and polyanthuses and primroses, were in a flush of spring glory now; violets breathed everywhere. The snowy-flowered gooseberry and the red-flowered currant, and berberry with its luxuriant yellow bloom, and the almond, and a magnificent magnolia blossoming out in the arms of its evergreen sister, with many another flower less known to Eleanor, made the garden terraces a little wilderness of loveliness and sweetness. Near the house some very fine auriculas in pots were displaying themselves. In the midst of all this, Mrs. Caxton was busy, with one or two people to help her and work under direction. Planting and training and seed-sowing were going on; and the mistress of the place moved about among her floral subjects a very pleasant representation of a rural queen, her nicce thought. Few queens have a more queenly presence than Mrs. Caxton had; and with a trowel in hand just as much as if it were a sceptre. And few queens, indeed, carry such a calm mind under such a calm brow. Eleanor sighed and smiled.

"Among your auriculas, aunty, as usual!"

"Among everything," said Mrs. Caxton, "There is a great deal to do. Don't you want to help, Eleanor? You may plant Gladiolus bulbs, or you may make cuttings, or you may sow seeds. I can find you work."

"Aunty, I am going down to the village."

"O, it is Wednesday afternoon!" said Mrs. Caxton. And she came close up to her niece and kissed her, while one hand was full of bulbs and the other held a trowel. "Well, go, my dear. Not at peace yet, Eleanor?"

There was so tender a tone in these last words that Eleanor could not reply. She dashed away without making any answer; and all along the way to Plassy she was every now and then repeating them to herself. "Not at peace yet, Eleanor?"

She was in a tender mood this afternoon; the questions and remarks addressed to the other persons in the meeting frequently moved her to tears, so that she sat with her hand to her brow to hide the watering eyes. She did not dread the appeal to herself, for Mr. Rhys never asked her any troublesome questions; never anything to which she had to make a troublesome answer; though there might be, perhaps, matter for thought in it. He had avoided anything, whether in his asking or replying, that would give her any difficulty *there*, in the presence of others,—whatever it might do in her own mind and in secret. To-day he asked her, "Have you found peace yet?"

"No," said Eleanor.

"What is the state of your mind—if you could give it in one word?"

"Confusion."

"What is it confused about? Do you understand, clearly, the fact that you are a sinner? without excuse?"

"Fully!"

"Do you understand, clearly, that Christ has suffered for sins; the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?"

"Yes. I understand it."

"Is there any confusion in your mind as to the terms on which the Lord will receive you?—forsaking your sins, and trusting in him to pardon and save you?"

"No—I see that."

"Do you think there is any other condition besides those two?"

"No."

"Why do you not accept them?"

Eleanor raised her eyes with a feeling almost of injustice. "I cannot!" she said.

"That makes no difference. God never gives a command that cannot with his help be fulfilled. There was a man once brought to Jesus—carried by four men; he was palsied, and lay on a litter or bed, unable to move himself at all. To this man the Lord said, 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' Suppose he had looked up and said, 'I cannot?'"

Eleanor struggled with herself. Was this fair? Was it a parallel case? She could not tell. She kept silence. Mr. Rhys went on, with tones subdued to great gentleness.

"My friend, Jesus invites to no empty board—to no cold reception. On his part all is ready; the unreadiness lies somewhere with you, or the invitation would be accepted. In your case it is not the bodily frame that is palsied, it is the heart; and the command comes to you, sweet as the invitation,—'*Give it to me.*' If you are entirely willing, the thing is done. If it be not done, it is because, somewhere you are not willing—or do not believe. If you can trust Jesus, as that poor man did, you may rise up and stand upon your feet this very hour. 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' he asked of the blind man whom he cured."

There was silence for an instant. And again, as he turned away from her, Mr. Rhys broke out with the song, that Eleanor thought would break her heart in twain this time:

"How lost was my condition
Till Jesus made me whole;
There is but one physician
Can cure a sin-sick soul.
There's balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There's power enough in Jesus
To save a sin-sick soul."

Eleanor had been the last one spoken to; the meeting soon was ended, and she was on her way home. But so broken-spirited and humiliated that she did not know what

to do with herself. Could it be possible that she was not *willing*—or that she wanted *faith*—or that there was some secret corner of rebellion in her heart? It humbled her wonderfully to think it. And yet she could not disprove the reasoning. God could not be unfaithful; and if there were not somewhere on her part a failure to meet the conditions, surely peace would have been made before now. And she had thought herself all this while a subject for pity, not for blame; nay, for blame indeed, but not in this regard. Her mouth was stopped now. She rode home broken-hearted; would not see Mrs. Caxton at supper; and spent the evening and much of the night in weeping and self-searching. They were very downcast days that followed this day. Mrs. Caxton looked at her anxiously sometimes; never interfered with her.

Towards the end of the week there was preaching at Glanog, and the family went as usual. Eleanor rode by herself, going and coming, and held no communication with her aunt by the way. But late at night, some time after Mrs. Caxton had gone to bed, a white-robed figure came into her room and knelt down by the bedside.

"Is that you, Eleanor?"

"Aunt Caxton—it's all gone!"

"What?"

"My trouble. I came to tell you. It's all gone. I am so happy!"

"How is it, my dear child?"

"When Mr. Rhys was preaching to-night, it all came to me; I saw everything clearly. I saw how Jesus loves sinners. I saw I had nothing to do but to give myself to him, and he would do everything. I see how sins are forgiven through his blood; and I trust in it, and I am sure mine are; and I feel as if I had begun a new life, aunt Caxton!"

Eleanor's tears flowed like summer rain. Mrs. Caxton rose up and put her arms round her.

"The Lord be praised!" she said. "I was waiting for this, Eleanor."

"Aunt Caxton, I had been trying and thinking to make myself good first. I thought I was unworthy and unfit to be Christ's servant; but now I see that I can be nothing but unworthy, and only he can make me fit for anything; so I give up all, and I feel that he will do all for me. I am so happy! I was so blind before!"

Mrs. Caxton said little; she only rejoiced with Eleanor as tenderly as if she had been her own mother. Though that is speaking very coolly on the present occasion. Mrs. Powle had never showed her daughter so much of that quality in her life as Eleanor's aunt showed now.

The breakfast next morning was unusually quiet. Happiness does not always make people talkative.

"How do you do, my love?" said Mrs. Caxton, when they were left alone. "After being up half the night?"

"More fresh than I have felt for a year, aunt Caxton. Did you hear that nightingale last night?"

"I heard him. I listened to him and thought of you."

"He sang—I cannot tell you what his song sounded like to me, aunt Caxton. I could almost have fancied there was an angel out there."

"There were a great many rejoicing somewhere else. What glory to think of it!" They were silent again till near the end of breakfast; then Mrs. Caxton said,—"Eleanor, I shall be engaged the whole of this morning. This afternoon, if you will, I will go with you into the garden."

"This afternoon—is Wednesday, aunt Caxton."

'So it is. Well, before or after you go to the village, I want you to dress some dishes of flowers for me—will you?"

"With great pleasure, ma'am. And I can get some hawthorn blossoms, I know. I will do it before I go, ma'am."

Was it pleasant, that morning's work? Eleanor went out early to get her sprays of May blossoms; and in the tender beauty of the day and season was lured on and on, and tempted to gather other wild bits of loveliness, till she at last found her hands full, and came home laden with tokens of where she had been. "O'er the muir, amang the

heather," Eleanor's walk had gone; and her basket was gay with gorse and broom just opening; but from grassy banks on her way she had brought the bright blue speedwell, and clematis and bryony from the hedges, and from under them wild hyacinth and white campion and crane's-bill and primroses; and a meadow she had passed over gave her one or two pretty kinds of orchis, with daisies and cowslips, and grasses of various kinds. Eleanor was dressing these in flower baskets and dishes, in the open gallery that overlooked the meadows, when Mrs. Caxton passing through on her own business stopped a moment to look at her.

"All those from your walk, my dear! Do you not mean to apply to the garden?"

"Aunty, I could have got a great many more, if I could have gone into the woods—but my walk did not lie that way. Yes, ma'am, I am going into the garden presently, when I have ordered these dishes well. Where are they to go, aunt Caxton?"

"Some in one place and some in another. You may leave them here, Eleanor, when they are done, and I will take care of them. Shall I have the garden flowers cut for you?"

"O no, ma'am, if you please!"

Mrs. Caxton stood a moment longer watching Eleanor; the pretty work and the pretty worker; the confusion of fair and sweet things around her and under her fingers, with the very fine and fair human creature busy about them. Eleanor's face was gravely happy; more bright than Mrs. Caxton had ever seen it; very much of kin to the flowers. She watched her a moment, and then went nearer to kiss Eleanor's forehead. The flowers fell from the fingers, while the two exchanged a look of mute sympathy; then on one part and on the other, business went forward.

Eleanor's work held her all the morning. For after the wild beauties had been disposed to her mind, there was another turn with their more pretentious sisters of the garden. Azaleas and honeysuckles, lilies of the valley,

hyacinths and pomponium lilies, with Scotch roses and white broom, and others, made superb floral assemblages, out of doors or in; and Eleanor looked at her work lovingly when it was done.

So went the morning of that day, and Eleanor's ride in the afternoon was a fit continuation. May was abroad in the bursting leaves as well as in opening flowers; the breath of Eden seemed to sweep down the valley of Plassy. Ay, there is a partial return to the lost paradise, for those whom Christ leads thither, even before we get to the everlasting hills.

Eleanor this day was the first person addressed in the meeting. It had never happened so before. But now Mr. Rhys asked her first of all, "How do you do to-day?"

Eleanor looked up and answered, "Well. And all changed."

"Will you tell us how you mean?"

"It was when you were preaching last night. It all came to me. I saw my mistake, when you told about the love of Christ to sinners. I saw I had been trying to make myself good."

"And how is it now?"

"Now," said Eleanor, looking up again with full eyes, "I will know nothing but Christ."

The murmur of thanksgiving heard from one or two voices brought her head down. It had nearly overcome her. But she controlled herself, and presently went on; though not daring to look again into Mr. Rhys's face, the expression of whose eyes of gladness was harder to meet than the spoken thanksgivings.

"I see I have nothing, and am nothing," she said. "I see that Christ is all, and will do all for me. I wish to be his servant. All is changed. The very hills are changed. I never saw such colours or such sunlight, as I have seen as I rode along this afternoon."

"A true judgment," said Mr. Rhys. "It has been often said, that the eye sees what the eye brings the means of seeing; and the love of Christ puts a glory upon all nature

that far surpasses the glory of the sun. It is a changed world, for those who know that love for the first time! Friends, most of us profess to have that knowledge. Do we have it so that it puts a glory on all the outer world, in the midst of which we live and walk and attend to our business?"

"It does to me, sir," said the venerable old man whom Eleanor had noticed; "it does to me. Praise the Lord!"

Instead of any other answer they broke out singing:

"O happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above.
Tongue can never express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."

"The way to keep that joy," said Mr. Rhys, returning to Eleanor, "and to know more of it, is to take every succeeding step in the Christian life exactly as you took the first one—in self-renunciation, in entire dependence. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. It is a simple and humble way, the way along which the heavenly light shines. Do everything for Christ—do everything in his strength;—and you will soon know that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. Blessed be his name! He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

It was easy to see that the speaker made a personal application here, with reference to himself; but after that there was no more said directly to Eleanor. The subject went round the circle, receiving the various testimony of the persons there. Eleanor's heart gave quick sympathy to many utterances, and took home with intent interest the answering counsels and remarks, which in some instances were framed to put a guard against self-deception or mistake. One or two of her neighbours, when the exercises were over, came and took her hand, with a warm simple expression of feeling which made Eleanor's heart hot; and then she rode home.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" said her aunt.

"Aunt Caxton, I think that room where we meet is the pleasantest place in the world!"

"What do you think of the chapel at Glanog?"

"I don't know. I believe that is as good or better."

"Are you too tired to go out again?"

"Not at all. Who wants me?"

"Nanny Croghan is very sick. I have been with her all the afternoon; and Jane is going to sit up with her to-night; but Jane cannot go yet."

"She need not. I will stay there myself. I like it, aunt Caxton."

"Then I will send for you early in the morning."

Nanny Croghan lived a mile or two from the farmhouse. Eleanor walked there, attended by John with a basket. The place was a narrow dell between two uprising hills covered with heather; as wild and secluded as it is possible to imagine. The poor woman who lived there alone was dying of lingering disease. John delivered the basket, and left Eleanor alone with her charge and the mountains.

It was not a night like that she had spent by the bedside of her old nurse's daughter. Nanny was dying fast; and she needed something done for her constantly. Through all the hours of the darkness Eleanor was kept on the watch or actively employed, in administering medicine, or food, or comfort. For when Nanny wanted nothing else, she wanted that.

"Tell me something I can fix my mind on to," she would say. "It seems slipping away from me, like. And then I gets cold with fear."

Eleanor was new at the business; she had forgotten to bring her Bible with her, and she could find none in the house; "her sister had been there," Nanny said, "and had carried it away." Eleanor was obliged to draw on the slender stores of her memory; and to make the most of those, she was obliged to explain them to Nanny, and go them over and over, and pick them to pieces, and make her rest upon each clause, and almost each word of a verse. There

were some words that surely Eleanor became well acquainted with that night. For Nanny could sleep very little, and when she could not sleep she wanted talking incessantly. Eleanor urged her to accept the promises, and she would have the peace. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

"Ay, but I never did fear him, you see, till a bit agone; and now it's all fear. I fear furder'n I can see."

"Nanny, Nanny, the blood of Christ will take all that fear away—if only you will trust in it. He shed it for you—to pay your debts to justice. There is no condemnation to them which are in him."

Nanny did not know exactly what so big a word as condemnation meant; Eleanor was obliged to explain it; then what was meant by being "in Christ." Towards morning Nanny seemed somewhat soothed, and fell into a doze. Eleanor went to the cottage door and softly opened it, to see how the night went.

The dawn was breaking fair over the hills, the tops of which showed the unearthly brightness of coming day. It took Eleanor's eyes and thoughts right up. O, for the night of darkness to pass away from this weary earth! Down in the valley the shadows lay thicker; how thick they lay about the poor head just now resting in sleep! How thick they lay but a day or two ago upon Eleanor herself! Now she looked up. The light was flushing upon the mountain-tops every moment stronger. The dewy scents of the May morning were filling the air with their nameless and numberless tokens of rich nature's bounty. The voice of a cataract, close at hand, made merry down the rocks, along with the song of the blackbird, woodpecker, and tit-mouse. And still, as Eleanor stood there and looked and listened, the rush and the stir of sweet life grew more and more; the spring breeze wakened up and floated past her face, bringing the breath of the flowers fresher and nearer; and the hill-tops ever kindled into more and more glow. "It is Spring! and it is Day!" thought Eleaner, "and so it is in my heart. The darkness is gone; the light is like that

light,—promising more; my life is full of sweetness I never knew. Surely this month shall be the month of months to me for ever. O, for this day—O, for this morning—to waken over all the world!"

She stood there, for Nanny still slept, till the sunbeams struck the hills, and crept down the sides of them; and till John and Jane came in sight round the angle of the road. John had brought the pony to take Eleanor home; and a few minutes' ride brought her there. Morning prayers were however done, before Eleanor could refresh herself with cold water and a change of dress. When she came down to the sitting-room, Mrs. Caxton had stepped out on some business; and in her place, sitting alone with a book, Eleanor was greatly surprised to see Mr. Rhys.

He was not at all surprised to see her; rose up and gave her a very cordial grasp of the hand, and stirred up the wood fire, which, May morning though it was, the thick walls of the old stone house and the neighbourhood of the mountains made useful and agreeable. In silence and with a good deal of skill Mr. Rhys laid the logs together so that a fresh blaze sprang up; then after a remark upon the morning he went back to his book. Eleanor sat down, also silent, feeling very much delighted to see him there, and to think that they would have his company at breakfast; but not at all inclined, nor indeed competent, to open a conversation. She looked into the fire, and wondered at the turns that had brought about this meeting; wondered over the past year of her life; remembered her longing for the "helmet of salvation," which her acquaintance with Mr. Rhys had begun; and sang for joy in her heart that now she had it. Yes, it was hers, she believed; a deep rest and peace had taken place of craving and anxiety, such as even now disturbed poor dying Nanny. Eleanor felt very happy, in the midst of all her care for her. The fire burned beautifully.

"I was not aware," said Mr. Rhys, looking up from his book, "I was not aware till last night that you lived with Mrs. Caxton."

Very odd, Eleanor thought; most people would have found out; however, she took it simply.

"I am her niece."

"So I find,—so I am glad to find. I can wish nothing better for any one, in that kind, than to be connected with Mrs. Caxton."

He sat with his finger between the leaves of his book, and Eleanor again wondered at the silence; till Mrs. Caxton came in. It was not very flattering; but Eleanor was not troubled with vanity; she dismissed it with a thought compounded of good-humour and humility. At breakfast the talk went on pretty briskly; it was all between the other two, and left her on one side; yet it was good enough to listen to it. Eleanor was well satisfied. Mr. Rhys was the principal talker; he was telling Mrs. Caxton of different people and things in the course of his labours, which constantly gave a reflex gleam of light upon those labours themselves, and upon the labourer. Unconsciously of course, and merely from the necessity of the case; but it was very interesting to Eleanor, and probably to Mrs. Caxton; she looked so. At last she turned to her niece.

"How did you leave Nanny?"

"A little easier towards morning, I think; at least she went to sleep, which all the night she could not do."

"Nor you neither."

"O, that's nothing. I don't mind that at all. It was worth watching, to see the dawn."

"Was the woman in so much pain?" Mr. Rhys asked.

"No—not bodily; she was uneasy in mind."

"In what way?"

"Afraid of what lies before her; seeing dimly, if at all."

"Was she comforted by what you told her?"

"I had very little to tell her," said Eleanor; "I had no Bible; I had forgotten to take it; and hers was gone. I had to get what I could from memory, for I did not like to give her anything but the words of the Bible itself to ground hope upon.

"Yes, but a good warm testimony of personal experience,

coming from the heart, often goes to the heart. I hope you tried that."

Eleanor had *not;* she was silent. The testimony she had given in the class-meeting, somehow she had been shy of uttering unasked in the ear of the dying woman. Was that humility—or something else? Again Mr. Rhys had done for her what he so often did for her and for others—probed her thoughts.

"It is a good plan," said Mrs. Caxton, "to have a storehouse in one's memory of such things as may be needed upon occasion—passages of Scripture and hymns—to be brought out when books are not at hand. I was made to learn a great deal out of the Bible when I was a girl; and I have often made a practice of it since; and it always comes into play."

"I never set myself lessons to get by heart," said Mr. Rhys. "I never could learn anything in that way. Or, perhaps I should say, I never *liked* to do it. I never did it."

"What is your art, then?" said Mrs. Caxton, looking curious.

"No art. It is only that when anything impresses itself strongly on my feelings, the words seem to engrave themselves in my memory. It is an unconscious and purely natural operation."

Eleanor remembered the multitudinous quoting of the Bible she had at different times heard from Mr. Rhys; and again wondered mentally. All that, all those parts of the Bible, he had not set himself to study, but had *felt* them into his memory! They had been put in like gold letters, with a hot iron.

"Where is this woman?" Mr. Rhys went on.

"She lives alone, in the narrow dell that stretches behind Bengarten Castle—and nearly in a straight line with it, from here. Do not go there this morning—you want rest, and it is too far for you to walk. I am going to take you into my garden, to see how my flowers go."

"Won't you take me into your dairy?"

"If you like it," said Mrs. Caxton, smiling.

"I like it exceedingly. It is something like a musical box to me, Miss Powle, to see Mrs. Caxton's cheesemaking. It soothes my nerves, the noiseless order of everything. Do you know that wonderful cheese-house, where they stand in ranks like yellow mill-stones? I never can get over my surprise at going in there. Certainly we, as a nation, are fond of cheese!"

"You think so because you are not," said Mrs. Caxton. "It is too late for the dairy to-day. You shall give me help in my garden, where I want it."

"I understand," said Mr. Rhys. "But it is my business to make flowers grow in the Lord's garden—wherever I can. I wish I could do more of *that* gardening work!"

Eleanor gave a quick glance up at the speaker. His brow rested on his hand for the moment; she noticed the sharply drawn lines of the face, the thin cheeks, the complexion, which all witnessed to *over*-work already attempted and done. The brow and eyes were marked with lines of watching and fatigue. It was but a glance, and Eleanor's eyes went down again; with an additional lesson of unconscious testimony carried deep home. This man lived as he talked. The good of existence was not one thing in his lips and another in his practice. Eleanor looked at her plate with her heart burning. In her old fancy for studying, or at least reading, hands, she had noticed too in her glance the hand on which the head rested; and with surprise. It was almost a feminine hand in make, with long slim fingers; white withal, and beautifully cared for. Certain refinements were clearly necessary to this man, who was ready to plunge himself into a country of savages nevertheless, where all the refinement would be his own. To some natures it would be easier to part with a hand altogether, than to forego the necessity of having it clean. This was one. And *he* was going to give himself up to Polynesia and its practices. Eleanor eat with the rest of her breakfast, and swallowed with her tea, the remembered words of the apostle—"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for

Christ."—"Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to be faithful." Eleanor's heart swelled. Tears were very near.

After breakfast, a large part of the morning was spent by her aunt and Mr. Rhys in the garden, as Mrs. Caxton had said; and very busy they were. Eleanor was not asked to join them, and she did not choose to volunteer; she watched them from the house. They were very honestly busy; planting and removing and consulting; in real garden work; yet it was manifest the minds had also much more in common, in matters of greater interest; they stood and talked for long intervals when the flowers were forgotten. They were very near each other, those two, evidently, in regard and mutual confidence and probably mutual admiration also. It was very strange Eleanor should never have come to the knowledge of it till to-day. And yet, why should she? She had never mentioned the name of Mr. Rhys to her aunt in any of her stories of Wiglands.

He was away all the afternoon and the evening, and came back again late, a tired and exhausted man. He said nothing, except to officiate at family prayers; but Eleanor was delighted that he was to spend the night at the farm, and they would have him at breakfast. Only to see him and hear him talk to others, only the tones of his voice, brought up to her everything that was good and strong and pure and happy. He did not seem inclined to advance at all upon their Wiglands acquaintance. He made no allusion to it. As far as she was concerned, Eleanor thought there was more reserve in his manner towards her than he had showed there. No matter. With Mrs. Caxton he was very much at home; and she could study him at her ease all the better for not talking to him.

CHAPTER XX.

"The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice;
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace."

"Mrs. Caxton," said Mr. Rhys the next morning, when half the breakfast had been passed in silence, "have you such a thing as a microscope in the house?"

"I am afraid not. Why do you ask?"

"Only that I have suddenly discovered myself to be very ignorant, in a department of knowledge where it would be very pleasant as well as proper to be otherwise. I have been reading a book on some of the forms of life which are only to be known through the help of glasses; and I find there is a world there I know nothing about. That book has made a boy of me."

"How?" said Mrs. Caxton, smiling.

"You think I always retain more or less of that character? Well—it has made me doubly a boy, then; in my eagerness to put myself to school, on the one hand, and my desire to see something new on the other. Miss Powle, have you ever studied the invisible inhabitants of pools, and ponds, and sea-weeds?"

"Not at all," said Eleanor.

"You do not know much more than the names, then, of Infusoria, Rotifera, and Pedunculata, and such things?"

"Not so much as the names—except Infusoria. I hope they are better than they sound."

"If the accounts are true—Mrs. Caxton, the world that we do not see, because of the imperfection of our organs, is even far more wonderful than the world that we do see. Perhaps it seems so, because of the finiteness of our own powers. But I never had a single thing give me such a view of the infinite glory of God, as one of the things detailed in that book—one of the discoveries of the microscope."

"His glory in creation," said Mrs. Caxton.

"More than that—there is to be sure the infiniteness of wisdom and of power, that makes your brain dizzy when you think of it; but there is an infinite moral glory also."

"What was the thing that struck you so much?" Eleanor inquired.

"It was a little fellow that lives in the water. He is not bigger than the diameter of the slenderest needle—and that is saying as much as I can for his size. This fellow builds himself a house of bricks, which he makes himself; and under his head he carries a little cup mould in which the bricks are made."

"Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor, "I am wondering what is the slenderest needle of your acquaintance!"

"No," said he, laughing, "you are mistaken. I have seen my mother hem thin ruffles of muslin; and you know with what sort of a needle that should be done."

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, "it is inconceivable."

Mrs. Caxton did not make much answer, and the conversation turned. After breakfast, and after, as Eleanor judged, they had been a good while in the dairy, the two went out together in the car. Eleanor supposed it was to visit Nanny; and so she found when her aunt came home.

"I knew he would go," said Mrs. Caxton; "and then we made another call. Nanny is hopeful and comfortable; but the other——Mr. Rhys came away very much agitated. He is not fit for it. I wish I could keep him from work

for a few weeks. It's the best economy. But I will keep him here as long as I can, at least."

"Is he going to stay here?"

"Yes; he was not comfortably situated in the village; and now I will have him at the farm, I hope, till he goes. I shall trust you to keep the flowers fresh in his room, Eleanor.—No, my dear; Jane will stay with Nanny to-night."

So Mr. Rhys stayed at the farm, and certainly wanted for no comfort that the mistress of it could secure to him. Neither did Eleanor neglect the flowers. Mr. Rhys made his home there, and went out to his preaching and visiting and teaching as vigorously as ever; and was often a tired man when he came home. Nevertheless he gained ground, to Mrs. Caxton's great satisfaction. He grew stronger; and was less often a silent, prostrated, done-over member of their little circle. At first he was very often that. But when he felt well he was exceedingly social and conversational; and the Plassy farmhouse had never been so pleasant, nor the evenings and mornings and meal times so full of interest. In all which, however, Mrs. Caxton thought Eleanor took a very quiet part.

"You do not do your share, Eleanor," she said one day; "you are becoming nothing of a talker; and I can bear witness you had a tongue once. Has religion made you silent, my dear?"

"No, aunty," said Eleanor, laughing; "but you forget—you have somebody else to talk to now."

"I am sure, and so have you."

"No, ma'am—Mr. Rhys does not talk to me generally."

"I would return good for evil, then; and not silence for silence."

"I can't, aunty. Don't you know there are some people that have a sort of quieting effect upon one?"

"I don't think anybody ever did upon me," said Mrs. Caxton; "and I am sure Mr. Rhys would be shocked if he knew the effect of his presence."

One morning Mrs. Caxton asked Mr. Rhys at breakfast

if he had leisure to unpack a box for her. He said yes, with great alacrity; and Mrs. Caxton had the box brought in.

"What is it?" said Mr. Rhys as he began his work. "Am I to take care of china and glass—or to find gardener's plants nicely done up—or best of all, books?"

"I hope something better yet," said Mrs. Caxton.

"There is a good deal of it, whatever it is," said Mr. Rhys, taking out one and another and another carefully wrapped up bit of something. "Curiosity can go no further!"

He stopped unpacking, and took the wrapping papers off one or two odd-looking little pieces of brass; paused—then suddenly exclaimed, "Mrs. Caxton!——"

"Well?" said that lady, smiling.

"It is just like you! I might have known the other morning what all that talk would end in."

Mrs. Caxton smiled in silence, and the gentleman went on with his unpacking; with added zeal and tenderness now, it was evident. It stood full in view at last, an exquisitely made and mounted microscope of one of the best London makers. Now was Mr. Rhys in his element; and proved how justly he had declared himself a *boy*. He got the microscope all into place and arranged, and then set himself to find out its powers and method of management. There were some prepared objects sent with the instrument, which gave him enough to work with; and over them he was in an absorbed state for hours; not selfishly, however, for he allowed Eleanor to take her full share of the pleasure of looking, when once he had brought objects into view. At last he broke off, and hurried away to an engagement.

The next day at breakfast, Eleanor was a good deal surprised to be asked if she would take a walk.

"Now?" said Eleanor. "You mean immediately after breakfast?"

"It is the only time I have to-day. All the time before dinner I have; but I supposed we should want the whole of it. I am going after objects for the microscope, and I

thought it would be selfish to go alone. Besides, we may help one another."

"I shall be very glad to go," said Eleanor, laughing; "but don't expect any *help* of me; unless it be in the way of finding out such places as you want."

"I fancy I know those better than you do. Miss Powle, a small basket would be desirable to hold phials of water."

"And phials."

"I will take care of those."

Much amused, and a little excited, Eleanor made ready for the walk, and in the matter of the basket at least proved helpful. It was bright and early when they set out. Among those mountains and valleys, the dew was not off the fields yet, while the air was freshly sweet from roses and wild thyme, and primroses lingering, and numberless other sweet things; for hedgerow and meadow and mountain side were gay and rich with a multitude of flowers. There was a mingling of shadow and sunshine, too, at that early time in the morning; and as the two walkers passed along they were sometimes in one, sometimes in the other. There was little conversation at first. Mr. Rhys went not with a lingering step, but as if with some purpose to reach a definite locality. Eleanor was musing to herself over the old walks taken with Julia by her present companion; never but once Eleanor's walking companion till now. How often Julia had gone with him; what a new and strange pleasure it was for herself; and how oddly life changes about things; that the impossible thing at Wiglands should be possible at Plassy!

"What sort of places are you looking for, Mr. Rhys?" Eleanor inquired at last.

"All sorts of places," he said, smiling. "All sorts, at least, of wet places. But I know nothing about it, you know, except what I have read. They say, wherever water is found, some or other species of these minute wonders may be met with; standing pools, and rivers, and ditches, all have them; and some particularly beautiful are to be found in bog water; so with, I am afraid you will think, a

not very commendable impatience, I am pointing my steps towards a bog that I know—in the wish to get some of the best first."

"That is being very impatient," said Eleanor, laughing. "I should be satisfied with almost anything for the first."

"So you will very probably have to be. I am by no means sure of accomplishing my design. Am I walking too fast for you, in the meanwhile?"

"Not at all. I am thinking, Mr. Rhys, how we are to bring home the bog water when we have found it."

In answer to which, he put his hand in his pocket and brought out thence and deposited in his basket, one after another, half-a-dozen or more little phials, all duly corked. Eleanor was very much amused.

"And what is this stick to do, that you wanted me to bring?"

"You will see."

The bog was reached in due time, after a walk over a most delicious country, for the most part new to Eleanor. Water was found, though not exactly with the conditions Mr. Rhys desired; however, a phial of it was dipped up, corked, and marked. Then they retraced their steps partially, diverging right and left. Just the right sort of pool was found at last, covered with duck-weed. Here Mr. Rhys stopped, and tied one of the phials to the end of the stick. With this he dipped water from the surface, then he dipped from the bottom; he took from one side and from another side, where there was sunshine and where there was shade; pouring each dipping into a fresh phial, while Eleanor, in a great state of amusement, corked and labelled each as it was filled. At last it was done. Mr. Rhys filled his last phial, looked at Eleanor's face, and smiled.

"You do not think much is going to come of all this?' he said.

"Yes, I do," said Eleanor. "At least, I hope so."

"I know it. Look through that."

He put a pocket lens into her hand, and bade her survey one of the phials with it. Eleanor's scepticism fled. That

something was there, in pretty active life was evident. Somethings—the kinds were plural.

"It was like Mrs. Caxton, to order this lens with the microscope," Mr. Rhys went on. "I suppose she made her order general—to include everything that would be necessary for a naturalist in making his observations. I not being a naturalist. Did you ever see the 'Bundle' of Helig?"

"I do not know what it is."

"Bundle' or 'Bandel'—I do not know how it got the name, I am sure; but I suppose it is a corruption of something. Would you like to go a little out of your way to see it?"

"You can judge better than I, Mr. Rhys!" Eleanor said, with her full, rich smile, which that gentleman had not often seen before. He answered it with his own very peculiar one, sober and sweet.

"I will take so much responsibility. You ought not to come so near and miss it."

Turning from the course of their return way, they followed a wild woody dell for a little distance; then making a sudden angle with that, a few steps brought them in sight of a waterfall. It poured over a rocky barrier of considerable height, the face of which was corrugated, as it were, with great projecting ridges of rock. Separated of necessity by these, the waters left the top of the precipice in four or five distinct bands or ribbands of bright wave and foam, soon dashed into whiteness; and towards the bottom of the fall at last found their way all together; which they celebrated with a rush and a dance and a sparkle and a roar that filled all the rocky abyss into which they plunged. The life, the brightness, the peculiar form, the wild surroundings, of this cataract made it a noted beauty. In front of it the rocks closed in so nearly that spectators could only look at it through a wild narrow gap. Above, beyond the top of the fall, the waving branches could be seen of the trees and bushes that stood on the borders of the water, to reach which was a mere impossibility, unless by taking a very

long way round. At the foot, the waters turned off suddenly, and sought their course where the eye could not follow them.

It was out of the question to talk in the presence of the shout of those glad waters. Mr. Rhys leaned against the rock, and looked at them, so motionless that more than once the eye of Eleanor went from them to him with a little note-taking. When at last he turned away, and they got back into the stillness of the glen, he asked her, "how looking at such a thing made her feel?"

"Nothing but surprise and pleasure, I think," said Eleanor; "but a great deal of both those." Then, as he still remained silent, she went on,—"To tell the truth, Mr. Rhys, I think my mental eye is only beginning to get educated. I used always to enjoy natural beauty, but I think it was in a superficial kind of way. Since I have been at Plassy—and especially since a few weeks back—all nature is much more to me than it was."

"It is sure to be so," he said. "Nature without and nature within are made for each other; and till the two are set to the same key, you cannot have a good tune.—There is a fellow who is in pretty good order! Do you hear that blackbird?"

"Sweet!" said Eleanor. "And what is that other note—'chee, chee, chee,' so many times?"

"That is a green wren."

"You are *something* of a naturalist, Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor.

"Not at all! no more than my acquaintance with you and Mrs. Caxton makes me a philosopher."

Eleanor wanted to ask what looking at the cataract made *him* think of; but as she had told her aunt, Mr. Rhys exercised a sort of quieting influence over her. No natural audacity, of which she had an innocent share, remained to her in his company. She walked along in demure silence. And to say the truth, the sun was now growing warm, and the two had walked not a few good miles that morning; which also has a quieting influence. Eleanor queried with

herself whether all the bright part of the walk were over.

"I think it is time we varied our attention," said Mr. Rhys, breaking silence. "We have been upon one class of subjects a good while;—suppose we try another. Don't you want to rest?"

"I am not tired—but I have no objection."

"You are not easily tired?"

"Not about anything I like."

"You have struck a great secret of power and usefulness," he said gravely. "What do you think of this bank?—it is dry, and it is pleasant."

It would have been hardly possible to find a spot in all their way that would not have been pleasant; and from this bank they looked over a wide rich valley bordered with hills. It was not the valley where the farmhouse of Plassy stood, with its meadows and river; this was different in its features, and moreover some miles distant. Eleanor and Mr. Rhys sat down on the moss at the foot of the trees, which gave both shade and rest. It was the edge of a piece of woods, and a blackbird was again heard saluting them.

"Now, if you want refreshment," said Mr. Rhys, "I can give it to you; but only of one kind."

"I don't know—I should say of several kinds," said Eleanor, looking into the basket—"but the quality doubtful."

"Did you think I meant *that?*"

Eleanor laughed at the earnest gravity of this speech. "Mr. Rhys, I saw no other refreshment you had to offer me; but indeed I do not want any—more than I am taking."

"I was going to offer it to you of another kind, but there is no kind like it. What is your way of reading the Bible?"

"I have no particular 'way,'" said Eleanor, in some surprise. "I read several chapters a day—or at least always a chapter at morning and another at evening. What 'way' do you mean?"

"There are a great many ways; and it is good to use them all at different times. But what way would be good for a half-hour's refreshment, at such a time as this?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Eleanor. "I have no way but the one."

"Yes, but we should not have seen the 'Bandel' of Helig, if we had not turned aside to look at it; and you would not have heard the blackbird and the wren, perhaps, unless you had stopped to listen to them. I suppose we have missed a million of other things, for want of looking."

"Yes, but we could not look at everything all along these miles of our way," said Eleanor, her smile breaking forth again.

"Very true. On the other hand, if we go but a very little way, we can examine all around us. Have you a Bible with you?"

"No. I never carry one."

"I am better off than you. Let us try a little of this—the first chapter of Romans. Will you read the first verse, and consider it."

He handed her his Bible, and Eleanor read.

"'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.'"

"What do you find there?" said her companion.

"Not much. This verse seems to be a sort of opening, or introduction to the rest. Paul tells who he is, or what he is.''

"And what does he say he is?"

"A servant of Jesus Christ."

"You think that is 'not much?'"

"Certainly it is much, in itself; but here I took it for a mere statement of fact."

"But what a fact! *A servant of Jesus Christ.* Only that! Do you know what a fact that is? What is it, to be a servant of Jesus Christ?"

Without waiting for the answer, which was not ready, Mr. Rhys rose up from his seat and began an abstracted exploration of the bit of woodland at the edge of which they

had been sitting; wandering in and out among the trees, and stooping now and then to pluck a flower or a fern, or to examine one; apparently too full of his thoughts to be quiet. Eleanor heard him sometimes and watched him when she could; he was very busy; she wished he would give some of his thoughts to her.

"I thought you wanted rest, Mr. Rhys," she said boldly, when she got a chance. "Please sit down here and take it, along with your other refreshment."

He smiled, and came immediately with a bunch of Myosotis in his hand, which he threw into Eleanor's lap; and turning to her, he repeated very seriously his question—

"What is it, to be a servant of Jesus Christ?"

"I know very little," said Eleanor, timidly. "I am only just beginning to learn."

"You know the words bring for our refreshment only the meaning that we attach to them—except so far as the Holy Spirit answering our prayers and endeavours shows us new meaning and depth that we had not known before."

"Of course—but I suppose I know very little. These words convey only the mere fact to me."

"Let us weigh the words. A servant is a follower. Christ said, 'If a man serve me, let him *follow me*.'"

"Yes—I know."

"A follower must know where his Master goes. How did Christ walk?"

"He went about doing good."

"He did; but mark, there are different ways of doing that. Get to the root of the matter. The young man who kept all the commandments from his youth, was not following Christ; and when it came to the pinch, he turned his back upon him."

"How then, Mr. Rhys? You mean heart-following?"

"That is what the Lord means. Look here—Paul says in the ninth verse,—'Whom I serve *with my spirit* in the gospel.' Following cannot have a different end in view from that of the person followed. And what was Christ's?—'My

meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' Are we servants of Christ after that rule, Miss Powle?"

The question had a singular intonation, as if the questioner were charging it home upon himself. Yet Eleanor knew he could answer it in the affirmative and that she could not; she sat silent without looking up. The old contrast of character recurred to her, in spite of the fact that her own had changed so much. She hung over the book, while her companion half abstractedly repeated—

"'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.' That makes a way of life of great simplicity."

"Is it always easy to find?" ventured Eleanor.

"Very!—if his will is all that we desire."

"But that is a very searching, deep question."

"Let it search, then. 'My meat is to do the will of him.' No matter what that may be, Miss Powle; our choice lies in this—that it is his will. And as soon as we set our hearts upon one or the other particular sort of work, or labour in any particular place, or even upon any given measure of success attending our efforts, so that we are not willing to have him reverse our arrangements—we are getting to have too much will about it."

Eleanor looked up with some effort.

"You are making it a great matter, to be a true servant of Christ, Mr. Rhys."

"Would you have it a little matter?" he said, with a smile of great sweetness and brightness. "Let the Lord have all! He was among us 'as one that serveth'—amid discouragements and disappointments, and abuse; and he has warned us that the servant is not greater than his Lord. It is not a little thing, to be the minister of Jesus Christ!"

"Now you are getting out of the general into the particular."

"No—I am not; a 'minister' is but a servant; what we call a minister, is but in a more emphatic degree the servant of all. The rules of service are the same for him and

for others. Let us look at another one. Here it is—in John."

And the fingers that Eleanor had watched the other morning, and with which she had a curious association, came turning over the leaves.

"'Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' One thing is plain from that, Miss Eleanor—we are not to consider ourselves too good for anything.',

"No," said Eleanor; "but I suppose that does not forbid a just judgment of ourselves or of others, in respect of their adaptations and qualifications."

"Yes, it does," he said quickly. "The only question is, Has the Lord put that work in your hands? If he has, never ask whether your hands are the right ones. He knows. What our Lord stooped to do, well may we."

Eleanor dared not say any more; she knew of what he was thinking; whether he had a like intuition with respect to her thoughts she did not know, and would not risk them any nearer discovery.

"There is another thing about being a servant of Christ," he presently went on;—"it ensures some kind and degree of persecution."

"Do you think so?" said Eleanor; "in these days? Why, it is thought praiseworthy and honourable, is it not, through all the land, to be good? to be a member of the Church, and to fulfil the requirements of religion? Does anybody lose respect or liking from such a cause?"

"No. But he suffers persecution. My dear friend, what are the 'requirements of religion?' We are just considering them. Can you remember a servant of Christ, such as we have seen the name means, in your knowledge, whom the world allowed to live in peace?"

Eleanor was silent.

"'Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me,

they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.'"

"But in *these* days, Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor, doubtfully.

"I can only say, that if you are of the world, the world will love his own. I know no other way of securing that result. 'Because ye are not of the world,' Jesus said, 'but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' And it is declared elsewhere, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Can you remember any instance to the contrary?"

Eleanor looked up, and gave Mr. Rhys a good view of her honest eyes; they looked very intent now and somewhat sorrowful.

"Mr. Rhys, except in Plassy, I do not know such a person as you ask me about."

"Is it possible!" he said.

"Mr. Rhys, I was thinking the servants of Christ have good need of that 'helmet of salvation' I used to wish for."

"Well, they have it!" he said brightly. "'If any man serve me, let him follow me; *and where I am, there shall also my servant be.*' That is the end of all. But there is another point of service that occurs to me. We have seen that we must not please ourselves; I recollect that in another place Paul says that if he pleased men, he would not be the servant of Christ. There is a point where he and the world would come in contact of opposition."

"But I thought we ought to please everybody as much as we could?"

He smiled, put his hand over and turned two or three leaves of the Bible which she kept open at the first of Romans, and pointed to a word in the fifteenth chapter. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification."

"There is your limit," said he. "So far thou mayest go, but no further. And to do that you will find requires quite sufficiently that you should not please yourself. And now how shall we do all this?—how shall we be all this?"

"You are asking the very question!" said Eleanor, gravely.

"We must come to the root and spring of all this service and following—it is our love of the Lord himself. That will do it, and nothing else will. 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.'"

"But suppose," said Eleanor, with some difficulty commanding her voice,—"suppose one is deficient in that very thing? suppose one wants that love?"

"Ay!" he said, looking into her face with his eyes of light,—"suppose one does; what then?"

Eleanor could not bear them; her own eyes fell. "What is one to do?"—Mr. Rhys had risen up before he answered, in his deliberate accents—

"'Seek him, that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of night into morning.'"

He paced slowly up and down before Eleanor; then went off upon a rambling search through the wood again; seeming to be busy with little things in his way. Eleanor sat still. After a little he came and stood before her with a bunch of ferns and Melic grass and lilies of the valley, which he was ordering in his hands as he spoke.

"The effect of our following Christ in this way, Miss Powle, will be, that we shall bear testimony to the world that he is our King, and what sort of a king he is. We shall proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. We shall have the invisible army of angels for our fellow-servants and co-workers; and we shall be passing on with the whole redeemed world to the day of full triumph and final restoration; when Christ will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe—because our testimony among you was believed. But now our business is to give the testimony."

He walked up and down, up and down, before Eleanor for some minutes, in a thoughtful, abstracted way. Eleanor felt his manner as much as his words; the subject had clearly gone home to himself. She felt both so much that she did not like to interrupt the silence, nor to look up. At last he stopped again before her, and said in quite a different tone, "What are the next words, Miss Powle?"

"'Called to be an apostle.'"

"We shall not get home to dinner, if we go into that," he said, smiling.

"You have preached a sermon to me, Mr. Rhys."

"I do that very often to myself," he answered.

"To yourself?" said Eleanor.

"Yes. Nobody needs it more."

"But when you have so much real preaching to do, I should think it would be the last thing you would wish to do in private, at other times."

"For that very reason. I need to have a sermon always ready, and to be always ready myself. Now, let us get home and look at our 'Rotifera'—if we have any."

However, there was to be no microscopical examination that morning.

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley."

They had gone but half a mile further homeward when their course was again stopped. They came up with a man and a horse; the horse standing still, the man lying on the ground beside him. At first sight they thought it was a case of drunkenness, for the face of the man was very red, and he was unable to give any account of himself; but they were soon convinced it was sudden illness, not intoxication, which was the matter. He had fallen from his horse evidently, and now was not unconscious, but in great pain; the red in his face alternating with sudden changes of colour. Apparently his condition was that of a small farmer, or upper farm-servant, who had been overtaken on some business errand by this attack of severe sickness. His horse stood quietly beside him.

"This is no case for a lancet," said Mr. Rhys, after making a slight examination. "It calls for greater skill than mine. How will you do? I must take the horse and ride for it. But the first thing is to find where I ought to go—if I can."

For this information he sought in the man's pockets; and

found presently a pocket-book with one or two bills, which gave the name he wanted. It was a name not unknown to Mr. Rhys; and let him know also the direction in which he must ride—not towards the valley of Plassy.

"What will you do, Miss Powle?—will you be afraid to find your way home alone?"

"I will stay here till you come back."

"Will you? But I may be gone some time—and I must tell you," he said gravely, "the man is very ill."

"There is the more reason then, I am sure. I will stay and do anything for him I can, Mr. Rhys. You go—I will stay here."

Mr. Rhys said nothing more, though Eleanor felt sure from his face that he did not disapprove of her conclusion. He mounted the horse immediately.

"I will send help from the way, if I can, though I doubt it. The way is lonely till I get almost there."

He rode off at a sharp pace, and Eleanor was left quite alone. Her attention came back to the sick person at her feet. So near the light-hearted pleasure of ten minutes ago had been to pain and death! And Mr. Rhys's sermon was nearer still. The first thing to consider, was what she could do for the man.

He had fallen, and lay on the grass in the broad sunshine. The sun had mounted high now; its beams fell hot and full on the sufferer's face. At a little distance was a grove of oaks and beeches, and good shelter; but Eleanor's strength could not move the man thither; he was a great, thickset, burly fellow. Yet it was miserable to see the sun beating upon his face where the sweat of pain already stood. Eleanor went to the wood, and with much trouble and searching managed to find or break off two or three sticks of a few feet in length. She planted these for a frame near the sick man's head, and spread her light summer shawl over them to make a screen. It was a light screen; nevertheless, much better than nothing. Then Eleanor kneeled down by the man to see what more she could do. Red and pale changed fast and fearfully upon his face; big drops

stood on the brow and cheeks. Eleanor doubted whether he were conscious, he lay so still. She took her pocket-handkerchief to wipe the wet brow. A groan answered her at that. It startled her, for it was the first sound she had heard the sick person utter. Putting down her face to receive if possible some intimation of a wish, she thought he said or tried to say something about "drink." Eleanor rose up and sought to recollect where last and nearest she had seen water. It was some distance behind; a little spring that had crossed their footway with its own bright track. Then what could she bring some in? The phials! Quick the precious pond water and bog water was poured out, with one thought of the nameless treasures for Mr. Rhys's microscope that she was spilling upon the ground; and Eleanor took the basket again, and set off on the backward way. She was in a hurry, the sun was warm, the distance was a good quarter of a mile; by the time she had found the stream and filled her phials and retraced again her steps to where the sick man lay, she was heated and weary; for every step was hurried with the thought of that suffering which the water might alleviate. This was pure, sparkling, good water with which the phials were now filled. But when Eleanor got back to him, the man could not open his lips to take it. She feared he would die, and suddenly.

It was a wild uncultivated place they were in. No signs of human habitation were to be seen, except far up away on a hillside in the distance, where smoke went up from a farm-house or some sort of a house; towards which Eleanor looked with earnest longings that the human help which was there could be brought within available distance. It was greatly too far for that. How soon would Mr. Rhys be back? Impossible to say; she could not tell what length of road he might have to travel. And the man seemed dying. Eleanor knelt down again, and with the precious contents of one of the phials bathed the brow and the lips that she thought would never return to their natural colour again. She did it perseveringly; it was all she could do. Perhaps it gave comfort. But Eleanor grew tired, and felt

increasingly lonely and desirous that some one should come. No one did come by that way, nor was likely to come, until the return of Mr. Rhys; the place was not near a highway; only on a wild mountain track. It struck Eleanor then that the sufferer's head lay too low upon the ground. She could not move him to a better position; and finally placing herself on the grass beside him, she contrived with great exertion to lift his head upon her lap. He could not thank her; she did not know if he were aware of what she did; but then Eleanor had done all. She schooled herself to sit patiently and wipe the brow that lay upon her knee, and wait; knowing that death might come to take her charge before any other arrival relieved her of it. Eleanor had a great many thoughts meanwhile; and as she sat there revolved Mr. Rhys's "sermon" in her mind over and over, and from one end to the other and back again.

So at last Mr. Rhys found her. He came as he had gone, full speed; jumped off his horse, and took a very grave survey of the group on the ground. It was not early. Mr. Rhys had been a long time away; it seemed half a day's length to Eleanor.

"Have you been there all this time?" was his question.

"O no."

"I will take your place," said he, kneeling down and lifting the unconscious head from Eleanor's lap. "There is a waggon coming. It will be here directly."

Eleanor got up, trembling and stiff from her long constrained position. The waggon presently came in sight—a huge covered wain which had need to move slowly. Mr. Rhys had stayed by it to guide it, and only spurred forward when near enough to the place. Into it they now lifted the sick man, and the horses' heads were turned again. Mr. Rhys had not been able to bring a doctor.

"Why, here is Powis!" exclaimed Eleanor, as on the waggon coming round she discovered her pony hitched to the back of it. Mr. Rhys unhitched him. Powis was saddled.

"I thought you would have done enough for to-day," said

he; "and I went round by the farm to bring him. Now you will ride home as fast as you please."

"But I thought the farm was out of your way?"

"I had time to gallop over there and meet the waggon again; it went so slowly."

"O, thank you! But I do not need Powis—*I* can walk perfectly well. I am sure you need him more than I do, Mr. Rhys. I do not need him at all."

"Come, mount!" said he. "I cannot ride on a side-saddle, child."

Eleanor mounted in silence, a little surprised to find that Mr. Rhys helped her not awkwardly; and not knowing exactly whence came a curious warm glow that filled her heart like a golden reflection. But it kept her silent too; and it did not go away even when Mr. Rhys said in his usual manner—

"I beg your pardon, Miss Powle—I live among the hills till I grow unceremonious."

Eleanor did not make any answer, and if she rode home as fast as she pleased, it was her pleasure to ride slowly; for Mr. Rhys walked beside her all the way. But she was too tired perhaps to talk much, and he was in one of his silent moods.

"What have you done with the phials?" said he, looking into the basket as they neared home.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Rhys. I had to empty them to get water for that poor man. I wasn't quite sure, but I thought he asked for it."

"Oh! And where did you go to find water?"

"Back—don't you remember?—some distance back from where we found him, we had passed a little brook of running clear water. I had to go there."

"Yes—I know. Well, we shall have to make another expedition."

CHAPTER XXI.

"I will have hopes that cannot fade,
For flowers the valley yields!
I will have humble thoughts instead
Of silent, dowy fields!
My spirit and my God shall be
My sea-ward hill, my boundless sea."

THE promised expedition came off, and a number of others; not too frequently, however, for Mr. Rhys continued to be one of the world's busy people, and was often engaged and often weary. The walks after natural history came between times; when he was not under the immediate pressure of duty, and felt that he needed recreation to fit him for it. Eleanor was his companion generally, and grew to be as much interested in his objects as he was himself. Perhaps that is saying too much. In the house certainly Mr. Rhys bestowed an amount of patient time and investigation upon his microscopical studies which Eleanor did not emulate; time and pains which made him presently a capital manipulator, and probably stowed away quantities of knowledge under that quiet brow of his. Many an hour Mr. Rhys and his microscope were silent companions, during which he was rapt and absorbed in his contemplations or his efforts—whichever it might be; but then at other times, and before and after these times, Eleanor and Mrs. Caxton were constantly invited to a share in some of the results at least of what was going on.

Perhaps three people rarely enjoy more comfort together in themselves and in each other, than these three did for some weeks following the date of the last chapter. Mr. Rhys was a wonderful pleasant addition to the family. He was entirely at home, and not a person to be trammelled by any ordinary considerations. He was silent when he felt like it; he kept alone when he was busy; he put no unnatural force upon himself when he was fatigued; but silent, or weary, or busy, there was always and at all times where he was the feeling of the presence of one who was never absent from God. It was in the atmosphere about him; it was in the look that he wore, free and simple as that always was in its gravity; it was in the straightforward doing of duty, in all little things as much as in great things; the little things never forgotten, the great things . . . . . ired. It was an unconscious testimony that Mr. L. . . . . out with him; and which his companions seeing, they moved about with softened steps and strengthened hearts all the while. But he was not always tired and silent; and when he was not, he was a most delightful companion, as free to talk as a child and as full of matter as a wise man; and entirely social and sympathetic too in his whole temper and behaviour. He would not enjoy his natural historical discoveries alone; Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor were made to take their full share. The family circle was, quietly, a very lively one; there was no stagnating anywhere. He and Mrs. Caxton had many subjects and interests in common of which they talked freely, and Eleanor was only too glad to listen. There were books and reviews read aloud sometimes, with very pithy discussion of the same; in fact there was conversation, truly deserving the name; such as Eleanor had never listened to before she came to Plassy, and which she enjoyed hugely. Then the walks after natural objects were on the whole frequent; and Mr. Rhys was sure to ask her to go along; and they were full of delightful pleasure and of nice talk too, though it never happened that they sat down under a tree again to sermonize, and Mr. Rhys never forgot himself again to speak

to her by the undignified appellation he once had given her. But Eleanor had got over her shyness of him pretty well, and was inclined to think it quite honour and pleasure enough to be allowed to share his walks; waited very contentedly when he was wrapped up in his own thoughts; wrapped herself up in hers; and was all ready for the talk when it came. With all this she observed that he never distinguished her by any more familiarity than Mrs. Caxton's niece, and his daily neighbour at the table and in the family, might demand from a gentleman and Mrs. Caxton's friend and guest. The hills and the valleys around Plassy were very beautiful that summer.

So was Mrs. Caxton's garden. The roses flushed out into bloom, with all their cotemporaries; the terraces down to the river were aglow with richness and profusion of blossoms, and sweet with many fragrances. The old farmhouse itself had become an object of admiration to Eleanor. Long and low, built of dark red stone and roofed with slate, it was now in different parts wreathed and draped in climbing roses and honeysuckle, as well as in the ivy which did duty all winter. To stand under these roses at the back of the house, and look down over the gorgeous terraces, to the river and the bridge and the outspread meadows on the other side, stretching away down and up the valley and reaching to the foot of the hills which rose beyond them; to see all this, was to see a combination of natural features rare even in England, though words may not make it seem so.

Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor were there one evening. It was towards the end of the season of "June roses," though indeed it was later than the month of June. Mr. Rhys had been called away to some distance by business, and been detained a week; and this evening he might be expected home. They had missed him very much, Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor. They had missed him exceedingly at prayer-time; they had missed him desolately at meals. To-night the tea-table was spread where he loved to have it—on the tiled floor under the projecting roof before mentioned. A dish was crowned with red and white strawberries in the middle of

the table, and Eleanor stood decorating it slowly with ivy leaves and blossoms of white heath.

"It is not certain, my dear, he will come home to-night," Mrs. Caxton said as she watched her.

"No, aunty," said Eleanor, with a slight start, but then going on with her occupation. "What about it?"

"Nothing. We will enjoy the flowers ourselves."

"But he thought he would be at home to-night, aunt Caxton?"

"He could not be sure. He might easily be detained. You have got over your fear of Mr. Rhys, Eleanor?"

"Aunt Caxton, I don't think I ever feared him."

"He used to have a 'quieting influence' upon you," Mrs. Caxton said, smiling.

"Well, he does now, ma'am. At least, I am sure Mr. Rhys is one of the persons I should never care to contradict."

"I should think not," said Mrs. Caxton quietly. Eleanor had coloured a little.

"But that is not because, merely, I do not think myself wise; because there are other persons before whom I think myself no wiser, whom I *would* contradict—I mean, in a polite way—if it came into my head."

"We shall miss him when he goes," said Mrs. Caxton, with a little bit of a sigh. Eleanor wanted to ask a question, but the words did not come. The ornamenting of the strawberry dish was finished. She turned from it, and looked down where the long train of cows came winding through the meadows and over the bridge. Pretty, peaceful, lovely, was this gentle rural scene; what was the connection that made but a step in Eleanor's thoughts between the meadows of Plassy and some far-off islands in distant Polynesia? Eleanor had changed since some time ago. She could understand now why Mr. Rhys wanted to go there; she could comprehend it; she could understand how it was that he was not afraid to go, and did not shrink from leaving all this loveliness at her feet. All that was no mystery now; but her thoughts fastened on her aunt's words—how they

would "miss him." She was very still, and so was Mrs. Caxton, till a step brought both heads round to the door.

It was only a servant that came out, bringing letters; one for Eleanor, one for Mrs. Caxton. Standing where she was, Eleanor broke hers open. It was from her mother, and it contained something both new and unexpected; an urgent injunction on her to return immediately home. The family were going at once to Brighton, the letter said; Mrs. Powle wished Eleanor to lose no time, in order that her wardrobe might be properly cared for. Thomas was sent with the letter, and her mother desired that Eleanor would immediately on the receipt of it, "without an hour's delay," set off to come home with him. Reasons for this sudden proceeding there were none given; and it came with the suddenness of a hurricane upon Eleanor. Up to this time there had been no intimation of her mother's wish to have her at home again ever; an interval of several weeks had elapsed since any letters; now Mrs. Powle said "she had been gone long enough," and they all wanted her, and must have her at once to go to Brighton. So suddenly affectionate!

Eleanor stood looking at her letter some time after she had ceased to read it, with a face that showed turmoil. Mrs. Caxton came up to her. Eleanor dropped the letter in her hand, but her eye avoided her aunt's.

"What is all this haste, Eleanor?" Mrs. Caxton said gravely.

"I don't know, ma'am."

"At any rate, my child, you cannot leave me to-night. It is too late."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Does your mother assign no reason for this sudden demand of you? She gives me none."

"She gives me none, ma'am."

"Eleanor——"

It brought Eleanor's eye up, and that brought her head down on Mrs. Caxton's shoulder. Her aunt clasped her tenderly for a moment, and then said—

"Had you not better see your mother's servant, my dear, and give your orders?—and then we will have tea."

Eleanor steadied herself immediately; went out and had an interview with old Thomas, which, however, brought her no enlightenment; made her arrangements with him, and returned to her aunt. Mrs. Caxton ordered tea; they would not wait for Mr. Rhys any longer. The aunt and niece sat down to the table behind the honeysuckle drapery of the pillars; the sunlight had left the landscape, the breath of the flowers floated up cool and sweet from the terraced garden, and waved about them with every stir of the long rose and honeysuckle sprays. Eleanor sat by the table and looked out. Mrs. Caxton poured out the tea and looked at her.

"Aren't you going to take some strawberries, my love?"

"Shall I give you some, aunt Caxton?"

"And yourself, my dear."

She watched while Eleanor slowly broke up the heath and ivy adornment of the strawberry dish, and carefully afterwards replaced the sprays and leaves she had dislodged. It is no harm for a lady's hand to be white; but travelling from the hand to the face, Mrs. Caxton's eye found too little colour there. Eleanor's cheeks were not generally wanting in a fine healthy tinge. The tinge was fainter than usual to-night. Nevertheless, she was eating strawberries with apparent regularity.

"Eleanor, I do not understand this sudden recall. Have you any clue?"

"No, ma'am, not the least."

"What arrangements have you made, my dear?"

"For to-morrow morning, ma'am. I had no choice."

"No, my dear, you had not; and I have not a word to say. I hope Mr. Rhys will come back before you go."

Absolute silence on Eleanor's part.

"You would like to bid him good-bye before you leave Plassy."

There was a cessation of any attention to the strawberries, and Eleanor's hand took a position which rather hindered observations of her face. You might have heard a slight little sigh come from behind Mrs. Caxton's teapot.

"Eleanor, have you learned that the steps of a good man

are ordered by the Lord? My love, they are not left to our own disposal, and we should not know how to manage it. You are going to do the Lord's work, are you not, wherever you may be?"

"I hope so."

"Then trust him to place you where he wants the work to be done. Can you, Eleanor?"

Eleanor left her seat, came round and knelt down by Mrs. Caxton's side, putting her face in her lap.

"It is not like a good soldier, dear, to wish to play general. You have something now to do at home—perhaps not more for others than for yourself. Are you willing to do it?"

"Don't ask me if I am willing, aunt Caxton. I have been too happy—— But I shall be willing."

"That is all we live for, my dear—to do the Lord's work; and I am sure that in service as in everything else, God loves a cheerful giver. Let us give him that now, Eleanor, and trust him for the rest. My child, you are not the only one who has to give up something."

And though Mrs. Caxton said little more than that word on the subject of what Eleanor's departure cost herself, she manifested it in a different way, by the kind, incessant solicitude and care with which she watched over Eleanor, and helped her and kept with her that night and the next morning. Eleanor made her preparations, and indulged in very few words. There was too much to think of, in the last evening's society, the last night in her happy room, the last morning hours. And yet Eleanor did very little thinking. She was to go immediately after breakfast. The early prayers were over, and the aunt and niece were left by themselves a moment before the meal was served.

"And what shall I say to Mr. Rhys?" enquired Mrs. Caxton, as they stood silent together. Eleanor hesitated, and hesitated, and finally said—

"I believe, nothing, ma'am."

"You have given me messages for so many other people, you know," said Mrs. Caxton quietly.

"Yes, ma'am. I don't know how to make a message for him."

"I think he will feel it," said Mrs. Caxton in the same manner.

Then she saw—for her eyes were good—the lightning flash of emotion which worked in Eleanor's face. Proud self-control kept it down, and she stood motionless, though it did not prevent the perceptible paling of her cheek which Mrs. Caxton had noticed last night. She stood silent, then she said slowly—

"If I thought *that*—— You may give him any message for me that you think good, aunt Caxton."

The breakfast arrived, and few more words passed on any topic. Another hour, and Eleanor was on her journey.

She felt in a confusion of spirits, and would not let herself think, till they reached her stopping place for the night. And then, instead of thinking, Eleanor, to say the truth, could do nothing but weep. It was her time for tears; to-morrow would end such an indulgence. At an early hour the next day she met her father's carriage, which had been sent so far for her; and the remaining hours of her way Eleanor did think. Her thoughts are her own. But at the bottom of some that were sorrowful lay one deep subject of joy—that she was not going helmetless into the fight which she felt might be before her. Of that she had an inward presentiment, though what form it would take she was entirely uncertain.

Julia was the first person that met her, and that meeting was rapturous.

"O Nell! it has been so dreadful and dull since you have been gone! I'm so glad to have you home! I'm so glad to have you home!" she repeated, with her arms round Eleanor's neck.

"But what are you going to Brighton for?" said Eleanor, after the first salutations had satisfied the first eagerness of the sisters.

"O, I don't know. Papa isn't very well, I believe; and mamma thought it would do him good. Mamma's in here."

It was to Eleanor's relief that her reception in this quarter also was perfectly cordial. Mrs. Powle seemed to have forgotten, or to be disposed to forget, old causes of trouble; and to begin again as if nothing had happened.

"You look well, Eleanor. Bless me, I never saw your complexion better! but how your hair is dressed! That isn't the way now; but you'll get to rights soon. I've got a purple muslin for you that will be beautiful. Your whole wardrobe will want attention, but I have everything ready —dressmaker and all—only waiting for you. Think of your being gone seven months and more! But never mind—we'll let bygones be bygones. I am not going to rake up anything. We'll go to Brighton, and have everything pleasant."

"How soon, mamma?"

"Just as soon as I can get you dressed. And Eleanor! I wish you would immediately take a review of all your wardrobe and all I have got for you, and see if I have omitted anything."

"What has put you into the notion of Brighton, mamma?"

"Everybody is there now—and we want a change. I think it will do your father good."

To see her father was the next thing; and here there was some comfort. The Squire was undoubtedly rejoiced to see his daughter, and welcomed her back right heartily. Made much of her in his way. He was the only one too who cared to hear much of Mrs. Caxton and her way of life and her farm. The Squire did care. Eleanor was kept a long time answering questions and giving details. It cost her some hard work.

"She is a good woman, is my sister Caxton," said the Squire; "and she has pluck enough for half a dozen. The only thing I have against her is her being a Methodist. She hasn't made a Methodist of you, eh, Eleanor?"

"I don't think she has, papa," Eleanor answered slowly.

"That's the only fault I have to find with her," the Squire went on; "but I suppose women must have an empty corner of their heads, where they will stick fancies if they don't stick

flowers. I think flowers are the most becoming of the two. Wears a brown gown always, don't she?"

"No, sir."

"I thought they did," said the Squire; "but she's a clever woman, for all that, or she wouldn't carry on that business of the farm as she does. Your mother don't like the farm; but I think my sister is right. Better be independent, and ask leave of nobody. Well, you must get dressed, must you? I am glad to have you home, child!"

"Why are we going to leave home, papa?"

"St. George and the Dragon! Ask your mother."

So Eleanor did not get much wiser on the subject till dinner-time; nor then either, though it was nearly the only thing talked about, both directly and indirectly. A great weariness came over her, as the contrast rose up of Mrs. Caxton's dinner-table and the three faces round it; with the sweet play of talk, on things natural or philosophical, religious or civil, but always sensible, fresh, and original and strong. Always that; the party might lapse into silence; if one of them was tired, it often did; but when the words came again, they came with a ready life and purpose—with a sort of perfume of love and purity—that it made Eleanor's heart ache now to think of. Her mother was descanting on lodgings, on the people already at Brighton, or coming there; on dresses ready and unready; and to vary this topic the Squire complained that his wine was not cooled properly. Eleanor sank into silence, and then into extreme depression of spirits; which grew more and more, until she caught her little sister's eye looking at her wistfully. Julia had hardly said a word all dinner-time. The look smote Eleanor's conscience. "Is this the way I am doing the work given me?" she thought; "this selfish forgetting of all others in myself? Am I standing in my post like a good soldier? Is *this* 'pleasing all men for their good?'" Conscience thumped like a hammer; and Eleanor roused up, entered into what was going, talked and made herself pleasant to both father and mother, who grew sunshiny under the influence. Mrs. Powle eat the remainder

of her dinner with more appetite; and the Squire declared Eleanor had grown handsome, and Plassy had done her no harm. But Julia looked and listened, and said never a word. It was very hard work to Eleanor, though it brought its reward as she went along, not only in comments, but in the sense of duty performed. She would not run away from her post; she kept at it; when her father had gone away to smoke, she stayed by her mother, till Mrs. Powle dropped off into her usual after-dinner nap in her chair. Eleanor sat still a minute or two longer, then made an escape. She sought her old garden, by the way of her old summer parlour. Things were not changed there, except that the garden was a little neglected. It brought painful things back, though the flowers were sweet and the summer sunset glow was over them all. So it used to be in old times. So it used to be in nearer times, last summer. And now was another change. Eleanor paced slowly down one walk and up another, looking sorrowfully at her old friends, the roses, carnations and petunias, which looked at her as cheerfully as ever; when a hand touched hers, and she found Julia at her side.

"Eleanor," she said wistfully, "are you *sorry* to be at home again?"

"I am glad to see you, darling; and papa, and mamma."

"But you don't look glad. Was it so much pleasanter where you have been?"

Eleanor struggled with herself.

"It was very different, Julia—and there were things that you and I both love, that there are not here."

"What?"

"Here all is for the world, Julia; there, at Plassy, nothing is for the world. I feel the difference just at first—I suppose I shall get a little used to it presently."

"I have not thought so much about all that," said Julia, soberly, "since Mr. Rhys went away. But you must have loved aunt Caxton very much, Eleanor, to make you sorry to come home."

Julia spoke almost sadly. Eleanor felt bitterly reproached.

Was there not work at home here for her to do! Yet she could hardly speak at first. Putting her arm round Julia, she drew her down beside her on a green bank, and took her little sister in her arms.

"You and I will help each other, Julia, will we not?"

"In what?"

"To love Christ, and please him."

"Why, do you love him?" said Julia. "Are you like Mr. Rhys?"

"Not much. But I do love the same Master he loves, Julia; and I have come home to serve him. You will help me?"

"Mamma don't like all that," remarked Julia.

Eleanor sighed. The burden on her heart seemed growing heavy. Julia half rose up, and putting both arms round her neck, covered her lips with kisses.

"You don't seem like yourself!" she said; "and you look as grave as if you had found us all dead. Eleanor—are you afraid?" she said, with an earnest look.

"Afraid of what, dear?"

"Of that man—afraid of Mr. Carlisle?"

"No, I am not afraid of him, or of anything. Besides, he is hundreds of miles away, in Switzerland, or somewhere."

"No, he isn't; he is here."

"What do you mean by 'here?'"

"In England, I mean. He isn't at the Priory; but he was here at the Lodge the other day."

Eleanor's heart made two or three springs one way and another.

"No, dear, I am not afraid of him," she repeated, with a quietness that was convincing; and Julia passed to other subjects. Eleanor did not forget that one; and as Julia ran on with her talk, she pondered it, and made a secret thanksgiving that she was so escaped both from danger and from fear. Nevertheless she could not help thinking about the subject. It seemed that Mr. Carlisle's wound had healed very rapidly. And moreover she had not given him credit

for finding any attraction in that house, beyond her own personal presence in it. However, she reflected that Mr. Carlisle was busy in politics, and perhaps cultivated her father. They went in again, to take up the subject of Brighton.

And what followed? Muslins, flowers, laces, bonnets, and ribbands. They were very irksome days to Eleanor, that were spent in getting ready for Brighton; and the thought of the calm purity of Plassy, with its different occupations, sometimes came over her, and for the moment unnerved her hands for the finery they had to handle. Once Eleanor took a long rambling ride alone on her old pony; she did not try it again. Business and bustle was better, at least was less painful, than such a time for thinking and feeling. So the dresses were made, and they went to Brighton.

CHAPTER XXII.

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

ELEANOR was at once plunged into a whirl of engagements, with acquaintances new and old. And the former class multiplied very rapidly. Mrs. Powle's fair curls hung on either side of her face with almost their full measure of complacency, as she saw and beheld her daughter's successful attractions. It was true. Eleanor was found to have something unique about her; some said it was her beauty, some said it was her manners; some insisted it was neither, but had a deeper origin; at any rate she was fresh. Something out of the common line, and that piqued curiosity, was delightful; and in despite of her very moderate worldly advantages, compared with many others who were there, Eleanor Powle seemed likely to become in a little while the belle of Brighton. Certain rumours which were afloat no doubt facilitated and expedited this progress of things. Happily Eleanor did not hear them.

The rush of engagements and whirl of society at first was very wearying and painful to her. No heart had Eleanor to give to it. Only by putting a force upon herself, to please her father and mother, she managed to enter with some spirit into the amusements going forward, in which she was expected to take an active part. Perhaps this very fact had something to do with the noble and sweet disengagedness

of manner which marked her unlike those about her, in a world where self-interest of some sort is the ruling motive. It was not Eleanor's world; it had nothing to do with the interests that were dear in her regard; and something of that carelessness which she brought to it conferred a grace that the world imitates in vain. Eleanor found, however, after a little, that the rush and hurry of her life and of all the people about her had a contagion in it; her own thoughts were beginning to be absorbed in what absorbed everybody; her own cherished interests were getting pushed into a corner. Eleanor resolved to make a stand then, and secure time enough to herself to let her own inner life have play and breathing room. But it was very difficult to make such a stand. Mrs. Powle ever stood like a watchman at the door, to drive Eleanor out when she wanted to be in. Time! there seemed to be no time.

Eleanor had heard that Mr. Carlisle was expected at Brighton; so she was not greatly surprised one evening to find herself in the same room with him. It was at a public assembly. The glances that her curiosity cast, found him moving about among people very like, and in very exactly the manner of his old self. No difference that she could see. She wondered whether he would have the audacity to come and speak to her. Audacity was not a point in which Mr. Carlisle was failing. He came; and as he came others scattered away—melted off, and left her alone.

He came with the best air in the world; a little conscious, a little apologetic, wholly respectful, not altogether devoid of the old familiarity. He offered his hand; did not, to be sure, detain hers, which would have been inconvenient in a public assembly; but he detained *her*, falling into talk with an ease or an effrontery which it was impossible not to admire. And Eleanor admired him involuntarily. Certainly this man had capacities. He did not detain her too long; passed away as easily as he had come up; but returned again in the course of the evening to offer her some civility; and it was Mr. Carlisle who put her mother and herself into their carriage. Eleanor looked for a remark

from her mother on the subject during their drive home; but Mrs. Powle made none.

The next evening he was at Mrs. Powle's rooms, where a small company was gathered every Tuesday. He might be excused if he watched, more than he wished to be seen watching, the sweet unconscious grace and ease with which Eleanor moved and spoke. Others noticed it, but Mr. Carlisle drew comparisons; and found to his mystification that her six months on a cheese-farm had returned Eleanor with an added charm of eye and manner, for which he could not account—which he could not immediately define. She was not expecting to see him this time, for she started a little when he presented himself. He came with the same pleasant expression that he had worn last night.

"Will you excuse me for remarking, that your winter has done you good?" he said.

"Yes. I know it has," Eleanor answered.

"With your old frankness, you acknowledge it?"

"Willingly."

Her accent was so simple and sweet, the attraction was irresistible. He sat down by her.

"I hope you are as willing as I am to acknowledge that all our last winter's work was not good. We exchanged letters."

"Hardly, Mr. Carlisle."

"Will you allow me to say, that I am ashamed of my part in that transaction? Eleanor, I want you to forget it, and to receive me as if it had not happened."

Eleanor was in a mixture of astonishment and doubt, as to how far his words might be taken. In the doubt, she hesitated one instant. Another person, a lady, drew near, and Mr. Carlisle yielded to her the place he had been occupying. The opportunity for an answer was gone. And though he was often near her during the evening, he did not recur again to the subject, and Eleanor could not. But the little bit of dialogue left her something to think of.

She had occasion often to think of it. Mr. Carlisle was everywhere, of course, in Brighton; at least he was in

Eleanor's everywhere; she saw him a great deal, and was a little struck and puzzled by his manner. He was very often in her immediate company; often attending upon her; it constantly happened, she could not tell how, that his arm was the one to which she was consigned, in walks and evening escorts. In a measure, he assumed his old place beside her; his attentions were constant, gracefully and freely paid; they just lacked the expression which would have obliged and enabled her to throw them off. It was rather the manner of a brother than of a lover; but it was familiar and confidential beyond what those assume that are not brothers. Whatever it meant, it dissatisfied Eleanor. The world, perhaps the gentleman himself, might justly think if she permitted this state of things, that she allowed the conclusions naturally to be drawn from it. She determined to withdraw herself. It was curiously and inexplicably difficult. Too easily, too gracefully, too much as a matter of course, things fell into train, for Eleanor often to do anything to alter the train. But she was determined.

"Eleanor, do you know everybody is waiting?" Mrs. Powle exclaimed one morning, bursting into Eleanor's room. "There's the whole riding-party—and you are not ready!"

"No, mamma. I am not going."

"Not going! Just put on your riding-habit as quick as you can—Julia, get her hat!—you said you would go, and I have no notion of disappointing people like that. Get yourself ready immediately—do you hear me?"

"But, mamma——"

"Put on your habit—then talk if you like. It's all nonsense. What are you doing—studying? Nonsense! There's time enough for studying when you are at home. Now be quick."

"But, mamma——"

"Well? Put your hair lower, Eleanor; that will not do."

"Mamma, isn't Mr. Carlisle there?"

"Mr. Carlisle? What if he is? I hope he is. You look well in that hat, Eleanor."

"Mamma, if Mr. Carlisle is there——"

"Hold your tongue, Eleanor—take your whip and go. They are all waiting. You may talk to me when you come back, but now you must go. I should think Mr. Carlisle would like to be of the party, for there isn't such another figure on the ride. Now kiss me and go. You are a good girl."

Mrs. Powle said it with some feeling. She had never found Eleanor so obediently tractable as since her return; she had never got from her such ready and willing co-operation, even in matters that her mother knew were not after Eleanor's heart, as now when her heart was less in them than ever. And at this moment she was gratified by the quiet grave obedience rendered her, in doing what she saw plainly enough Eleanor did not like to do. She followed her daughter down stairs with a proud heart.

It happened again, as it was always happening, that Mr. Carlisle was Eleanor's special attendant. Eleanor meditated possible ways of hindering this in future; but for the present there was no remedy. Mr. Carlisle put her on her horse; it was not till she was taking the reins in her left hand that something struck her with a sense of familiarity.

"What horse is this?" she asked.

"No other than your old friend and servant—I hope you have not forgotten her. She has not forgotten you."

Eleanor perceived that. As surely as it was Black Maggie, Maggie knew her; and displeased though Eleanor was with the master, she could not forbear a little caress of recognition to the beautiful creature he had once given her. Maggie was faultless; she and Eleanor were accustomed to each other; it was an undeniable pleasure to be so mounted again, as Eleanor could not but acknowledge to herself during the first few dainty dancing steps that Maggie made with her wonted burden. Nevertheless, it was a great deal too much like old times that were destroyed; and glancing at Mr. Carlisle, Eleanor saw that he was on Tippoo, and furthermore that there was a sparkle in his eye which meant

hope, or triumph. Something put Eleanor on her mettle; she rode well that day. She rode with a careless grace and ease that even drew a compliment from Mr. Carlisle; but beyond that, his companion at first gave him little satisfaction. She was grave and cold to all his conversational efforts. However, there she was on his black mare; and Mr. Carlisle probably found an antidote to whatever discouragement she threw in his way. Chance threw something else in his way.

They had turned into one of the less frequented streets of the town, in their way to get out of it, when Eleanor's eye was seized by a figure on the sidewalk. It startled her inexpressibly; and before she could be sure her eyes did not deceive her the figure had almost passed, or they had almost passed the person. But in passing he had raised his hat; she knew then he had recognized her, as she had known him; and he had recognized her in such company. And he was in Brighton! Without a moment for thought or delay, Eleanor wheeled her horse's head sharply round, and in one or two smart steps brought herself alongside of Mr. Rhys. He stopped, came up to her stirrup and shook hands. He looked grave, Eleanor thought. She hastened to speak.

"I could not pass you, Mr. Rhys. I had to leave Plassy without bidding you good-bye."

"I am glad to meet you now," he said, "before I go."

"Do you leave Brighton very soon?"

"To-morrow. I go up to London, and in a few days I expect to sail from there."

"For——?"

"Yes; for my post in the Southern Ocean. I have an unexpected opportunity."

Eleanor was silent. She could not find anything to say. She knew also that Mr. Carlisle had wheeled his horse after her, and that Tippoo was taking steps somewhere in her close neighbourhood. But she sat motionless, unable to move as well as to speak.

"I must not detain you," said Mr. Rhys. "Do you find it as easy to live well at Brighton as at Plassy?"

Eleanor answered a low and grave "no," bending down over her saddlebow.

"Keep that which is committed to thy charge," he said gently. "Farewell, and the Lord bless you!"

Eleanor had bared her gauntleted hand; he gave it the old earnest grasp, lifted his hat, and went on his way. Eleanor turned her horse's head again and found herself alongside of Mr. Carlisle. She rode on briskly, pointing out to him how far ahead were the rest of the party.

"Was not your friend somebody that I know?" he enquired as soon as there was a convenient pause.

"I am sure I do not know," said Eleanor. "I do not know how good your memory may be. He is the gentleman that was my brother's tutor at home—some time ago."

"I thought I remembered. Is he tutoring some one else now?"

"I should think not. He just tells me he is about to sail for the South Seas. Mr. Carlisle, Maggie has a very nice mouth."

"Her mistress has a very nice hand," he answered, bending forward to Maggie's bridle so that he could look up in Eleanor's face. "Only you let her rein be too slack, as of old. You like her better than Tippoo?"

"Tippoo is beyond my management."

"I am not going to let you say that. You shall mount Tippoo next time, and become acquainted with your own powers. You are not afraid of anything?"

"Yes, I am."

"You did not use to be."

"Well, I have not grown cowardly," said Eleanor, "but I am afraid of mounting Tippoo; and what I am afraid of, Mr. Carlisle, I will not do."

"Just the reverse maxim from that which I should have expected from you. Do you say your friend there is going to the South Seas?"

"Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor, turning her face full upon him.

"If that is his name—yes. Why does he not stick to tutoring?"

"Does anybody stick to tutoring that can help it?"

"I should think not; but then as a tutor he would be in the way of better things; he could mount to something higher."

"I believe he has some expectation of that sort in going to the Pacific," said Eleanor. She spoke it with a most commonplace coolness.

"Seems a very roundabout road to promotion," said Mr. Carlisle, watching Eleanor's hand, and stealthily her face; "but I suppose he knows best. Your friend is not a Churchman, is he?"

"No."

"I remember him as a popular orator of great powers. What is he leaving England for?"

"You assume somewhat too much knowledge on my part of people's designs," said Eleanor, carelessly. "I must suppose that he likes work on the other side of the world better than to work here—for some reason or other."

"How the reason should be promotion, puzzles me," said her companion; "but that may be owing to prejudice on my part. I do not know how to conceive of promotion out of the regular line—in England and in the Church. To be sent to India to take a bishopric seems to me a descent in the scale. Have you this feeling?"

"About bishoprics?" said Eleanor, smiling. "They are not in my line, you know."

"Don't be wicked! Have you this feeling about England?"

"If a bishopric in India were offered me?"

"Well, yes! Would you accept it?"

"I really never had occasion to consider the subject before. It is such a very new thought, you see. But I will tell you, I should think the humblest curacy in England to be chosen rather—unless for the sake of a wider sphere of doing good."

"Do you know," said Mr. Carlisle, looking very con-

tented, and coming up closer, "your bridle hand has improved? It is very nearly faultless. What have you been riding this winter?"

"A wiry little pony."

"Honour, Eleanor!" said Mr. Carlisle, laughing, and bringing his hand again near enough to throw over a lock of Maggie's mane, which had fallen on the wrong side. "I am really curious."

"Well, I tell you the truth. But, Mr. Carlisle, I wonder you people in parliament do not stir yourselves up to right some wrongs. People ought to live, if they are curates; and there was one where I was last winter—an excellent one—living, or starving, I don't know which you would call it, on thirty pounds a year."

Mr. Carlisle entered into the subject; and questions, moral, legislative, and ecclesiastical, were discussed by him and Eleanor with great earnestness and diligence; by him at least with singular delight. Eleanor kept up the conversation with unflagging interest; it was broken by a proposal on Mr. Carlisle's part for a gallop, to which she willingly agreed; held her part in the ensuing scamper with perfect grace and steadiness, and as soon as it was over, plunged Mr. Carlisle deep again into reform.

"Nobody has had such honour as I to-day," he assured her, as he took her down from her horse. "I shall see you to-night, of course?"

"Of course, I suppose," said Eleanor.

It cannot be said that Eleanor made any effort to change the "of course," though the rest of the day as usual was swallowed up in a round of engagements. There was no breathing time, and the evening occasion was a public one. Mrs. Powle was in a great state of satisfaction with her daughter to-day; Eleanor had shunned no company nor exertion, had carried an unusual spirit into all; and a minute with Mr. Carlisle after the ride had showed him in a sort of exultant mood. She looked over Eleanor's dress critically when they were about leaving home for the evening's entertainment. It was very simple indeed; yet Mrs. Powle in

the depth of her heart could not find that anything was wanting to the effect.

Nor could a yet more captious critic, Mr. Carlisle, who was on the ground before them, and watched and observed a little while from a distance. Admiration and passion were roused within him, as he watched anew what he had already seen in Eleanor's manner since she came to Brighton—that grace of absolute ease and unconsciousness, which only the very highest breeding can successfully imitate. No Lady Rythdale, he was obliged to confess, that ever lived, had better advanced the honours of her house, than would this one—could she be persuaded to accept the position. This manner did not use to be Eleanor's; how had she got it on the borders of Wales? Neither was the sweetness of that smile to be seen on her lip in the times gone by; and a little gravity was wanting then, which gave a charm of dignity to the exquisite poise which whether of character or manner was so at home with her now. Was she too grave? The question rose; but he answered it with a negative. Her smile came readily, and it was the sweeter for not being always seen. His meditations were interrupted by a whisper at his elbow.

"She will not dance!"

"Who will not?" said he, finding himself face to face with Mrs. Powle.

"Eleanor. She will not. I am afraid it is one of her new notions."

Mr. Carlisle smiled a peculiar smile. "Hardly a fault, I think, Mrs. Powle. I am not inclined to quarrel with it."

"You do not see any faults at all, I believe," said the lady. "Now I am more discerning."

Mr. Carlisle did not speak his thoughts, which were complimentary only in one direction, to say truth. He went off to Eleanor, and prevented any more propositions of dancing for the rest of the evening. He could not monopolize her, though. He was obliged to see her attention divided in part among other people, and to take a share, which, though perfectly free and sufficiently gracious, gave him no advan-

tage in that respect over several others. The only advantage he could make sure of was that of attending Eleanor home. The evening left him an excited man, not happy in his mind.

Eleanor, having quitted her escort, went slowly up the stairs; bade her mother good night; went into her own room, and locked the door. Then methodically she took off the several parts of her evening attire and laid them away; put on a dressing-gown, threw her window open, and knelt down by it.

The stars kept watch over the night. A pleasant fresh breeze blew in from the sea. They were Eleanor's only companions, and they never missed her from the window the whole night long. I am bound to say, that the morning found her there.

But nights so spent make a heavy draft on the following day. In spite of all that cold water could do in the way of refreshment, in spite of all that the morning cup of tea could do, Eleanor was obliged to confess to a headache.

"Why, Eleanor, child, you look dreadfully!" said Mrs. Powle, who came into her room and found her lying down. "You are as white!—and black rings under your eyes. You will never be able to go with the riding party this morning."

"I am afraid not, mamma. I am sorry. I would go if I could; but I believe I must lie still. Then I shall be fit for this evening, perhaps."

She was not; but that one day of solitude and silence was all that Eleanor took for herself. The next day she joined the riders again; and from that time held herself back from no engagement to which her mother or Mr. Carlisle urged her.

Mr. Carlisle felt it with a little of his old feeling of pride. It was the only thing in which Eleanor could be said to give the feeling much chance; for while she did not reject his attendance, which she could not easily do, nor do at all without first vanquishing her mother; and while she allowed a certain remains of the old wonted familiarity, she

at the same time never gave Mr. Carlisle any reason to think that he had regained the least power over her. She received him well, but as she received a hundred others. He was her continual attendant, but he never felt that it was by Eleanor's choice; and he knew sometimes that it was by her choice that he was thrown out of his office. She bewildered him with her sweet dignity, which was more utterly unmanageable than any form of pride or passion. The pride and passion were left to be Mr. Carlisle's own. Pride was roused, that he was stopped by so gentle a barrier in his advances; and passion was stimulated, by uncertainty not merely, but by the calm grace and indefinable sweetness which he did not remember in Eleanor, well as he had loved her before. He loved her better now. That charm of manner was the very thing to captivate Mr. Carlisle; he valued it highly; and did not appreciate it the less because it baffled him.

"He's ten times worse than ever," Mrs. Powle said exultingly to her husband. "I believe he'd go through fire and water to make sure of her."

"And how's she?" growled the Squire.

"She's playing with him, girl-fashion," said Mrs. Powle, chuckling. "She is using her power."

"What is she using it for?" said the Squire, threateningly.

"O, to enjoy herself, and make him value her properly. She will come round by and by."

How was Eleanor? The world had opportunities of judging most of the time, as far as the outside went; yet there were still a few times of the day which the world did not intrude upon; and of those there was an hour before breakfast, when Eleanor was pretty secure against interruption, even from her mother. Mrs. Powle was a late riser. Julia, who was very much cast away at Brighton, and went wandering about like a rudderless vessel, found out that Eleanor was dressed and using the sunshine long before anybody else in the house knew the day was begun. It was a golden discovery. Eleanor was alone, and Julia could have her to herself a little while at least. Even if

Eleanor was bent on reading or writing, still it was a joy to be near her, to watch her, to smooth her soft hair, and now and then break her off from other occupations to have a talk.

"Eleanor," said Julia one day, a little while after these cases in time had been discovered by her, "what has become of Mr. Rhys?—do you know?"

"He has gone," said Eleanor. She was sitting by her open window, a book open on her lap. She looked out of the window as she spoke.

"Gone? Do you mean he has gone away from England? You don't mean that?"

"Yes."

"To that dreadful place?"

"What dreadful place?"

"Where he was going you know,—somewhere. Are you sure he has gone, Eleanor?"

"Yes, I saw it in the paper—the mention of his going—he and two others."

"And has he gone to that horrible place?"

"Yes, I suppose so. That is where he wished to go."

"I don't see how he could!" said Julia. "How could he, where the people are so bad!—and leave England?"

"Why, Julia, have you forgotten? Don't you know whose servant Mr. Rhys is?"

"Yes," said Julia, mutteringly, "but I should think he would be afraid. Why, the people there are as wicked as they can be."

"That is no reason why he should be afraid. What harm could they do to him?"

"Why!—they could kill him, easily," said Julia.

"And would that be great harm to Mr. Rhys?" said Eleanor, looking round at her. "What if they did, and he were called quick home to the court of his King,—do you think his reception there would be a sorrowful thing?"

"Why, Nell," said Julia, "do you mean heaven?"

"Do you not think that is Mr. Rhys's home?"

"I haven't thought much about it at all," said Julia, laying her head down on Eleanor's shoulder. "You see, no

body talked to me ever since he went away; and mamma talks everything else."

"Come here in the mornings, and we'll talk about it," said Eleanor. Her voice was a little husky.

"Shall we?" said Julia, rousing up again. "But, Eleanor, what are your eyes full for? Did *you* love Mr. Rhys too?"

It was an innocent question; but instead of answering, Eleanor turned again to the window. She sat with her hand pressed upon her mouth, while the full eyes brimmed and ran over, and filled again; and drop after drop plashed upon the window-sill. It was impossible to help it, for that minute; and Julia looked on wonderingly.

"O Nell," she repeated, almost awe-struck, "what is it? What has made you sorry too?" But she had to wait a little while for her answer.

"He was a good friend to me," said Eleanor at last, wiping her eyes; "and I suppose it is not very absurd to cry for a friend that is gone, that one will never see again."

"Maybe he will come back some time," said Julia, sorrowfully.

"Not while there is work there for him to do," said Eleanor. She waited a little while. There was some difficulty in going on. When she did speak, her tone was clear and firm.

"Julia, shall we follow the Lord as Mr. Rhys does?"

"How?"

"By doing whatever Jesus gives us to do."

"What has he given us to do?" said Julia.

"If you come to my room in the mornings, we will read and find out. And we will pray, and ask to be taught."

Julia's countenance lightened and clouded with alternate changes.

"Will you, Eleanor? But what have we got to do?"

"Love Jesus."

"Well, I—O, I did use to, Eleanor! and I think I do now; only I have forgotten to think about anything, this ever so long."

"Then if we love him, we shall find plenty of things to do for him."

"What, Eleanor? I would like to do something."

"Just whatever he gives us, Julia. Come, darling,—have you not duties?"

"Duties?"

"Have you not things that it is your duty to do?—or not to do?"

"Studies!" said Julia. "But I don't like them."

"For Jesus' sake?"

Julia burst into tears. Eleanor's tone was so loving and gentle, it reached the memories that had been slumbering.

"How can I do them for him, Eleanor?" she asked, half perversely still.

"'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' So he has told us."

"But my studies, Eleanor—how can I?"

"Who gave you the opportunity, Julia?"

"Well—I know."

"Well, if God has given you the opportunity, do you think he means it for nothing? He has work for you to do, Julia, some time, for which you will want all these things that you have a chance of learning now; if you miss the chance, you will certainly not be ready for the work."

"Why, Eleanor!—that's funny."

"What is it?"

"Why, I never thought of such a thing."

"What did you think?"

"I thought I had French and German to study, for instance, because everybody else learned French and German. I did not think there was any use in it."

"You forgot who had given you them to learn."

"No; mamma would have it. Just her notion. Papa didn't care."

"But, dear Julia, you forget who has made it your duty to please mamma's notions. And you forget who it is that has given you your place in the world. You might have been born in poverty, with quite other lessons to learn, and quite other work in the world."

"You talk just as queer as if you were Mr. Rhys himself,"

said Julia. "I never heard of such things. Do you suppose all the girls who are learning French and German at school —all the girls in England—have the same sort of work to do, that they will want it for?"

"No, not all the same. But God never gives the preparation without the occasion."

"Then suppose they do not make the preparation?"

"Then when the occasion comes, they will not be ready for it. When their work is given them to do, they will be found wanting."

"It's so queer!" said Julia.

"What?"

"To think such things about lessons."

"You may think such things about everything. Whatever God gives you, he gives you to use in some way for him."

"But how can I possibly know *how*, Eleanor?"

"Come to me in the mornings, and you and I will try to find out."

"Did you say, I must please all mamma's notions?"

"Certainly—all you can."

"But I like papa's notions a great deal better than mamma's."

"You must try to meet both," said Eleanor, smiling.

"I do not like a great many of mamma's notions. I don't think there is any sense in them."

"But God likes obedience, Julia. He has bid you honour mamma and papa. Do it for him."

"Do *you* mean to please all mamma's notions?" said Julia, sharply.

"All that I can, certainly."

"Well, it is one of her notions that Mr. Carlisle should get you to the Priory after all. Are you going to let her? Are you going to let him, I mean?"

"No."

"Then if it is your duty to please mamma's notions, why mustn't you please this one?"

"Because here I have my duty to others to think of."

"To whom?" said Julia, as quick as lightning.

"To myself—and to Mr. Carlisle."

"Mr. Carlisle!" said Julia. "I'll be bound he thinks your duty to him would make you do whatever he likes."

"It happens that I take a different view of the subject."

"But, Eleanor, what work do you suppose I have to do in the world, that I shall want French and German for?—real work, I mean?"

"I can't tell. But I know *now* you have a beautiful example to set."

"Of what? learning my lessons well?"

"Of whatever is lovely and of good report. Of whatever will please Jesus."

Julia put her arms round her sister's neck, and hid her face there.

"I am going to give you a word to remember to-day; keep it with you, dear. 'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Just think of that, whether you are busy or not busy. And we will ask the Lord to make us so full of his love, that we cannot help it."

They knelt and prayed together; after which Julia gave her sister a great many earnest caresses; and they went down to breakfast a much-comforted pair.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"London makes mirth! but I know God hears
The sobs i' the dark, and the dropping of tears."

THE morning meetings were kept up. Julia had always been very fond of her sister; now she almost worshipped her. She would get as close as possible, put her arm round Eleanor's waist, and sometimes lay her head on her shoulder; and so listen to the reading and join in the talking. The talks were always finished with prayer; and at first it not seldom happened that Eleanor's prayer became choked with tears. It happened so often that Julia remarked upon it; and after that it never happened again.

"Eleanor, can you see much use in my learning to dance?" was a question which Julia propounded one morning.

"Not much."

"Mamma says I shall go to dancing school next winter.'

"Next winter! What, at Brompton?"

"O, we are going to London after we go from here. So mamma says. Why, didn't you know it?"

Eleanor remained silent.

"Now what good is that going to do?" Julia went on. "What work is that to fit me for, Eleanor?—dancing parties?"

"I hope it will not fit you for those," the elder sister replied gravely.

"Why not? don't you go to them?"

"I am obliged to go sometimes—I never take part."

"Why not, Eleanor? Why don't you? You can dance."

"Read," said Eleanor, pointing to the words. Julia read

"'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God and the Father by him.'—Well, Eleanor?"

"I cannot find anything I can do in the Lord's service at such places, except to stand by and say by my manner that I do not enjoy them nor approve of them."

"That won't hinder other people enjoying them, though."

"I do not think people enjoy them much. You and I have a hundred times as much fun in one good scamper over the moor. Dear old moor! I wish we were back again. But other people's doing is not my business."

"Then what makes you go, Eleanor?"

"Mamma would be so exceedingly vexed if I did not. I mean to get out of it soon—as soon as I can."

"Do you think you will, in London?"

Eleanor was silent and thoughtful.

"Well, I know one thing," said Julia,—"I am not going to dancing school. Mamma says it will make me graceful; and I think I am as graceful as other people now—as most other people—I don't think I am as graceful as you are. Don't you think so, Eleanor?"

Eleanor smiled, soberly enough.

"Eleanor, must I go to dancing school?"

"Why do you wish not to go?"

"Because you think it is wrong."

"Darling, you cannot displease mamma for such a reason. You must always honour every wish of hers, except you thought that honouring her would be to dishonour or displease the Lord."

The words were spoken and listened to with intense feeling and earnestness on both sides; and the tears came back in Eleanor's prayer that morning.

With the world at large, things maintained a very unaltered position during the rest of the stay at Brighton. Mr. Carlisle kept his position, advancing a little where it seemed possible. Eleanor kept hers, neither advancing nor retreating. She was very good to Mr. Carlisle; she did not throw him off; she gave him no occasion to complain of an

unready talker or an unwilling companion. A little particular kindness indeed she had for him, left from the old times. Julia would have been much mystified by the brightness and life and spirit Eleanor showed in company, and in his company especially; which her little sister did not see in their private intercourse alone. Nevertheless, Mr. Carlisle's passion was rather stimulated by difficulty than fed by hope; though hope lived high sometimes. All that Eleanor gave him she gave him readily, and as readily gave to others; she gave coolly too, as coolly as she gave to others. Mr. Carlisle took in many things the place of an accepted suitor; but never in Eleanor's manner, he knew. It chafed him, it piqued him; it made him far more than ever bent on obtaining her hand; her heart he could manage then. Just now it was beyond his management; and when Mrs. Powle smiled congratulation, Mr. Carlisle bit his lip. However, he had strong aids; he did not despair. He hoped something from London.

So they all went to London. Eleanor could gain no satisfactory explanation why. Only her mother asserted that her father's health must have the advice of London physicians. The Squire himself was not much more explicit. That his health was not good, however, was true; the Squire was very unlike his hearty, boisterous, independent self. He moped, and he suffered too. Eleanor could not help thinking he would have suffered less, as he certainly would have moped less, at home; and an unintelligible grunt and grumble now and then seemed to confirm her view of the case; but there they were, fixed in London, and Eleanor was called upon to enter into all sorts of London gaieties, of which always Mr. Carlisle made part and parcel.

Eleanor made a stand, and declined to go to places where she could not enjoy nor sympathize with what was done. She could not think it duty to go to the opera, or the theatre, or to great routs, even to please her mother. Mrs. Powle made a stand too, and insisted, and was very angry; but Eleanor stood firm, and the end was, she gained her point. Mr. Carlisle was disappointed, but counselled

acquiescence; and Mrs. Powle with no very good grace acquiesced; for though a woman, she did not like to be foiled. Eleanor gained one point only, she was not obliged to go where she could not go with a good conscience. She did not thereby get her time to herself. London has many ways of spending time; nice ways too; and in one and another of these Eleanor found hers all gone. Day by day it was so. Nothing was left but those hours before breakfast. And what was worse, Mr. Carlisle was at her elbow in every place; and Eleanor became conscious that she was in spite of herself appearing before the world as his particular property, and that the conclusion was endorsed by her mother. She walked as straight as she could, but the days grew to be heavy days.

She devoted herself to her father as much as possible, and in that found a refuge. The Squire was discontented and unwell; a good deal depressed in spirits as a consequence; he delighted to have Eleanor come and sit with him and read to him after dinner. She escaped many an engagement by that means. In vain Mrs. Powle came in with her appeal, about Eleanor's good requiring him to do without her; the Squire listened, struggled, and selfishness got the better.

"St. George and the Dragon!" he exclaimed, "she shall do as she likes, and as I like, for one hour in the twenty-four. You may haul her about the rest of the time, but from dinner for a while or so you may spare her. I choose she shall be with me."

The "while" was often three hours. Eleanor enjoyed repose then, and enjoyed ministering to her father, who speedily became exceedingly wedded to her services, and learned to delight in her presence after a new manner. He would have her read to him; she might read everything she pleased except what had a religious bearing. That he disposed of at once, and bade her seek another book. He loved to have her brush his hair, when his head ached, by the half-hour together; at other times he engaged her in a game of chess and a talk about Plassy. The poor Squire was getting

a good deal tamed down, to take satisfaction in such quiet pleasures; but the truth was, that he found himself unable for what he liked better. Strength and health were both failing; he was often suffering; drives in the park wearied him almost as much as sitting alone in his room; he swore at them for the stupidest entertainment man ever pleased himself with. What he did with the lonely hours he spent entirely by himself, nobody knew; Eleanor knew that he was rejoiced every time to see her come in. His eye brightened when she opened the door, and he settled himself in his easy chair to have a good time; and then even the long columns of the newspaper, read from one end to the other, up and down, were pleasant to Eleanor too. It was soothing repose, in contrast with the whirl of all the rest of her life; until the time came when Mr. Carlisle began to join the party. How he did it Eleanor hardly knew; but he did it. He actually contrived to make one at those evening entertainments, which admitted but two others; and with his usual adroitness and skill he made his presence so acceptable, that Eleanor felt that it would be in vain to attempt to hinder him. And so her rest was gone, and her opportunity; for she had cherished fond hopes of winning not only her own way into her father's heart, but with that, in time, a hearing for truths the Squire had always pushed out of his path.

Mr. Carlisle was very pleasant, there was no question. He did not at all usurp her office, nor interfere with it. But when he saw her getting weary of a parliamentary discussion, or a long discourse on politics or parties, his hand would gently draw away the paper from hers, and his voice carry on the reading. And his voice was agreeable to her father; Eleanor saw it; the Squire would turn his head a little towards the new reader, and an expression of anything but dissatisfaction steal over his features. Eleanor sat by, half mortified, half feeling real good will towards Mr. Carlisle for his grace and kindness. Or if a game of chess were on foot, Mr. Carlisle would sit by—he generally declined playing himself—and make the play very lively

with his talk; teaching Eleanor, whose part he invariably took, and keeping a very general's watch over her as if she had been a subordinate officer. Mr. Powle liked that too; it made his fighting better fun; he chuckled a good deal over Mr. Carlisle's play by proxy. Eleanor could not help it, nor withdraw herself. She knew what brought Mr. Carlisle there, and she could not avoid him, nor the very easy familiar terms on which they all sat round the chess table. She was admirably quiet and cool; but then it is true she felt no unkindness towards Mr. Carlisle, and sometimes she feared she showed kindness too frankly. It was very difficult to help that too. Nevertheless it was plain the gentleman did not dare trust anything to his present power over her, for he never tried it. He evidently relied on somewhat else in his advances. And Eleanor felt that the odds were rather hard against her. Father and mother, and such a suitor!

She was cut off from her evening refreshment; and the next step was, that her morning pleasure with Julia was also denied her. Mrs. Powle had been in a state of gratulation with reference to Julia's improvement; Julia had become latterly so docile, so decorous, and so diligent. One unlucky day it came to Mrs. Powle's knowledge that Julia objected to going to dancing school; objected to spending money on the accomplishment, and time on the acquisition; and furthermore, when pressed, avowed that she did not believe in the use of it when attained. It seemed to Mrs. Powle little less than a judgment upon her, to have the second of her daughters holding such language; it was traced to Eleanor's influence, of course; and further and diligent questioning brought out the fact of the sisters' daily studies in company. They should happen no more, Mrs. Powle immediately decided. Julia was forbidden to go to her sister's room for such purposes; and to make matters sure, she was provided with other and abundant occupation to keep her engaged at the dangerous hour. With Eleanor herself Mrs. Powle held no communication on the subject, having for certain reasons an unwillingness to come into

unnecessary collision with her; but Eleanor found her little sister's society was no more to be had. Mrs. Powle would assuredly have sent Julia quite out of the house to get her away from mischievous influences, but that she could not prevail on her husband. No daughter of his, he declared, should be made a fool of in a boarding-school, while he had a foot above ground to prevent it.

"Why, Mrs. Powle," he said, "don't you know yourself that Eleanor is the only sensible girl in London? That's growing up at home, just as you didn't want."

"If she only had not some notions——" said Mrs. Powle dubiously. For between her husband and Mr. Carlisle she was very much *held in* on Eleanor's subject; both insisting that she should let her alone. It was difficult for Eleanor to be displeased with Mr. Carlisle in these times; his whole behaviour was so kind and gentlemanly. The only fault to be found with him was his pursuit of her. That was steady and incessant; yet at the same time so brotherly and well-bred in manner, that Eleanor sometimes feared she gave him unconsciously too much encouragement. Feeling really grateful to him, it was a little hard not to show it. For although Mr. Carlisle was the cause of her trouble, he was also a shield between her and its more active manifestations. He favoured her not dancing; *that* was like a jealous man, Mrs. Powle said. He smiled at Eleanor's charities, and would have helped them if he could. He would not have her scolded on the score of religious duties; he preferred administering the antidote to them as quietly as possible.

"Eleanor!" said Mrs. Powle, putting her head out of the drawing-room door one Sunday evening as she heard somebody come in—"Eleanor! is that you? come here. Where have you been? Here is Mr. Carlisle waiting this hour to go with you to hear the Bishop of London preach."

Eleanor came into the room. She was dressed with extreme plainness, and looking so calm and sweet that it was no wonder Mr. Carlisle's eyes rested on her as on a new object of admiration. Few of his acquaintance looked so; and Eleanor did not use to, in times past.

"Now here you are, child, almost too late. Make haste and get yourself ready. Where have you been?"

"She cannot be more ready then she is," remarked the other member of the party.

"I think, mamma, I will not go to-night. I am a little tired."

"That's nonsense, Eleanor! When were you ever too unwell to go to church, *this* winter? Go and get ready. What Mr. Carlisle says is all very well, but he does not see you with my eyes."

"I shall not take her if she is tired," said Mr. Carlisle gently. And Eleanor sat still.

"Where have you been then, child, to tire yourself? You do try me, Eleanor. What can you have found to do?"

"All London, mamma," said Eleanor, pleasantly.

"All London! I should like to know what that means. All wrong, I suppose, according to you. Well, what part of London have you been attacking to-day? *I* should think the best thing for London would be to hear its Bishop. What have you been about, Eleanor?"

"Only to school, mamma—Sunday school."

"But you went there this morning?"

"That was another."

Mrs. Powle looked appealingly to Mr. Carlisle, as saying, "How long would you let this go on?" Turned her dissatisfied face again to Eleanor

"What school is this, mistress? and where?"

"Mamma, if I tell you where it is, I am afraid you will be frightened. It is a Ragged school."

"A Ragged school! What does that mean, Eleanor? What is a Ragged school?"

"A school to teach ragged children, mamma. Or rather, for ragged people—they are not most of them children; and perhaps I should not say they are ragged; for though some of them are, others of them are not. They are some of the wretchedest of the ragged class, at any rate."

"And Eleanor Powle can find nothing more suitable to do, than to go and teach such a set! Why, you ought to have a policeman there to take care of you."

"We have several."

"Policemen!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And it is not safe without them!"

"It is safe with them, mamma."

"Mr. Carlisle, what do you think of such doings?" said Mrs. Powle, appealing in despair.

"They move my curiosity," he said quietly. "I hope Eleanor will go on to gratify it."

"And can you really find nothing better than that to do, of a Sunday?" her mother went on.

"No, mamma, I do not think I can."

"What do they learn?" Mr. Carlisle enquired.

"A little reading, some of them; but the main thing to teach them is the truths of the Bible. They never heard them before anywhere,—nor can hear them anywhere else."

"Do you think they will hear them there?"

"I am sure they do."

"And remember?"

The tears filled Eleanor's eyes, as she answered, "I am sure some of them will."

"And suppose you lose your life in this Ragged teaching?" said Mrs. Powle. "You might catch your death of some horrid disease, Eleanor. Do you think that is right?"

"Mamma, there was One who did lay down his life for you and for me. I am not going to offer mine needlessly. But I do not think it is in any danger here. Many go besides me."

"She is a confirmed Methodist!" said Mrs. Powle, turning to Mr. Carlisle. He smiled.

"Where does your school meet, Eleanor?"

"I am afraid of terrifying mamma, if I tell you."

"We will take care of her in case she faints. I am in no danger."

"It is the Field Lane school, Mr. Carlisle."

"The Field Lane? Won't you enlighten me?"

"Carter's Field Lane; but it is only called Field Lane. Did you never hear of it? It was in a wretched place in

Saffron Hill at first—now it is removed to an excellent room in a better street."

"Where?"

"You know where Clerkenwell is?"

This name gave no intelligence whatever to Mrs. Powle, but Mr. Carlisle looked enlightened. His face changed and grew dark with something very like horror and alarm.

"Do you know that is one of the worst parts of London?" he said.

"Pretty bad," said Eleanor, "and the school used to be. It is wonderfully improved now."

"There, you see, Eleanor, Mr. Carlisle thinks it is a very improper place for you to be; and I hope you will go there no more. I do not mean you shall."

Eleanor was silent, looking a little anxious, though not cast down. Mr. Carlisle marked her.

"It is not safe for you, Eleanor," he said.

"It is perfectly safe," she answered, with a smile that had a curious brightness in it. "I run no risk whatever."

"You are a bold creature," said her mother, "and always were; but that is no reason why you should be allowed to go your own crazy ways. I will have no more of this, Eleanor."

"Mamma, I am perfectly safe. I have nothing at all to fear. I would not fail of going for anything in the world." She spoke with an earnest and shadowed face now. She felt it.

"Who goes with you? or do you go alone?"

"No, ma'am—Thomas is with me always."

"How came you to get into such a strange place?"

"I heard of it—and there is sure to be more to do in such a work than there are hands for. I know one or two of the gentlemen that teach there also."

"Methodists, I suppose?" said Mrs. Powle, sneeringly.

"One of them is, mamma; the other is a Churchman."

"And do you *teach* there?"

"Yes, ma'am—a large class of boys." Eleanor's smile came again—and went.

"I'll have no more of it, Eleanor. I will not. It is just absurdity and fanaticism, the whole thing. Why shouldn't those boys go to the regular schools, instead of you giving your time and risking your life to teach them on Sundays? *You*, indeed!"

"You do not know what sort of boys they are, mamma; or you would not ask that?"

"I suppose they have learned some things too well already?" said Mr. Carlisle.

"Well, I'll have no more of it!" said Mrs. Powle. "I am disgusted with the whole thing. If they are not good boys, the House of Correction is the best place for them. Mr. Carlisle, do you not say so?"

Mr. Carlisle's knowledge of the limits of Houses of Correction and the number of boys in London who were not good boys, forbade him to give an affirmative answer; his character as a reformer also came up before him. More than all, Eleanor's face, which was somewhat sad.

"Mrs. Powle, I am going to petition you to suspend judgment, and reconsider the case of the Ragged schools. I confess to a selfish motive in my request—I have a desire to go there myself, and see this lady with her scholars around her. The picturesque effect, I should say, must be striking."

Mrs. Powle looked at him as a very unwise and obstinate man, who was bewitched into false action.

"If you have a fancy for such effects," she said, "I suppose you must do as you please. To me the effect is striking, and not picturesque. Just look at her!"

Mr. Carlisle did so, and the expression on his face was so unsatisfactory that Mrs. Powle gave up the matter; laughed, and went out of the room.

"I will be less striking," said Eleanor, "if you will excuse me." And she left the room to change her dress. But when she came back an hour after, Mr. Carlisle was still there.

"Eleanor," said he, coming and standing before her, may, I go with you the next time you go to Field Lane?"

"No, I think not. You would not know what to do in such a place, Mr. Carlisle."

"Do you think so?"

"They are a set of people whom you do not like; people who you think ought to be fined—and imprisoned—and transported; and all that sort of thing."

"And what do you think ought to be done with them?"

"I would try a different regimen."

"Pray what would it be?"

"I would tell them of the love of One who died for them; and I would show them that the servants of that One love them too."

She spoke quietly, but there was a light in her eye.

"How, for heaven's sake, Eleanor?"

"Mr. Carlisle, I would never condemn a man or boy very severely for stealing, when I had left him no other way to live."

"So you would make the rest of the world responsible?"

"Are they not? These fellows never heard a word of right or of truth—never had a word of kindness—never were brought under a good influence—until they found it in the Ragged school. What could you expect? May I illustrate?"

"Pray do."

"There is a boy in a class neighbouring to mine in the room, whose teacher I know. The boy is thirteen or fourteen years old now; he came to the school first some four or five years ago, when he was a little bit of a fellow. Then he had already one brother transported for stealing, and another in prison for stealing—both only a little older than he. They had often no other way of getting food but stealing it. The father and mother were both of them drunkards, and swallowed up everything in liquor. This little fellow used to come to the morning school, which was held every day, without any breakfast; many a time. Barefooted, over the cold streets, and no breakfast to warm him. But after what he heard at the school, he promised he would never do as his brothers had done; and he had some very hard times in keeping his promise. At last he came to his teacher and

asked him for a loan of threepence; if he had a loan of threepence, he thought he could make a living."

Mr. Carlisle half turned on his heel, but instantly resumed his look and attitude of fixed attention.

"Mr. Morrison lent him threepence. And Jemmy has supported himself respectably ever since, and is now in honest employment as an errand boy."

"I hope you can tell me how he managed it? I do not understand doing business on such a capital."

"The threepence bought twelve boxes of matches. Those were sold for a halfpenny each—doubling his capital at once. So he carried on that business for two years. All day he went to school. In the end of the day he went out with twelve boxes of matches, and hawked them about until they were disposed of. That gave him threepence for the next day's trade, and threepence to live upon. He spent one penny for breakfast, he said; another for dinner, and another for supper. So he did for two years; now he does better."

"He deserves it, if anybody in London dose. Is not this a strange instance, Eleanor?—on honour?"

"If you like—but not solitary."

"What has been done for the mass of these boys in these schools? what has been accomplished, I mean?"

"I have given you but one instance out of many, many individual instances."

"Then you can afford to be generous and give me another."

Perhaps he said this only because he wanted to have her go on talking; perhaps Eleanor divined that; however, she hesitated a moment, and went on.

"Lord Cushley, with some other friends, has just provided for the emigration to Australia of near a dozen promising cases of these boys."

"Was Eleanor Powle another of the friends?"

"No; I had not that honour. These are reclaimed boys, mind; reclaimed from the very lowest and most miserable condition; and they are going out with every prospect of respectability, and every promise of doing well. Do you want to know the antecedents of one among them?"

"By all means!"

"Notice them. First, slavery under two drunken people, one of them his mother, who sent him out to steal for them; and refused him even the shelter of their wretched home if he came to it with empty hands. At such times, thrust out houseless and hungry, to wander where he could, he led a life of such utter wretchedness, that at length he determined to steal for himself, and to go home no more. Then came years of struggling vagrancy—during which, Mr. Carlisle, the prison was his pleasantest home and only comfortable shelter; and whenever he was turned out of it he stood in London streets helpless and hopeless but to renew his old ways of thieving and starvation. Nobody had told him better; no one had showed the child kindness; was he to blame?"

"Somebody showed him kindness at last," said Mr. Carlisle, looking into the lustrous eyes which were so full of their subject.

"Who, do you think?"

"Impossible for me to guess—since you were not here."

"One of the most noted thieves in London went to one of the city missionaries and told him of the boy, and recommended him to his kindness."

"Impelled by what earthly motive?"

"The misery of the case."

"Why did he not teach him his own trade?"

"The question the missionary put to him. The thief answered that he knew a thief's life too well."

"I should like to see you before a committee of the House of Commons," said Mr. Carlisle, taking two or three steps away and then returning. "Well?"

"Well—the missionary put the child with some decent people, where he was washed and clothed. But it is impossible for me to tell, as it was too bad to be told to me, the state to which squalor, starvation, and all that goes with it, had brought the child. He went to school; and two years after was well, healthy, flourishing, intelligent, one of the best and most useful lads at the establishment where

he was employed. Now Lord Cushley has sent him to Australia."

"Eleanor, I will never say anything against Ragged schools again."

"Then I have not spoken in vain," said Eleanor, rising.

He took her hand, held it, bowed his lips to it, held it still, too firmly for Eleanor to disengage it without violence.

"Will you grant me one little favour?"

"You take without asking, Mr. Carlisle!"

He smiled and kissed her hand again, not releasing it, however.

"Let me go with you to Field Lane in future."

"What would you do there?"

"Take care of you."

"As I do not need it, you would be exceedingly bored; finding yourself without either business or pleasure."

"Do you think that what interests you will not interest me?"

A change came over her face—a high grave light, as she answered,—"Not till you love the Master I do. Not till his service is your delight, as it is mine. Mr. Carlisle, if you will allow me, I will ring the bell for tea."

He rang the bell for her instantly, and then came to her side again, and waited till the servant was withdrawn.

"Eleanor, seriously, I am not satisfied to have you go to that place alone."

"I do not. I am always attended."

"By a servant. Have you never been frightened?"

"Never."

"Do you not meet a very ugly sort of crowd sometimes on your way."

"Yes—sometimes."

"And never feel afraid?"

"No. Mr. Carlisle, would you like a cup of tea, if you could get it?"

She had met his questions with a full clear look of her eyes, in which certainly there lay no lurking shadow. He read them, and drank his tea rather moodily.

"So, Eleanor," said Mrs. Powle, the next day, "you have enlisted Mr. Carlisle on your side as usual, and he will have you go to your absurd school as you want to do. How did people get along before Ragged schools were invented, I should like to know?"

"You would not like to know, mamma. It was in misery and ignorance and crime, such as you would be made sick to hear of."

"Well, they live in it yet, I suppose; or are they all reclaimed already?"

"They live in it yet—many a one."

"And it is among such people you go! Well, I wash my hands of it. Mr. Carlisle will not have you molested. He must have his own way."

"What has he to do with it, mamma?" Eleanor asked, a little indignantly.

"A good deal, I should say. You are not such a fool as not to know what he is with you all the time for, Eleanor."

A hot colour came up in Eleanor's cheeks.

"It is not by my wish, mamma."

"It is rather late to say so. Don't you like him, Eleanor?"

"Yes, ma'am—very much—if only he would be content with that."

"Answer me only one thing. Do you like any one else better? He is as jealous as a bear, and afraid you do."

"Mamma," said Eleanor, a burning colour again rising to her brow,—"you know yourself that I see no one that I favour more than I do Mr. Carlisle. I do not hold him just in the regard he wishes, nevertheless."

"But do you like any one else better? tell me that. I just want that question answered."

"Mamma, why? Answering it will not help the matter. In all England there is not a person out of my own family whom I like so well; but that does not put Mr. Carlisle in the place where he wishes to be."

"I just wanted that question answered," said Mrs. Powle.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Still all the day the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark."

"SHE declares there is not anybody in the world she likes better than she does you—nor so well."

Mrs. Powle's fair curls hung on either side of a perplexed face. Mr. Carlisle stood opposite to her. His eye brightened and fired, but he made no answer.

"It is only her absurd fanaticism that makes all the trouble."

"There will be no trouble to fear, my dear madam, if that is true."

"Well, I asked her the question, and she told me in so many words; and you know Eleanor. What she says she means."

Mr. Carlisle was silent, and Mrs. Powle went on. He was seldom loquacious in his consultations with her.

"For all that, she is just as fixed in her ways as a mountain; and I don't know how to manage her. Eleanor always was a hard child to manage; and now she has got these fanatical notions in her head she is worse than ever."

There was a slight perceptible closing in of the fingers of Mr. Carlisle's hand, but his words were quiet.

"Do not oppose them. Fanaticism opposed grows rigid, and dies a martyr. Let her alone; these things will all pass away by and by. I am not afraid of them."

"Then you would let her go on with her absurd Ragged schools and such flummery? I am positively afraid she will bring something dreadful into the house, or be insulted herself some day. I do think charity begins at home. I wish Lord Cushley, or whoever it is, had been in better business. Such an example of course sets other people wild."

"I will be there myself, and see that no harm comes to Eleanor. I think I can manage that."

"Eleanor of all girls!" said Mrs. Powle. "That *she* should be infected with religious fanaticism! She was just the girl most unlike it that could possibly be; none of these meek, tame spirits, that seem to have nothing better to do."

"No, you are wrong," said Mr. Carlisle. "It is the enthusiastic character, that takes everything strongly, that is strong in this as in all the rest. Her fanaticism will give me no trouble—if it will once let her be mine!"

"Then you would let her alone?" said Mrs. Powle.

"Let her alone."

"She is spoiling Julia as fast as she can; but I stopped that. Would you believe it? the minx objected to taking lessons in dancing, because her sister had taught her that dancing assemblies were not good places to go to. But I take care that they are not together now. Julia is completely under her influence."

"So am I," said Mr. Carlisle, laughing; "so much that I believe I cannot bear to hear any more against her than is necessary. I will be with her at Field Lane next Sunday."

He did not, however, this time insist on going with her. He went by himself. It is certain that the misery of London disclosed to him by this drive to Field Lane, the course of which gave him a good sample of it, did almost shake him in his opinion that Eleanor ought to be let alone. Mr. Carlisle had not seen such a view of London in his life before; he had not been in such a district of crime and wretchedness; or if by chance he had touched upon it, he had made a principle of not seeing what was before him. Now he looked; for he was going where Eleanor was accustomed to go, and what he saw she was obliged to meet also. He

reached the building where the Field Lane school was held, in a somewhat excited state of mind.

He found at the door several policemen, who warned him to guard well and in a safe place anything of value he might have about his person. Then he was ushered up stairs to the place where the school was held. He entered a very large room, looking like a factory room, with bare beams and rough sides, but spacious and convenient for the purpose it was used for. Down the length of this room ran rows of square forms, with alleys left between the rows; and the forms were in good measure filled with the rough scholars. There must have been hundreds collected there; three-fourths of them perhaps were girls, the rest boys and young men, from seven years old and upwards. But the roughness of the scholars bore no proportion to the roughness of the room. *That* had order, shape, and some decency of preparation. The poor young human creatures that clustered within it were in every stage of squalor, rags, and mental distortion. With a kind of wonder Mr. Carlisle's eye went from one to another to note the individual varieties of the general character; and as it took in the details, wandered horror-stricken from the nameless dirt and shapeless rags which covered the person, to the wild or stupid or cunning or devilish expression of vice in the face. Beyond description, both. There were many there who had never slept in a bed in their lives; many who never had their clothes off from one month's end to another; the very large proportion lived day and night by a course of wickedness. There they were gathered now, these wretches, eight or ten in a form, listening with more or less of interest to the instructions of their teachers who sat before them; and many, Mr. Carlisle saw, were showing deep interest in face and manner. Others were full of mischief, and showed that too. And others, who were interested, were yet also restless; and would manifest it by the occasional irregularity of jumping up and turning a somersault in the midst of the lesson. That frequently happened. Suddenly, without note or warning, in the midst of the most earnest deliverances

of the teacher, a boy would leap up and throw himself over; come up all right; and sit down again and listen, as if he had only been making himself comfortable; which was very likely the real state of the case in some instances. When, however, a general prevalence of somersaults throughout the room indicated that too large a proportion of the assemblage were growing uneasy in their minds, or their seats, the director of the school stood up and gave the signal for singing. Instantly the whole were on their feet, and some verse or two of a hymn were shouted heartily by the united lungs of the company. That seemed to be a great safety valve; they were quite brought into order, and somersaults not called for till some time had passed again.

In the midst of this great assemblage of strange figures, small and large, Mr. Carlisle's eye sought for Eleanor. He could not immediately find her, standing at the back of the room as he was; and he did not choose the recognition to be first on her side, so would not go forward. No bonnet or cloak there recalled the image of Eleanor; he had seen her once in her school trim, it is true, but that signified nothing. He had seen her only, not her dress. It was only by a careful scrutiny that he was able to satisfy himself which bonnet and which outline of a cloak was Eleanor's. But once his attention had alighted on the right figure, and he was sure, by a kind of instinct. The turns of the head, the fine proportions of the shoulders, could be none but hers; and Mr. Carlisle moved somewhat nearer, and took up a position a little in the rear of that form, so that he could watch all that went on there.

He scanned with infinite disgust one after another of the miserable figures ranged upon it. They were well-grown boys, young thieves some of them, to judge by their looks; and dirty and ragged, so as to be objects of abhorrence much more than of anything else to his eye. Yet to these squalid, filthy, hardened-looking little wretches, scarcely decent in their rags, Eleanor was most earnestly talking; there was no avoidance in her air. Her face he could not see; he could guess at its expression, from the turns of her

head to one and another, and the motion of her hands, with which she was evidently helping out the meaning of her words; and also from the earnest gaze that her unpromising hearers bent upon her. He could hear the soft varying play of her voice as she addressed them. Mr. Carlisle grew restless. There was a more evident and tremendous gap between himself and her than he had counted upon. Was she doing this like a Catholic, for penance, or to work out good deeds to earn heaven like a philanthropist? While he pondered the matter, in increasing restlessness, mind and body helping each other; for the atmosphere of the room was heavy and stifling from the foul human beings congregated there, and it must require a very strong motive in anybody to be there at all—he could hardly bear it himself—an incident occurred which gave a little variety to his thoughts. As he stood in the alley, leaning on the end of a form where no one sat, a boy came in and passed him; brushing so near that Mr. Carlisle involuntarily shrank back. Such a looking fellow-creature he had never seen until that day. Mr. Carlisle had lived in the other half of the world. This was a half-grown boy, inexpressibly forlorn in his rags and wretchedness. An old coat hung about him, much too large and long, that yet did not hide a great rent in his trowsers which showed that there was no shirt beneath. But the face! The indescribable brutalized, stolid, dirty, dumb look of badness and hardness! Mr. Carlisle thought he had never seen such a face. One round portion of it had been washed, leaving the dark ring of dirt all circling it like a border, where the blessed touch of water had not come. The boy moved on, with a shambling kind of gait, and to Mr. Carlisle's horror, paused at the form of Eleanor's class. Yes, he was going in there, he belonged there; for she looked up and spoke to him; Mr. Carlisle could hear her soft voice saying something about his being late. Then came a transformation such as Mr. Carlisle would never have believed possible. A light broke upon that brutalized face—actually a light; a smile that was like a heavenly sunbeam in the midst of those rags and dirt

irradiated it; as a rough thick voice spoke out in answer to her—"Yes; if I didn't come, I knowed you would be disappointed."

Evidently they were friends, Eleanor and that boy; young thief, young rascal, though Mr. Carlisle's eye pronounced him. They were on good terms, even of affection; for only love begets love. The lesson went on, but the gentleman stood in a maze till it was finished. The notes of Eleanor's voice in the closing hymn, which he was sure he could distinguish, brought him quite back to himself. Now *he* might speak to her again. He had felt as if there were a barrier between them. Now he would test it.

He had to wait yet a little while, for Eleanor was talking to one or two elderly gentlemen. Nobody to move his jealousy, however; so Mr. Carlisle bore the delay with what patience he could, which in that stifling atmosphere was not much. How *could* Eleanor endure it? As at last she came down the room, he met her and offered his arm. Eleanor took it, and they went out together.

"I did not know you were in the school," she said.

"I would not disturb you. Thomas is not here—Mrs. Powle wanted him at home."

Which was Mr. Carlisle's apology for taking his place. Or somewhat more than Thomas's place; for he not only put Eleanor in a carriage, but took a seat beside her. The drive began with a few moments of silence.

"How do you do?" was his first question.

"Very well."

"Must I take it on trust? or do you not mean I shall see for myself?" said he. For there had been a hidden music in Eleanor's voice, and she had not turned her face from the window of the carriage. At this request, however, she gave him a view of it. The hidden sweetness was there too; he could not conceive what made her look so happy. Yet the look was at once too frank and too deep for his personal vanity to get any food from it; no surface work, but a lovely light on brow and lip that came from within. It had nothing to do with him. It was something, though,

that she was not displeased at his being there; his own face lightened.

"What effect does Field Lane generally have upon you?" said he.

"It tires me a little—generally. Not to-day."

"No, I see it has not; and how you come out of that den, looking as you do, I confess is an incomprehensible thing to me. What has pleased you there?"

A smile came upon Eleanor's face, so bright as showed it was but the outbreaking of the light he had seen there before. His question she met with another.

"Did nothing there please you?"

"Do you mean to evade my enquiry?"

"I will tell you what pleased me," said Eleanor, "perhaps you remarked—whereabouts were you?"

"A few feet behind you and your scholars."

"Then perhaps you remarked a boy who came in when the lesson was partly done—midway in the time—a boy who came in and took his seat in my class?"

"I remarked him—and you will excuse me for saying, I do not understand how pleasure can be connected in anybody's mind with the sight of him."

"Of course you do not. That boy has been a most notorious pickpocket and thief."

"Exactly what I should have supposed."

"Did you observe that he had washed his face?"

"I think I observed how imperfectly it was done."

"Ah, but it is the first time probably in years that it has touched water, except when his lips touched it to drink. Do you know, that is a sign of reformation?"

"Water?"

"Washing. It is the hardest thing in the world to get them to forego the seal and the bond of dirt. It is a badge of the community of guilt. If they will be brought to wash, it is a sign that the bond is broken—that they are willing to be out of the community, which will, I suppose, regard them as suspected persons from that time. Now you can understand why I was glad."

Hardly; for the fire and water sparkling together in Eleanor's eyes expressed so much gladness that it quite went beyond Mr. Carlisle's power of sympathy. He remained silent a few moments.

"Eleanor, I wish you would answer one question, which puzzles me. Why do you go to that place?"

"You do not like it?"

"No, nor do you. What takes you there?"

"There are more to be taught than there are teachers for," said Eleanor, looking at her questioner. "They want help. You must have seen there are none too many to take care of the crowds that come; and many of those teachers are fatigued with attendance in the week."

"Do *you* go in the week?"

"No, not hitherto."

"You must not think of it. It is as much as your life is worth to go on Sundays. I met with several companies of most disorderly people on my way—do you not meet such?"

"Yes."

"What takes you there, Eleanor, through such horrors?"

"I have no fear."

"No, I suppose not; but will you answer my question?"

"You will hardly be able to understand me," said Eleanor hesitatingly. "I like to go to these poor wretches because I love them. And if you ask me why I love them—I know that the Lord Jesus loves them, and he is not willing they should be in this forlorn condition; and so I go to try to help get them out of it."

"If the Supreme Ruler is not willing there should be this class of people, Eleanor, how come they to exist?"

"You are too good a philosopher, Mr. Carlisle, not to know that men are free agents, and that God leaves them the exercise of their free agency, even though others as well as themselves suffer by it. I suppose, if those a little above them in the social scale had lived according to the gospel rule, this class of people never would have existed."

"What a reformer you would make, Eleanor!"

"I should not suit you. Yes—I do not believe in any radical way of reform but one."

"And that is, what?—counsellor."

"Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you."

"Radical enough! You must reform the reformers first, I suppose you know?"

"I know it."

"Then, hard as it is for me to believe it, you do not go to Field Lane by way of penance?"

"The penance would be to make me stay away."

"Mrs. Powle will do that, unless I contrive to disturb the action of her *free* agency; but I think I shall plunge into the question of reform, Eleanor. Speaking of that, how much reformation has been effected by these Ragged institutions?"

"Very much; and they are only as it were beginning, you must remember."

"Room for amendment still," said Mr. Carlisle. "I never saw such a disorderly set of scholars in my life before How do you find an occasional somersault helps a boy's understanding of his lesson?"

"Those things were constant at first, not occasional," said Eleanor, smiling; "somersaults and leaping over the forms, and shouts and cat-calls, and all manner of uproarious behaviour. That was before I ever knew them. But now, think of that boy's washed face!"

"That was the most partial reformation I ever saw rejoiced n," said Mr. Carlisle.

"It gives hope of everything else, though. You have no idea what a bond that community of dirt is. But there are plenty of statistics, if you want those, Mr. Carlisle. I can give you enough of them, showing what has been done."

"Will you show them to me to-night?"

"To-night? it is Sunday. No, but to-morrow night, Mr. Carlisle, or any other time."

"Eleanor, you are very strict."

"Not at all. That is not strictness; but Sunday is too good to waste upon statistics."

She said it somewhat playfully, with a shining of her old arch smile, which did not at all reassure her companion.

"Besides, Mr. Carlisle, you like strictness a great deal better than I do. There is not a law made in our Queen's reign or administered under her sceptre, that you would not have fulfilled to the letter—even down to the regulations that keep little boys off the grass. It is only the laws of the Great King which you do not think should be strictly kept."

She was grave enough now, and Mr. Carlisle swallowed the reproof as best he might.

"Eleanor, you are going to turn preacher too, as well as reformer? Well, I will come to you, dear, and put myself under your influences. You shall do what you please with me."

Too much of a promise, and more of a reponsibility than Eleanor chose to take. She went into the house with a sober sense that she had a difficult part to play; that between Mr. Carlisle and her mother, she must walk very warily or she would yet find herself entangled before she was aware. And Mr. Carlisle too had a sober sense that Eleanor's religious character was not of a kind to exhale like a volatile oil, under the sun of prosperity or the breeze of flattery. Nevertheless, the more hard to reach the prize, the more of a treasure when reached. He never wanted her more than now; and Mr. Carlisle had always, by skill and power, obtained what he wanted. He made no doubt he would find this instance like the others.

For the present, the thing was to bring a bill into parliament "for the reformation of juvenile offenders;" and upon its various provisions Mr. Carlisle came daily to consult Eleanor, and take advice and receive information. Doubtless there was a great deal to be considered about the bill, to make it just what it should be—to secure enough and not insist upon too much; its bearings would be very important, and every point merited well the deepest care and

most circumspect management. It enlisted Eleanor's heart and mind thoroughly; how should it not? She spent hours and hours with Mr. Carlisle over it; wrote for him, read for him, or rather for those the bill wrought for; talked and discussed and argued for and against various points which she felt would make for or against its best success. Capital for Mr. Carlisle. All this brought him into constant close intercourse with her, and gave him opportunities of recommending himself. And not in vain. Eleanor saw and appreciated the cool, clear business head, the calm executive talent, which seeing its ends in the distance, made no hurry, but took the steps and the measures surest to attain them, with patient foresight. She admired it, and sometimes also could almost have trembled when she thought of its being turned towards herself. And was it not, all the while? Was not Eleanor tacitly, by little and little, yielding the ground she fought so hard to keep? Was she not quietly giving her affirmative to the world's question,—and to Mr. Carlisle's too? To the former, yes; for the latter, she knew and Mr. Carlisle knew that she showed him no more than the regard that would not satisfy him. But then, if this went on indefinitely, would not he, and the world, and her mother, all say that she had given him a sort of prescriptive right to her? Ay, and Eleanor must count her father too now as among her adversaries' ranks. She saw it and felt it somewhat bitterly. She had begun to gain his ear and his heart; by and by he might have listened to her on what subject she pleased, and she might have won him to the knowledge of the truth that she held dearest. Now, she had gained his love certainly, in a measure, but so had Mr. Carlisle. Gently, skilfully, almost unconsciously it seemed, he was as much domiciled in her father's room as she was; and even more acceptable. The Squire had come to depend on him, to look for him, to delight in him; and with very evident admission that he was only anticipating by a little the rights and privileges of sonship. Eleanor could not absent herself neither; she tried that; her father would have her there; and there was Mr.

Carlisle, as much at home, and sharing with her in filial offices as a matter of rule, and associating with her as already one of the family. It is true, in his manner to Eleanor herself he did not so step beyond bounds as to give her opportunity to check him; yet even over this there stole insensibly a change; and Eleanor felt herself getting deeper and deeper in the toils. Her own manner meanwhile was nearly perfect in its simple dignity. Except in the interest of third-party measures, which led her sometimes further than she wanted to go, Eleanor kept a very steady way, as graceful as it was steady. So friendly and frank as to give no cause of umbrage; while it was so cool and self-poised as to make Mr. Carlisle very uneasy and very desperate. It was just the manner he admired in a woman; just what he would like to see in his wife, towards all the rest of the world. Eleanor charmed him more by her high-bred distance, than ever she had done by the affection or submissiveness of former days. But he was pretty sure of his game. Let this state of things go on long enough, and she would have no power to withdraw; and once his own, let him have once again the right to take her to his breast and whisper love or authority, and he knew he could win that fine sweet nature to give him back love as well as obedience,—in time. And so the bill went on in its progress towards maturity. It did not go very fast.

All this while the sisters saw very little of each other. One morning Eleanor waylaid Julia as she was passing her door, drew her in, and turned the key in the lock. The first impulse of the two was to spring to each other's arms for a warm embrace.

"I never have a chance to speak to you, darling," said the elder sister. "What has become of you?"

"O, I am so busy, you see—all the times except when you are gone out, or talking in the drawing-room to people, or in papa's room. *Then* I am out, and you are out too; somewhere else."

"Out of what?"

"Out of my studies, and teachers, and governesses. I must go now in two minutes."

"No, you must not. Sit down; I want to see you. Are you remembering what *we* have learnt together?"

"Sometimes—and sometimes it is hard, you see. Everything is so scratchy. O Eleanor, are you going to marry Mr. Carlisle?"

"No. I told you I was not."

"Everybody says you are, though. Are you *sure* you are not?"

"Quite sure."

"I almost wish you were; and then things would go smooth again."

"What do you mean by their being 'scratchy?' That is a new word."

"Well, everything goes cross. I am in ever so many dictionaries besides English — and shut up to learn 'em —and mamma don't care what becomes of me if she can only keep me from you; and I wish we were all home again!"

Eleanor sighed.

"I call it *scratchy*," said Julia. "Everybody is trying to do what somebody else don't like."

"I hope you are not going on that principle," said her sister, with a smile which made Julia spring to her neck again and load her lips with kisses over and over.

"I'll try to do what you like, Eleanor—only tell me what. Tell me something, and I will remember it."

"Julia, are you going to be a servant of Christ? have you forgotten that you said you loved him?"

"No, and I do, Eleanor! and I want to do right; but I am so busy, and then I get so vexed!"

"That is not like a servant of Jesus, darling."

"No. If I could only see you, Eleanor! Tell me something to remember, and I will keep it in my head, in spite of all the dictionaries."

"Keep it in your life, Julia. Remember what Jesus said his servants must be and how they must do—just in this

one little word—'And ye yourselves like them that wait for their Lord.'"

"How, Eleanor?"

"That is what we are, dear. We are the Lord's servants, put here to work for him, put just in the post where he wishes us to be, till he comes. Now let us stand in our post and do our work, 'like them that wait for their Lord.' You know how that would be."

Julia again kissed and caressed her, not without some tears.

"I know," she said; "it is like Mr. Rhys, and it is like you; and I don't believe it is like anybody else."

"Shall it be like you, Julia?"

"Yes, Eleanor, yes! I will never forget it. O Eleanor, are you sure you are not going to Rythdale?"

"What makes you ask me?"

"Why, everybody thinks so, and everybody says so; and you—you are with Mr. Carlisle all the time, talking to him."

"I have so many thoughts to put into his head," said Eleanor, gravely.

"What are you so busy with him about?"

"Parliament business. It is for the poor of London, Julia. Mr. Carlisle is preparing a bill to bring into the House of Commons, and I know more about the matter than he does; and so he comes to me."

"Don't you think he is glad of his ignorance?" said Julia, shrewdly. Eleanor leaned her head on her hand, and looked thoughtfully down.

"What do you give him thoughts about?"

"My poor boys would say, 'lots of things.' I have to convince Mr. Carlisle that it would cost the country less to reform than to punish these poor children, and that reforming them is impossible unless we can give them enough to keep them from starvation; and then a great many questions besides these and that spring out of these have to be considered and talked over. And it is important beyond measure; and if I should let it alone, the whole might fall to the ground. There are two objections now in Mr. Car-

lisle's mind—or in other people's minds—to one thing that ought to be done, and must be done; and I must show Mr. Carlisle how false the objections are. I have begun; I must go through with it. The whole might fall to the ground if I took away my hand; and it would be such an incalculable blessing to thousands and thousands in this dreadful place——"

"Do you think London is a dreadful place?" said Julia, doubtfully.

"There are very few here who stand 'like them that wait for their Lord,'" said Eleanor, her face taking a yearning look of thoughtfulness.

"There aren't anywhere, *I* don't believe. Eleanor, aren't you happy?"

"Yes!"

"You don't always look—just—so."

"Perhaps not. But to live for Jesus makes happy days—be sure of that, Julia; however the face looks."

"Are you bothered about Mr. Carlisle?"

"What words you use!" said Eleanor, smiling. "'Bother,' and 'scratchy.' No, I am not bothered about him—I am a little troubled sometimes."

"What's the difference?"

"The difference between seeing one's way clear, and not seeing it; and the difference between having a hand to take care of one, and not having it."

"Well, why do you talk to him so much if he troubles you?" said Julia, reassured by her sister's smile.

"I must," said Eleanor. "I must see through this business of the bill—at all hazards. I cannot let that go. Mr. Carlisle knows I do not compromise myself."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Julia, getting up to go,—"mamma means you shall go to Rythdale; and she thinks you are going."

With a very earnest kiss to Eleanor, repeated with an emphasis which set the seal upon all the advices and promises of the morning, Julia went off. Eleanor sat a little while thinking—not long; and met Mr. Carlisle the next

time he came with precisely the same sweet self-possession, the unchanged, calm cool distance, which drove that gentleman to the last verge of passion and patience. But he was master of himself, and bided his time, and talked over the bill as usual.

It was not Eleanor alone who had occasion for the exercise of admiration in these business consultations. Somewhat to his surprise, Mr. Carlisle found that his quondam fair mistress was good for much more than a plaything. With the quick wit of a woman she joined a patience of investigation, an independent strength of judgment, a clearness of rational vision, that fairly met him, and obliged him to be the best man he could in the business. He could not get her into a sophistical maze—she found her way through immediately; he could not puzzle her, for what she did not understand one day she had studied out by the next. It is possible that Mr. Carlisle would not have fallen in love with this clear intelligence, if he had known it in the front of Eleanor's qualities; for he was one of those men who do not care for an equal in a wife; but his case was by this time beyond cure. Nay, what might have alienated him once, bound him now; he found himself matched with Eleanor in a game of human life. The more she proved herself his equal, the nobler the conquest, and the more the instinct of victory stirred within him; for pride, a poor sort of pride, began to be stirred as well as love.

So the bill went on; and prisons and laws, and reformatory measures and penal enactments, and industrial schools, and the question of interfering with the course of labour, and the question of offering a premium upon crime, and a host of questions, were discussed and re-discussed. And partly no doubt from policy, partly from an intelligent view of the subject, but wholly moved thereto by Eleanor, Mr. Carlisle gradually gave back the ground, and took just the position (on paper) that she wished to see him take

CHAPTER XXV.

"Why, how one weeps
When one's too weary! Were a witness by,
He'd say some folly ——"

So the bill went on. And the season too. Winter merged into spring; the change of temperature reminded Eleanor of the changing face of the earth out of London; and even in London the parks gave testimony of it. She longed for Wiglands and the Lodge; but there was no token of the family's going home at present. Parliament was in session; Mr. Carlisle was busy there every night almost; which did not in the least hinder his being busied with Eleanor as well. Where she and her mother went, for the most part he went; and at home he was very much at home indeed. Eleanor began to feel that the motions of the family depended on him; for she could find no sufficient explanation in her father's health or her mother's pleasure for their continued remaining in town. The Squire was much as he had been all winter; attended now and then by a physician, and out of health and spirits, certainly; yet Eleanor could not help thinking he would be better at home, and somewhat suspected her father thought so. Mrs. Powle enjoyed London, no doubt; still, she was not a woman to run mad after pleasure, or after anything else; not so much but that the pleasure of her husband would have outweighed hers. Nevertheless, both the Squire and she were as quietly fixed in London, to judge by all appearance, as if they had no other place to go to; and the rising of parliament was some-

times hinted at as giving the only clue to the probable time of their departure.

Did you ever lay brands together on a hearth, brands with life in them too, seemingly; when, with no breath blown or stirring of air to fan them, gradually, by mere action and reaction upon each other, the cold grey ends began to sparkle and glow, till by and by the fire burst forth and flame sprang up? Circumstances may be laid together so, and with like effect.

Everything went on in a train at the house in Cadogan Square; nobody changed his attitude or behaviour with respect to the others, except as by that most insensible, unnoticeable, quiet action of elements at work; yet the time came when Eleanor began to feel that things were drawing towards a crisis. Her place was becoming uncomfortable. She could not tell how, she did not know when it began, but a change in the home atmosphere became sensible to her. It was growing to be oppressive. Mother, father, and friends seemed by concert to say that she was Mr. Carlisle's; and the gentleman himself began to look it, Eleanor thought, though he did not say it. A little tacit allowance of this mute language of assignment, and either her truth would be forfeited or her freedom. She must make a decided protest. Yet also Eleanor felt that quality in the moral atmosphere which threatened that if any clouds came up they would be stormy clouds; and she dreaded to make any move. Julia's society would have been a great solace now; when she never could have it. Julia comforted her, whenever they were together in company or met for a moment alone, by her energetic whisper—"I remember, Eleanor!" but that was all. Eleanor could get no further speech of her. At the Ragged school Mr. Carlisle was pretty sure to be, and generally attended her home. Eleanor remonstrated with her mother, and got a sharp answer, that it was only thanks to Mr. Carlisle she went there at all; if it were not for him, Mrs. Powle certainly would put a stop to it. Eleanor pondered very earnestly the question of putting a stop to it herself; but it was at Mr. Carlisle's own risk; the poor boys in the

school wanted her ministrations; and the "bill" was in process of preparation. Eleanor's heart was set on that bill, and her help she knew was greatly needed in its construction; she could not bear to give it up. So she let matters take their course; and talked reform diligently to Mr. Carlisle all the time they were driving from West Smithfield home.

At last, to Eleanor's joy, the important paper was drawn up according to her mind. It satisfied her. And it was brought to a reading in the House and ordered to be printed. So much was gained. The very next day Mr. Carlisle came to ask Eleanor to drive out with him to Richmond, which she had never seen. Eleanor coolly declined. He pressed the charms of the place, and of the country at that season. Eleanor with the same coolness of manner replied that she hoped soon to enjoy the country at home, and that she could not go to Richmond. Mr. Carlisle withdrew his plea, sat and talked some time, making himself very agreeable, though Eleanor could not quite enjoy his agreeableness that morning; and went away. He had given no sign of understanding her or of being rebuffed; and she was not satisfied. The next morning early her mother came to her.

"Eleanor, what do you say to a visit to Hampton Court to-day?"

"Who is going, mamma?"

"Half the world, I suppose—there or somewhere else—such a day; but with you, your friend in parliament."

"I have several friends in parliament."

"Pshaw, Eleanor! you know I mean Mr. Carlisle. You had better dress immediately, for he will be here for you early. He wants to have the whole day. Put on that green silk which becomes you so well. How it does, I don't know, for you are not blonde; but you look as handsome as a fairy queen in it. Come, Eleanor!"

"I do not care about going, mamma."

"Nonsense, child; you do care. You have no idea what Bushy Park is, Eleanor. It is not like Rythdale—though Rythdale will do in its way. Come, child, get ready. You will enjoy it delightfully."

"I do not think I should, mamma. I do not think I ought to go with Mr. Carlisle."

"Why not?"

"You know, mamma," Eleanor said calmly, though her heart beat; "you know what conclusions people draw about me and Mr. Carlisle. If I went to Hampton Court or to Richmond with him, I should give them, and him too, a right to those conclusions."

"What have you been doing for months past, Eleanor? I should like to know."

"Giving him no right to any conclusions whatever, mamma, that would be favourable to him. He knows that."

"He knows no such thing. You are a fool, Eleanor. Have you not said to all the world all this winter, by your actions, that you belonged to him? All the world knows it *was* an engagement, and you have been telling all the world that it *is*. Mr. Carlisle knows what to expect."

Eleanor coloured.

"I cannot fulfil his expectations, mamma. He has no right to them."

"I tell you, you have given him a right to them by your behaviour these months past. Ever since we were at Brighton. Why, how you encouraged him there!"

A great flush rose to Eleanor's cheeks.

"Mamma,—no more than I encouraged others. Grace given to all is favour to none."

"Ay, but there was the particular favour in his case of a promise to marry him."

"Broken off, mamma."

"The world did not know that, and you did not tell them. You rode, you walked, you talked, you went hither and thither with Mr. Carlisle, and suffered him to attend you."

"Not alone, mamma; rarely alone."

"Often alone, child; often of evenings. You are alone with a gentleman in the street, if there is a crowd before and behind you."

"Mamma, all those things that I did, and that I was

sorry to do, I could hardly get out of or get rid of; they were Mr. Carlisle's doing and yours."

"Granted; and you made them yours by acceptance. Now, Eleanor, you are a good girl; be a sensible girl. You have promised yourself to Mr. Carlisle in the eye of all the world; now be honest, and don't be shy, and fulfil your engagements."

"I have made none," said Eleanor, getting up and beginning to walk backwards and forwards in the room. "Mr. Carlisle has been told distinctly that I do not love him. I will never marry any man whom I have not a right affection for."

"You did love him once, Eleanor."

"Never! not the least; not one bit of real. Mamma, I *liked* him, and I do that now; and then I did not know any better; but I will never, for I ought never, to marry any man upon mere liking."

"How come you to know any better now?"

Eleanor's blush was beautiful again for a minute; then it faded. She did not immediately speak.

"Is Mr. Carlisle right after all, and has he a rival?"

"Mamma, you must say what you please. Surely it does not follow that a woman must love all the world because she does not love one."

"And *you* may say what you please; I know you like Mr. Carlisle quite well enough, for you as good as told me so. This is only girl's talk; but you have got to come to the point, Eleanor. I shall not suffer you to make a fool of him in my house; not to speak of making a fool of yourself and me, and ruining—for ever ruining—all your prospects. You can't do it, Eleanor. You have said yea, and you can't draw back. Put on your green gown and go to Hampton Court, and come back with the day fixed—for that, I know, is what Mr. Carlisle wants."

"I cannot go, mamma."

"Eleanor, you would not forfeit your word?"

"I have not given it."

"Do not contradict me! You have given it all these

months. Everybody has understood it so. Your father looks upon Mr. Carlisle as his son already. You would be everlastingly disgraced if you play false."

"I will play true, mamma. I will not say I give my heart where I do not give it."

"Give your hand, then. All one," said Mrs. Powle, laughing. "Come, I order you to obey me, Eleanor."

"I must not, mamma. I will not go to Hampton Court with Mr. Carlisle."

"What is the reason?"

"I have told you."

"Do you mean absolutely that you will not fulfil your engagement, nor obey me, nor save us all from dishonour, nor make your friend happy?"

Eleanor grew paler than she had been, but answered, "I mean not to marry Mr. Carlisle, mamma."

"I understand it, then," said Mrs. Powle, rising. "It is not your heart but your head. It is your religious fanaticism. I will put that out of the way."

And without another word she departed.

Eleanor was much at a loss what would be the next move. Nevertheless she was greatly surprised when it came. The atmosphere of the house was heavy that day; they did not see Mr. Carlisle in the evening. The next day, when Eleanor went to her father's room after dinner, she found not Mr. Carlisle, but her mother with him. "Waiting for me," thought Eleanor. The air of Mrs. Powle said so. The Squire was gathered up into a kind of hard knot, hanging his head over his knees. When he spoke, and was answered by his daughter, the contrast of the two voices was striking and in character—one gruff, the other sweet but steady.

"What's all this, Eleanor? what's all this?" he said abruptly."

"What, papa?"

"Have you refused Mr. Carlisle?"

"Long ago, sir."

"Yes, that is all past; and now this winter you have

been accepting him again; are you going to throw him over now?"

"Papa——"

"Only one thing," roared the Squire, "are you going to say no to him?—tell me that?"

"I must, papa."

"I command you to say yes to him! What do you say now?"

"I must say the same, sir. If you command me, I must disobey you."

"You will disobey me, eh?"

"I must, papa."

"Why won't you marry him? what's the reason?" said the Squire, looking angry and perplexed at her, but very glum.

"Papa——"

"I have seen you here myself, all the winter, in this very room; you have as good as said to him every day that you would be his wife, and he has as good as said to you that he expected it. Has he not, now?"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Now why won't you have him, eh?"

"Papa, I do not like him well enough to marry him. That is reason enough."

"Why did you tell him all the winter that you *did?*"

"Sir, Mr. Carlisle knows I did not. He has never been deceived."

"Why don't you like him well enough, then? that's the question. What fool's nonsense! Eleanor, I am going to have you at the Priory and mistress of it before the world is three months older. Tell me that you will be a good girl, and do as I say."

"I cannot, papa. That is all past. I shall never be at the Priory."

"What's the reason?" roared her father.

"I have told you, sir."

"It's a lie! You do like him. I have seen it. It's some fool's nonsense"

"Let me ask one question," said Mrs. Powle, looking up and down from her work. "If it had not been for your religious notions, Eleanor, would you not have married Mr. Carlisle more than a year ago—before you went to Wales?"

"I suppose I should, mamma."

"And if you had no religions notions, would you have any difficulty about marrying him now? You will speak the truth, I know."

"Mamma——"

"Speak!" the Squire burst out violently—"speak! truth or falsehood, whichever you like. Speak out, and don't go round about. Answer your mother's question."

"Will you please to repeat it, mamma?" Eleanor said, a little faintheartedly.

"If you had never been in a Methodist chapel, or had anything to do with Methodists, would you have any difficulty now about being the wife of Mr. Carlisle, and lady of Rythdale?"

Eleanor's colour rose gradually, and grew deep before she ceased speaking.

"If I had never had anything to do with Methodists, mamma, I should be so very different from what I am now, that perhaps it would be as you say."

"That's enough!" said the Squire, in a great state of rage and determination. "Now, Eleanor Powle, take notice, I am as good as the Methodists any day, and as well worth your minding. You'll mind me, or I'll have nothing to do with you. Do you go to their chapels?"

"Sometimes."

"You don't go any more. St. George and the Dragon fly away with all the Methodist chapels that ever were built! they shall hold no daughter of mine. And hark ye—you shall give up this foolery altogether and tell me you will marry Mr. Carlisle, or I won't have you in *my* family. You may go where you like, but you shall not stay with me as long as *I* live. I give you a month to think of it, Eleanor—a month—what's to-day?—the tenth. Then I give you till

the first of next month. You can think of it and make up your mind to give yourself to Mr. Carlisle by that time, or you shall be no daughter of mine. St. George and the Dragon! I have said it, and you will find I mean it. Now go away."

Eleanor went, wondering whether her ears had served her right, so unnaturally strange seemed this turn of affairs. She had had no time to think of it yet, when passing the drawing-room door, a certain impulse prompted her to go in. Mr. Carlisle was there, as something had told her he might be. Eleanor came in, looking white, and advanced towards him with a free steady step, eyeing him fully. She was in a mood to meet anything.

"Mr. Carlisle," she said, "you are the cause of all the trouble that has come upon me."

He did not ask her what trouble. He only gently and gravely disclaimed the truth of her assertion.

"Mr. Carlisle," said Eleanor, facing him, "do you want the hand without the heart?" There was brave beauty in her face and air.

"Yes!" he said. "You do not know yourself, Eleanor—you do not see yourself at this moment—or you would know better how impossible it is to give other than one answer to such a question."

His look had faced hers as frankly; there was no evil expression in it. Eleanor's head and her gaze sank a little. She hesitated, and then turned away. But Mr. Carlisle with a quick motion intercepted her.

"Eleanor, have you nothing kind to say to me?" he asked, taking her hand. And he said it well.

"Not just now," said Eleanor, slowly; "but I will try not to think unkindly of you, Mr. Carlisle."

Perhaps he understood that differently from her meaning; perhaps he chose to misinterpret it; at all events, he stooped forward and kissed her. It brought a flash of colour into Eleanor's face, and she went up stairs much more angry with her suitor than her last words had spoke her. The angry [illegible]d fast when she reached her own room, and

could be alone and be still. She sat down and thought how, while he stood there and held her hand, there had been a swift presentation to her mind, swift and clear, of all she would be giving up when she turned away from him. In one instant the whole view had come—the rank, the ease, the worldly luxury, the affection; and the question came too, waywardly, as impertinent questions will come, whether she was after all giving it up for sufficient cause? She was relinquishing, if she quitted him, all that the world values. Not quite that, perhaps; if turned out from her father's family even, she was in no danger of wanting food or shelter or protection; for she would be sure of those and more in Mrs. Caxton's house. But looking forward into the course of future years that might lie before her, the one alternative offered for her choice presented all that is pleasant in worldly estimation; and on the other side there was a lonely life, and duty, and the affection of one old woman. But though the two views came with startling clearness before Eleanor just at this moment, the more attractive one brought no shadow of temptation with it. She saw it—that was all, and turned away from it to consider present circumstances.

Would her father keep to his word? It seemed impossible; yet coolly reflecting, Eleanor thought from what she knew of him that he would; so far at least as to send her into immediate banishment. That such banishment would be more than temporary, she did not believe. Mr. Carlisle would get over his disappointment, would marry somebody else; and in course of time her mother and father, the latter of whom certainly loved her, would find out that they wanted her at home again. But how long first? That no one could tell, nor what might happen in the interval; and when she had got so far in her thoughts, Eleanor's tears began to flow. She let them flow; it relieved her; and somehow there was a good fountain-head of them. And again those two pictures of future life rose up before her; not as matters of choice, to take one and leave the other—but as matters of contrast, in somewhat that entered the spring of tears and made them bitter. Was something gone from her

life, that could never be got back again? had she lost something that could never be found again? Was there a "bloom and fragrance" waving before her on the one hand, though unattainable, which the other path of life with all its beauty did not offer? To judge by Eleanor's tears she had some such thoughts. But after a time the tears cleared away, and her bowed face looked up as fair as a blue sky after a storm. And Eleanor never had another time of weeping during the month.

It was a dull month to other people. It would have been a dreary one to her, only that there is a private sunshine in some hearts that defies cloudy weather. There is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, by which one rides contentedly in rough water; there is a hope of glory, in the presence of which no darkness can abide; and there is a word with which Eleanor dried her tears that day, and upon which she steadied her heart all the days after. It was written by one who knew trouble. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." It is hard to take that portion away from a man, or to make him poor while he has it.

Eleanor had little else the remaining twenty-one days of that month. What troubled her much, she could by no means see Julia; and she found that her sister had been sent home, to the Lodge at Wiglands, under charge of a governess; Mrs. Powle averring that it was time she should be in the country. London was not good for Julia. Was it good for any of them? Eleanor thought. But parliament was still sitting; Mr. Carlisle was in attendance; it was manifest they must be so too. Everything went on much as usual. Eleanor attended her father after his early dinner, for Mr. Powle would not come into London hours; and Mr. Carlisle as usual shared her office with her, except when he was obliged to be in the House. When he was, Mrs. Powle now took his place. The Squire was surly and gloomy; only brought out of those moods by Mr. Carlisle himself. That gentleman held his ground, with excellent grace and self-control, and made Eleanor more than ever feel his power.

But she kept her ground too; not without an effort and a good deal of that old arm of defence which is called "all-prayer;" yet she kept it; was gentle and humble and kind to them all—to Mr. Carlisle himself—while he was sensible her grave gentleness had no yielding in it. How he admired her, those days! how he loved her; with a little fierce desire of triumph mingling, it must be confessed, with his love and admiration, and heightened by them; for now pride was touched, and some other feeling which he did not analyze. He had nobody to be jealous of, that he knew; unless it were Eleanor herself; yet her indifference piqued him. He could not brook to be baffled. He showed not a symptom of all this; but every line of her fine figure, every fold of her rich, beautiful hair, every self-possessed movement, at times was torment to him. Her very dress was a subject of irritation. It was so plain, so evidently unworldly in its simplicity, that unreasonably enough, for Eleanor looked well in it, it put Mr. Carlisle in a fume every day. She should not dress so when he had control of her; and to get the control seemed not easy; and the dress kept reminding him that he had it not. On the whole, probably all parties were glad when the sweet month of May for that season came to an end. Even Eleanor was glad; for though she had made up her mind what June would bring her, it is easier to grasp a fear in one's hand, like a nettle, than to touch it constantly by anticipation. So the first of June came.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Come, spur away!
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down,
And leave the changeable noise of this great town;
I will the country see,
Where old simplicity,
Though hid in grey,
Doth look more gay
Than foppery in plush and scarlet clad."

Although Eleanor's judgment had said what the issue would be of that day's conference, she had made no preparation to leave home. That she could not do. She could not make certain before it came the weary foreboding that pressed upon her. She went to her father's room after dinner as usual, leaning her heart on that word which had been her walking-staff for three weeks past,—"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him!"

Mrs. Powle was there, quietly knitting. The Squire had gathered himself up into a heap in his easy chair, denoting a contracted state of mind; after that curious fashion which bodily attitudes have, of repeating the mental. Eleanor took the newspaper and sat down.

"Is there anything there particular?" growled the Squire.

"I do not see anything very particular, sir. Here is the continuation of the debate on—— "

"How about that bill of yours and Mr. Carlisle's?" broke in Mrs. Powle.

"It was ordered to be printed, mamma—it has not reached the second reading yet. It will not for some time."

"What do you suppose will become of it then?"

"What the Lord pleases. I do not know," said Eleanor, with a pang at her heart. "I have done my part—all I could—so far."

"I suppose you expect Mr. Carlisle will take it up as his own cause, after it has ceased to be yours?"

Eleanor understood this, and was silent. She took up the paper again to find where to read.

"Put that down, Eleanor Powle," said her father, who was evidently in a very bad humour, as he had cause, poor old gentleman! there is nobody so bad to be out of humour with as yourself;—"put that down! until we know whether you are going to read to me any more or no. I should like to know your decision."

Eleanor hesitated, for it was difficult to speak.

"Come!—out with it. Time's up. Now for your answer. Are you going to be an obedient child, and give Mr. Carlisle a good wife—eh? Speak!"

"An obedient child, sir, in everything but this. I can give Mr. Carlisle nothing, any more than he has."

"Any more than he has? What is that?"

"A certain degree of esteem and regard, sir—and perhaps, forgiveness."

"Then you will not marry him, as I command you?"

"No—I cannot."

"And you won't give up being a Methodist?"

"I cannot help being what I am. I will not go to church, papa, anywhere that you forbid me."

She spoke low, endeavouring to keep calm. The Squire got up out of his chair. He had no calmness to keep, and he spoke loud.

"Have you taught your sister to think there is any harm in dancing?"

"In dancing-parties, I suppose I have."

"And you think they are wicked, and won't go to them?"

"I do not like them. I cannot go to them, papa, for I am a servant of Christ; and I can do no work for my

Master there at all; but if I go, I bear witness that they are good."

"Now hear me, Eleanor Powle,"—the Squire spoke with suppressed rage,—"no such foolery will I have in my house, and no such disrespect to people that are better than you. I told you what would come of all this if you did not give it up—and I stand to my word. You come here to-morrow morning, prepared to put your hand in Mr. Carlisle's and let him know that you will be his obedient servant—or, you quit my house. To-morrow morning you do one thing or the other. And when you go, you will stay. I will never have you back, except as Mr. Carlisle's wife. Now go! I don't want your paper any more."

Eleanor went slowly away. She paused in the drawing-room—there was no one there this time—rang the bell and ordered Thomas to be sent to her. Thomas came, and received orders to be in readiness and have everything in readiness to attend her on a journey the next day. The orders were given clearly and distinctly as usual; but Thomas shook his head as he went down from her presence at the white face his young mistress had worn. "She don't use to look that way," he said to himself, "for she is one of them ladies that carry a hearty brave colour in their cheeks; and now there wasn't a bit of it." But the old servant kept his own counsel and obeyed directions.

Eleanor went through the evening and much of the night without giving herself a moment to think. Packing occupied all that time and the early hours of the next day; she was afraid to be idle, and even dreaded the times of prayer; because whenever she stopped to think, the tears would come. But she grew quiet; and was only pale still, when at an early hour in the morning she left the house. She could not bear to go through a parting scene with her father; she knew him better than to try it; and she shrank from one with her mother. She bid nobody good-bye, for she could not tell anybody that she was going. London streets looked very gloomy to Eleanor that morning as she drove through them to the railway station.

She had still another reason for slipping away, in the fear that else she would be detained to meet Mr. Carlisle again. The evening before she had had a note from him, promising her all freedom for all her religious predilections and opinions—leave to do what she would, if she would only be his wife. She guessed he would endeavour to see her, if she stayed long enough in London after the receipt of that note. Eleanor made her escape.

Thomas was sorry at heart to see her cheeks so white yet when they set off; and he noticed that his young mistress hid her face during the first part of the journey. He watched to see it raised up again; and then saw with content that Eleanor's gaze was earnestly fixed on the things without the window. Yes, there was something there. She felt she was out of London; and that whatever might be before her, one sorrowful and disagreeable page of life's book was turned over. London was gone, and she was in the midst of the country again, and the country was at the beginning of June. Green fields and roses and flowery hedgerows, and sweet air, all wooed her back to hopefulness. Hopefulness for the moment stole in. Eleanor thought things could hardly continue so bad as they seemed. It was not natural. It could not be. And yet—Mr. Carlisle was in the business, and mother and father were set on her making a splendid match and being a great lady. It might be indeed that there would be no return for Eleanor, that she must remain in banishment, until Mr. Carlisle should take a new fancy or forget her. How long would that be? A field for calculation over which Eleanor's thoughts roamed for some time.

One comfort she had promised herself, in seeing Julia on the way; so she turned out of her direct course to go to Wiglands. She was disappointed. Julia and her governess had left the Lodge only the day before to pay a visit of a week at some distance. By order, Eleanor could not help suspecting it had been; of set purpose, to prevent the sisters meeting. This disappointment was bitter. It was hard to keep from angry thoughts. Eleanor fought them

resolutely, but she felt more desolate than she had ever known in her life before. The old place of her home, empty and still, had so many reminders of childish and happy times, careless times, days when nobody thought of great marriages or settlements, or when such thoughts lay all hidden in Mrs. Powle's mind. Every tree and room and book was so full of good and homely associations of the past, that it half broke Eleanor's heart. Home associations now so broken up; the family divided, literally and otherwise; and worst of all, and over which Eleanor's tears flowed bitterest, her own ministrations and influence were cut off from those who most needed them, and whom she most wished to benefit. Eleanor's day at home was a day of tears; it was impossible to help it. The roses with their sweet faces looked remonstrance at her; the roads and walks and fields where she had been so happy invited her back to them; the very grey tower of the Priory rising above the trees held out worldly temptation and worldly reproof, with a mocking embodiment of her causes of trouble. Eleanor could not bear it; she spent one night at home; wrote a letter to Julia, which she entrusted to a servant's hands for her; and the next morning set her face towards Plassy. Julia lay on her heart. That conversation they had held together the morning when Eleanor waylaid her—it was the last that had been allowed. They had never had a good talk since then. Was that the last chance, indeed, for ever? It was impossible to know.

In spite of June beauty, it was a dreary journey to her from home to her aunt's; and the beautiful hilly outlines beyond Plassy rose upon her view with a new expression. Sterner, and graver; they seemed to say, "It is life work, now, my child; you must be firm, and if necessary rugged, like us; but truth of action has its own beauty too, and the sunlight of Divine favour rests there always." A shadowless sunlight lay on the crowns and shoulders of the mountains as Eleanor drew near. She got out of the carriage to walk the last few steps and look at the place. Plassy never was more lovely. An aromatic breath, pure and strong,

came from the hills and gathered the sweetness of the valleys. Roses and honeysuckles and jessamines and primroses, with a thousand others, loaded the air with their gifts to it, from Mrs. Caxton's garden, and from all the fields and hedgerows around. And one after another bit of hilly outline reminded Eleanor that off *there* went the narrow valley that led to the little church at Glanog; *there* went the road to the village, where she and Powis had gone so often of Wednesday afternoons; and in *that* direction lay the little cot where she had watched all night by the dying woman. Not much time for such remembrances was there now; for the farmhouse stood just before her. The dear old farmhouse! looking as pretty as everything else in its dark red stone walls and slate roof; stretching along the ground in that rambling, picturesque, and also opulent style. Eleanor would not knock now, and the door was not fastened to make her need it. Softly she opened it, went in, and stood upon the tiled floor.

No sound of anything in particular; only certain tokens of life in the house. Eleanor went on, opened the door of the sitting parlour and looked in. Nobody there; the room in its summer state of neatness and coolness as she had left it. Eleanor's heart began to grow warm. She would not yet summon a servant; she left that part of the house, and wound about among the passages till she came to the back door that led out into the long tiled porch where supper was wont to be spread. And there was the table set this evening; and the wonted glow from the sunny west greeted her there, and a vision of the gorgeous flower-garden. But Eleanor hardly saw the one thing or the other; for Mrs. Caxton was there also, standing by the tea-table, alone, putting something on it. Eleanor moved forward without a word. Her voice would not come out of her throat very well.

"Eleanor!" exclaimed Mrs. Caxton. "My dear love! what has given me this happiness?"

Very strong language for Mrs. Caxton to use. Eleanor felt it, every word of it, as well as the embrace of those kind

arms and her aunt's kisses upon her lips; but she was silent.

"How come you here, my darling?"

"They have sent me away from home."

Mrs. Caxton saw that there was some difficulty of speech, and she would not press matters. She put Eleanor into a seat, and looked at her, and took off her bonnet with her own hands; stooped down and kissed her brow. Eleanor steadied herself and looked up.

"It is true, aunt Caxton. I come to you because I have nowhere else to be."

"My love, it is a great happiness to have you, for any cause. Wait, and tell me what the matter is by and by."

She left Eleanor for a moment—only a moment; gave some orders, and returned to her side. She sat down and took Eleanor's hand.

"What is it, my dear?"

And then Eleanor's composure, which she had thought sure, gave way all of a sudden; and she cried heartily for a minute, laying her head in its old resting-place. But that did her good; and then she kissed Mrs. Caxton over and over before she began to speak.

"They want me to make a great match, aunty; and will not be satisfied with anything else."

"What, Mr. Carlisle?"

"Yes."

"And is that all broken off?" said Mrs. Caxton, a little tone of eagerness discernible under her calm manner.

"It was broken off a year ago," said Eleanor, "more than a year ago. It has always been broken since."

"I heard that it was all going on again. I expected to hear of your marriage."

"It was not true. But it is true, that the world had a great deal of reason to think so; and I could not help that."

"How so, Eleanor?"

"Mamma, and papa, and Mr. Carlisle. They managed it."

"But in such a case, my dear, a woman owes it to herself and to her suitor, and to her parents too, to be explicit."

"I do not think I compromised the truth, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, passing her hand somewhat after a troubled fashion over her brow. "Mr. Carlisle knew I never encouraged him with more favour than I gave others. I could not help being with him, for mamma and he had it so; and they were too much for me. I could not help it. So the report grew. I had a difficult part to play," said Eleanor, repeating her troubled gesture, and seeming ready to burst into tears.

"In what way, my love?"

Eleanor did not immediately answer; sat looking off over the meadow, as if some danger existed to self-control; then, still silent, turned and met with an eloquent soft eye the sympathizing yet questioning glance that was fixed on her. It was curious how Eleanor's eye met it; how her eye roved over Mrs. Caxton's face and looked into her quiet grey eyes, with a kind of glinting of some spirit fire within, which could almost be seen to play and flicker as thought and feeling swayed to and fro. Her eye said that much was to be said, looked into Mrs. Caxton's face with an intensity of half-speech, and the lips remained silent. There was consciousness of sympathy, consciousness of something that required sympathy; and the seal of silence. Perhaps Mrs. Caxton's response to this strange look came half unconsciously; it came wholly naturally.

"Poor child!"

The colour rose on Eleanor's cheek at that; she turned her eyes away.

"I think Mr. Carlisle's plan—and mamma's—was to make circumstances too strong for me, and to draw me on by degrees. And they would, perhaps, but for all I learned here."

"For what you learned here, my dear?"

"Yes, aunty; if they could have got me into a whirl of society—if they could have made me love dancing-parties and theatres and the opera, and I had got bewildered and forgotten that a great worldly establishment is not the best thing—perhaps temptation would have been too much for me.—Perhaps it would. I don't know"

There was a little more colour in Eleanor's cheeks than her words accounted for, as Mrs. Caxton noticed.

"Did you ever feel in danger from the temptation, Eleanor?"

"Never, aunty. I think it never so much as touched me."

"Then Mr. Carlisle has been at his own risk," said Mrs. Caxton. "Let us dismiss him, my love."

"Aunt Caxton, I have a strange homeless, forlorn feeling."

For answer to that, Mrs. Caxton put her arms round Eleanor and gave her one or two good strong kisses. There was reproof as well as affection in them; Eleanor felt both, even without her aunt's words.

"Trust the Lord. You know who has been the dwelling-place of his people, from all generations. They cannot be homeless. And for the rest, remember that whatever brings you here brings a great boon to me. My love, do you wish to go to your room before you have tea?"

Eleanor was glad to get away and be alone for a moment. How homelike her old room seemed!—with the rose and honeysuckle breath of the air coming in at the casements. How peaceful and undisturbed the old furniture looked! The influence of the place began to settle down upon Eleanor. She got rid of the dust of travel, and came down presently to the porch with a face as quiet as a lamb.

Tea went on with the same soothing influence. There was much to tell Eleanor, of doings in and about Plassy the year past; for the fact was, that letters had not been frequent. Who was sick and who was well; who had married, and who was dead; who had set out on a Christian walk, and who were keeping up such a walk, to the happiness of themselves and of all about them. Then how Mrs. Caxton's own household had prospered; how the dairy went on; and there were some favourite cows that Eleanor desired to hear of. From the cows they got to the garden. And all the while the lovely meadow valley lay spread out in its greenness before Eleanor; the beautiful old hills drew the same loved outline across the sunset sky; the lights and shadows were of June; and the garden at hand was a rich mass of

beauty sloping its terraced sweetness down to the river. Just as it was a year ago, when the summons came for Eleanor to leave it; only the garden seemed even more gorgeously rich than then. Just the same, even to the dish of strawberries on the table. But that was not wreathed with ivy and myrtle now.

"Aunt Caxton, this is like the very same evening that I was here last."

"It is almost a year," said Mrs. Caxton.

Neither added anything to these two very unremarkable remarks; and silence fell with the evening light, as the servants were clearing away the table. Perhaps the mountains with the clear paling sky beyond them were suggestive. Both the ladies looked so.

"My dear," said Mrs. Caxton then, "let me understand a little better about this affair that gives you to me. Do you come, or are you sent?"

"It is formal banishment, aunt Caxton. I am sent from them at home; but sent to go whither I will. So I come to you."

"What is the term assigned to this banishment?"

"None. It is absolute—unless or until I will grant Mr. Carlisle's wishes, or give up being, as papa says, a Methodist. But that makes it final—as far as I am concerned."

"They will think better of it by and by."

"I hope so," said Eleanor faintly. "It seems a strange thing to me, aunt Caxton, that this should have happened to me—just now when I am so needed at home. Papa is unwell—and I was beginning to get his ear,—and I have great influence over Julia, who only wants leading to go in the right way. And I am taken away from all that. I cannot help wondering why."

"Let it be to the glory of God, Eleanor; that is all your concern. The rest you will understand by and by."

"But that is the very thing. It is hard to see how it can be to his glory."

"Do not try," said Mrs. Caxton, smiling. "The Lord never puts his children anywhere where they cannot glorify

him; and he never sends them where they have not work to do or a lesson to learn. Perhaps this is your lesson, Eleanor—to learn to have no home but in him."

Eleanor's eyes filled very full; she made no answer.

But one thing is certain; peace settled down upon her heart. It would be difficult to help that at Plassy. We all know the effect of going home to the place of our childhood after a time spent in other atmosphere; and there is a native air of the spirit, in which it feels the like renovating influence. Eleanor breathed it while they sat at the table; she felt she had got back into her element. She felt it more and more when at family prayer the whole household were met together, and she heard her aunt's sweet and high petitions again. And the blessing of peace fully settled down upon Eleanor when she was gone up to her room and had recalled and prayed over her aunt's words. She went to sleep with that glorious saying running through her thoughts—"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"But there be million hearts accurst, where no sweet sunbursts shine,
And there be million hearts athirst for Love's immortal wine.
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And if we did our duty, it might be full of love."

PEACE had unbroken reign at Plassy from that time. Eleanor threw herself again eagerly into all her aunt's labours and schemes for the good and comfort of those around her. There was plenty to do; and she was Mrs. Caxton's excellent helper. Powis came into requisition anew; and as before, Eleanor traversed the dales and the hills on her various errands, swift and busy. That was not the only business going. Her aunt and she returned to their old literary habits, and read books and talked; and it was hard if Eleanor in her rides over the hills and over the meadows and along the streams did not bring back one hand full of wild flowers. She dressed the house with them, getting help from the garden when necessary; botanized a good deal; and began to grow as knowing in plants almost as Mrs. Caxton herself. She would come home loaded with wild thyme and gorse and black bryony and saxifrage and orchis flowers, having scoured hill and meadow and robbed the hedgerows for them, which also gave her great tribute of wild roses. Then later came crimson campion and eyebright, dog roses and honeysuckles, columbine and centaury, grasses of all kinds, and harebell, and a multitude impossible to name; though the very naming is pleasant. Eleanor lived very much out of doors, and was likened by her aunt

to a rural Flora or Proserpine that summer; though when in the house she was just the most sonsy, sensible, companionable little earthly maiden that could be fancied. Eleanor was not under size indeed; but so much like her own wild flowers in pure simpleness and sweet natural good qualities, that Mrs. Caxton was sometimes inclined to bestow the endearing diminutive upon her, so sound and sweet she was.

"And what are all these?" said Mrs. Caxton one day, stopping before an elegant basket.

"Don't you like them?"

"Very much. Why, you have got a good many kinds here."

"That is Hart's Tongue, you know—that is wall spleenwort, and that is the other kind; handsome things, are they not?"

"And this?"

"That is the forked spleenwort. You don't know it? I rode away, away up the mountain for it yesterday. That is where I got those Woodsias too—aren't they beautiful? I was fortunate to find those; they are not common."

"No. And this is not common, to me."

"Don't you know it, aunt Caxton? It grows just in the spray of a waterfall—this and this; they are polypodies. That is another—that came from the old round tower."

"And where did you get these?—these waterfall ferns?"

"I got them at the Bandel of Helig."

"There? My dear child! how could you, without risk?"

"Without much risk, aunty."

"How did you ever know the Bandel?"

"I have been there before, aunt Caxton."

"I think I never showed it to you?"

"No, ma'am;—but Mr. Rhys did."

His name had scarcely been mentioned before since Eleanor had come to the farm. It was mentioned now with a cognizance of that fact. Mrs. Caxton was silent a little.

"Why have you put these green things here without a rose or two? they are all alone in their greenness."

"I like them better so, aunty. They are beautiful enough

by themselves; but if you put a rose there, you cannot help looking at it."

Mrs. Caxton smiled and turned away.

One thing in the midst of all these natural explorations remained unused; and that a thing most likely, one would have thought, to be applied to for help. The microscope stood on one side, apparently forgotten. It always stood there, in the sitting parlour, in full view; but nobody seemed to be conscious of its existence. Eleanor never touched it; Mrs. Caxton never spoke of it.

From home meantime, Eleanor heard little that was satisfactory. Julia was the only one that wrote, and her letters gave painful subjects for thought. Her father was very unlike himself, Julia said, and growing more feeble and more ill every day; though by slow degrees. She wished Eleanor would write her letters without any religion in them, for she supposed *that* was what her mother would not let her read; so she never had the comfort of seeing Eleanor's letters for herself, but Mrs. Powle read aloud bits from them. "Very little bits, too," added Julia. "I suppose your letters have more religion in them than anything else. But you see it is no use." Eleanor read this passage aloud to Mrs. Caxton.

"Is that true, Eleanor?"

"No, ma'am. I write to Julia of everything that I do, all day long, and of everything and everybody that interests me. What mamma does not like comes in, of course, with it all; but I do very little preaching, aunt Caxton."

"I would go on just so, my dear. I would not alter the style of my letters."

So the flowers of June were replaced by the flowers of July; and the beauties of July gave place to the purple "ling" of August, with gentian and centaury and St. John's wort; and then came the autumn changes, with the less delicate blossoms of that later time, amidst which the eclipsed meadow-sweet came quite into favour again. Still Eleanor brought wild things from the hills and the streams, though she applied more now to Mrs. Caxton's home store in the

garden; wild mints and Artemisias and the Michaelmas daisy still came home with her from her rides and walks; the rides and walks in which Eleanor was a ministering angel to many a poor house, many an ignorant soul and many a failing or ailing body.

Then came October; and with the first days of October the news that her father was dead.

It added much bitterness to Eleanor's grief, that Mrs. Powle entirely declined to have her come home, even for a brief stay. If she chose to submit to conditions, her mother wrote, she would be welcome; it was not too late; but if she held to her perversity, she must bear the consequences. She did not own her nor want her. She gave her up to her aunt Caxton. Her remaining daughter was in her hands, and she meant to keep her there. Eleanor, she knew, if she came home would come to sow rebellion. She should not come to do that, either then or at all.

Mildly quiet and decided Mrs. Powle's letter was; very decided, and so cool as to give every assurance the decision would be persisted in. Eleanor felt this very much. She kept on her usual way of life without any variation; but the radiant bright look of her face was permanently saddened. She was just as sweet and companionable an assistant to her aunt as ever; but from month to month Mrs. Caxton saw that a shadow lay deep upon her heart. No shadow could have less of anything like hard edges.

They had been sitting at work one night late in the winter, those two, the aunt and the niece; and having at last put up her work, Eleanor sat gravely poring into the red coals on the hearth; those thought-provoking, life-stirring, strange things, glowing and sparkling between life and death like ourselves. Eleanor's face was very sober.

"Aunt Caxton," she said at length,—"my life seems such a confusion to me!"

"So everything seems that we do not understand," Mrs. Caxton said.

"But is it not, aunty? I seem taken from everything that I ought most naturally to do—papa, Julia, mamma. I

feel like a banished person, I suppose; only I have the strange feeling of being banished from my place in the world."

"What do you think of such a life as Mr. Rhys is leading?"

"I think it is straight and beautiful," Eleanor answered, looking still into the fire. "Nothing can be further from confusion. He is in *his* place."

"He is in a sort of banishment, however."

"Not from that! And it is voluntary banishment—for his Master's sake. *That* is not sorrowful, aunt Caxton."

"Not when the Lord's banished ones make their home in him. And I do not doubt but Mr. Rhys does that."

"Have you ever heard from him, aunt Caxton?"

"Not yet. It is almost time, I think."

"It is almost a year and a half since he went."

"The communication is slow and uncertain," said Mrs. Caxton. "They do not get letters there, often, till they are a year old."

"How impossible it used to be to me," said Eleanor, "to comprehend such a life; how impossible to understand, that anybody should leave home and friends and comfort, and take his place voluntarily in distance and danger and heathendom! It was an utter enigma to me."

"And you understand it now?"

"O yes, aunty," Eleanor went on in the same tone; and she had not ceased gazing into the coals;—"I see that Christ is all; and with him one is never alone, and under his hand one can never be in danger. I know now how his love keeps one even from fear."

"You are no coward naturally."

"No, aunt Caxton—not about ordinary things, except when conscience made me so, some time ago."

"That is over now?"

Eleanor took her eyes from the fire, to give Mrs. Caxton a smile with the words—"Thank the Lord!"

"Mr. Rhys is among scenes that might try any natural courage," said Mrs. Caxton. "They are a desperate set of savages to whom he is ministering."

"What a glory, to carry the name of Christ to them!"

"They are hearing it, too," said Mrs. Caxton. "But there is enough of the devil's worst work going on there to try any tender heart, and horrors enough to shock stout nerves. So it has been. I hope Mr. Rhys finds it better."

"I don't know much about them," said Eleanor. "Are they much worse than savages in general, aunt Caxton?"

"I think they are,—and better too, in being more intellectually developed. Morally, I think I never read of a lower fallen set of human beings. Human life is of no account; such a thing as respect to humanity is unknown, for the eating of human bodies has gone on to a most wonderful extent, and the destroying them for that purpose. With all that, there is a very careful respect paid to descent and rank; but it is the observance of fear. That one fact gives you the key to the whole. Where a man is thought of no more worth than to be killed and eaten, a woman is not thought worth anything at all; and society becomes a lively representation of the infernal regions, without the knowledge and without the remorse."

"Poor creatures!" said Eleanor.

"You comprehend that there must be a great deal of trial to a person of fine sensibilities, in making a home amongst such a people for an indefinite length of time."

"Yes, aunty,—but the Lord will make it all up to him."

"Blessed be the name of the Lord!" it was Mrs. Caxton's turn to answer; and she said it with deep feeling and emphasis.

"It seems the most glorious thing to me, aunt Caxton, to tell the love of Christ to those that don't know it. I wish I could do it."

"My love, you do."

"I do very little, ma'am. I wish I could do a thousand times more!"

The conversation stopped there. Both ladies remained very gravely thoughtful a little while longer, and then separated for the night. But the next evening, when they were seated at tea alone, Mrs. Caxton recurred to the subject.

"You said last night, Eleanor, that you wished you could do a great deal more work of a certain kind than you do."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did your words mean, my love, that you are discontented with your own sphere of duty, or find it too narrow?"

Eleanor's eyes opened a little at that. "Aunt Caxton, I never thought of such a thing. I do not remember that I was considering my own sphere of duty at all. I was thinking of the pleasure of preaching Christ—yes, and the glory and honour—to such poor wretches as those we were talking of, who have never had a glimpse of the truth before."

"Then for your part, you are satisfied with England?"

"Why, yes, ma'am. I am satisfied, I think—I mean to be—with any place that is given me. I should be sorry to choose for myself."

"But if you had a clear call, you would like it, to go to the Cape of Good Hope and teach the Hottentots?"

"I do not mean that, aunty," said Eleanor, laughing a little. "Surely you do not suspect me of any wandering romantic notion about doing the Lord's work in one place rather than in another? I would rather teach English people than Hottentots. But if I saw that my place was at the Cape of Good Hope, I would go there. If my place were there, some way would be possible for me to get there, I suppose."

"You would have no fear?" said Mrs. Caxton.

"No, aunty; I think not. Ever since I can say, 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' I have done with fear."

"My love, I should be very sorry to have you go to the Cape of Good Hope. I am glad there is no prospect of it. But you are right about not choosing. As soon as we go where we are not sent, we are at our own charges."

The door here opened, and the party and the tea-table received an accession of one to their number. It was an elderly, homely gentleman, to whom Mrs. Caxton gave a very cordial reception, and whom she introduced to Eleanor as the Rev. Mr. Morrison. He had a pleasant face, Eleanor saw, and as soon as he spoke, a pleasant manner.

"I ought to be welcome, ma'am," he said, rubbing his hands with the cold as he sat down. "I bring you letters from Brother Rhys."

"You are welcome without that, brother, as you know," Mrs. Caxton answered. "But the letters are welcome. Of how late date are they?"

"Some pretty old—some not more than nine or ten months ago; when he had been stationed a good while."

"How is he?"

"Well, he says; never better."

"And happy?"

"I wish I was as happy," said Mr. Morrison. "He had got fast hold of his work already."

"He would do that immediately."

"He studied the language on shipboard, all the way out; and he was able to hold a service in it for the natives only a few weeks after he had landed. Don't you call that energy?"

"There is energy wherever he is," said Mrs. Caxton.

"Yes, you know him pretty well. I suppose they never have it so cold out there as we have it to-night," Mr. Morrison said, rubbing his hands. "Its stinging. That fire is the pleasantest thing I have seen to-day."

"Where is Mr. Rhys stationed?"

"I forget—one of the islands down there, with an unintelligible name. Horrid places!"

"Is the place itself disagreeable?" Eleanor asked.

"The place itself, ma'am," said Mr. Morrison, his face stiffening from its genial unbent look into formality as he turned to her,—"the place itself I do not understand to be very disagreeable; it is the character of the population which must make it a hard place to live in. They are exceedingly debased. Vile people!"

"Mr. Rhys is not alone on his station?" said Mrs. Caxton.

"No, he is with Mr. and Mrs. Lefferts. His letters will tell you."

For the letters Mrs. Caxton was evidently impatient; but

Mr. Morrison's refreshment had first to be attended to. Only fair, for he had come out of his way on purpose to bring them to her; and being one of a certain committee, he had it in his power to bring for her perusal and pleasure more than her own letters from Mr. Rhys, and more than Mr. Rhys's own letters to the committee. It was a relief to two of the party when Mr. Morrison's cups of tea were at last disposed of, and the far-come despatches were brought out on the green table-cloth under the light of the lamp.

With her hand on her own particular packet of letters, as if so much communication with them could not be put off, Mrs. Caxton sat and listened to Mr. Morrison's reading. Eleanor had got her work. As the particular interest which made the reading so absorbing to them may possibly be shared in a slight degree by others, it is fair to give a slight notion of the character of the news contained in those closely written pages. The letters Mr. Morrison read were voluminous; from different persons on different stations of the far-off mission field. They told of difficulties great, and encouragements greater; of their work and its results; and of their most pressing wants, especially the want of more men to help. The work they said was spreading faster than they could keep up with it. Thousands of heathen had given up heathenism, who in miserable ignorance cried for Christian instruction; children as wild as the wild birds, wanted teaching and were willing to have it; native teachers needed training, who had the will without the knowledge to aid in the service. Thirty of them, Mr. Lefferts said, he had under his care. With all this, they told of the wonderful beauty of the regions where their field of labour was. Mr. Lefferts wrote of a little journey lately taken to another part of his island, which had led him through almost every variety of natural luxuriance. Mountains and hills and valleys, rivers and little streams, rich woods and mangrove swamps. Mr. Lefferts' journey had been, like Paul's of old, to establish the native churches formed at different small places by the way. There he married couples and baptized

children, and met classes and told the truth. At one place where he had preached, married several couples, baptized over thirty, young and old, and met as many in classes, Mr. Lefferts told of a walk he took. It led him to the top of a little hill, from which a rich view was to be had, while a multitude of exquisite shrubs in flower gave another refreshment in their delicious fragrance. A little stream running down the side of the hill was used by the natives to water their plantations of taro, for which the side hill was formed into terraced beds. Parroquets and humming birds flew about, and the sun was sinking brilliantly in the western ocean line as he looked. So far, everything was fair, sweet, lovely; a contrast to what he met when he reached the lower grounds again. There the swarms of mosquitos compelled Mr. Lefferts to retreat for the night within a curtain canopy for protection; and thither he was followed by a fat savage, who shared the protection with him all night long. Another sort of experience! and another sort of neighbourhood from that of the starry white *Gardenia* flowers on the top of the hill.

Nevertheless, of a neighbouring station Mr. Rhys wrote that the people were at war, and the most horrible heathen practices were going on. At the principal town, he said, more people were eaten perhaps than anywhere else in the islands. The cruelties and the horrors were impossible to be told. A few days before he wrote, twenty-eight persons had been killed and eaten in one day. They had been caught fishing—taken prisoners and brought home—half killed, and in that state thrown into the ovens; still having life enough left to try to get away from the fire.

"The first time I saw anything of this kind," wrote Mr. Rhys, "was one evening when we had just finished a class-meeting. The evening was most fair and peaceful as we came out of the house; a fresh air from the sea had relieved the heat of the day; the leaves of the trees were glittering in the sunlight; the ocean all sparkling under the breeze; when word came that some bodies of slain people were bringing from Lauthala. I could hardly understand the

report, or credit it; but presently the horrible procession came in sight, and eleven dead bodies were laid on the ground immediately before us. Eleven only were brought to this village; but great numbers are said to have been killed. Their crime was the killing of one man; and when they would have submitted themselves and made amends, all this recompense of death was demanded by the offended chief. The manner in which these wretched creatures were treated is not a thing to be described; they were not handled with the respect which we give to brute animals. The natives have looked dark upon us since that time, and give us reason to know that as far as they are concerned our lives are not safe. But we know in whose hands our lives are; they are the Lord's; and he will do with them what he pleases—not what the heathen please. So we are under no concern about it."

The storm appeared to have passed away; for in later letters Mr. Rhys and Mr. Lefferts spoke of acceptable services among the people, and an evidently manifested feeling of trust and good will on their part towards the missionaries. Indeed, these were often able to turn the natives from their devilish purposes and save life. Not always. The old king of that part of the country had died, and all the influence and all the offers of compensation made by the missionaries, could not prevent the slaughter of half a dozen women, his wives, to do him honour in his burial. The scene as Mr. Lefferts described it was heart-sickening.

As he drew near the door of the king's house, with the intent to prevail for the right or to protest against the wrong, he saw the biers standing ready; and so knew that all the efforts previously made to hinder the barbarous rites had been unavailing. The house as he entered was in the hush of death. One woman lay strangled. Another sitting on the floor, covered with a large veil, was in the hands of her murderers. A cord was passed twice round her neck and the ends were held on each side of her by a group of eight or ten strong men, the two groups pulling opposite ways. She was dead, the poor victim underneath the veil,

in a minute or two after the missionaries entered; and the veil being taken off, they saw that it was a woman who had professed Christianity. Her sons were among those who had strangled her. Another woman came forward with great show of bravery when her name was called; offered her hand to the missionaries as she passed them; and with great pride of bearing submitted herself to the death which probably she knew she could not avoid. Everybody was quiet and cheerful, and the whole thing went on with the undisturbed order of a recognized and accustomed necessity; only the old king's son, the reigning chief for a long time back, was very uneasy at the part he was playing before the missionaries; he was the only trembling or doubtful one there. Yet he would not yield the point. Pride before all: his father must not be buried without the due honours of his position. Mr. Rhys and Mr. Lefforts had stayed to make their protest and offer their entreaties and warnings, to the very last; and then, heart-sick and almost faint with the digusting scene, had returned home.

Yet the influence of the truth was increasing and the good work was spreading and growing around them, steadily and in every direction. A great many had renounced heathenism; not a small number were earnest Christians and showed the truth of their religion in their changed lives. A great number of reports proved this.

"It is work that tries what stuff men's hearts are of, however," remarked Mr. Morrison as he folded up one packet of letters. Neither of his hearers made him any answer. Mrs. Caxton sat opposite to him, deeply attentive but silent, with her hands always lying upon her own particular packet. Eleanor had turned a little away, and sat with her side face towards Mr. Morrison, looking into the fire. Her work was dropped; she sat motionless.

"I have a letter to read you now of a later date," Mr. Morrison went on,—"from Mr. Rhys, which shows how well he has got hold of the people, and how much he is regarded by them already. It shows the influence gained by the truth, too, which is working there fast."

After giving some details of business and of his labours, Mr. Rhys wrote—"My last notable piece of work, has been in the character of an ambassador of peace—not heavenly, but earthly. News was brought four or five days ago that the heathen inhabitants of two neighbouring districts had engaged in open hostilities. Home business claimed me one day; the next morning I set out on my mission, with one or two Christian natives. The desolations of war soon met our eyes, in destroyed crops and a deserted village. Nobody was to be seen. I and those who were with me sat down in the shade of some trees, while a native went to find the inhabitants, who had hid themsleves in a thicket of mangroves. As soon as the chief heard that I was there, and what I had come for, he declared he would be a Christian forthwith; and four or five of his principal men followed his example. They came to me, and entered fully into my object; and it was decided that we should go on immediately to the fortress where those who wished to carry on war had intrenched themselves. We got there just as the sun was setting; and from that time to midnight I was engaged in what I saw now for the first time—a savage council of war. Grim black warriors covered with black powder sat or stood about, on a little clear spot of ground where the moon shone down; muskets and clubs and spears lay on the grass and were scattered about among the boles of the trees; a heathen-looking scene. Till midnight we talked, and hard talking too; then it was ended as I had prayed it might. The party with whom I was had suffered already in battle and had not had their revenge; it was difficult to give that up; but at last the chief got up and put his hand in mine. 'I should like to be a heathen a little longer,' he said, 'but I will *lotu*, as you so earnestly entreat me.' *Lotu* is their name for embracing Christianity. Another young warrior joined him; and there under the midnight moon we worshipped God—those two and those who were with me. In another part of the village a dozen women for the first time bowed the knee in the same worship.

"So far was well; but it yet remained to induce the

opposite hostile party to agree to peace; you understand only one side was yet persuaded. Early the next morning I set about it. Here a difficulty met me. The Christian chiefs made no objection to going with me to parley with their enemies; but I wanted the company also of another, the chief of this district, knowing it very important. And he was afraid to go. He told me so plainly. 'If I do as you ask me,' said he, 'I am a dead man this day.' I did my best to make him think differently; a hundred men declared that they would die in defence of him; and at last I gained my point. Tui Mbua agreed to go to the neighbourhood of the hostile town, if I would bring its principal men to meet him at an appointed place. So we went. This chosen place was a fine plot of ground enclosed by magnificent chestnut trees. I went on to the town, with a few unarmed men. The people received us well; but it was difficult to make the old heathen, brought up on treachery and falsehood, believe that I was to be trusted. But in the end the chief and twenty of his men consented to go with us, and left their arms at home. They did it with forebodings, for I overheard an old man say, as we set out from the place, 'We shall see death to-day.' I lifted my voice and cried, 'To-day we live!' They took up the words, and heart at the same time, and repeated, 'To-day we live'—to encourage themselves, I suppose, as we went towards the chestnut-tree meeting-ground.

"I felt that the peace of the whole region depended on what was to be done there, and for my part went praying that all might go well. It was an anxious moment when we entered the open place; any ill-looks in either party would chase away trust from the other. As we went in I watched the chief who accompanied me. He gently bowed to Tui Mbua, and approached him with due and evidently honest respect. My heart leaped at that moment. Tui Mbua looked at him keenly, sprang to his feet, and casting his arms about his enemy's neck, gave him a warm embrace. The people around shouted for joy; I was still, I believe, for the very depth of mine. One of the Christian chiefs spoke out and

cried, 'We thank thee, O Lord, for thus bringing thy creatures into the way of life;' and he wept aloud for very gladness.

"After that we had speechifying; and I returned home very full of thankful joy."

This was the last letter read. Mr. Morrison folded up his packed amid great silence. Mrs. Caxton seemed thoughtfull; Eleanor was motionless.

"He is doing good work," remarked Mr. Morrison; "but it is hard work. He is the right sort of man to go there—fears nothing, shirks nothing. So are they all, I believe; but almost all the rest of them have their wives with them. How came Rhys to go alone?"

"He does not write as if he felt lonely," said Mrs. Caxton.

"It is better for a man to take a wife, though," said Mr. Morrison. "He wants so much of comfort and home as that. They get tired, and they get sick, and to have no woman's hand about is something to be missed at such times. O, we are all dependent. Mr. Rhys is domesticated now with Brother Lefferts and his family. I suppose he feels it less, because he has not had a home of his own for a good while; that makes a difference."

"He knows he has a home of his own too," said Mrs. Caxton; "though he has not reached it yet. I suppose the thought of that makes him content."

"Of course. But in a heathen land, with heathen desolation and dark faces all around one, you have no idea how at times one's soul longs for a taste of England. Brother Rhys, too, is a man to feel all such things. He has a good deal of taste, and what you might call sensitiveness to externals."

"A good deal," said Mrs. Caxton, quietly. "Then he has some beautiful externals around him."

"So they say. But the humanity is deplorable. Well, they will get their reward when the Master comes. A man leaves everything indeed, when he goes to the South Seas as Rhys has done. He would have been very popular in England."

"So he will in the islands."

"Well, so it seems," said Mr. Morrison. "He has got the ear of those wild creatures, evidently. That's the man."

It was time for evening prayers; and afterwards the party separated; Mrs. Caxton carrying off with her her packet of letters unbroken. The morning brought its own business; the breakfast was somewhat hurried; Mr. Morrison took his departure; and nothing more was said on the subject of South Sea missionaries till the evening. Then the two ladies were again alone together.

"Are you well to-day, Eleanor?" was Mrs. Caxton's first question at the tea-table.

"Some headache, aunt Caxton."

"How is that? And I have noticed that your eyes were heavy all day."

"There is no harm, ma'am. I did not sleep very well."

"Why not?"

"I think the reading of those letters excited me, aunt Caxton."

Mrs. Caxton looked at a line of faint crimson which was stealing up into Eleanor's cheeks, and for a moment stayed her words.

"My dear, there is as good work to be done here, as ever in Polynesia."

"I do not know, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, leaning her head on her hand in thoughtful wise. "England has had the light a great while; it must be grand to be the first torch-bearers into the darkness."

"So Mr. Rhys feels. But then, my dear, I think we are to do the work given us—one here and one there;—and let the Lord place his servants, and our service, as he will."

"I do not think otherwise, aunt Caxton."

"Would you like to hear some of what Mr. Rhys has written to me? There is a little difference between what is sent to a committee, and what is for the private eye of a friend."

"Yes, ma'am, I would like it," Eleanor said; but she did not say so at all eagerly; and Mrs. Caxton looked at her

once or twice before she changed the subject and spoke of something else. She held to her offer, however; and when the green cloth and the lamp were again in readiness, she brought out the letters. Eleanor took some work and bent her head over it.

"This is one of the latest dates," Mrs. Caxton said as she opened the paper; "written after he had been there a good many months and had got fairly acquainted with the language and with the people. It seems to me he has been very quick about it."

"Yes, I think so," Eleanor answered; "but that is his way."

Mrs. Caxton read.

"My dear Friend,

"In spite of the world of ocean rolling between us, I yet have a strange and sweet feeling of taking your hand, when I set myself to write to you. Spirit and matter seem at odds; and far away as I am, with the vegetation and the air of the tropics around me, as soon as I begin upon this sheet of paper I seem to stand in Plassy again. The dear old hills rear their wild outlines before me; the green wealth of vegetation is at my feet, but cool and fresh as nothing looks to me under the northerly wind which is blowing now; and your image is so distinct, that I almost can grasp your hand, and almost hear you speak; *see* you speak, I do. Blessed be the Lord for imagination, as well as for memory! Without it, how slowly we should mount to the conception of heavenly things and the understanding of himself; and the distance between friends would be a sundering of them indeed. But I must not waste time or paper in telling you what you know already.

"By which you will conclude that I am busy. I am as busy as I can possibly be. That is as I wish it. It is what I am here for. I would not have a moment unused. On Sunday I have four or five services, of different sorts. Week days I have an English school, a writing school, one before and the other after mid-day; and later still, a school for

native instruction. Every moment of time that is free, or would be, is needed for visiting the sick, whose demands upon us are constant. But this gives great opportunity to preach the gospel and win the hearts of the people.

"Some account of a little preaching and teaching journey in which I took part some few months ago, I have a mind to give you. Our object was specially an island between one and two hundred miles away, where many have become Christians, and not in name only; but where up to this time no missionary has been stationed. We visit them when we can. This time we had the advantage of a brig to make the voyage in; the mission ship was here with the Superintendent, and he desired to visit the place. We arrived at evening in the neighbourhood; at a little island close by, where all the people are now Christian. Mr. Lefferts went ashore in a canoe to make arrangements; and the next day we followed. It was a beautiful day and as beautiful a sight as eyes could see. We visited the houses of the native teachers, who were subjects of admiration in every respect; met candidates for baptism and examined them; married a couple; and Bro. Griffiths preached. There is a new chapel, of very neat native workmanship; with a pulpit carved out of a solid piece of wood, oiled to give it colour and gloss. In the chapel the whole population of the island was assembled, dressed in new dresses, attentive and interested. So were we, you may believe, when we remembered that only two years ago all these people were heathens. O! these islands are a glorious place now and then, in spots where the devil's reign is broken. I wish you could have seen us afterwards, my dear friend, at our native feast spread on the ground under the trees; you who never saw a table set but with exact and elegant propriety. We had no table; believe me, we were too happy and hungry to mind that. I do not think you would have quarrelled with our dishes; they were no other and no worse than the thick broad glossy leaves of the banana. No fault could be found with their elegance; and our napkins were of the green rind of the same tree. Cocoanut shells were our substitute for flint glass, and I like

it very well; especially when cocoanut milk is the refreshment to be served in them. Knives and forks we had none! What would you have said to that? Our meat was boiled fowls and baked yams and fish dressed in various ways; and the fingers of the natives, or our own, were our only dividers. But I have seen less pleasant entertainments; and I only could wish you had been there—so you might have whisked back to England the next minute after it was over, on some convenient fairy carpet such as I used to read of in Eastern tales when I was a boy. For us, we had to make our way in haste back to the ship, which lay in the offing, and could not come near on account of the reef barrier. We got on board safely, passing the reefs where once an American ship was wrecked and her crew killed and eaten by the people of these parts.

"The next day we made the land we sought, and got ashore through a tremendous surf. Here we found the island had lately been the seat of war—some of the heathen having resolved to put an end by violence to the Christian religion there, or as they call it, the *lotu*. The Christians had gained the victory, and then had treated their enemies with the utmost kindness; which had produced a great effect upon them. The rest of the day after our landing was spent in making thorough inquiry into this matter; and in a somewhat extended preaching service. At night we slept on a mat laid for us, or tried to sleep; but my thoughts were too busy; and the clear night sky was witness to a great many restless movements, I am afraid, before I lost them in forgetfulness; the occasion of which, I suppose, was the near prospect of sending letters home to England by the ship. At any rate, England and the South Seas were very near together that night; and I was fain to remember that heaven is nearer yet. But the remembrance came, and with it sleep. The next day was a day of business. Marrying couples (over forty of them), baptizing converts, preaching; then meeting the teachers and class-leaders, and examining them as to their Christian experience, etc. From dawn till long past mid-day we were busy

so; and then were ready for another feast in the open air like that one I described to you—for we had had no breakfast. We had done all the work we could do at that time at Ono, and sought our ship immediately after dinner; passing through a surf too heavy for the canoes to weather.

"Let me tell you some of the testimony given by these converts from heathenism; given simply and heartily, by men who have not learned their religion by book nor copied it out of other men's mouths. It was a very thrilling thing to hear them, these poor enterers into the light, who have but just passed the line of darkness. One said, 'I love the Lord, and I know he loves me; not for anything in me, or for anything I have done; but for Christ's sake alone. I trust in Christ and am happy. I listen to God, that he may do with me as he pleases. I am thankful to have lived until the Lord's work has begun. I feel it in my heart! I hold Jesus! I am happy! My heart is full of love to God!'

"Another said, 'One good thing I know,—the sacred blood of Jesus. I desire nothing else.'

"Another,—'I know that God has justified me through the sacred blood of Jesus. I know assuredly that I am reconciled to God. I know of the work of God in my soul. The sacred Spirit makes it clear to me. I wish to preach the Gospel, that others also may know Jesus.'

"All these have been engaged the past year in teaching or proclaiming the truth in various ways. Another of their number who was dying, one or two of us went to see. One of us asked him if he was afraid to die? 'No,' he said, 'I am sheltered.' The great Saviour died for me. The Lord's wrath is removed. I am his.' And another time he remarked, 'Death is a fearfully great thing, but I fear it not. There is a *Saviour* below the skies.'

"So there is a helmet of salvation for the poor Fijian as well as for the favoured people at home. Praise be to the Lord! Did I tell you, my dear friend, I was restless at the thought of sending letters home? Let me tell you now, I am happy; as happy as I could be in any place in the world; and I would not be in any other place, by my own choice,

for all the things in the world. I need only to be made more holy. Just in proportion as I am that, I am happy and I am useful. I want to be perfectly holy. But there is the same way of trusting for the poor Fijian and for me; and I believe in that same precious blood I shall be made clean, even as they. I want to preach Christ a thousand times more than I do. I long to make his love known to these poor people. I rejoice in being here, where every minute may tell actively for him. My dear friend, when we get home, do what we will, we shall not think we have done enough.

"Our life here is full of curious contrasts. Within doors, what our old habits have stereotyped as propriety is sadly trenched upon. Before the ship came, Mrs. Lefferts' stock of comfort in one line was reduced to a single tea-cup; and in other stores, the demands of the natives had caused us to run very short. You know it is only by payment of various useful articles that we secure any service done or purchase any native produce. Money is unknown. Fruit and vegetables, figs, fish, crabs, fowls, we buy with iron tools, pieces of calico, and the like; and if our supply of these runs out, we have to draw upon the store of things needed by ourselves; and blankets and hardware come to be minus. Then, forgetting this, which it is easy to do, all the world without is a world of glorious beauty. How I wish I could show it to you! These islands are of very various character, and many of them like the garden of Eden for natural loveliness, showing almost every kind of scenery within a small area. Most of them are girdled more or less entirely by what is called a *barrier reef*—an outside and independent coral formation, sometimes narrow, sometimes miles in width, on the outer edge of which the sea breaks in an endless line of white foam. Within the reef the lagoon, as it is called, is perfectly still and clear; and such glories of the animal and vegetable world as lie beneath its surface, I have no time to describe to you now. I have had little time to examine them; but once or twice I have taken a canoe and a piece of rest, gliding over this submarine garden, and rejoicing in

the Lord who has made everything so beautiful in its time. My writing hour is over for to-day. I am going five or six miles to see a man who is said to be very ill.

"Feb. 16. The man had very little the matter with him. I had my walk for nothing, so far as my character of doctor or nurse was concerned.

"I will give you a little notion of the beauty of these islands, in the description of one that I visited a short time ago. It is one of our out-stations—too small to have a teacher given it; so it is visited from time to time by Mr. Lefferts and myself. With a fair wind the distance is hardly a day's journey; but sometimes, as in this case, it consumes two days. The voyage was made in a native canoe, manned by native sailors, some Christian, some heathen. They are good navigators, for savages, and need be, for the character of the seas here, threaded with a network of coral reefs makes navigation a delicate matter. Our voyage proceeded very well, until we got to the entrance of the island. That seems a strange sentence, but the island itself is a circle nearly; a band of volcanic rock, not very wide, enclosing a lake or lagoon within its compass. There is only a rather narrow channel of entrance. Here we were met by difficulty. The surf breaking shorewards was tremendously high, and meeting and struggling with it came a rush of the current from within. Between the two opposing waters the canoe was tossed and swayed like a reed. It was, for a few moments, a scene to be remembered, and not a little terrific. The shoutings and exertions of the men, who felt the danger of their position, added to the roar and the power of the waters, which tossed us hither and thither as a thing of no consequence, made it a strange wild minute, till we emerged from all that struggle and roar into the still, beautiful quiet of the lagoon inside. Imagine it, surrounded with its border of rocky land covered with noble trees, and spotted with islets covered in like manner. The whole island is of volcanic formation, and its rocks are of black scoria. The theory is, I believe, that a volcano once occupied the whole centre of such islands, which sinking afterwards away, left its place to

the occupancy of a lake instead. However produced, the effect is singular in its wild beauty. The soil of this island is poor for any purpose but growing timber; the inhabitants consequently are not many, and they live on roots and fish, and what we should think still poorer food, a great wood maggot, which is found in plenty. There are but four villages, two of them Christian. I stayed there one night and the next day, giving them all I could, and it was a good time to me. The day after I returned home. O sweet gospel of Christ! which is lighting up these dark places; and O my blessed Master! who stands by his servants and gives them his own presence and love, when they are about his work and the world is far from them, and men would call them lonely. There is no loneliness where Christ is. I must finish this long letter with giving you the dying testimony of a Tongian preacher who has just gone to his home. He came here as a missionary from his own land, and has worked hard and successfully. He said to Mr. Calvert the day before his death, 'I have long *enjoyed* religion and felt its *power*. In my former illness I was happy, but now I am greatly blessed. The Lord has come down with mighty power into my soul, and I feel the blessedness of *full rest of soul* in God. I feel religion to be peculiarly sweet, and my rejoicing is great. I see more fully and clearly the truth of the word and Spirit of God, and the suitableness of the Saviour. The whole of Christianity I see as exceedingly excellent.'

"With this testimony I close, my dear friend. It is mine; I can ask no better for you than that it may be yours."

Mrs. Caxton ended her reading and looked at Eleanor. She had done that several times in the course of the reading. Eleanor was always bent over her work, and busily attentive to it; but on each cheek a spot of colour had been fixed and deepening, till now it had reached a broad flush. Silence fell as the reading ceased; Eleanor did not look up; Mrs. Caxton did not take her eyes from her niece's face. It was

with a kind of subdued sigh that at last she turned from the table and put her papers away.

"Mr. Morrison is not altogether in the wrong," she remarked at length. "It is better for a man in those far-off regions, and amidst so many labours and trials, to have the comfort of his own home."

"Do you think Mr. Rhys writes as if he felt the want?"

"It is hard to tell what a man wants by his writing. am not quite at rest on that point."

"How happened it that he did not marry, like everybod else, before going there?"

"He is a fastidious man," said Mrs. Caxton; "one of those men that are rather difficult to please, I fancy; and that are apt enough to meet with hindrances because of the very nice points of their own nature."

"I don't think you need wish any better for him, aunt Caxton, than, to judge by his letters, he has and enjoys as he is. He seems to me, and always did, a very enviable person."

"Can you tell why?"

"Good—happy—and useful," said Eleanor. But her voice was a little choked.

"You know grace is free," said Mrs. Caxton. "He would tell you so. Ring the bell, my dear. And a sinner saved in England is as precious as one saved in Fiji. Let us work where our place is, and thank the Lord!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Speak, is't so?
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clue;
If it be not, forswear't: howe'er, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
To tell me truly."

MR. MORRISON'S visit had drifted off into the distance of time; and the subject of South Sea missions had passed out of sight, for all that appeared. Mrs. Caxton did not bring it up again after that evening, and Eleanor did not. The household went on with its quiet ways. Perhaps Mrs. Caxton was a trifle more silent and ruminative, and Eleanor more persistently busy. She had been used to be busy; in these weeks she seemed to have forgotten how to rest. She looked tired accordingly sometimes; and Mrs. Caxton noticed it.

"What became of your bill, Eleanor?" she said suddenly one evening. They had both been sitting at work some time without a word.

"My bill, ma'am? What do you mean, aunt Caxton?"

"Your Ragged school bill."

"It reached its second reading, ma'am; and there it met with opposition."

"And fell through?"

"I suppose so—for the present. Its time will come, I hope; the time for its essential provisions, I mean."

"Do you think Mr. Carlisle could have secured its passage?"

"From what I know and have heard of him, I have no doubt he could."

"His love is not very generous," remarked Mrs. Caxton.

"It never was, aunt Caxton. After I left London I had little hope of my bill. I am not disappointed,"

"My dear, are you weary to-night?"

"No, ma'am, not particularly."

"I shall have to find some play-work for you to do. Your voice speaks something like weariness."

"I do not feel it, aunt Caxton."

"Eleanor, have you any regret for any part of your decision and action with respect to Mr. Carlisle?"

"Never, aunt Caxton. How can you ask me?"

"I did not know but you might feel weariness now at your long stay in Plassy, and the prospect of a continued life here."

Eleanor put down her work, came to Mrs. Caxton, knelt down and put her arms about her; kissing her with kisses that certainly carried conviction with them.

"It is the most wicked word I ever heard you say, aunt Caxton. I love Plassy beyond all places in the world, that I have ever been in. No part of my life has been so pleasant as the part spent here. If I am weary, I sometimes feel as if my life were singularly cut off from its natural duties, and stranded somehow, all alone; but that is an unbelieving thought, and I do not give it harbour at all. I am very content—very happy."

Mrs. Caxton brought her hand tenderly down the side of the smooth cheek before her, and her eyes grew somewhat misty. But that was a rare occurrence, and the exhibition of it was immediately dismissed. She kissed Eleanor, and returned to her ordinary manner.

"Talking about stranded lives," she said; "to take another subject,—you must forgive me for that one, dear,—I think of Mr. Rhys very often.

"His life is not stranded," said Eleanor; "it is under full sail."

"He is alone, though."

"I do not believe he feels alone, aunt Caxton."

"I do not know," said Mrs. Caxton. "A man of a sensitive nature must feel, I should think, in his circumstances that he has put an immense distance between himself and all whom he loves."

"But I thought he had scarcely any family relations left."

"Did it never occur to you," said Mrs. Caxton, "when you used to see him here, that there was somebody, somewhere, who had a piece of his heart?"

"No, ma'am, never!" Eleanor said with some energy. "I never thought he seemed like it."

"I did not know anything about it," Mrs. Caxton went on slowly, "until a little while before he went away—some time after you were here. Then I learned that it was the truth."

Eleanor worked away very diligently, and made no answer. Mrs. Caxton furtively watched her; Eleanor's head was bent down over her sewing, but when she raised it to change the position of her work, Mrs. Caxton saw a set of her lips that was not natural.

"You never suspected anything of the kind?" she repeated.

"No, ma'am, and it would take strong testimony to make me believe it."

"Why so, pray?"

"I should have thought—but it is no matter what I thought about it."

"Nay, if I ask you, it is matter. Why should it be hard to believe, of Mr. Rhys especially?"

"Nothing; only—I should have thought, if he liked any one—a woman—that she would have gone with him."

"You forget where he was bound to go. Do you think many women would have chosen to go with him to such a home—perhaps for the remainder of their lives? I think many would have hesitated."

"But *you* forget for what he was going; and any woman whom he would have liked, would have liked his object too."

"You think so," said Mrs. Caxton; "but I cannot wonder

at his having doubted. There are a great many questions about going such a journey, my dear."

"And did the lady refuse to go?" said Eleanor, bending over her work and speaking huskily.

"I do not think he ever asked her. I almost wish he had."

"*Almost*, aunt Caxton? Why, he may have done her the greatest wrong. She might like him without his knowing it; it was not fair to go without giving her the chance of saying what she would do."

"Well, he is gone," said Mrs. Caxton; "and he went alone. I think men make mistakes sometimes."

Eleanor sewed on nervously, with a more desperate haste than she knew, or than was in the least called for by the work in hand. Mrs. Caxton watched her, and turned away to the contemplation of the fire.

"Did the thought ever occur to you, Eleanor," she went on very gravely, "that he fancied *you*?"

Eleanor's glance up was even pitiful in its startled appeal.

"No, ma'am, of course not!" she said hastily. "Except —O aunt Caxton, why do you ask me such a thing?"

"*Except*—my dear?"

"Except a foolish fancy of an hour," said Eleanor, in overwhelmed confusion. "One day, for a little time—aunt Caxton, how can you ask me such a thing?"

"I had a little story to tell you, my dear; and I wanted to make sure that I should do no harm in telling it. What is there so dreadful in such a question?"

But Eleanor only brushed away a hot tear from her flushed face and went on with her sewing. Or essayed to do it, for Mrs. Caxton thought her vision seemed to be not very clear.

"What made you think so that time, Eleanor? and what is the matter, my dear?"

"It hurts me, aunt Caxton, the question. You know we were friends, and I liked him very much, as I had reason; but I *never* had cause to fancy that he thought anything of me—only once I fancied it without cause"

"On what occasion, my love?"

"It was only a little thing—a nothing—a chance word. I saw immediately that I was mistaken."

"Did the thought displease you?"

"Aunt Caxton, why should you bring up such a thing now?" said Eleanor, in very great distress.

"Did it displease you, Eleanor?"

"No, aunty," said the girl; and her head dropped in her hands then.

"My love," Mrs. Caxton said, very tenderly, "I knew this before—I thought I did—but it was best to bring it out openly, for I could not else have executed my commission. I have a message from Mr. Rhys to you, Eleanor."

"A message to me?" said Eleanor, without raising her head.

"Yes. You were not mistaken."

"In what?"

Eleanor looked up; and amidst sorrow and shame and confusion, there was a light of fire, like the touch the summer sun gives to the mountain-tops before he gets up. Mrs. Caxton looked at her flushed tearful face, and the hidden light in her eye; and her next words were as gentle as the very fall of the sunbeams themselves.

"My love, it is true."

"What, aunt Caxton?"

"You were not mistaken."

"In what, ma'am?"

"In thinking what you thought that day, when something—a mere nothing—made you think that Mr. Rhys liked you."

"But, aunty," said Eleanor,—a scarlet flood refilling the cheeks which had partially faded,—"I had never the least reason to think so again."

"That is Mr. Rhys's affair. But you may believe it now, for he told me; and I give it to you on his own testimony."

It was curious to Mrs. Caxton to see Eleanor's face. She did not hide it; she turned it a little away from her aunt's full view and sat very still, while the intense flush passed away, and left only a nameless rosy glow, that almost re-

minded Mrs. Caxton of the perfume as well as of the colour of the flower it was likened to. There was a certain unfolding sweetness in Eleanor's face, that was most like the opening of a rosebud just getting into full blossom; but the lips, unbent into happy lines, were a little shamefaced, and would not open to speak a word or ask another question. So they both sat still—the younger and elder lady.

"Do you want me to tell you any more, Eleanor?"

"Why do you tell me this at all now, aunt Caxton?" Eleanor said, very slowly and without stirring.

"Mr. Rhys desired I should."

"Why, aunt Caxton?"

"Why do gentlemen generally desire such things to be made known to young ladies?"

"But, ma'am!"—said Eleanor, the crimson starting again.

"Well, my dear?"

"There is the whole breadth of the earth between us."

"Ships traverse it," said Mrs. Caxton, coolly.

"Do you mean that he is coming home?" said Eleanor. Her face was a study, for its changing lights; too quick, too mingled, too subtle in their expression, to be described. So it was at this instant. Half eager and half shamefaced; an unmistakeable glow of delight, and yet something that was very like shrinking.

"No, my love," Mrs. Caxton made answer, "I do not mean that. He would not leave his place and his work, even for you."

"But then, ma'am——"

"What all this signifies? you would ask. Are you sorry—do you feel any regret—that it should be made known to you?"

"No, ma'am," said Eleanor, low, and hanging her head.

"What it signifies, I do not know. That depends upon the answer to a very practical question which I must now put to you. If Mr. Rhys were stationed in England, and could tell you all this himself, what would you say to him in answer?"

"I could give him but one, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor in the same manner.

"And that would be a grant of his demand?"

"You know it would, ma'am, without asking me."

"Now we come to the question. He cannot leave his work to come to you. Is your regard for him enough to make you go to Fiji?"

"Not without asking, aunt Caxton," Eleanor said, turning away.

"Suppose he has asked you?"

"But, dear aunt Caxton," Eleanor said in a troubled voice, "he never said one word to me of his liking for me, nor to draw out my feeling towards him."

"Suppose he has said it?"

"How, ma'am? By word, or in writing?"

"In writing."

Eleanor was silent a little, with her head turned away; then she said in a subdued way, "May I have it, aunt Caxton?"

"My dear, I was not to give them to you except I found that you were favourably disposed towards the object of them. If you ask me for them again, it must be upon that understanding."

"Will you please to give them to me, aunt Caxton?" Eleanor said in the same subdued tone.

Mrs. Caxton rose and went to a secretary in the room for one or two papers, which she brought and put in Eleanor's hand. Then folding her arms round her, stooped down and kissed the turned-away face. Eleanor rose up to meet the embrace, and they held each other fast for a little while, neither in any condition to speak.

"The Lord bless you, my child!" said Mrs. Caxton, as she released her. "You must make these letters a matter of prayer. And take care that you do the Lord's will in this business—not your own."

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor presently, "why was this not told me long ago—before Mr. Rhys went away?" She spoke the words with difficulty.

"It is too long a story to tell to-night," Mrs. Caxton said, after hesitating. "He was entirely ignorant of what your

feeling might be towards him—ignorant too how far you might be willing to do and dare for Christ's sake—and doubtful how far the world and Mr. Carlisle might be able to prevail with you if they had a fair chance. He could not risk taking a wife to Fiji who had not fairly counted the cost."

"He was so doubtful of me, and yet liked me?" said Eleanor.

"My love, there is no accounting for these things," Mrs. Caxton said with a smile.

"And he left these with you to give to me?"

"One was left—the other was sent. One comes from Fiji. I will tell you about them to-morrow. It is too long a story for to-night; and you have quite enough to think about already. My dear Eleanor!"

They parted without more words, only with another speaking embrace, more expressive than words; and without looking at the other, each went to her own room. Eleanor's was cosy and bright in winter as well as in summer; a fire of the peculiar fuel used in the region of the neighbourhood, made of cakes of coal and sand, glowed in the grate, and the whole colouring of the drapery and the furniture was of that warm rich cast which comforts the eye and not a little disposes the mind to be comfortable in conformity. The only wood fire used in the house was the one in the sitting-parlour. Before her grate-full of glowing coals Eleanor sat down, and looked at the two letters she held in her hand. Looked at the handwriting too, with curious scrutiny, before she ventured to open and read either paper. Wondered too, with an odd side-thought, why her fingers should tremble so in handling these, when no letter of Mr. Carlisle's writing had ever reminded her that her fingers had nerves belonging to them. One was a little letter, which Mrs. Caxton had told her was the first to be read; it was addressed, "In the hand of Mrs. Caxton, for Miss Eleanor Powle." That note Eleanor's little fingers opened with as slight tearing of the paper as might be. It was in few words indeed.

"Although I know that these lines will never meet the eye of her for whom they are written, unless she be favourably inclined both to them and to me; yet in the extreme doubt which possesses me whether that condition will be ever fulfilled, and consequently whether I am not writing what no one will ever read, I find it very difficult to say anything. Something charges me with foolhardiness, and something with presumption; but there is a something else, which is stronger, that overthrows the charges and bids me go on.

"If you ever see these lines, dear Eleanor, you will know already what they have to tell you; but it is fit you should have it in my own words; that—not the first place in my heart—but the second—is yours; and yours without any rivalry. There is one thing dearer to me than you—it is my King and his service; after that, you have all the rest.

"What is it worth to you? anything? and what will you say to me in reply?

"When you read this I shall be at a distance—before I can read your answer I shall be at the other side of the globe. I am not writing to gratify a vague sentiment, but with a definite purpose—and even, though it mocks me, a definite hope. It is much to ask—I hardly dare put it in words—it is hardly possible—that you should come to me. But if you are ready to do and venture anything in the service of Christ—and if you are willing to share a life that is wholly given to God, to be spent where and how he pleases, and that is to take up its portion for the present and probably for long, in the depths of South Sea barbarism—let your own heart tell you what welcome you will receive.

"I can say no more. May my Lord bless and keep you. May you know the fulness of joy that Jesus can give his beloved. May you want nothing that is good for you.

"R. RHYS."

The other letter was longer. It was dated "Island Vulanga, in the South Seas, March, 18—."

"My Dear Eleanor,—

"I do not know what presumption moves me to address you again, and from this far-away place. I say to myself that it is presumption; and yet I yield to the impulse. Perhaps it is partly the wish to enjoy once at least even this fancied communion with you, before some news comes which may shut me off from it for ever. But I yield to the temptation. I feel very far from you to-day; the tops of the bread-fruit trees that I see from my window, the banana tree with its bunches of fruit and broad bright leaves just before my door—this very hot north wind that is blowing and making it so difficult to do anything and almost to breathe—all remind me that I am in another land; and by the very force of contrast, the fresh Welsh mountains, the green meadows, the cool sweet air of Plassy—and your face—come before me. Your face, most of all. My mind can think of nothing it would be so refreshing to see. I will write what I please; for you will never read it if the reading would be impertinent; and something tells me you *will* read it.

"This is one of the hot months, when exertion is at times very difficult. The heat is oppressive, and takes away strength and endurance. But it is for my Master. That thought cures all. To be weary for Christ, is not to be weary; it is better than any delights without him. So each day is a boon; and each day that I have been able to fill up well with work for God, I rejoice and give thanks. There is no limit here to the work to be done; it presses upon us at all points. We cannot teach all that ask for teaching; we can hardly attend to the calls of the sick; hundreds and hundreds stand stretching out their hands to us with the prayer that we would come and tell them about religion, and we cannot go! Our hands are already full; our hearts break for the multitudes who want the truth, to whom we cannot give it. We wish that every talent we have were multiplied. We wish that we could work all night as well as all day. Above all, *I* want to be more like my Lord. When I am all Christ's, *then* I shall be to the praise of his

glory, who called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. I want to be altogether holy; then I shall be quite happy and useful, and there is no other way. Are you satisfied with less, Eleanor? If you are, you are satisfied with less than satisfies Christ. Find out where you stand. Remember, it is as true for you as it was for Paul to say, 'Through Christ I can do all things.'

"There are a few native Christians here who are earnestly striving to be holy. But around them all is darkness —blacker than you can even conceive. Where the Sun of righteousness has shined, there the golden beams of Fiji's morning lie; it is a bright spot here and there; but our eyes long for the day. We know and believe it is coming. But when? I understand out here the meaning of that recommendation—'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest.' You can hardly understand it in England. Do you pray that prayer, Eleanor?

"Before I left England I wrote you a note; amid the exquisite pleasure and pain of which lurked a hope—without which it would not have been written, but which I now see to have been very visionary. It is possible that circumstances may be so that the note may have been read by you; in that case Mrs. Caxton will give you this; but at the distance of space and time that intervenes now, and with cooler thoughts and better knowledge, I feel it to be scarcely possible that you should comply with the request I was daring enough to make to you. I do not expect it. I have ceased to allow myself to hope for it. I think I was unreasonable to ask—and I will never think you unreasonable for refusing—so extravagant a demand. Even if you were willing, your friends would not allow it. And I would not disguise from you that the difficulties and dangers to be met in coming here, are more and greater than can possibly have been represented to you. Humanly speaking, that is; I have myself no fear, and never have felt any. But the evils that surround us—that come to our knowledge and under our very eyes—are real and tangible and dreadful.

So much the more reason for our being here;—but so much the less likely that you, gently reared and delicately cared for, will be allowed to risk your delicate nurture in this land of savages. There is cannibalism here, and to the most dreadful extent; there is all the defilement of life and manners that must be where human beings have no respect for humanity; and all this must come more or less under the immediate knowledge and notice of those that live here. The Lord God is a sun and shield; we dwell in him and not in the darkness; nevertheless our eyes see what our hearts grieve over. I could not shield you from it entirely were you here; you would have to endure what in England you could not endure. There are minor trials many and often to be encountered; some of which you will have learned from other letters of the mission.

"The heathen around us are not to be trusted, and will occasionally lay their hands upon something we need very much, and carry it off. Not long ago, the house of Mr. Thomas, on a neighbouring station, was entered at night and robbed of almost all the wearing apparel it contained. The entrance was effected silently, by cutting into the thin reed and grass wall of the house; and nobody knew anything of the matter till next morning. Then the signs showed that the depredators had been prepared to commit violence if resisted. I do not know—but I am inclined to think such a thing would not happen in my house. I have been enabled to gain the good will of the people very generally, by kindness to the sick, etc.; and two or three of the most powerful chiefs in this vicinity have declared themselves each formally my 'friend'—a title of honour which I scrupulously give and take with them. Nevertheless they are not to be relied upon. What of that? The eternal God is our refuge! After all, I come back into feeling how safe we are, rather than how exposed.

"Yet all I have told you is true, and much more. Let no one come here who does not love Christ well enough to suffer the loss of all things for his sake, if necessary; for it may be demanded of him. He wants the helmet of salva-

tion on his head; but with that, it does not matter where we are—glory to the Captain of our salvation! Fiji is very near heaven, Eleanor—nearer than England; and if I dared, I would say, I wish you were here;—but I do not dare. I do not know what is best. I leave you to your own judgment of what you ought to do, and to that better direction which will tell you. For me, I know that I shall not want—not so but that I can find my supply; and soon I shall be where I shall not want at all. Meanwhile every day is a glad day to me, for it is given to my Lord; and Jesus is with me. The people hear the word gladly, and with some fruit of it continually our hearts are cheered. I would not be anywhere else than I am. My choice would be, if I had my choice, to live and die in Fiji.

"I dare not trust myself to say the thoughts that come surging up for utterance; it is wiser not. If my first note to you was presumptuous, this at least is the writing of a calmer and wiser man. I have resigned the expectations of a moment. But it is no harm for me to say I love you as well as ever; *that* I shall do, I think, till I die; although I shall never see you again, and dare not promise myself I shall ever again write to you. It may be it will be best not, even as a friend, to do that. Perhaps as a friend I could not. It is not as a friend that I sign myself now,

"Rowland Rhys."

Poor Eleanor! She was, of all people in the world, the least given to be sentimental or soft-hearted in a foolish way; but strong as she was, there was something in these letters—or some mixture of things—that entered her heart like an arrow through the joints of an armour, and found her as defenceless. Tears came with that resistless, ceaseless, measureless flow, as when the secret nerve of tenderness has been reached, and every barrier of pride or self-consideration is broken down or passed over. So keen the touch was to Eleanor, that weeping could not quiet it. After all, it was only a heavy summer shower—not a winter storm. Eleanor hushed her sobs at last to begin her prayers;

and there the rest of the night left her. The morning was dawning grey in the east, when she threw herself upon her bed for an hour's sleep. Sleep came then without waiting.

Perhaps Mrs. Caxton had not been much more reposeful than her niece; for she was not the first one down stairs. Eleanor was there before her; Mrs. Caxton watched her as she came in; she was ceremoniously putting the fire in best burning condition, and brushing up the ashes from the hearth. As Mrs. Caxton came near, Eleanor looked up, and a silent greeting passed between them; very affectionate, but silent evidently of purpose. Neither of them was ready to speak. The bell was rung, the servants were gathered; and immediately after prayers breakfast was brought in. It was a silent meal for the first half of it. Mrs. Caxton still watched Eleanor, whose eyes did not readily meet hers. What about her? Her manner was as usual, one would have said; yet it was *not*—nor was she. A little delicate undefined difference made itself felt; and that Mrs. Caxton was studying. A little added grace; a little added deftness and alacrity; Mrs. Caxton had seen it in that order taken of the fire before breakfast; she saw it and read it then. And in Eleanor's face correspondingly there was the same difference; impossible to tell where it lay, it was equally impossible not to perceive it. Though her face was grave enough, there was a beauty in the lines of it that yesterday had not seen; a nameless witness in the corners of her mouth, that told tales the tongue would not. Mrs. Caxton looked on and saw it and read it, for half the breakfast time, before she spoke. Maybe she had a secret sigh or two to cover; but at any rate there was nothing like that in her look or her voice when she spoke.

"So you will go, Eleanor?"

Eleanor started, and coloured; then looked down at her plate, the blush growing universal.

"Have you decided, my love?"

Eleanor leaned her head upon her hand, as if with the question came the remembrance of last night's burden of thoughts; but her answer was a quiet low "yes."

"May I know—for I feel myself responsible to a degree in this matter—may I know, on what ground?"

Eleanor's look was worth five hundred pounds. The little glance of surprise and consciousness—the flash of hidden light, there was no need to ask from what magazine, answered so completely, so involuntarily. She cast down her eyes immediately, and answered in words sedate enough—

"Because I am unable to come to any other decision, ma'am."

"But Eleanor, my dear," said Mrs. Caxton,—"do you know, Mr. Rhys himself would be unwilling you should come to him for his own sake alone—in Fiji."

Eleanor turned away from the table at that, and covered her face with her hands; a perfect rush of confusion bringing over face and neck and almost even over the little white fingers, a suffusing crimson glow. She spoke presently.

"I cannot say anything to that, aunt Caxton. I have tried myself as well as I can. I think I would go anywhere and do anything where I saw clearly my work and my place were put for me. I do not know anything more about it."

"My love, that is enough. I believe you. I entirely approve your decision. I spoke because I needed to ask the question *he* would have asked if he had been here. Mr. Rhys has written to me very stringently on the subject."

"So he has to me, ma'am."

"If you have settled that question with your conscience, my dear, there is no more necessary to be said about it. Conscience should be clear on that point, and the question settled securely. If it is not, you had better take time for thought and self-searching."

"I do not need it, aunt Caxton."

Mrs. Caxton left her place and came round to Eleanor, for the sole purpose of taking her in her arms and kissing her. Grave, earnest kisses, on brow and cheek, speaking a heart full of sympathy, full of tenderness, full of appreciation of all that this decision of Eleanor's involved, full of satisfaction with it too. A very unusual sort of demonstration from Mrs. Caxton, as was the occasion that called for it. Eleanor

received it as the seal of the whole business between them. Her aunt's arms detained her lovingly while she pressed her lips to every part of Eleanor's face; then Mrs. Caxton went back to her place and poured herself out another cup of coffee. Sentiment she had plenty; she was not in the least bit sentimental. She creamed her coffee thoughtfully and broke bread and eat it, before she came out with another question.

"When will you go, Eleanor?"

Eleanor looked up doubtfully. "Where, aunt Caxton?"

"To Fiji."

There seemed to be some irresolution or uncertainty in the girl's mind; for she hesitated.

"Aunt Caxton, I doubt much—my mother will oppose my going."

"I think she will. But I think also that her opposition can be overcome. When will you write to her?"

"I will write to-day, ma'am."

"We must have an answer before we send any other letters. Supposing she does not oppose, or that her opposition is set aside, I come back to my question. When will you go?"

Eleanor looked up doubtfully again. "I don't know, ma'am; I suppose opportunities of going only occur now and then."

"That is all—with long intervals sometimes. Opportunities for *your* going would come only rarely. You must think about it, Eleanor; for we must know what we are to tell Mr. Rhys."

Eleanor was silent; her colour went and came.

"You must think about it, my dear. If you write to Mr. Rhys to-day and send it, we may get an answer from him possibly in twenty months—possibly in twenty-four months. Then if you wait four or five months for an opportunity to make the voyage, and have a reasonably good passage, you may see your friend in three years from now. But it might well happen that letters might be delayed, and that you might wait much longer than four or five months for a ship

and company in which you could sail; so that the three years might be nearer four."

"I have thought of all that, aunt Caxton," Eleanor said, while the colour which had been varying in her cheeks fixed itself in two deep crimson spots.

Mrs. Caxton was now silent on her part, slowly finishing her coffee and putting the cups together on the tray. She left it for her niece to speak next.

"I have thought of all that, aunt Caxton," Eleanor repeated after a little while,—"and——"

"Well, my love?"

"Aunt Caxton," said the girl, looking up now, while her cheeks and brow were all one crimson flush,—"is it unmaidenly in me—would it be—to go so, without being asked?"

"Has he not asked you?"

"Yes, ma'am. But——"

"What?"

"Not since he got there."

"Have you reason to think his mind is altered on the subject?"

"No, ma'am," said Eleanor, drooping her head.

"What does your own feeling bid you to do, my love?"

"I have thought it all over, aunt Caxton," said the girl slowly,—"I did that last night; I have thought of everything about it; and my feeling was——"

"Well, my love?"

"My feeling, as far as I am concerned—was to take the first good opportunity that offered."

"My love, that is just what I thought you would do; and what I would have you do, if you go at all. It is not unmaidenly. Simple honest frankness is the most maidenly thing in the world, when it is a woman's time to speak. The fact that your speaking must be action does not alter the matter. When it takes two years for people to hear from each other, life would very soon be spent in the asking of a few questions and getting the answers to them. I am a disinterested witness, Eleanor; for when you are gone, all I

care for in this world is gone. You are my own child to me now."

Eleanor's head bent lower.

"But I am glad to have you go, nevertheless, my child. I think Mr. Rhys wants you even more than I do; and I have known for some time that you wanted something And besides—I shall only be separated from you in body."

Eleanor made no response.

"What are you going to do now?" was Mrs. Caxton's question in her usual calm tone.

"Write to mamma."

"Very well. Do not send your letter to her without letting mine go with it."

"But, aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, lifting up her head,—"my only fear is—I am quite satisfied in my own mind, and I do not care for people—my only fear is, lest Mr. Rhys himself should think I come too easily. You know he is fastidious in his notions." She spoke with great difficulty, and with her face a flame.

"Your fear will go away when you have heard my story," said Mrs. Caxton tranquilly. "I will give you that to-night. He is fastidious; but he is a sensible man."

Quieted with which suggestion, Eleanor went off to her desk.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"But never light and shade
Coursed one another more on open ground,
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale
Across the face of Enid hearing her."

VARIOUS letters were written that day. In the evening the two ladies came together again cheerfully. The time between had not all been spent in letter-writing, for the world does not stand still for love matters. Eleanor had been out the whole afternoon on visits of kindness and help to sick and poor people. Mrs. Caxton had been obliged to attend to the less interesting company of one or two cheese-factors. At the tea-table the subject of the morning came back.

"You posted your letter and mine, Eleanor?"

"Yes, ma'am. But I cannot think mamma's answer will be favourable. I cannot fancy it."

"Well, we shall see. The world is a curious world; and the wind does not always blow from the quarter whence we expect it. We must wait and pray."

"I am puzzled to imagine, aunt Caxton," Eleanor said, after some pause, "how you came to know all about this matter in the first place. How came you to know what I never knew?"

"That is my story," said Mrs. Caxton. "We will let the table be cleared first, my dear."

So it was done. But Eleanor left her work by her side to-night, and looked into her aunt's face to listen.

"I never should have known about it, child, till you had, if you had been here. You remember how you went away in a hurry. Who knows? Perhaps, but for that, none of us would have been any wiser to-day on the subject than we were then. It is very possible."

"How, ma'am?"

"You disappeared, you know, in one night, and were gone. When Mr. Rhys came home, the next day or the same day, I saw that he was very much disappointed. That roused my suspicions of him; they had been only doubtful before. He is not a person to show what he thinks, unless he chooses."

"So I knew; that made me surprised."

"I saw that he was very much disappointed, and looked very sober; but he said hardly anything about it, and I was forced to be silent. Then in a little while—a few weeks, I think—he received his appointment, with the news that he must sail very soon. He had to leave Plassy then in a very few days; for he wanted some time in London and elsewhere. I saw there was something more than leaving Plassy upon his mind; he was graver than that could make him, I knew; and he was giving up something more than England, I knew by his prayers.

"One night we were sitting here by the fire—it was a remarkably chill evening, and we had kindled a blaze in the chimney and shut the windows. Mr. Rhys sat silent, watching the fire and keeping up the blaze; too busy with his own thoughts to talk to me. I was taken with a spirit of meddling which does not very often possess me; and asked him how much longer he had to stay. He said how long, in so many words; they were short, as pain makes words.

"'How comes it,' I asked, plunging into the matter, 'that you do not take a wife with you, like everybody else?'

"He answered, in dry phrases, 'that it would be presumption in him to suppose that anybody would go with him, if he were to ask.'

"I said quietly, I thought he was mistaken; that anybody who was worthy of him would go; and it could not be *presumption* to ask anybody else.

"'You do not realize, Mrs. Caxton, how much it would be asking of any one,' he said; 'you do not know what sacrifices it would call for.'

"'Love does not care for sacrifices,' I reminded him.

"'I have no right to suppose that anybody has such a degree of regard for me,' he said.

"I can't tell what in his manner and words told me there was more behind. They were a little short and dry; and his ordinary way of speaking is short sometimes, but never with a sort of edge like this—a hard edge. You know it is as frank and simple when he speaks short as when his words come out in the gentlest way. It hurt me, for I saw that something hurt him.

"I asked if there was not anybody in England good enough for him? He said there were a great many too good.

"'Mr. Rhys,' said I,—I don't know what possessed me to be so bold,—'I hope you are not going to leave your heart behind with somebody, when you go to Fiji?'

"He got up, and walked once or twice through the room, went out and presently came back again. I was afraid I had offended him, and I was a good deal troubled; but I did not know what to say. He sat down again, and spoke first.

"'Mrs. Caxton,' said he, 'since you have probed the truth, I may as well confess it. I am going to do the unwise thing you have mentioned.'

"'Who are you going to leave your heart with, Mr. Rhys?' I asked.

"'With the lady who has just left you.'

"'Eleanor?'

"'Yes,' he said.

"'Have you told her, Mr. Rhys?' I asked.

"He said no.

"'You are not going to do her the injustice to go and *not* speak to her?'

"'Why should I tell her?' he said.

"'There might be several answers given to that,' I said; 'but the best one at present seems to be, why should you *not*?'

"'For several reasons,' he said. 'In the first place, I do not know at all whether Miss Powle has that degree of love to Christ that she would be willing to forsake all her earthly prospects—home and friends—for hard work in his service. In the second place, even if she have that, I have not the slightest reason to believe that she—that she cares enough for me to go with me at my asking.'

"'And do you mean to go in ignorance?' I said.

"'Yes—I must.'

"I waited a little, and then I told him I thought he was wrong.

"'Why?' he asked quickly.

"'People cannot see each other's hearts,' I said. 'Suppose that she have the same secret feeling towards you that you have towards her. She cannot speak—you will not; and so both would be unhappy for nothing.'

"'I never saw the least thing like it,' he said.

"'I suppose she might say the same of you, might she not?'

"'Yes, and with truth; for knowing the uncertainties—or rather the certainties of my position, I have not given her the least cause.'

"'You could hardly expect demonstrations from her in that case,' I said.

"'There is no chance, Mrs. Caxton, even if it were according to your supposition. Her friends would never permit her to marry a man with my lot in life; and I do not know that I ought to ask her, even if they would. She has a very fair prospect for this world's happiness.'

"'What do you think of your own lot in life?' I asked him.

"'I would not exchange it, you know,' he said 'for any other the world could offer me. It is brighter and better.'

"'It strikes me you are selfish,' I told him.

"He laughed a little for the first time, but he grew as grave as possible immediately after.

"'I have not meant to be selfish,' he said. 'But I could not take a woman to Fiji, who had not thoroughly considered the matter and counted the cost. That could not

be done in a little while. The world has a fair chance now to see if it can weaken Miss Powle's principles or overcome her faithfulness to them. It is better that she should try herself perhaps, before having such a question asked of her.'

"'And suppose she comes clear out of the trial?' I said.

"'Then I shall be in Fiji.'

"'We were both silent a while. He began then.

"'Mrs. Caxton, without invading any confidences or seeking to know anything that should not be known—may I ask you a question?'

"'Certainly,' I said. 'I reserve the discretion of answering.'

"'Of course. Your words look like a rebuke of the attitude I have taken towards this subject. Is it proper for me to ask, whether you have any foundation for them beyond your general knowledge of human nature and your good will towards me? I mean—whether you, as a friend, see any ground of hope for me?'

"'If you were going to stay in England,' I said, 'I would answer no such question. Every man must make his own observations and run his own risk. But these circumstances are different. And appealed to as a friend—and answering on my own observations simply—I should say, that I think your case not hopeless.'

"I could see the colour rise in his cheek; but he sat quite still, and did not speak till it faded again.

"'I have never heard a word on the subject,' I told him. 'I do not say I am certain of anything. I may mistake. Only, seeing you are going to the other end of the world, without the chance of finding out anything for yourself, I think it fair to tell you what, as a woman, I should judge of the case.'

"'Why do you tell me?' he said quickly.

"'I am but answering your question. You must judge whether the answer is worth anything.'

"He half laughed again, at himself; at least I could see the beginning of a smile; but he was too terribly in earnest to be anything but serious. He sat silent; got up and

fidgetted round the room; then came and stood by the chimney-piece, looking down at me.

"'Mrs. Caxton,' he said, 'I am going to venture to ask something from you—to fulfil a contingent commission. When I am gone, if Miss Powle returns to you, or when you have otherwise opportunity—will you, if you can, find out the truth of her feeling on these subjects, which I have failed to find out? You tempt me beyond my power of self-abnegation.'

"'What shall I do with the truth, if I find it, Mr. Rhys?'

"'In that case,' he said, 'if it is as you suppose it possible it may be, though I dare not and do not hope it;—if it be so, then you may tell her all I have confessed to you to-night.'

"'Why?'

"'You are uncommonly practical to-night,' he said. 'I could have but one motive in discovering it to her.'

"'To ask her to follow you to Fiji?'

"'I dare not put it in words. I do not believe the chance will ever come. But I am unable to go and leave the chance changed into an impossibility.'

"'We are talking of what *may* be,' I said. 'But you do not suppose that she could follow you on my report of your words alone?'

"'I shall be too far off to speak them myself.'

"'You can write, then,' I said.

"'Do you remember what the distances are, and the intervals of time that must pass between letter and letter? When should I write?'

"'Now—this evening. I am not thinking of such courtship as took place in the antediluvian days.'

"'I cannot write on such an utter uncertainty. I have not hope enough; although I cannot bear to leave the country without enlisting you to act for me.'

"'I shall reconsider the question of acting,' I said, 'if I have no credentials to produce. I cannot undertake to tell anything to Eleanor merely to give her pleasure—or merely to give her pain.'

"'Would you have me write to her here—now?' he asked.

"'Yes, I would,' I told him.

"He sat pondering the matter a little while, making up the fire as you did this morning—only with a very different face; and then with a half laugh he said I was making a fool of him, and he went off. I sat still—and in a few minutes he came down and handed me that note for you."

Eleanor's cheeks would have rivalled the scarlet Lobelia, or Indian mallow, or anything else that is brilliant. She kept profound silence. It was plain enough what Mr. Rhys expected her to do—that is, supposing he had any expectations. Now her question was, what would her mother say? And Eleanor in her secret heart looked at the probability of obstinate opposition in that quarter; and then of long, long waiting and delay; perhaps never to be ended but with the time and the power of doing what now her heart longed to do. The more she thought of it, the less she could imagine that her mother would yield her consent; or that her opposition would be anything but determined and unqualified. Then what could she do? Eleanor sighed.

"No," said Mrs. Caxton. "Have patience, my dear, and believe that all will go right, *however it goes*, Eleanor. We will do our part, but we must be content with our part. There is another part, which is the Lord's; let him do that, and let us say it is well, Eleanor. Till we have learnt that, we have not learnt our lesson."

"I do say it, and will, aunt Caxton," said the girl. But she said nothing more that night.

To tell the truth, they were rather silent days that followed. Mrs. Powle's letters of answer did not come speedily; indeed, no one knew at Plassy just where she might be at this time, nor how far the Plassy letters might have to travel in order to reach her, for communication was not frequent between the two families. And till her answer came, Eleanor could not forget that the question of her life was undecided; nor Mrs. Caxton that the decision might take away from her, probably for ever, the only living thing that was very dear to her. That was Eleanor now. They

were very affectionate to each other those days, very tender and thoughtful for each other; not given to much talking. Eleanor was a good deal out of the house; partly busy with her errands of kindness, partly stilling her troublesome and impatient thoughts with long roamings on foot or on horseback over the mountains and moors.

"The spring has come, aunt Caxton," she said, coming in herself one day, fresh enough to be spring's impersonation. "I heard a blackbird and a wheat-ear; and I have found a violet for you."

"You must have heard blackbirds before. And you have got more than violets there."

"Yes, ma'am—not much. I found the Nepeta and the ivy-leaved Veronica under the hedge, and whitlow grass near the old tower. That's the willow catkin, you know, of course—and sloe. That's all—but it's spring."

A shade came over the faces of both. Where might another spring find her?

"I have got something more for you," said Mrs. Caxton.

"My letter, ma'am!—Had you one, aunt Caxton?"

"Yes."

Eleanor could not tell from her aunt's answer what the letter might be. She went off with her own, having parted suddenly with all the colour she had brought in with her. It returned again, however, soon.

Mrs. Powle declared that according to all *her* experience and power of judging of the world, her daughter and her sister Mrs. Caxton were both entirely crazy. She had never, in her life, heard of anything so utterly absurd and ridiculous as the proposition upon which they had required her to give an opinion. Her opinion found no words in the English language strong enough in which to give it. That Eleanor should be willing to forego every earthly prospect of good or pleasure, was like Eleanor; that is, it was like the present Eleanor—an entirely infatuated, blind, fanatical, unreasonable thing. Mrs. Powle had given up the expectation of anything wiser or better from her, until years and the consequences of her folly should have taught her, when it would

be too late. Why Eleanor, if she wished to throw herself away, should pitch upon the South Seas for the place of her retirement, was a piece of the same mysterious fatuity which marked the whole proceeding. Why she could think of no pleasanter wedding journey than a voyage of twelve thousand miles in search of a husband, was but another incomprehensible point. Mrs. Powle had a curiosity to know what Eleanor expected to live upon out there, where, she presumed, the natives practised no agriculture, and wheaten flour was a luxury unknown? And what she expected to *do?* However, having thus given her opinion, Mrs. Powle went on to say, that she must quite decline to give it. She regarded Eleanor as entirely the child of her aunt Caxton, as she understood was also Mrs. Caxton's own view; most justly, in Mrs. Powle's opinion, since conversion and adoption to Mrs. Caxton's own family and mind must be amply sufficient to supersede the accident of birth. At any rate, Mrs. Powle claimed no jurisdiction in the matter; did not choose to exercise any. She felt herself incompetent. One daughter she had still remaining, whom she hoped to keep her own, guarding her against the influences which had made so wide a separation between her eldest and the family and sphere to which she belonged. Julia, she hoped, would one day do her honour. As for the islands of the South Seas, or the peculiar views and habits of life entertained by those white people who chose them for their residence, Mrs. Powle declared she was incapable from very ignorance of understanding or giving judgment about them. She made the whole question, together with her daughter, over to her sister Mrs. Caxton, who she did not doubt would do wisely according to her notions. But as they were not the notions of the world generally, they were quite incomprehensible to the writer, and in a sphere entirely beyond and without her cognizance. She hoped Eleanor would be happy—if it were not absurd to hope an impossibility.

But on one point the letter was clear, if on no other. Eleanor should not come home; she had ruined her own prospects; Mrs. Powle could not help that; she should not ruin

Julia's. Whether she stayed in England or whether she went on her fool's voyage, *this* was a certain thing. She should not see Julia, to infect her. Mrs. Powle desired to be informed of Eleanor's movements; that if she went, she herself might meet her in London before she sailed. But she would not let her see Julia either then or at any time.

This cruel letter broke Eleanor down completely. It settled the question of her life indeed; and settled it according to her wish and against her fears; but for all that, it was a letter of banishment and renunciation. With something of the feeling which makes a wounded creature run to shelter, Eleanor gathered up her papers and went down to Mrs. Caxton; threw them into her lap, and kneeling beside her, put herself in her arms.

"What is it, my child?" said Mrs. Caxton. "What does your mother say to you?"

"She gives her consent—but she gives me up to you, aunt Caxton. She counts me your child and not hers."

"My love! I asked her to do so. You have been mine, in my own mind, for a long time past. My Eleanor!"—And Mrs. Caxton's kiss and her warm clasping arms spoke more than her words.

"But she renounces me—and she will not let me see Julia."—Eleanor was in very great distress.

"She will by and by. She will not hold to that."

"She says she will not at all. O aunt Caxton! I want to see Julia again!"

"Were you faithful to Julia while you were with her?"

"Yes—I think so—while I could. I had hardly any chance the last winter I was at home; we were never together; but I seized what I could."

"Your mother kept you apart?"

"I believe so."

"My child, remember, as one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, so one word is as a thousand words; he can make it do his work. All we have to do is to be faithful, and then trust. You recollect the words of that grand hymn on the will of God—

"'I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.'

"I don't think I know it."

Mrs. Caxton went on.

"'When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.

"'I know not what it is to doubt;
My heart is ever gay;
I run no risk, for, come what will,
Thou always hast thy way.

"'I have no cares, O blessed will!
For all my cares are thine.
I live in triumph, Lord, for thou
Hast made thy triumphs mine.'"

Eleanor lifted up her face, and pressed a long kiss on her aunt's lips. "But I want to see Julia!"

"My love, I think you will. It will be some time yet before you can possibly leave England. I think your mother will withdraw her prohibition before that time. Meanwhile——"

Eleanor lay with her head on Mrs. Caxton's bosom, her brown eyes looking out with a sweet and sorrowful wistfulness towards the light. Mrs. Caxton read them.

"This gift would be very precious to me, my child," she said, tightening the pressure of the arms which still were wrapped round Eleanor,—"if I were not obliged so soon to make it over to somebody else. But I will not be selfish. It is unspeakably precious to me now. It gives me the right to take care of you. I asked your mother for it. I am greatly obliged to her. Now, what are you going to do to-day?"

"Write—to Fiji," said Eleanor slowly and without moving.

"Right; and so will I. And do not you be overmuch concerned about Julia. There is another verse of that hymn, which I often think of—

"'I love to see thee bring to nought
The plans of wily men;
When simple hearts outwit the wise,
O thou art, loveliest then!'"

CHAPTER XXX.

"If Proteus like your journey, when you come,
No matter who's displeased when you are gone;
I fear me he will scarce be pleased withal."

THE way was clear, and Eleanor wrote to Fiji as she had said. She could not, however, get rid of her surprise that her mother had permitted the tenor of these letters to be what it was. What had moved Mrs. Powle so to act against all her likings and habits of action? How came she to allow her daughter to go to the South Seas and be a missionary?

Several things which Eleanor knew nothing of, and which so affected the drift of Mrs. Powle's current of life that she was only, according to custom, sailing with it and not struggling against it. When people seem to act unlike themselves, it is either that you do not know themselves, or do not know some other things which they know. So in this case. For one thing, to name the greatest first, Mr. Carlisle was unmistakeably turning his attention to another lady, a new star in the world of society—an earl's daughter and an heiress. Whether heart-whole or not, which was best known to himself, Mr. Carlisle was prosecuting his addresses in this new quarter with undoubted zeal and determination. It was not the time for Eleanor now to come home! Let her do anything else—was the dictate of pride. *Now* to come home, or even not to come home, remaining Eleanor Powle, was to confess in the world's eye a lamentably lost game; to take place as a rejected or vainly ambitious girl; the *would-have-been* lady of Rythdale Anything but that!

Eleanor might almost better die at once. She would not only have ruined her own prospects, but would greatly injure those of Julia, on whom her mother's hopes and pride were now all staked. Alfred was taken from her and put under guardians; Mrs. Powle did not build anything on him; he was a boy, and when he was a man he would be only Alfred Powle. Julia promised to be a beauty; on her making a fine match rested all Mrs. Powle's expectations from this world; and she was determined to spare no pains, expense, nor precautions. Therefore she resolved that the sisters should not be together, cost what it might. Good-bye to all her cares or hopes on Julia's behalf, looking to a great establishment, if Julia became a Methodist! She might go on a farm like her aunt, and sell cheeses. The thought of those cheeses froze the blood in Mrs. Powle's veins; that was a characteristic of good blood, she firmly believed. Therefore on every account, for every reason, nothing better could happen than that Eleanor should go to the South Seas. She would escape the shame of coming home; Julia would be out of danger of religious contamination; and she herself would be saved from the necessary odium of keeping one daughter in banishment and the other in seclusion; which odium she must incur if both of them remained in England and neither of them ever saw the other. All this would be cleverly saved. Then, also, if Eleanor married a missionary and went to the other end of the world, her case could be very well dismissed as one of a religious enthusiasm—a visionary fanatical excitement. Nay, there could be made even a little *éclat* about it. There would be no mortification, at any rate, comparable to that which must attend supposed overthrown schemes and disappointed ambition. Eleanor had chosen her own course, backed by her wealthy relation Mrs. Caxton, who had adopted her; and whose views were entirely not of this world. Mrs. Powle deplored it, of course, but was unable to help it. Besides, Mrs. Caxton had answered, on her own knowledge, for the excellent character and superior qualities of the gentleman Eleanor was to marry; there was no

fault to be found with him at all, except that he was a fanatic; and as Eleanor was a fanatic herself, that was only a one-sided objection.

Yes, Mrs. Caxton had answered for all that, on her own knowledge, of many years' standing; and she had said something more, which also weighed with Mrs. Powle, and which Mrs. Powle could also mention among the good features of the case, without stating that it had had the force of an inducement with herself. Mrs. Caxton had asked indeed to be permitted to consider Eleanor her own, and had promised in that case to make Eleanor entirely her own care, both during Mrs. Caxton's life and afterwards; leaving Mrs. Powle free to devote all her fortune to Julia that would have been shared with Julia's sister. Mrs. Powle's means were not in her estimation large; she wanted every penny of them for the perfecting and carrying out of her plans which regarded her youngest daughter: she consented that the elder should own another mother and guardian. Mrs. Powle agreed to it all. But not satisfied with any step of the whole affair nevertheless, which all displeased her, from beginning to end, her own action included, she expressed her determination to Eleanor in terms which half broke Eleanor's heart, and left a long, lingering, sore spot there. To Mrs. Caxton Mrs. Powle's writing was much better worded; civil if not kind, and well-mannered if not motherly.

The thing was done, at all events; Eleanor was formally made over to another, and left free to do whatever her new guardian pleased. Letters of a different sort of temper were sent off upon their long journey to the South Seas; and there began a busy time at Plassy, in anticipation of Eleanor's following them. It was still very uncertain when that might be; opportunities must be waited for—such an opportunity as would satisfy Mrs. Caxton. In the meanwhile a great deal of business was on hand. Mrs. Caxton even made a journey up to London and took Eleanor with her, for the sake of inquiries and arrangements which could not be attended to from a distance. For the sake of purchases too, which could be made nowhere but in London. For

Mrs. Caxton was bent, not only on supplying Eleanor with all that could be thought of in the way of outfit, but also on getting together to accompany or precede her everything that could be sent that might be useful or helpful to Mr. Rhys or comfortable in the household; in short, to transfer England as nearly as possible to Fiji. As freights of course were expensive, all these matters must be found and compressed in the smallest compass they could possibly know as their limits; and Mrs. Caxton was very busy. London did not hold them but a fortnight; the rest of the time, work was done at Plassy.

And the months rolled on. Cheeses were turned off as usual, and Mrs. Caxton's business was brisk as ever. Eleanor's outfit gradually got ready; and before and after that was true, Eleanor's visits among her neighbours and poor people were the same as ever. She had strength and spirit enough for all calls upon either; and her sweet diligence seemed to be even more than ever, now that work at Plassy was drawing towards a close. Still Eleanor gathered the spoils of the moors and the hedgerows, as she went and came on her errands; climbed the mountain on Powis, and explored the rocks and the waterfalls on her way. As usual, her hands came home full. The house was gay with broom again in its season; before that the violets and wood anemone had made the tea-table and the breakfast-table sweet with their presence. Blue-bells and buttercups and primroses had their time, and lovely they looked, helped out by the yellow furze blossoms which Eleanor was very fond of. Then the scorpion grass, of both kinds, proclaimed that it was summer; and borage was bright in the sitting-room. Eleanor could hardly look at it without an inward smile and sigh, remembering the cheering little couplet which attached to it by old usage, and Julia, from whose lips she had first heard it, and the other lips that had given it to Julia. Corn-marigold was gay again in July, and the white blackberry blossoms came with crane's-bill and flax, campion and willow-herb, speedwell and vetchling. Any one well acquainted with the wild things that grow and blossom in the

land, might have known any day what time of the year it was by going into Mrs. Caxton's sitting-parlour and using his eyes. Until the purple ling and loosestrife, gave place to mint and maiden pink and late meadow-sweet; and then the hop vine and meadow saffron proclaimed that summer was over. But ferns had their representatives at all times.

Summer was over; and no chance for Eleanor's sailing had yet presented itself. Preparations were all made; and the two ladies lived on in waiting and in the enjoyment of each other, and doubtless with a mixture of thoughts that were not enjoyment. But a very sweet even glow of love and peace and patience filled the house. Letters were written; and once and again letters had arrived, even from Mr. Rhys. They told of everything going on at his station; of his work and pleasures; of the progress the truth was making; and the changes coming, even while he looked, upon the population of the islands, their manners and character. There never were letters, I suppose, more thoroughly read and studied and searched out in every detail, than all those letters were by Eleanor; for every fact was of importance to her; and the *manner* of every word told her something. They told her what made her eyes fill and her pulse beat quick. But among them there was not a word to herself. No, and not even a word about herself. In vain Eleanor hoped for it and searched for it. There was not even an allusion that looked her way.

"Do you want to know what I am doing?" Mr. Rhys wrote in one of these letters. "You see by my date that I am not in the place I last wrote from. I am alone on this island, which has never had a resident missionary, and which has people enough that need the care of one; so it has been decided that I should pitch my tent here for some months. There is not a large population—not quite five hundred people in the whole island; but almost all of them that are grown up are professing Christians—members of the church, and not disgracing their profession. The history of the church in this place is wonderful and even of romantic interest. One of their chiefs, being in another

part of Fiji, fell in with a chief who was a Christian. From him he learned something of the new religion, and carried back to Ono thus much of truth—that Jehovah is the only God, and that all worship and praise is his due. Further than this, and the understanding that the seventh day should be especially spent in his service, the Ono chief knew nothing. Was not that a little seed for a great tree to grow from? But his island had just been ravaged by disease and by war; in their distress the people had applied in vain to their old gods to save them; they were convinced now from what they heard that help is in the Lord alone, and they resolved to seek him. But they knew not the Lord, nor his ways, and there was no one to teach them. Fancy that company of heathens renouncing heathenism—setting apart the seventh day for worship, preparing food beforehand so that the day might be hallowed, putting on their best dresses and fresh oil, and meeting to seek the unknown God! O kingdom of Christ, come, come!

"When they were met, they did not know how to begin their service. However, as old custom referred them to their priests for intercourse with heaven, they bethought them to apply to one now, and told him what they wanted. I do not understand what influenced the man; but however, heathen priest of a heathen god as he was, he consented to officiate for this Christian service. The priest came; the assembly sat down; and the priest made a prayer, after this fashion, as it has been reported to me. *He* did not then renounce heathenism, you understand.

"'Lord, Jehovah! here are thy people; they worship thee. I turn my back on thee for the present, and am on another tack, worshipping another god. But do thou bless these people; keep them from harm, and do them good.'

That was the beginning; and doubtless the Lord hearkened and heard it. For awhile they went on as they had begun; then wanting something more, they sent messengers to Tonga to beg for teachers. Now, as I said, the people are nearly all Christians, and not in name only; and all the children are brought to be taught. Here am I;

don't you think I am in a good place? But I am here only for a little while; more cannot be spared to so small a population at this time.

"To get here, one has to shoot something such a gulf as described to you at Vulanga. The barrier reef has a small opening. At particular times of tide a boat can go through, but with the rush of waves from without, meeting the tremendous current from within, it is an exciting business, somewhat dangerous as well as fearful. The ships cannot get inside the barrier. The night I came, canoes came out to meet me, bringing a present of yams as their contribution to our fund; they brought as many as the vessel could find room for. In the canoe with the Ono people I felt myself with friends; I had visited the place before, and they knew me. The current made fearfully hard work for them, but it was love's labour; they felt about me, I suppose, something as the Galatians did towards Paul. The next day was Sunday. I preached to an attentive congregation, and had a happy time. Now I will give you a notion of my run of employments at the present time.

"First. Playing bookbinder. Fact. One has to play all sorts of things here, and the more the better. My work was to stitch, fold (fold first) and cover, so many copies of the New Testament as I had brought with me—printed, but in sheets. I did them strong, more than that I will not answer for; but I wish I could send you a copy. It would be only a curiosity in art though; you could not read it. It is an admirable translation in Fijian. As I have had but very slight previous practice in bookbinding, my rate of progress was at first somewhat slow; and after a few days of solitary labour, I was glad to accept the offer of help from four or five native apprentices—some of our local preachers. They took to the work kindly, and in five weeks we finished the edition—sixty copies. I could do the next sixty quicker These are the first Fijian Testaments in Ono, and you can understand—or you can*not*—what a treasure. The natives who came to purchase them found no fault with the binding, I assure you. So you see I have been bookseller as well as

the other thing, and I received pay for my Testaments in *sinnet*—you know what that is. It is as good as money for the mission use here in Fiji. During these bookbinding weeks I was making excursions hither and thither, to preach and baptize. Twice a week I took a time to see the local preachers and teachers and examine them and hear them read, and talk to them and be talked to by them. Every Tuesday and Friday I did this. The whole course of the week's work is now something like the following:

"Sunday begins with a prayer-meeting. Afterwards old and young have a catechism exercise together. Morning and afternoon, preaching.

"Monday, the morning there is a children's school, and nor his wife ... afternoon a school for grown people. I question both the afternoon sermons of the preceding day, and I hope classes on t... have as good memories. The afternoon school English people ... prayer-meeting. Tuesdays and Fridays I is followed by ... meeting in addition.

have the teachers ... preach, have leaders' meeting, and give

"Wednesday I ... to come.

out work for the wee... at one of the neighbouring towns,

"Thursday, preachi... -meeting.

and a sort of young class ... at I do.

"Friday, I have said wh... meeting.

"Saturday has a prayer-m... work. Then there are the sick

"So much for the regular ... vate studies; and there is not to look after, and my own pr... annot be spared are claimed a minute to spare. A few that ... r high court and revel here by the mosquitos, which hold thei... that I know, their head- at Ono; of all places on the earth ... ith Brother Lefferts and quarters. When I was here before ... read something that others, two of them could not sit still ... poor, one holding the wanted to be read; they walked the ... ing mosquitos with candle the other the paper; both fighti... mperament—for I both hands. I am of a less excitable ... th contrive to live a little more quietly. ... testimonies of

"Shall I tell you some of these native ... dols? At our Christians who a little while ago worshipped ... They did my love-feast lately some thirty or forty spoke. ...

heart good. So may they yours! These people said but few words, full of feeling; my report cannot at all give the effect. I wish it could.

"One old chief, who could hardly speak for feeling, said, 'These are new things to me in these days;' (he meant the love-feasts) 'I did not know them formerly. My soul is humbled. I rejoice greatly in the Lord. I rejoice greatly for sending his servants.'

"A Tongan teacher—'I desire that God may rule over me,' (*i.e.*, direct me) 'I desire not to govern myself. I know that I am a child of God: I know that God is my father. My friends wrote for me to go to Tonga; but I wondered at it. I wish to obey the Father of my soul.'

"A local preacher—'I know that God is near, and helps me sometimes in my work. I love all men. I do not fear death; one thing I fear—the Lord.'

"Leva Soko, a female class-leader, a very holy woman, said—this is but a part of what she said—'My child died, but I loved God the more. My body has been much afflicted, but I love him the more. I know that death would only unite me to God.'

"A teacher, a native of Ono, who had gone to a much less pleasant place to preach the gospel, and was home on a visit, spoke exceedingly well. 'I did not leave Ono that I might have more food. I desired to go that I might preach Christ. I was struck with stones twice while in my own house; but I could bear it. When the canoes came, they pillaged my garden; but my mind was not pained at it: I bore it only.'

"A local preacher—'I am a very bad man; there is no good thing in me; but I know the love of God. There are not two great things in my mind; there is one only—the love of God for the sake of Christ. I know that I am a child of God. I wish to repent and believe every day till I die.'

"These are but a specimen, my dear friend. The other day, in our teacher's meeting, we were reading the nine-

teenth chapter of John. An old teacher read the eighteenth verse in his turn—the words, 'Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.' He could hardly get through it, and then burst into tears and wept aloud. This man was a cannibal once. And now his life speaks for the truth of his tears.

"Good night. The mosquitos are not favourable to epistle writing. I am well. Remember me, as I remember you.

"R. R."

"Aunt Caxton," said Eleanor, after reading this letter for the second or third time, "have we a supply of mosquito netting among my boxes? I could get the better of the mosquitos, I think."

"How would you like to help bind books?" said Mrs. Caxton. "Or translate? Mr. Rhys seems to be about that business, by what he says in the other letter."

"He would not want help in that," said Eleanor, musing and flushing. "Aunt Caxton—is it foolish in me to wish I could hear once more from Mr. Rhys before I go?"

"Only a little foolish, my love; and very natural."

"Then why is it foolish?"

"Because reason would tell you that it is simply impossible your letters could receive an answer by this time. They have, perhaps, but barely got to Mr. Rhys this minute. And reason would tell you further, that there is no ground for supposing he is in any different mind from that expressed when he wrote to you."

"But—you know—since then he does not say one word about it, nor about me," said Eleanor, flushing pretty deep.

"There is reason for that, too. He would not allow himself to indulge hope; and therefore he would not act as if he had any. That sight of you at Brighton threw him off a good deal, I judge."

"He told you he saw me?"

"He wrote to me about it."

"Did he tell you how he saw me?"

"Yes."

"What more?"

"He said he thought there was little chance I would have any use for his letters; he saw the world was closing its nets around you fast; how far they were already successful he could not know; but he was glad he had seen what forbade him in time to indulge vain anticipations."

"O, aunt Caxton!" said Eleanor, "O, aunt Caxton! what a strange world this is, for the way people's lives cross each other, and the work that is done without people's knowing it! If you knew—what that meeting cost me!——"

"My dear child! I can well believe it."

"And it aroused Mr. Carlisle's suspicions instantly, I knew. If I made any mistake—if I erred at all, in my behaviour with regard to him, it was then and in consequence of that. If I had faltered a bit then—looked grave, or hung back from what was going on, I should have exposed myself to most cruel interpretation. I could not risk it. I threw myself right into whatever presented itself—went into the whirl—welcomed everybody and everything—only, I hoped, with so general and impartial a welcome as should prove I preferred none exclusively."

Eleanor stopped, and the tears came into her eyes.

"My child! if I had known what danger you were in, I should have spent even more time than I did in praying for you."

"I suppose I was in danger," said Eleanor, thoughtfully. "It was a difficult winter. Then do you think Mr. Rhys gave me up?"

"No," said Mrs. Caxton, smiling. "You remember he wrote to you after that, from Fiji; but I suppose he tried to make himself give you up, as far as hope went."

"For all that appears, I may be here long enough yet to have letters before I go. We have heard of no opportunity that is likely to present itself soon. Aunt Caxton, if my feeling is foolish, why is it natural?"

"Because you are a woman, my dear."

"And foolish?"

"Not at all; but feeling takes little counsel of reason in

some cases. I am afraid you will find that out again before you get to Mr. Rhys—*after* that, I do not think you will."

The conversation made Eleanor rather more anxious than she had been before to hear of a ship; but October and November passed, and the prospect of her voyage was as misty as ever.

Again and again, all summer, both she and Mrs. Caxton had written begging that Mrs. Powle would make a visit to Plassy, and bring or send Julia. In vain. Mrs. Powle would not come—Julia could not.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"A wild dedication of yourselves
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores; most certain,
To miseries enough."

In a neat plain drawing-room in a plain part of London, sat Mrs. Caxton and Eleanor. Eleanor, however, soon left her seat and took post at the window; and silence reigned in the room, unbroken for some length of time except by the soft rustle of Mrs. Caxton's work. Her fingers were rarely idle. Nor were Eleanor's hands often empty; but to-day she stood still as a statue before the window, while now and then a tear softly rolled down and dropped on her folded hands. There were no signs of the tears, however, when the girl turned round with the short announcement—

"She's here!"

Mrs. Caxton looked up a little bit anxiously at her adopted child; but Eleanor's face was only still and pale. The next moment the door opened, and, for all the world as in old times, the fair face and fair curls of Mrs. Powle appeared. Just the same; unless just now she appeared a trifle frightened. The good lady felt so. Two fanatics! She hardly knew how to encounter them. And then, her own action, though she could not certainly have called it fanatical, had been peculiar, and might be judged divers ways. Moreover, Mrs. Powle was Eleanor's mother.

There was one in the company who remembered that;

witness the still close embrace which Eleanor threw around her, and the still hiding of the girl's face on her mother's bosom. Mrs. Powle returned the embrace heartily enough; but when Eleanor's motionless clasp had lasted as long as she knew how to do anything with it, and longer than she felt to be graceful, Mrs. Powle whispered—

"Won't you introduce me to your aunt, my dear,—if this is she?"

Eleanor released her mother, but sobbed helplessly for a few minutes; then she raised her head and threw off her tears; and there was to one of the two ladies an exquisite grace in the way she performed the required office of making them known to each other. The gentleness of a chastened heart, the strength of a loving one, the dignity of a humble one, made her face and manner so lovely that Mrs. Caxton involuntarily wished Mr. Rhys could have seen it. "But he will have chance enough," she thought, somewhat incongruously, as she met and returned her sister-in-law's greetings. Mrs. Powle made them with ceremonious respect, not make believe, and with a certain eagerness which welcomed a diversion from Eleanor's somewhat troublesome agitation. Eleanor's agitation troubled no one any more, however; she sat down calm and quiet; and Mrs. Powle had leisure, glancing at her from time to time, to get into smooth sailing intercourse with Mrs. Caxton. She took off her bonnet, and talked about indifferent things, and sipped chocolate; for it was just luncheon time. Ever and anon her eyes came back to Eleanor; evidently as to something which troubled her and which puzzled her; and Mrs. Caxton saw, which had also the effect of irritation too. Very likely, Mrs. Caxton thought! Conscience on one hand not satisfied, and ambition on the other hand disappointed, and Eleanor the point of meeting for both uneasy feelings to concentrate their forces. It would come out in words soon, Mrs. Caxton knew. But how lovely Eleanor seemed to her. There was not even a cloud upon her brow now; fair as it was pure and strong.

"And so you are going?" Mrs. Powle began at last, in a somewhat constrained voice. Eleanor smiled.

"And *when* are you going?"

"My letter said, Next Tuesday the ship sails."

"And pray, Eleanor, you are not going alone?"

"No, mamma. A gentleman and his wife are going the whole voyage with me."

"Who are they?"

"A Mr. Amos and his wife."

"*What* are they, then? missionaries?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Going to that same place?"

"Yes, ma'am—very nicely for me."

"Pray how long do you expect the voyage will take you?"

"I am not certain—it is made, or can be made, in four or five months; but then we may have to stop awhile at Sydney."

"Sydney? what Sydney? Where is that?"

"Australia, mamma," said Eleanor, smiling. "New South Wales. Don't you know?"

"*Australia!* Are you going there? To Botany Bay?"

"No, mamma; not to Botany Bay And I only take Australia by the way. I go further."

"*Further* than Botany Bay?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well certainly," said Mrs. Powle, with an accent of restrained despair, "the present age is enterprising beyond what was ever known in my young days. What do you think, sister Caxton, of a young lady taking a voyage five months long after her husband, instead of her husband taking it for her? He ought to be a grateful man, I think!"

"Certainly; but not too grateful," Mrs. Caxton answered, composedly; "for in this case necessity alters the rule."

"I do not understand such necessities," said Mrs. Powle; "at least if a thing cannot be done properly, I should say it was better not to do it at all. However, I suppose it is too late to speak now. I would not have *my* daughter hold herself so lightly as to confer such an honour on any man; but I gave her

to you to dispose of, so no doubt it is all right. I hope Mr. What's-his-name is worthy of it."

"Mamma, let me give you another cup of chocolate," said Eleanor. And she served her with the chocolate and the toast and the hung beef, in a way that gave Mrs. Caxton's heart a feast. There was the beautiful calm and high grace with which Eleanor used to meet her social difficulties two years ago, and baffle both her trials and her tempters. Mrs. Caxton had never seen it called for. Her face showed not the slightest embarrassment at her mother's words; not a shade of rising colour did dishonour to Mr. Rhys by proving that she so much as even felt the slurs against him, or the jealousy professed on her own behalf. Eleanor's calm sweet face was an assertion both of his dignity and her own. Perhaps Mrs. Powle felt herself in a hopeless case.

"What do you expect to live on out there?" she said, changing her ground, as she dipped her toast into chocolate. "You won't have this sort of thing."

"I have never thought much about it," said Eleanor, smiling. "Where other people live and grow strong, I suppose I can."

"No, it does not follow at all," replied her mother. "You are accustomed to certain things, and you would feel the want of them. For instance, will you have bread like this out there? wheat bread?"

"I shall not want chocolate," said Eleanor. "The climate is too hot."

"But bread?"

"Wheat flour is shipped for the use of the mission families," said Mrs. Caxton. "It is known that many persons would suffer without it; and we do not wish unnecessary suffering should be undergone."

"Have they cows there?"

"Mamma!" said Eleanor, laughing.

"Well, have they? Because Miss Broadus or somebody was saying the other day, that in New Zealand they never had them till we sent them out. So I wondered directly whether they had in this place."

"I fancy not, mamma. You will have to think of me as drinking my tea without cream."

"So you will take tea there with you?"

"Why not?"

"I have got the impression," said Mrs. Powle, "somehow, that you would do nothing as other people do. You will drink tea, will you? I'll give you a box."

"Thank you, mamma," said Eleanor, but the colour flushed now to the roots of her hair,—"aunt Caxton has given me a great stock already."

"And coffee?"

"Yes, mamma—for great occasions—and concentrated milk for that."

"Do tell me what sort of a place it is, Eleanor."

"It is a great many places, mamma. It is a great many islands, large and small, scattered over some hundreds of miles of ocean; but they are so many and so near each other often, and so surrounded with interlacing coral reefs, that navigation there is in a kind of network of channels. The islands are of many varieties, and of fairy-land beauty; rich in vegetation and in all sorts of natural stores."

"Not cows."

"No, ma'am. I meant, the things that grow out of the ground," said Eleanor, smiling again. "Cows and sheep and horses are not among them."

"Nor horses either? How do you go when you travel?"

"In a canoe, I suppose."

"With savages?" exclaimed Mrs. Powle.

"Not necessarily. Many of them are Christians."

"The natives?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then I don't see what you are going for. Those that are Christians already might teach those that are not. But, Eleanor, who will marry you?"

A bright rose-colour came upon the girl's cheek. "Mamma, there are clergymen enough there."

"*Clergymen?* of the Church?"

"I beg your pardon, mamma; no.

"Well, that is as you look at things. I know you and my sister Caxton have wandered away,—but for me, I should feel lost out of the Church. It would be very essential to me. Are there no Church people in the islands at all?"

"I believe not, mamma."

"And what on earth do you expect to do there, Eleanor?"

"I cannot tell you yet, mamma; but I understand everybody finds more than enough."

"What, pray?"

"The general great business, you know, is to carry light to those that sit in darkness."

"Yes, but you do not expect to preach, do you?"

Eleanor smiled, she could not help it, at the bewildered air with which this question was put. "I don't know, mamma. Do not you think I could preach to a class of children?"

"But, Eleanor! such horrid work. Such work for *you!*"

"Why, mamma?"

"Why? With your advantages and talents and education. Mr. —— no matter who, but who used to be a good judge, said that your talents would give anybody else's talents enough to do;—and that you should throw them away upon a class of half-naked children at the antipodes!"——

"There will be somebody else to take the benefit of them first," Mrs. Caxton said, very composedly. "I rather think Mr. Rhys will see to it that they are not wasted."

"Mamma, I think you do not understand this matter," Eleanor said, gently. "Whoever made that speech flattered me; but I wish my talents were ten times so much as they are, that I might give them to this work."

"To this gentleman, you mean!" Mrs. Powle said, tartly.

A light came into Eleanor's eyes; she was silent a minute, and then with the colour rising all over her face she said, "He is abundantly worthy of all and much more than I am."

"Well, I do not understand this matter, as you said," Mrs. Powle answered, in some discomfiture. "Tell me of something I do understand. What society will you have where you are going, Eleanor?"

"I shall be too busy to have much time for society, mamma," Eleanor answered, good-humouredly.

"No such thing—you will want it all the more. Sister Caxton, is it not so?"

"People do not go out there without consenting to forego many things," Mrs. Caxton answered; "but there is One who has promised to be with his servants when they are about his work; and I never heard that any one who had that society, pined greatly for want of other."

Mrs. Powle opened her eyes at Mrs. Caxton's quiet face; she set this speech down in her mind as uncontaminated fanaticism. She turned to Eleanor.

"Do the people there wear clothes?"

"The Christians clothe themselves, mamma; the heathen portion of the people hardly do, I believe. The climate requires nothing. They have a fashion of dress of their own, but it is not much."

"And can you help seeing these heathen?"

"No, of course not."

"Well you *are* changed!" said Mrs. Powle. "I would never have thought you would have consented to such degradation."

"I go that I may help mend it, mamma."

"Yes, you must stoop yourself first."

"Think how Jesus stooped—to what degradation—for us all."

Mrs. Powle paused, at the view of Eleanor's glistening eyes. It was not easy to answer, moreover.

"I cannot help it," she said. "You and I take different views on the subject. Do let us talk of something else; I am always getting on something where we cannot agree. Tell me about the place, Eleanor."

"What, mamma? I have not been there."

"No, but of course you know. What do you live in? houses or tents?"

"I do not know which you would call them; they are not stone or wood. There is a skeleton frame of posts to uphold the building: but the walls are made of different thick-

nesses of reeds, laid different ways and laced together with sinnet."

"What's *sinnet?*"

"A strong braid made of the fibre of the cocoanut—of the husk of the cocoanut. It is made of more or less size and strength, and is used instead of iron to fasten a great many sorts of things; carpentry and boat-building among them."

"Goodness! what a place. Well, go on with your house."

"That is all," said Eleanor, smiling; "except that it is thatched with palm leaves, or grass, or cane leaves. Sometimes the walls are covered with grass; and the braid work done in patterns, so as to have a very artistic effect."

"And what is inside?"

"Not much beside the people."

"Well, tell me what, for instance. There is something, I suppose. The walls are not bare?"

"Not quite. There are apt to be mats, to sit and lie on;—and pots for cooking, and baskets and a chest perhaps, and a great mosquito curtain."

"Are you going to live in a house like that, Eleanor?"

Mrs. Powle's face expressed distress. Eleanor laughed and declared she did not know.

"It will have some chairs for her to sit upon," said Mrs. Caxton; "and I shall send some china cups, that she may not have to drink out of a cocoanut shell."

"But I should like that very well," said Eleanor; "and I certainly think a Fijian wooden dish, spread with green leaves, is as nice a vessel for food as can be."

Mrs. Powle rose up and began to arrange her shawl, with an air which said, "I do not understand it!"

"Mamma, what are you about?"

"Eleanor, you make me very uncomfortable."

"Do I? Why should I, mamma?"

"It is no use talking." Then suddenly facing round on Eleanor she said, "What are you going to do for servants in that dreadful place?"

"Mr. Rhys says he has a most faithful servant—who is much attached to him, and does as well as he can desire."

"One of those native savages?"

"He was; he is a Christian now, and a good one."

Mrs. Powle looked as if she did not know how to believe her daughter.

"Aren't you afraid of what you are about, Eleanor—to venture among those creatures? and to take all that voyage first, alone? Are you not afraid?"

There was that in the very simpleness and quietness of Eleanor's answer that put her negative beyond a question. Mrs. Powle sat down again for very bewilderment.

"Why are you not afraid?" she said. "You never were afraid of little things, I know; but those houses—are there no thieves among those heathen?"

"A good many."

"What is to keep them out of your house? Anybody could cut through a reed wall with a knife—and make no noise about it. Where is your security?"

Alas, in the one face there was such ignorance, in the other such sorrowful consciousness of that ignorance, that the two faces at first looked mutely into each other across the gulf between them.

"Mamma," said Eleanor, "why will you not understand me? Do you not know,—the Eternal God is our refuge!"

The still, grand expression of faith Mrs. Powle could not receive; but the speaking of Eleanor's eyes she did. She turned from them.

"Good morning, sister Caxton," she said. "I will go. I cannot bear it any longer to-day."

"You will come to-morrow, sister Powle?"

"Yes. Oh, yes. I'll be here to-morrow. I will get my feelings quieted by that time. Good bye, Eleanor."

"Mamma," said the girl, trembling, "when will you bring Julia?"

"Now, Eleanor, don't let us talk about anything more that is disagreeable. I do not want to say anything about Julia. You have taken your way—and I do not mean to unsettle you in it; but Julia is in another line, and I cannot have you interfere with her. I am very sorry it is so,—but it is

not my doing. I cannot help it. I do not want to give you pain—"

Mrs. Powle departed. Eleanor came back from attending her to the door, stopped in the middle of the room, and her cheeks grew white as she spoke.

"I shall never see her again!"

"My love," said Mrs. Caxton, pityingly,—"I hardly know how to believe it possible."

"I knew it all along," said Eleanor. She sat down and covered her face. Mrs. Caxton sighed.

"It is as true now as it was in the old time," she said—"'He that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' So surely as we walk like Christ, so surely the world will call us odd and strange and fanatical, and treat us accordingly."

Eleanor's head was bent low.

"And Jesus is our only refuge—and our sufficient consolation."

"Oh, yes!—but——"

"'And he can make our silent witness-bearing bring fruits for his glory, and for our dear ones' good, as much as years of talking to them, Eleanor."

"You are good comfort, aunt Caxton," said the girl, putting her arms around her and straining her close;—"but—this is something I cannot help just now——"

It was a natural sorrow not to be struggled with successfully; and Eleanor took it to her own room. So did Mrs. Caxton take it to hers. But the struggle was ended then and there. No trace of it remained the next day. Eleanor met her mother most cheerfully, and contrived admirably to keep her from the gulf of discussion into which she had been continually plunging at her first visit. With so much of grace and skill, and of that poise of her own mind which left her free to extend help to another's vacillations and uncertainties, Eleanor guided the conversation and bore herself generally that day, that Mrs. Powle's sighing commentary as she went away, was, "Ah, Eleanor!—you might have been a duchess!"

But the paleness of sorrow came over her duchess's face

again so soon as she was gone. Mrs. Caxton saw that if the struggle was ended, the pain was not; and her heart bled for Eleanor. These were days not to be prolonged. It was good for everybody that Tuesday, the day of sailing, was so near.

They were heavy, the hours that intervened. In spite of keeping herself close and making no needless advertisement of her proceedings, Eleanor could not escape many an encounter with old friends or acquaintances. They heard of her from her mother; learned her address; and then curiosity was enough, without affection, to bring several; and affection mingled with curiosity to bring a few. Among others, the two Miss Broadus's, Eleanor's friends and associates at Wiglands ever since she had been a child, could not keep away from her, and could not be denied when they came; though they took precious time, and though they tried Eleanor sorely. They wanted to know everything; if their wishes had sufficed, they would have learned the whole history of Mr. Rhys's courtship. Failing that, their inquiries went to everything else, past and future, to which Eleanor's own knowledge could be supposed to extend. What she had been doing through the year which was gone, and what she expected the coming year would find her to do; when she would get to her place of destination, and what sort of a life she would have of it when once there. Houses and horses, and cows and sheep, were as interesting to these good ladies as they were to Mrs. Powle; and feeling less concern in the matter they were free to take more amusement, and so no side feeling or hidden feeling disturbed their satisfaction in the flow of information they were receiving. For Eleanor gratified them patiently, in all which did not immediately touch herself; but when they were gone she sighed. Even Mrs Powle was less trying; for her annoyances were at least of a more dignified kind. Eleanor could meet them better.

"And this is the end of you!" she exclaimed the evening before Eleanor was to sail. "This is the end of your life and expectations! To look at you and think of it!" Despondency could no further go.

"Not the end of either, mamma, I hope," Eleanor responded cheerfully.

"The expectation of the righteous shall be for ever. you forget," said Mrs. Caxton, smiling. "There is no fall nor failure to that."

"Oh, yes, I know!" said Mrs. Powle impatiently; "but just look at that girl and see what she is. She might be presented at Court now, and reigning like a princess in her own house; yes, she might; and to-morrow she is going off as if she were a convict to Botany Bay!"

"No, mamma," said Eleanor, smiling. "I never can persuade you of Australian geography."

"Well, it's New South Wales, isn't it?" said Mrs. Powle.

Eleanor assented.

"Very well. The girl that brings you your luncheon when you get there, may be the very one that stole my spoons three years ago. It's all the same thing. And you, Eleanor, you are so handsome, and you have the manners of a queen.—Sister Caxton, you have no notion what admiration this girl excited, and what admiration she could command!"

Mrs. Caxton looked from the calm face of the girl, certainly handsome enough, to the vexed countenance of the mother; whose fair curls failed to look complacent for once.

"I suppose Eleanor thinks of another day," she said, "when the Lord will come to be admired in his saints and to be glorified in all them that believe. *That* will be admiration worth having; if Eleanor thinks so, I confess I think so too."

"Dear sister Caxton," said Mrs. Powle, restraining herself, "what has the one thing to do with the other?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Caxton. "To seek both is impossible."

"*Do* you think it is wicked to receive admiration? I did not think you went so far."

"No," said Mrs. Caxton, with her genial smile. "We were talking of seeking it."

Mrs. Powle was silent, and went away in a very ill humour.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea."

And the Tuesday came, and was fair; and under a bright sky the steamer ran down to Gravesend with Eleanor and her friends on board. Not Julia; Eleanor had given up all hopes of that; but Mrs. Caxton was beside her, and on the other side of her was Mrs. Powle. It was a terribly disagreeable journey to the latter; every feeling in her somewhat passionless nature was in a state of fretful rebellion. The other stronger and deeper characters were ready for the time and met it bravely. Met it cheerfully too. The crisping breeze that curled the waters of the river, the blue sky and fair sunlight, the bright and beautiful of the scene around them, those two saw and tasted, with hopeful though very grave hearts. The other poor lady saw nothing but a dirty steamboat and a very unpropitious company. Among these, however, were Eleanor's fellow-voyagers, Mr. Amos and his wife; and she was introduced to them now for the first time. Various circumstances had prevented their meeting in London.

"A very common-looking man," whispered Mrs. Powle to Eleanor.

"I don't know, mamma—but very *good*," Eleanor returned.

"You are mad on goodness!" said Mrs. Powle. "Don't you see anything else in a man, or the want of anything else?

beginning of her journey was made amidst mental storms. Julia was the particular bitter thought over which her tears poured; but they flooded every image that rose of home things, and childish things, and things at Plassy. Mr. Amos came to her help.

"It is nothing," Eleanor said, as well as she could speak,—"it is nothing but the natural feeling which will have its way. Thank you—don't be concerned. I don't want anything—if I only could have seen my sister!——"

"Mrs. Amos is about as bad," said her comforter, with a sigh. "Ah, well! feeling must have its way, and better it should. You will both be better by-and-by, I hope."

They were worse before they were better. For in a few hours sickness took its place among present grievances; and perhaps on the whole it acted as a relief by effecting a diversion from mental to bodily concerns. It seemed to Eleanor that she felt them both together; nevertheless, when at the end of a few days the sea-sickness left her, and she was able to get up again, it was with the sweet fresh quietness of convalescence in mind as well as in body. She was herself again. Things took their place. England was behind, indeed—but Fiji was forward—and Heaven was over all.

As soon as she was able to be up she went upon deck. Strength came immediately with the fresh breeze. It was a cool, cloudy day; the ship speeding along under a good spread of canvas; the sea in a beautiful state of life, but not boisterous. Nobody was on deck but some of the sailors. Eleanor took a seat by the guards, and began to drink in refreshment. It stole in fast, on mind as well as body, she hardly knew how; only both were braced up together. She felt now a curious gladness that the parting was over, the journey begun, and England fairly out of sight. The going away had been like death; a new life was rising upon her now; and Eleanor turned herself towards it with the same sweet readiness as the good ship whose head is laid upon a new course.

There is a state of mind in which the soul may be aptly called the garden of the Lord; when answering to his culture it brings forth flowers and fruits for his pleasure. In such

a state, the paradise which Adam lost is half re-entered again; the moral victory is won over "the works of the devil" which Christ came to destroy. The body is dead, no doubt, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness. The air of that garden is peace; no hurricanes blow there; the sunshine dwells therein; the odours of sweet things come forth, and make known all abroad whose garden it is.

Eleanor had sat awhile very still, very busy looking over into the sea, when she heard a step near her on the deck. She looked up, and saw a man whom she recognized as the master of the vessel. A rather hard-featured man, tall and strong set, with a pair of small eyes that did not give forth their expression readily. What there was struck her as not pleasant.

"So you've got up!" said he, in a voice which was less harsh than his looks. "Do you feel better?"

"Much better, thank you."

"Hearty, eh?"

"Pretty well," said Eleanor, smiling, "since I have got this salt air into my lungs."

"Ah! you'll have enough of that. 'Tother lady is down yet, eh? She has not got up."

"No."

"Are you all going to the same place?"

"I believe so."

"Missionaries, eh?"

"Yes."

"Think you'll get those dark fellows to listen to you?"

"Why not?" said Eleanor, brightly.

"It's all make-believe. They only want to get your axes and hatchets, and such things."

"Well, we want their yams and potatoes, and fish and labour," said Eleanor; "so it is a fair bargain; and no make-believe on either side."

"Why don't you stay in the Colonies? there is work enough to be done; people enough that need it; and a fine country. Everything in the world that you need; and not so far from home either."

Eleanor made no answer.

"Why don't you stay in the Colonies?"

"One can only be in one place," said Eleanor, lightly.

"And that must always be the place where somebody else is," said the captain, maliciously. "That's the way people will congregate together, instead of scattering where they are wanted."

"Do you know the Colonies well?" said Eleanor coolly, in answer to this rude speech.

"I ought. I have spent about a third of my life in them. I have a brother at Melbourne too, as rich in flocks and herds almost as Job was. That's the place. That's a country! But you are going to Sydney?"

"Yes."

"Friends there?"

"I have one friend there who expects me."

"Who's he? Maybe I know him."

"Egbert Esthwaite is his name."

"Don't know him, though. And so you have left England to find yourself a new home in the wilderness?"

"Yes."

"Pretty tough change you'll find it. Don't you find it already?"

"No. Don't you know," said Eleanor, giving him a good look, "when one's real home is in heaven, it does not make so much difference?"

The captain would have answered the words fast enough; but in the strong sweet eye that had looked into his so full, there was something that silenced him. He turned off abruptly, with the internal conviction—"*That* girl thinks what she says anyhow!"

Eleanor's eyes left contemplating the waters, and were busy for some time with the book which had lain in her lap until her colloquy with the captain. Somebody came and sat down beside her.

"Mr. Amos! I am glad to see you," said Eleanor.

"I am glad to see you, sister," he replied; "and glad to see you able to be here. You look well again."

"Oh! I am."

"Mrs. Amos cannot raise her head. What are you doing? if I may ask so blunt a question upon so short an acquaintance."

"This is the first time I have been on deck. I was studying the sea, in the first place; and then something drove me to study the Bible."

"Ah, we are driven to that on every hand," he answered. "Now go on, and tell me the point of your studies, will you?"

There was something in the utmost genial and kind in his look and way; he was not a person from whom one would keep back anything he wanted to know; as also evidently he was not one to ask anything he should not. The request did not even startle Eleanor. She looked thoughtfully over the heaving sea while she answered.

"I had been taking a great new view of the glory of creation —over the ship's side here. Then I had the sorrow to find—or fear—that we have an unbeliever in our captain. From that, I suppose, I took hold of Paul's reasoning—how without excuse people are in unbelief; how the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead. And those glorious last words were what my heart fixed upon."

"'His eternal power and Godhead.'"

Eleanor looked round without speaking: a look full of the human echo to those words; the joy of weakness, the strength of ignorance, the triumph of humility.

"What a grand characterizing Paul gives in those other words," said Mr. Amos—'the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.' Unto him be honour and glory for ever!"

"And then those other words," said Eleanor, low,—"'The eternal God is thy refuge.'"

"That is a good text for us to keep," said Mr. Amos. "But really, with that refuge, I don't see what we should be afraid of."

"Not even of want of success," said Eleanor.

"No. If faith didn't fail. Paul could give thanks that he

was made always to triumph in Christ,—and by the power that wrought with him, so may we." He spoke very gravely, as if looking into himself and pondering his own responsibilities and privileges and shortcomings. Eleanor kept silence.

"How do you like this way of life?" Mr. Amos said presently.

"The sea is beautiful. I have hardly tried the ship."

"Haven't you?" said Mr. Amos, smiling. "That speaks a candid good traveller. Another would have made the first few days the type of the whole."

And he also took to his book, and the silence lasted this time.

Mrs. Amos continued prostrated by sea-sickness; unable to raise her head from her pillow. Eleanor could do little for her. The evil was remediless, and admitted of very small amelioration. But the weather was very fine and the ship's progress excellent; and Eleanor spent great part of her time on deck. All day, except when she was at the side of Mrs. Amos, she was there. The sailors watched the figure in the dark neat sea-dress and cloak and the little close straw bonnet with chocolate ribands; and every now and then made pretences to get near and see how the face looked that was hidden under it. The report of the first venturers was so favourable that Eleanor had an unconscious sort of levée the next day or two; and then, the fresh sweet face that was so like a flower was found to have more attractions when known than it had before when unknown. There was not a hand on board but seized or made opportunities every day and as often as he could to get near her; if a chance offered and he could edge in a word and have a smile and word in answer, that man went away esteemed both by himself and his comrades a lucky fellow. Eleanor awoke presently to the sense of her opportunities, though too genuinely humble to guess at the cause of them; and she began to make every one tell for her work. Every sailor on board soon knew what Eleanor valued more than all other things; every one knew, "sure as guns," as he would have expressed it, that if she had a chance of speaking to him, she would one way or another contrive before it was ended to make him think of his duty and to remember to whom it was owed; and yet—strange

to say—there was not one of them that for any such reason was willing to lose or to shun one of those chances. "If all were like she"—was the comment of one Jack tar; and the rest were precisely of his opinion. The captain himself was no exception. He could not help frequently coming to Eleanor's side, to break off her studies or her musings with some information or some suggestion of his own and have a bit of a talk. His manners mended. He grew thoroughly civil to her.

Meanwhile the vessel was speeding southwards. Fast, fast, every day they lowered their latitude. Higher and higher rose the sun; the stars that had been Eleanor's familiars ever since she had eyes to see them, sank one by one below the northern horizon; and the beauty of the new, strange, brilliant constellations of the southern sky began to tell her in curious language of her approach to her new home. They had a most magical charm for Eleanor. She studied and watched them unwearicdly; they had for her that curious interest which we give to any things that are to be our life-companions. Here Mr. Amos could render her some help; but with or without help, Eleanor nightly studied the southern stars, watched and pondered them till she knew them well; and then she watched them because she knew them, as well as because she was to know them all the rest of her life.

By day she studied other things; and the days were not weary. The ocean was a storehouse of pleasure for her; and Captain Fox declared his ship had never carried such a clever passenger; "a girl who had plenty of stuff, and knew what to do with herself." Certainly the last piece of praise was true; for Eleanor had no weary moments. She had interests on board, as well as outside the ship. She picked up the sailors' legends and superstitions; ay, and many a little bit of life history came in too, by favour of the sympathy and friendliness they saw in those fine brown eyes. Never a voyage went better; and the sailors, if not the captain, were very much of the mind that they had a good angel on board.

"Well, how do you like *this*?" said Mr. Amos, coming up one day. It was the seventh day of a calm in the tropics.

"I would like a wind better," Eleanor said, smiling.

"Can you possess your soul in patience?"

"Yes," she said, but gently and with a slight intonation that spoke of several latent things.

"We are well on our way now,—if a wind would come"

"It will come."

"I have never asked you," said Mr. Amos. "How do you expect to find life in the islands?"

"In what respect? In general, I should say, as unlike this as possible."

"Of course. I understand there is no stagnation there. But as to hardships—as to the people?"

"The people are part Christianized and part unchristianized; that gives every variety of experience among them, I suppose. The unchristianized are as bad as they can be, very nearly; the good, very good. As to hardships, I have no expectation."

"You have not data to form one?"

"I cannot say that; but things are so different according to circumstances; and there is so great a change going on continually in the character of the people."

"How do you feel about leaving behind you all the arts and refinements and delights of taste in the old world?"

"Will you look over the side of the ship, Mr. Amos?—down below there—do you see anything?"

"Dolphin——," said Mr. Amos.

"What do you think of them?"

"Beautiful!" said Mr. Amos. "Beautiful, undoubtedly! as brilliant as if they had just come out of the jeweller's shop, polished silver. How clear the water is! I can see them perfectly—far below."

"Isn't the sea better than a jeweller's shop?"

"I never thought of it before," said Mr. Amos, laughing; "but it certainly is; though I think it is the first time the comparison has been made."

"Did you ever go to Tenby?"

"I never did."

"Nor I; but I have heard the sea-caves in its neighbourhood described as more splendid in their natural treasures of vege-

The island of St. Paul was passed; and still the ship sailed on and on to the east.

Eleanor had observed for a day or two that there was an unusual degree of activity among the sailors. They seemed to be getting things into new trim; clearing up and cleaning, and the chain cable one day made its appearance on deck, where room had been made for it. Eleanor looked on at the proceedings with a half guess at their meaning that made her heart beat.

"What is it?" she asked Captain Fox.

"What's all this rigging up? Why we expect to see land soon. You like the sea so well, you'll be sorry."

"How soon?"

"I shouldn't wonder, in a day or two. You will stop in Sydney till you get a chance to go on?"

"Yes."

"I wish I could take you the whole way, I declare! but I would not take an angel into those awful islands. Why, if you get shipwrecked there, they will kill and eat you."

"There would be little danger of that now, Captain Fox; none at all in most of the islands. Instead of killing and eating, they relieve and comfort their shipwrecked countrymen."

"Believe that?" said the captain.

"I know it. I know instances."

"Whereabouts are you going among them?" said he, looking at her. If I get driven out of my reckoning ever, and find myself in those latitudes, I'd like to know which way to steer. Where's your place?"

He was not uncivil; but he liked to see, when he could manage to bring it, that beautiful tinge of rose in Eleanor's cheeks which answered such an appeal as this.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

> "And the magic charm of foreign lands,
> With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
> Where the tumbling surf
> O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
> Washes the feet of the swarthy 'Lascar.'"

It was but the next day, and Eleanor was sitting as usual on deck looking over the waters in a lovely bright morning, when a sound was heard which almost stopped her heart's beating for a moment. It was the cry, rung out from the mast-head, "Land-ho!"

"Where is it?" she said to the captain, who was behind her. "I do not see it anywhere."

"You will see it in a little while. Wait a bit. If you could go aloft I could show it you now."

"What land? do you know?"

"Australia—the finest land the sun shines upon!"

"I suppose you mean, besides England."

"No, I don't, begging your pardon. England is very well for those who can take the ripe side of the cherry; poorer folks had better come here, if they want any chance at all.

The lucky sailor was coming down from the mast-head, and the captain went off to join those who were giving him sundry rewarding tokens of their joy for his news. Eleanor looked over the waste of waters eastward, feeling as if her breath had been taken away.

So much of her journey done! The rest seemed, and was, but little. Australia was almost—*home*. And what sort of a home? And could Mr. Rhys possibly be at Sydney to meet her? Eleanor knew he could not; yet the physical possibility

would assert itself in spite of all the well-allowed moral impossibility. But, at any rate, at Sydney she would find letters; at Sydney she would find, perhaps very soon, the means of making the remainder of her voyage; at Sydney she could no longer prevent herself from *thinking*. Eleanor had staved off thought all the way by wisely saying and insisting to herself, "Time enough when I get to Sydney." Yes; she was nearing home now. So deep, so engrossing, were her meditations and sensations, that Mr. Amos, who had come up to congratulate her on the approaching termination of the voyage, spoke to her once and again without being heard. He could not see her face, but the little straw bonnet was as motionless as if its wearer had been in a dream. He smiled and went away.

Then appeared on the distant horizon somewhat like a low blue cloud, which gathered distinctness and strength of outline by degrees. It was the land, beyond doubt; the coast of New Holland itself, as the captain informed Eleanor; and going on and passing through Bass's Strait the vessel soon directed her course northward, Little remained then before reaching port.

It was under a fair and beautiful sunlight morning that they were at last approaching Sydney. Mr. Amos was on deck as well as Eleanor, the captain standing with them; for a pilot had come on board; the captain had given up his charge, and was in command no longer. Before the watching three stretched a low unpromising shore of sandstone cliffs and sand.

"It is good to see it," said Mr. Amos; "but in this first view it don't show for much."

"Don't show for anything," said Captain Fox. "Wait till we get inside the Heads. It don't show for anything; but it's the most glorious land the sun shines on!"

"In what particular respects?" said Mr. Amos.

"In every respect of making a living and enjoying it," said the captain. "That makes a good land, don't it?"

Mr. Amos allowed that it did.

"It's the most beautiful country, if you come to that," Cap-

tain Fox went on;—"that's what Miss Powle thinks of. I wish this was Melbourne we were coming to, instead of Sydney. I'd like to have her look at it."

"Better than this?" said Mr. Amos, for Eleanor was silent.

"A better colony, for beauty and riches," said the captain. "It's the most glorious country, sir, you ever saw! hundreds of square miles of it are as handsome as a duke's park; and good for something, which a duke's park ain't. There's a great tract of country up round Mt. Macedon—thirty or forty miles back into the land—its softly rolling ground without a stone on it, as nice as ever you saw; and spotted with the trees they call she-oaks—beautiful trees; and they don't grow in a wood, but just stand round in clumps and ones or twos here and there, like a picture; and then through the openings in the ground you can see miles off more of just the same, till it gets blue in the distance; and mountains beyond all. And when you put here and there a flock of thousands of sheep spotting the country with their white backs—I ain't poetical sir, but I tell you! when I saw that country first, I thought maybe I was; but it's likely I was mistaken," said the captain laughing, "for the fit has never come back since. Miss Powle thinks there's as much poetry in the water as on the land."

Still Eleanor did not move to answer; and Mr. Amos, perhaps for her sake, went on.

"What is it that country is so good for? gold or sheep?"

"Sheep, sir, sheep! the gold grows in another part. There's enough of that too; but I'd as lieve make my money some other way. Victoria is the country for wool-growing, sir. I've a brother there—Stephen Fox—he went with little more than nothing; and now he has a flock of sheep—well, I'm afraid to say how many; but I know he needs and uses a tract of twelve thousand acres of land for them."

"That is being a pretty large landowner, as well as sheep-owner," Mr. Amos said with a smile.

"Oh, he don't own it. That wouldn't do, you know. The interest of the money would buy all the wool on his sheeps' backs."

"How then?"

"He has the use of it,—that's all. Don't you know how they work it? He pays a licence fee to Government for the privilege of using the land for a year—wherever he pitches upon a place; then he stocks it, and goes on occupying by an annual licence fee, until he has got too many neighbours and the land is getting all taken up in his neighbourhood. Then some one comes along who has money and don't want the plague of a new settlement; and he sells off his stock and claim to him, packs up his traps, pokes off through the bush with his compass till he has found a new location somewhere; then he comes back, pays a new licence fee, and stocks the new place with flocks and shepherds and begins again. And I never saw in my life anything so fine as one of those Victoria sheep or cattle farms."

"Why don't you go into it?"

"Well—it's best to divide the business just now. I can be of use to Stephen, and he can be of use to me. And I'm a little of this lady's opinion."

"How is it in this colony we are coming to?"

"Well, they are very prosperous; it's a good place to get rich. They have contrived to get along with their gold mines without ruining every other interest, as the other colonies have done for a time. But I think Victoria is the queen of them all. Victoria sends home more wool than either of the others; and she has gold, and she has other mines—different. She has copper equal to Burra-Burra—and she has coal, within a few miles of Melbourne, and other things; but the coal is a great matter here, you see."

The ship all the while was rapidly approaching the Heads, which mark and make the entrance to the harbour of Port Jackson. They assumed more dignity of elevation and feature as they were nearer seen; the rocks rising some two or three hundred feet high, with the sea foaming at their foot. Passing swiftly onward, the vessel by-and-by doubled Bradley's Head, and the magnificent sheet of water that forms the harbour was suddenly revealed to the stranger's gaze. Full of islands, full of sailing craft, bordered with varying shores of "promontory,

creek, and bay," pleasantly wooded, and spotted along its woody shores with spots of white that marked where people had pretty country homes, the quiet water glittering in the light; the view to the sea-tossed travellers was nothing short of enchanting. Mrs. Amos had come on deck, though scarce able to stand; a quiet, gentle, sweet-looking person; her eyes were full of tears now. Her husband's arm was round her, supporting her strength that she might keep up; his face was moved and grave. Eleanor was afraid to show anybody her face; yet it was outwardly in good order enough; she felt as if her heart would never get back to its accustomed beat. She sat still, breathlessly drinking in the scene, rejoicing and trembling at once. She heard Mrs. Amos's softly whispered, "Praise the Lord!" and her husband's firm "Amen!" It had like to have overset her. She pressed her hands tight together to keep her heart still.

"They know we are coming," said the captain.

"Who?" said Eleanor, quickly.

Mr. Amos pressed his wife's arm; the captain's eyes twinkled.

"Is there anybody there on the look-out for you?" he asked.

"I suppose there may be," said Eleanor calmly.

"Well, he has got notice then, some hours ago," said the captain. "The pilot telegraphed to the South Head, and from the South Head the news has gone all over Sydney and Paramatta. Pretty good-looking city is Sydney."

It was far more than that. It had been the point of the travellers' attention for some time. From the water up, one height above another, the white buildings of the town rose and spread; a white city; with forts and windmills, and fair looking country seats in its neighbourhood.

"Where is Paramatta?" said Eleanor, "and what is it?"

"It's a nice little pleasure place, up the Paramatta river; fifteen miles above Sydney. Fine scenery; it's as good as going to Richmond," added the captain.

"What is that splendid large white building," Mrs. Amos asked, "on the hill?"

"No great things of a hill,' said the captain. "That's the

Government-house. Nice gardens and pleasure grounds there too."

"How beautiful it is!" said Mrs. Amos almost with a sigh.

"It is almost like a Scottish lake!" said her husband. "I remember one that this scene reminds me of at this moment."

"A little of this is worth all Scotland," said the captain. "There's pretty much everything here that a man wants—and not hard to come by, either. Oh, you'll stay in Sydney! why shouldn't you? There's people enough here that want teaching, worse than the savages. I declare, I think they do."

"Somebody else will have to teach them," said Mr. Amos.

"What an array of ships and sails of all sorts! This gives one an idea of the business of the place."

"Business, and growing business," said the captain. "Sydney is getting ahead as fast as it can."

"How sweet the air is!" said Eleanor.

"Ay!" said the captain. "Now you smell green things again. I'll wager you won't want to put to sea any more, after you once get a firm foot on land. Why this is the very place for you. Enough to do, and every luxury a man need want, at hand when your work is done."

"When is one's work done?" said Eleanor.

"*I* should say, when one has worked enough and got what one is after," said the captain. "That's my idea. I never was for working till I couldn't enjoy."

"What are we after, do you think?" said Eleanor looking round at him.

"What everybody else is!" the captain answered, somewhat shortly.

"Luxury, namely?"

"Yes! it comes to that. Everybody is seeking happiness in his own way; and when he has got it, then it is luxury."

Eleanor only looked at him; she did not say anything further, and turned again to the contemplation of the scene they had in view. The captain bustled off and was gone in a few minutes.

"I wish you'd sing, sister Powle," said Mr. Amos in that interval.

"Do!" said his wife. "Please do!"

Whether Eleanor was precisely in a singing mood or no, she began as desired. Mr. Amos joined her, in somewhat subdued tones, and Mrs. Amos gave a still gentler seconding; while the rich notes of her own voice filled the air; so mellow that their full power was scarcely recognized; so powerful that the mellow sound seemed to fill the ship's rigging. The sailors moved softly. They were accustomed to that music. All the way out, on every Sunday service, or any other that was held, Eleanor had served for choir to the whole company, joined by here and there a rough voice that broke in as it could, and just backed by Mr. Amos's steady support. There was more than one in that ship's company to whom memory would never cease to bring a reminder that "there is balm in Gilead;" for some reason or other that was one of Eleanor's favourite songs. Now she gave another—sweet, clear, and wild;—the furthest-off sailors stood still to hearken. They had heard it often enough to know what the words were.

"O who's like Jesus!
From sins and fears he frees us.
He died for you,
He died for me,
He died to set poor sinners free.
O who's like Jesus!"

The chorus floated all over after each verse of the hymn was ended; it went clear to the ship's bows; but Eleanor sat quite still in her old position, clasping her hands fast on the rail and not moving her head. During the singing the captain came back and stood behind them listening; while people on the vessels that they passed, suspended their work and looked up to hear. Just as the singing was finished, a little boat was seen swiftly coming alongside; and in another minute they were boarded by the gentleman who had been its solitary passenger. The captain turned to meet him. He was a man rather under middle size, black hair curling all round his head, eyes quick and bright, and whole appearance handsome at once and business-like. He came forward briskly, and so he spoke.

"Have you got anybody here that belongs to me?" he said. "Captain, is there a Miss Powle on board of your ship?"

Captain Fox silently stepped on one side, and made a motion of his hand towards Eleanor. Eleanor hearing herself called, slowly rose and faced the new-comer. There was a second's pause, as the two confronted each other; then the gentleman bowed very low and advanced to touch the lady's hand, which, however, when he touched he held.

"Is this Miss Powle? Miss *Eleanor* Powle?"

"Yes."

"I am honoured in having such a cousin! I hope you have heard somebody speak of a Mr. Esthwaite in these parts?"

"I have heard Mrs. Caxton speak of Mr. Esthwaite—very often."

"All right!" said the gentleman letting go Eleanor's hand. "Identity proved. Captain, I am going to take charge of this lady. Will you see that her luggage, personal effects, and so on, are brought on deck?"—then turning to Eleanor with real deference and cordiality in his manner, he went on,—"Mrs. Esthwaite is longing to see you. It is such a pleasure to have a cousin come from England, as you can but feebly appreciate; she hopes to learn the new fashions from you, and all that sort of thing; and she has been dressing your room with flowers, I believe, for these three months past. If you please, we will not wait for the ship's slow motions, but I will carry you straight to land in my boat; and glad you will be! Will you signify your assent to this arrangement?—as I perceive the captain is a servant of yours, and will do nothing without you bid him."

"Thank you," said Eleanor, "I will go with you; but what will be done with all my boxes in the hold?" This inquiry was addressed to the captain.

"Don't you fear anything," said Mr. Esthwaite, "now you have overcome so many troubles and got to this haven of rest We will take care of your boxes. I suppose you have brought enough to stock the whole Navigator's group—or Fiji, is it, you are going to? I would go to any other one rather—but never mind; the boxes shall be stored, and maybe you'll unpack them here after all. Captain, what about that luggage?"

Eleanor went down to give directions, and presently came on deck again, already to go ashore. There was a little delay on account of the baggage; and meanwhile Mr. Esthwaite was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Amos.

"I am very much obliged to you for taking care of this cousin of mine," he said to them. "I am sure she is worth taking care of. And now I should like to take care of you in turn. Will you go to my house, and make us happy?"

They explained that they were going elsewhere.

"Well, come and see her, then; for she will be wanting to see somebody. We will do the best for her we can; but still, you know, absent friends have the best claim. By the way! didn't I hear some sweet Methodist singing as I came up? was it on this ship? You haven't got any Methodists on board, captain, have you?"

"I've been one myself, this voyage!" said the captain.

"I wouldn't," said Mr. Esthwaite. "The Church service is the only one to be used at sea. Every other sounds—I don't know how—incompatible. There is something in the gentle swell of the rolling waves, and in the grandeur of the horizon, that calls for the finest form of words mortals could put together; and when you have got such a form, why not use it?"

"You did not like the form of the singing, then?" said Mr. Amos, smiling.

"No," said Mr. Esthwaite, drily, "it struck me that if there had been a cathedral roof over it, one of those voices would have lifted the rafters and gone on; and that would not have been reverential, you know. Now, my young cousin!"—

"Mr. Amos," said Eleanor aside to him and colouring deeply, "if there are any letters for me at the house where you are going, or at the post-office, will you send them to me?"

"I will certainly make it my care, and bring them to you myself."

"I'll send for anything you want," said Mr. Esthwaite. "What's that, letters? We'll get all there is in Sydney, and there is a good deal, waiting for this young lady. I've

had one floor of my warehouse half full for some months back already. No use of it for myself."

At last they got off; and it was not quickly, for Eleanor had to give a good-by to every one on board. Mr. Esthwaite looked on smiling, until he was permitted to hand her down the vessel's side, and lodged her in the wherry.

"Now you are out of the ship," said he, looking keenly at her. "Aren't you glad?"

"I have some good friends in her," said Eleanor.

"Friends! I should think so. Those were salt tears that were shed for your coming away. Positively, I don't think a man of them could see clear to take his last look at you."

Neither were Eleanor's feelings quite unmixed at this moment. She expected to see Mr. and Mrs. Amos again; with the rest her intercourse was finished; and it had been of that character which leaves longing and tender memories behind. She felt all that now. And she felt much more. With the end of her voyage in the "Diana" came, at least for the present, an end to her inward tranquillity. Now there were letters awaiting her—letters for which she had wished nervously so long; now she was near Fiji and her new life; now she dared to realize, she could not help it, what all the voyage she had refused to think of, as still in a hazy distance of the future. Here it was, nigh at hand, looming up through the haze, taking distinctness and proportions; and Eleanor's heart was in a state of agitation to which that sound little member was very little accustomed. However, the outward effect of all this was to give her manner even an unwonted degree of cool quietness; and Mr. Esthwaite was in a state between daunted and admiring. Both of them kept silence for a little while after leaving the ship, while the wherry pulled along in the beautiful bay, passing among a crowd of vessels of all sorts and descriptions, moving and still. The scene was lively, picturesque, pleasant, in the highest degree.

"How does my cousin like us on a first view?"

"It is a beautiful scene!" said Eleanor. "What a great variety of vessels are here!"

"And isn't this just the finest harbour in the world?"

"I have heard a great deal of Port Philip," said Eleanor, smiling. "I understand there is a second Bay of Naples there."

"I don't care for the Bay of Naples! We have sunk all that. We are in a new world. Wait till you see what I will show you to-morrow. Now look at that wooded point, with the white houses spotting it. Those are fine seats; beautiful view and all that; and at Sydney you can have everything you want, almost at command."

"You know," said Eleanor, "that is not absolutely a new experience to me. In England, we have not far to seek."

"Oh, *you* say so! Much you know about it. You have been in such a nest of a place as my cousin Caxton spreads her wings over. I never was in a nest, till I made one for myself. How is my good cousin?"

The talk ran upon home things now until they reached the town and landed at a fine stone quay; then to the custom house, where business was easily despatched; then Mr. Esthwaite put Eleanor into a cab, and they drove away through the streets for his house in the higher part of the city. Eleanor's eyes were full of business. How strange it was! So far away from home, and so long living on the sea, now on landing to be greeted by such a multitude of familiar sounds and sights. The very cab she was driving in; the omnibuses and carts they passed; the English-cut faces; the same street cries; the same trades revealing themselves as she had been accustomed to in London. But now and then there came a difference of Australasia. There would be a dray drawn by three or four pair of bullocks—London streets never saw that turn-out; and then Eleanor would start at seeing a little group of the natives of the country, dressed in English leavings of costume. Those made her feel where she was, otherwise the streets and houses and shops had very much of a home air; except, indeed, when a curious old edifice, built of logs, peeped in among white stone fronts and handsome shop windows, the relics, Mr. Esthwaite told her, of not so very far distant time, when the town first began to grow up and the "bush" covered almost all the ground now occupied by it. Eleanor was well pleased to be so busied in looking out that she had little leisure for talking, and

Mr. Esthwaite sat by and smiled in satisfaction. But this blessed immunity could not last. The cab stopped before a house in George-street.

"Has she come?" exclaimed a voice, as the door opened, and a head full of curls put itself out into the hall. "Have you brought her? Oh, how delightful! How glad I am!" And the owner of the curls came near to be introduced, hardly waiting for the introduction, and to give Eleanor the most gleeful sort of a welcome.

"And she was on that ship, the 'Diana,' Egbert? How nice! Just as you thought; and I was so afraid it was nothing but another disappointment. I was afraid to look out when the cab came. Now come upstairs, cousin Eleanor, and I will take you to your room. You must be tired to death, are you not?"

"Why should I?" said Eleanor, as she tripped upstairs after her hostess. "I have done nothing for four months."

"Look here!" shouted Mr. Esthwaite, from the hall—"Louisa, don't stop to talk over the fashions now—it is dinner-time. How soon will you be down?"

"Don't mind him," said pretty Mrs. Esthwaite, leading the way into a light pleasant room overlooking the bay; "sit down and rest yourself. Would you like anything before you dress? Now just think you are at home, will you? It's too delightful to have you here!"

Eleanor went to the window, which overlooked a magnificent view of the harbour. Very oddly, the thought in her mind at that moment was, how soon an opportunity could be found for her to make the rest of her voyage. Scarce landed, she wanted to see the means of getting away again. Her way she saw, over the harbour; where was her conveyance? While she stood looking, her new-found cousin was considering her; the erect beautiful figure, in all the simplicity of its dress; the closed little bonnet with chocolate ribands, the fine grave face under it; lastly, the little hand which rested on the back of the chair, for Eleanor's sea-glove was off. And a certain awe grew up in Mrs. Esthwaite's mind.

"Cousin Eleanor," said she, "shall I leave you to dress?

Dinner will be ready presently, and Egbert will be impatient, I know, till you come downstairs again."

"Thank you. I will be but a few minutes. How beautiful this is! Oh, how beautiful to my eyes that have seen no beauty but sea beauty for so long! And the air is so good!"

"I am glad you like it. Is it prettier than England?"

"Prettier than England!" Eleanor looked round smiling. "Nothing could be that."

"Well, I didn't know. Mr. Esthwaite is always running down England, you see, and I don't know how much of it he means. I came away when I was so little, I don't remember anything, of course——"

Here came such a shout of "Louisa! Louisa!" from below, that Mrs. Esthwaite, laughing, was obliged to obey it and go, and Eleanor was left. There was not much time then for anything; yet a minute Eleanor was held at the window by the bay with its wooded shores and islands glittering in the evening light; then she turned from it to pray, for her heart needed strength, and a great sense of loneliness had suddenly come over her. Fighting this feeling, and dressing, both eagerly, in a little time she was ready to descend and encounter Mr. Esthwaite and dinner.

An encounter it was to Mr. Esthwaite. He had put himself in very careful order, though that, to do him justice, was an habitual weakness of his; and he met his guest, when she appeared, with a bow of profound recognition and appreciation. Yet Eleanor was only in the simplest of all white dresses, without lace or embroidery. No matter. The rich hair was in perfect arrangement; the fine figure and fine carriage, in their unconscious ease, were more imposing than anything pretentious can ever be, even to such persons as Mr. Esthwaite. He measured his young guest correctly and at once. His wife took the measure of Eleanor's gown meanwhile, and privately studied what it was that made it so graceful—a problem she had not solved when they sat down to dinner.

The dinner was sumptuous and well served. Mr. Esthwaite took delight evidently in playing his part of host, and some pride, both housekeeping and patriotic, in showing to Eleanor

all the means he had to play it with. The turtle soup he declared was good, though she might have seen better; the fish from Botany Bay, the wild fowl from the interior, the game of other kinds from the Hunter river, he declared she could not have known surpassed anywhere. Then the vegetables were excellent; the potatoes from Van Dieman's Land were just better than all others in the world; and the dessert certainly in its abundance of treasures justified his boasting that Australia was a grand country for anybody that liked fruit. The growth of the tropics and of the cooler latitudes of England met together in confusion of beauty and sweetness on Mr. Esthwaite's table. There were oranges and pineapples on one hand, peaches, plums, melons, from the neighbouring country, with all sorts of English-grown fruits from Van Dieman's Land, gooseberries, pears, and grapes. Native wines also he pressed on his guest, assuring her that some of them were as good as Sauterne, and others very fair claret and champagne. Eleanor took the wines on credit; for the rest, her eyes enabled her to give admiration where her taste fell short. And admiration was expected of her. Mr. Esthwaite was in a great state of satisfaction, having very much to do in the admiring way himself.

"Did Louisa keep you upstairs to begin upon the fashions?" said he, as he pulled a pineapple to pieces.

"I see you have very little appreciation of that subject," said Eleanor.

"Yes!" said Mrs. Esthwaite,—"just ask him whether he thinks it important that *his* clothes should be cut in the newest pattern, and how many good hats he has thrown away because he got hold of something new that he liked better. Just ask him. He never will hear me."

"I am going to ask her something," said Mr. Esthwaite. "See here! you are not going to those savage and inhospitable islands, are you?"

Eleanor's smile and answer were as cool as if her whole nature had not been in a stir of excitement.

"What in the world do *you* expect to do there?" said her host, with a strong tone of disapprobation. "'Wasting

sweetness on the desert air' is nothing to it: this is positive desecration!"

Eleanor let the opinion pass, and ate the pineapple which he gave her with an apparently unimpaired relish.

"You don't know what sort of a place it is!" he insisted.

"I cannot know, I suppose, without going."

"Suppose you stay here," said Mr. Esthwaite; "and we'll send for anybody in the world you please, to make you comfortable. Seriously, we want good people in this colony; we have got a supply of all other sorts, but those are in a deficient minority."

"In that case, I think everybody that stays here is bound to supply one."

"See here—who is that gentleman that is so fortunate as to be expecting you? what is his name?"

"Mr. Esthwaite! for shame!" said his wife. "I think you are a very presuming cousin."

Mr. Esthwaite knew quite well that he was, but he smiled to himself with satisfaction to see the answer his question had called up into Eleanor's cheeks. The rich dye of crimson was pretty to behold; her words were delayed long enough to mark either difficulty of speaking, or displeasure at the necessity for it. Mr. Esthwaite did not care which it was. At last, Eleanor answered, with calm distinctness, though without facing him,

"Do you not know the name?"

"I—I believe Mrs. Caxton must have mentioned it in one of her letters. She ought, and I think she did."

An impatient throb of displeasure passed through Eleanor's veins. It did not appear. She said composedly, "The name is Rhys—it is a Welsh name—spelled R h y s."

"Hm! I remember. What sort of a man is he?"

Eleanor looked up, fairly startled with the audacity of her host; and only replied gravely, "I am unable to say."

Mr. Esthwaite at least had a sense of humour in him; for he smiled, and his lips kept pertinaciously unsteady for some time, even while he went on talking.

"I mean—is he a man calculated for savage, or for civilized life?"

"I hope so," said Eleanor, wilfully.

"Mr. Esthwaite! you astonish me!" said his wife.

Mr. Esthwaite seemed, however, highly amused. "Do you know what savage life is?" he said to Eleanor. "It is not what you think. It is not a garden of roses, with a pineapple tucked away behind every bush. Now, if you would come here—here is a grand opening. Here is every sort of work wanting you—and Mr. Rhys—whatever the line of his talents may be. We'll build him a church, and we'll go and hear him, and we'll make much of you. Seriously, if my good cousin had known what she was sending you to, she would have wished the 'Diana' should sink with you on board, rather than get to the end of her voyage. It is quite self-denial enough to come here—when one does not expect to gain anything by it."

"Mr. Esthwaite! Egbert!" cried his wife. "Now you are caught! Self-denial to come here! That is what you mean by all your talk about the colonies and England!"

"Don't be silly, my dear," said her husband. "These people would think it so. *I* don't; but I am addressing myself to their prejudices. Self-denial is what they are after."

"It is not what I am after," said Eleanor, laughing. "I must break up *your* prejudices."

"What are you after, then? Seriously, what *are* you going to those barbarous islands for—putting friendship and all such regards out of the question? What takes you there—without humbug? You must excuse me—but you are a very extraordinary person to look at—as a missionary."

Eleanor could hardly help laughing. She doubted whether or no this was a question to be answered; discerning a look of seriousness, as she thought, beneath the gleam in her host's eye, she chose to run the risk of answering. She faced him, and them, as she spoke.

"I love Jesus. And I love to do his work, wherever he gives it to me; or, as I am a woman and cannot do much, I am glad to help those who can."

Mr. Esthwaite was put out a little. He had words on his lips that he did not speak; and he piled Eleanor's plate with

various fruit dainties, and drank one or two glasses of his Australian claret before he said anything more; an interval occupied by Eleanor in cooling down after her last speech, which had flushed her cheeks prodigiously.

"That's a sort of work to be done anywhere," he said, finally, as if Eleanor had but just spoken. "I am sure it can be done here, and much better for you. Now see here—I like you. Don't you suppose, if you were to try, you could persuade this Mr. Rhys to quit those regions of darkness and come and take the same sort of work at Sydney that he is doing there?"

"No."

"Seems decided!—" said Mr. Esthwaite, humorously, looking towards his wife. "I am afraid this gentleman is a positive sort of character. Well!—there is no use in struggling against fate. My dear, take your cousin off and give her some coffee. I will be there directly."

The ladies left him accordingly; and in the pretty drawing-room Mrs. Esthwaite plied Eleanor with questions relating to her voyage, her destination, and, above all, the England of which she had heard so much and knew so little. Her curiosity was huge, and extended to the smallest of imaginable details; and one thing followed another with very little of congruous nature between them. And Eleanor answered, and related, and described, and the while thought—where her letters were? Nevertheless she gave herself kindly to her hostess's gratification, and patiently put her own by; and the evening ended with Mrs. Esthwaite being in a state of ecstatic delight with her new-found relation. Mr. Esthwaite had kept silence and played the part of listener for the larger portion of the evening, using his eyes, and probably his judgment, freely during that time. As they were separating, he asked Eleanor whether she could get up at six o'clock.

Eleanor asked what for.

"Do, for once; and I will take you a drive in the Domain."

"What Domain? yours, do you mean?"

"Not exactly. I have not got so far as that. No; it's the Government Domain—everybody rides and drives there, and

almost everybody goes at six o'clock. It's worth going—botanical gardens, and all that sort of thing."

Eleanor swiftly thought that it was scarce likely Mr. Amos would have her letters for her, or at least bring them, so early as that; and she might as well indulge her host's fancy, if not her own. She agreed to the proposal, and Mrs. Esthwaite went rejoicing with her to her room.

"You'll like it," she said. "The botanical gardens are beautiful, and I daresay you will know a great deal more about them than I do. Oh, it's delightful to have you here! I only cannot bear to think you must go away again."

"You are very kind to me," said Eleanor, gratefully. "My dear aunt Caxton will be made glad to know what friends I have found among strangers."

"Don't speak about it!" said Mrs. Esthwaite, her eyes fairly glistening with earnestness. "I am sure if Egbert can do anything he will be too glad. Now won't you do just as if you were at home? I want you to be completely at home with us—now and always. You must feel very much the want of your old home in England! being so far from it, too."

"Heaven is my home," said Eleanor, cheerfully; "I do not feel the loss of England so much as you think. That other home always seems near."

"Does it?" said Mrs. Esthwaite. "It seems such an immense way off, to me!"

"I used to think so, but it is near to me now. So it does not so much matter whereabouts on the earth I am."

"It must be nice to feel so!" said Mrs. Esthwaite, with an unconscious sigh.

"Do you not feel so?" Eleanor asked.

"Oh, no. I do not know anything about it. I am not good—like you."

"It is not goodness—not my goodness—that makes heaven my home," said Eleanor, smiling at her and taking her hands.

"But I am sure you are good?" said Mrs. Esthwaite, earnestly.

"Just as you are, except for the grace of God, which is free to all."

"But," said Mrs. Esthwaite, looking at her as if she were something hardly of earth like ordinary mortals, "I have not given up the world as you have. I cannot. I like it too well."

"I have not given it up either," said Eleanor, smiling again; "not in the sense you mean. I have not given up anything but sin. I enjoy everything else in the world as much as you do."

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Esthwaite, much bewildered.

"Only this," said Eleanor, with very sweet gravity now. "I do not love anything that my King hates. All that I have given up, and all that leads to it; but I am all the more free to enjoy everything that is really worth enjoying, quite as well as you can, or anybody else."

"But you do not go to parties and dances, and you do not drink wine, and go to the theatre, and all that sort of thing; do you?"

"I do not love anything that my King hates," said Eleanor, shaking her head gently.

"But dancing and wine—what harm is in them?"

"Think what they lead to!"

"Well, wine—excuse me, I know so little about these things, and I want to know what you think—wine, I know, is hurtful if people will drink too much, but what harm is there in dancing?"

"None that I know of," said Eleanor, "if it were always suited to womanly delicacy, and if it took one into the society of those that love Christ, or helped one to witness for him before those who do not."

"Well, I will tell you the truth," said Mrs. Esthwaite, with a sort of penitent laugh, "I love dancing."

"Ay, but I love Christ," said Eleanor, "and whatever is not for his honour I am glad to give up. It is no cross to me. I used to like some things too, but now I love him, and his will is my will."

"Ah, that is what I said! you are good, that is the reason. I can't help doing wrong things, even if I want to do it ever so much, and when I know they are wrong, and I shouldn't like to *give up* anything."

"Listen," said Eleanor, holding her hands fast. "It is not that I am good. It is that I love Jesus, and he helps me. I cannot do anything of myself—I cannot give up anything—but I trust in my Lord, and he does it for me. It is he that does all in me that you would call good."

"Ah, but you love him."

"Should I not?" said Eleanor, "when he loved me, and gave himself for me, that he might bring me from myself and sin to know him and be happy?"

"And you are happy, are you not?" said Mrs. Esthwaite, looking at her as if it were something that she had come to believe against evidence. There was good evidence for it now in Eleanor's smile, which would bear studying.

"There is nothing but happiness where Christ is."

"But I couldn't understand it—those places where you are going are so dreadful—and why you should go there at all."

"No, you do not understand, and cannot till you try it. I have such joy in the love of Christ sometimes, that I wish for nothing so much in the world as to bring others to know what I know!"

There was power in the lighting face, which Mrs. Esthwaite gazed at and wondered.

"I think I am willing to go anywhere and do anything which my King may give me to do in his service."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Esthwaite, as if adding a convincing corollary from her own mind, "you have some other reason to wish to get there—to the Islands, I mean."

That brought a flood of crimson over Eleanor's face; she let go her hostess's hands and turned away.

"But there was something else I wanted to ask," said Mrs. Esthwaite, hastily. "Egbert said——Are you very tired, my dear?"

"Not at all, I assure you."

"Egbert said there was some most beautiful singing as he came up alongside the ship to-day—was it you?"

"In part it was I."

"He said it was hymns. Won't you sing me one?"

Eleanor liked it very well; it suited her better than talking. They sat down together, and Eleanor sang:—

"'There's balm in Gilead,
To make the wounded whole.
There's power enough in Jesus
To save a sin-sick soul.'"

And somewhat to her surprise, before the hymn had gone far, her companion was weeping, and kept her face hidden in her handkerchief till the last words were sung.

"'Come, then, to this physician;
His help he'll freely give.
He asks no hard condition,—
'Tis only, look, and live.
For there's balm in Gilead,
To make the wounded whole.
There's power enough in Jesus
To save a sin-sick soul.'"

"I never heard anything so sweet in all my life!" said Mrs. Esthwaite, as she got up and wiped her eyes. "I've been keeping you up. But do tell me," said she, looking at her innocently, "are all Methodists like you?"

"No," said Eleanor, laughing; and then she was vexed at herself that the laugh changed to a sob, and the tears came. Was *she* hysterical? It was very unlike her, but this seemed something like it. Neither could she immediately conquer the strangling sensation, between laughter and crying, which threatened her.

"My dear! I'm very sorry," said Mrs. Esthwaite; "you are too tired, and it is my fault. Egbert will be properly angry with me."

But Eleanor conquered the momentary oppression, threw off her tears, and gave her hostess a peaceful kiss for good-night; with which the little lady went off comforted. Then Eleanor sat down by her window, and with tears wet on her eyelashes yet, looked off to the beautiful moonlit harbour in the distance —and thought. Her thoughts were her own. Only some of them had a reference to certain words that speak of "sowing beside all waters," and a tender earnest remembrance of the

seed she had just been scattering. "Beside all waters"—yes; and as Eleanor looked over towards the fair, peace-speaking view of Port Jackson, in New South Wales, she recollected the prayer that labourers might be sent forth into the vineyard

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest."

"That girl is the most lovely creature!" said Mrs. Esthwaite, when she rejoined her husband.

"What have you been talking to her about? Now she will not be up in time to take a drive in the Domain."

"Yes, she will. She has got plenty of spirit. But, oh! Egbert, to think of that girl going to put herself in those savage islands, where she won't see anybody!"

"It is absurd?" said her husband, but somewhat faintly.

"I couldn't but think to-night, as I looked at her—you should have seen her. Something upset her and set her to crying; then she wouldn't cry; and the little white hand she brushed across her eyes, and then rested on the chair-back to keep herself steady—I looked at it, and I couldn't bear to think of her going to teach those barbarians. And her eyes were all such a glitter with tears, and her feelings—I've fallen in love with her, Egbert."

"She's a magnificent creature!" said Mr. Esthwaite. "Wouldn't she set Sydney a-fire, if she was to be here a little while! But somebody has been beforehand with Sydney—so it's no use talking."

Eleanor was ready in good time for the drive, and with spirits entirely refreshed by the night's sleep and the morning's renewing power. Things looked like new things, unlike

those which yesterday saw. All feeling of strangeness and loneliness was gone; her spirits were primed for enjoyment. Mr. and Mrs. Esthwaite both watched eagerly to see the effect of the drive and the scene upon her: one was satisfied, the other was not. The intent delight in Eleanor's eyes escaped Mrs. Esthwaite; she looked for more expression in words; her husband was content that Eleanor's mind was full of what he gave it to act upon. The Domain was an exquisite place for a morning drive; and the more stylish inhabitants of Sydney found it so; there was a good display of equipages, varying in show and pretension. To Mrs. Esthwaite's disappointment, neither these nor their owners drew Eleanor's attention; she did not even seem to see them; while the flowers in the woods through which part of the drive was cut, the innumerable gorgeous novel and sweet flowers of a new land, were a very great delight to her. All of them were new, or nearly so. How Eleanor contrasted them with the wild things of Plassy, which she knew so well! And instead of the blackbird and green wren, there were birds of brilliant hues, almost as gay as the flowers over which their bright wings went, and yet stranger than they. It was a sort of drive of enchantment to Eleanor; the air was delightful, though warm, with no feeling of lassitude or oppression resulting from the heat.

There were other pleasures. From point to point, as they drove through the "bush," views opened upon them of the harbour and its islands, glittering in the morning sun. Changes of beauty; for every view was a little unlike the others, and revealed the loveliness with a difference. Eleanor felt herself in a new world. She was quite ready for the gardens, when they got through the "bush."

The gardens were fine. Here she had a feast which neither of her companions could enjoy with her in anything like fellowship. Eleanor had not lived so long with Mrs. Caxton, entering into all her pursuits, without becoming somewhat well acquainted with plants; and now she was almost equally charmed at seeing her dear old home friends, and at making acquaintance with the glorious beauties that outshone them, but

could never look so kindly. Slowly Eleanor went through the gardens, followed by her host and hostess, who took their enjoyment in observing her. In the Botanical Gardens Mr. Esthwaite came up alongside again, to tell her names and discuss specimens; he found Eleanor knew more about them than he did.

"All this was a wild 'bush'—nothing but rocks and trees a few years ago," he remarked.

"*This?* this garden?"

"Yes, only so long ago as 1825."

"Somebody has deserved well of the community, then," said Eleanor. "It is a delicious place."

"General Sir Ralph Darling had that good desert. It is a fine thing to be in high place and able to execute great plans; isn't it?"

Eleanor rose up from a flower, and gave Mr. Esthwaite one of her thoughtful glances.

"I don't know," she said. "His gardeners did the work, after all."

"They don't get the thanks."

"*That* is not what one works for," said Eleanor, smiling. "So the thing is done, what matter?"

"If it *isn't* done, what matter? No, no! I want to get the good of what I do,—in praise, or in something else."

"What is Sir Ralph Darling the better for my thanks now?"

"Well, he's dead!" said Mr. Esthwaite.

"So I was thinking."

"Well, what do you mean? Do you mean that you would do nothing while you are alive, for fear you would not hear of it after you have left the world?"

"Not exactly."

"What then? I don't know what you are after."

"You say this was all a wilderness a few years ago—why should you despair of what you call the 'black islands?'"

"Oho!" said Mr. Esthwaite; "we are there, are we? By a hop, skip, and jump—leaving the argument. That's like a woman."

"Are you sure?" said Eleanor.

"Like all the women I ever saw. Not one of them can stick to the point."

"Then I will return to mine," said Eleanor, laughing; "or rather bring you up to it. I referred—and meant to refer you—to another sort of gardening, in which the labourer receives wages and gathers fruit; but the beauty of it is, that his wages go with him—he does not leave them behind—and the fruit is unto life eternal."

"That's fair," said Mr. Esthwaite. "See here—you don't preach, do you?"

"I will not, to you," said Eleanor. "Mr. Esthwaite, I will look at no more flowers I believe, this morning, since you leave the time of our stay to me."

Mr. Esthwaite behaved himself, and though a speech was on his tongue he was silent, and attended Eleanor home in an unexceptionable manner. Mrs. Esthwaite was in a dissatisfied mood of mind.

"I hope it will be a great while before you find a good chance to go to Fiji!" she said.

"Do not wish that," said Eleanor; "for in that case I may have to take a chance that is not good."

"Ah! but you are not the sort of person to go there."

"I should be very sorry to think that," said Eleanor, smiling.

"Well, it is clear you are not. Just to look at you! I am sure you are exactly a person to look always as nice as you do now."

"I hope never to look less nice than I do now," said Eleanor, rather opening her eyes.

"What! in that place?"

"Why, yes, certainly. Why not?"

"But you will not wear that flat there?"

Eleanor and Mr. Esthwaite here both gave way in a fit of laughter.

"Why, yes, I will; if I find it, as I suppose I shall, the most comfortable thing."

"But you cannot wear white dresses there?"

"If I cannot, I will submit to it; but, my dear cousin, I have

brought little else *but* white dresses with me. For such a climate, what else is so good?"

"Not like that you wore yesterday?"

"They are all very much alike, I believe. What was the matter with that?"

"Why, it was so——" Mrs. Esthwaite paused. "But how can you get them washed? Do you expect to have servants there?"

"There are plenty of servants, I believe; not very well trained, indeed, or it would not be necessary to have so many. At any rate, they can wash, whatever else they can do."

"I don't believe they would know how to wash your dresses."

"Then I can teach them," said Eleanor, merrily.

"*You!* To wash a cambric dress!"

"That, or any other."

"Eleanor, do not talk so!"

"Certainly not, if you do not wish it. I was only putting you to rest on the score of my laundry work."

"With those hands!" said Mrs. Esthwaite, expressively.

Eleanor looked down at her hands, for a moment a higher and graver expression flitted over her face, then she smiled again.

"I should be ashamed of my hands if they were good for nothing."

"Capital!" said Mr. Esthwaite. "That's what I like. That is what I call having spirit. I like to see a woman have some character of her own; something besides hands, in fact."

"But, Eleanor, I do not understand. I am serious. You never washed; how can you know how?"

"That was precisely my reasoning; so I learned."

"Learned to *wash*? *You*?"

"Yes."

"You did it with your own hands?"

"The dress you were so good as to approve," said Eleanor, smiling, "was washed and done up by myself."

"Do you expect to have to do it for yourself?" said Mrs. Esthwaite, looking intensely horrified.

"No, not generally; but to teach somebody, or upon occasion, you know. You see," she said, smiling again her full rich smile, "I am bent upon having my white dresses."

Mrs. Esthwaite was too full for speech; and her husband looked at his new cousin with an eye of more absolute admiration than he had yet bestowed on her. Eleanor's thoughts were already on something else: springing forward to meet Mr. Amos and his letters.

Breakfast was over, however, before he arrived. Much to her chagrin she was obliged to receive him in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Esthwaite; no private talk was possible. Mr. Esthwaite engaged him immediately in an earnest but desultory conversation about Sydney, Eleanor, and the mission, and the prospect of their getting to their destination, which Mr. Esthwaite prophesied would not be within any moderate limits of time. Mr. Amos owned that he had heard of no opportunity, near or far. The talk lasted a good while, and it was not till he was taking leave that Eleanor contrived to follow him out and gain a word to herself.

"There are no letters for you," said Mr. Amos, speaking under his breath, and turning a cheerful but concerned face towards Eleanor. "I have made every inquiry—at the post-office, and of everybody likely to know about such things. There are none, and they know of none."

Eleanor said nothing: her face grew perceptibly white.

"There is nothing the matter with brother Rhys," said Mr. Amos, hastily; "we have plenty of news from him—all right—he is quite well, and for a year past has been on another station; different from the one he was on when you last heard from him. There is nothing the matter—only there are no letters for you; and there must be some explanation of that."

He paused; but Eleanor was silent, only the colour returned a little.

"We want to get away from here as soon as possible, I suppose," Mr. Amos went on, half under breath; "but as yet I see no opening. It will come."

"Yes," said Eleanor, somewhat mechanically. "You will let me know —"

"Certainly—as soon as I know anything myself; and I will continue to make inquiry for those letters. Mr. Armitage is away in the country; he might know something about them, but nobody else does; and he ought to have left them with somebody else if he had them. But there can be nothing wrong about it; there is only some mistake, or mischance; the letters from Vuliva, where brother Rhys is, are quite recent, and everything is going on most prosperously, himself included. And we are to proceed to the same station. I am very glad for ourselves and for you."

"Thank you," Eleanor said; but she was not equal to saying much. She listened quietly, and with her usual air, and Mr. Amos never discovered the work his tidings wrought; he told his wife sister Powle looked a little blank, he thought, at missing her expected despatches, and no wonder. It was an awkward thing.

Eleanor slowly made her way up to her room and sat down, feeling as if the foundations of the earth, to *her* standing, had given way. She was more overwhelmed with dismay than she would have herself anticipated in England, if she could have looked forward to such a catastrophe. Reason said there was not sufficient cause; but poor Eleanor was to feel the truth of Mrs. Caxton's prediction, that she would find out again that certain feelings might be natural that were not reasonable. Nay, reason said on this occasion that the failure of letters proved too much to justify the distress she felt; it proved a combination of things, that no carelessness nor indifference nor unwillingness to write, on the part of Mr. Rhys, could possibly have produced. Let him feel how he would, he would have written, he *must* have written to meet her there; all his own delicacy and his knowledge of hers affirmed and re-affirmed that letters were in existence somewhere, though it might be at the bottom of the ocean. Reason fought well; to what use, when nature trembled, and shivered, and shrank. Poor Eleanor! she felt alone now, without a mother and without shelter; and the fair shores of Port Jackson looked very strange and desolate to her; a very foreign land, far from home. What if Mr. Rhys with his fastidious notions of delicacy, did not fancy

so bold a proceeding as her coming out to him? what if he disapproved? What if, on further knowledge of the place and the work, he had judged both unfit for her; and did not, for his own sake only in a selfish point of view, choose to encourage her coming? In that case her being *come* would make no difference; he would not shelter himself from a judgment displeasing to him, because the escape from its decisions was rendered easy. What if for *his own sake* his feeling had changed, and he wanted her no longer? Years had gone by since he had seen her; it must have been a wayward fancy that could ever have made him think of her at first; and now, about his grave work in a distant land, and with leisure to correct blunders of fancy, perhaps he had settled into the opinion that it was just as well that his coming away had separated them, and did not feel able to welcome her appearance in Australia, and was too sincere to write what he did not feel; so wrote nothing. Not very like Mr. Rhys, reason whispered; but reason's whisper, though heard, could not quiet the sensitive delicacy which trembled at doubt. So miserable, so chilled, so forlorn, Eleanor had never felt in her life; not when the "Diana" first carried her away from the shores of her native land.

What was she to do? That question throbbed at her heart; but it answered itself soon. Stay in Australia she could not; go home to England she could not; no, not upon this mere deficiency of testimony. There was only one alternative left; she must go on whenever Mr. and Mrs. Amos should move. Nature might tremble and quiver, and all Eleanor's nerves did; but there was no other course to pursue. "I can tell," she thought, "I shall know—the first word, the first look, will tell me the whole; I cannot be deceived. I must go on and meet that word and look, whatever it costs me—I must; and then, if it is—if it is not satisfying to me, then aunt Caxton shall have me! I can go back, as well as I have come. Shame and misery would not hinder me; they would not be so bad as my staying here then."

So the question of action was settled; but the question of feeling not so soon. Eleanor's enjoyment was gone, of all the

things she had enjoyed those first twenty-four hours, and of all others which her entertainers brought forward for her pleasure. Yet Eleanor kept her own counsel, and as they did not know the cause she had for trouble, so neither did they discover any tokens of it. She did not withdraw herself from their kind efforts to please her, and they spared no pains. They took her in boat excursions round the beautiful harbour. They showed her the pretty environs of the Parramatta river. Nay, though it was not very easy for him to leave his business, Mr. Esthwaite went with her and his wife to the beautiful Illawarra district; put the whole party on horses, and showed Eleanor a land of tropical beauty under the clear, bracing, delicious warm weather of Australia. Fern trees there were, springing up to the dimensions of trees indeed, with the very fern foliage she was accustomed to in low herbaceous growth at home, only magnified superbly. There were elegant palms, too, with other evergreens, and magnificent creepers; and floating out and in among them in great numbers were gay red-crested cockatoos and other tropical birds. The character of the scenery was exquisite. Eleanor saw one or two of the fair lake-like lagoons of that district, eat of the fish from them; for they made a kind of gipsy expedition, camping out and providing for themselves fascinatingly; and finally returned in the steamer from Wollongong to Sydney. Her friends would have taken her to see the gold diggings if it had been possible. But Eleanor saw it all, all they could show her, with half a heart. She had learned long ago to conceal what she felt.

"I think she wants to get away," said Mrs. Esthwaite one night, half vexed, wholly sorry.

"That's what it is to be in love!" said her husband. "You won't keep her in Sydney. Do you notice she has given up smiling?"

"No!" said his wife, indignantly; "I notice no such thing. She is as ready to smile as anybody I ever saw." And I wish I had as good reason! was the mental conclusion; for Eleanor and she had had many an evening talk by that time, and many a hymn had been listened to.

"All very well," said Mr. Esthwaite; "but she don't smile

as she did at first. Don't you remember that full smile she used to give once in a while, with a little world of mischief in the corners? I would like to see it the next time! ——'

"I declare," said Mrs. Esthwaite, "I think you take quite an impertinent interest in people's concerns. She wouldn't let you see it, besides."

At which Mr. Esthwaite laughed.

So near people came to it; and Eleanor covered up her troublesome thoughts within her own heart, and gave Mr. Esthwaite the benefit of that impenetrable coolness and sweetness of manner which a good while ago had used to bewitch London circles. In the effort to hide her real thoughts and feelings, she did not quite accommodate it to the different latitude of New South Wales; and Mr. Esthwaite was a good deal struck and somewhat bewildered.

"You have mistaken your calling," he said one evening, standing before Eleanor and considering her.

"Do you think so?"

"There! Yes, I do. I think you were born to govern."

"I *am* sadly out of my line then," said Eleanor, laughing.

"Yes. You are. That is what I say. You ought to be this minute a duchess, or a governor's lady, or something else in the imperial line."

"You mistake my tastes, if you think so."

"I do not mistake something else," muttered Mr. Esthwaite and then Mr. Amos entered the room.

"Here, Amos," said he, "you have made an error in judging of this lady; she is no more fit to go for a missionary than I am. She—she goes about with the air of a princess!"

Mrs. Esthwaite exclaimed, and Mr. Amos took a look at the supposed princess's face, as if to reassure or inform his judgment. Apparently he saw nothing to alarm him.

"I am come to prove the question," he said composedly; then turning to Eleanor,—"I have heard at last of a schooner that is going to Fiji, or will go, if we desire it."

This simple announcement shot through Eleanor's head and heart with the force of a hundred-pounder. An extreme and painful flush of colour answered it; nobody guessed at the pain.

"What's that?" exclaimed Mr. Esthwaite, getting up again and standing before Mr. Amos—"you have found a vessel, you say?"

"Yes. A small schooner, to sail in a day or two."

"What schooner? whom does she belong to? Lawsons, or Hildreth?"

"To nobody, I think, but her master. I believe he sails the vessel for his own ends and profits."

"What schooner is it? what name?"

"The 'Queen Esther,' I think."

"You cannot go in that!" said Mr. Esthwaite, turning off "The 'Queen Esther!'—I know her. She's not fit for you; she's a leaky old thing that that man Hawkins sails on all sorts of petty business; she'll go to pieces some day. She's not seaworthy, I believe."

"It is not as good a chance as might be, but it is the first that has offered, and the first that is likely to offer for an unknown time," Mr. Amos said, looking again to Eleanor.

"When does she sail?"

"In two days. She is small, and not in first-rate order; but the voyage is not for very long. I think we had better go in her."

"Certainly. How long is the voyage, regularly?"

"A fortnight in a good ship, and a month in a bad one," struck in Mr. Esthwaite. "You'll never get there, if you depend on the 'Queen Esther' to bring you."

"We go to Tonga first," said Mr. Amos. "The 'Queen Esther' sails with stores for the stations at Tonga and the neighbourhood; and will carry us farther only by special agreement: but the master is willing, and I came to know your mind about it."

"I will go," said Eleanor. "Tell Mrs. Amos I will meet her on board—when?"

"Day after to-morrow morning."

"Very well: I will be there. Will she take the additional lading of my boxes?"

"Oh, yes; no difficulty about that. It's all right."

"How can I do with the things you have stored for me?"

Eleanor said to Mr Esthwaite. "Can the schooner take them, too?"

"What things?"

"Excuse me—perhaps I misunderstood you. I thought you said you had half your warehouse, one loft of it, taken up with things for me?"

"Those things are gone, long ago," said Mr. Esthwaite, in a dogged kind of mood, which did not approve of the proposed journey or conveyance.

"Gone?"

"Yes: according to order. Mrs. Caxton wrote, 'Forward, as soon as possible:' so I did."

Again Eleanor's brow and cheeks, and her very throat, were covered with a rush of crimson; but when Mr. Amos took her hand, on going away, its touch made him ask, involuntarily, if she were well? "Perfectly well," Eleanor answered, with something in her manner that reminded Mr. Amos, though he could not tell why, of the charge Mr. Esthwaite had brought. Another look into Eleanor's eyes quieted the thought.

"Your hand is very cold!" he said.

"It's a sign of"—Mr. Esthwaite would have said "fever," but Eleanor had composedly faced him, and he was silent; only busied himself in showing Mr. Amos out, without a word that he ought not to have spoken. Mr. Amos went home and told his wife.

"I think she is all right," he said; "but she does not look to me just as she did before we landed. I dare say she has had a great deal of admiration here——"

"I dare say she feels bad," said good Mrs. Amos.

"Why?"

"If you were not a man you would know," Mrs. Amos said, laughing. "She is in a very trying situation."

"Is she? Oh, those letters! It is unfortunate, to be sure. But there must be some explanation."

"The explanation will be good when she gets it," Mrs. Amos remarked. "I hope somebody who is expecting her is worthy of her. Poor thing! *I* couldn't have done it, I believe, even for you."

CHAPTER XXXV.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear."

The morning came for the "Queen Esther" to sail. Mr. and Mrs. Amos were on board first, and watched with eyes both kind and anxious to see Eleanor when she should come. The little bonnet with chocolate ribbons did not keep them waiting; and the first smile and kiss to Mrs. Amos made *her* sure that all was right. She had been able to see scarce anything of Eleanor during the weeks on shore: it was refreshing to have her near again But Eleanor had turned immediately to attend to Mr. Esthwaite.

"This is the meanest, most abominable thing of a vessel," he said, "that ever Christians travelled in! It is an absurd proceeding altogether. Why, if the boards don't part company and go to pieces before you get to Tonga (which I think they will), they don't give room for all three of you to sit down in the cabin at once."

"The deck is of better capacity," Eleanor told him briskly.

"Such a deck! I wonder *you*, cousin Eleanor, can make up your mind to endure it. There is not a man living who is worth such a sacrifice. Horrid!"

"We hope it won't last a great while," Mr. Amos told him.

"It won't! That's what I say. You will all be deposited in the bottom of the ocean, to pay you for not having been contented on shore. I would not send a dog to sea in such a ship!"

"Cousin Esthwaite, you had better not stay in a situation so disagreeable to you. You harass yourself for nothing. Shake hands. You see the skipper is going to make sail directly."

Eleanor, with a little play in the manner of this dismissal, was enough in earnest to secure her point. Mr. Esthwaite felt in a manner constrained to take his departure. He presumed, however, in the circumstances, to make interest for a cousinly kiss for good-by, which was refused him with a cooler demonstration of dignity than he had yet met with. It nettled him.

"There was the princess," whispered Mr. Amos to his wife.

"Good!" said Mrs. Amos.

"Good-by!" cried Mr. Esthwaite, disappearing over the schooner s side. "*You* are not fit for a missionary! I told you so before."

Eleanor turned to Mrs. Amos, ignoring entirely this little transaction, and smiled at her. "I hope he has not made you nervous," she said.

"No," said Mrs. Amos; "I am not nervous. If I did not get sick I should enjoy it; but I suppose I shall be sick as soon as we get out of the harbour."

"Let us take the good of it, then, until we are out of the harbour," said Eleanor. "If the real 'Queen Esther' was at all like her namesake, Ahasuerus must have had a disorderly household."

They sat down together on the little vessel's deck, and watched the beautiful shores from which they were gliding away. Eleanor was glad to be off. The stay at Sydney had become oppressive to her; she wanted to be at the end of her journey and know her fate; and hope and reason whispered that she had reason to be glad. For all that, the poor child had a great many shrinkings of heart. A vision of Mr. Rhys never came up in one of its aspects—that of stern and fastidious delicacy—without her heart seeming to die away within her. She could not talk now. She watched the sunny islands and promontories of the bay, changing and passing as the vessel slowly moved on; watched the white houses of Sydney, grateful for the home she had found there, longing exceedingly for

a home once again that should be hers by right; hope and tremulousness holding her heart together. This was a conflict that prayer and faith did not quell; she could only come to a state of humble submissiveness, and she never thought of reaching Vuliva without a painful thrill that almost took away her breath. But she was glad to be on the way.

The vessel was very small, not of so much as eighty tons burden; its accommodations were of course a good deal as Mr. Esthwaite had said; and more than that, the condition of the vessel and of its appointments was such that Mrs. Amos felt as if she could hardly endure to shut herself up in the cabin. Eleanor resolved immediately that *she* would not; the deck was a better place, and she managed to have a mattress brought there for Mrs. Amos, where the good lady, though miserably ill as soon as they were upon the ocean swell, yet could be spared the close air and other horrors of the place below deck. Eleanor wrapped herself in her sea cloak, and lived as she could on deck with her, having a fine opportunity to read the stars at night, and using it. The weather was very fine; the wind favouring and steady; and in the Southern Ocean, under such conditions, there were some good things to be had, even on board the "Queen Esther." There were glorious hymn-singings in the early night-time, and Eleanor had never sung with more power on the "Diana." There were beautiful Bible discussions between her and Mr. Amos—Bible contemplations, rather, in which they brought Scripture to Scripture to illustrate their point, until Mr. Amos declared he thought it would be a grand way of holding a Bible-class; and poor Mrs. Amos listened, delighted, though too sick to put in more than a word now and then. And Eleanor's heart gave a throb every time she recollected that another day had gone—so many more miles were travelled over—they were so much nearer the journey's end. Her companions found no fault in her. There was nothing of the princess now, but a gentle, thoughtful, excellent nurse, and capital cook. On board the "Diana" there had been little need of her services for Mrs. Amos; little, indeed, that could be done. Now, in the fresh air on the open deck of the little schooner, Mrs. Amos

suffered less in one way; but all the party were sharers in the discomforts of close accommodations and utter want o nicety in anything done or furnished on board. The condition of everything was such that it was scarcely possible even for healthy people to eat at all. Poor Mrs. Amos would have had no chance except for Eleanor's helpfulness and clever management. As on board the "Diana," there was nobody in the schooner that would refuse her anything; and Mr. Amos smiled to himself to see where she would go and what she would do to secure some little comfort for her sick friend, and how placidly she herself munched sea biscuit and bad bread, after their little stock of fruit from Sydney had given out. She would bring a cup of tea and a bit of toast to Mrs. Amos, and herself take a crust with the equanimity of a philosopher. Eleanor did not care much what she ate those days. Her own good times were when everybody else was asleep except the man at the wheel, and she would kneel by the guards and watch the strange constellations, and pray, and sometimes weep a flood of tears. Julia, her mother, and Alfred, Mrs. Caxton, her own intense loneliness and shrinking delicacy in the uncertainty of her position—they were all well watered in tears at some of those watching hours when nobody saw.

The "Queen Esther" made the Friendly Islands in something less than a month, notwithstanding Mr. Esthwaite's unfavourable predictions. At Tonga she was detained a week and more, unlading and taking in stores. The party improved the time in a survey of the island and mission premises, and in pleasant intercourse with their friends stationed there—or what would have been pleasant intercourse; it was impossible for Eleanor to enjoy it. So near her destination now, she was impatient to be off, and drew short breaths until the days of delay were ended, and the little schooner once more made sail and turned her head towards Vuliva. She had seen Tonga with but half an eye.

Two or three days would finish their journey now. The weather and wind continued fair; Tonga disappeared in the salt wave; and they stood on and on towards the unseen haven of their hopes and duties. A new change came over Eleanor. It

could not be reason, for reason had striven in vain. Perhaps it was nature, which, turning a corner, took a new view of the subject. But from the time of their leaving Tonga, she was unable to entertain such troublesome apprehensions of what the end of the voyage might have in store for her. Something whispered it could be nothing very bad, and that point that she had so dreaded began to gather a glow of widely different promise. A little nervousness and trepidation remained about the thought of it; the determination abode fast to see the very first word and look, and know what they portended; but in place of the rest of Eleanor's downhearted fear, there came now an overwhelming sense of shamefacedness. This was something quite new and unexpected; she had never known in her life more than a slight touch of it before; and now it consumed her. Even before Mr. and Mrs. Amos she felt it; and her eyes shunned theirs the last day or two as if she had been a shy child. Why was it? She could not help it. This seemed to be as natural and as unreasonable as the other; and in her lonely night watches, instead of trembling and sinking of heart, Eleanor was conscious that her cheeks dyed themselves with that unconquerable feeling of shame. Very inconsistent, indeed, with her former state of feeling; and that was according to Mrs. Caxton's words; not being reasonable, reason could not be expected from them in anything. Her friends had not penetrated her former mood; this they saw and smiled at; and indeed it made Eleanor very lovely. There was a shy, blushing grace about her the last day or two of the voyage which touched all she did; indeed, Mrs. Amos declared she could see it through the little close straw bonnet, and it made her want to take Eleanor in her arms and keep her there. Mr. Amos responded, in his way of subdued fun, that it was lucky she could not; as it would be likely to be a disputed possession, and he did not want to get into a quarrel with his brethren the first minute of his getting to land.

Up came Eleanor with some trifle for Mrs. Amos which she had been preparing.

"We are almost in, sister Eleanor!" said Mr. Amos. "The captain says he sees the land."

Eleanor's start was somewhat prompt to look in the direction of "Queen Esther's" figure-head.

"The light is failing—I don't believe you can see it," said Mr. Amos, "not to know it from the clouds. The captain says he shall stand off and on through the night, so as to have daylight to go in. The entrance is narrow. I suppose, if all is well, we shall have a wedding to-morrow?"

Eleanor asked Mrs. Amos somewhat hastily, if what she had brought her was good?

"Delicious!" Mrs. Amos said; and, pulling Eleanor's face down to her, she gave it a kiss which spoke more things than her mere thanks. She was rewarded with the sight of that crimson veil which spread itself over Eleanor's cheeks, which most people thought it was a pleasure to see.

Eleanor thought she should get little sleep that night; but she was disappointed. She slept long and sweetly on her mattress, and awoke to find it quite day, with fair wind, and the schooner setting her head full on the land which rose up before her fresh and green, yes, and exceedingly lovely. Eleanor got up and shook her disordered dress; her companions were still sleeping. She rolled her mattress together and sat down upon it, to watch the approaches to the land. Fresher and fairer and greener every moment it lifted itself to her view; she could hardly bear to look steadily; her head went down for a minute often under the pressure of the thoughts that crowded together. And when she raised it up, the lovely hills of the island, with their novel outline and green luxuriance, were nearer, and clearer, and higher than they had been a minute before. Now she could discern here and there, she thought, something that must be a dwelling-house; then trees began to detach themselves from the universal mass; she saw smoke rising; and she became aware, too, that along the face of the island, fronting the approach of the schooner, was a wall of surf, and a line of breakers that seemed to stretch right and left, and to be without an interval in their white continuity. Eleanor did not see how the schooner was going to get in, for the surf did not break evidently on the shore of the island, but on a reef extending around the shore and at some little distance from it.

Yet the vessel stood straight on; and the sweet smell of the land began to come with the freshness of the morning air.

"Is this Vuliva before us?" she asked of the skipper, whom she found standing near.

"Ay, ay!"

"Where are you going to get in? I see no opening."

"Ay, ay! There *is* an opening, though."

And soon, looking keenly, Eleanor thought she could discern it. Not until they were almost upon it, however; and then it was a place of rough water enough, though the regular fall of the surf was interrupted, and there was only a general upheaving and commotion of the waves among themselves. It was nothing very terrific; the tide was in a good state; and presently Eleanor saw that they had passed the barrier—they were in smooth water, and making for an opening in the land immediately opposite, which might be either the mouth of a river or an inlet of the sea. They neared it fast, sailed up into it; and there, to Eleanor's mortification, the skipper dropped anchor and swung to. She saw no settlement. Some few scattered houses were plain enough now to be seen; but nothing even like a village. Tufts of trees waved gracefully; rock and hill and richly-coloured lowland spread out a variety of beauty. Where was Vuliva, the station? This might be the island. Where were the people? Could they come no nearer than this?

Mr. Amos made inquiry. The village, the skipper said, was "round the pint;" in other words, behind a woody headland which, just before them, bent the course of the river into a sharp angle. The schooner would go no farther; passengers and effects were to be transported the rest of the way in boats. People they would see soon enough; so the master of the "Queen Esther" informed them.

"I suppose the natives will carry the news of the schooner being here, and our friends will come and look after us," Mr. Amos said.

Eleanor changed colour, and sat with a beating heart looking at the fair fresh landscape which was to be, perhaps, the scene of her future home. The scene was peace itself. Still

water after the upheavings of the ocean; the smell and almost the fluttering sound of the green leaves in the delicious wind; the ripple on the surface of the little river; the soft stillness of land sounds, with the heavy beat of the surf left behind on the reef outside. Eleanor drew a long breath. People would find them out soon, the skipper had said. She was exceedingly disposed to get rid of her sea dress, and put on something that looked like the summer morning; for, without recollecting what the seasons were in the Southern Ocean, that was what the time seemed like to her. She looked round at Mrs. Amos, who was sitting up and beginning to realize that she had done with the sea for the present.

"How do you do?" said Eleanor.

"I should feel better if I could get on something clean."

"Come, then!"

The two ladies disappeared down the companion way, into one of the most sorry tiring rooms, surely, that ever nicety used for that purpose. But it served two purposes with Eleanor just now; and the second was a hiding place. She did not want to be taken unawares, nor to be seen before she could see. So, under the circumstances, she made both Mrs. Amos and herself comfortable, and was as helpful as usual in a new line. Then she went to look out; but nobody was in sight yet, gentle or savage: all was safe. She went back to Mrs. Amos, and fastened the door.

"Let us kneel down and pray together, will you?" she said. "I cannot get my breath freely till we have done that."

Mrs. Amos's lips trembled as she knelt. And Eleanor and she joined in many petitions there, while the very stillness of their little cabin floor reminded them they were come to their desired haven, and the long sea journey was over. They rose up and kissed each other.

"I am so glad I have known you!" said Mrs. Amos. "What a blessing you have been to us! I wish we might be stationed somewhere together."

"I suppose that would be too good to hope for," said Eleanor. "I am going to reconnoitre again."

Mrs. Amos half guessed why, and smiled to herself at Eleanor's

blushing shyness. "Poor child! her hands were all trembling too," she said in her thoughts. They were broken off by a low summons to the cabin door, which Eleanor held slightly ajar. Through the crack of the door they had a vision.

On the deck of the "Queen Esther" stood a specimen of the native inhabitants of the land. A man of tall stature, nobly developed in limbs and muscles, he looked, in his native undress, almost of giant proportions. His clothing was only a long piece of figured native cloth wound about his loins, one end falling like a train to the very sloop's deck. A thorough black skin was the only covering of the rest of his person, and showed his breadth of shoulder and strength of muscle to good advantage, as if carved in black marble, only there was sufficient graceful mobility and dignified ease of carriage and attitude—no marble rigidity. Black he was, this savage, but not negro. The features were well cut and good. What the hair might be naturally could only be guessed at; the work of a skilful hairdresser had left it something for the uninitiated to marvel at. A band of three or four inches in breadth, completely white, bordered the face; the rest, a very luxuriant head, was jet black, and dressed into a perfectly regular and smooth roundish form, projecting everywhere beyond the white inner border. He had an uncouth necklace, of what made it was impossible to say, except that part of it looked like shells and part like some animal's teeth: rings of one or two colours were on his fingers. He carried no weapon; but in his huge, powerful black frame, uncouth hair-dressing, and strange uncoveredness, he was a sufficiently terrible object to unused eyes. In Tonga the ladies had seen no such sight.

"Do shut the door!" said Mrs. Amos. "He may come this way, and there is nobody that knows how to speak to him."

Eleanor shut the door, and looked round at her friend with a smile.

"I am foolish!" said Mrs. Amos, laughing; "but I don't want to see him just yet—till there is somebody to talk to him."

The door being fast, Eleanor applied herself to a somewhat large knot-hole she had long ago discovered in it; one which she strongly suspected the skipper had fostered, if not originated,

for his own convenience of spying what was going on. Through this knot-hole Eleanor had a fair view of a good part of the deck, savage and all. He was gesticulating now and talking, evidently to the captain and Mr. Amos, the former of whom either did not understand or did not agree with him. Mr. Amos, of course, was in the former condition. Eleanor watched them with absorbed interest; when suddenly this vision was crossed by another, that looked to her eyes much as a white angel might, coming across a cloud of both moral and physical blackness. Mr. Rhys himself, his very self, and looking very much like it, only in a white dress literally, which in England she had never seen him wear. But the white dress alone did not make the impression to her eyes; there was that air of freshness and purity which some people always carry about with them, and which has to do with the clear look of temperance as well as with great particularity of personal care, and in part also grows out of the moral condition. In three breathless seconds Eleanor took note of it all, characteristics well known, but seen now with the novelty of long disuse and with the background of that huge black savage, to whom Mr. Rhys was addressings ome words of explanation or exhortation, Eleanor could not tell which. She noticed the quiet pleasant manner of his speech, which certainly looked not as if Mrs. Amos had any reason for her fears; but he was speaking earnestly, and she observed too the unbending look of the savage in answer, and a certain pleasant deference with which he appeared to be listening. Mr. Rhys had taken off his hat for a moment—it hung in his hand, while the other brushed the hair from his forehead. Eleanor's eye even in that moment fell to the hand which carried the hat; it was the same,—she recognized it with a curious sense of bringing great and little things together,—it was the same white and carefully looked-after hand that she remembered it in England. Mr. Rhys's own personal civilization went about with him.

Eleanor did not hear any of Mrs. Amos's words to her, which were several, and though Mrs. Amos, half alarmed by her deafness, and not knowing but that she might be witnessing something dreadful on deck, spoke with some importunity.

Eleanor was thinking she had not a minute to lose. Beyond the time of Mr. Rhys's talking to the other visitor on the schooner's deck, there could be but small interval before he would learn all about her being on board; two words to the skipper or Mr. Amos would bring it out; and if she wished to gain that first minute's testimony of look and word, she must be beforehand with them. She thought of all that with a beating heart in one instant's flash of thought, hastily caught up her ship cloak without daring to stop to put it on, slipped back the bolt of the door, and noiselessly passed out upon the deck. She neither heard nor saw anybody else; she was conscious of an intense and pitiful shame at being there and at thus presenting herself; but everything else was second to that necessity, to know from Mr. Rhys's look, with an absolute certainty, where *he* stood. She was not at that moment much afraid; yet the look she must see. She went forward while he was yet speaking to his black neighbour; she stood still a little behind him, and waited. She longed to hide her eyes, yet she looked steadfastly. *How* she looked, neither she, nor, perhaps, anybody else knew. There was short opportunity for observation.

Mr. Rhys had no sooner finished his business with his sable friend, when he turned the other way; and of course the motionless figure standing so near his elbow, the woman's bonnet and drapery, caught his first glance. Eleanor was watching, with eyes that were strained already with the effort: they got leave to go down now. The flash of joy in those she had been looking at, the deep tone of the low-uttered, "Oh, Eleanor!" which burst from him, made her feel on the instant as if she were paid to the full, not only for all she had done, but for all that life might have of disagreeable in store for her. Her eyes fell; she stood still in a sudden trance of contentment which made her as blind and deaf as another feeling had made her just before. Those two words—there had been such a depth in them of tenderness and gladness; and somehow she felt in them, too, an appreciation of all she had done and gone through. Eleanor was satisfied. She felt it as well in the hold of her hand, which was taken and kept in a clasp, as who should say, "This is mine."

Perhaps it was out of consideration for her state, that without any further reference to her he turned to Mr. Amos and claimed acquaintance and brotherhood with him; and for a little while talked, informing himself of various particulars of their journey and welfare; never all the while loosing his hold of that hand, though not bringing her into the conversation, and, indeed, standing so as somewhat to shield her. The question of landing came up and was discussed. The skipper objected to send the schooner's boat, on the score that it would leave too few men on board to take care of the vessel. Mr. Rhys had only a small canoe with him, manned by a single native. So he decided forthwith to return to the village and despatch boats large enough to bring the missionaries and their effects to land; but about that there might be some delay. Then for the first time he bent down and spoke to Eleanor; again that subdued, tender tone.

"Are you ready to go ashore?"

"Yes."

"I will take you with me. Do you want anything out of this big ship? The canoes may not be immediately obtained for anything but the live freight."

He took the grey ship cloak from Eleanor's arm and put it round her shoulders. She felt that she was alone and forlorn no more: she had got home. She was a different creature that went into the cabin to kiss Mrs. Amos, from the Eleanor that had come out.

"I've seen him!" whispered Mrs. Amos. "Eleanor! you will not be married till we come, will you?"

"I hope not—I don't know," said Eleanor, hurriedly, seizing her bag and passing out again. Another minute, and it and she were taken down the side of the schooner and lodged in the canoe; and their dark oarsman paddled off.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it."

ELEANOR'S shamefacedness was upon her in full force when she found herself in the canoe pushing off from the schooner and her friends there. She felt exceeding shy and strange, and with that a feeling very like awe of her companion. A feeling not quite unknown to her in former days with the same person, and in tenfold force now. There was no doubt, to be sure, of the secret mind of them both towards each other; nevertheless, he had never spoken to her of his affection, nor given her the least sign of it, except on paper, up to that day; and now he sat, for all she could see, as cool and grave as ever by her side. The old and the new state of things it was hard to reconcile all at once. To do Eleanor justice, she saw as one sees without looking; she was too shamefaced to look; she bent her outward attention upon their boatman. He was another native, of course, but attired in somewhat more civilized style, though in no costume of civilized lands. What he wore was more like a carman's frock at home than anything else it could be likened to. He was of pleasant countenance, and paddled along with great activity and skill.

They had been silent for the first few minutes since leaving the schooner, till at length Mr. Rhys asked her, with a little of the sweet arch smile she remembered so well, "how she had liked the first sight of a Fijian?" It brought such a rush upon Eleanor of past things and present, old times and changes,

that it was with the utmost difficulty she could make any answer at all.

"I was too much interested to think of liking or disliking."

"You were not startled?"

"No."

"That was a heathen chief, of the opposite village."

"He wanted something, did he not?"

"Yes; that the captain of the schooner should accommodate him in something he thought would be for his advantage. It was impossible, and so I told him."

Eleanor looked again towards the oarsman.

"This is one of our Christian brethren."

"Are there many?" she asked, though feeling as if she had no breath to ask.

"Yes. And we have cause to be thankful every day at hearing of more. We want ten times as many hands as we have got. How has the long voyage been to you?"

Eleanor answered briefly; but then she was obliged to go on and tell of Mrs. Caxton, and of Mr. and Mrs. Amos, and of various other matters; to all which still she answered in as few words as possible. She could not be fluent, with that sense of strangeness upon her; conscious not only that one of her hands was again in Mr. Rhys's hold, but that his eyes were never off her face. He desisted at last from questions, and they both sat silent until the headland was rounded; and "there is Vuliva!" came from Mr. Rhys's lips.

In a little bay curve of the river, behind the promontory, lay the village, looking pretty and foreign enough. But very pretty it was. The odd, or, rather, the strange-looking houses, standing apart from each other, some large and some small, intermingled gracefully with trees whose shape and leafage were as new, made a sweet picture. One house in particular, as they neared the shore, struck Eleanor; it had a neat colonnade of slender pillars in front, and a high roof, almost like a Mansard in form, but thatched with native thatch. A very neat paling fence stretched along in front of this. Very near it, a little further off, rose another building that made Eleanor almost give a start of joy; so homelike and

pleasant it looked, as well as surprising. This was an exceeding pretty chapel; again with a high thatched roof, and also with a neat slight bell-tower rising from one end. In front two doors at each side were separated by a large and not inelegant window; other windows and doors down the side of the building promised light and airiness; and the walls were wrought into a curious pattern, reminding Eleanor of the fanciful brickwork of a past style of architecture. Near the shore and back behind the chapel and houses reared themselves here and there the slender stems of palm and cocoanut trees, with their graceful tufts of feathery foliage waving at top; other trees of various kinds were mingled among them. Figures were seen moving about, in the medium attire worn by their oarsman. It was a pretty scene, cheerful and home-like, though so unlike home. Further back from the river, on the opposite shore, other houses could be seen, the houses of the heathen village, but Eleanor's eyes were fastened on this one. Mr. Rhys said not one word, only he held her hand in a still closer grasp which was not meaningless.

"How pretty it is!" Eleanor forced herself to say. He only answered, "Do you like it?" but it was in such a satisfied tone of preoccupation that Eleanor blushed and thought she might as well leave his meditations alone.

Yet though full of content in her heart, Mr. Rhys and his affection seemed both at a distance. It was so exactly the Mr. Rhys of Plassy that Eleanor could not in a moment realize their changed relations and find her own place. A little thing administered a slight corrective to this reckoning.

The little canoe had come to land. Eleanor was taken out of it safely, and then for a moment left to herself; for Mr. Rhys was engaged in a colloquy with his boatman and another native who had come up. Not being able to understand a word of what was going on, though from the tones and gestures she guessed it had reference to the disembarkation of the schooner's party, and a little ready to turn her face from view, Eleanor stood looking landward, in a maze of strangeness that was not at all unhappy. The cocoanut tops waved gently a welcome to her; she took it so; the houses looked neat and

inviting; glimpses of other unknown foliage helped to assure her she had got home; the country outlines, so far as she could see them, looked fair and bright. Eleanor was taking note of details in a dreamy way, when she was surprised by the sudden frank contact of lips with hers; lips that had no strangeness of their own to contend with. Turning hastily, she saw that the natives with whom Mr. Rhys had been talking had run off different ways, and they two were alone. Eleanor trembled as much as she had done when she first read Mr. Rhys's note at Plassy. And his words when he spoke did not help her, they were spoken so exactly like the Mr. Rhys she had known there. Not exactly either, though he only said:—

"Do you want this cloak on any longer?"

"Yes, thank you," said Eleanor, stammering; "I do not feel it."

Which was most literally true, for at that moment she did not feel anything external. He looked at her, and, exercising his own judgment, proceeded to unclasp the cloak from her shoulders and hang it on his arm, while he put her hand on the other.

"There is no need for you to be troubled with this now," said he. "I only put it round you to protect your dress." And with her bag in his hand, they went up from the river-side and past the large house with the colonnade. "Whither now?" thought Eleanor; but she asked nothing. One or two more houses were passed; then a little space without houses; then came a paling enclosure, of considerable size, apparently, filled with trees and vines. A gate opened in this and let them through, and Mr. Rhys led Eleanor up a walk in the garden-like plantation, to a house which stood encompassed by it. "Not at home yet!" he remarked to her as they stood at the door, with a slight smile which again brought the blood to her cheeks. He opened the door, and they went in.

"The good news is true, sister Balliol!" he said to somebody that met them. "I have brought you one of our friends, and there are more to come, that I must go and look after. Is brother Balliol at home?"

"No, he is not; he has gone over the river."

"Then I will leave this lady in your care, and I will go and see if I can find canoes. I meant to have pressed him into my service. This is Miss Powle, sister Balliol."

The lady so called had come forward to meet them, and now took Eleanor by the hand and kissed her cordially. Mr. Rhys took her hand then, when she was released, and explained,

"I am going back to the schooner after our friends, if I can find a canoe."

And without more words, off he went. Eleanor and Mrs. Balliol were left to look at each other.

This latter was a lady of middle height, and kindly, if not fine, features. A pair of good black eyes too. But what struck Eleanor most about her was her air; the general style of her figure and dress, which to Miss Powle's eyes were peculiar. She wore her hair in a crop; and that seemed to Eleanor a characteristic of the whole make up. Her dress was not otherwise than neat, and yet that epithet would never have occurred to one in describing it, all graces of style or attire were so ignored. Her gown sat without any; so did her collar; both were rather uncivilized, without partaking of the picturesqueness of savage costume. The face was by no means disagreeable, lacking neither in sense nor in spirit nor in kindliness; but Eleanor perceived at once that the mind must have a serious want somewhere in refinement or discernment, the exterior was so ruthlessly abandoned to ungainliness.

Mrs. Balliol took her to an inner room, where the cloak and the bonnet were left, and returned then to her occupations in the other apartment, while Eleanor sat herself down at the window to make observations. The room was large and high, cheerful and airy, with windows at two sides. The one where she sat commanded a view of little beside the garden, with its luxuriant growth of fruit trees and shrubs and flowers; a tropical looking garden, for the broad leaves of the banana waved there around its great bunches of fruit; the canopy of a cocoanut palm fluttered slightly overhead, and various fruits that Eleanor did not know displayed themselves along with the pineapples that she did know. This garden view seemed very interesting to Eleanor, to judge by her intentness;

and so it was for its own qualities; besides that, a bit of the walk could be seen by which she had come, and the wicket which had let her in, and by which Mr. Rhys had gone out; but in good truth, as often as she turned her eyes to the scene within, she had such a sense of being herself an object of observation, and perhaps of speculation, that she was fain to seek the garden again. And it was true that while Mrs. Balliol plied her needle she used her eyes as well, and her thoughts with her needle flew in and out, as she surveyed Eleanor's figure in her neat fresh print dress. And the lady's eyebrows grew prophetical, not to say ominous.

"She's too handsome!" that was the first conclusion. "She is quite too handsome; she cannot have those looks without knowing it. Better have brought a plain face to Fiji than a spirit of vanity. Hair done as if she was just come out of a hair-dresser's—hum—ruffle all down the neck of her dress—flowing sleeves, too, and ruffles round *them*. And a buckle in her belt—a gold buckle, I do believe. And shoes?"

The shoes were unexceptionable, but they fitted well on a nice foot; and the hands were too small and white and delicate ever to have done anything, or ever to be willing to do anything. That was the point. No harm in small hands, Mrs. Balliol allowed, if they did not betray their owner into daintiness of living. She pursued her lucubrations for some time without interrupting those of Eleanor.

"Are you from England, sister?"

"From England—yes; but we made some stay in Australia by the way," said Eleanor, turning from the window to take a more sociable position nearer her hostess.

"A long voyage?"

"Not remarkably long. I had good companions."

"From what part of England?"

"The borders of Wales, last."

"Brother Rhys is from Wales; isn't he?"

"I do not know," said Eleanor, vexed to feel the flush of blood to her cheeks.

"Ah! you have known brother Rhys before?" with a searching look.

"Yes."

"And how do you think you shall like it in Fiji?"

"You can hardly expect me to tell under such short trial," said Eleanor, smiling.

"There are trials enough. I suppose you expect those, do you not?"

"I do not mean to expect them till they come," said Eleanor, still smiling.

"... you think that is wise?" said the other gravely. "They will ... be, I assure you, fast enough; do you not think it is well ... prepare the mind for what it has to go through, by looking ... t it beforehand?"

"... never know beforehand what is to be gone through," said ... anor.

"... you know some things; and it is well, I think, to harden oneself against what is coming. I have found that sort of discipline very useful. Sister, may I ask you a searching question?"

"Certainly, if you please," said Eleanor.

"You know, we should be ready to give every one a reason of the hope that is in us. I want to ask you, sister, what moved you to go on a mission?"

Astonishment almost kept Eleanor silent; then, noticing the quick eyes of Mrs. Balliol repeating the inquiry at her face, the difficulty of answering met and joined with a small tide of indignation at its being demanded of her. She did not want to be angry, and she was very near being ready to cry. Her mind was in that state of overwrought fulness when a little stir is more than the feelings can bear. Among conflicting tides, the sense of the ludicrous at last got the uppermost, and she laughed, as one laughs whose nerves are not just under control,—heartily and merrily. Mrs. Balliol was confounded.

"I should not have thought it was a laughing matter," she remarked at length. But the gravity of that threw Eleanor off again, and the little hands and ruffled sleeves were reviewed under new circumstances. And when Eleanor got command of herself, she still kept her hand over her eyes, for she found

that she was just trembling into tears. She held it close pressed upon them.

"Perhaps you are fatigued, sister?" said Mrs. Balliol, in utter incapacity to account for this demonstration.

"Not much. I beg your pardon!" said Eleanor. "I believe I am a little unsettled at first getting here. If you please, I will try being quite quiet for awhile—if you will let me be so discourteous."

"Do so," said Mrs. Balliol. "Anything to rest you." And Eleanor went back to her window, and turning her face to the garden again rested her head on her hand; and there was a hush. Mrs. Balliol worked and mused, probably. Eleanor did as she had said; kept quiet. The quiet lasted a long time, and the tropical day grew up into its meridian heats, yet it was not oppressive; a fine breeze relieved it, and made it no other than pleasant. Home at last! This great stillness and quiet, after the ocean tossings and months of voyaging and change and heart-uncertainty. The peace of heart now was as profound, but so profound and so thankfully recognized, that Eleanor's mood was a little unsteady. She needed to be still, and recollect herself, as she could, looking out into the leaves of a great banana tree there in the garden, and forgetting the house and Mrs. Balliol.

The quiet lasted a long time, and was broken then by the entrance of Mr. Balliol. His wife introduced him, and after learning that he could now render no aid to Mr. Rhys, he immediately entered into a brisk conversation with the new comer Mr. Rhys had brought. That went well, and was also strengthening. Eleanor was greatly pleased with him. He was evidently a man of learning and sense and spirit; a man of excellent parts, in good cultivation, and filled with a most benign and gentle temper of goodness. It was a pleasure to talk to him; and while they were talking the party from the schooner arrived.

Eleanor felt her shamefacedness return upon her, while all the rest were making acquaintance, welcoming and receiving welcome. She stood aside. Did they know her position? While she was thinking, Mr. Rhys came to her, and put her

again in her chair by the window. Mrs. Amos had been carried off by Mrs. Balliol. The two other gentlemen were in earnest converse. Mr. Rhys took a seat in front of Eleanor and asked, in a low voice, if she wished for any delay?

"In what?" said Eleanor, though she knew the answer.

"Coming home."

He was almost sorry for her, to see the quick blood flash into her face. But she caught her breath, and said, "No."

"You know," he said; how exactly like the Mr. Rhys of Plassy! "I would not hurry you beyond your pleasure. If you would like to remain here a day or two, domiciled with Mrs. Balliol and the rest, and see the land, you have only to say what you wish."

"I do not wish it," said Eleanor, finding it very difficult to answer at all; "I wish it to be just as you please."

"You must know what my pleasure is. Does your heart not fail you, now you are here?" he asked still lower, and in a very gentle way.

"No."

"Eleanor, have you had any doubts or failings of heart at any time since you left England?"

"No. Yes! I did once—at Sydney."

"At Sydney?" repeated Mr. Rhys, in a perceptibly graver tone.

"Yes,—at Sydney,—when I did not get any letters from you."

"You got no letters from me?"

"No."

"At Sydney?"

"No," said Eleanor, venturing to look up.

"Did you not see Mr. Armitage?"

"Mr. Armitage! Oh, he was in the back country; I remember now Mr. Amos said that; and he never returned to Sydney while we were there."

An inarticulate sound came from Mr. Rhys's lips, between indignation and impatience; the strongest expression of either that Eleanor had ever heard from him.

"Then Mr. Armitage had the letters?"

"Certainly! and I am in the utmost surprise at his carelessness. He ought to have left them in somebody else's charge, if he was quitting the place himself. When *did* you hear from me?"

The flush rose again, not so vividly, to Eleanor's face.

"I heard in England—those letters—you know."

"Those letters I trusted to Mrs. Caxton?"

"Yes."

"And not since? Well, you are excused for your heart failing that once. Who is to do it, Eleanor?—Mr. Amos?"

"If you please—I should like ——"

He left her for a moment to make his arrangements, and for that moment Eleanor's thoughts leaped to those who should have been by her side at such a time, with a little of a woman's heart-longing—Mrs. Caxton or her mother. If one of them might have stood by her then! Eleanor's head bent with the moment's poor wish. But with the touch of Mr. Rhys's hand, when he returned to her, with the sound of his voice, there came, as it always did to Eleanor, healing and strength. The one little word "Come," from his lips, drove away all mental hobgoblins. He said nothing more; but there was a great tenderness in the manner of his taking her upon his arm. His look Eleanor dared not meet. She felt very strange yet; she could not get accustomed to the reality of things. This man had never spoken one word of love to her, and now she was standing up to be married to him.

The whole little party stood together, while the marriage service of the English Church was read. It was preceded, however, by a prayer that was never read nor written. After the service was over, and after Eleanor had been saluted by the two ladies who were all the representatives of mother and sister and friends for her on the occasion, Mr. Rhys whispered to her to get her bonnet. Eleanor gladly obeyed. But as soon as it appeared, there was a general outcry and protest. What were they going to do?

"Take her to see how her house looks," said Mr. Rhys. "You forget I have something to show."

"But you will bring her back to dinner? Do, brother Rhys! We shall have dinner presently. You'll be back?"

"If the survey is over in time—but I do not think it will be," he answered, gravely.

"Then tea—you will come, then? Let us all be together at tea. Will you?"

"It is a happiness we have had no visitors before dinner. I will see about it, sister Balliol, thank you; and take advice."

And glad was Eleanor when they got away; which was immediately, for Mr. Rhys's motions were prompt. He led her now not to the wicket by which she had come, but another way, through the garden wilderness still, till another slight paling with a wicket in it was passed and the wilderness took a somewhat different character. The same plants and trees were to be seen, but order and pleasantness of arrangement were in place of vegetable confusion; neat walks ran between the luxuriant growing bananas, and led gradually nearer to the river, till another house came in view; and, passing round the gable end of it, Eleanor could cast her eye along the building and take the effect. It was long and low, with a high picturesque thatched roof, and the walls fancifully wrought in a pattern, making a not unpretty appearance. The door was in the middle; she had no time to see more, for Mr. Rhys unlocked it and led her in.

The interior was high, wide, and cool and pleasant after the hot sun without; but again she had no time to make observations. Mr. Rhys led her immediately on to an inner room. Eleanor's eyes were dazed and her heart was beating; she could hardly see anything, except, as one takes impressions without seeing, that this answered to the inner room at Mrs. Balliol's, and had far more the air of being furnished and pleasantly habitable. What gave it the air she could not tell; for Mr. Rhys was unfastening her bonnet and throwing it off, and then taking her sea-cloak from his arm and casting that somewhat carelessly away; and then his arms enfolded her. It was the first time they had been really alone since her coming; and now he was silent, so silent that Eleanor could scarcely bear it. She was aware his eyes were studying her

fixedly, and she felt as if they could see nothing beside the conscious mounting of the blood from cheek to brow, which reached what to her was a painful flush. Probably he saw it, for the answer came in a little closer pressure of the arms that were about her. She ventured to look up at last; she was unable to endure this silent inspection; and then she saw that his face was full of emotion that wrought too deep for words, too deep even for caresses, beyond the one or two grave kisses with which he had welcomed her. It overcame Eleanor completely. She could not meet the look. It was much more than mere joy or affection; there was an expression of the sort of tenderness with which a mother would clasp a lost child; a full keen sympathy for all she had done and gone through and ventured for him, for all her loneliness and forlornness that had been, and that was still, with respect to all the guardians of her childhood or womanhood up to that hour. Eleanor's head sank down. She felt none of that now for which his looks expressed such keen regard; she had got to her resting-place, not the less for all the awe and strangeness of it, which were upon her yet. She could have cried for a very different feeling; but she would not; it did not suit her. Mr. Rhys let her be still for a few minutes. When he did speak, his voice was gravely tender indeed, as it had been to her all day, but there was no sentimentality about it. He spoke clear and abrupt, as he often did.

"Do you want to go back to the other house to dinner?"

"Do you wish it?" said Eleanor, looking up to find out.

"I wish to see nothing earthly, this afternoon, but your face."

"Then do let it be so!" said Eleanor.

He laughed and kissed her, more gaily this time, without seeming able to put her out of his arms; and left her at last with the injunction to keep still a minute till he should return, and on no account to begin an examination of the house by herself. Very little danger there was! Eleanor had not the free use of her eyes yet for anything. Presently he came back, put her hand on his arm, and led her out into the middle apartment.

"Do you know," he said, as he passed through this, keeping her hand in his own, and looking down at her face, "what is the first lesson you have to learn?"

"No," said Eleanor, most unaffectedly frightened; she did not know why.

"The first thing we have to do, on taking possession here to-day, is, to give our thanks and offer our prayers in company. Do not you think so?"

"Yes," said Eleanor breathlessly. "But what then?"

"I mean together, not that it should be all on one side. You with me, as well as I with you."

"Oh, no, Mr. Rhys!"

"Why not, Mrs. Rhys?"

"Do not ask me! That would be dreadful!"

"I do not think you will find it so."

Eleanor stopped short, near the other end of the great apartment. "I cannot do it!" she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes, appealing to him. He put his arms round her again, but spoke gravely.

"One can always do what is right."

"Not to-day," whispered Eleanor.

"One can always do right to-day," he answered, smiling. "And it is best to begin as we are going on. Come!"

He took her hand and led her forward into the room at the other end of the house; his study, Eleanor saw with half a glance by the books and papers and tables that were there. Still keeping her hand fast in his, they knelt together; and certainly the prayer that followed was good for nervousness, and like the sunshine to dispel all manner of clouds. Eleanor was quieted and subdued; she could not help it; all sorts of memories and associations of Plassy and Wiglands gathered in her mind, and pervaded the thoughts that immediately filled it. Hallowed, precious, soothing, and joyful, those minutes of prayer were while Mr. Rhys spoke; in spite of the minutes to follow that Eleanor dreaded. And though her own words were few and stammering, they were different from what she would have thought possible a quarter of an hour before; and not unhappy to look back upon.

Detaining her when they arose, Mr. Rhys asked, with something of his old comical look, whether she thought she could eat a dinner of his ordering. Eleanor had no doubt of it.

"You think you could eat anything by this time?" said he. "Poor child! But my credit is at stake—suppose you wait here a few minutes, until I see whether all is right."

He went off, and Eleanor sat still, feeling too happy to want to look about her. He came again presently, to lead Eleanor to the dining-room.

In the lofty, spacious, and by no means inelegant middle apartment of the house, a little table stood spread, looking exceeding diminutive in contrast with the wide area and high ceiling of the room. Here Mr. Rhys, with a very bright look, established Eleanor, and proceeded to make amends for keeping her so long from Mrs. Balliol's table. Much to her astonishment there was a piece of broiled chicken and a dish of eggs nicely cooked, and Mr. Rhys was pouring out for her some tea in delicate little cups of china.

"You see aunt Caxton, do you not?" he said.

"Oh, aunt Caxton! in these cups. I thought so. But I had no idea you had such cooks in Fiji?"

"They will learn—in time," said he shortly. "You perceive this is an unorganized establishment. I have not indulged in table-cloths yet; but you will put things to rights."

"Table-cloths?" said Eleanor.

"Yes; you have such things lying in wait for you. You have a great deal to do. And in the first place, you are to find out the good qualities of these fruits of the land," he said, giving her portions of several vegetable preparations with which and with fruits the table was filled.

"What is this?" said Eleanor.

"Taro; one of the valuable things with which nature has blessed Fiji. The natives cultivate it well and carefully. That is yam, and came from a root five and a half feet long. Eleanor, I do not at all comprehend how you come to be sitting there!"

It was so strange and new to Eleanor, and Mr. Rhys was such a compound of things new and things old to her, that a

little chance word like this was enough to make her flutter and change colour. He perceived it, and bent his attention to amuse her with the matters of the table, and told her wonders of the natural productions of Fiji. But in the midst of this Mr. Rhys's hand would come abstracting her tea-cup to fill it again; and then Eleanor watched while he did it, and he made himself a little private amusement about getting it sugared right and finding how she liked it, and Eleanor wondered at him and her teacup together, and stirred her tea in a subdued state of mind.

"One hardly expects to see such a nice little teaspoon in Fiji," she remarked.

"Aunt Caxton again," said Mr. Rhys.

"But, Mr. Rhys, your Fijians must be remarkable cooks! Or you have taught them?"

"I have taught nobody in that line."

"Then are they not remarkable for their skill in cookery?"

"As a nation, I think they are; and it is one evidence of their mental development. They have a great variety of native dishes; some of which, I believe, are not despicable."

"But these are English dishes."

"Do justice to them, then, like a good Englishwoman."

Eleanor's praise was not undeserved, for the chicken and yam were excellent, and the sweet potato which Mr. Rhys put upon her plate was roasted very like one that had been in some hot ashes at home. But everything except the dishes was strange, Mr. Rhys's hand included. Through the whole length of the house, and of course through the middle apartment, ran a double row of columns upholding the roof. If Eleanor's eye followed them up, there was no ceiling, but the lofty roof of thatch over her head. Under her foot was a mat, of native workmanship, substantial and neat and very foreign looking. And here were aunt Caxton's cups; and if she lifted her eyes—— Eleanor felt most strange then, although most at home.

The taro, and yam, and sweet potato were only an introduction to the fruit, which was beautiful as a show. A native servant came in and removed the dishes, and then set on the table a large basket, in which the whole dessert was very simply

served. Cocoanuts and bananas, oranges and wild plums, bread-fruit and Malay apples, came piled together in beautiful mingling. Mr. Rhys went himself to a sort of buffet in the room and brought plates.

"Servants cannot be said to be in complete training," he said, with a humorous look, as he seated himself. "It would be strange if they were, when there has been no one to train them —and in Fiji."

"I do not understand," said Eleanor. "Have you been keeping house here all by yourself? I thought not, from what Mrs. Balliol said."

"You may trust sister Balliol for being always correct. No; for the last few months, until lately, I have been building this house. Since it was finished I have lived in it—partly, but I have taken my principal meals at the other house."

"*You* have been building it?"

"Or else you would not be in it at this moment. There is no carpenter to be depended on in Fiji but yourself. You have got to go over the house presently and see how you like it. Are you ready for a banana, or an orange? I think you must try one of these cocoanuts."

"But you had people to help you?"

"Yes: at the rate of two boards a day."

"But, Mr. Rhys, if you cannot get carpenters, where can you get cooks? or do the people have *this* by nature?"

"When you ask me properly I will tell you," he said, with a little pucker in the corners of his mouth that made Eleanor take warning and draw off. She gave her attention to the cocoanut, which she found she must learn how to eat. Mr. Rhys played with an orange in the meantime; but she knew he was really busy with nothing but her and her cocoanut. When she would be tempted by no more fruit, he went off and brought a little wooden bowl of water and a napkin, which he presented for her fingers, standing before her to hold it. Eleanor dipped in her fingers, and then looked up.

"You should not do this for me, Mr. Rhys!" she said, half earnestly.

But he stooped down and took his own payment, and on the

whole Eleanor did not feel that she had greatly the advantage of him. Indeed, Mr. Rhys had payment of more sorts than one, for cheeks were rosy as the fingers were white which she was drying, as she had risen and stood before him. She looked on then with great edification, to see his fingers deliberately dipped in the same bowl and dried on the same napkin, for very well Eleanor knew they would have done it for no mortal beside her. And then she was carried off to look at the walls of her house.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Thou hast found . . . :
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatched with leaves."

THE walls of the house were, to an Englishwoman, a curiosity. They were made of reeds, three layers or thicknesses of them being placed different ways, and bound and laced together with sinnet, the strong braid made of the fibre of the cocoanut-husk. It was this braid, woven in and out, which produced the pretty mosaic effect Eleanor had observed upon the outside. Mr. Rhys took her to a doorway, where she could examine from within and from without this novel construction, and explained minutely how it was managed

"This looks like a foreign land," said Eleanor. "You had described it, and I thought I had imagined it; but sight and feeling are quite a different matter."

"I did not describe it to you?"

"No—oh, no; you described it to aunt Caxton."

He drew her back a step or two, and laid her hand upon the post of the door.

"What is this?" said Eleanor.

"That is a piece of the stem of the palm-fern."

"And these are its natural mouldings and markings! It is like elegant carved work! It is natural, is it not?" she said, suddenly.

"Certainly. The natives do execute very marvellous carving in wood, with tools that would drive a workman at home to despair; but I have not learned the art. Come here—the

pillars that hold up the roof of your house are of the same wood."

A double row of pillars through the whole length of the house gave it stability; they were stems of the same palm-fern, and as they had been chosen and placed with a careful eye to size and position, the effect of them was not at all inelegant. The building itself was of generous length and width; and with a room cut off at each end, as the fashion was, the centre apartment was left of really noble proportions—broad, roomy, and lofty; with its palm columns springing up to its high roof of thatch. Standing beside one of them, Eleanor looked up and declared it a beautiful room.

"Do not look at the doors and windows," said Mr. Rhys. "I did not make those—they were sent out framed. I had only the pleasure of putting them in."

"And how did that agree with all your other work?"

"Well," he said, decidedly, "that was my recreation."

"There is the prettiest mixture of wild and tame in this house," said Eleanor, speaking a little timidly, for she was conscious all the while how little Mr. Rhys was thinking of anything but herself. "Are these mats made here?"

"Pure Fijian!"

The one at which Eleanor was looking, her eyes having fallen on the floor, was both large and elegant. It was very substantially and neatly made, and had a border fancifully wrought all round it, a few inches in width. The pattern of the border was made with bits of worsted and little white feathers. This mat covered all the centre of the room; under it the whole floor was spread with other and coarser ones; and others of a still different manufacture lined the walls of the room.

"One need not want a prettier carpet," said Eleanor, keeping her eyes on the mat. Mr. Rhys put his arm round her and drew her off to one side of the room, where he made her pause before a large square space which was sunk a foot deep in the earth, and bordered massively with a frame of logs of hard wood.

"What do you think of that?"

"Mr. Rhys, what is it?"

"You would not take it for a fireplace?" he said, with a comical look.

"But is it a fireplace?"

"That is what it is intended for. The Fijians make their fireplaces in this manner."

"And you are a Fijian, I suppose?"

"So are you."

"But, Mr. Rhys, can a fireplace of this sort be useful in an English house?"

"No. But in a Fijian house it may, as I have proved. The natives would have a wooden frame here, at one side, to hold cooking vessels. You do not need that, for you have a kitchen."

"With a fireplace like this?"

"Yes," he said, with a smile that had some raillery in it, which Eleanor would not provoke.

"Suppose you come and look at something that is not Fijian," he went on. "You must vary your attention."

He drew her before a little unostentatious piece of furniture, that looked certainly as if it was made out of a good bit of English oak. What it was, did not appear; it was very plain and rather massively made. Now, Mr. Rhys produced keys, and opened first doors, then a drawer, which displayed all the characteristic contents and arrangements of a lady's work-box on an extended scale. Love's work: Eleanor could see her adopted mother in every carefully disposed supply of needles and silks and braids and glittering Sheffield ware, and the thousand and one appliances and provisions for one who was to be at a very large distance from Sheffield, and every home source of needle furniture. Love recognized love's work, as Eleanor looked into the drawer.

"Now you are ready to say this is a small thread and needle shop," said Mr. Rhys, "but you will be mistaken if you do. Look further."

And that she might, he unlocked a pair of smaller inner doors; the little piece of furniture developed itself immediately into a capital secretary. As thorough-going as the

work-box, but still more comprehensive, here were more than mere materials and conveniences for writing; it was a depository for several small but very precious treasures of a scientific and other kinds; and even a few books lay nestling among them, and there was room for more.

"What is this?" Elcanor exclaimed, when she had got her breath.

"This is—Mrs. Caxton! I do not know whether she expected you to turn sempstress immediately for the colony—or whether she intended you for another vocation, as I do."

"She sent this from England!"

"It was made by nobody worse than a London cabinet-maker. I did not know whether you would choose to have it stand in this place, or in the only room that can properly be called your own. Come in here: the other part of the house is, you will find, pretty much public."

"Even your study?"

"That is no exception, sometimes. I am a public man myself."

The partition wall of this room was nicely lined with mats; the door was like a piece of the wall, swinging to noiselessly, but Mr. Rhys showed Elcanor how she could fasten it securely on the inside. Elcanor had been taken into this room on her first arrival, but had then been unable to see anything. Now her eyes were in requisition. Here there was even more attention paid to comfort and appearances than in the dining-room. In the simplest possible manner; but somebody, had been at work there who knew that elegance is attainable without the help of opulence, and that eye and hand can do what money cannot. Eye and hand had been busy everywhere. Very pretty and soft native mats were on the floor; the windows were shaded with East Indian *jalousies;* and not only personal convenience, but tastes were regarded in the various articles of furniture and the arrangement of them. Good sense was regarded, too. Camp chairs and tables were useful for packing and moving, as well as neat to the eye; white draperies relieved their simplicity; shelves were hung against the wall in one place for books, and filled; and on the

floor stood an easy-chair of excellent workmanship, into which Mr. Rhys immediately put Eleanor But she started up to look at it.

"Did aunt Caxton send all these things?" she said, with a tear in her eye.

"She has sent almost too many. These are but the beginning. Look here, Eleanor!"

He opened a door at one end of the room, hidden under mat hangings like the other, which disclosed a large space lined with shelves, several articles reposing on them, and on the floor below, sundry chests and boxes.

"This is your store-room. Here you may revel in the riches you do not immediately wish to display. This is yours; I have a store-room on my own part."

"And what is in those chests and boxes, Mr. Rhys?"

"I don't know—except that it is aunt Caxton again. You will find tablecloths and napkins, I can certify that, for I stumbled upon them; but I thought they had best not see the light till their owner came. So I locked them up, and here are the keys."

"And who put up all these nice shelves?"

"Your head carpenter."

"And have you been doing all this for me?" said Eleanor.

He laughed, and took her in his arms again, looking at her with a mingling of expressions.

"I wish I could give you some of my content!" he said.

"I do not want it!" said Eleanor, laughing.

"Is that declaration entirely generous?"

Eleanor had no mind, like a wise woman, to answer this question; but she was held under the inspection of an eye that she knew of old, clear and keen beyond all others to untie the knot of anybody's meaning. She flushed up very much, and tried to turn it off, for she saw he had a mind to have the answer.

"You do not want me to give account of every idle word after that fashion?" she said, lightly.

"Hush! hush!" he said, with a gravity that had much sweetness in it. "I cannot have you speak in that way."

"I will not," said Eleanor, suddenly, much more sober than he was.

"There are too many that have the habit of using their Master's words to point their own sentences. Do not let us use it. Come to my study; you did not see it before dinner, I think?"

Eleanor was glad he could smile again, for at that minute she could not. She felt whirled back to Plassy and to Wiglands, to the time of their old and very different relations. She could not realize the new, nor quietly understand her own happiness, and a very fresh, vivid sense of his character made her feel almost as much awe of him as affection. That was according to old habit, too. But if she felt shy and strange, she was the only one who did; for Mr. Rhys was in a very gay mood. As they went through the dining-room he stopped to show and display to her numerous odd little contrivances and arrangements; here a cupboard of rustic, and very pretty too, native work, or at least native materials; there a more sophisticated buffet, which had come from Sydney by Mrs. Caxton's order. "Dear Mrs. Caxton!" said Mr. Rhys, "she has forgotten nothing. I am only in astonishment what she can have found to fill your new invoice of boxes."

"Why, there are not many," said Eleanor.

He looked at her and laughed. "You will be doing nothing but unpacking for days to come," he said. "I have done what I never thought I should do—married a rich wife."

"Why, aunt Caxton sends the things quite as much to you as to me."

"Does she?"

"I am sure, if anybody is poor, I am."

"If that speech means *me*," said Mr. Rhys, with a little bit of provokingness in the corners of his mouth, "I don't take it. I do not feel poor; and never did. Not to-day, certainly, with whole shiploads coming in."

"I do not know of a single unnecessary thing but your microscope."

"Have you brought that?" he said, with a change of tone. "It would be just like Mrs. Caxton to come out and make us a

visit some day! I cannot think of anything else she could give us that she has not given. Look at my bookcases."

Eleanor did, thinking of their owner. They were of plainest construction, but so made that they would take to pieces in five minutes and become packing cases, with the books packed all ready for travel; or at pleasure, as now, stand up in their place in the study in the form of very neat bookcases. They were not large; a Fijian missionary's library had need be not too extensive; but Eleanor looked over their contents with hurried delight.

The rest of the room also spoke of Mrs. Caxton, in light neat tables and chairs and other things. Here, too, though not a hand's turn had apparently been wasted, everything, simple as it was, had a sort of pleasantness of order and fitness which left the eye gratified. Eleanor read that and the meaning of it. Here were contrivances again that Mr. Rhys had done; shelves, and brackets, and pins to hang things; nothing out of use, but all so contrived as to give a certain elegant effect to this plain work-room. Even the book and paper disorder was not that of a careless man. Still it was not like the room at the other end of the house. The mats that floored and lined it were coarser; there were no *jalousies* at the windows, and no easy-chair anywhere. One thing it had like the other—a store-room cut off from it. This was a large one, like Eleanor's, and filled; his money-drawer, Mr. Rhys called it. All sorts of articles valued by the natives were there; Mrs. Caxton had taken care to send a large supply. These were to serve the purposes of barter. Mr. Rhys displayed to Eleanor the stores of iron tools, cotton prints, blankets, and articles of clothing that were stowed away there; stowed away with an absolute order and method which again she looked at as significant of one side, at least, of Mr. Rhys's character. He amused himself with displaying everything; showed her the whole of the new and strangely-appointed establishment over which she had come to preside, so far, at least, as the house contained it; and when he had brought her to something like an apparent share in his own gay mood, at last placed her in a camp-chair in the dining-room, which he had set in the middle of the floor, and

opened the door of the house. It gave Eleanor a lovely view. The plantations had been left open, so that the eye had a fair range down to the river and to the opposite shore, where another village stood. It was seen under bright sunshine now. Mr. Rhys let her look a moment, then shut the door, and came and sat down before her, taking both her hands in his own; and Eleanor knew from a glance at his face that the same thoughts were working within him that had wrought that moved look before dinner—when she first came. She felt her colour mounting; it tried her to be silent under his eye in that way.

"Mr. Rhys, do you remember preaching to me one day at Plassy, when we were out walking?"

"Yes," he said, with a half laugh.

"I wish you would do it again."

"I will preach you a sermon every morning, if you like."

"No, but now. I wish you would, so as to make me realize that you are the same person."

"I am not the same person at all!" he said.

"Why are you not?" said Eleanor, opening her eyes at him.

"In those days I was your pastor and friend simply. The difference is, that I have acquired the right to love you, take care of you, and scold you."

"It seems to me that last was a privilege you exercised occasionally in those times," said Eleanor, archly.

"Not at all. In those days I was a poor fellow that did not dare say a word to you."

Eleanor's recollections were of sundry exceptions to this rule, so marked and prominent in her memory that she could not help laughing.

"Oh, Mr. Rhys, don't you remember ——"

"What?" said he, with the utmost gravity.

But Eleanor had stopped, and coloured now brilliantly.

"It seems that your recollections are of a questionable character," he said. Eleanor did not deny it.

"What is it you wish me *not* to remember?"

"It was a time when you said I was very wrong," said Eleanor, meekly; "so do not call it back."

He bent forward to kiss her, which did not steady Eleanor's thoughts at all.

"Do you want preaching?" he said.

"Yes, indeed! It will do me good."

"I will give you some words to think of, that I lived in all yesterday. 'Beloved of God.' They are wonderful words, that Paul says belong to all the saints; and they were about me yesterday like a halo of glory, from morning to night."

Now Eleanor was all right; now she recognized Mr. Rhys and herself, and listened to every word with her old delight in them. Now she could use her eyes and look at him, though she well saw that he was considering her with that full, moved tenderness that she had felt in him all day; even when he was talking and thinking of other things he did not cease to remember *her*.

"Eleanor, what do you know about the meaning of those words?"

"Little!" she said; "and yet, a little."

"You know that *we* were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, or after others in our own hearts, as helplessly as the poor heathen around us. But we have got the benefit of that word—'I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.'"

"Yes!"

"Then look at our privileges: 'The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.' Heavenly security; unearthly joy; a hiding-place where the troubles of earth cannot reach us."

Mr. Rhys left his position before Eleanor at this, and with a brow all alight with its thoughts began to pace up and down in front of her, just as he had done at Plassy, she remembered. She ventured not a word; her heart was very full.

"Then look how we are bidden to increase our rejoicing, and to delight ourselves in the store laid up for us; we are not only safe and happy, but fed with dainties. All things are ready; Christ says he will sup with us; and we are bidden—'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'

'He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' And then, Eleanor, if we are the elect of God, holy and beloved, what bowels of mercies should be in us; how precious all others beloved of him should be to us; how we should be constrained by his love. Are you? I am. I am willing to spend and be spent for these people among whom we are. I am sure there are many, many children of God among them, come and coming. I seek no better than to labour for them It is the delight of my soul! Eleanor, how is it with you?"

He had stood still before her during these last words, and now sat down again, taking her hands and looking with his undeceivable gaze into her face.

"I desire the same thing. I dare not say I desire it as strongly as you do,—but it is my very wish."

"Is it for the love of Christ, or for love of these poor creatures? or for any other reason?"

"I can hardly separate the first two," said Eleanor, looking a little wistfully. "The love of Christ is at the bottom of it all."

"There is no other motive," he said, "no other that will do the work; nothing else that will work true love to them. But when I think of my Master, I am willing to do or be anything, I think, in his service!"

He let go her hands, and began slowly walking up and down again

"Mr. Rhys," said Eleanor, "what can I do?"

"Are you ready to encounter disagreeablenesses, and hardships, and privations, in the work?"

"Yes; and discouragements."

"There are no such things. There ought to be no such things. I never feel nor have felt discouraged. That is want of faith. Do you remember, Eleanor, 'The clouds are the dust of his feet?' Think—our eyes are blinded by the dust, we look at nothing else, and we do not see the glory of the steps that are taken."

"That is true. Oh, Mr. Rhys, that is glorious!"

Then you are not afraid? I forewarn you little annoyances are sometimes harder to bear than great ones. It is one

of the most trying things that I have to meet," said Mr. Rhys, standing still with a funny face, "to have Ra Mbombo's beard sweep my plate when I am at dinner."

"What does he do that for?"

"He is so fond of me."

"That is being too fond, certainly."

"It is an excess of affectionate attention; he gets so close to me that we have a community of things. And you will have, Eleanor, some days a perpetual levee of visitors. But what is all that, for Christ?"

"I am not afraid," said Eleanor, with a most unruffled smile.

"I wrote to frighten you."

"But I was not frightened. Are things no better in the islands than when you wrote?"

"Changing—changing every day, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Literally. There are heathen temples here, in which a few years ago if a woman or a child had dared cross the threshold they would have been put to death immediately. Now those very temples are used as our schools. On our way to the chapel we shall pass almost over a place where there used to be one of the ovens for cooking human bodies; now the grass and wild tomatoes are growing over it. I can take you to house after house, where men and women used to be eaten, where now if you stand to listen you may hear hymns of praise to Jesus, and prayer going up in his name. Praise the Lord! It is grand to be permitted to live in Fiji now!"

Eleanor was hushed and silent a few minutes, while Mr. Rhys walked slowly up and down. Then she spoke with her eyes full of sympathetic tears.

"Mr. Rhys, what can *I* do?"

"What you have to do at present," he said, with a change of tone, "is to take care of me, and learn the language—both languages, I should say. And in the meanwhile you had better take care of your pins,"—he stooped, as he spoke, to pick up one at her feet, and presented it with comical gravity. "You must remember you are not in England. Here you could not spend pin-money, even if you had it."

"If I were inclined to be extravagant," said Eleanor, laughing at him, "your admonition would be thrown away, I have brought such quantities with me."

"Of pins?"

"Yes."

"I hope you will never use them!"

"Why not?"

"I do not see what a properly made dress has to do with pins."

But at this confession of masculine ignorance Eleanor first looked and then laughed and covered her face, till he came and sat down again and by forcible possession took her hands away.

"You have no particular present occasion to laugh at me," he said; "Eleanor, what made you first willing to quit England and go anywhere?"

The answer to this was, first, an innocent look, and then, an extreme scarlet flush. She could not hide it, with her hands prisoners; she sat in a pretty state of abashment. A slight giving way of the mouth bore witness that he read and understood it, though his immediate words were reassuringly grave and unchanged in tone.

"I remember, you did not comprehend such a thing as possible, at one time. When was that changed? You used to have a great fear."

"I lost part of that at Plassy."

"Where did you lose the rest of it, Eleanor?"

"It was in London."

He saw by the light in Eleanor's eyes, which looked at him now, that there was something behind. Yet she hesitated.

"Sealed lips?" said he, bending forward again to her face. "You must unseal them, Eleanor."

"Do you want me to tell you all that?" she asked, questioningly.

"I want you to tell me everything."

"It is only a long story."

"Do not make it short."

An easy matter, to go on and tell it with her two hands

prisoners, and those particularly clear eyes looking into her face. It served to show the grace that belonged to Eleanor, the way that, in these circumstances, she began what she had to say. Where another woman would have been awkward, she spoke with the simple sweet poise of manner that had been the admiration of many a company, and that made Mr. Rhys now press the little hands closer in his own. A little evident shy reluctance only added to the grace.

"It is a good while ago, I felt, Mr. Rhys, that I wanted just that which makes one willing to go anywhere, and do anything; though not for that reason. I expected to live in England always. I wanted to know more of Christ. I wanted it, not for work's sake, but for happiness' sake. I was a Christian, I suppose; but I knew—I had seen and felt—that there were things—there was a height of Christian life and attainment that I had not reached, but where I had seen other people with a light upon their brows that I knew never shone upon mine. I knew whence it came, I knew what I wanted, more knowledge of Christ, more love of him."

"When was this?"

"It is a good while ago. It is—it was—time seems so confused to me! I know it was the winter after you went away. I think it was near the spring. We were in London."

"Yes."

"I was cold at heart to religion. I was not happy. I knew what I wanted, more love to Christ."

"You did love him?"

"Yes; but you know what it is just to love him a little. I went as duty bade me; but the love of him did not make all duty happy. I had seen you live differently, I saw others, and I could not be content as I was. We were in town then. One night I sat up all night, and gave the whole night to thoughts of it."

"To seeking Jesus?"

"I wanted to get out of my coldness and find him!"

"And you found him?"

"Not soon. I spent the night in fear. I prayed—and I walked the floor and prayed—and I shed a great many tears

over the Bible. I felt as if I must have what I wanted, but I could not seem to get any nearer to it. The whole night passed away, and I had wearied myself, and I had got nothing.

"The dawn was just breaking when I got up from my knees the last time. I was almost giving up in despair. I had done all I could—what could I do more? I went to the window and opened it. The light was just creeping up in the sky—there was a little streak of brightness along the horizon, or of light rather, but it was the herald of brightness. I felt desolate and tired, and like giving up hope and quest together. The dull grey canopy overhead seemed just like my heart. I cannot tell you how enviously I looked at the eastern dawn, wishing the light would break upon my own horizon. I shall never forget it. It was dusky yet down in the streets and over the housetops; the city had not waked up in our quarter; it was still yet, and the breath of the morning's freshness came to me, and revived me and mocked me both at once. I could have cried for sadness, if I had not been too down-hearted and weary.

"While I stood there, hearing the morning's promise, I suppose, without knowing it, there came up from the streets somewhere below me, and near, the song of a chimney-sweep. I can never tell you how it came! It came—but not yet; at first I only knew what he was singing by the notes of the air; but the next verse he began came up clear and strong to me at the window He was singing those words—

"'Twas a heaven below
My Redeemer to know;
And the angels could do nothing more
Than to fall at his feet,
And the story repeat,
And the Lover of sinners adore.'

"I thought it seemed that a band of angels came and carried those words up past my window! And the dawn came in my heart. I cannot tell you how—I seemed to see everything at once. I saw what a heaven below it is to know the love of Christ. I think my heart was something like the

Ganges when the tide is coming in. I thought, if the angels could do nothing more than praise him, neither could I! I fell at his feet then; I do not think I have ever really left them since—not for long at a time; and since then my great wish has been to be allowed to glorify him. I have had no fears of anything in the way."

Eleanor had not been able to get through her "long story" without tears; but they came very much against her will. She could not see, yet somehow she felt the strong sympathetic emotion with which she was listened to. She could hear it, in the subdued intonation of Mr. Rhys's words.

"'Keep yourselves in the love of God.' How shall we do it, Eleanor?"

She answered without raising her eyes.

"'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him.'"

"And, 'if ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.'"

There was silence a moment.

"That commandment must take me away for a while, Eleanor."

She looked up.

"I thought," he said, with his sweet, arch smile, "I might take so much of a honeymoon as one broken day, but there is a poor sick man a mile off who wants me; and brother Balliol has had the schooner affairs to attend to. I shall be gone an hour. Will you stay here? or shall I take you to the other house?"

"May I stay here?"

"Certainly. You can fasten the door, and then if any visitors come they will think I am not at home. I will give Solomon directions."

"Who is Solomon?"

"Solomon is—I will introduce him to you!" and with a very bright face, Mr. Rhys went off into his study, coming back again in a moment, and with his hat. He went to a door opposite that by which Eleanor had entered the house, and blew a shrill whistle.

"Solomon is my fast friend and very faithful servant," he

said, returning to Eleanor. "You saw him at dinner—but it is time he should know you."

In came Solomon; a very black specimen of the islanders, in a dress something like that which Eleanor had noticed on the man in the canoe. Solomon's features were undeniably good, if somewhat heavy; they had sense and manliness; and his eye was mildly quiet and genial in its expression. It brightened, Eleanor saw, as he listened to Mr. Rhys's words; to which she also listened without being able to understand them, and wondering at the warm feeling of her cheeks. Solomon's gratulations were mainly given with his face, for all the English words he could get out were, "Glad—see—Misi Risi." Mr. Rhys laughed and dismissed him, and went off himself.

Eleanor was half glad to be left alone for a time. She fastened the door, not for fear, but that her solitude might not be intruded upon; then walked up and down over the soft mats of the centre room, and tried to bring her spirits to some sense of realization. But she could not. The change had been so sudden, from her wandering state of uncertainty and expectation to absolute content and rest, of body and mind at once, that her mental, like her actual, footing seemed to sway and heave yet with the upheavings that were past. She could not settle down to anything like a composed state of mind. She could not get accustomed yet to Mr. Rhys in his new character. As the children say, it was "too good to be true."

A little unready to be still, she went off again into the room specially prepared for her, where the green jalousies shaded the windows. One window here was at the end; a direction in which Eleanor had not looked. She softly raised the jalousies a little, expecting to see just the waving bananas and other plants of the tropical garden that surrounded the house; or, perhaps, servants' offices, about which she had a good deal of curiosity.

Instead of that, the window revealed a landscape of such beauty that Eleanor involuntarily pulled up the blind and sat entranced before it. No such thing as servants or servants' offices. A wide receding stretch of broken country, rising in the distance to the dignity of blue precipitous hills, a gorge of

which opened far away, to delight and draw the eye into its misty depth; a middle distance of lordly forest, with patches of clearing; bits of tropical vegetation at hand, and over them and over it all a tropical sky. In one direction the view was very open. Eleanor could discern a bit of a pathway winding through it, and once or twice a dark figure moving along its course. This was Vuliva! this was her foreign home! the region where darkness and light were struggling foot by foot for the mastery; where heathen temples were falling and heathen misery giving place to the joy of the gospel, but where the gospel had to fight them yet. Eleanor looked till her heart was too full to look any longer; and then turned aside to get the only possible relief in prayer.

The hour was near gone when she went to her window again. The day was cooling towards the evening. Well she guessed that this window had been specially arranged for her. In everything that had been done in the house she had seen that same watchful care for her pleasure and comfort. There never was a house that seemed to be so love's work; Mr. Rhys's own hand had most manifestly been everywhere; and the furniture that Mrs. Caxton had sent he had placed. But Mrs. Caxton had not sent all. Eleanor's eye rested on a dressing-table that certainly never came from England. It was pretty enough; it was very pretty, even to her notions; yet it had cost nothing, and was as nearly as possible made of nothing. Yes, for she looked; the frame was only some native reeds or canes and a bit of board; the rest was white muslin drapery, which would pack away in a very few square inches of room, but now hung in pretty folds around the glass and covered the frame. Eleanor just looked and wondered; no more; for the hour was up, and she went to her window and raised the jalousies again. She was more quiet now, she thought; but her heart throbbed with the thought of Mr. Rhys and his return.

She looked over the beautiful wild country, watching for him. The light was fair on the blue hills; the sea-breeze fluttered the leaves of the cocoa-nut trees and waved the long thick leaves of the banana. She heard no other sound near or

far, till the quick swift tread she was listening for came to her ear. Nobody was to be seen; but the step was not to be mistaken. Eleanor got to the front door and had it open just in time to see him come.

They stood then together in the doorway, for the view was fair on the river-side too. The opposite shore was beautiful, and the houses of the heathen village had a great interest for Eleanor, aside from their effect as part of the landscape; but her shyness was upon her again, and she had a thorough consciousness that Mr. Rhys did not see how the light fell on either shore. At last he put his arm round her and drew her up to his side, saying,—

"And so you did not get my letters in Sydney—poor little dove!"

These words struck Eleanor with a curious pleasure. They would have been true, she knew, in the lips of no other mortal, as also certainly to no other mortal would it have occurred to use them. She was not the sort of person by any means to whom such an appellation would generally be given. To be sure her temper was of the finest, but then also it had a body to it. Yet here she knew it was true; and *he* knew; it was spoken not by any arrogance, but by a purely frank and natural understanding of their mutual natures and relations. She answered by a smile, exceeding sweet and sparkling as well as conscious, to the face that was looking down at her with a little bit of provoking archness upon its gravity; and their lips met in a long sealing kiss. Husband and wife understood each other.

Perhaps Mr. Rhys knew it, for it seemed as if his lips could hardly leave hers; and Eleanor's face was all manner of lights.

"What has become of Alfred?" he asked, in an irrelevant kind of manner, by way of parenthesis.

"I have not seen him—hardly—since you left England. He is not under mamma's care now."

"And my friend Julia? You have told me but a mite yet about everybody."

"Julia is your friend *still*. But Julia—I have not seen her for a long, long time."

"How is that?"

"Mamma would not let me. Oh, Mr. Rhys!—we have been kept apart. I could not even see her when I came away."

"Why?"

"Mamma—she was afraid of my influence over her."

"Is it possible?"

"Julia was going on well—setting her face to do right. Now—I do not know how it will be. Even our letters are overlooked."

"I need not ask how your mother is. I suppose she is trying to save one of her daughters for the world."

Eleanor's thoughts swept a wide course in a few minutes; remembered whose instrumentality had saved her from such a fate and had striven for Julia. With a sigh that was part sorrow and part gratitude, Eleanor laid her head softly on Mr. Rhys's shoulder. With such tenderness as one gives to a child, and yet rarer, because deeper and graver, she was made at home there.

"Don't you want to take a walk to the chapel?"

"Oh, yes!"—But she was held fast still.

"And shall we give sister Balliol the pleasure of our company to tea, as we come back?"

"If you please—if you like."

"I do not like it at all," said Mr. Rhys, frankly—"but I suppose we must."

"Think of finding the restraints of society even in Fiji!" said Eleanor, trying to laugh, as she brought her bonnet and they set out.

"You must find them everywhere—unless you live to please yourself," said Mr. Rhys, with his sweet grave look; and Eleanor was consoled.

The walk to the church was not very long, and she could have desired it longer. The river shore, and the view on the other side, and the village by which they passed, the trees and the vegetable gardens and the odd thatched roofs—everything was pretty and new to Eleanor's eyes. They passed all they had seen in coming from the landing that morning, taking this time a path outside the mission premises. Past the house

with the row of pillars in front, which Eleanor learned was a building for the use of the various schools. A little further on stood the chapel. It was neat and tasteful enough to please even an English eye; and indeed looked more English than foreign on a distant view; and standing there in the wilderness, with its little bell-tower rising like a witness for all that was good in the midst of a heathen land, the feelings of those who looked upon it had need be very tender and very deep.

"This chapel is dear to our eyes," said Mr. Rhys. "Everything is, that costs such pains. This poor people have made it; and it is one of the best pieces of work in Fiji. It was all done by the labour of their hearts and hands."

"That seems to be the style of carpentry in this country," said Eleanor.

"The chief made up his mind on a good principle—that for a house of the true God neither time nor material could be too precious. On that principle they went to work. The timber used in the building is what we call green-heart—the best there is in Fiji. To find it, they had to travel over many a mile of the country; and remember, there are no oxen here, no horses; they had no teams to help them. All must be done by the labour of the hands. I think there were about eighty beams of green-heart timber needed for the house —some of them twelve and some of them fifty feet long. In about three months these were collected; found and brought in from the woods and hills, sometimes from ten miles away. While the young men were doing this, the old men at home were all day beating cocoa-nut husk, to separate the fibre for making sinnet. All day long I used to hear their beaters going; it was good music; and when at the end of every few days the woodcutters came home with their timber, so soon as they were heard shouting the news of their coming there was a general burst and cry, and every creature in the village set off to meet them and help drag the logs home. Women and children and all went; and you never saw people so happy.

"Then the building was done in the same spirit. Many a time when I was busy with them, overlooking their work, I have heard them chanting to each other words from the Bible

—band against band. One side would sing—'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded.'—Then the other side would answer, 'The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.' I cannot tell you how sweet it was. There was another chant they were very fond of. A few would begin with Solomon's petition—'Have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place,'—and here a number of the other builders would join in with their cry—'Hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make!' And so in the next verse, when it came near the end the others would join in—'And when thou hearest forgive!'"

"I should think you would love it!" said Eleanor, with her eyes full of tears. "And I should think the Lord would love it."

"Come in, and see how it looks on the inside."

The inside was both simple and elegant, after a quaint fashion; for it was Fijian elegance and Fijian simplicity. A double row of columns led down the centre of the building; they looked like mahogany, but it was only native wood; and the ornamental work at top which served for their capitals, was done in sinnet. Over the doors and windows triangular pediments were elaborately wrought in black with the same sinnet. The roof was both quaint and elegant. It was done in alternate open and close reed-work, with broad black lines dividing it; and ornamental lashings and bandings of sinnet were used about the fastenings and groinings of spars and beams. Then the wings of the communion rail were made of reed work, ornamented; the rail was a beautiful piece of nut timber, and the balusters of sweet sandal wood. The whole effect was exceedingly pretty and graceful, though produced with such simple means.

"Mr. Ruskin ought to have had this as an illustration of his 'Lamp of Sacrifice,'" said Eleanor. "How beautiful!"

"The 'Lamp of Truth,' too," said Mr. Rhys. "It is all honest work. That side was done by our heathen neighbours. The heathen chief sent us his compliments, said he heard we were engaged in a great work, and if we pleased he would come and help us. So he did. They built that side of the wall and the roof."

"Did they do it well?"

"Heartily."

"Do they come to attend worship in it?"

"The chapel is a great attraction. Strangers come to see, if not to worship, and then we get a chance to tell the truth to them."

"And, Mr. Rhys, how is the truth prospering generally?"

"Eleanor, we want men! and that seems to be all we want. My heart feels ready to break sometimes, for the want of helpers. I am glad of brother Amos coming, very glad; but we want a hundred where we have one. It is but a few weeks since a young man came over from one of the islands, a large and important island, bringing tidings that a number of towns there had given up heathenism—all wanting teachers—and there were no teachers for them. In one place the people had built a chapel; they had gone so far as that; it was at Koroivonu; and they gathered together, the next Sunday after it was finished, great numbers of the people, filled the chapel, and stood under some bread-fruit trees in front of it, and stood there waiting to have some one come and tell them the truth, and there was no one. My heart is ready to weep blood when I think of these things! The Tongan who came with the news came with his eyes full of tears. And this case of Koroivonu is no strange or solitary one."

Mr. Rhys walked the floor of the little chapel, his features working, his breast heaving. Eleanor sat thinking how little she could do—how much she would!

"You have native helpers," she said gently.

"Praise the Lord for what they are! but we want missionaries. We want help from England. We cannot get it from

the Colonies—not fast enough. Eleanor,"—and he stopped short and faced her—"a few months ago, to give you another instance, I was beholder of such a scene as this. I was to preach to a community that were for the first time publicly renouncing heathenism. It was Sunday." Mr. Rhys spoke slowly, evidently exercising some control over himself; how often Eleanor had seen him do that in the pulpit!

"I stood on the shores of a bay, reefed in from the ocean. I wish I could put the scene before you! On the land side, one of the most magnificent landscapes stretched back into the country, with almost every sort of natural beauty. Before me the bay, with ten large canoes moored in it. An island in the bay, I remember, caught the light beautifully; and beyond that there was the white fence of breakers on the reef barrier. The smallest of the canoes would hold a hundred men; they were the fleet of Thakombau, one of Fiji's fiercest kings formerly, with himself and his warriors on board.

"My preaching place was on what had been the dancing grounds of a village. I had a mat stretched on three poles for an awning—such a mat as they make for sails; and around me were nine others prepared in like manner. This was my chapel. Just at my left hand was a spot of ground where were ten boiling springs; and until that Sunday, one of them had been the duly appointed place for cooking human bodies. That was the place and the preparation I looked at in the still Sunday morning, before service time.

"At that time, the time appointed for service, a drum was beat and the conch shell blown; the same shell which had been used to give the war call. Directly all those canoes were covered with men, and they were plunging into the water and wading to shore. These were Thakombau and his warriors. Not blacked and stripped and armed for fighting, but washed and clothed. They were stopping in that place on their way somewhere else, and were now coming and gathering to hear the preaching. On the other side came a procession from the village; and down every hill-side and along every path, I could see scattering groups and lines of comers from the neighbouring country. *These* were the heathen inhabitants, coming

up now to hear the truth, and profess by a public act of worship that they were heathens no longer. They all gathered round me there under the mat awnings, and sat on the grass looking up to hear, while I told them of Jesus."

Mr. Rhys's voice was choked and he broke off abruptly. Eleanor guessed how he had talked to that audience; she could see it in his flushing face and quivering lip. She could not find a word to say, and let him lead her in silence and slowly away from the chapel and towards the mission house. Before entering the plantation again, Eleanor stopped and said in a low voice,—

"What can I do?"

He gave her a look of that moved sweetness she had seen in him all day, and answered with his usual abruptness,—

"You can pray."

"I do that."

"Pray as Paul prayed—for your mother, and for Julia, and for Fiji, and for me. Do you know how that was?"

"I know what some of his prayers were."

"Yes, but I never thought how Paul prayed, until the other day. You must put the scattered hints together. Wait until we are at home—I will show you."

He pushed open the wicket and they went in; and the rest of the evening Eleanor talked to Mrs. Amos or to Mr. Balliol; she sheered off a little from his wife. There was plenty of interesting conversation going on with one and another; but Eleanor had a little the sense of being to that lady an object of observation, and drew into a corner or into the shade as much as she could.

"Your wife is very handsome, brother Rhys," Mrs. Balliol remarked, in an aside, towards the end of the evening.

"That is hardly much praise from you, sister Balliol," he answered, gravely. "I know you do not set much store by appearances."

"She is very young!"

Both looked over to the opposite corner where Eleanor was talking to Mrs. Amos, sitting on a low seat and looking up; a little drawn back into the shade, yet not so shaded but that

the womanly modest sweetness of her face could be seen well enough. Mr. Rhys made no answer.

"I judge, brother Rhys, that she has been brought up in the great world," Mrs. Balliol went on, looking across to the ruffled sleeve.

"She is not in it now," Mr. Rhys observed, quietly.

"No;—she is in good hands. But, brother Rhys, do you think our sister understands exactly what sort of work she has come to do here?"

"She is teachable," he answered, with great imperturbability.

"Well, you will be able to train her, if she wants it. I am glad to know she is in such good hands. I think she has hardly yet a just notion of what lies before her, brother Rhys."

"When did you make your observations?"

"She was with me, you know—you left her with me this morning. We were alone, and we had a little conversation."

"Mrs. Balliol, do you think a just notion of *anything* can be formed in half an hour?"

His question was rather grave, and the lady's eyes wavered from meeting his. She fidgeted a little.

"Oh, you know best, of course," she said; "I have had very little opportunity—I only judged from the want of seriousness; but that might have been from some other cause. ou must excuse me if I spoke too frankly."

"You can never do that to me," he said. "Thank you, sister Balliol. I will take care of her."

Mrs. Balliol was reassured. But neither during their walk home nor ever after, did Mr. Rhys tell Eleanor of this little bit of talk that had concerned her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"My Lady comes; my Lady goes; he can see her day by day,
And bless his eyes with her beauty, and with blessings strew her way."

The breakfast-table was as much of a mystery to Eleanor the dinner had been. Not because it looked so homelike though in the early morning the doors and windows were all open, and the sunlight streaming through on Mrs. Caxton's china cups and silver spoons. It all looked foreign enough yet, among those palm-fern pillars, and on the Fijian mat with its border made of red worsted ends and little white feathers. The basket of fruit, too, on the table, did not look like England. But the tea was unexceptionable, and there was a piece of fresh fish as perfectly broiled as if it had been brought over by some genius or fairy, smoking hot, from an English gridiron. And in the order and arrangements of the table, there had been something more than native skill and taste, Eleanor was sure.

"It seems to me, Mr. Rhys," she said, "that the Fijians are remarkably good cooks!"

"Uncommon, for savages," said Mr. Rhys, with perfect gravity.

"This fish is excellent."

"There is no better fish-market in the world, for variety and abundance, than we have here."

"But I mean, it is broiled just like an English fish. Isaak Walton himself would be satisfied with it."

"Isaak Walton never saw such fishing as is carried on here. The natives are at home in the water from their childhood—

men and women both;—and the women do a good deal of the fishing. But the serious business is the turtle fishing. It is a hand-to-hand conflict. The men plunge into the water and grapple bodily with the turtle, after they have brought them into an enclosure with their nets. Four or five men lay hold of one, if it is a large fellow, and they struggle together under water till the turtle thinks he has the worst of the bargain, and concludes to come to the surface."

"Does not the turtle sometimes get the better?"

"Sometimes."

"Mr. Rhys, have you any particular duty to-day?"

"I don't see how you can keep up that form of expression!" said he, with a comic gravity of dislike.

"Why not?"

"It is not treating me with proper confidence."

Her look in reply was so very pretty, both blushing and winsome, that the corners of his mouth were obliged to give way.

"You know what my first name is, do not you?"

"Yes," said Eleanor.

"The people about call me 'Misi Risi'—I am not going to have my wife a Fijian to me."

The lights on Eleanor's face were very pretty. With the same contained smile he went on.

"I gave you my name yesterday. It is yours to do what you like with; but the greatest dishonour you can show to a gift, is not to use it at all."

"That is the most comical putting of the case that ever I heard," said Eleanor, quite unable to retain her own gravity.

"Very good sense," said Mr. Rhys, with a dry preservation of his.

"But, after all," said Eleanor, "you gave me your second name, if you please—I do not know what I have to do with the first."

"You do not? Is it possible you think your name is Henry, or James, or something else? You are Rowland Rhys as truly as I am—only you are the mistress, and I am the master."

Eleanor's look went over the table with something besides laughter in the brown eyes, which made them a gentle thing to see.

"Mr. Rhys, I am thinking what you will do to this part of you to make it like the other?"

He gave her a glance, at which her eyes went down instantly.

"I do not know," he said, with infinite gravity. "I will think about it. Preaching does not seem to do you any good."

Eleanor bent her attention upon her bread and fruit. He spoke next with a change of tone, giving up his gravity.

"Do your know *your* particular duty to-day?"

"I thought," said Eleanor, "that as yesterday you showed me the head carpenter, perhaps this morning you would let me see the chief cook."

"That is not the first thing. You must have a lesson in Fijian, now that I hope you are instructed in English."

He carried her off to his study to get it. The lesson was a matter of amusement to Mr. Rhys, but Eleanor set herself earnestly to learn. Then he said he supposed she might as well see her establishment at once, and took her out to the side of the house where she had not been.

It was a plantation wilderness here, too, though particularly devoted to all that in Fiji could belong to a kitchen garden. English beans and peas had been sown, and were flourishing; most of the luxuriance that met the eye had a foreign character. Beautiful order was noticeable everywhere. Mr. Rhys seemed to have forgotten all about the servants; he pleased himself with leading Eleanor through the walks and showing her which were the plants of the yam and the kumera, and other native fruits and vegetables. Bananas were here too, and the graceful stems of the sugar-cane; and overhead the cocoa-nut trees waved their feathery plumes in the air.

"Who did all this?" Eleanor asked, admiringly.

"Solomon, with a head gardener over him."

"Solomon is—I saw him yesterday?"

"Yes. He came with me from Vulanga. He is a nice fellow. He is a Christian, as I told you; and a true labourer

in the great vineyard. I believe he never misses an opportunity to speak to his countrymen in a quiet way, and tell them the truth. He has brought a great many to know it. In my service he is very faithful."

"No wonder this garden looks nice," said Eleanor.

"I asked Solomon one day about his religious experience. He said he was very happy; he had enjoyed religion all the day. He said he rose early in the morning, and prayed that the Lord would greatly bless him and keep him; and that it had been so, and generally was so when he attended to religious duties early in the morning. 'But if I neglect and rush into the world,' he said, 'without properly attending to my religious duties, nothing goes right. I am wrong in my own heart, and no one round me is right.'"

"Good testimony," said Eleanor. "Is he your cook as well as your gardener?"

"I had forgotten all about the cook," said Mr. Rhys. "Come and see the kitchen."

Near the main dwelling-house, in this planted enclosure, were several smaller houses. Mr. Rhys at last took Eleanor that way, and permitted her to inspect them. The one nearest the main building was fitted up for a laundry. The furthest was a sleeping-house for the servants. The middle one was the kitchen. It was a Fijian kitchen. Here was a large fire-place, of the original fashion, which had moved Eleanor's wonder in the dining-room; with a Fijian framework of wood at one side of it, holding native vessels of pottery, larger and smaller, and variously shaped, for cooking purposes. Some more homelike iron utensils were to be seen also; with other kitchen appurtenances, water jars, and so forth. A fire had been in the fire-place, and the signs of cookery were remaining; but, in all the houses, nobody was anywhere visible.

"Solomon is gone to collect your servants," said Mr. Rhys "That explains the present solitude."

"Did he cook that fish?"

"I have not tried him in cooking," said Mr. Rhys, with a gravity that was perfect. "I do not know what he could do if he was tried."

"Who did it, then?"

His smile was wonderfully pleasant—now that it could be no longer kept back—as he answered, "Your servant."

"*You*, Rowland! And the dinner yesterday?"

"Do not praise me," he said, with the same look, "lest I should spoil the dinner to-day. I do not expect there will be anybody here till afternoon."

"Then you shall see what I can do!"

"I do not believe you know how. I have been long enough in the wilderness to learn all trades. You never learned how to cook at Wiglands."

"But at Plassy I did."

"Did aunt Caxton let you into her kitchen?"

"Yes."

"I shall not let you into mine."

"She went with me there. I have not come out here to be useless. I will take care of the dinner to-day."

"No, you shall not," said Mr. Rhys, drawing her away from the kitchen. "You have got enough to do to-day in unpacking boxes. There will be servants this evening to attend to all you want; and for the present you are my care."

"Rowland, I should like it."

Which view of the case did not seem to be material. At least it was answered in a silencing kind of way, as with his arm about her he led her in through the bananas to the house. It silenced Eleanor effectually, in spite of being very serious in her wish. She put it away to bide another opportunity.

Mr. Rhys gave her something else to do, as he had said. The boxes had in part been brought from the schooner, and there was employment for both of them. He drew out nails, and took off covers, and did the rough unpacking; while the arranging and bestowing of the goods thus put under her disposal kept Eleanor very busy. His part of the work was finished long before hers, and Mr. Rhys withdrew to his study for some other work. Eleanor, happy and busy, with touched thoughts of Mrs. Caxton, put away blankets, and clothes, and linen, and calicos, and unpacked glass, and stowed on her shelves a whole store of home comforts and necessaries; mar-

velling between whiles at Mr. Rhys's varieties of power in making himself useful, and wishing she could do what she thought was more her work than his—the work to be done in the kitchen before the servants came home. By-and-by, Mr. Rhys came out of the study again, and found Eleanor sitting on the mat before a huge round hamper, uncovered, filled with Australian fruit. This was a late arrival, brought while he had been shut up at his work. Grapes and peaches, and pears and apricots, were crowded side by side in rich and beautiful abundance and confusion. Eleanor sat looking at it. She was in a working dress, of the brown stuff her aunt's maids wore at home; short sleeves left her arms bare to the elbow; and the full jacket and hoopless skirt did no wrong to a figure the soft outlines of which they only disclosed. Mr. Rhys stopped and stood still. Eleanor looked up.

"Mr. Esthwaite has sent these on in the schooner unknown to me! What shall I do with them all?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Rhys. "It is the penalty that attaches to wealth."

"But you said you never were poor?" said Eleanor, laughing at his look.

"I never was, in feeling. I never was in an embarrassment of riches, either. I can't help you!"

"But these are yours, Rowland. What are you talking of?"

"Are you going to make me a present of the whole?" said Mr. Rhys, stooping down for a grape.

"No, Mr. Esthwaite has done that. The embarrassment is yours."

"I am in no embarrassment; you are mistaken. By what right do you say that Mr. Esthwaite has sent these to me?"

"Because he sent them to me," said Eleanor. "It is the same thing."

"That is dutiful, and loyal, and all that sort of thing," said Mr. Rhys, helping himself to another grape, and looking with his keen eyes and imperturbable gravity at Eleanor. Perhaps he liked to see the scarlet bloom he could so easily call up in her cheeks, which was now accompanied with a little impatient

glance at him. "Nevertheless, I do not consider myself to be within the scope of the gift. The disposition of it remains with you. I do not like the responsibilities of other people's wealth to rest on my shoulders."

"But this fruit is different from what we have on the island; is there not something you would like to have done with it?"

"I should like you to give me one bunch of grapes—to be chosen by yourself."

He looked on, with a satisfied expression of face, while Eleanor's fingers separated and overhauled the fruit till she had got a bunch to her mind. He stood still in his place to let her bring it to him; then took possession of her and the grapes at once; neglecting the latter, however, entirely, to consider her.

"What would you like to have done with the rest, Rowland?" said Eleanor, while her face glowed under his caresses and examination.

"This is a very becoming dress you have on!"

"I did not know you noticed ladies' dresses."

"I always notice my own."

Eleanor's head drooped a little, to hide the rush of pleasure and shame.

"But, Rowland," she said, with gentle persistence, "what *would* you like to have done with that basket? Isn't there some meaning behind your words about it?"

"What makes you think so?" said he, curling the corners of his mouth in an amused way.

"I thought so. Please tell it me! You have something to tell me."

"The fruit is yours, Eleanor."

"And what am I?"

The tears came into her eyes with a little vexed earnestness, for she fancied that Mr. Rhys would not speak *because* the fruit was hers. His manner changed again, to the deep tenderness which he had shown so frequently; holding her close, and looking down into her face; not answering at once; half enjoying, half soothing, the feeling he had raised.

"Eleanor," he said, "I do not want that fruit."

"Tell me what to do with it."

"If you like to send some of those grapes to sister Balliol, at the other house, I think they would do a great deal of good."

"I will just take out a few for you, and I will send the whole basket over there just as it is. Is there anybody to take it?"

"Do not save any for me."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not want anything more than I have got."

"I suppose I may do about that as I please?" said Eleanor, laughing a little.

"No, you may not. I only want this bunch that I have in my hand, for a poor sick fellow whom I think they will comfort. If you feel as I do, and like to send the rest over to the mission house, I think they will be well and gratefully used."

But, Rowland, why did you not tell me that just at first?" she said, a little wistfully.

"Do you feel as I do? Tell me that first."

But as Eleanor was not ready with her answer to this question, of course her own was not responded to. Mr. Rhys laughed at her a little, and then told her she might get the house ready for dinner. Very much Eleanor wished she could rather get the dinner ready for the house; yet somehow she had an instinctive knowledge that it would be no use to ask him; and she had a curious unwillingness to make the request.

"Do you know," she said, looking up in his face, "I do not know how it is, but you are the only person I ever was afraid of, where my natural courage had full play."

"Does that sentiment possess you at present?"

"Yes, a little."

He laughed again, and said it was wholesome; and went off without seeming in the least dismayed by the intelligence. If Eleanor had ventured that remark as a feeler, she was utterly discomfited. She went about her pretty work of getting the little table ready and acquainting herself with the details of

her cupboard arrangements, feeling a little amused at herself, and with many deeper thoughts about Mr. Rhys and the basket of fruit.

They were sitting in the study after dinner, alternately talking and studying Fijian, when Mr. Rhys suddenly asked,—

"Of whom have you ever been afraid, Eleanor, where your natural courage did not have full play?"

"Mr. Carlisle."

"How was that?"

"I was in a false position."

"I feared that, at one time," said Mr. Rhys, thoughtfully.

"I was a bondwoman—under engagements that tied me—I did not dare do as I felt. I understand it all now."

"Do you like to tell me how it happened?"

"I like it very much. I want that you should know just how it was. I was pressed into those engagements without my heart being in them, and indeed very much against my will; but I was dazzled by a vision of worldly glory that made me too weak to resist. Then thoughts of another kind began to rise within me; I saw that worldly glory was not the sufficient thing I had thought it; and as my eyes got clear, I found I had given no love where I had given my promise. Then that consciousness hampered me in every action."

"But you did not break with him—with Mr. Carlisle?"

"Because I was such a bondwoman, as I told you. I did not know what I might do—what was right—and I wanted to do right then—till I went to Plassy. Aunt Caxton set me free."

Mr. Rhys was silent a little.

"Do you remember coming to visit the old window in the ruins, just before you went to Plassy that time?" he said, looking round at her with a smile.

His wife though she was, Eleanor could not help a warm flush of consciousness coming over her at the recollection.

"I remember," she said demurely. "It was in December."

"What were you afraid of at that time?"

"Mr. Carlisle."

"Did you think it was *he* whom you heard?"

"No. I thought it was you."

"Then why were you afraid?"

"I had reason enough," said Eleanor, in a low voice. "Mr. Carlisle had taken it into his head to become jealous of you."

She answered with a certain straightforward dignity; but Mr. Rhys had a view of dyed cheeks and a face which shrank from his eye. He beheld it, no doubt, for a little while; at least he was silent; and ended with one or two kisses, which, to Eleanor's feeling, for she dared not look, spoke him very full of satisfaction. But he never brought up the subject again.

The thoughts raised by the talk about the basket of fruit recurred a few days later. Eleanor had got into full train of her island life by this time. She was studying hard to learn the language, and beginning to speak words of it with her strange muster of servants. Housekeeping duties were fairly in hand. She had begun to find out, too, what Mr. Rhys had foretold her respecting visitors. They came in groups and singly, at all hours nearly, on some days, to see the new house and the new furniture, and the new wife of "Misi Risi." Eleanor could not talk to them; she could only be looked at, and answer through an interpreter their questions and requests, and watch with unspeakable interest these strange, poor people, and admire with unceasing admiration Mr. Rhys's untiring kindness, patience, and skill in receiving and entertaining them. They wanted to see and understand every new thing and every new custom. They were polite in their curiosity, but insatiable; and Mr. Rhys would show, and explain, and talk, and never seem annoyed or weary; and then, whenever he got a chance, put in his own claim for attention, and tell them of the Gospel. Eleanor always knew from his face and manner, and from theirs, when this sort of talk was going on; and she listened strangely to the unknown words in which her heart went along so blindly. When he thought her not needed, or when he thought her tired, Mr. Rhys would dismiss her to her own room, which he would not have invaded; and Eleanor's reverence for her husband grew with every day,

although she would not at the beginning have thought that possible.

At the end of these first few days, Eleanor went one afternoon into Mr. Rhys's study. He was in full tide of work now. The softly swinging door let her in without much noise, and she stood still in the middle of the room, in doubt whether to disturb him or no. He was busy at his writing-table. But Mr. Rhys had good ears, even when he was busy. While she stood there, he looked up at her. She was a pretty vision for a man to see and call wife. She was in one of the white dresses that had stirred Mrs Esthwaite's admiration; its spotless draperies were in as elegant order as ever they had been for Mrs. Powle's drawing-room; the rich banded brown hair was in as graceful order. She stood there very bright, very still, looking at him.

"You have been working a long time, Rowland. You want to stop and rest."

"Come here, and rest me," he answered, stretching out his hand.

"Rowland," said Eleanor, when she had been standing a minute beside him, "Mrs. Balliol wants me to cut off my hair."

Mr. Rhys looked up at her, for with one arm round her he was still bending attention upon his work. He glanced up as if in doubt or wonder.

"I have been over to see her," Eleanor repeated, "and she counsels me to cut off my hair; cut it short."

"See you don't!" he said, sententiously.

"Why?" said Eleanor.

"It would be the cause of our first and last quarrel."

"Our first," said Eleanor, stifling some hidden amusement; "but how could you tell that it would be the last?"

"It would be so very disagreeable!" Mr. Rhys said, with a gravity so dryly comic, that Eleanor's gravity was destroyed.

"Mrs. Balliol says I shall find it—my hair, I mean—very much in my way."

"It would be in *my way*, if it was cut off."

"She says it will take a great deal of precious time. She

thinks that your razor would be better applied to my head—"

"Than to what other object?"

"Than to its legitimate use and application. She wants me to get you to let your beard grow and to cut off my hair. It's rather unequal, I must say."

Eleanor was laughing; she could not see Mr. Rhys's face very well; it was somewhat bent over his papers; but the side view was of unprovokable gravity. A gravity, however, which she had learned to know covered a wealth of amusement or of mischief, as the case might be. She knelt down to bring herself within better speaking and seeing distance.

"Rowland, what sort of people are your coadjutors?"

"They are the Lord's people," he answered.

Eleanor felt somewhat checked; the gravity of this answer was of a different character; but she could not refrain from carrying the matter further; she could not let it rest there.

"Do you mean," she said, a little timidly, but persistently, "that you are not willing to speak of them as they are, *to me?*"

He was quite silent half a minute, and Eleanor grew increasingly sober. He said then, gently, but decidedly,—

"There are two persons in the field, of whose faults I am willing to talk to you—yours and my own."

"And of others you think it is wrong, then, to speak, even so privately and kindly as we are speaking?" Eleanor was very much chagrined. Mr. Rhys waited a moment, and then said, in the same manner,—

"I cannot do it, Eleanor."

He got up a moment after and went out of the room. Eleanor felt almost stunned with surprise and discomfort. This was the second time, in the few days that she had been with him, that he had found her wrong in something. It troubled her strangely; and the sense of how much he was better than she—how much higher his sphere of living than the one she moved in—pressed her heart down almost to the ground. She stood by the writing-table, where she had risen to her feet, with her eyes brimful of tears, but so still even to

her eyelids, that the tears had not overflowed. She supposed Mr. Rhys had gone out. In another moment, however, she heard his step returning, and he entered the study. Eleanor moved instantly to leave it, but he met and stayed her with a look infinitely sweet, turned her about, and made her kneel down with him. And then he poured out a prayer for charity; not merely the kindness that throws a covering over the failings of others, or that holds back the report of what they have been; but the over-abounding heavenly love that will send its brightness into the dark places of human society, and with its own richness fill the barren spots; and, above all, for that love of Jesus the King that makes all his servants dear; for that spirit of Christ that looks with his own love and forbearance on all that need it. And so, as the speaker prayed, he showed his own possession of that which he asked for; so revealed the tender and high walk of his own mind and its near familiarity with heavenly things, that Eleanor thought her heart would break. The feeling, how far he stood above her in knowledge and in goodness, while it was a secret and deep joy, yet gave her acute pain, such as she had never felt before. She would not weep; it was a dry aching pain, that took part of its strength from the thought of having done or shown something that he did not like. But Mr. Rhys went on to pray for her alone; and Eleanor was conquered then. Tears came, and she cried like a little child, and all the hard pain of pride or of fear was washed away, like the dust from the leaves in a summer shower.

She was so far healed, but she would have run away when they rose from their knees, if he had permitted her. He had no such intention. Keeping fast hold of her hand, he brought her to a seat by the window, opened it—for the day was now cooling off, and the sea-breeze was fresh—and, taking the book of their studies, he put her into a lesson of Fijian practice, till Eleanor's spirits were thoroughly restored. Then, throwing away the book and taking her in his arms, he almost kissed the tears back again.

"Eleanor," he said, when he saw that her eyes were wet, and her colour and her voice were fluttering together.

"What?"

"You must bear the inconvenience of your hair for my sake. Tell sister Balliol you wear it by my express orders."

Eleanor's look was lovely. She saw that the gentleness of this speech was intended to give her back just that liberty she might think was forbidden. Humbleness and affection danced in her face together.

"And you do not object to white dresses, Rowland?"

"Never—when they are white," he said, with one of his peculiar smiles.

"Rowland," said Eleanor, now completely happy again, "you ought to have those jalousie blinds at these windows You want them here much more than I do."

"How will you prove that?"

"By putting them here; and then you will confess it."

"Don't you do it!" said he, smiling, seeing that Eleanor's eye was in earnest.

"Please let me! Do let me! You want them much more than I do, Rowland."

"Then you will have to let them stand; for they are just *where* I want them."

"But the shade of them is much more needed here."

"I could have had it. You need not disturb yourself. There is a whole stack of them lying under the shelves in your store-room."

"Why are they lying there?" said Eleanor, in great surprise.

"I did not want them. I left them for you to dispose of."

"For me! Then I shall dispose of some of them here."

"Not with my leave."

"May I not know why?" said Eleanor, putting her hand in his to plead for it.

"I do not want to fare too much better than my brethren," he answered, with a smile of infinite pleasantness at her. Eleanor's face showed a sudden accession of intelligence.

"Then, Rowland, let us send the other jalousies to Mr. Balliol to shade his study—with all my heart; and you put up mine here. I did not think about that before. Will you do it?"

"There are plenty of them without taking yours, child."

"Then, oh, Rowland, why did you not do it before?"

"I have an objection to using other people's property, even for the benefit of my neighbours," he said, with the provoking smile in the corners of his mouth.

"But it is yours now."

"Well, I make it over to you, to be offered and presented as it seems good to you, to brother Balliol, or to sister Balliol, for his use and behoof."

"Do you mean that I must do it?"

"If it is your pleasure."

"Then I will speak of it immediately."

"You can have an opportunity to-night. But, Eleanor, you must call her sister Balliol."

"I can't, Rowland!"

Silence fell between the parties. Mr. Rhys's face was impenetrable. Eleanor glanced at it, and again glanced at it, but got no help. Finally she laid her hand on his shoulder and spoke a little apprehensively. "Rowland, are you serious?"

"Perfectly." So he was outwardly.

"Do you think it matters really whether I call her one thing or another? If it were Mrs. Amos, I should not have the least difficulty. I could call her sister Amos. What does it matter?"

"Why can't you use a Christian form of address with her as well as with me?"

"Do you consider it a matter of *principle*?"

"Only as it regards the feelings of the individual, in either se." Mr. Rhys's mouth was looking very comical.

"Would she care, Rowland?"

"I should like to have you try," he said, getting up and arranging his papers to leave. And Eleanor saw he was not going to tell her any more.

"What is the opportunity you spoke of, Rowland?"

"This is our evening for being together—it has hardly been a class before this, we were so few; but we met to talk and think together, and usually considered some given subject. To-night it is, the 'glory to be revealed.'"

"That is what Mr. Amos and I used to do on board the schooner; and we had that subject too, just after we left Tonga So we shall be ready."

"We ought to go there to tea; but I have to go over first to Nawaile; it will keep me till after tea-time. Do not wait for me, unless you choose."

Eleanor chose, and told him so. While he was gone she sat at the door of the house watching and thinking; thinking of him especially, and of things that his talk that afternoon had brought up. It was a pleasant hour or two. The sea-breeze fresh from the sea; the waving broad banana leaves; the sweet perfume of flowers, which were rarely profuse and beautiful in their garden; the beautiful southern sky of night, with the stars which Eleanor had learned to know as strangers coming over in the ship, and now loved as the companions of her new home. Stillness, and flapping of leaves, and sweet thoughts; until it was time to be expecting Mr. Rhys back again, and Eleanor made the tea, that he might at least not miss so much refreshment. She knew his step a long way off, and long before she could see him; his cup was all ready for him when he stepped in. He drank it, looking at Eleanor over it; would stop for nothing else, and carried her off.

"I had a happy time," he said, as they went through the plantations. "I have been to see an old man who lies there dying, or very near it. He has been a Christian two years. He is very glad to see me when I come, and ready to talk; but he will not talk with his neighbours. He says he wants to keep his thoughts fixed on God; and if he listened to these people they would talk to him of village affairs, and turn his mind off."

"Then, if you had a happy time, I suppose *he* is happy?"

"He is happy. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!' Think of old Cæsar, going to glory from the darkness of Fiji. He said to me to-night, 'I am weak, and I am old; my time is come, but I am not afraid to die; through Jesus I feel courageous for death. Jesus is my Chief, and I wish to obey him: if he says I am yet to lie here, I will praise him: and if he

says I am to go above to him, I will praise him. I do not wish to eat; his word is my food; I think on it, and lean entirely on Jesus.' Do you know how good it is to be a missionary, Eleanor?"

They exchanged looks; that was all; they were at the door, and went in. The party there were expecting and waiting for them, and it was more than a common welcome, Eleanor saw, that was given to them. She did not wonder at it. After exchanging warm greetings all round, she sat down; but Mr. Rhys began walking the floor. The rest were silent. There was a somewhat dim light from a lamp in the room; the windows and doors were open; the air, sweet with flowers and fresh from the sea, came in gently; the soft sounds of leaves and insects could be heard through the fall of Mr. Rhys's steps upon the matted floor. The hour had a strange charm to Eleanor.

Silence lasted until Mr. Rhys interrupted it with kneeling down for prayer. Then followed one of those prayers, in which it always seemed to Eleanor as if somebody had taken her hand, who was leading her where she could almost look in at the gates of that city which Bunyan called the Celestial. Somewhere above earth it took her, and rapt her up as Milton's angel is said to have descended, upon a sunbeam. One came to earth again at the end of the prayer; but not without a remembrance of where one had been.

"Sister Balliol," said Mr. Rhys, "will you put us in mind concerning our subject this evening?"

"It is the glory to be revealed; and I find that it is a glory to be revealed *in us*," Mrs. Balliol made answer. "Sufferings come first. It is a glory that goes along with sufferings in the present life; but it is so much greater than the sufferings, that no comparison can be made of them. For my part, I do not think the glory would be half so much glory, if it were not for the sufferings going before."

"To suffer with Christ, and for him, that is glory now," said Mr. Rhys; "to have been so honoured will always be part of our joy. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but rather let him glorify God on this behalf. Those

be tears that Christ's own hand will wipe off; and what glory will that be!"

"The word of God fails to express it," said Mr. Amos, "and calls it 'riches of glory.' Riches of glory, to be poured into vessels prepared to receive it. Surely, being such heirs, none of us has a right to call himself poor? we are heirs of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and not subject to decadence or failure. We may well be content with our puny interest in this life, who have such an estate coming in."

"I feel poor very often," said gentle Mrs. Amos; "and I suppose that must be my own fault; for the word says, 'Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches, and righteousness.'"

"Those are riches that none but the poor come into possession of," said Mr. Rhys. "The poor in spirit inherit the kingdom, and nobody else. It is our very emptiness that fits us for receiving those unsearchable riches. But, having those, sister Amos, it is no deprivation of this world's good things that would make you feel poor."

"Oh, no, indeed!" said Mrs. Amos. "I did not mean *that* sort of poor."

"The rich he will send empty away," Mr. Rhys went on.

"So in the matter of suffering," said Mr. Balliol, taking up the word. "If we are partakers of Christ's sufferings now, we are told to rejoice. For when his glory is revealed, the word is, that we shall be glad also, and with exceeding joy. When his glory is revealed here, a little, now, we are glad; our joy seems to be exceeding, now, brother Rhys. I wonder what it will be when God calls it exceeding joy!"

There was a pause; and then Mrs. Amos, for the sake simply of starting Eleanor, whose voice she knew in it, began softly the song, "Burst, ye emerald gates!" She had her success, for Eleanor with the others took up the words, and carried it—Mrs. Amos thought—where Mr. Rhys's prayer had been. When the song ceased, there was silence; till Mr. Rhys said, "Eleanor!"—It was her turn to speak.

"I do not believe," she said, speaking low and slowly, "that either sufferings, or promises, or duties, will bring the hope of

glory into the heart, until Jesus himself brings it there. And if he brings it, it hardly seems to me that sufferings will enhance it—except in so far as they lead to greater knowledge of him, or are the immediate fruit of love to him; and then, as Mr. Rhys says, they are honour themselves already. The riches of the glory of this mystery is *Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"

Mr. Rhys was standing at the back of Eleanor's chair, leaning upon it. He bent his head and whispered to her to tell her story that she had told him. At that whisper, Eleanor would have steadily gone through the fire if necessary; this was not quite as hard; and though not for her own sake caring to do it, she told the story, and told it freely and well. She told it so that every head there was bowed. And then there was silence again; till Mr. Rhys began, or rather went on with what she had been saying, in a voice that seemed to come from every heart,—

"'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"Friends, we have the present honour of being Christ's ambassadors. Do we know what honour that is? 'Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me.' That is honour under which we may tremble!" And standing there at the back of Eleanor's chair, Mr. Rhys began to talk; on the joy of carrying Christ's message, the honour of being his servants and co-workers, and the gladness of bringing the water of life to lips dry and failing in death. He told the instance of that evening which he had told to Eleanor; and, leaving his station behind her, he walked up and down again, speaking as she had sometimes heard him speak, till every head was raised and turned, and every eye followed him. With fire and tears, speaking of the work to be done and the joy of doing it, and the need of more to do it, and of the carelessness people have of that glory which will make men shine as the stars for ever and ever.

"Ay, we shall know then, brother Balliol, when the great

supper is served, and Christ shall gird himself, and make his faithful servants sit down to meat, and he shall come forth and serve them—we shall know then, if we are there, what glory means! And we shall know what it means to have no want unsatisfied, and no joy left out!—when the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters."

Mr. Balliol answered,—

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servants be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Mr. Rhys went on—"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

They knelt together again, and then separated; and the tropical moon lighted home the two who did not belong to Mrs. Balliol's household.

THE END.

CLAY AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS, BUNGAY.

LIST OF

NEW AND RECENT BOOKS,

PUBLISHED BY

JAMES NISBET AND CO.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL TAIT: A Sketch of the Public Life of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. By A. C. Bicklay. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY: Its History and Standards. With some account of English Puritanism up to the meeting of the Assembly. Being the Baird Lecture for 1882. By the Rev. A. F. Mitchell, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in St. Andrew's University. *Will be ready very shortly.*

THE HOMILETICAL LIBRARY. By the Rev. Canon Spence, M.A., and the Rev. J. S. Exell, M.A. Vol. I. containing Sermons appropriate for Advent. Demy 8vo, 7s. 6d. (To be completed in 8 vols.)

THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES: Their Claims, their History, and their Authority. Being the Croall Lecture for 1882. By the Rev. Professor Charteris, D.D. Demy 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

HOMILETICS. By Rev. James Hoppin, Professor in Yale College. Large 8vo, 12s. 6d.

THE ELDER AND HIS FRIENDS. By the Rev. A. M. Symington, D.D. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE MODERN HEBREW AND THE HEBREW CHRISTIAN. By the Rev. B. Bassin. Crown 8vo, cloth, 4s. 6d.

LIFE OF MRS. COLIN VALENTINE. By Mrs. George Cupples. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

BRIGHT AND FAIR. A Book for Young Ladies. By the Rev. George Everard, M.A. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

"A LIFE OF CONSECRATION." Memorials of Mrs. Mary Legge. By one of her Sons. Post 8vo, cloth, 8s. 6d.

MY CONFIRMATION: Before and After. By the same. 18mo, paper, 3d.; cloth, 6d.

THE PRINCE IN THE MIDST. By Miss Nugent. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

GOD'S ANSWERS: The narrative of Miss Annie Macpherson's Work at the Home of Industry, Spitalfields. By Miss Lowe. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 3s. 6d.

EVENING STARS. By Mrs. Evered Poole. 32mo, cloth, 9d.
This volume is written on the plan intended to have been carried out by Miss F. R. Havergal, as described in the preface to "Morning Stars."

VISITING TEXT BOOK. By the Rev. Charles Neil, M.A. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

EARLY IN THE MORNING. By the Rev. Gordon Calthrop. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

WELLS OF WATER. By Mrs. Simpson, Author of "Steps through the Stream," &c. Square 16mo, cloth elegant, 1s.

THE LORD'S PURSEBEARERS. By Hesba Stretton. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

BOOK OF ANTHEMS. Compiled and arranged for use in Churches and Families. By E. J. Hopkins, Organist in the Temple Church.

THE PSALMS OF DAVID, BIBLE VERSION, Pointed for Chanting by Sir Herbert Oakeley, Mus. Doc., and adapted by him to appropriate Chants. Crown 8vo, cloth.

A NOBLE VINE. By the Rev. J. Jackson Wray. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING. By Miss Anna Warner. 32mo, cloth extra, 10d.

SWISS LETTERS AND ALPINE POEMS. By the late Frances Ridley Havergal. With twelve illustrations of Alpine Scenery and Flowers by the Baroness Helga von Cramm. Small 4to, cloth, extra gilt, 12s.

THE BATTERY AND THE BOILER; or, The Electrical Adventures of a Telegraph Cable Layer. By R. M. Ballantyne. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

THE KITTEN PILGRIMS; or, Great Battles and Grand Victories. By R. M. Ballantyne. Small 4to, paper boards, with numerous illustrations, 5s.

THE STORY OF A SHELL. A Romance of the Sea, with some sea teachings. A book for boys and girls. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D. Small 4to, cloth, with numerous Illustrations, 6s.

DECIMA'S PROMISE. By AGNES GIBERNE. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

EXPELLED. The Story of a Young Gentleman. By BERNARD HELDMANN. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

HOW THEY DID. By GRACE STEBBING. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

REX AND REGINA. By Mrs. MARSHALL. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

BEN BRIGHTBOOTS, AND OTHER TRUE STORIES. By FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

A BAG OF STORIES. By ANNA WARNER. Crown 8vo.

NOBODY. By Miss WARNER. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d. (New Volume of the "Golden Ladder" Series.)

THROUGH SHADOW TO SUNSHINE. By Mrs. HORNIBROOK. Small crown 8vo, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE PARISH. By Lady DUNBOYNE. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 1s. (Crown Series.)

MRS. ARNOLD. By Miss WODEHOUSE. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 1s. (Crown Series.)

THE STORY OF THE REFORMATION, FOR CHILDREN. By Mrs. BOWER. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 1s. (Crown Series.)

LITTLE BRICKS. By DARLEY DALE. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD: A Study from Old Testament History. By J. OSWALD DYKES, D.D. Post 8vo, cloth, 6s.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE KING. Comprising "The Beatitudes of the Kingdom," "The Laws of the Kingdom," and "The Relation of the Kingdom to the World." By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

A VOLUME OF FAMILY PRAYERS. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

SERMONS. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

HOSANNAS OF THE CHILDREN: or, a Chime of Bells from the Little Sanctuary. Being Brief Sermons for the Young for each Sunday in the Year. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D., Author of "In Christo," "Palms of Elim," &c., &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

GLEAMS FROM THE SICK CHAMBER. Memorial Thoughts of Consolation and Hope, gathered from the Epistle of St. Peter. (A Book for Sufferers.) By the same. Small crown 8vo. cloth, 2s.

THE MORNING AND NIGHT WATCHES. By the same. In one vol., 16mo and royal 32mo, cloth, 1s. 6d.; separately, sewed, 8d.; cloth, 1s.

THE MIND AND WORDS OF JESUS. By the same. In one vol., 16mo and royal 32mo, cloth, 1s. 6d.; separately, sewed, 8d.; cloth, 1s.

PALMS OF ELIM; or, Rest and Refreshment in the Valley. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

EVENTIDE AT BETHEL; or, The Night Dream of the Desert. An Old Testament Chapter in Providence and Grace. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN; or, Christ the Light of the World. A Life of our Lord for the Young. By the same. With 16 Full-page Illustrations by A. ROWAN. Post 4to, cloth, 7s. 6d. Cheap edition with 12 illustrations, post 4to, 3s. 6d.: also a cheaper edition in paper covers, price 1s.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PETER. Being the Life and Times of the Apostle. By the same. Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

THE GATES OF PRAISE, and other Original Hymns, Poems, and Fragments of Verse. By the same. 16mo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

PALESTINE EXPLORED. With a View to its Present Natural Features, and to the Prevailing Manners, Customs, Rites, and Colloquial Expressions of its People, which throw Light on the Figurative Language of the Bible. By the Rev. JAMES NEIL, M.A., Author of "Palestine Re-peopled," "Rays from the Realms of Nature," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 6s.

BIBLE IMAGES. By the Rev. JAMES WELLS, M.A., Author of "Bible Echoes," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON IN BLANK VERSE. By the Rev. Canon CLARKE D.D., with an Introduction by the Rev. Dr. BONAR. Small 4to, cloth, 3s. 6d.

LIVING TRUTHS FOR HEAD AND HEART. By the Rev. Canon BELL, D.D., Author of "Songs in the Twilight." &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d

HYMNS FOR THE CHURCH AND CHAMBER. By the same. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

THE INHERITORS OF THE KINGDOM: being Expository Discourses on St. Matthew v. 1-16. By the Rev. JOSEPH DUNCAN. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

ISRAEL'S LAWGIVER: His Narrative true and His Laws genuine. By A. MOODY STUART, D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE HOMILETIC MAGAZINE VOLUME. Each containing six monthly parts. Very suitable for Clergymen, Ministers, and Lay-Preachers. Demy 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

LIFE OF SIR HENRY HAVELOCK, K.C.B. A Biographical Sketch of Sir Henry Havelock, K.C.B., compiled from unpublished papers, &c. By the Rev. WILLIAM BROCK, D.D. Cloth boards, 3s. 6d.; also a cheap edition. Cloth limp, 1s. 6d.

HINDU WOMEN, with Glimpses into their Life and Zenanas. By H. LLOYD, Editorial Secretary of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

LONELY; NO, NOT LONELY, and other Poems. By EVA TRAVERS EVERED POOLE, Author of "Evening Stars," &c. 16mo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF A SOLDIER. By the same. 16mo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE: As a Problem of International Policy in connection with the Requirements of Christianity and the Expectations of the Jews. By B. WALKER. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

SCRIPTURE ITSELF THE ILLUSTRATOR. A Manual of Illustrations, gathered from Scriptural Figures, Phrases, Types, Derivations, Chronology, Texts, &c., adapted for the use of Preachers and Teachers. By the Rev. G. S. BOWES, B.A. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

IN PROSPECT OF SUNDAY. Analyses, Arguments, Applications, &c. By the Rev. G. S. BOWES, Author of "Scripture itself the Illustrator," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

THE NATURAL ELEMENTS OF REVEALED THEOLOGY; Being the Baird Lecture for 1881. By the Rev. GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., of Innellan. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

A WISE DISCRIMINATION THE CHURCH'S NEED. By T. U. DUDLEY, D.D., Assistant-Bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky. The Bohlen Lecture, 1881. Crown 8vo, cloth, 4s. 6d.

SERMONS AND LECTURES. By the late Rev. JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S., Author of "Life in Earnest," "The Great Biography," &c. Post 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

THE HOLY WAR. By JOHN BUNYAN. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 3s. 6d.

RED LINE EDITION OF BOGATZKY'S GOLDEN TREASURY Crown 32mo, cloth, 1s.; cloth gilt, gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

RED LINE EDITION OF KEBLE'S CHRISTIAN YEAR. Crown 32mo, cloth 1s.; cloth gilt, gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

SOLDIERS AND SERVANTS OF CHRIST; or, Chapters on Church History. With Preface by the Rev. F. V. MATHER, M.A., Vicar of St. Paul's, Clifton, and Canon of Bristol. Second edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

WORK AND PRAYER. The Story of Nehemiah. By the Rev. A. M. SYMINGTON, D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

SEEKING THE LOST. Incidents and Sketches of Christian Work in London. By the Rev. C. J. WHITMORE, Author of "The Bible in the Workshop." Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

A SOLDIER'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S LOVE AND OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS WORD. By the late Major C. H. MALAN. Crown 8vo, revised and cheaper edition, cloth 1s. 6d.

OLD COMRADES; or, Sketches from Life in the British Army. With Thoughts on Military Service. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE CONSECRATED LIFE. By the Rev. ERNEST BOYS, M.A., 16mo, cloth, 1s.

REST UNTO YOUR SOULS. By the same. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

THE SURE FOUNDATION. By the same. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

NEVER SAY DIE: A Talk with Old Friends. By SAMUEL GILLESPIE PROUT. 16mo, sewed, 6d.; cloth, 9d.

HURRAH! A Bible Talk with Soldiers. By the same. 16mo, sewed 6d.; cloth, 9d.

BUNYAN'S PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. With 40 Illustrations, designed by Sir JOHN GILBERT, and engraved by W. H. WHYMPER. Printed on toned paper, and handsomely bound in cloth, 3s. 6d.; in leatherette, gilt edges, 5s.

ILLUSTRATIVE TEXTS AND TEXTS ILLUSTRATED. By the Rev. J. W. BARDSLEY, M.A. New and enlarged edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

FAMILY DEVOTION. The Book of Psalms arranged for Worship, with Meditations on each portion. By the Very Rev. HENRY LAW, M.A., Dean of Gloucester. In 2 vols. Post 8vo, cloth, 10s.

WILD FLOWERS OF THE HOLY LAND. Fifty-four Plates printed in Colours, drawn and painted after Nature by HANNAH ZELLER, Nazareth. With a preface by the Rev. H. B. TRISTRAM, Canon of Durham, and an Introduction by EDWARD ATKINSON, Esq., F.L.S., F.Z.S. 4to, cloth gilt, 21s.

HINTS TO HOSPITAL AND SICK ROOM VISITORS. By Mrs. COLIN G. CAMPBELL. Small crown 8vo, 1s. 6d.

ABOUT CRIMINALS. By Mrs. MEREDITH. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS. Evening Readings for a Month. By MARGARET STEWART SIMPSON, Author of "Steps through the Stream." With two Illustrations. 16mo, cloth extra, 1s.

THOUGHTS. By Mrs. WIGLEY. Small crown 8vo, cloth. Each 1s.

THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS.
THOUGHTS FOR CHILDREN.
THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN BUSINESS.
THOUGHTS FOR SERVANTS.
THOUGHTS FOR TEACHERS.

WORKERS AT HOME. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

OUR COFFEE ROOM. By Lady HOPE of Carriden. With Preface by Lieut.-Gen. Sir ARTHUR COTTON, R.E., K.C.S.I. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

MORE ABOUT OUR COFFEE ROOM. By Lady HOPE of Carriden. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

LINES OF LIGHT ON A DARK BACKGROUND. By the same. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

A MAIDEN'S WORK. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

SUNSET RAYS. A Companion Volume to "Sunrise Gleams." By Lady HOPE of Carriden. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

A BRIGHT LIFE. Crown 8vo, cloth, with steel portrait, 3s. 6d.

A SUMMER IN THE LIFE OF TWO LITTLE CHILDREN. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

THE CULTURE OF PLEASURE; or, The Enjoyment of Life in its Social and Religious Aspects. By the Author of "The Mirage of Life." Fifth edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE END OF A COIL. By Miss WARNER, Author of "My Desire," "Wide, Wide World," &c. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 3s. 6d.

GREY CRAIGS. A Story of Scottish Life. By J. L. WATSON. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 5s.

HELEN HERVEY'S CHANGE; or, Out of Darkness into Light. By MARIA ENGLISH ("Home and School Series"). Small crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 1s. 6d.

STORIES OF THE CATHEDRAL CITIES OF ENGLAND. By Mrs. MARSHALL, Author of "A History of France," "Matthew Frost," &c. With illustrations. Crown 8vo. 5s.

DEWDROPS AND DIAMONDS. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

THE BIRTH OF THE CENTURY; or, Eighty Years Ago. By the same. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

HEATHER AND HAREBELL. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK. By the same. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 1s.

ROSE HARTLEY AND HER CHRISTMAS WAYMARKS. A Tale for Girls Leaving School. By C. N. REDFORD, Author of "The Kingdom." Small crown 8vo, with illustrations, cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

A MOTHER. For a Daughter. By Mrs. UMPHELBY, Author of "A Child. For a Mother." Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s.

A CHILD. For a Mother. By the same. Small crown 8vo, 2s.

ROGER WILLOUGHBY; or, The Days of Benbow. By the late W. H. G. KINGSTON, Author of "The Three Lieutenants," &c. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 5s.

DORRINCOURT. A Tale for Boys. By B. HELDMANN. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 5s.

BOXALL SCHOOL. By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

THE BLUE FLAG AND THE CLOTH OF GOLD. By ANNA WARNER. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, 2s. 6d.

TIRED CHRISTIANS. By the same. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

THE MELODY OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. By the same. Royal 32mo, cloth, 8d.

WAYFARING HYMNS, Original and Selected. By the same. Royal 32mo, cloth, 6d.

THE OTHER SHORE. By the same. Royal 32mo, cloth, 1s.

THE FOURTH WATCH. By the same. Royal 32mo, cloth, 10d.

WHAT AILETH THEE? By the same. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

WORKS BY THE REV. J. JACKSON WRAY.

A NOBLE VINE. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

MATTHEW MELLOWDEW. A Story with more Heroes than One. Cloth gilt, 5s.

PAUL MEGGITT'S DELUSION. With Six full-page Plates. Cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

CHRONICLES OF CAPSTAN CABIN. Or, The Children's Hour. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

A MAN, EVERY INCH OF HIM; or, The Story of Frank Fullerton's School-days. With full-page Illustrations. Cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

PETER PENGELLY; or, True as the Clock. Cloth gilt, 2s.

NESTLETON MAGNA. A Story of Yorkshire Methodism. Cloth, 3s. 6d.; cloth gilt, gilt edges, 5s.

WORKS BY THE REV. GEORGE EVERARD, M.A.

BRIGHT AND FAIR. A Book for Young Ladies. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

MY CONFIRMATION: Before and After. 18mo, paper, 3d.; cloth, 6d.

STRONG AND FREE. A Book for Young Men. With a recommendatory letter by the Right Honourable the Earl of Shaftesbury. 16mo, limp cloth, 1s.; boards, 1s. 6d.

FOLLOW THE LEADER. 16mo, 1s. 6d.

IN SECRET. A Manual of Private Prayer. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

THE RIVER OF LIFE. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

DAY BY DAY; or, Counsels to Christians on the Details of Everyday Life. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s.

BEFORE HIS FOOTSTOOL. Family Prayers for One Month. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s.

STEPS ACROSS; or, Guidance and Help to the Anxious and Doubtful. A Companion Volume to "Day by Day." Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s.

HOME SUNDAYS; or, Help and Consolation from the Sanctuary. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s.

NOT YOUR OWN; or, Counsels to Young Christians. 16mo. cloth, 1s.

SAFE AND HAPPY. Words of Help and Encouragement to Young Women. With Prayers for Daily Use. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

EDIE'S LETTER; or, Talks with the Little Folks. Small 4to, 2s. 6d.

MY SPECTACLES: and What I Saw With Them. Uniform with "Not Your Own." 16mo, cloth, 1s.

LITTLE FOXES, and How to Catch Them. 18mo, cloth, 1s.

BENEATH THE CROSS: Counsels, Meditations, and Prayers for Communicants. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

THE WRONG TRAIN; or, Common Mistakes in Religion. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

THE HOLY TABLE. A Guide to the Lord's Supper. 64 pp., tinted cover, 4d.; cloth, 6d.

NONE BUT JESUS; or, Christ is All from First to Last. 32mo, sewed, 4d.; cloth limp, 6d.

WELCOME HOME: or, Plain Teachings from the Prodigal Son. 32mo, cloth, 8d.

THE HOME OF BETHANY; or, Christ revealed as the Teacher and Comforter of His People. 32mo, sewed, 4d., cloth, 6d.

LIST OF WORKS

BY THE LATE

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

SWISS LETTERS AND ALPINE POEMS. With twelve illustrations of Alpine Scenery and Flowers by the Baroness HELGA VON CRAMM. Small 4to, cloth, extra gilt, 12s.

LIFE CHORDS; the Earlier and Later Poems of the late FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL. With 12 Chromo-Lithographs of Alpine Scenery, &c., from designs by the Baroness HELGA VON CRAMM, in one of which is introduced a Portrait of the Author in the ninth year of her age. Small 4to, cloth gilt, 12s.

LIFE MOSAIC: "The Ministry of Song" and "Under the Surface," in One Vol. With 12 Coloured Illustrations of Alpine Flowers and Swiss Mountain and Lake Scenery, from drawings by the Baroness HELGA VON CRAMM. Beautifully printed by Kaufmann, of Lahr-Baden. In crown 4to, with Illustrated Initials, Head-pieces, &c., cloth, gilt extra, 12s.

MORNING STARS; or, Names of Christ for His Little Ones. Super royal 32mo, cloth, 9d.

MORNING BELLS; being Waking Thoughts for the Little Ones. Royal 32mo, sewed, 6d.; cloth, 9d.

LITTLE PILLOWS: being Good Night Thoughts for the Little Ones. Uniform in size and price.

BRUEY, A LITTLE WORKER FOR CHRIST. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.; cheap edition, limp cloth, 1s. 6d., sewed, 1s.

THE FOUR HAPPY DAYS. A Story for Children. Seventh edition. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

SONGS OF PEACE AND JOY. Selected from "The Ministry of Song" and "Under the Surface." With Music by CHARLES H. PURDAY. Fcap 4to, cloth, gilt edges, 3s.; or in paper covers, 1s. 6d.

BEN BRIGHTBOOTS, and other True Stories. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

Works by the late F. R. HAVERGAL—continued.

ROYAL GRACE AND LOYAL GIFTS.

Comprising the following Seven Books in a neat cloth case, price 10s. The Books may be had separately, 16mo, cloth, 1s. each.

KEPT FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

THE ROYAL INVITATION; or, Daily Thoughts on Coming to Christ.

MY KING; or, Daily Thoughts for the King's Children.

ROYAL COMMANDMENTS; or, Morning Thoughts for the King's Servants.

ROYAL BOUNTY; or, Evening Thoughts for the King's Guests.

LOYAL RESPONSES; or, Daily Melodies for the King's Minstrels.

STARLIGHT THROUGH THE SHADOWS; and other Gleams from the King's Word.

UNDER HIS SHADOW. The Last Poems. Super royal 32mo, cloth, gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

THE MINISTRY OF SONG. Super royal 32mo, cloth, gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

UNDER THE SURFACE. Poems. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.; also super royal, 32mo, cloth, gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

WORKS BY MISS M. V. G. HAVERGAL.

MEMORIALS OF FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL. Recently published. Crown 8vo, with Steel Portrait, and other Illustrations, cloth, 6s.; also a Cheaper Edition, roan, 3s.; cloth, 1s. 6d; paper covers, 6d.

PLEASANT FRUITS; or, Records of the Cottage and the Class. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE LAST WEEK: Being a Record of the Last Days of Frances Ridley Havergal. 32mo, sewed, 2d.; cloth, 6d.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS FOR BOYS.

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE.

Crown 8vo, cloth, price, 5s.

THE BATTERY AND THE BOILER: or, The Electrical Adventures of a Telegraph Cable Layer.

THE GIANT OF THE NORTH: or, Pokings round the Pole.

THE LONELY ISLAND: or, The Refuge of the Mutineers.

POST HASTE: A Tale of Her Majesty's Mails.

IN THE TRACK OF THE TROOPS: A Tale of Modern War.

THE SETTLER AND THE SAVAGE: A Tale of Peace and War in South Africa.

UNDER THE WAVES: or, Diving in Deep Waters. A Tale.

RIVERS OF ICE: A Tale Illustrative of Alpine Adventure and Glacier Action.

THE PIRATE CITY; An Algerine Tale.

BLACK IVORY; A Tale of Adventures among the Slavers of East Africa.

THE NORSEMEN IN THE WEST; or, America before Columbus.

THE IRON HORSE; or, Life on the Line. A Railway Tale.

THE FLOATING LIGHT OF THE GOODWIN SANDS.

ERLING THE BOLD: A Tale of the Norse Sea Kings.

THE GOLDEN DREAM: A Tale of the Diggings.

DEEP DOWN: A Tale of the Cornish Mines.

FIGHTING THE FLAMES: A Tale of the London Fire Brigade.

SHIFTING WINDS: A Tough Yarn.

THE LIGHTHOUSE: or, The Story of a Great Fight Between Man and the Sea.

THE LIFEBOAT: A Tale of our Coast Heroes.

GASCOYNE, THE SANDALWOOD TRADER: A Tale of the Pacific.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS FOR BOYS. BY R. M. BALLANTYNE.

Crown 8vo, cloth, price 3s. 6d.

TALES OF ADVENTURE ON THE SEA.

TALES OF ADVENTURE BY FLOOD, FIELD, AND MOUNTAIN.

TALES OF ADVENTURE; or, Wild Work in Strange Places.

TALES OF ADVENTURE ON THE COAST.

MY DOGGIE AND I.

THE RED MAN'S REVENGE.

PHILOSOPHER JACK: A Tale of the Southern Seas.

SIX MONTHS AT THE CAPE: Letters to Periwinkle from South Africa. A Record of Personal Experience and Adventure. With twelve Illustrations by the Author. A New Edition.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ENSIGN SOPHT, Late of the Volunteers. Illustrated by himself. Edited by R. M. BALLANTYNE Small crown 8vo. 1s. 6d. picture boards; 2s. 6d. cloth.

THE KITTEN PILGRIMS: or, Great Battles and Grand Victories. Small 4to, paper boards, with numerous illustrations, 5s.

HOME AND SCHOOL SERIES OF JUVENILE BOOKS.

With Illustrations. In Small crown, extra cloth, each 1s. 6d.

AMOS FAYLE; or, Through the Wilderness into a Wealthy Place. By Mrs. PROSSER.

RUNNING AWAY.

STORIES OF THE LAND WE LIVE IN. By WILLIAM LOCKE.

A RAY OF LIGHT TO BRIGHTEN COTTAGE HOMES. By the Author of "A Trap to Catch a Sunbeam."

THE STORY OF AN OLD POCKET BIBLE, as related by itself. By ROBERT COX, A.M.

ASHTON COTTAGE; or, The True Faith.

MARJORY. By Mrs. MARSHALL.

COURAGE AND COWARDS; or, Who was the Bravest? By the Author of "The Maiden of the Iceberg."

AGATHA LEE'S INHERITANCE. By Mrs. M. R. HIGHAM, Author of "The Other House."

NIDWORTH AND HIS THREE MAGIC WANDS. By Mrs. E. PRENTISS.

ALICE L'ESTRANGE'S MOTTO, AND HOW IT GAINED THE VICTORY. By RABY HUME.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH; or, Susine and Claude of the Val Pelice.

THE BIRTH OF A CENTURY; or, Eighty Years Ago. By Mrs. MARSHALL.

ROSE HARTLEY AND HER CHRISTMAS WAYMAKS. A Tale for Girls leaving School. By Miss C. N. REDFORD.

HELEN HERVEY'S CHANGE; or, Out of Darkness into Light.

THE CROWN SERIES.

Crown 8vo, price One Shilling, cloth, Illustrated.

THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE PARISH. By Lady Dunboyne.
MRS. ARNOLD. By Miss Wodehouse.
THE STORY OF THE REFORMATION, FOR CHILDREN. By Mrs. Bower.

NISBET'S MINIATURE CHRISTIAN CLASSICS.

Red Line Editions. Cloth, 1s. each; cloth gilt, 1s. 6d.

1. BOGATZKY'S GOLDEN TREASURY.
2. KEBLE'S CHRISTIAN YEAR.
3. THE IMITATION OF CHRIST (Thomas à Kempis).
4. THE POEMS OF GEORGE HERBERT.

Series to be continued.

Fcap 8vo, each 1s., cloth. Illustrated.]

NISBET'S ENTERTAINING LIBRARY

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLE.

GENTLEMAN JIM. By Mrs. Prentiss.
FRAMILODE HALL. By Mrs. Marshall.
A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK. By the same.
THE PRINCE'S BOX; or, The Magic Mirror. By Christina N. Simpson.
URSULA: A Story of the Bohemian Reformation. By M. L. Bekenn.
OUR LADDIE. By Miss L. J. Tomlinson.
VIOLET IN THE SHADE. By Mrs. Marshall.
LIGHT ON THE LILY. By the same.
A ROSE WITHOUT THORNS. By the same.
DOLLY'S CHARGE. By Miss Beatrice Marshall.
THE MOUNTAIN MILL. By H. C. Coape.
FAN'S BROTHER. By Miss Beatrice Marshall.
THE MAITLANDS' MONEY-BOX. By Lady Dunboyne.

CABINET SERIES.

Price 2s. 6d.

1. MATTHEW FROST, CARRIER; or, Little Snowdrop's Mission. By EMMA MARSHALL.
2. THE SPANISH BARBER. A Tale. By the Author of "Mary Powell."
3. THREE PATHS IN LIFE. A Tale for Girls. By ELLEN BARLEE.
4. A YEAR WITH THE EVERARDS. By the Hon. Mrs. CLIFFORD-BUTLER.
5. STELLAFONT ABBEY; or, Nothing New. By EMMA MARSHALL.
6. RONALD DUNBEATH; or, The Treasure in the Cave.
7. A SUNBEAM'S INFLUENCE; or, Eight Years After. By the Hon. Mrs. CLIFFORD-BUTLER.
8. A TALE OF TWO OLD SONGS. By the same.
9. ESTHER'S JOURNAL: or, A Tale of Swiss Pension Life. By a RESIDENT. With a Preface by Miss WHATELEY.
10. EFFIE'S FRIENDS; or, Chronicles of the Woods and Shores. By the Author of "The Story of Wandering Willie."
11. THERESA'S JOURNAL. From the French of Madame de PRESSENSÉ. By CRICHTON CAMPBELL.

THE GOLDEN LADDER SERIES.

A Series of Entertaining Books for the Young, principally by the Author of "The Wide Wide World," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, illustrated, price 3s. 6d.

THE EIGHTEENPENNY SERIES OF JUVENILE BOOKS,

Suitable for Prizes and Gift Books for Young People. 16mo, cloth, illustrated.

THE SHILLING SERIES OF JUVENILE BOOKS.

16mo, cloth, illustrated.

A Catalogue of J. N. and Co.'s books, giving a full list of the above series, may be had gratis on application.

LONDON: J. NISBET AND CO., 21, BERNERS STREET.