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G R A C E L E I G H

OF DARLINGTON:

AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY.





# GRACE LEIGH

Of Darlington:

AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY.

BY

REBECCA RABOTEAU.

"God setteth the solitary in families."—Psa. lxxviii. 6.

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## P R E F A C E.

It is with no little hesitation that I have yielded to the judgment of perhaps too partial friends in thus submitting my simple story to the public. And in doing so I would earnestly solicit their forbearing indulgence with regard to the execution of my work, and commend its object to their sympathy and consideration. That object will, I hope, reveal itself in every page—the embodiment of Christian principles in the young female character as the result of the Divine blessing on the careful training and potent example of a pious mother. And as I feel it to be a sort of treason against good principles to clothe them in bad language, I have spared no pains in order to present to the young of my own sex a Christmas offering that will not deteriorate either our mother tongue or that tone of Christian morals that I would desire to commend to the study and acceptance of my own child. If I have been happy enough to succeed in this endeavour I shall feel more than satisfied with the result of my literary enterprise; and

if not, I shall at least have the consolation that my conscience will not accuse me of having written one line that I should wish blotted on my death-bed.

Some of the characters in "Grace Leigh" are portraits, and its most striking incidents are from real life ; and if my young readers (to whom I specially dedicate my work) have as much pleasure in the reading of "Grace Leigh" as I have had in its writing, I shall not feel that I have written in vain.

R. R.

GALTRIM GLEBE,

*December, 1861.*

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# GRACE LEIGH, OF DARLINGTON.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

“ If wrong you do, if false you play,  
In summer among the flowers,  
You must atone, you shall repay,  
In winter among the showers.”—MACKAY.

I HAVE often thought that we could scarcely bequeath a more valuable legacy to our children than a faithful transcript of our own past experience: thus, “being dead, we might yet speak” to those we love, and perhaps cheer them under the “burden and heat of the day.” And very possibly, in tracing the footprints of a loved and lost parent, they might learn lessons that would save them from many a stumble in their own pilgrimage through an ensnaring world.

For my own part, I should be reluctant to leave my loved ones without some record, however feeble, of the gracious dealings of God with me in my journey through

life—a life in which I must acknowledge with gratitude that “mercy and truth have followed me” every step of my way. Oh, may He, who has thus led me, bless my children also! And, if spared to my advanced period, may they experience, as I do, the truth of that blessed promise, “Even to hoary hairs will I carry you.” Not merely kindness, but “*loving* kindness,” nor mercies, but “*tender* mercies,” have been my portion. Hedged round, as I still am, with domestic blessings, eyes and ears, hands and feet, are amply supplied to me by my loving, dutious descendants; and I can scarcely wish them a greater earthly blessing, than to meet in their own children all that they are now to me. For them I leave these simple memorials of a long and chequered life; and they will throw the ample mantle of filial love over all its errors. To them I commit this last long-sought expression of maternal affection. They will supply its deficiencies, or reduce its redundancies, as the case may be; and when this pen, and the feeble hand that guides it, shall be at rest, if the spirits of the departed are permitted to hover over those they loved on earth, how gladly would I undertake the sweet office of guardianship over the precious children of the best of daughters!

At the eleventh hour, as it were, my beloved ones, I begin to fulfil the long extorted promise of a little record of my own life, that may help to perpetuate my memory amongst you; and now that I have set about it, what a task it seems to me! the looking out and gathering up of a bundle of trifles: for *telle est la vie*! But, as I said, it is no child’s play after all, this rummaging of an old woman’s brain; and if you live to be my age you will know for yourselves, that rest is the luxury of our latter days. Still, I have promised to make the exertion; and your gratification will be my reward. But now, dear girls, you must

not be exacting. I forewarn you that I shall not always be able to put the right thing in the right place, only too happy to pounce upon it as it may turn up, and note it before it escapes me; be satisfied, therefore, with a brief sketch—it can be no more—of persons, **things**, places, and circumstances, salient enough in themselves to have laid hold of a hook in my memory and hung there, however mutilated, from youth to age. Very probably, too, I shall cling to my own phraseology, and give you the sentiments of others in my own words; for the rest, expect little, and perhaps you will not be disappointed in this maundering old story of your grandmother's; and if at the end you are able to say, “Not so bad, after all, for poor grandmamma,” I shall be quite satisfied with my own performance, which, if it can boast no more to recommend it, will at least have *truth*, and that *love* that is always ready to encounter exertion cheerfully for the sweet recompense of making others happy. And if my experience should give any of you a helping hand up that hill of difficulty that lies between your age and my own, I shall feel that I have neither lived nor written in vain.

My maiden name, as you know, was Leigh. My mother's name was Norwood—“sweet Clara Norwood,” as she was called by all who knew her in the rosebud days of her early womanhood—that charming period of our existence which we scarcely know how to estimate as it deserves, until it has fled from us for ever. Happy are those young people who have wise guardianship at this interesting period! But, alas! my poor mother missed this invaluable boon. Her mother died at the birth of her only child, who was, after the unnatural fashion of those days, sent out to be nursed, and not brought home to her father's house until she was nearly four years old. Long before her arrival, her father had married again, and, as frequently occurs, a per-

son who was the very reverse of my amiable grandmother. My poor mother's stepmother was a haughty, imperious woman, whose tyrannical caprice embittered her childish years. People say (however truly I know not) that "a woman loves her first husband best, and a man his second wife;" but whether my grandfather was influenced by love or fear, it is certain that the lady's will was paramount; and she at length succeeded in persuading him that my mother was a troublesome, unloveable child, and that the sooner she was sent to school the better. Accordingly, at ten years old she was sent to the Reading Abbey School, and, as her maternal grandmother and aunt (Mary Noble) lived near Reading, we may well imagine that this was a good move for her. She has often told me that her school days were the happiest of her life, until she became a mother. She loved her governess and her fellow pupils, and the holidays were generally spent at her grandmother's, where she had every indulgence that her childish heart could desire, and, best of all, that gentle love without which the young heart must wither. Her first real sorrow was when she lost this dear old parent, and when, immediately afterwards, her aunt Mary left Reading, and went to live with a distant relative in the north of England. When my mother was about fifteen, her father died rather suddenly, but not until he had executed a will, under the direction of his wife, providing amply for her and her children, and leaving my mother's portion conditional on her pleasing her stepmother in her marriage. She was recalled from school almost immediately, and soon installed at home as the governess of her three step-sisters—no very enviable post in any case, and in hers (as we may suppose) very burdensome. Her mornings were spent in tuition and house needlework, but her evenings, to her great delight and wonderment, were very much left by her stepmother at her own disposal. In her simplicity she did not see

that this licence was given her by her wily guardian, in order to her forming ties for herself, which would probably end, as they did, in an early and unsuitable marriage; and her plans were promoted by keeping my mother in strict ignorance of the terms of her father's will, which might have exercised a salutary restraint on her unprotected youthful liberty. Her stepmother's maid was the counterpart of herself, wholly under her influence, and devoted to her interests; and this evil woman, under the garb of friendship and sympathy, connived at every juvenile imprudence of which my poor mother was guilty, and laid claim to her gratitude by affecting to conceal from her mistress the late hours at which Miss Clara often returned from parties, wholly unprotected save by the escort of some thoughtless young man whom she had met, and perhaps danced with, at the houses of her giddy acquaintance. Many a time have I heard her express her heartfelt gratitude to God for having watched over her in those careless years, and preserved her from a worse fate than that which awaited her in her nineteenth year, when she became the wife of one wholly unworthy of her trusting gentleness and rare beauty. Thus did her stepmother triumph over her youth and inexperience, and divide amongst her own daughters, according to the terms of their father's will, the portion of whichever of his children acted independently of their sole guardian before they had attained the mature age of twenty-five years. This unjustly gotten gain was afterwards scattered to the winds by her own wilful children, in spite of all her hoarding and chicanery; and this naughty woman lived to be despised by those for whom she had made shipwreck of a good conscience. So true is that scripture, "The triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment;" and "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed."



## CHAPTER II.

### DISAPPOINTMENT.

“For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit.”

“The sorrows of thy youthful day  
Shall make thee wise in coming years ;  
The brightest rainbows ever play  
Above the fountains of our tears.”—MACKAY.

It is with much reluctance that I am here compelled to speak of my poor father, George Leigh. The little that I know of his history is not such as a child likes to dwell on, when the subject is the author of her being ; for it has ever been my feeling, that the delinquency of a parent should seal the lips of the child. Shem and Japheth should be our examples, if we would avoid the curse of Canaan. However, it is necessary to my little history that I should advert to this painful subject, my knowledge of which was gained, partly from the quick observation that marks our early years, and partly from strangers ; my dear mother being ever reluctant to speak of her husband, even to myself, when she could not with truth say much that was satisfactory. I have often thought that the lingering and unreturned affection which she cherished for him to the last, was a great means of injuring her health, and laying the foundation of my early orphanhood.

From what I could gather of my father's early history, he was outlawed from the paternal home when a mere boy, and sent to sea, in order to subdue a naturally

froward disposition. As might have been expected, his unbroken spirit rebelled fiercely at this severe schooling, and I believe during his first voyage he more than once attempted to end the contest by throwing himself into the waves. However, he was rescued from such a fate as he blindly imagined would have punished his family for their treatment of him ; and as the voyage was a long and successful one, by the time his vessel arrived again in England, he had not merely become reconciled to a seafaring life, but finally adopted it as his profession. So inconsistent and variable is poor human nature, or (if you choose) so accommodating to circumstances, that frequently what is forced upon us at first, becomes the object of our ultimate choice—like the acquired or forced taste for olives, which are so generally disliked on a first trial, and afterwards become so palatable.

I believe he became what is called a good sailor—brave, hardy, active, and enduring ; but the indomitable pride of his nature was unsubdued, and his impatience of control, contradiction, or guidance of any kind, led him into many a serious quarrel, one of which ended in his breaking off all connection with his first vessel, and seeking employment in another ; and for this purpose he came to Portsmouth, where my mother resided then with her stepmother. In an evil hour they became acquainted, just as he was on the point of sailing in an East Indiaman for China. With the violence and impetuosity natural to his character, his passion for her on first sight was extravagant ; though, except from the force of contrast, it is hard to see what could have attracted them to each other. He was, however, remarkably handsome and fine looking, and her girlish vanity was touched by her sudden conquest of such a splendid young corsair, as he appeared in the eyes of her romantic fancy. Unhappily for her future peace, she

was led by his demonstrations of excessive regard, to engage herself to him after a very brief acquaintance, with the mutual understanding that they were to be married immediately on his return from the east. Having thus entered into this solemn contract without consulting her stepmother, she was afraid to name it to her during his absence; and if that lady heard of the report from any other quarter, it was no part of her policy to speak to my mother on the subject; so that, when the handsome sailor returned first mate of his vessel, and laden with oriental trifles for his betrothed, he had but little difficulty in hurrying her into a clandestine marriage. Then, indeed, when all hope of saving her young victim was over, Mrs. Norwood gave way to the most furious invectives. She stamped and raged at my gentle mother, and treated her with such severity, that she was only too glad to seek refuge in the arms of her husband from the violence of her unnatural guardian. Now, however, a new revelation awaited her, and this was the clause in her father's will, that had been so carefully concealed from her hitherto. She was greatly shocked, not so much for herself, (for at eighteen we have but little knowledge of the value of money), but for the disappointment that she feared it would occasion to her husband, who had doubtless built many a scheme on the possession of the five thousand pounds, to which his sweet young bride was, he supposed, fully entitled, and which he did not think she could be prevented from enjoying, at the farthest when she attained her majority. His first violent outburst of temper appeared on this occasion, and terrified my poor mother dreadfully, although his fury was then spent not on her, but her stepmother. He threatened to go to law, and did attempt to do so; but Mrs. Norwood had the law on her side, from the validity of the will, and from the artful circumstance of her own children having

been included in the same condition, with regard to the consent of their parent, in order to their obtaining possession of the marriage portions, bequeathed them by their father. Mrs. Norwood of course triumphed, and then my father's rage knew no bounds, and many were the taunts which my poor mother had to endure. He even went so far as to insinuate that she could not have been ignorant of the nature of the will, and that he was her victim, entrapped at first by her arts into admiration and courtship, and then hurried into an engagement by her selfish passion and vanity. Such language as this to a bride, one would suppose well calculated to extinguish all regard on her side; but my sweet mother might truly say, "Gently I took that which ungently came, and without scorn forgave;" and such was the indescribable softness of her disposition, that she would have loved to idolatry, had my father permitted her to do so; but whenever the flame of love began to burn brightly, some sudden and fearful tempest of wrath would extinguish the sacred fire; and there it smouldered beneath its ashes until the skies cleared, and the gentle spirit fanned it again, and so things went on from year to year. No steady progress in conjugal attachment; no regularly gratified mutual affection, nothing to cheer or animate the wife in her daily endeavour to bear her share of that burden of domestic care that falls to the lot of every woman.

Men are apt to think that because they are the bread-winners, they do all for their families; but what would become of their earnings if they were not managed, economized, and used to the best advantage? And it is hard for a poor, feeble woman to get along without a look of tenderness, a word of appreciation, or a smile of encouragement from him for whom all her little self-denying exertions are so constantly made. For the first seven years of her

married life, too, she had to undergo the repeated disappointment of her fond hopes of maternity. If she had been blessed with a baby to cheer her loneliness during my father's voyages, or to divert her attention from his rude violence of manner while at home, she would have been comparatively indemnified against the crookedness of her lot; for, as some one says, "Children are the saving clause in the marriage contract." At length, however, my approaching birth gave a happy diversion to her wounded feelings, and most lovingly, and longingly, I believe, were her little preparations made for the expected event. A few days before I was born, she was showing all her pretty baby-linen (the work of her own busy, skilful fingers) to an old school-fellow who had called to see her, and who well knew her trials, for they were no secret in the circle in which she then moved. "Well, dear Clara," said her friend, "*she* will be a comfort to you;" as if it were already a known fact that she was to be the mother of a little *girl*. My poor mother told me that her friend's words had to her, at the time, all the force of a prophecy; and they were as surely fulfilled; for I have the happiness of thinking, that as long as she was spared to me, I never once willingly grieved her in any way, or omitted anything that I thought might cheer or comfort her deeply tried spirit. She often told me that she believed I was a special gift to her, from Him who "in judgment remembers mercy;" and amongst all her bitter trials she could, at least, never number "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child!"

## CHAPTER III.

### MY EARLY DAYS.

“Whilst skies are blue and bright,  
    Whilst flowers are gay,  
Whilst eyes that change ere night,  
    Make glad the day ;  
Whilst yet the calm hours creep  
Dream thou—and from thy sleep  
Then wake to weep.”

I BELIEVE it was shortly before my birth, that that great and vital change passed upon my mother's character, by which she became “a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” How truly says the poet, that

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
    Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”

For had she been allowed to make my father the god of her idolatry, (which her fond heart was only too well disposed to do), she might never have remembered the claims of Him who loved her and gave himself for her, to the undivided affections of his bride, the Church ; and if she had had children at her desire, “the little angels in white frocks” would, perhaps, just as entirely have excluded the only true and satisfying portion for which we were created, and without which poor craving human nature must still cry “Give, give.” She has often said that creature love, in some form or other, was her grand besetment ; for, unselfish and yielding in her disposition, simple in her tastes, and

singularly pure-minded, she was free from many temptations to which others fall victims; but she had, like Achilles, one vulnerable point, and that was, her affections—she was susceptible, ardent, almost passionate, in her attachments, and, had my father been so constituted as to respond to her pure love, it would, she said, have been heaven enough for her. She has told me, that when leaning on his arm, as they walked together, she fancied that every one must envy her, she felt so proud of her handsome husband. But how bitterly was her disappointment in this her first idol! Then her longing for children was so intense as to be painful, and she feared, if the disappointment had continued, her reason would have sunk under it, so much was she the creature of her feelings and affections. She has often told me that, in the childless days of her married life, she has envied the beggars that she passed in the streets when they were nursing fine lively infants. However, “the Lord afflicteth not willingly,” but for our profit, “that we may be partakers of his holiness;” and so, when his cheeks and chastenings had taken a blessed effect, and that she submitted her whole will to her heavenly Father, and as it were kissed the rod, and acknowledged that it was “good for her to be afflicted,” then in mercy he stayed his hand, and sent me to her as a sweet token of his love, and an evidence of reconciliation. God says to the poor sinner, “My son, give me thy heart;” and where he has a purpose of love to us, he stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, still with this message. If we stop our ears to the voice of the charmer, he will knock louder and louder still, and if we refuse to open to him, he will come into our domestic temples, throw down our altars, and prostrate our household gods, like Dagon before the ark of the Lord.

I was, it seems, an exceedingly frail, delicate infant, so

much so, that my mother's friends shook their heads when they saw me, and thought that another trial was preparing for her; but she, in the first transports of her maternal affection, viewed me very differently, and thought me the very perfection of babyhood. She told me that when I was first laid beside her she would not have exchanged places with a childless queen, so amply rewarded did she feel for all her sorrows, in the possession of her tiny babe. She had been in a very feeble state of health for several months before my birth, and it was feared she would not be able to nurse me herself; and so much did she long to enjoy this delicious privilege of maternity, that she said she never prayed more earnestly for the salvation of her soul, than for ability to perform the duties of a mother towards me. And her prayer was heard; for, as her strength returned, my natural nutriment kept pace with it, and she was able to continue nursing many months beyond the usual period; and when she was obliged, by her own returning delicacy, to wean me, she did it with many tears; indeed, I suppose mother and child divided the trial pretty equally between them.

I teethed very hardly, so that my mother's hands were full of care for the first two years of my life; indeed, I have heard her say that during that period she did not know what it was to enjoy a quiet night's rest: but all was borne cheerfully, for sake of what she used to call "that priceless pearl, an only and beloved daughter." For the greater part of that time she was my sole attendant by day and night—my bathing and dressing, exercise, care of my little wardrobe, all were performed by her own tender hands, and by this means I not only escaped the bodily and mental injuries that infants often meet with from careless, inexperienced attendants, but my early habits, tempers, and manners were always managed and directed with grace and delicacy; and



if it be true that "we are all so many bundles of habits," how important it is that those early habits which so generally stereotype character for life, should be acquired from the example of those who are themselves specimens of innate refinement. Oh, surely then the mother who devolves so sacred a charge on a coarse, and, it may be, corrupt hireling, proves herself unworthy of that "heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord." One of the qualifications of a widow for admission into the primitive church was, "if she have brought up children"—an honourable and glorious work, and one that, if undertaken in faith, and carried out by love, will in the end surely yield a rich reward. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

I believe I showed signs of intelligence early. I recollect to have heard my mother say, that before I was a year old, if she asked me where was the good God that loved her baby, I would point to the sky. I can quite remember that, from about three years old, my infant sympathies were excited in behalf of my mother, and that an understanding was established between us, by which we seemed to read each other's eyes. As long as my memory goes back, she prayed with me every day, even when she held me in her arms during the exercise; so that my first impressions, happily for me, were of holiness and love. Then, as soon as I was able to walk, she took me by the hand into the garden or the fields, and taught me the names of the wild flowers, while I gathered them in my little basket. Thus I was ever learning, without fatigue, from those loved lips, that sealed every lesson with a kiss, in which I could feel the heart of my mother. Disappointed as she was in my father, it was but natural that her warm, tender heart, whose strong necessity it was "to love and be beloved again," should turn in all its fulness towards

her only child ; and what a full tide of maternal love was my daily portion none can tell ; suffice it to say, that we were, indeed, all the world to each other, and, as far as our hearts were concerned, we were, I believe, cast in the same mould, both possessing largely that exquisite sensibility that is, after all, so questionable a boon, as the vehicle both of intense enjoyment and acute suffering. Still, as we must pay a certain tax on our luxuries, I believe, with all its pains and penalties, the balance is pretty equal on the whole ; and I cannot help thinking that a sensitive person, if his heart be in the right place, has a foretaste of heaven that enables him to pay the tax without being bankrupt.

My dear mother was an admirable economist, and managed our little income so judiciously, that, as long as she was spared to me, I never knew what it was to want any comfort, though I know that her remittances from my father were very irregular : not that I think he was an ungenerous man, but he was not as profitably or constantly occupied as he might have been. Then, when he was at home with us, his tastes and habits were very profuse : so that, between one thing and another, any worse manager than my mother would have been often brought to a standstill. Her personal expenditure was very light, and she had a fixed determination to avoid pecuniary obligations of every kind ; and this she adhered to so rigidly, that, let her income be ever so narrow, she never exceeded it either by running up bills or borrowing money. When remittances were slack, she retrenched in some way to meet the want ; and after my first years had passed, and that I made fewer demands on her time, she exerted herself in many ways to eke out our means. She was an elegant needlewoman, and often earned something in that way ; then, after a while, she sought out a few pupils, and had a regular morning class, that paid her very well. She had a great pleasure in

teaching, and a happy method of conveying information, that made her pupils love both their teacher and her lessons. Most of them were the children of persons in some way or other connected with a seafaring life, and many a string of coral and box of shells were amongst my childish treasures. When she had dismissed the children, and we had our early dinner, we went to walk, my mother and I. Our walk was often by the sea-side; and while I held that beloved hand, what lessons of wisdom I learned from those loving lips! "In her tongue was the law of kindness," and many a sorrow she soothed, while her own were a heavy burden to her. She used to say that in her early youth, while her spirit was unbroken, she was selfish, (though I never could believe it,) but that one of the blessed uses of affliction was to open our hearts to feel for the sufferings of others. I believe, indeed, that her own troubles kept her in such close communion with our sympathising High Priest, Christ Jesus, that she drank deeply into his spirit. Still, I never heard her murmur; she bore her burden nobly, meekly, and in silence, and I recollect she often quoted that Scripture in our daily prayer: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him."

Now, dear children, you must not suppose that my father ever used her with gross cruelty, but he was wholly uncongenial to her; he never understood or sympathised with her feelings, never appreciated her refinement, or encouraged her by tenderness, and his impatience and violence of temper she never seemed to become accustomed to; every burst was a fresh shock to her, and as a child I learned to dread his knock at the door, from seeing how it startled my poor mother and paled her cheek. She never seemed prepared to meet him, but was ever apprehensive that something would be wrong, and that he would be vexed with her for something either done or undone; but

her personal apprehensions were comparatively light, compared to those she felt for the result of his intercourse with others. He was constitutionally quarrelsome, and often got into severe trouble in that way, for others would not bear with his tyranny like his forbearing, loving, gentle wife ; indeed, it was one of these quarrels that separated him from us altogether. The ship-owners who generally employed him, had, after a successful voyage, (in which his services as first mate had, I believe, been instrumental in saving the vessel), given him a promise of the command of one of their ships on a voyage to the east. He was in high spirits, and while he was so, poor man, he would do anything for us, or lay out any money for our good or comfort, and for a few days we had such a spell of domestic enjoyment as brought back the roses to my mother's cheeks. He had left us after breakfast, in order to make arrangements with the company, and have the crew told out to him. The young man who had been second mate in the last voyage was now to be first, and my father, captain. The crew were told off, the third mate and boys named, the sailing orders were ready, cargo taken in, and "all went merry as a marriage bell," when one of the company remarked that the first mate was absent. This young man had been in a distant part of the country seeing his friends, and had only arrived at the port that morning, and of course did not know who was to be the officer in command of his vessel. While they were speaking of him, however, he arrived at the office, and one of the merchants said :—

"You have got a step this voyage, Mr. Jackson ; you are to be our first mate of the 'Albatross,' under our new captain, Leigh."

"I thank you, sir," said Jackson, "for my promotion, but not in Captain Leigh's vessel ; one deck was too narrow for us on our last voyage ; we shan't sail together again."

My father never waited for another word, but raised his hand to fell him to the earth. Some of the others pushed Jackson out of the office, and endeavoured to separate them, but both were now angry, and they made a regular fight of it. Unfortunately, however, a blow of my father's struck Jackson down, and in the fall one of his arms was broken. In the confusion of the moment, while the men were carrying him away to the hospital, the third mate hurried my father out of the way, and, to avoid pursuit, they turned into a vessel bound for America, and now under weigh, whose captain was a mutual friend, and who advised my father to make the voyage with him as a passenger, in order to let Jackson's affair blow over; and in another hour he had set sail for the west, without leaving any message for us. It was thought better that he should not do so at the time, in order to avoid pursuit, in case of any worse termination to the quarrel than the broken limb. His friend Carter, however, called on my mother, and told her not to be uneasy, that Captain Leigh was safe, and that she would hear from him, but that at present it was better for him that she should not know his address. And now began a time of suspense and anxiety that made an old woman of my poor mother. Day and night she had no rest for a long time; the most fearful apprehensions possessed her mind, and in the end brought on a nervous fever. When she recovered, the doctor sent us across to the Isle of Wight for change of scene for her, and while we walked about looking for lodgings, she thought she knew the features of a fine old woman, who was stooping over the little flower-beds in front of her pretty cottage, tying up pinks. We stopped for a moment, and each looked steadily at the other, and at length the old woman threw her arms about my mother's neck, exclaiming, "Miss Clara, my own child, is this you?" It was my mother's nurse, Mrs. Moss, a

kind, excellent woman, and their mutual delight at having met thus unexpectedly, seemed to revive my mother greatly. She soon found that Mrs. Moss had lodgings to let; they were instantly engaged, and we took up our abode with her from that day, and never returned to Portsmouth as a residence. It was a sweet spot, most pleasant and cheerful, and so sheltered from the cold winds, that it suited my dear mother admirably, and was, indeed, a truly providential opening for her, and for me too, for good old Mrs. Moss was like a parent to us both.

## CHAPTER IV.

MRS. MOSS.

“It is true there are shadows as well as lights, clouds as well as sunshine, thorns as well as roses, but much happiness after all.”

I HAVE just been refreshing my memory, dear children, with a sight of my loved mother's picture, and I think I can see her as she appeared to my childish eye at this period, the very embodiment of womanly grace and beauty. She was about the middle height, with a perfect figure and carriage ; her hands and feet were small and beautifully formed, her hair dark, very dark brown, almost black ; her eyes dark gray, very sweet and animated, and capable of speaking out every pure feeling of the soul. Her complexion was clear and delicate, her teeth fine, and such harmony of feature and expression in her countenance, as made her very attractive even to strangers. What, then, must she have appeared to me ? I thought then, and still think, I never saw so charming a person ; and yet, how cruelly was she thrown away ! but I never heard her murmur at her sad lot. She always took the blame to herself, and said she was justly punished for having cast in her lot with a man of the world, who had his portion in this life. Hers was indeed a life-long repentance for one hasty step, “that fatal step that cannot be recalled.” Her anomalous position at this trying period sadly taxed her equanimity ; it was indeed one of great difficulty, and but for her singular delicacy and refinement, might have been one of great danger to a woman still young and lovely. In fact, during the first years she spent in the Isle of Wight she was, strictly speaking, neither

maid, wife, nor widow. Under her circumstances, then, it seemed a most providential thing that she was able to secure Mrs. Moss's protection, whose age and respectable character were a guarantee to the deserted wife that shared her domicile—good old woman! I soon loved her dearly, for her tender care of my mother. She left nothing undone to cheer and comfort her; and when our resources failed, our chairs were regularly placed at her own humble board, and my mother did not feel the burden of dependence on her dear old nurse, as she would have felt it towards any one else in the world. But when two years had passed away without any direct communication from my father, she felt bewildered with suspense and anxiety. Many a time have I heard her utter the prayer, "O, Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me!" She had begged of Captain Briggs, in whose vessel my father sailed to America, to make strict inquiries, and let her know the result. So, early in the third year of our residence with Mrs. Moss he called on us, and told my mother that he had at length got a clue to guide her to her husband. On his last arrival at New York, he had met with a seaman who had served under him in a whaling vessel, and this man said, that when on shore Captain Leigh generally lived at Montreal. Captain Briggs added, that he supposed it must be the fear of Jackson's vengeance that kept him across the Atlantic, and that he did not much wonder at it, as Jackson was a man who was well known never to forget an injury, and that his lame arm would be a constant reminder of the unlucky scuffle at Portsmouth. "However, Mrs. Leigh," said Captain Briggs, "I really think that it would be better for you to venture on a voyage of discovery, than bear the state of suspense in which you now live. And if you determine on looking up the captain, I shall be going over to Canada next month, and I will take every



care of you on the voyage, and assist you in your endeavours to recover your truant husband. Nothing should have induced him," he said, "to keep you in such torture about him; but you can pay him off, madam," he concluded, "when you see him again, as I trust you will before long."

My mother thanked Captain Briggs for his kind interest in her affairs, and determined to accept of his offers of protection and assistance, and he took his leave. As soon as he was gone, she consulted with Mrs. Moss, who felt very differently on the subject, and used all her eloquence in order to dissuade her from her "wild-goose chase," as she called it, but nothing would put her off her loving quest. She set about the preparations for her voyage immediately, and disposed of her watch to enable her to leave some provision for me during her absence. Captain Briggs behaved very handsomely on the occasion, insisting on franking my mother across; and he said it was nothing to thank him for, as his wife was accompanying him for the sake of the sea voyage, and that, being something of an invalid, my mother's society and assistance would leave the obligations on their side. It was a sore trial to my mother to part with me, and many a tear she shed over me when I slept at her side, as she thought of this terrible necessity for our separation. Still, hope bore her up, and she felt that, precious as I was to her, she could confide me to the loving care of her good old friend Mrs. Moss. At length the parting day came—a day of woe to both of us. I was just six years old, and this was my first sorrow, and to this day I have a vivid recollection of my bitter weeping as I clung to my poor mother, while Mrs. Moss tried with her most loving gentleness to soothe and draw me away. The worthy captain, rough far as he was, was deeply moved; but he saw that the sooner the parting scene ended the

better for my poor mother, so he took out his watch and said, "My dear madam, I have not another moment," and then hurried her arm into his own, and bore her away. Mrs. Moss carried me into the house, and laid me on her own bed, for I was exhausted by my violent emotion, and I soon found repose from my grief in the arms of sleep—that blessed soother of infant sorrows. "That gentle sleep, that slid like dew into my soul," did me a world of good, and when I awoke and found Mrs. Moss making a cake for our tea, I felt so cheered and refreshed that I got up and assisted her to bake the cake and lay the supper-cloth; and, as we sat together at our comfortable meal, we could talk of my mother with dry eyes, and count the days till her return. I slept with our good old friend while my mother was away, and daily helped her in the garden and the house, and fed the chickens and the canary, so that the days flew by beyond all my anticipations. Then, in the evenings she taught me to knit garters, to have ready for my mother on her return; and before we went to bed we had reading of the Scriptures, an evening hymn, and prayer. Dear old Mrs. Moss! she had a sweet loving spirit, and it was her delight to make others happy. What a solemn thought it is, dear children, that we can carry nothing with us out of this world, but the character we form here; and, be that evil or good, it intensifies through a boundless eternity. Surely, then, Mrs. Moss prepared here to be a ministering spirit in a better world; for if ever a woman lived for others, in the pure spirit of Christian love, she was that woman. A blessed example she was to me, and one link of the chain that was to draw my youthful mind from earth to heaven.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE WIDOWED WIFE.

“Patience and sorrow strive  
Which shall express her goodliest.”  
“Joy hath its ministries, but griefs are fraught  
With gentler blessings.”

GLADLY would I pass over this part of my history, my children. I will, however, give it a brief glance, and have done with it for ever; it is a humiliating theme for the pen of a daughter; but my little narrative would be very incomplete without giving you a slight sketch of this climax of my poor mother's married troubles.

She found Captain Briggs and his kind wife all that was hospitable and helpful on the voyage; and, as soon as possible after their arrival at Montreal the captain escorted her to my father's quarters when on shore, a respectable, comfortable-looking hotel, chiefly frequented by seafaring people. The captain asked to see the proprietor, in order to make particular inquiries, as he had heard from the waiter that Captain Leigh had just sailed in the “Barnacle” for Buenos Ayres. The landlady appeared on the captain's summons, and confirmed the statement of the waiter, adding that, as she was about writing to *her husband*, she would be glad to convey any message for Captain Briggs. The captain stared at this proposition, but said in reply, “Your husband, ma'am, I suppose, sails under Captain Leigh.”

“Sir,” she said, “you are under a mistake; *Captain Leigh is my husband.*”

My mother heard no more ; she had fainted from the shock ; and while the landlady was trying in a very tender, womanly way to restore her, the captain broke to the injured woman the terrible news that Captain Leigh had been married for the last fourteen years to the poor lady who now lay insensible on the sofa. Captain Briggs, from his own account of the sad transaction to Mrs. Moss, was, comparatively speaking, almost as much shocked as either of the sufferers. The poor landlady gave way at first to violent weeping ; but as soon as she was able to tell her story, she said that about two years before, my father had stopped at her house. She was then a widow, in good business, and without any incumbrance of family, and from the first, she said, he was remarkably attentive and good-natured in his manners to her, and perfectly correct in his conduct ; that he had gone on a whaling voyage almost immediately after he had recruited from his voyage out, during which he had been very ill, and of course required some nursing and setting up before he went to sea again. He seemed very grateful for her attention, but said nothing of marriage until his return, which was about three months before, and that, as she considered him a good match, she had no objection to accept his proposals of marriage, which he made the very day he landed. Her story had all the air of truth, and her appearance and manner were pleasing and sensible ; still, Captain Briggs being a man of business, thought it only right to ask to see her marriage certificate, which she produced, without the least hesitation, from her pocket-book. She expressed great compassion for my mother, and asked the captain to advise her what she should do, or rather, what she could do, without bringing him to justice. This she was evidently reluctant about ; and when my mother was so far recovered as to be able to speak, she agreed with her, that, if possible, they should

both avoid punishing the author of their mutual injury.

"As for me," said my mother, "I shall return to England with my friend Captain Briggs, and there is no use in telling Captain Leigh of my fruitless journey in search of the lost father of my child. I cannot advise you," added she, "nor can you comfort me; but let us both seek our consolation henceforth, where alone we shall not be disappointed." Captain Briggs lost no time in conveying my mother to his wife's lodgings, and under her kind, soothing care she recovered her strength sufficiently to enable her to accompany them back to England in a few weeks. She returned to us a mere wreck, totally broken down in mind and body, and it was many months before she was able to assume any measure of that chastened cheerfulness that marked her demeanour as a widowed wife. Good old Mrs. Moss redoubled all her gentle cares and tender nursing in order to restore the wasted strength and spirits of her afflicted friend, and by slow degrees, for my sake she exerted herself, and in the end so far triumphed over this stunning blow, that she was again able to resume the business of teaching, and in the bathing season she had a full class of profitable pupils. About this time, too, her aunt, (Mary Noble,) who had been for many years a hopeless invalid, died, bequeathing to my mother a small life annuity, that enabled her to remunerate our good old friend for all her expenses on our account, and pay her a moderate sum annually for our board and lodging. Her suspense about my father, and her pecuniary necessities, ceased about the same time, so that from this period she seemed to get, comparatively speaking, into smooth water, and her stormy voyage of life subsided into that calm which she enjoyed until her frail bark reached the haven of eternal repose, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

## CHAPTER VI.

### OUR COTTAGE HOME.

“It was our home, and so had charms  
No other spot could boast of;  
And every beauty we could find  
We wisely made the most of.”

It has often been remarked that those periods of life in which we have the greatest amount of quiet enjoyment, are those of which we can say the least. I can myself prove the truth of the observation; for when I look back on the four years which I spent in the cottage at Undercliff, there seems little to record that would interest others to read or hear of. Our days passed so quietly, and each was so like the past, that our lives seemed to glide on like some still stream that ripples away through a mossy, sequestered dell; occasionally, perhaps, reflecting a glimpse of sunshine, or a patch of blue sky, or fleecy cloud, but generally overhung and concealed from view by the sedge and willows that adorn its banks.

All my early days, and a considerable portion of mature life, were passed within sight of the bright blue sea, and almost within hearing of its murmuring waves; and when, in after years, I had to move inland, I seemed to have lost a friend, in fact, to want a something that to me was almost a necessary ingredient of life.

At Undercliff my mother and I spent a good deal of our time out of doors; it was necessary for her, and pleasant to me, and whenever the weather admitted, which was, indeed, the greater part of the year in that sweet

sheltered spot, we walked or sat abroad for several hours every day. Mrs. Moss's cottage was beautifully situated, so that before we came to her, she never had any difficulty in letting her rooms to advantage, especially in the winter season, from its salubrity for invalids. It was not large enough, however, to admit of her having more than one set of lodgers, and we occupied her two spare rooms; for although, from our boarding together, one sitting-room would have been enough for us, my mother required the other for her morning pupils; and her class was salutary for her in the way of occupation, even after it ceased to be necessary in a pecuniary point of view. Our mode of life was very simple, and quite suited our primitive hostess, who enjoyed early hours. We generally breakfasted before eight o'clock, and then occupied ourselves in the garden, where we had an abundant store of flowers, fruit, and vegetables, and a pleasant arbour where my mother sat to read and work. From ten till one she had her pupils. We then dined, and after dinner mother and I rambled away together for hours. Sometimes she rested on a rock, or under a tree, while I gathered shells or wild flowers; and when any of her pupils accompanied us and spent the evening, I was not to be known for the same quiet child that I was when alone with her or Mrs. Moss. It is often remarked that an only child is careless of the society of other children, but it never was so with me. I delighted in youthful companions, when I could have them, and felt a pleasure in taking care of, and giving up to those that were younger than myself. But though I enjoyed play, and fun, and childish company, my sweetest moments were those that I spent with my mother, when we seemed to grow, as it were, into each other's hearts, and think and feel together like one soul in two bodies; and if ever a mother and daughter truly enjoyed that sweetest and

purest companionship to the full, we were that happy pair. We generally supped between five and six o'clock, and after that, when Mrs. Moss could sit down and rest quietly for the remainder of the evening, we all sat together at our plain sewing, knitting, or embroidery. Sometimes a neighbour of Mrs. Moss's would spend the evening with us, but in general we were alone.

My mother's company was often sought, but she never would go into society after her return from America. She was, indeed, a beautiful pattern of feminine prudence and delicacy; so that I should have been without excuse if I had not imbibed that quiet, retiring demeanour that is, after all, the maiden's best adorning. Indeed, from a very early age, I became matured in my mind and ways of thinking, from constant association with my beloved parent; and, in imagination, I was all to my doll that my mother was to me. I quite recollect the sage discourse to which I treated the little puppet, whom I loved with the maternal sort of feeling which is so happily cultivated in that valuable institution of childhood, the doll's house. I do like to see little girls love their dolls, and take pleasure in dressing, nursing, and working for them. It is a nice initiation into those fostering ministrations that form so important a feature of womanhood, and where duty and enjoyment go hand in hand.

Our good old friend Mrs. Moss loved me dearly; indeed, I think she could not have avoided loving my mother's child, for her love to her foster-child bordered on worship; but she loved me besides with that feeling of tender gratitude with which the aged are apt to regard young persons who seem to enjoy their society, and I delighted in hers. She had a store of old stories and ballads, which she dispensed for my special edification in the evenings, and certainly they formed a strong link between us. Sometimes she would



tell me of my mother's childhood, how pretty she was, and how gentle and loving to her, and how much she grieved at parting with her to go home to her stepmother. Indeed, I think if poor Mrs. Moss had been prime minister of England she would have made it nothing short of felony to "go over a dead woman's child," as she called it.

I have often wondered at the universality of this prejudice against stepmothers, dating from Sarah, the wife of Abraham, who was the first of the class of whom there is any record. I have known and heard of excellent stepmothers; but, if you speak of them as such, they are called "rare birds," there seems to be no faith in them, but, on the contrary, a sort of antagonism excited at the mention of this unnatural connection—for we cannot dignify it with the name of relationship. It is certainly in itself an unenviable post, and a trying one to the most amiable woman; for, after all—setting aside the prejudice—it seems as if the circumstances drew out the worst part of human nature on both sides. Still, I am very sure that the prejudice (such as it is) perpetuates the evil, paralysing exertion by discouragement in the very outset; and it seems to be only even-handed justice to sympathise with both sides. Many a woman who has been worthy and loveable as a daughter, sister, friend, and wife, has got a blot on her escutcheon when she became a stepmother; and it is worth while, before we listen to such stories, at least to hear both sides of the question. But my dear girls, I do hope, will never be stepmothers, and they will call this a most uninteresting digression.

Mrs. Moss was a Welshwoman—hearty, active, and tidy, as those ancient Britons generally are. Her house was a picture of delicate cleanliness and neatness, at once her pride and her constitutional element. She could not have lived in a slovenly place, it would have been a constant

purgatory to her instincts that would have been unendurable. I date a great deal of what you call my fidgetty neatness to her example and training, for she would make me a little housekeeper, and it was my delight to be so employed. I well recollect the important feeling with which I used to tie on my little apron after breakfast, when I went to assist her in the house affairs; and my dear mother used to watch all my little matronly airs and movements with silent enjoyment, thinking (as mothers will think of their own children) that her little Grace was a matchless child.

It is often a curious inquiry to trace the links by which families become connected, and the important consequences that often hang on these connections. This question occurs to my mind as I recollect the way in which Mrs. Moss, the comforter and protector of my mother and her child in their desolation, became her nurse in the helpless days of infancy. To trace this out for you, I must go back to my grandfather Norwood, who was a retired post-captain in the navy at the time of my mother's birth; for my grandmother (Grace Noble) was not permitted by her parents to marry him until he had retired from the sea service. I believe my grandmother's health had been injured by her long engagement, so that she only lived to give birth to my mother, and from her frail appearance on her entrance into this life, it was not thought that she would long survive her gentle mother. But it was ordered otherwise, mainly owing to her excellent nursing. John Moss was in the coast-guard service, and well known to my grandfather, and when he found what perplexity the captain was in about his motherless baby, he offered the services of his stout, healthy wife, who was at the time nursing, and whose cottage was a mile or two away from the town in a salubrious situation, to supply the place of the lost mother.

The offer was gladly accepted and amply remunerated, and thus begun that life-long love secured to my poor mother from her earliest and latest earthly friend. Mrs. Moss had married late in life, from having an invalid sister wholly dependent on her care and attention, from the death of their mother, and whose eyes she closed before John Moss could prevail on her to enter the married state. Her parents were comfortable small farmers in the Isle of Anglesey, and I believe from this her first home, she acquired that love of an insular residence which induced her to settle in the Isle of Wight, when the death of her husband, and emigration of her sons, left her alone in the world, free to choose a new habitation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A MOVE.

“A thousand thoughts of all things dear,  
Like shadows o’er me sweep ;  
I leave my sunny childhood here,  
Oh, therefore, let me weep !”

I THINK I was about ten years old, six of which I had spent at Undercliff, when our old friend Mrs. Moss got a letter from her native place, that was productive of important consequences to us all. Her only brother, David Drinkwater, had always lived on the farm of Seafield, where they were brought up ; he had married an orphan cousin of his own, but never had any family ; so that, when death deprived him of his wife, he was very desolate, and, being an old man, he sunk under his loss, and became equally feeble in mind and body. A distant relative, named Winny Jones, had supplied the place of a daughter at the farm of Seafield for many years, and was now housekeeper and nurse to the bereaved old man. Winny it was who wrote to Mrs. Moss to tell her that her brother had had an alarming seizure of some kind that the doctor feared would terminate fatally ; and, as he had expressed a wish to see his only sister, she begged of Mrs. Moss, if possible, to come to see him before his death. Mrs. Moss was in great perplexity, on the receipt of Winny’s letter, between grief for her brother, anxiety about leaving us alone, and the natural apprehension which elderly people feel when a journey seems thus forced on them. My mother at once told her not to be uneasy on our account, as we should get on very well with a little aid from our

neighbours, at least for a while, and encouraged her to make the effort, lest she should regret not having done so, if her poor brother died without having the gratification of seeing her. So we helped her to put up her things for the journey, and the next day she left us, promising to write to us as soon as she got to Seafield. We were, of course, very anxious to receive the letter; indeed, a letter was an unusual occurrence in our quiet little retreat. My mother had no correspondence, except with her old schoolfellow and distant relative, Cecilia Darling, of Darlington, who, soon after my mother's marriage, became the wife of Colonel Manley, an old friend of her father's, to whose protection he was glad to commit his only daughter, lest she should become a prey to some fortune-hunter after his death, so that, as far as she was concerned, it was a marriage of obedience to her father; still, she made a good wife, as might be expected from a yielding, dutiful daughter; but my mother deplored the match as one in which it was not likely that her friend had much heart; and as such, not one to realise that young dream of love that visits the heart of every girl between fifteen and twenty. Mrs. Manley had often asked us to visit her at Darlington, but my mother shrank from the publicity that a visit to such a family would involve, and always excused herself, though she often said that the sight of her friend would be a cordial to her heart.

But I have wandered from our old friend and her expected letter, which arrived about a week after she left us, and gave a pleasing, though mournful account of her good brother. She said he was greatly revived by seeing her, and that his evident enjoyment of her society and ministration was such, that she could not think of leaving him while he lived, and, but for us, she would have had no drawback to her satisfaction in being thus permitted to cheer the last days of the excellent man, who was not

merely her brother in the flesh, but in the Lord. He seemed to have nothing to do but to die, resting, as he was enabled to do, in simple faith on the finished work of his Divine Redeemer. He told Mrs. Moss that he now felt that his wife had been his idol, and that, "soon or late, the heart must bleed that idols entertains;" so that since her removal, heaven had one bright attraction more for him, and earth one less. He arranged his worldly affairs by will, leaving Mrs. Moss everything he possessed, with remainder to their excellent cousin, Winny Jones. Mrs. Moss described Winny as a thoroughly amiable creature, whom she was sure my mother would like if she knew her; and hinted that, after her brother's death, she thought she should have to remove to Seafield altogether, in order to take care of the little property, which would render her quite independent for the rest of her days; and that she hoped my mother would be induced to follow her fortunes, and take up her abode with her in her new home when it became hers by the demise of her brother.

Here was an entirely new and unlooked for change put before us. I say us; for, young as I was, my mother had long been in the habit of turning to me, I will not say for counsel, but for that sympathy, approbation, and encouragement, that were so necessary to her sweet spirit. I do not think she could have enjoyed anything without participation—that sweet communion and fellowship which she had missed in the grand lottery of our sex. "Well, Grace," she said, when she had read Mrs. Moss's letter, first to herself, then to me, and afterwards conned it over line by line, to take in all it meant to say to her, "well, Grace, what shall we do, my child? Shall we go to Wales, or stay at Undercliff?"

I said I feared she would miss Mrs. Moss terribly; indeed hardly be able to get on alone.

"But, dear Grace," she replied, "I should not be alone; you are a little tower of strength to me now. But then," she continued, "it is safer for us to have an old friend's house to live in than any other. We are alone in the world, my daughter, and we cannot afford to lose one loving heart. My old friend is devoted to us, and we are a comfort to her. She, however, will now be independent in having her cousin, but after all, what have we to leave in Hants? What should now attach me to it, but that it is the place of my home, and the place of my dead—my parents' burial place, and the burial place of all my early hopes. I believe we shall have to go, my child, and we must disengage our minds from this pleasant little resting place."

I would not add to my mother's evident regrets at leaving, or rather at the prospect of leaving Undercliff; but I had my own thoughts on the subject. The only little girl of my own age that I quite loved and enjoyed as a companion, was our next neighbour, Marion Rosebery, and, in my childish view, the parting with her would be like the loss of a part of myself. We spent part of each day together, and knew every thought of one another's hearts. Many were the little notes we passed to each other over the garden hedge, or left in a last year's nest there, as in a post office—giving some intelligence on account of the dolls, the canary, the garden, or the geraniums; perhaps inclosing a bit of ribbon, a bunch of early violets, or a pretty spray of sea-weed. And whenever we met, which was generally in the evenings either at walking time or after tea, we told each other everything we could remember since our last meeting.

Marion's father, Captain Rosebery, was, like my own, a sailor; but her mother, unlike mine, was a happy wife. Her happiness, however, rather opened and softened her

naturally amiable heart than disposed it to selfish enjoyment. She felt intense sympathy for my mother, and won on her confidence by its delicate expression; so that her society was one of the things she found it most difficult to give up in leaving Undercliff. She and Marion often walked with us, and it would not be easy to say which was the happier pair in each other's company, the mothers or the daughters. Before Mrs. Moss's letter was answered, Mrs. Rosebery and Marion came in with their baskets to spend the evening with us—the mother's with work, Marion's with dolls and their etceteras. And while they talked together at their sewing, we played with our dolls. When I heard my mother speak of Mrs. Moss's letter to Mrs. Rosebery, I thought Marion and I should have a little consultation of our own on the subject, and for this purpose we repaired to the garden. And not without many tears on both sides and promises of writing to each other when we were separated, did we say good-night; indeed, I think it was the subject of our mutual dreams. However, to make a long story short, my mother wrote to Mrs. Moss, and gladdened her heart by assuring her that she would cast in her lot with her, whether for weal or woe. We soon heard that she had closed the eyes of the good old man, and then we felt anxious to be with her, for we knew that her mind would be diverted from her recent loss by the desire to make us comfortable in her new home. And now came on our last walks and talks with our dear friends the Rosebery's, who would have felt our loss more deeply, but that their jubilee was approaching in the return of the captain from his long voyage. I will not dwell upon our parting or our journey, of which I have no remembrance noteworthy. Suffice it to say, that a warm welcome awaited us at the pleasant farm, from our old friend and her relative Winny Jones; and thus ended the second stage of my earthly pilgrimage.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SEAFIELD.

“Soon were our fires upon its hearths,  
Our pictures on its walls.”

THE farmhouse at Seafeld was pleasant and commodious, standing in a large orchard garden, where fruit, vegetables, and flowers seemed to flourish together most agreeably to the eye. There was no crowding, no want of order or neatness, but the wholesome look of a well kept country garden, whose productions were equally acceptable in the kitchen and parlour. I have often remarked that flowers seem to thrive particularly well in the borders of vegetable ground. I mean the common old-fashioned flowers, such as roses, gilliflowers, wall-flowers, pinks, polyanthus, and auriculas. They were Winny's special care at Seafeld, and in this department I gladly assisted her. The house was a long roomy cottage; the upper kitchen was our common living room, and a charming room it was, spotlessly neat and well kept, and not likely to be less so for having Mrs. Moss as its mistress; indeed, all the rooms were neat, pleasant, and cheerful. The parlour was small, and wholly appropriated to my mother's use, and our sleeping room communicated with it; beyond the upper kitchen were the store-room and two good bed-rooms, and in a sort of return at the back of the house, looking out on the farm-yard, were the lower kitchen and dairy. We had abundance of good milk and butter, fowl and eggs, fruit and vegetables, so that we seemed to have been transplanted

into a sort of Goshen that was very salutary to a growing child like me; but I never thought the air suited my mother as well as our sheltered nook at Undercliff; still, she enjoyed it greatly, and we explored together every spot within our reach before the winter set in; then the long evenings round the comfortable fire in the upper kitchen were times of quiet enjoyment to the whole party. We found Winny a pleasant and profitable addition to our society, for without any pretension she was a delightful companion. Ministration to others, either bodily or mentally, seemed to be her special vocation, and, indeed, her very element. All the neighbours resorted to her for aid and advice, and whether the ailments were those of age or infancy, Winny seemed to be equally at home in their management. She was apparently upwards of fifty years of age, nearly twenty of which she had passed at Seafeld, so that she was the only one of our little party who felt perfectly at home for some time. She had been handsome, and was still very pleasing in her countenance and cheerful in her manners. My mother used to say that "a good wife was lost in her," and Mrs. Moss often rallied her on having remained single, for it was plain that such a woman must have had opportunities of changing her condition had she been so disposed. But Winny's reply was invariably the same, "It is better that I should be sorry for not marrying, than sorry for marrying." This was and is true enough; but perhaps the secret lay partly in her eldest sister's having married badly and dying young of a broken heart, and partly in Winny's having been the youngest of a large family, and when all had dispersed abroad, the feeble parents were wholly dependent on her fostering care. From the faithful fulfilment of this pious duty nothing would divert her thoughts, and the only man she loved well enough to marry did not wait for her, and so her day passed away. Mrs. Moss told

us that it was a beautiful sight to see her care of her aged parents, both of whom lived to be upwards of ninety. Their washing, dressing, and feeding, had to be done by her hands, and when she had made them comfortable for the day, she would sit down and read the Bible to them. She was quite a middle-aged woman when her mother died, blessing her duteous daughter with her last breath. I have often thought that if the great moralist, Dr. Johnson, had known Winny Jones, he never would have put that sweeping conclusion into the mouth of his sage Imlac, that "marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures;" for Winny's blameless life was evidently a happy one; her loving heart and busy hands seeming to provide for her enjoyment, the perpetual feast of contentment. You could not look in her face without seeing that unselfishness marked her character, and that her natural amiability was as it were sublimed by "the love of God shed abroad in her heart." My mother and I soon loved her dearly, and before the first winter at Seafeld had passed we all ceased to regret Undercliff; in fact, each of us seemed to have gained so much in the possession of the new household treasure we found here, that we felt indemnified for having made a change so dreaded at the first.

Our good old rector, Dr. Warne, often came to see us, and have an early cup of tea, and his conversation was a great treat to my mother, for he was not merely an enlightened, large-hearted Christian, but a person of great refinement and cultivation, and a fine specimen of that highest style of man, an old English gentleman, where Christian simplicity is engrafted on the chivalric sentiments of the old school of English gentry. It is certainly a beautiful combination, and, in my mind, a clergyman who is not possessed of gentlemanly mind and manners is lamentably deficient of an important qualification for his

holy office; personal influence is such a mighty engine in that civilization that should be the pioneer of religion. Even as a child, I felt elevated by Dr. Warne's conversation and manners; indeed, we all breathed freely in that atmosphere of graceful ease and simplicity, that were so evidently merely the exponents of the "meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God." Dr. Warne had a great love for Winny; he used to call her his eldest child, because she was the first person who was brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, under his ministry; and she, on her part, looked up to him with the most loving reverence, as to her spiritual father. He had long been a widower, and his house was kept by his granddaughter, Rachel Wynyard, a very charming young person, and one to whom I owe a great deal of my literary taste. She took the kindest interest in me, and though ten years at least my senior, was good enough to admit me to her companionship; and, lonely as she was at the parsonage, she welcomed my frequent visits. For she used to say that the very pattering of young feet brought an element of glee into a house, that no other instrumentality could create. We were very close to the church and parsonage, and many of my happiest days were passed within its peaceful walls. From her I learned to sketch flowers from nature, which we gathered in our rambles. My mother often accompanied us in our walks, though, after our first year at Seafeld, I saw with pain that she was easily fatigued, and would lie all the evening on the settee after a walk that formerly caused no weariness; still, she did not complain, and seemed to enjoy her present position greatly. I am sure, however, that though she was not one to make a parade of her feelings, but the reverse, her heart bled inwardly; for to the last I know she loved the father of her child. She had, however, many sweet alleviations of her

lot, for which she felt truly thankful; and any one who could have seen her genuine enjoyment of the loving circle with which she was surrounded, could scarcely suspect that there was at the bottom of all so deep and deadly a wound.

I delighted in listening to the conversations of my mother and her young friend Rachel, and even when the discourse turned, (as it often did,) on love and matrimony, my presence never restrained them; for it was my mother's opinion, that as marriage is the natural and divine appointment for the majority of our sex, there could be no indecorum whatever in teaching young people from an early period, to look forward to it as at least their probable lot, and prepare their minds accordingly. And, indeed, I quite coincide in her enlarged view of this important subject myself; for if marriage be the rule, and celibacy the exception, it is an exercise of wise maternal forecast to teach children to think rationally and scripturally of the lot that most probably lies before them. Young people will think of such subjects, and it is right that they should do so—both right and natural—or rather right, because it is natural; and therefore a mother should anticipate her daughters by opening the subject, and guarding and fencing their minds from the dangers to which they might be exposed, if their first impressions were derived from a less judicious and delicate source than the mature experience of a pure, loving mother.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HALCYON DAYS.

“O how this spring of life resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day,  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and by a cloud takes all away.”

I HAVE often thought that if there were no higher motive to induce parents to seek “the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” the very blessings promised to “the seed of the righteous” ought to be amply sufficient. Many of us would undergo a great deal of self-sacrifice in order to insure permanent benefits to our beloved children; but what earthly good can compare for a moment with an introduction to the family of the most high God? The promise is “unto you *and to your children.*” These reflections force themselves on my attention when I take a retrospect of my own past life—a life, blessed be God! as free from positive evil, and as rich in positive good, as, I suppose, was ever vouchsafed to a child of Adam. To be sure, I have had my trials, the trials incident to human nature, and the trials promised to the children of God, as proofs of their adoption, and means towards their sanctification; but, after all, what a comparatively happy lot has mine been! Now, when I ask myself why have I escaped many evils so common to others, and why have I enjoyed many blessings to which others are strangers? I am able to trace a great deal of the preservation and advantage to my having had a pious mother. Brought herself into communion with God immediately before my birth, I believe

her prayers for me were registered in heaven before I appeared upon earth, and my earliest recollections and impressions are associated with what is pure and holy. The right direction given to her own mind and feelings, made her anxious to secure the blessings of the everlasting covenant for her child. And, in order to this blessed end, she not merely prayed for me daily, and hourly (I believe), that I might be kept in the bosom of the "Good Shepherd," "unspotted from the world," but it was her constant endeavour to act in the spirit of that prayer. By this means I was preserved from the corruption of evil attendants, and evil companions, and, as it were, shut in to the company of the people of God. While she was spared to me I had the unspeakable advantage not merely of her prayers, but of her beauteous example—that of "a woman professing godliness," and acting up to her holy profession; and before she was taken away she had secured to me a goodly company of Christian friends, those valuable helpers in our earthly pilgrimage. My dear mother used to say that she was afraid her faith would fail if she had to leave me in the world after her, except she had reason to believe that her God was also the God of her seed. And during the last few years of her life it was her constant prayer, either that the Lord would give her some evidence of my adoption into his family, or so increase her faith that she might be able to leave me without fear in his hands.

This prayer was sweetly answered when I was about twelve years old, by my Heavenly Father's disposing me to give him my heart in all the simplicity and genuineness of childhood; and from that period the sweet communion that I enjoyed with my precious mother, may be better conceived than described. The ground of my heart had been long prepared by the prayers and exertions of my beloved parent; but our venerable friend and pastor, Dr. Warne,

was the more immediate instrument of my conversion. He was about to prepare a class of young people for confirmation, and my mother happened to say that it would give her great pleasure if I were able and willing to devote myself to the service of the Lord with the others.

“Well,” said the doctor, “Grace’s mind is more matured than many children who are older, and you know,” he added playfully, “the mind is the stature of the man.” So, if you just bring her up to me with the class, the exercise will do her mind good, even if we should decide in the end, that it would be premature to bring her forward in a public profession on the coming occasion.”

When the good man was going away, he sought me out where I was watering my roses in the garden; and after some talk about the flowers, he took a little tract from his pocket called “Christian Warfare,” and asked me to read it carefully with prayer before Saturday, on which day I was to join the class. When he had left me I laid down my watering can, and sat down in the arbour, and then I read the little book. It is an excellent tract on the subject, but as I look at it now, I cannot see anything so peculiarly striking in it as I did then. The difference is, that then I read it *with a purpose*, and then *God blessed the reading of it to my soul’s awakening*; and though I was some months before I enjoyed that sweet peace in believing, that has been my portion to this day—still, from the evening I read that tract, I could say, like the blind man in the Gospel, “One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see.” Yes, I saw myself a sinner, and Jesus a Saviour at the same time; and though I could not immediately call him *my Saviour*, I never ceased to seek after him until he was found of me. Oh! how blessed I was at this time of my transition from death to life, to have my mother to be my



guide and helper by her prayers and exhortations ! On the last evening when the class met before the day of confirmation, our beloved pastor addressed us with great earnestness on the last clause of the 5th verse of the 29th chapter of 1st Chronicles : "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord ?" That address was a means of grace to my soul, such as I had never enjoyed before. And I have no hesitation in saying that on that evening I returned from the church, "a new creature in Christ Jesus," and went up to my house "justified from all things, from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses." Now, indeed, I had really begun to live, and begun to love. I felt as if I should have been glad to embrace the whole world, and tell every one I met what a Saviour I had found. Oh, how my sweet mother rejoiced over her child that evening ! Surely our mutual enjoyment on that occasion was a lively type of the communion we shall yet have together "in the happy land far, far away." And the nearer I come to it, the more my thoughts delight to dwell on a re-union with my inestimable parent. Whether right or wrong, I cling to the idea that we shall recognise each other in heaven ; for, as the old Welsh clergyman said to his wife, "I do not think we shall be greater fools there than here."

I could scarcely give you an idea of the joy of our good pastor when I told him on the day before the confirmation, that I wished to profess openly the service in which I had been enabled to engage. The good old man's eyes filled with tears of joy. "Oh ! my child," he said, "if you live to be my age you will call this service perfect freedom ; my only regret is, that I did not enter it earlier ; but I had become a man, and a clergyman, before I knew what it was to be a Christian. I was moral and well conducted ; but no more. A frequenter of gay, fashionable assemblies,

and a partaker of all their frivolities for six days of the week, and on the seventh, their unhallowed minister of holy things in the house of God. I had not been long engaged in my first curacy, and was returning to it after a brief absence, when my horse lost a shoe, and by the time the accident was repaired, it was too late to reach home that night, so I resigned myself as well as I could to the dulness of a roadside inn, and, to pass the time, I asked the waiter if he could bring me anything to read. He was a Christian man himself, and probably supposed that, as a clergyman, I would enjoy one of his own books. It was a religious periodical, and one part of it was devoted to missionary intelligence. I read there of the sufferings of the early missionaries in their endeavours to bring the heathen to the knowledge of the truth, and, as I read, I said to myself, 'Surely these men have some principle of action to which I am a stranger.' This was the arrow of the Lord that entered my spirit, and it pierced into the inmost recesses of my soul, showing me all that I was, and all that I should be. I passed a sleepless night, and returned to my curacy the next day so far an altered man, that I determined to follow on to know the Lord, 'through evil and good report,' and I had to endure a good deal of persecution, even from those nearest and dearest to me, while I pressed on with little human aid on my pilgrimage. At length it pleased the Lord, by the reading of his own blessed word, to bring me into the glorious liberty of his children, which I have now been privileged to enjoy for fully fifty years; and amply have I been repaid for the disinheritance of an earthly estate, in the happy assurance of being 'an heir of God, and a joint heir through Christ;' so that all things are now mine, and 'nothing shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.' May you, dear child, be enabled to press on in the

same blessed path, which will end at last in the golden streets of the new Jerusalem."

Never was a happier mother and daughter than we were on the day of the confirmation, and when our good bishop prayed that I might be "filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and continue *his for ever*," I felt that it was my delight to know that I was indeed his, and that I could trust his faithfulness never to leave or forsake me.

I remember my dress that day was a white frock with a green trimming, and a green and white ribbon round my waist. It was the very middle of a glorious summer, and there were a great many of us young people led up to the bishop by our excellent Dr. Warne, who felt like a true shepherd with his lambs, many of whom he had led to green pastures and still waters from infancy; but none of them was dearer to him, I believe, than the stray lamb from Undercliff that he had seen so happily folded under his recent ministry.

After the bishop left, he and Rachel came over to Seafield, and spent the evening with us—a happy evening—full of cheerful enjoyment. Surely none can be so happy as Christians, secure for both worlds, trusting in God and in each other, innocently enjoying by the way all that is vouchsafed to them, and knowing that their last day will be their best day.

And now my cup of bliss would have run over, but that I daily saw, with trembling apprehension, the increasing weakness of my beloved mother. To gratify Mrs. Moss and me, she consented to see a physician, though knowing well that her case was beyond human aid. He said there was no immediate danger to be apprehended, but that she should guard against excitement of every kind, which might at any moment prove fatal, for that the disease of the heart, under which she laboured, had been evidently

induced by a long-continued strain on a peculiarly sensitive temperament. She had very little suffering, except from palpitation, and occasional spasm in the side, and was generally cheerful and at ease. I dare say her anxiety about me for some time before had been injurious to her; but now she was happy about me, and enjoyed the calm, and we went on as usual, except that she was unequal to walking exercise, and reclined a good deal in the evenings. She had not told me of the doctor's opinion of her case, and though deeply anxious, I was hopeful, as was natural at my years; and in my new found peace in believing, the Lord was preparing me for the storm, which soon burst upon my head.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FLOWER FADETH.

“ Her pale cheek,  
Like a white rose . . . . .  
The drooping lid whose lash is wet with tears,  
A lip which has the sweetness of a smile,  
But not its gaiety.”

If it be true that the doctrine of compensation pervades every phase of human life, and of nature in general, we cannot but acknowledge, from experience, that affliction forms no exception to its universality.

“ How often we find in this changeable world,  
Where so many afflictions oppress,  
That the tokens of love, that descend from above,  
Are reserved for the day of distress !”

My day of distress was now approaching with rapid strides, but it was heralded by a time of exquisite enjoyment, pure, chastened, high-toned enjoyment—worthy of immortals. Oh ! that precious time—how sweet it is in retrospect, that touchstone of true pleasure !—for how often we anticipate fondly, and enjoy keenly, what we cannot look back upon without a pang, either of reproach, regret, or disappointment ! But the time to which I now allude, with its peculiar enjoyment, has been a perpetual feast to me whenever I recur to it. The poet says, “ Of joys departed never to return, how painful the remembrance !”

But on the contrary, the joys of which I speak were not only such as to give a foretaste of joys that will last for ever, but even their memory is blessed: the joys vouchsafed to his dear children by our heavenly Father, on their first entrance into his family—and those joys poured into the bosom of a loving, sympathising Christian mother—a mother who had always reflected my every smile, and “wept with me tear for tear.” We always slept together, and at this time joy often kept us awake for hours. She rejoiced over me now as an heir with her of the grace of life; and our prayers and praises ascended like mingled incense to the throne on high. We often sang together that sweet hymn:

“ These are the joys he makes us know,  
In fields and villages below;  
Gives us a foretaste of his love,  
But holds his nobler feast above.”

And another favourite:

“ We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground;  
A little spot inclosed by grace;  
Out of the world’s wide wilderness.”

My dear mother loved music, sacred music especially—and had a clear, sweet, soft voice, to which I warbled a second; and our evenings, when alone, were often spent in singing. We shall sing together again in the choir above, and then our notes shall never be lost in weeping; for we shall have no sorrow—no sin—no death—no separation. Sometimes Rachel Wynyard and Winny joined us, and then we had a sweet concert. At other times we sewed, and one of us read; and, when our dear pastor was one of our party, his conversation was a rich treat to us all. I have not described him to you as he is pictured in my memory, but I

will try to do so, though I fear I shall scarcely be able to give you an adequate idea of him. He was singularly handsome and fine-looking, and, for an aged man, remarkably fresh and fair, with an abundance of fine hair, literally white as snow, and yet, with the crispness and full setting of youth; but his eye was the feature that would strike you most—its peculiar life, brightness, and clear, beautiful expression, would have been attractive in a young person, but, at his time of life, quite reminded one of the description of Moses in his 120th year: “His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated;” his step still elastic, and his look upward. Age, such as Dr. Warne’s, is neither dark nor unlovely; but the hoary head of such a one is indeed a crown of glory, found, as it was in his case, in the way of righteousness. There seldom was a cloud to be seen upon that clear brow; and whenever it appeared, we knew that the unwonted shadow had been cast by something untoward in the flock that were so near and dear to his heart. One day, as he sat with my mother and me, Winny came in, and though his greeting of her was as ever pleasant, she, who knew his countenance so well, from her long and loving study of its sweet expression, saw that something troubled him; and, though she did not say anything, she looked her anxious inquiry as to the cause. He divined at once the unspoken question, and, smiling at her, said, “Well, Winny, if you have missed the joys of wedded life, you have also escaped its sorrows; no man will ever carry such a story to me of you, as a husband brought to me of his wife to-day; and, as I disapproved of his conduct on the occasion, he shall be nameless. I suppose,” he added, “that he thought I would sympathise with him, and rebuke his wife—but I could not do either. I just said, “Well, sir, I am afraid you do not love your wife according to the divine command, “even as Christ loved his

Church." Go home and love her better, and I will answer for her that she will return your love with such liberal interest that you will never have to complain of her again. Poor man!" he concluded, "he looked abashed, but I hope it may do him good, and her too, for 'faithful are the wounds of a friend.'"

"Well, Doctor," said my mother, "I believe there would be fewer marriages if it would be possible to convince the young and inexperienced of the risk they run in that solemn contract. But somehow," she added, "it seems as if the experience of the married went for nothing with the unmarried. They must, I suppose, to the end of the chapter, learn for themselves, and pay for their experience."

"Such is the power of hope," said the Doctor, "that each expects his own path to be strewn with flowers. And so it is, Mrs. Leigh," he added, "if we can only manage to pick our steps prudently, and escape the thorns that lie beneath the rosy surface. Temper is, after all, next to true religion, the great guarantee for wedded happiness; for with a well-tempered Christian husband or wife, one cannot be absolutely unhappy. But, unfortunately for us, we generally want too much, and, in the attempt to grasp it, we often lose hold of the most valuable though common elements of happiness. I say," he continued, "and I will maintain it, to the honour of your sex, that if a man wants a good wife, he will get a good wife. There are plenty of really good wives to be had for the asking, thanks to their good sense and good nature; but, if a man wants not merely a good wife, but a good wife with a good face and figure, a good family and fortune, a good education and good manners, it is not so easy to suit him; in fact, he wants a sort of *rara avis*. And, if he be silly enough in his days of courtship to fancy that the object of his choice is all that, and more, he is preparing disappoint-



ment for himself, and his wife too, when he finds out his mistake. I remember a college friend of mine, long ago, coming to consult me on the subject of matrimony. He had seen and admired a lady of my acquaintance, and he said he should be glad of my advice. I saw at once that he was quite disposed to ask for her, and only wanted to be confirmed by me in his own prepossession in her favour. So I hesitated a little—looked blank, I suppose, and then, with some reluctance, said to my friend, ‘I am afraid, John, she is not the woman for you—think no more of her as a wife.’ ‘What do you mean?’ said he, ‘is she not a Christian woman?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘she is that.’ ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘is she not talented, and very fascinating in her manners?’ ‘All that, too, I must confess,’ I said. ‘Well then, my friend, what is the matter with her?’ (We both knew that she had a good fortune and connexion, and that she was very handsome.) ‘Just this, John,’ I replied, ‘that the Holy Spirit can bear with her better than you could do.’ I knew that her temper was naturally unlovely, and it would have made him miserable to find it out a day too late. He took the hint,’ said Dr. Warne, ‘waited a while, and then married a person without half her advantages, but so far her superior, that she possessed the “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.” He was happy, and he made his wife happy; and, when an old married man, he has often playfully, but thankfully, alluded to my having saved him when on the brink of a precipice. His simple good wife did not understand the allusion; so we had it all to ourselves. And now, young ladies,” he said, turning to Rachel and me, who had been all ear to the conversation, “though I believe little Grace is almost too juvenile to feel the force of my warning, I hope you will live, like our good friend Winny, all your lives, ‘in maiden meditation,

fancy free,' except you marry children of God, whose heart and treasure are in heaven. Never be induced by beauty or talents, fortune or accomplishments, to cast in your lot with 'men of this world, who have their portion in this life;' for nothing less powerful than the Spirit of God can root out the selfishness of man's nature, so as to prepare him to make a good husband. Women are naturally unselfish. A selfish wife is a monster; or else her husband has made her so—for poor human nature will seek indemnification in some form or other. And if a woman be disappointed of the love and tenderness of her husband, of his fostering protection and tender appreciation, she will turn elsewhere for her happiness, as naturally as a flower in a dark room will push out towards any chink that admits that light that is its natural element. That excellent man, Philip Henry, used to say to his daughters, as Naomi said to Ruth, 'Shall I not seek rest for thee?' He thought rightly, that the house of a husband was the natural place for a woman to find rest, and so it is; but alas! too many poor women find there only a bed of thorns. If the Lord himself find not out the rest for you, my children," he said, "I hope you will be satisfied to have your Maker for your husband, like Winny. You see in her an example of happiness in celibacy. Do not be afraid, Rachel," he continued, "to be called 'an old maid;' but if you can be married 'in the Lord,' choose it rather, because marriage is so far good for women, that it puts them in a position for dispensing happiness to another, or others, as the case may be—thus taking them, as it were, out of themselves, and keeping self in such habitual abeyance, that, by the force of habit, acting on the gentle affections of womanhood, as wives and mothers, self-love is at last lost, in the will of those far dearer to them than themselves. I speak, *con amore*," said the Doctor, "of women—because I was

blessed with one, on whose tomb I was able to inscribe, with truth, after nearly half a century of married life, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.' And the good old man's eyes filled, as he turned away, saying, "Come now, girls, and let us look at the flowers—always sweet and refreshing to my mental, as well as bodily sense." So Rachel and I took a hand each of our beloved old friend, and we wandered away through the garden, and fields, and down to the sea-shore, and they carried me away with them to the parsonage for the remainder of the evening.

On my return I flew, as usual, to my mother; but I was shocked with her unusual paleness.

"Dear mother," I said, kissing her, as I leaned over the little couch on which she rested, "have you been very unwell since I left you?"

"Yes, my child," she said, "I have had an unusually severe spasm in my side. I was so glad," continued the gentle being, smiling sweetly at me, "that you were not here—it would have pained you to see me suffer so."

I burst into tears.

"Ah! my darling Grace," she said, "if you love me you must try to suppress this excitement—it distracts me to see tears in those sweet eyes—and I am better now, my love. Come here, and lie down beside me, and lay your little head on your mother's bosom, and we will rest together."

I did so, and when I could command my voice to speak, I said—

"And mother, were you alone when you were so ill?"

"Yes, dear," she said, "Mrs. Moss and Winny had just left me to go to the dairy to their churning. I was only a little while ill, but it was very sharp. Now, love, I am as

well as usual, except that I feel a little shaken ; but we will go to bed early, and sleep will refresh me."

We went to bed, but not to sleep ; she passed a sleepless night, and so did I, and the next day she did not rise ; and I sat beside her, with my eyes rivetted to her sweet pale face. Towards evening she got up, I think to please me by seeing her sit up to tea ; but from that day she never looked the same, and my fears began to thicken. Ah ! the bitter feeling of steadily approaching separation then visited me for the first time, in all its intensity ! and I should have sunk under it, but that I had my sympathising High Priest to turn to in my trouble ; and in tender compassion he enabled me, after a severe struggle, to look my affliction steadily in the face, with a firm conviction that He who sent it would hear my prayer, in enabling me to give up my whole will to him. My mother had been my idol, and the Lord was now opening to me the necessity for my leaning on Him alone. I had nearly completed my thirteenth year, and my first real sorrow was now looming out upon me ; but He who sent it enabled me to trust in him, "and who ever trusted in him and was confounded?"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

"Sorrows are well allowed, and sweeten nature,  
Where they express no more than drops on lilies ;  
But when they fall in storms they bruise our hopes,  
Make us unable, though our comforts meet us,  
To hold our heads up." MASSINGER.

It was now about midsummer, and my dear mother felt the heat very exhausting ; she seemed feverish and hectic, and, until sun-down, scarcely breathed freely. The early part of the summer had been unusually warm that year, but in the beginning of July we had a few days of refreshing rain, succeeded by a brisk westerly wind, and my dear mother seemed to spring up suddenly under its bracing influence, and looked as revived as the parched flowers after the rain. I recollect it was Sunday, and Winny said to me at breakfast, "Now Grace, will you trust your mother to my care, and go to church with Mrs. Moss to-day? I will not leave her side," said the good-natured woman, "you may depend on me."

"Do, my child," said my mother ; "it will do you good."

Her will was always law to me, however slightly expressed, and, as far as silence went, I gave a sort of passive assent to the proposition ; but I could not affect to do it cheerfully, for it was now torture to me to leave her for an hour. She saw my tearful eye and quivering lip, and I could perceive that she shook her head at Winny, as much as to say, "Do not press her further."

"Remember, my love," she said, "I do not wish you to

leave me except you would enjoy it—do just as you feel disposed yourself.”

I was only too glad to get her permission, so, smiling through my tears, I said, “Then if you please, dear mother, I will stay with you.”

So Mrs. Moss and Winny went to church, and soon after my mother said to me, “Come, now, my love, fetch me my bonnet and shawl, and we will go to the garden, and have our little service together in the arbour; the air will do us both good.” So I wrapped her in her shawl, and she took my arm, and we went to the garden. There was a wealth of roses in the garden at Seafield, and they were now in the full glory and beauty of midsummer, refreshed by the late rains, so that they were quite a picture. She loved flowers, and when in health delighted in their culture, and the roses were always her special favourites. She had not been in the garden for a week or ten days, and now she seemed almost unprepared for the flush of beauty that burst upon her, when I opened the wicket and led her up the middle walk, that was bordered with a low rose hedge. I felt her press my arm, and heard her murmur faintly, once or twice, “Beautiful, beautiful, how beautiful! He hath made everything beautiful in his time. My Father made them all;” and then, as if she felt overwhelmed by the contrast between the blushing beauty that surrounded her, and her own fading weakness, she burst into tears, and, throwing her arms about my neck, sobbed out most pitifully, “Ah, Grace, Grace! I shall never see the roses blow again.” Our mutual reserve on the subject of her own hopeless state was now broken through, and I saw at a glance that she felt she was soon about to leave me. I was stunned by the sudden consciousness that she was right, and wondered how I could have entertained a hope on the subject. Now all hope was gone—my mother—my earthly

all—the object of my love and pride—my almost worshipped parent was fading away rapidly before my eyes, and I knew that she knew it, and that her heart was torn at the thought of our approaching separation. We threw ourselves into each other's arms, and wept until I exceeded, but she was soon exhausted, and with some difficulty I supported her into the house, and laid her down on her little couch, bathing her face and hands, and not daring to speak lest she should be excited again. After a while she fell asleep, and in about half an hour wakened refreshed, but looking worse than ever I had seen her before. She looked up at me smiling, and taking my hand and pressing it to her lips, said in her own old sweet way, "My child, I have had such a happy dream. I thought I was in the garden of paradise, and that I felt almost dazzled with its beauty; and while I gazed in speechless delight, I heard a choir of sweet young voices amongst the trees, singing—

‘ Here everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers.’

And then I thought you came up to me, looking as you did ten years ago, and you pointed with your little finger, as you used to do then, to a beautiful rose and rose-bud, saying, 'Look—look—a mother and daughter!' It seemed to me then as if it were time for us to leave the garden, and I was turning towards its pearly gate, when a shining one came and laid his hand softly first on my head and then on yours, saying, 'Fear not, this inheritance shall be yours.' The joy, I think, must have awoken me, and the whole scene is painted so vividly on my memory, that I feel as if I shall be able to carry it about with me like a beautiful picture, ready to refresh my sight at any moment. Now, my love," she said, "I feel well enough to have a

little reading; bring the Bible and read the last chapter of Revelation."

I did so, and we had prayer and a hymn, and then I got her something to eat, and she sat up and partook of it with apparent appetite, but not until I drew my chair up to her side and ate with her. I remember it was a currant tart and cream, and she enjoyed it greatly. And, as she lay upon the sofa afterwards, I looked upon her face, like Stephen's in the council, "as it had been the face of an angel."

When Mrs. Moss and Winny came back from church, they were shocked to see the change effected in my mother's appearance by the agitation of the garden scene; and I was so thankful that it had not ended fatally, that I determined for the future to put a constraint on my own feelings, lest she should be excited again, and have a recurrence of her late weakness. Mrs. Moss and Winny, too, resolved not to leave me in the house alone with her again, and took it in turn to go to church, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, and then in the evenings we were all together. Dangerous as her late excitement had evidently been, it was well that it occurred, for it opened the way for her to speak to me freely of her fears, hopes, and desires with regard to me when she should be taken away; and though it was agonising to me to hear her speak of a time when I should have no mother, I would not for worlds have lost a word, but treasured up in my memory her lightest wishes to guide me in my approaching orphanhood. And this tenacity of her every breath, as expressed in that parting time, was so intensified after I had actually lost her, that nothing would have induced me to do or say anything on which I could not expect the smile of my mother, that had been my sunshine for nearly thirteen years.



It might have been about a week or ten days after that Sunday, that one evening my mother and I were sitting at the open window of her own little parlour, that looked out on the high road. I was sewing and she was repeating some beautiful hymns to me, and we were talking about them very pleasantly, and enjoying the sweet cool evening breeze, when we heard the rumbling of coach wheels, and soon a travelling carriage stopped at the entrance to the farm. The postilion did not alight, but a private servant came up to the house, and my mother sent me to the door to answer him. He asked if Mrs. Leigh lived here—"Mrs. Captain Leigh?" he repeated. I said, "Yes;" and immediately he returned to the carriage, and while we were wondering what it was all about, we saw a very lovely lady of about my mother's age alighting and coming towards the house, with a sweet little girl of four or five years old by the hand—a miniature of herself; her long, fair hair hung in soft curls over her neck, and her eyes looked to me like stars, they sparkled so.

I held the door open for them, and the lady did not give me time to speak until I felt her gentle kiss on my forehead. "Little Grace Leigh," she said, "I am sure; and where is your sweet mother?" By this time my mother had partially recognised her dear friend and relative, Cecilia Darling (Mrs. Manley), and soon they were in each other's arms. My mother looked joyous. "Oh, Cecilia," she said, "I did not hope for such a pleasure as this—to see you and your sweet little girl."

"Well, dearest Clara," said Mrs. Manley, "it is by a happy accident that your tent is pitched between Holyhead and Darlington, or I should not have had the delight of seeing my oldest and dearest friend to-day. I have been in the north of Ireland with my aunt, Lady Linton, of Ravenshaw, and am now returning to Darlington; but it

is a long journey, and I will send the carriage back to the hotel, if you will be able to dispose of Bella and me for the night."

My mother was delighted at this proposition, and grasped at it eagerly; so I carried off the sweet little girl with me, to have tea prepared, and her maid, Janet, sent away the coach. Mrs. Moss and Winny were on the alert, so that we were able to make the travellers very comfortable in our small way, and the two friends enjoyed each other to their hearts' content, with the evident drawback on Mrs. Manley's side of seeing my dear mother such a confirmed invalid. I found afterwards that I formed the principal subject of their conversation; my mother confiding to her dear friend all her anxieties with regard to my future. The only friends she knew that would or could take charge of me were Dr. Warne and Mrs. Moss, the latter nearly seventy years of age, and the former more than that; and then, my education, and the formation of my character and manners were so incomplete, that she felt bewildered at the thought of leaving me at the very period when, humanly speaking, her care and protection were most necessary to my well-being. That heavenly Friend in whom she trusted, however, did not leave her long comfortless or in doubt about her poor child, for He who has the hearts of all in his hands, disposed Mrs. Manley to relieve her of all anxiety by generously offering to adopt me into her own family.

"I feel reluctant, Clara," said her excellent friend, "to propose to you the only way in which I can take the charge of your dear child, lest it should not be congenial to your feelings. However, I have no alternative to offer, and I can assure you that if you and I could exchange places, I should have no hesitation in accepting the same offer from you for my Bella, that I make for your Grace. I need not

tell you that I have not much of my own will. I never had since my marriage; and, knowing Colonel Manley's disposition as I do, I never take the initiative in anything, as it has always been my conviction that one can hardly pay too much for domestic peace; it is cheap at any price but that of principle. Now, you know Darlington is my own inheritance, and, were I its mistress, your child's place at its board should be beside my own Bella's. This, however, I could not attempt; so I will tell you my plan. Our excellent housekeeper, Mrs. Nutley, who is the widow of an Irish clergyman and an old friend of my aunt Linton's, is often rheumatic and ailing in the winter and spring, and I proposed to Colonel Manley to give her the assistance of a respectable young person as a sort of assistant, who would live with her in her own rooms, and be like a daughter to her. This plan has been in contemplation since last winter, and now, if you allow me, I will secure it to Grace, if I am spared to survive you. Remember that I shall feel to her, and act towards her, as if she were my own child, while Colonel Manley will look on her as one of my household. In this way I can assist in her education myself, and our excellent chaplain, Mr. Lovely, will, I know, be happy to give her lessons also. Then Janet is a famous needlewoman, and Mrs. Nutley such a motherly Christian woman—indeed, since my dear mother's death, she has been like a mother to me. Darlington is a very quiet establishment, and your dear child will be safe with us, and, I trust, happy too. Is she not the 'seed of the righteous?' and has she not herself cast in her lot with the little flock to which it is 'the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom?'"

My poor mother felt like one relieved of a heavy burden. "I can breathe freely about my darling child now," she said, "and I can leave her with you, Cecilia, on any terms, with perfect confidence. For my sake," she added, "my

little Grace will be dear to you. Why did I not trust the Lord more fully? for almost before I called he answered me, and while I was yet speaking he heard. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name, and forget not this his benefit.’ My last anxiety is now removed, and I have nothing to do but wait for the Lord’s salvation.” In sweet and holy intercourse they passed the remaining hours of Mrs. Manley’s stay, and by the time they had to leave us, little Bella and I had become fast friends. The parting was a sad one to our two mothers, who were never to meet again until the morning of the resurrection.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MY BIRTHDAY.

“So swift treads sorrow on the heels of joy.”

WHEN our visitors had left us, my mother sent for Mrs. Moss, and told me to go and help Winny in the garden, as she wanted to be alone with Mrs. Moss for a little. She then told her of Mrs. Manley's arrangement for me, and her own satisfaction on account of it. She feared that our good old friend would perhaps have felt overlooked in the disposal of me, and it was a great relief to her to find that Mrs. Moss's sound sense and real interest in our welfare were such, that she quite rejoiced with her in the prospect of such protection for me as Mrs. Manley had offered.

“You know, my dear Mrs. Leigh,” said the good old woman, “that Grace is almost as dear to me as yourself; but, leaving my age out of the question, I feel that I am not the most suitable person for her now. Your child ought to be a lady in every respect, and Winny and I are plain people, not fit to educate her as you have done; besides, I have only a life interest in this place, so that I could not leave it to her; it will be Winny's at my death, and it is right that it should be so; she earned it, and my boys don't want for anything. And now, dear,” she added, “your mind will be easy about your sweet child. ‘I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread.’”

“Yes,” said my mother, “God is faithful to his promises;

he will be a God not merely to me but to my seed also. I used to think of Mrs. Roseberry, and that I might ask her to take charge of Grace; but I find she is obliged to go abroad for her health, and leave Marian at school in England, and her boys now sail with their father, so that this providential opening fills me with joy and gratitude. Should I tell Grace of it, Mrs. Moss?" asked my mother.

"Ah, no dear," she replied, "not, at least, until after her birthday. This day week, you know, will be the 1st of August, and as we intend to have a little celebration of it, I think it would be better to let her enjoy it without telling her of your arrangements for her after you are taken from her."

"You are right," said my mother; "it would cast a shadow on her fair brow, and it is better that she should be saved the pang as long as possible."

Mrs. Manley's visit and its consequences had relieved my dear mother's mind, so that she looked greatly revived; her eyes were bright, her smile cheerful and sweet, and her manners with me full of that old innocent playfulness that had won my idolatry from my babyhood. I never saw such sweet manners as my mother's—graceful, child-like, and tender—and then, the touching gentleness of her musical voice was quite peculiar; indeed, it was easy to see that, with all her trials, her heart had never grown old. My hopes revived about her whenever she improved ever so little in appearance, and I thought I saw a faint tinge of blush again showing on her cheek; so that, as my birthday approached, my spirits became very happy, and this delighted my poor mother, for we always seemed to reflect each other; if she looked sad, I could not feel gay, but when she smiled and looked happy and at ease, all the natural gaiety and sportiveness of childhood returned to me. As we see a shade creep over the grass when a cloud

obscures the sun, so was I when my mother looked ill or sorrowful, but when the cloud cleared away from my sun, I became all bright again.

The day before my birthday my mother called me to her to help her to sort out linen and various things that lay in a handsome brass-bound oak chest that had belonged to my father, and where she kept all her handsome clothes, laces, trinkets, and other valuables that she had never worn from the time of her visit to America. I was always glad to be allowed to look over her nice things in this chest, but it was with a mingled feeling of surprise, pleasure, and pain, that I heard her say to me as she gave me the key—

“All that this chest contains is now your own, Grace, or, at least, you may call it yours.” She saw at once that I looked troubled, and she added, “Now, my love, you need not look so; remember that to-morrow you will arrive at the turning point between the child and woman. You will be thirteen, you little mite!” she said playfully, “and I can hardly believe it; you would still pass for ten or eleven. But you are becoming a little woman now, Grace, and I shall never wear those things again. A good deal of the embroidery was stitched by these feeble fingers when I was at school at Reading Abbey, and now they are all yours; I do not mean you to wear them at present, but you will take care of them and save me the trouble in future.”

She then took out what I coveted most, which was her own miniature attached to a fine gold chain; her hair was at the back, with her initials in pearls. Her grandmother Noble had got it done when she was about my age, and it came to my mother at her aunt Mary's death, with some other things of the same kind.

“This,” she said, “I mean to give you to-morrow, as

my special birthday token, and remember to get me some roses (if there are any good ones still left us) early while the dew is on them, that I may twist them into a wreath for your hair. As morning is my best and freshest time, I have asked Dr. Warne and Rachel to come over to breakfast and help us to discuss Mrs. Moss's cakes and Winny's fruit and cream, and I shall be so happy to-morrow, (please God!)" she added.

She then drew me down beside her and offered me up to God in such a prayer as I shall never forget. My feeling was as if an angel shook his wings beside us, there was such a holy, happy calm over our spirits; and when she rose from prayer, and folded me to her bosom, she seemed as if she would take me into her very heart. We then went down to tea, and I helped Mrs. Moss and Winny to prepare for our guests in the morning.

The morning came—a glorious morning—fresh, bright, and glowing, and I was up early and moved about softly, not to awake my mother. My first work was to repair to the garden for the flowers. I dressed the room and the table with the brightest I could gather, reserving the roses for my mother; and when I thought it was time for her to rise, I carried the basket of roses to her bedside that she might smell them. She made me sit down for a little beside her, and there I drank in a full draught of the priceless love of the best of mothers. She was all joy, and I was all delight to see her so. I assisted her to dress; and when she saw the pretty breakfast-room she admired it greatly, and praised my tasteful arrangement.

"One must really love flowers as you and I do, Grace," she said, "to be able to arrange them. They all seem to be in their right places, so natural; they look happy with their greenery about them, as if they were still in the garden."



Then she made my wreath, and when our dear friends came into the room she put it on my head and kissed me, and, taking me by the hand, led me up to the others to wish me joy of my birthday.

Oh! that happy breakfast—that happy, happy, too happy day! Dear Dr. Warne, at my mother's request, dedicated me afresh to the service of our gracious God, and when we were about to disperse to the business of the day, I asked Rachel to come with me to our room to see all my new treasures. Each of our friends added something to my stock, so that I felt quite a rich woman on my birthday.

Towards evening my mother began to look fatigued, and, as it grew dark, she said—

“My feet are cold, Grace, my love, and I feel weary. Take my feet in your lap, my child, and rub my limbs a little, and perhaps I shall have a sleep, and then I shall be refreshed.”

So she lay back in her easy chair, and I brought a little stool and sat down near her and took her feet in my lap, and, after chafing them gently for about a quarter of an hour, she fell into a sweet, natural sleep, and I scarcely dared to breathe lest I should awake her. Mrs. Moss and Winny were busy in the lower kitchen for some time, and I had sat so for about an hour; and when Mrs. Moss came in with a cup of sago for my mother's supper, I raised my hand to warn her not to bring the light near her eyes lest she should awake her. So Mrs. Moss laid down the cup and candle on a side table and walked softly up to me, while I whispered to her that mother had been nearly an hour sleeping quietly.

I saw that Mrs. Moss looked uneasy, for she could see her face better than I could, from her recumbent posture. She leaned down over her to listen to her breathing, and then took down a little hand-mirror from the mantel-shelf,

and held it before her face for a moment. I could not understand her look, but feared to speak. It was then after eight o'clock, so that she had slept (as I thought) fully an hour, for it was about seven when she called me to her.

Mrs. Moss, with a troubled countenance, sat down on a low seat beside me, and, taking my hand in hers and pressing it gently, said softly, but with great and even (for her) unusual tenderness and solemnity—

“‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’”

The tears started to my eyes, but I did not understand her; it was her manner that affected me. She waited a little longer, and then said—

“Grace, my child, your mother is the Lord’s—the purchase of his precious blood—may he not do what he wills with his own?”

My tears were now flowing rapidly, but silently, and I felt so choked that I could not answer her. Just then Winny came in, and Mrs. Moss said—

“Winny, go to the rectory and tell Dr. Warne I want him for a moment, as soon as he can come to me.”

So, after Winny left the room, we sat together quietly, Mrs. Moss often sighing heavily, while I had an undefined apprehension that something was wrong, but could not speak out to ask what it was that had solemnized her so, or what she wanted with Dr. Warne.

“Mrs. Moss,” I said, at length, “you do not think mother worse?”

“No, dear,” she said, “better.”

Just then Dr. Warne came in, and Mrs. Moss rose from beside me and spoke softly to him for a moment. The dear old man then took her place at my side, and, taking my hand in his and caressing it for a moment or two, he said—

“My sweet child, the conflict is over; your precious mother is ‘absent from the body and present with the Lord!’ ”

I was just sensible of a stunning shock, as if I had been suddenly knocked down with a violent blow on my breast. All at once the terrible reality burst upon me, and I fell back on the floor. I remember nothing more for several days. I had a dreamy sort of feeling of soft hands arranging my bed, or engaged in some way about me, that I could not understand. But my first distinct recollection is of a sweet, grave, reverend face looking very tenderly at me through two such soft brown eyes as I never saw before or since. I felt as if awaking from a dream, and that my present reality was the desolation of orphanhood.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ORPHANHOOD.

“When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord taketh me up.”

I FELT reassured, as I beheld my good old friend, Mrs. Moss, at the opposite side of my bed; her motherly eye resting on me with affectionate earnestness.

“Grace, dear,” she said, in reply to my inquiring glance, “this is Mr. Lovely, a friend of Mrs. Manley’s, whom she has sent here to see you and carry her love and sympathy.”

My little wasted hand lay on the coverlet, and, taking it tenderly between his, he said—

“My dear child, your heavenly Father has, I trust, given me the privilege of doing you good, if,” he added, smiling gently, “you will allow me to try.”

I suppose I looked grateful, but could not trust myself to speak. However, he seemed satisfied with my tacit acceptance of his proffered service, on which he entered at once, by reaching to a plate of grapes that lay on the little table beside my bed, and helping me to them, one by one, as if I had been a little child. His extreme gentleness of look and tone, and the total absence of anything like effort in his manner, seemed to act like a charm on my quivering nerves, and set all apprehension at rest; and as my disorder had reached its crisis, I began to amend from that day forward. Mr. Lovely spent several hours of each day in my room, assisting Mrs. Moss to take care of me. Never was a patient more carefully or gently nursed; for all my

attendants were animated by that love of God that shines out so beautifully towards the weak and helpless. Rachel Wynyard used to bring her work and sit with me, while Mrs. Moss and Winny were engaged about the house affairs; and I had a daily visit from our own dear pastor, Dr. Warne; and, as I was able to bear it, he used to read a few verses for me. Every morning Mr. Lovely brought me some fresh flowers, and talked to me about them, as my mother used to do, often reminding me of her by his soft soothing tones, and his pronunciation also; for he, too, was from the south of England. But, though I longed to speak of her, or hear her spoken of, I was wholly unequal to the effort; and those who were about me seemed afraid to enter on the subject, lest it should be too much for me in my weak state. I was taught a lesson then in that art of nurse-tending, that I have had to practise so largely through life, and I would give you the benefit of my experience, and advise you to use great openness in the sick-room. Never be afraid to speak to invalids of anything that concerns them; but in your manner of speaking avoid the two extremes of abruptness and hesitancy. A gentle but firm tone and manner will do much to reassure a patient, whose confidence in you will generally keep pace with your confidence in yourself. An invalid is, in fact, for the time being, to all intents and purposes a child, who will rely on those whose manner is reliable. You supply a want to a child, or that temporary child an invalid, when you assume that you are so far stronger and wiser than he is, that you know what is best for him, and act accordingly. Now this was the peculiarity about Mr. Lovely, that gave him such influence over me. I felt it before he had been an hour beside me; and in my weakness it was an unspeakable refreshment to have one so strong, so wise, and so gentle to lean on. And although he

was a comparative stranger, I felt that it would be a relief to me if he would at once recognise my orphanhood, and speak to me of my loss, the overwhelming sense of which had laid me on my bed of languishing. With that delicate, refined instinct so peculiar to him, he seemed to divine my want; and, in order to supply it, he began to speak to me of his own loved and lost mother, and dwelt so on the endearing nature of their intercourse, and his desolation at her loss, that, like an unsealed fountain, my surcharged feelings, so long pent up, burst forth freely; and the unspeakable relief I experienced did me a world of good; for he did not check my weeping, but rather encouraged me to speak to him freely of my beloved mother. And when I had exhausted myself, he bound up my bleeding heart with that sweet Scripture, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord taketh me up."

In about a week from that day I began to get up, and my strength returned steadily. Mr. Lovely and Dr. Warne exchanged visits daily, and spent much of their time together. They were indeed kindred spirits, and Rachel too enjoyed their intercourse. He had spent about ten days with us, when, on receiving his letters in the morning, he looked at me with a cheerful aspect, and said—

"Would not you like to see the garden to-day, my child? it is very fine, and you want the air."

And then, without giving me time to think whether I was able for the exertion, he wrapped a warm shawl of Winny's round me, and taking my arm made me lean on him, leading the way to the grassy bank under the walnut tree. There we sat down and rested, while I drank in refreshment from the sweet air, and quietly enjoyed the sight of the autumnal bloom.

"Well, Grace," he said, "you are looking so much better to-day that I begin to hope we may soon set out to-

gether on our journey to Darlington. You know, my child, that the Lord, who has taken you up, has disposed your dear mother's early friend and relative, Mrs. Manley, to adopt you into her family. She has sent me to see you, and to bring you back with me as soon as you are able to travel, and I must return to Darlington in a few days."

I made no reply for some time. I could not command myself to speak; indeed, I felt a sort of shudder at the thought of leaving the spot where I had been so happy with my mother, and near which her beloved remains were deposited. Besides, I thought, in my weak state of body and mind, it would be a dreadful thing to go amongst strangers, however kind, and miss the loving care and tender sympathy of Mrs. Moss and Winny, Dr. Warne and Rachel. Mr. Lovely saw my reluctance, and felt my agitation; for I trembled and wept bitterly, but could not utter a word. So he took a letter from his pocket-book and opened it.

"Shall I read this for you, Grace?" he said, "or would you like to read it yourself? it is the expression of your mother's last wishes with regard to you. I had it this morning in a letter from Mrs. Manley."

I grasped the letter, and thrust it into my bosom, sobbing out—

"I will go anywhere, Sir, that she wished me to go; but will you be there all the time?"

"Yes, my dear child," he replied, "it is my home, and will, I trust, be a happy home to you. I will try to be a father to you. Trust me *fully*, and let me see that you *have* the will to be happy; there is a great deal in that; look forward and upward, and remember that *your* Father is one who will never leave or forsake you. Here is a sweet verse for you: 'What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee.' Come, now, and let us look at the flowers."

I leaned on his arm, and felt it pleasant to use my limbs again. On our way back to the house we passed by a rose bush that bore some fine late roses. The ground underneath was strewed with their sweet leaves; but there was one fine rose, 'the last rose of summer,' that had been shaded from the sunlight by the overhanging branch of a cherry-tree, so that it was only opening its beautiful cup. As we were passing the bush, it caught Mr. Lovely's attention, and he said—

"There, Grace, is it not a beauty?"

And plucking it, he took his knife from his pocket, carefully trimmed away all the thorns, and then gave it to me. There was something in the action, manner, and look, that accompanied the simple gift, that conveyed to me a sweet conviction that the gentle hand that trimmed away the rose-thorns would, if possible, remove other thorns that might beset my path. And I was not disappointed in my hope. The rose was like a token for good; and I loved to look at it in its glass of water, as long as I could keep it alive; and when its petals fell I gathered them carefully and put them by, not merely as a sort of relic of Seafield garden, where my mother and I had often revelled amongst the roses, but as a memento of the happy hour I spent there on my recovery from that heart-sickness that took possession of me when I lost her. We are born for something better and more enduring than this passing scene, and we exhibit this tending towards immortality by our love of relics. Every secret store of cherished mementoes, whether they consist of locks of hair or faded flowers, proves the universal desire to retain our hold of what is eluding our grasp. We pant after some possession that is enduring, something that we try to catch at as it passes away. How happy are those, then, who have secured a treasure in the heavens, that fadeth not away! I



have often felt pained at the sight of old family pictures exposed for sale—those likenesses once so cherished! but those to whom they were dear have themselves passed away—*telle est la vie!*

As the day for our journey drew near, I could see that my good old friend Mrs. Moss looked very sad, and it pained me to see her so. One night, after Mr. Lovely had retired to the rectory, where he slept, she drew me down upon her lap, and, as I leaned my head on her bosom, she told me of my mother's arrangement with Mrs. Manley about me, and what was to be my position at Darlington.

"But remember, Grace," she added, "that if you are not happy at Mrs. Manley's, or if anything should occur to deprive you of her protection, or make it inconvenient for you to remain there, this house is open to you as long as I live. And that you may not want means to find your way back to me, if needful or desirable for you to do so, I have put a little money into this purse for you. I knitted it for your mother, and now it is yours, and when it is empty tell me; I am able and willing to replenish it for you. I have put ten guineas into it, my child, and I mean to lay up as much for you every year. You would like to be able to help the poor and needy, Grace, as your mother did. Remember, dear," she added, "the poor are never to cease out of the land, and it is our privilege to minister to their necessities; for 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

I felt very grateful to my dear old friend for this expression of her love; as usual, I could not say half what I felt, but my tears told the rest, and we wept together freely as we talked of my mother. The last night I spent at Seafeld she would have me to sleep with her; and whenever I awoke in the night I felt her kind arms about me. Her love to my mother had been deep and abiding; and now she seemed to have transferred it all to me. Early in

the morning dear Rachel was beside our bed to offer her services, and to say that the good Doctor was coming over to breakfast with us. He felt that a grand turning point of my life had arrived; and, as far as "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" availeth, he was that morning the means of drawing down rich blessings from above upon the head of the orphan child who was about to journey into what was a strange land to her, truly "not knowing whither she went." We had each been nerving ourselves for the hour of separation; but when it arrived we all broke down but our venerable pastor. I promised Mrs. Moss and Rachel to write to them every month, and tell them truly all that was in my heart; and to those letters promised to me in return I looked for my solace in the unknown scene where every face would be new to me but that of my guide. Poor Mrs. Moss could scarcely be comforted during our last hour together, spent by me in her tender arms. She said she could not have parted with me with any measure of confidence, but that she felt I was a child of God, and, knowing that I was his, she did not fear for me. At last the chaise drove up to the door—the last sad farewell words and kisses were exchanged, and, blinded by my tears, I was gently lifted into it by Mr. Lovely.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DARLINGTON.

“The stage is pleasant, and the way seems short,  
All strew’d with flowers.”

For some miles of the way my time passed in reverie or silent weeping. Up to the last I had been hoping that Mrs. Moss was taking a cheerful view of what lay before me; for with that admirable forgetfulness of self that characterised this “Israelite indeed,” she seemed to throw all her energies into the task of preparing me for this new phase of my existence, and in this way cheated me into a belief that her bright hopes for my auspicious future had almost dispelled the clouds that hung about our separation. But the parting day told another tale, and through all the bustle of our early journey, in which she was foremost, packing, and muffling, and catering for me, I could see that the mask of cheerfulness assumed for my sake could be retained no longer, and all the features of deep sorrow were revealed. Indeed, I think that to any other than Mr. Lovely she would not have entrusted me; but there was something in his whole tone and manner that quieted her fears. Gentleness such as his, when engrafted on manly firmness, forms an irresistible combination; and were its power more generally known and acted upon, we should require no other moral engine in the domestic relations. Ah! why are we

such enemies to our own peace as to use more arbitrary but less potent agency ?

“ Bury the hatchet, bury it low,  
Under the greensward, under the snow.”

When my wise guardian saw that abstraction was gaining undue influence over me, he took his own way of dispelling it, by at once arousing my attention to the beautiful scenery through which we were passing. He seemed to take it for granted that I could not be insensible to what Dr. Johnson calls “ one of the best things life has to offer—rapid post travelling through a fine country with an agreeable companion.” And, having thus suddenly snapped the coil of sorrow that was fastening around me, he took care to prevent a recurrence of the past by gently leading me on to the future, through the charming scenery that surrounded us. By degrees he won many a pleased smile from me by his habitual cheerfulness of eye and tone.

By the way, what an infectious thing cheerfulness is, when it emanates from a mind at peace with God and man ! a mind of purity and cultivation ; for such only can reflect the sweet, soothing influences of nature, that great restorer of jaded feeling.

Many a lesson I learned in that pleasant journey, not merely from the instructive conversation of my guide, which seemed to drop like dew on my exhausted spirit, but from the upward beaming expression of countenance that told out like a “ living epistle,” that “ peace of God that passeth all understanding.” Then, with the unspoken delicate sympathy of a deep, earnest, undemonstrative nature, he was ever caring for me, and evidencing that he did so, without oppressing me by officiousness ; and in this way, he relieved me from the apprehension of being a

burdensome charge on our protracted journey. He always seemed to divine my moments of need for refreshment of any kind. At one time my feet were to be rested, at another my head, and sometimes he would take me out of the carriage and let me walk a little, and pick wild flowers by the wayside, or walk with me up a breezy hill, and set out our dinner on a rock in sight of the blue sea.

It was a three days' journey, for we halted every evening for an early tea, and did not set out again until after breakfast, so that we were able to enjoy our quiet times of worship as if we had not been on pilgrimage. Wherever we stopped for the night, Mr. Lovely invited the family to join in our exercise, which gave a sort of homelike character to our devotions peculiarly refreshing to the travellers. The experience of this journey completed the conviction that began in my illness at Scafield, that, in answer to the prayers of my mother, a protector had been raised up for me, in whose wisdom and love I could place unbounded confidence, and to whom I could look up with loving reverence, as a child to a father. For although I was not at that time a good judge of age by appearance, I could see that he was a man of years, and as such entitled to the respect of a child like myself, independently of the high and holy office which he adorned by his whole bearing and deportment. True religion can and will soften a hard heart, and draw forth love and tenderness to the weak and helpless from under a rough and unpromising exterior. But when "the sun of righteousness" shines on a "temple of the Holy Ghost," that seems to have been "prepared for the Master's use" by natural or constitutional amiability, how beautifully is the likeness of "God manifest in the flesh" reflected in the earthen vessel! So we may suppose it to have been with the beloved apostle John, and so it was with my revered friend, Walter Lovely.

By the time we drew near our journey's end, I was feeling wonderfully strong and well, and when we stopped at the entrance gate, I was struck with the beauty of the lodge and the magnificence of the trees—the latter I never saw equalled anywhere. Darlington was a very old place, but in excellent keeping, that I could see at a glance. The house, like an old French *château*, appeared at the end of a fine wide carriage way, fully a mile in length, that ran between two rows of splendid limes—a true avenue and in my old-fashioned taste, quite superior in effect to the more novel serpentine drive.

From the moment we entered the gate, I felt painfully that I was a stranger; it was too grand to be homelike to me, and a thousand regrets and apprehensions struggled for the mastery with my few faint hopes of the future. My guide perceived my agitation, and, to soothe it, took possession of my trembling hand. Had he alluded to what was so evident, it must have been followed, on my part, with a burst of tears. He saw that, and with the genuine playfulness that none but the purest minds know, he drew my attention to the rapid pace at which we were progressing up the smooth road to the house.

"Come," he said, "this rapid motion is really pleasant, is it not, Grace? I love animals, and I do not like to see them overdriven or abused; but really, with all my tenderness, the last ten miles has taxed my patience, this good postillion of ours has taken us on so leisurely. I have been wishing for a cup of tea for you, my poor child: are you wearying for it?"

"No, sir," I said, "I never thought of tea."

"Well, Grace, here we are," said Mr. Lovely, as we drove into the sweep in front of the house, and I felt myself gently lifted from the carriage and up the steps, where the old servants and even the dogs looked happy to

see Mr. Lovely back at Darlington, as if he had been the special patron of each.

When he had returned their kindly greeting, he took my hand and led me to Mrs. Nutley's room. Mrs. Nutley was the housekeeper, and I was to be her ward and assistant. She was a fine-looking old woman, and her reception of me was kind and motherly, as Mr. Lovely presented me to her, saying, in his own graceful way—

“Here is a little friend for you, Mrs. Nutley, whom you will soon love; and she and I want a cup of your tea after our long ride.”

The good old lady looked at me with great softness as she took off my wraps, and then kissed my cheek as she placed me by her cheerful fire, saying—

“You are welcome, my child; you and I will have some pleasant evenings here; and you shall soon have a cup of tea, sir,” she added, looking at Mr. Lovely, “to reward you for bringing me a little companion.”

“Thanks, my good friend,” he replied; “and now tell me, where shall I find Mrs Manley?”

“In the pleasance rooms, sir,” said Mrs. Nutley, “for the colonel is at Tintern.” Just then the little fair child, Bella, with whom I had made a hasty acquaintance at Seafeld, ran into the room and threw herself into Mr. Lovely's arms to be kissed, saying, “Mamma has sent me to fetch Grace Leigh to her.”

“Here is Grace, then, said Mr. Lovely, “and we will go together to mamma;” and so saying he gave a hand to each of us, and took us along the corridor that led to Mrs. Manley's private apartments. We found the dear lady looking pale and agitated, and I could feel that she trembled as she pressed me to her bosom saying: “My dear little daughter, you are welcome to me, and welcome to Darlington. You will try to be happy with us, will you not?” The tears

trembled in my eyes, and I could not speak, but I looked my gratitude as I returned her embrace. She then drew Bella to her side, and put an arm round each of us, and the fair little one kissed me. Mr. Lovely stood back enjoying the scene, and then said to Mrs. Manley, "Well, Cecilia, now it is my turn;" and their greeting over, they entered into conversation apart for a little, while Bella and I enjoyed each other. Mrs. Manley's tea was over, so she soon permitted us to return to Mrs. Nutley's room, where we found ample provision made for a comfortable supper. Mrs. Nutley busied herself in setting muffins to toast, and taking out sundry pots of marmalade and potted meat from a set of deep presses that lined the walls of her comfortable room, and that seemed to my childish eyes that evening enormous repositories of good things. Bella sprang up on Mr. Lovely's knee, and maintained her station there till tea was ready, which we found a great refreshment. After tea my kind patroness came in and sat for a little with us, and then I noticed her dress, which had escaped me before the candles were lighted: it was of rich black silk, with white crape collar, and cuffs, and a cap, trimmed with white love ribbons. Bella's frock was white, with a black sash and shoulder-knots; nothing could have been more simply elegant and becoming, but I felt that above and beyond that, lay a delicate tribute of respect to my mother, and to my bereaved feelings. A mourning garb seems to many a matter of indifference; but I have always felt it soothing to create that sympathy in our surroundings that is denied us by nature. The sun beams as brightly on the mourner as on the glad of heart; and the flowers that surround the house of mourning bloom as gaily as those that deck the bridal coronet. This is, I believe, the origin of what is called mourning—that uniform of sorrow that so fitly harmonises with a wounded spirit. In my young days the style of



mourning was simple and sombre, and admitted of none of the frippery and trickery that has found its way into the present fashions, where so many light hearts "bear about a mockery of woe, to midnight dances and the public show." Such caricatures of mourning should be discarded altogether, and the sooner the better; but this by the way. After tea Bella began to poke Mr. Lovely's pockets to find a promised picture-book; so he made her shut her eyes, and then opened the book at a page of bright prints. It would be hard to say whether the giver or receiver looked most pleased on the occasion. Soon, however, Janet came to take the little maid to bed, and then we all went to the hall for evening prayers. I was surprised to see so many servants for so small a family; there were five men and seven women, besides Mrs. Nutley, who was treated as an old friend rather than a domestic, having been the early associate of Mrs. Manley's mother, and herself a very superior person. After prayers I returned with Mrs. Nutley to her room, and she soon led me into a pretty, airy, light closet inside her own chamber, where comfortable preparation had been made for me. She assisted me to undress, and settled the bed-clothes about me with a motherly hand, and kissed and blessed me as she wished me good night. So the grand change was accomplished; I had left Seafeld and was settled at Darlington, and as I lay down to rest, my heart went out in gratitude to God for my new home.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A NEW SCENE.

“ But you shall hear the tale that I will tell,  
When we have seen the mansion where they dwell.  
Mark well the rooms, and their proportions learn,  
In each some use, some elegance discern ;  
Observe the garden—its productive wall,  
And find a something to commend in all.”—CRABBE.

I HAVE said that Darlington was a fine old place, built in the days of massive grandeur by the first lord of the manor to whom it belonged—one of Mrs. Manley’s forefathers—and added to in various styles, from time to time, by successive proprietors, till it assumed its present irregular aspect. It was flanked by two turrets, covered with ivy. This was its northern aspect, and faced the grand entrance, while the south and west presented the appearance of a Swiss cottage, with its verandah, balcony, and bay windows looking out upon a beautiful piece of ground called the pleasance, and commanding a distant view of the sea. This part of the house had been built by Colonel Manley on his marriage, and was generally known as the pleasance rooms, and devoted to Mrs. Manley’s use.

Mr. Lovely occupied one of the turrets and Mrs. Nutley the other, and the public apartments were in the main body of the house. Mr. Lovely’s rooms opened on the library, which led to an antique little chapel, where family worship was always conducted in the summer, and where many of our neighbours joined us on the Sabbath, as it

was a chapel of ease to the parish of Orchardton, Mr. Lovely being Dr. Meadows' curate, as well as domestic chaplain to the family at Darlington.

I believe the chapel had an interesting history of its own, connected with Puritan times, of which party the Darlings and Manleys had been old and firm supporters. Many a midnight petition was sent up from that little sanctuary by the godly band that sought refuge from persecution under the hospitable roof-tree of Darlington. Outwardly, you could not distinguish the chapel from the house, and its internal arrangements, though singularly neat, were so perfectly plain that it might have been taken for a sort of lecture-room or oratory rather than a place of public worship.

It is associated in my memory with love, joy, and peace. The half hour spent there in the stillness of early morning, left a happy influence on my mind, which diffused itself over the remainder of the day. The prayers were short, but praise predominated in our worship. The soul of our chaplain was attuned to praise, and he led our devotions with a voice of rich, soft melody, that made the singing a very attractive part of the service, at least, I found it so; and I am sure that children in general would be much benefitted by being early trained to correct, lively, intelligent psalmody. Selfishness may intrude into prayer, but praise takes us, as it were, out of ourselves. It is an elevating thing, too, to feel ourselves in harmony with the heavenly choir in ascribing "Glory, honour, praise, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever."

Whenever I found my thoughts wander, a look at our chaplain restored my attention to the solemn duty and rich privilege, in the exercise of which we were engaged, and into which he seemed to throw his whole soul, as if devo-

tion were its element. I have not described Mr. Lovely to you, as he appeared to my youthful eye. I was not then a good judge of age, but he appeared to me an old man. In person he was tall and largely made, though slight in figure. His dark hair, already silvered in patches, was crisply set ~~at~~ the temples, and full at the back of the head; but his fair brow was open, and the upper part of his head partially bald. There ~~was~~ nothing peculiar or remarkable about his features in general; their great charm consisted in the fine expression, that seemed to flow out as from fountains, from those pure, soft, earnest eyes. His father was a Puritan (one of that goodly company that gave so many bright ornaments to England), and his mother a Huguenot; and he bore in his whole appearance and manner that lofty simplicity and grave cheerfulness that might be naturally expected from such a parental combination.

It is a great thing, children, to come of a good stock. I can quite understand the feeling of the ancient Egyptians, who regarded the bodies of their ancestors as their most valuable possessions. A reminder of our origin (if that origin be a worthy one) is elevating in its tendency; and we can well imagine the sentiments that must have animated the Israelites, as they carried the bones of the pious patriarch Joseph out of the house of bondage in their glorious exodus. Let it be our aim to be worthy of our forefathers, and not have it said of us, as was once quaintly remarked of a person who boasted of an ancestry to which he bore but little resemblance in character, "That man is like a potato—the best part of him is underground."

But I have wandered from the grand old house, which I attempted to describe to you, my favourite part of which was the pleasance side, as being more light and elegant in its structure than the massive, antique manor-house proper,

and, as such, more suited to its graceful tenant, my fair patroness—

“’Twas raised upon a terraced slope,  
The blue sea gleamed before it ;  
A rill through thickets flowed beside  
*Grand trees* their arms spread ~~o~~er it.

And *grand trees* they were—the ~~grow~~th of centuries. What was called the pleasance, (an old-fashioned word now,) was an extensive piece of ground that had been laid out originally by Mrs. Manley’s mother, on Lord Bacon’s plan; it looked south and west, being shaded by the wood on the north side, and by the house itself on the east. It was extensive enough to afford plenty of exercise, and an agreeable sight of verdure at all seasons, abounding as it did with fine evergreens, and plats of beautiful turf in plains and banks. The walls were covered with roses, ivy, and various climbing plants; Shenstone’s “Leasowes” must have been in the mind of the planter of the pleasance at Darlington.

“ Not a pine in my grove is there seen,  
But with tendrils of woodbine is bound ;  
Not a beech’s more beautiful green,  
But a sweet briar entwines it around.”

There was quite a wealth of old-fashioned flowers at Darlington. I do not see such gilliflowers and wallflowers, clove-pinks and cabbage-roses now, as abounded there; and as to sweet herbs, they were so much used for distillation in old times, that they were a special cultivation. The smell of that pleasance seems to come back to me as I talk of it. Many a pleasant hour I spent there, indulging to the full that love of flowers that I inherited from my dear mother. It was a paradisaical garden that. There were

shady walks where we could enjoy the air in the hottest weather ; and here and there, covered arbours and seats of all sorts. There was also a bright stream at the foot of the pleasance, that bounded away through the park, and beside the river, a summer house of trellis work, called the bower. And on the embankment that protected the ground from the autumnal floods, the stone-crops and rock-plants luxuriated. I believe there is no such garden now; if there be, I see none such. The remembrance of it is pleasant, and its associations sweet and refreshing. It communicated with the park through the wood, by a little door, of which Mrs. Manley kept the key. I have often thought of Milton's Eve, as I admired this fair, graceful woman, tending the plants in her pleasance, accompanied by her bright little Bella, tripping gaily beside her, laden with roses to dress her mother's rooms.

I have not yet spoken of Colonel Manley. He was not at home for some days after my arrival ; so that I had time to accustom my eye to the softer features of my new home, before encountering the presence of its grand master. He must have been very wealthy, for he kept up a noble establishment, and was very munificent in his charities. He appeared to be old enough to be Mrs. Manley's father, and had, I believe, been her father's oldest and most valued friend ; she was an only child, and an heiress. Darlington was hers by inheritance, and was to descend to Bella. Their only son Philip, who had just entered his father's old regiment, was amply provided for by the paternal estate. I do not believe Mrs. Manley had much to say with regard to the disposal of her own hand in marriage ; it was not the fashion of her youthful day to consult the affections ; and those who ventured on that course, were generally obliged to do so by clandestine marriage. As well as I could judge, even if Colonel Manley had been

a young man, he was not likely to attract a sweet, gentle, graceful creature, like my patroness; for he was rather stern and saturnine in temperament, and commanding in manner, though a good man, and a sincere friend, the very soul of honour and uprightness. But he managed his family and household as if it had been his regiment, and he was a strict disciplinarian in both civil and military life. He seemed to look on Mrs. Manley as his eldest child, and favourite plaything, but, I believe, never consulted her on his affairs, and acted quite independently of her. She was evidently in awe of him, and certainly in no danger of forgetting the apostolic command: "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." Still, he grudged her nothing that could be desired by a woman in her station. But after all, what can compensate for the want of that genial, trusting affection with which a woman delights to regard her husband? that ability and willingness to *think aloud* before him, that constitutes the chief charm of married life? One can scarcely conceive a more burdensome state of existence to a refined, affectionate female, than a marriage without mutual tenderness, confidence, and entire\* affection; this, however, my dear patroness never knew with her liege lord. She, therefore, fell into his ways, and treated him as she would have treated her father; indemnifying her affections by almost excessive tenderness not only to her children, but her domestics, and everything that depended on her.

Colonel Manley was one of the finest and handsomest old men I ever saw; truly noble in his whole bearing, but one rather to be feared than loved. About a week or ten days after my arrival, I found the whole house in an attitude of expectancy, as the Colonel was to be home to dinner. The loose reins were then gathered up, and every thing and person about the house wore its best face. Mrs. Manley

and Bella repaired to the library to wait his arrival, and Mr. Lovely rode out to meet the carriage, and when the wheels were heard on the gravel of the court, it was evident that the mainspring of Darlington had arrived. He was, indeed, "monarch of all he surveyed." But, in truth, I must add, Colonel Manley was no tyrant—far from it—he was too great a man to practise that petty domestic tyranny that is the true mark of cowardice. Many a man, who would quail even to the verge of obsequiousness before his fellow-men, will lord it over women, children, and domestics. But our noble host was not such—he was a perfect gentleman—an English gentleman—"a good old English gentleman, all of the olden time;" and as such, was polite and gallant in his manner to all females of whatever rank; still, there was a something in his manner that rather repelled approach or familiarity—at all events he should take the initiative. My first sight of his fine presence was at morning worship, where his eagle glance soon detected that a little orphan maid had been added to the household in his absence. After service, Mr. Lovely beckoned me to him, and taking my hand, presented me to the colonel with his usual simple grace, introducing me as "Mrs. Manley's little orphan ward, Grace Leigh." Mrs. Manley coloured, and added softly, "Mrs. Nutley's still-room maid;" and I saw at once the bit of bye-play of which I was the subject at Darlington. The colonel looked kindly, almost with compassion, on my fragile appearance, sombre attire, and timid manner; perhaps it appealed to all that was noble in his nature, as coming from a creature who sought shelter and protection; for certainly, from that moment, he always met me with a kindly notice; and although it was not his habit to make free with any of the family but his little Bella, he always treated me with great condescension.



Every day now, Mrs. Manley rode or drove abroad for several hours with the colonel, and during these times my lessons with Mr. Lovely commenced, sometimes in the library, and sometimes in his own study, or Mrs. Nutley's room. He taught me writing, counting, and Latin, and made me read history to him. This I did with an atlas, so that I learned geography at the same time. My writing was either an exercise in grammar, or a page from some good author; or it might be a letter, or something dictated to me by him, which I had to render in my own words. My lessons were short, but very pleasant to me. I generally committed to memory a passage of scripture, and a verse or two of sacred poetry; and when I had satisfied my kind teacher by my diligence, he rewarded me by allowing me to feed his birds, water his plants, or dust his books—all delightful recreations to me. Indeed it was enjoyment to me to find myself in his presence, even if he never spoke to me, and often he was too much occupied to notice me. But from the time I came to Darlington, I felt that he was my best earthly friend, my especial guide and protector, where all else were comparative strangers; and the very sight of him at a distance has often refreshed my spirit, as green refreshes the bodily eye. On Saturdays I never had any lessons, either from him or Mrs. Manley, for she taught me music, French, and embroidery for an hour or so every morning; but Saturday was a busy day at Darlington—it was an old-fashioned household—many of the domestics were old, and some of them pious, and great strictness was observed in the keeping of the Sabbath, with regard to which Saturday was kept as a day of preparation, when all our secular doings were as regularly wound up as an eight-day clock; the busiest day of the week, therefore, ushered in the day of rest. This Sabbath observance, and the preparation necessary thereto, was one of the happiest

remnants of Puritan times. Sometimes of a Saturday evening, when all was in readiness for the morrow, Mr. Lovely would say—

“Now all is hushed, as nature were retired,  
And the perpetual motion standing still;  
So much she from her work appears to cease,  
And every jarring element’s at peace.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A DARLINGTON SATURDAY.

“Six days thou shalt labour and *do all thy work*; but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt *do no manner of work*.”—Exod. xx. 9, 10.

“ . . . But shalt call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.”—Isaiah lviii. 13.

I THINK you will have a better idea of Saturdays at Darlington, if I give you a brief sketch of one. At all times an early household, we were peculiarly so on the last day of the week, each having his or her own special responsibility in the work of preparation for the Sabbath. It was the Colonel's day to settle accounts for the week with his steward; it was our chaplain's day for special pulpit preparations; and Mrs. Nutley's duties were multifarious. She and I rose early, and had our breakfast by seven, for she used to say she was never good for much until she had her coffee; then, when all was put away, she took me with her to the buttery, to assist her in the baking and confectionery. Soup, cold meat, and fruit tart, was the general Sunday dinner, and the dinner for so large a household for two days took some time to arrange and prepare; then we went to the laundry or drying-room, and sorted the fresh linen. I assisted Mrs. Nutley to fill the baskets for the respective rooms, and to strew them with rose leaves and lavender, or any sweet herbs we could gather in winter. In summer, a great deal of bleaching was carried

on with the house-linen, and on putting it away we always strewed lavender and rosemary through it. This was a very old practice in England; you will see it referred to in "Walton's Complete Angler," page 85:—"Good master, let's go to that house, for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so;" and page 94:—"Then let's meet here, for here are fresh sheets, that smell of lavender." It was supposed to keep away moths, and insects of all kinds, besides imparting a pleasant, delicate perfume to the fresh linen. At all events, it was faithfully kept up at Darlington, with many other old customs, now obsolete, to the remembrance of which an old woman like myself will cling fondly. Mrs. Nutley always carried away Mr. Lovely's linen to her own room for special inspection, and when we became intimate and familiar, she allowed me to assist her in airing and repairing it, which was quite a pleasure to me. Whenever she could spare me, she sent me away to assist Janet and Bella in gathering flowers in summer, and evergreens and berries in winter, to deck the apartments for Sunday. This was a regular part of the Saturday's business, and one in which I took great delight. Mrs. Manley sometimes accompanied us to the pleasance on these occasions, and then she would teach Bella how to arrange the flowers in the vases, as no one could do who had not a love for those sweet creations, as well as a fine, correct taste. A clumsy nosegay seems a contradiction in terms, yet we sometimes see such a thing, and long to re-arrange it. I believe I am a little fastidious on the subject, but this I am by maternal inheritance. Mrs. Manley herself always went through the family rooms to see that secular books were put away, and suitable Sunday reading provided for all. Even the little maid, Bella, learned to put away her dolls on Saturday, and she seemed to forget all her toys on the Sabbath, so

fully and agreeably was she occupied by her mother in recreations suited to the day, particularly in sweet singing. I have often thought of that Scripture on Sabbath evenings at Darlington, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous;" but here I anticipate. On Saturday evenings, whenever I was disengaged, Mr. Lovely took me with Bella through the park, to the widows' almshouse in the village, with our good lady's weekly dole, and we did enjoy that walk so, taking in our way many an interesting ramble, while Mr. Lovely would teach us the names and properties of the wild flowers, for he was a rare botanist, and a close observer of nature. He knew a great deal of the habits and manners of birds, and the instinct of animals in general, and his lessons on nests were very interesting to us. We carried our baskets full of something good for the poor old women who were sick, and on our return filled them with violets and primroses in spring, wild strawberries in summer, nuts in autumn, and sprays of berries in winter. Mr. Lovely enjoyed the walk as well as ourselves, and it was looked forward to by each with agreeable anticipations, but sad was the disappointment if weather prevented this weekly ramble. If possible, however, he indemnified us by reading something from White's "Selborne," in Mrs. Nutley's room, and often staid with us to tea. These were happy evenings. He was so simple-minded, with all his learning, that he would interest himself in our work, and all that we were doing; and though, having his book with him, and taking his notes as if he were alone, he would occasionally remember us, and say a pleasant word, or have us to sing a verse with him, for he loved music, and had a store of fine old German hymns. Then his "good night" was a sort of benediction, as his grace at our evening meal seemed to draw down a blessing upon it and upon us; surely he was a beam of sun-

shine at Darlington. A single eye and upright spirit were his, and he was always happy, because he knew and loved God, and all that God had made, for his sake. And in thus making the happiness of all around him, he unconsciously secured his own.

I recollect in our lessons, he used sometimes to trace words to their roots, and explain them to me, and one day I asked him the derivation of misanthrope; he told me that *anthropos*, the Greek word for man, was derived from two words, signifying "to look upward," and I remember thinking at the time, that he himself was an example of that upward look that distinguishes man from the prone or lower animals. His shoulders were well thrown back, remarkably so for a studious man, and his look was that of one "acquainted with the skies," as if he gazed boldly and fearlessly at that "kingdom of heaven which Christ has opened to all believers;" and, like Stephen, he looked "*steadfastly*" up to heaven, knowing that he had a mansion there, provided by Him who says, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."

On Saturday evening he generally walked alone in the pleasance or the wood, for about an hour. This was his time for arranging the manner of his address to us on Sunday, and he never was satisfied without this little time, which he used to call "Isaac's hour," who "meditated in the fields at eventide."

If we rose early on Saturdays we also retired early, in order to be fresh for the first day of the week.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE SABBATH.

“Is there a time when moments flow  
More lovelily than all beside?  
It is, of all the times below,  
A Sabbath eve in summertide.”

EDMESTON.

If Saturday was a day of bustle and preparation with us at Darlington, surely Sunday was a true Sabbath—a day of rest; the very meaning of the word rest was understood, felt, and enjoyed there, as I never saw it elsewhere. By rest, lying in bed later than usual was not understood, for we were all astir early. The Colonel was a very early riser, and *therefore*, his household were so too. Indeed, he ruled his own house wisely and well, as a Christian man of the old strict school thought it his duty to do. *Fortiter in re*, however, was rather his motto, than *suaviter in modo*. Could he have combined them, perhaps he would have been a more perfect character than we generally find in this imperfect world.

At seven in summer, and eight in winter, our Sabbath commenced by a short service of prayer and praise in the chapel; then breakfast, and immediately afterwards Mr. Lovely catechised the children of our end of the parish, and our catechism was no task to us, taught and explained as it was by our chaplain; at eleven we all met in the chapel for full noon service, which was never considered complete without the communion; and soon after one we dined, after which we each had a time of retirement. The second

service was held in the almshouse, for the sake of such of the widows as were not able to attend at Darlington, and we generally accompanied Mr. Lovely to the village for the service, which was held in the almshouse oratory. On our return we had supper, after which we all met in the hall, and were there questioned by our chaplain on the morning sermon. The day closed with sacred music in the library, where all the family and servants were expected to attend and join in a service of praise, after which Colonel Manley prayed, and we all separated for the night. Mrs. Nutley and I, however, generally had an hour of quiet converse together before bed time. This was the day of the week most in keeping with the sweet spirit of my dear patroness, and she seemed to enjoy it so, and, as it were, to live in its sacred services, that I often thought she would, if she could, have had Sunday last all the week. Weariness, languor, lounging, or *ennui* never seemed to find their way to Darlington on Sunday. And though we were so constantly engaged during its sacred hours, it always left us refreshed for the six days that followed, so true is it that

“Absence of occupation is not rest ;  
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.”

A dull Sunday was a thing unknown to us, and yet I never saw such strict keeping of the Sabbath ; it was, indeed, “the holy of the Lord, honourable.”

Mrs. Nutley and I were not twelve months together until we became like mother and daughter to each other ; and as I came to know and love her, I would tell her of my own sweet, lost mother and her sorrows, and of Mrs. Moss, and all at dear old Seafeld. Indeed, I frequently read my letters to her, that she might share my enjoyment in their perusal. Rachel’s generally brought me a kind message from my dear old pastor, but I could learn from



her that she had begun to tremble anxiously for him, he was becoming so much more feeble than when I left them. Mrs. Moss, and Winny too, seemed fearful of some approaching change, which would leave poor Rachel a double orphan. "If he were only able to sit in his chair and pray for us," Winny said, "what a boon would it not be!" He used to tell them that he verily believed their prayers were holding him back from his rest. "Do, dear ones," he would say, "let me go; the Lord will provide a man after his own heart for you. Were I not assured of this, I could not leave you in peace; but I have wrestled and prevailed for this blessing for you. And as for you, my Rachel, the Lord will take you up. Did he not set our solitary little Grace in a family where he is loved and served?"

I must try to give you some idea of Mrs. Nutley as she was when I knew her. Most of her history I learned from her own lips in the pleasant winter evenings we spent together at our needlework, of which we had always an abundant supply, as everything for the use of the family was made up in the house; the linen was spun and woven in the north of Ireland, under the superintendence of Mrs. Manley's aunt, Lady Linton, of Ravenshaw, and was sent over to us ready for the needle. I never saw linen in such abundance any where. Mrs. Manley piqued herself on keeping up her mother's stock to the full, both of damask and linen, and Mrs. Nutley carried out her views to perfection. The Dutchwomen are very famous for their linen closets, and old Mrs. Darling had, I believe, some Dutch blood in her veins, her ancestors having come over to England in the train of the Prince of Orange.

At all events, the linen closets at Darlington were a fine sight to a true housekeeper, and it is a nice taste too. I know, for my own part, I fancy I can sleep better in fine linen; and certainly an inferior dinner would be preferred by me,

if served on delicate table linen and napkins. A luxury it is, certainly, but one very possible to a woman who will give her attention to it, and a much more refined luxury than showy furniture or groaning tables. But this by the way.

To return to Mrs. Nutley. I learned from her that she was an Irishwoman, and a northern—one of a large family early left fatherless, but blessed with a vigorous, God-fearing mother, who, although her last shilling went to pay for the letter that brought her the sad news of her good husband's death, was able, by upright, honest industry, and the blessing of the widow's God, to bring up her family not merely in sufficiency, but to leave them a comfortable provision. She kept on the bleach-green during her widowhood, and such was her strict regard for the Sabbath, that she had all her linens unpinned on Saturday evening, and laid down again on Monday morning.

"Neither sun nor wind," she said, "should bleach her cloth on God's holy day."

She had come of a covenanting stock, that escaped to Ireland in the cloudy and dark days of Claverhouse. She brought up her family with great strictness, and yet they all revered and loved her, and her word was as much a law to them when they were in their own homes, and she leaning on her staff for very age, as when she marshalled them before her to church, a little troop of helpless orphans. They lived at a considerable distance from their place of worship; but in the severest weather she would have them walk, determined that her ox and her ass should rest as well as she. Neither would she accept of any excuse short of bodily illness for the non-appearance of all her family at public worship. Their servant accompanied them, leaving the house locked, and carrying bread and cheese for their dinner, which they ate between services. Some of her

daughters were handsome, but they had little encouragement from their mother in the way of gay or vain apparel; and if she saw any disposition to vanity, she put it down with such a strong hand that it was nipped in the bud.

One day Mrs. Nutley's eldest sister, a fine girl of sixteen, was ironing laces and small linen at a table, over which hung a looking-glass; and, thinking she was alone, she stole an occasional glance at the reflection of her pretty face, practising some girlish airs to see how they became her. She did not know, however, that her mother was at the time in the china-closet inside the room. She looked on quietly for a moment or two, as if to assure herself that she was not deceived in the occupation of her daughter, and then, in a fit of indignation that must have obliterated all memory of her own young days, she took up the little flat iron, and, laying it lightly on her daughter's fair cheek, said to her—

"Now, Margaret, admire that. 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.' "

The blistered cheek was a painful but salutary lesson, certainly not likely to be soon forgotten; but in our days we rather doubt the wisdom of harsh measures with the young, who may be constrained to outward gravity, while the heart is full of trifling and vanity. I ventured to say so to Mrs. Nutley, but I could not get her to utter an objection to her mother's proceeding.

"I do not think, my dear," she replied, "that I could have done it; but then," she added, as if apologising for the admission, "none of us inherited the vigorous mind of our godly mother. In very old age she would lift her staff and lay it on the back of any one in the street whom she heard blaspheming. 'Let no one dare,' she would say,

‘to blaspheme the name of my Maker where I am.’ And what would be resented from a younger person, or one of the stronger sex, would be quietly borne with from this ‘mother in Israel.’ ”

Mrs. Nutley had married early, and was a childless widow at forty. She was the youngest of her own family, all of whom were able and willing to assist her when she became a widow without means of her own. But her independent spirit revolted from the idea of being a burden, and when a situation presented itself for her under the roof with her friend Mrs. Darling, she was only too happy to avail herself of so providential an opening. She had now been at Darlington for nearly a quarter of a century, and desired nothing better than to end her days there. She felt my coming to be a great relief to her in many ways, and it was a pleasure to me to supply the place of a daughter to this excellent woman.

She became acquainted with the Lovelys on her coming to Darlington, for our chaplain’s father was the former rector of Orchardton, and brother to Colonel Manley’s mother. Mrs. Nutley said that Mr. Lovely was the very counterpart of his mother, to whom he became quite devoted after his father’s death. His only sister, Mary, was several years his senior, and was, it seems, not merely very beautiful, but an angel of goodness. She was Colonel Manley’s first, and probably his only true love; but it was not thought advisable that they should be married in time of war, and suspense and anxiety broke down her sensitive mind and delicate frame, so that she fell into decline, and died at the age of twenty-eight, only a few months before Colonel Manley’s return. That was the reason, Mrs. Nutley said, why he leaned so on Mr. Lovely, who could have had promotion in the church but for his devotion to his cousin.

This disappointment to a strong nature like the colonel's, might perhaps account, at least in part, for the quiet reserve of his manners. His marriage was promoted by his bachelor uncle, old Sir Philip Manley, of Tintern Court, and my dear patroness was, strictly speaking, *given away* by her father, who thought he should be able to die in peace after having secured such a protector to his only child.

When people calculate, where they should feel, they make sad work of it, either for themselves or others. It is my doctrine that no parent has any such right given to him by God, with regard to the disposal of his child's affections; and many a sad romance of real life might be avoided, if parents would listen in time to that Scripture which says, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." *God joins hearts, and man joins hands*; but where the hands have no hearts in them, it is a base caricature of the holy ordinance of matrimony, upon which we cannot reasonably expect any blessing. God can, and does over-rule evil things, and bring good out of them to his own children; but we have no right to do evil that good may come. Oh, no! the affections of the heart are too sacred to be meddled with, and "marriage is a matter of more worth than to be dealt with by attorneyship." This may be called strong language, but "on such a theme 'tis impious to be calm." Let nothing induce you, my dear children, to form any union that is not sanctified by mutual love. Marriage without oneness of heart is a mere mockery, and passion without tenderness is an offering unworthy the acceptance of a delicate mind.

We can be at no loss to understand what true Scriptural marriage is. In kind, though not in degree, it is like the mysterious union between Christ and his Church: "He

loved it, and gave himself for it;" and "We love him, because *he first* loved us." Oh! that my dear ones may never be the subjects of such sad romances of real life from misplaced, coerced, or wasted affection as we hear and read of every day. "Fix but your hearts where grace has fixed her seal, and all is well."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### OLD MEMORIES OF YOUNG DAYS.

“ Welcome, pure thoughts! welcome ye silent groves!  
These guests, these courts, my soul most dearly loves!  
Now, the winged people of the sky shall sing  
My cheerful anthems to the gladsome spring.”

TIME with me seemed to steal away almost imperceptibly at Darlington, fully and agreeably occupied as it was in useful and wholesome exercise of mind and body. And ever in good company, and carefully shielded from evil influence, as (through the good hand of my God upon me) I was under the sheltering roof-tree of Darlington, it was little wonder that I escaped many evils incident to my years and inexperience. Surely it was in answer to the effectual fervent prayers of my righteous mother that my lines were cast in so pleasant a place, and with such goodly company. Every power of body and mind were kept in full and healthful play, without being overstrained in any way. And I can testify from experience that it is the best way to secure the holiness and happiness of our early years. Often, as I sat at my daily task of needlework, I have pleased myself with the thought that perhaps my beloved mother was permitted to look at her darling child, and enjoy the fruit of her prayers in seeing how tenderly and judiciously I was cared for, both in body and mind. There is a great deal said now-a-days on the physical training of the young, and it is not for an old-fashioned body like me to put in my word amongst the wise and learned of

either sex. Indeed, I should not have confidence to send it out to the world, and perhaps get laughed at for my pains ; but for your sakes, my dear girls, who will, I trust, in the Lord's good time fulfil the happy destiny of our sex, in attaining the heaven-bestowed dignity of matronhood and maternity, it may be worth while for me to record my experience. Upon you will devolve the responsibility of training another generation, and to you I give my deliberate opinion, that two hours a-day of *plain sewing* is a very important element in female education. Sorry I am to see it so out of fashion, both at school and at home. I may be set down as quite behind the age in patronising the homely needlework of my own young days ; but I contend for it, that the needle is a useful implement *to mind and body*. In the good golden days of Queen Bess, a woman who could not use her needle with skill and ability, and a man who could not handle his sword with grace and effect, were looked upon as equally contemptible. I recommend needlework, not so much for the value of the work itself, or even for its results in after life, (though we must confess that a woman of middle rank, who cannot use her needle skilfully, is as imperfect a domestic machine as can well be imagined,) but it is *the very act of doing* the work that strikes me as so salutary—the stillness—the facility for quiet reflection—the freedom of the thoughts while the hands are employed—and last, not least, the femininity and homelikeness of the occupation itself. Then the acquisition of a habit of humble, useful industry must have a happy effect on the young female mind. Indeed, for my own part, I have found it through life so agreeable a resource to myself, that business and pleasure have gone as it were hand in hand. Certainly in this respect we have an advantage over the other sex ; but to be fully convinced of this we



must compare an old woman with a man of the same age and equal outward advantages, and see how much better off she is, how much more independent of the services and attentions of others, and how much more useful in the family of her descendants. Now, have I said enough for the needle, or too much? One word more, and I have done. No domestic scene is more agreeable to my old eyes, than the evening table surrounded by my industrious grandchildren, while I wipe my spectacles and look up some screeed of past days to read to them.

Now, my dear children, however gratifying it may be to me to know that you are so desirous of this little recapitulation of the simple events of my commonplace life, it is a relief to me to turn to the characters of others with whom I came into contact in my pilgrimage, rather than to be constantly my own subject. Still, as you have so often asked me what I was like as a young person, I shall tell you in as few words as I can, though one is seldom a good judge of their own outward appearance, from not being able to look at its effect as a whole, and from a distance. You know that—

“ 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,  
And robes the mountains in their azure hue.”

But we look at our own appearance closely and minutely; and how few of us will bear such inspection! Thus it was, I suppose, that I never was as much pleased with my own face or figure, as with those of others, perhaps no better looking from the same point of view. You know that my height was rather under than over the middle size; so that I was always called “Gracey,” or “little Grace,” and yet I think I could not have been under five feet before I began to grow down to my present diminutive scale. I was very

slightly formed, and my colour delicate, though fresh looking. I had an abundance of fine hair, of a chesnut or golden brown shade, and, as you see, dark-grey eyes. My other features not at all *prononcé*, but I believe as pleasing as my constitutional timidity would admit of; for I was ever, except to those who loved me, shy; and even where I loved most fondly, almost to idolatry, yea, and was beloved again, I seldom allowed myself the indulgence of demonstration, from a fear of displeasing the objects of my affection. But your grandfather, for one, used to say that, with all my attempts at reserve, the corner of my eye told my story—to him, I suppose it did—my first, last, and *only love*! My inspiration! my husband! the loving woman's all! happy the woman who may garner up her heart safely in the man of her choice! I cannot join with those aged persons who would discourage the young from the journey of life, and, like the evil spies, give a bad report of the land. I have had my trials, deep and bitter; but I have had abundant support under them. And many a cluster of Esheol was I permitted to gather by the wayside, during my pilgrimage. I had, however, this advantage on my side to begin with, that I came to my journey with sober views of life. I saw my beloved mother smarting under peculiar trials, yet ever hopeful and serene. And when I was not called to such sufferings as hers, all others seemed comparatively light. And so they are, after all, for if a woman be permitted to love wisely and well, the rosy light of that tender union will gild over every minor trial. Indeed, I never could think any woman had cause to be really unhappy, who enjoyed the tender sympathy of a loving husband. And even when the hand of death is permitted to snap that most sweet and tender of all earthly ties, the survivor is not left wholly comfortless. The

memory of such a married life is a sweet and pleasant retrospect, and the presence of the beloved object seems almost to hover about the bereaved one, through her pilgrimage, until the time come when they shall wing their way together, once more in sweet companionship, to those blissful regions of perfect love, "where farewell words are heard no more."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### BELLA'S BIRTHDAY.

“That child of gracious nature ever neat,  
And never fine ; a flowret simply sweet.  
Seeming almost unconscious she was fair,  
Gay in her spirit, graceful in her air.”

I HAVE not said much of our dear little maid Bella, for I was kept so busy that I could only cultivate her acquaintance by snatches, equally pleasant to both. She was a charming child, very sweet and engaging, and strange to say, not spoiled. Some children seem to do all the better for an amount of petting that would quite spoil others, and Bella was one of those dear little things that seem to glow and expand in the sunshine of love. When the cultivation of the heart and head go hand in hand, as they did in her case, the result is generally an engaging character. Indeed, it is my belief that as long as a child is perfectly obedient, we can scarcely indulge it too much. Are not the tender little things committed to us that we may make them happy ? And if a child be well trained it will have a smooth brow and sweet smile, even while undergoing the necessary discipline of subjection. Dear Bella was always happy ; and merry as a bird, from early morn till dewy eve. She indeed fully possessed the not over common boon, of a beautiful mind in a beautiful body. She was all life and playfulness, but never (that I could see) naughty ; even the little wilfulness so natural to her years, she already made evident efforts to control. She was a happy combination of both her parents, having the sweet aerial grace and playful

gentleness of her mother, engrafted on the noble dignity of Colonel Manley. She had a wealth of bright sunny curls, like a glory round her fair rosy face, with eyes of oriental shape and colour—deep, dark, and lustrous. Her seventh birthday was now approaching, and we were to have a celebration of the occasion, that had been long talked of, and to which the dear child looked forward with gleeful anticipation. I had worked very hard for some days previously, in order to have an entire holiday, without letting kind Mrs. Nutley suffer from my being absent from my post in her room, where our engagements succeeded each other with the regularity of clockwork. It was now midsummer, and the pleasance, always a beautiful spot, was to be made specially attractive for this occasion, as a part of the programme was to be a breakfast in the bower. I had often in our walks in the park twisted wild flowers into wreaths for the fair little maid, such as my own mother used to make for me, and she took such delight in them that I meant to make one of roses for her birthday, as well as a collar for her pet lamb. Midsummer day was her birthday, and Mrs. Nutley gave me leave to go to the pleasance very early, before anybody was stirring, to gather the roses, so that I might have the wreath and collar ready by the time the little one awaked. So I rose almost with the sun on that glorious morning, and watched his rising from the turret window, which looked to the east. I carried some milk with me to Bella's lamb, and my basket on my arm for the flowers. Very joyous I was that bright morning, as I hummed an old Spanish air, to the pretty words,

“Come forth, come forth my maidens,  
’Tis the day of good St. John ;  
It is the Baptist’s morning,  
That breaks the hills upon ;

Let us all go forth together,  
While the blessed day is new,  
To dress with flowers the snow white wether,  
Ere the sun has dried the dew."

I meant to lay the wreath on Bella's pillow while she slept, that she might see it the first thing on awaking, and I tripped along gaily with the little basket in my hand, that dear Mrs. Moss had given me full of fruit the morning I left Scafield, and that I had used ever since as a work-basket for her sake, thinking of her each time I took it out; for, after all, the best remembrancers are the little trifles in daily use. I took out my scissors to cut the roses, that seemed to repose in a bath of sparkling dew, and, thinking I was quite alone, I began to sing with great spirit the hymn of Eve; it had been a favourite of my mother's: "How cheerful along the gay mead," &c. The sweet influences of the hour and day I suppose inspired me, so that I sang as it were *con-amore*; certainly I surprised myself by my own tones, which my natural timidity would never suffer to come out so boldly before any one else. I had just turned down the south walk, to a low rose hedge, where I saw some fine rosebuds, when I was startled to find that I was not alone, by the sudden appearance of the head gardener, John Plant, who emerged suddenly from one of the covered alleys with a beautiful nosegay in his hand, which he presented to me with great natural grace, saying—

"Good morning, Miss Leigh! will you let me help you to pick the roses? I suppose you are going to deck our little maid for her birthday."

I said "Yes," and thanked him (I dare say) coldly enough for the nosegay, for I was vexed at having been surprised singing out so boldly, and the more so as John looked archly, and said he thought he had caught a night-

ingale finishing her song amongst the roses, until he met me so suddenly.

I felt that I blushed deeply, and was altogether confused and ill at ease. I was not ready to leave the pleasance, and yet I did not want to stay any longer ; for I was just at that age (between fifteen and sixteen) when, if a girl be naturally shy, she becomes almost painfully so, and another moment of rallying would have been followed, on my part, with a burst of tears, which could neither be analysed or accounted for on any rational principle whatever. But the good John, with native delicacy of mind, saw at once how I felt. He looked pained for a moment, and then said, with a very apologising look and tone—

“Pray excuse me, Miss Leigh : I assure you I did not mean to vex you ; but I once had a sweet sister—an only one—about your age, and she was taken away from us ; and just for a moment I felt as I used to do with her ; but you will excuse my freedom.”

Then, indeed, I was punished for my silly, awkward reserve and shyness, so uncalled for on the present occasion. The revulsion of feeling was complete. I was now really angry with myself for having caused a flush of pain on that pure manly brow ; and, with what I felt to be a very atoning manner, I replied—

“Oh, Mr. Plant, I am not, I was not vexed ; but I thought I was alone in the pleasance, or I should not have sang out as I did, and I was surprised and fluttered, that was all.”

John looked quite re-assured by my tone and manner, and I was relieved ; for I never could bear to cause pain to another, even unwittingly ; but then I wanted prudence to know where to stop, and lest John should be hurt with me again, I suffered him to lead me about, and show me all his choice flowers. His heart was in his profession,

for he loved flowers, and took great delight in their cultivation, so that when I admired their perfection he was quite pleased; and then he asked me to look at the bower which he had decked for Bella's fête. It was, indeed, very tastefully arranged, with clusters of roses and other flowers round its pillars, and the floor strewn with fresh rose-leaves.

"Oh! John," I exclaimed, "you have made it a fairy bower."

I was then turning to come away, after a mutually pleasant time to John and myself, when he stopped by a screened stand of choice China roses, and taking up a pot covered with luxuriant buds, just bursting into bloom through a fine shade of rich verdure—quite a prize pot—he said to me—

"Now, Miss Leigh, I see you love the roses as well as myself; you will be pleased to watch the bursting of these fine buds in your own room. The bloom will be very fine, I promise you."

I looked rather than expressed my thanks, as I relieved him from the pot; and as I touched his hand in doing so, I felt that it trembled, but could not think why.

Just as we were parting, John, hat in hand, holding the door open for me to pass, I met Mr. Lovely coming in to pick his nosegay for the little one. He was not by any means sharp or observant, or he would have seen that John Plant looked agitated and excited; but he did see at once that I should not have been in the pleasance alone with any young man at that hour, and a shade of anxiety crossed his calm brow. He passed in hurriedly, giving me a hasty glance rather than word *en passant*, and before I had time to reach Mrs. Nutley's room, laden, like Flora, with glowing roses, the basket on my arm, the nosegay in my bosom, and the pot in both hands, I heard a well-



known step close behind me, and turning round met Mr. Lovely, who could not have spent two minutes in the pleasance after I had left it. He came into Mrs. Nutley's room with me, while she exclaimed at the beauty of the flowers, saying—

“Well, my little Grace, you are like a May queen this morning.”

I laid down my glowing burden, and then, picking the two finest roses from my own nosegay, I placed one in Mrs. Nutley's bosom and the other in Mr. Lovely's buttonhole. They both thanked me, and then he said—

“You and John Plant must be good friends, Grace, or he would not have given you that pot of roses, for I often tell him he is a niggard of nature's bounties. He has not a free hand in cutting his flowers; but he says he feels it to be almost like committing a murder to shorten the brief lives of those sweet sojourners in the pleasance.”

“Ah! Mr. Lovely,” I replied, “I am afraid I was very rude to poor John Plant this morning, for I did not think there was anybody there but myself when I went down early, and I sang out the hymn of Eve so boldly,—then when I found that John heard me I was ashamed, and I believe I looked vexed, and John was sorry for having surprised me; so to make him easy again I went with him to look at the bower that he has decked so prettily for Bella's fête. And now, sir,” I added, “I will put this pot of roses in the shade, and they will bloom later, and I shall not be without a rose for your coat for a long while.”

The clouds were all gone from his brow as he thanked me, adding—

“My truthful Grace, your roses will always be welcome. Come and let us see if the little maid is stirring?”

"Please to wait for me, sir," I replied, "for a few minutes; I want to twist these roses in my basket into a wreath for her pretty head."

So he sat down and watched my floral manufacture with pleased interest, and when I had completed the wreath I showed it to Mrs. Nutley. She admired it greatly, and taking it from my hand placed it on my head, saying—

"There, now, my dear, that is the safest way to carry it."

My first impulse was to take it off, from a feeling that it was out of place, and a wish that the fair brow to which it belonged should be the first to grace it, and I was putting up my hand for the purpose of removing it, when Mr. Lovely stopped me. "Leave it, Grace," he said; "it will be but a moment till the right owner has it." As we passed the mantel-glass my curiosity was excited to see how I looked in it, and I stole a hasty glance, but Mr. Lovely stopped short, saying, "There, Grace, you have not had time to admire your handiwork." The look rather sobered me, throwing back my thoughts to the last time I had worn a wreath of roses—the day of my birth and the day of her death who placed it on my brow with such love and admiration. I dashed away a tear as I accompanied Mr. Lovely to Bella's room, where we found her dear mother hanging over the little crib with admiration, love, and gratitude—the gift and the Giver sweetly blending in her thankful loving heart. She breathed lightly lest she should awake her; but the little one hearing the door open, stirred, and I had only time to place the wreath beside her on the pillow when she awakened; then, indeed, the flush of surprise and pleasure on her sweet young face outvied the freshest roses in her birthday crown. We stood round the little bed, while she sat up silently taking in the perfume and beauty that lay before her, and then opening her arms she embraced us, saying so

gracefully, "Dear mother, and Grace, and Mr. Lovely, how good you all are to me!" Mrs. Manley's eyes filled with emotion, and Mr. Lovely looking, as he always did, like the good angel of the household, said, with sweet solemnity, "Let us pray." We knelt round the bed, and there he poured out his full heart in such a prayer for his dear little kinswoman as her after life proved to have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

When we rose from prayer, he put into her hand a beautiful little Bible, bound in red morocco, and fastened with a silver clasp, with "Isabel" engraved on it, and as he gave it to her, he said, "My dear little girl, will you tell me one verse out of this holy book every day?" Bella promised that she would, and then Mr. Lovely hastened away, seeing Janet come into the room to dress the child. Bella was always dressed in white. I never saw a coloured frock on her, summer or winter. In winter she had additional under clothing and warm wraps for out-door wear, but the little frock was invariably of what was called cambric muslin, thick, fine, and glossy, and made quite plain, with a number of tucks in the skirt. Her only adornment on this occasion was a string of coral round her fair neck, and a rose-coloured sash of wide French ribbon; her shoes were always of what was called Spanish leather. By the way, I never see it now, but it was very pretty wear for children. While Janet dressed the little maid, Mrs. Manley told me of all her arrangements for the day. Mrs. Nutley and I were to breakfast with Bella and her mother in the lady's bower by the river, and pass the morning there; and at noon we were to go to the almshouse, where Bella was to help the poor old widows to an abundant refreshment of tea and cake, roast fowl, and custard pudding. The little one was then to dine with her papa and pass the rest of the day in his company. He had got a beautiful Shetland

pony for her, as white as snow, and she was to have her first lesson in riding from him that afternoon. This, however, was a profound secret from her, that the surprise might add to her pleasure. When she was dressed, she skipped down before her mother and me to the pleasance, and there she found her lamb, with its rosy collar, at the entrance to the bower, where Mrs. Nutley was engaged in setting out the plates of strawberries and cake for breakfast. You may be sure it was a very happy meal to young and old of our little party, and when it was despatched Mrs. Nutley said to Bella, "My dear, will you be so good as to pick up my handkerchief? see, there it is in the corner." The child stooped for the handkerchief, and as she did, she gave a scream of delight, for there she found a doll's cradle of pretty French wicker-work, and a beautiful, fair-haired wax doll, neatly dressed, lying under the little coverlet. "Oh, dear Mrs. Nutley," she said, throwing her arms round her old friend's neck, "you are too good; where did you get such a lovely doll?"

"See, Grace," she said; "is she not a beauty? do tell me what shall I call her."

"Call her Rosa," I replied, "as she was born in a bower of roses."

"Yes," said her mother; "a true 'bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream.' I do not want to see a lovelier bower than our own, and *mia bella*, the sweetest flower in Darlington pleasance."

That was a happy morning, but it should come to an end. The almshouse fête gave great satisfaction, and the surprise of the pony was beautifully managed. The gentle thing stood saddled, waiting for his little mistress on her return from the village, and her proud papa lifted her on its back, as if she were in a dream. She could scarcely believe that "Snow" was really her own, and the dancing joy of her

bright eyes was quite a picture. Her father carried the little maid off with him through the park, and I saw no more of my sweet Bella until we met at evening worship. It had been a day of unmixed delight to the dear child. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." After sunset, Mrs. Nutley and I had a walk together in the park, where we talked over all the simple events of this happy day, and I recollect our hymn that evening was

"These are the joys he makes us know,  
In fields and villages below,  
Gives us these tokens of his love,  
But holds his nobler feast above."

## CHAPTER XX.

### MRS. PLANT.

“How sweet with thee to lift the latch,  
Where faith has kept her midnight watch,  
Smiling on woe : with thee to kneel,  
Where fixed, as if our prayer could heal,  
She listens, till her pale eye glow  
With joy, wild health can never know.”

It was in the early autumn that John Plant's excellent mother became very unwell. At first, her illness seemed to be the result of cold, but eventually settled into a chronic rheumatism, that quite confined her to the house, and almost to her chair. She and John lived together in a beautiful cottage in the park, just at the entrance of the gardens, which were very extensive, and beautifully kept by a large staff of workmen under John's inspection. Mrs. Plant was highly valued at Darlington, not only as being John's mother, but as a very superior person herself. So that, from the time of her illness, Mrs. Manley and Bella visited her every day, and supplied her amply with every luxury that might tempt the capricious appetite of a confirmed invalid. Up to this period I had never gone anywhere alone ; but often in the evenings I accompanied Mrs. Nutley to see the old lady. One morning, however, Mrs. Manley came into our room, and addressing me, said—

“My dear, I wish you would put on your hat and cloak, and take some jelly to Mrs. Plant, and say I was sorry to hear from Mr. Lovely that she is not so well to-day. Bella and I are going to Tintern Court with the Colonel, and we

may not return for a day or two. So I leave her in your charge during my absence, and Mrs. Nutley will supply your basket."

I felt quite pleased and important on the occasion, and hastened to execute the kind commission. It was a good step across the park, and a light frost made the day bracing and pleasant; so that, by the time I arrived at the cottage, I was quite in a glow, and looking, I suppose, my best. She greeted me kindly, and made me very welcome to her neat fireside. I found her suffering a good deal, but, as usual, placid and cheerful.

"I fear you are very unwell to-day, Mrs. Plant," I said.

"Yes, my dear," she replied, "I am suffering sadly this morning; but then, I must not complain. I have so many comforts and alleviations to be thankful for; 'the spirit of a man can bear his infirmities;' and, thank God! I have not a wounded spirit to contend with. And then, I am not suffering in solitude: I have my precious child to soothe me. Indeed, Miss Leigh," she added, "my John is son and daughter, and all to me. I believe there never was a mother so blessed, and why should I complain of pain of body? He often makes me almost forget my pain in the added tenderness I enjoy from him."

"Ah! Mrs. Plant," I said, "I envy him the privilege of having a mother to tend; I know what enjoyment it was to me to minister to my mother."

And as I spoke I felt a sort of sympathy spring up between John and myself on the subject of filial affection, and I respected him for his devotion to his excellent parent; for it has ever been my conviction that it is scarcely possible for a child to do enough for a mother—that being who *alone* can love unselfishly; for the maternal instinct has always appeared to me the most perfect thing that has survived the fall, and I said to Mrs. Plant—

“Surely there can be no affection half so sweet as a mother’s to her child. I speak from experience, for I drank it in, in full draughts, for thirteen happy years, and nothing can ever make up to me for its loss.”

“I do not wonder you say so, my dear,” said the old lady, “for it is the only love you have ever experienced; but I do hope in the Lord’s good time you will enjoy other affections that will help you to forget your loss. One might, you know, be child, and wife, and mother, all at once; and God has arranged it so that the several sets of affections flow on regularly, side by side, without at all interfering with each other. Indeed, I rather think they so far help each other, that if one set of affections be in a healthy state, the others can scarcely be defective. You know,” she added smiling, “the old proverb that ‘a good son makes a good husband, and a good daughter a good wife.’”

While she was speaking, John appeared in the porch, looking pleased to see me with his mother, and the social terms on which we were together. Her eyes brightened as she saluted him, saying—

“Well, John, you were uneasy about me, but you see I have not been alone. I have been well taken care of, and have just had some of Mrs. Nutley’s nice jelly.”

“You are very good, Miss Leigh,” said John, “to take my place here, and mother looks cheered since I saw her at breakfast. I wish she could see you oftener.”

“Could you not, my dear?” said the old lady, “if Mrs. Nutley would spare you to me for an evening occasionally, it would be very good of her; tell her so, please, with my love?”

“Yes, Mrs. Plant,” I replied, “I shall ask her to send me to you soon, if she can with convenience.”

As I rose to take leave, Mrs. Plant said to her son—



"John, will you show Miss Leigh, the rose in the summer parlour."

So John led the way to a little old-fashioned tea-room, with very antique furniture, and a bay window with a seat all round, which made quite a cheerful recess for the old lady when the warm weather invited her away from the fireside in the living-room. In the very centre of the window grew a most luxuriant China rose tree, apparently out of the floor, as I could see neither pot, tub, or vase of any kind connected with it. John enjoyed my look of curiosity and wonderment, for the tree was in full bloom and the verdure beautiful.

"Come now," John said, "mother must solve this enigma for you." So on returning to the room where Mrs. Plant sat, she gave me the following account, as strange as true:—"One morning," she said, "when I was stouter than I am now, and very fidgetty about having my rooms neat, I was dusting the tea-room carefully, when I spied what I supposed to have been a little green caterpillar coming out of a very small hole in the floor; but when I took hold of it to put it away, I found it was the end of a soft little rose sucker, that had found its way into the room, but how I could not tell, as the only rose tree of that kind about the place was at the other side of the house on the porch. However, as it was so good-natured as to come into the house to see me, I could not be inhospitable, so I protected it from injury until it was able to take care of itself, and there it is now, a beautiful ornament, such as I suppose no royal palace can boast. I used to be proud of it, but now I am really fond of it; for as I am not able to go out of doors to see the roses, I can enjoy their beauty at home. You will be surprised to hear that it has never had a drop of water given to it, and yet you see how it flourishes. But you must have one of my roses, and take it with you, my

dear, to reward you for your pleasant visit to me, and so saying she gave her scissors to John, who brought me the rose; and then, after having spent more than an hour with Mrs. Plant, I took up my basket to go home. She held my hand tenderly for a moment, and looked fondly at me as she said, "John tells me that you love the roses, my dear."

"Yes, Mrs. Plant," I said, "and my dear mother loved them too."

"I believe," she said, "they were given to us for our special enjoyment. I know that rose tree is a treasure to me, but you will soon come to see it again; farewell!"

When I came back to Mrs. Nutley's room, I found Mr. Lovely sitting with her, he had come for his tea, as Mrs. Manley was not at home.

"Well, Grace," said Mrs. Nutley, "how did you find Mrs. Plant?"

"Suffering a good deal, ma'am," I replied, "but looking the picture of peace and love. I had such a nice time with her, and she hopes you will let me go to see her soon again."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Nutley, "you must go soon again; it is nice training for young people to learn to nurse the sick, and you may learn much from that wise old woman."

"She is a fine old Christian," remarked Mr. Lovely; "I do not think I ever met with a more happy spirit."

"Are not her manners very much beyond her station?" I said.

"Her station by birth," replied Mrs. Nutley, "was very much beyond that of her married life; she was a gentlewoman by birth, but I believe under rather uncomfortable circumstances at home, and becoming attached to her father's gardener, she married him when she became an

orphan. It was, I have heard, a love match on both sides, for she had no fortune to attract a mercenary suitor, and Mr. Plant was a man who would adorn any station. She might well be proud of her husband, and so she was, for he was a man of information, and very gentle manners, and a handsome man too. John resembles his father, but is not as fine a figure. Now, sir," added Mrs. Nutley, addressing Mr. Lovely, "what do you think? would you call Mr. and Mrs. Plant's an unsuitable marriage?"

"Certainly not," he replied; "it is the man that dignifies the situation, and not the situation the man:—"

‘The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,  
The man’s the gold for a’ that.’

"I think Mrs. Plant married wisely and well, but it is not every one who would have had her moral courage in the first instance, or her singular propriety and good sense afterwards. I am sure no one ever heard her boast of her birth, parentage, or education; far from it. Like a true wife and a wise woman, she lost herself in her good husband. But then she really loved him, and he was worthy of her love.

"What do you say, Mrs. Nutley," added he playfully; "would you stand up for the rights of women?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, "I would contend for the rights of love and tenderness; but, as to independence, I think the woman who seeks it loses her chief charm, and sacrifices her chief happiness."

"Right, Mrs. Nutley," said Mr. Lovely; "but recollect that it is not every man who is worthy of a self-sacrificing woman; it is not every man who knows how to appreciate that "virtuous woman who is a crown to her husband." But, after all, the man who lords it over the gentle,

trusting creature whose all he is, not merely turns his back on his own true happiness, but forgets the divine command to love and cherish his wife, as "Christ the Church;" that is the grand rule, which, if followed, would make this life, with all its trials, a type of heaven."

"I wonder are there any such happy homes as are in your mind now, sir?" said Mrs. Nutley.

"One there was, surely," he replied, "the very nest where I was hatched myself. There I saw 'thought meeting thought, and will preventing will, with boundless confidence.' And I believe Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, of Madeley, enjoyed such a union, that, brief as it was, it left with the survivor a lively picture of heaven. For what is heaven," he added, (glowing with his subject), "but the dwelling-place of the God of love? and the more we love, the more like to God we become, for 'God is love, and he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him.'"

I listened, as I always did to my revered friend, with breathless attention and unmixed delight, and when he paused I still sat with my hands clasped and my eyes rivetted to his countenance, like the council with Stephen, "as if it had been the face of an angel." Mrs. Nutley, noticing my rapt attention, said to Mr. Lovely—

"Our little Grace is taking in some stores for the voyage of life this evening, sir."

"I was thinking, ma'am," I said, "that my mother had to learn all that when she went to heaven."

The remembrance of my mother and her sorrows, of my loss and her gain, always deeply affected me, and I covered my face with my hands.

I suppose Mr. Lovely felt that the conversation had been too exciting for me, and to divert my thoughts into

another channel, he began to admire my rose, and I told him its story. He then said to Mrs. Nutley—

“Now, Mrs. Nutley, if we had that tardy cup of tea, we should be able to sing a hymn.”

And we did sing “Thou wondrous love of God whose height,” etc., before we went down to the hall for evening worship.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MRS. PLANT'S STORY.

“ He’s as tall and as straight as a poplar tree,  
His cheeks are as red as a rose ;  
He looks like a squire of high degree,  
When he’s drest in his Sunday clothes.”

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“ Give me my bonnie Scot, that travels from the Tweed.”

THAT evening was the first of a series of pleasant and profitable interviews with good old Mrs. Plant, from whose experience I gathered many a valuable lesson. As we became more intimate, she seemed a good deal attracted towards me; and from time to time, I learned several particulars connected with her early history, and happy married life, that interested me deeply, not merely in her, but in her excellent son John, whom I began to look upon as my good friend, and for whom my respect increased with our acquaintance. He, however, was seldom present during my visits to his mother, as he had a good deal of responsibility in the charge and direction of several men who worked under him in the gardens and pleasure-grounds, which were very extensive and exquisitely kept at Darlington; for Colonel Manley had an eye for perfection in every thing. On one occasion, when I arrived at the garden-house (as it was called), I was met at the porch by John, who was just coming out. He caught my hand with a pleased look, saying—

“ Oh ! Miss Leigh, you are a good angel this evening. Mother has been suffering sadly all the afternoon ; I

have staid with her to the last moment that my duty would allow, and was just wishing that you would come over and see her. How good you are!" continued John, pressing my hand between his, as he said "farewell," and then hurried away. I felt a little flurried and confused, for John had never taken my hand before. He was a very staid young man in his manner, and this was quite out of his general way of greeting me. However, I accounted for it from his unusual anxiety about his mother on that occasion; for although he never left her quite alone, (as the porter's daughter was her little handmaid) he knew that in his absence she must miss that tenderness and sympathy, that are such an inestimable boon to the invalid. When I saw the poor old lady, I found her, as John had said, suffering very much, more than usual.

"Welcome, my dear," she said; "John was just wishing that you were here with me for a little, to cheer me up in his absence."

"Can nothing be done for you, Mrs. Plant?" I said, "I should not be satisfied without trying something."

"Nothing gives me permanent relief, dear," she replied. "I sometimes feel a little ease, a soothing sort of sensation, by rubbing with camphor."

I saw the bottle lying on the mantel-shelf, and said—

"Do now, Mrs. Plant, let me rub you with the camphor. Mother often had relief from using it."

"No, no, my child," she said, "I thank you very much, but it would fatigue you. My John has a strong arm, but yours is a tiny hand," she said, taking it in hers caressingly.

"Pray do now, let me try a little?" I said, "just for a few minutes, and you will see what a little hand can do, when there is a heart in it."

So to gratify me, she consented to my chafing her limbs with the camphor for about a quarter of an hour. I then

poured out a cup of coffee for her, and soon had the gratification of seeing a relieved expression on her countenance, very different from what it had worn on my entrance. She looked very grateful for my attention, and kissed me tenderly; and as she did so, I could hear her breathe softly, "Not my will but thine be done." I thought she alluded to her sufferings, but I found afterwards that her words referred to another subject altogether.

"Now, dear," she said, "if Mrs. Nutley could spare you to me this evening, I should be so glad."

"She told me, ma'am," I replied, "that I might spend an hour or two with you if you wished; she is gone to the almshouse, and will not be home until supper-time; and I think she will call here for me on her way home through the park."

"Oh! that is a nice arrangement," said Mrs. Plant. "Now you will see that your company will do me good as well as your gentle rubbing. I sometimes tell my John," she added, "that my pains must be nervous, for he seems to amuse them away now and then, when they are not very violent. You cannot think, dear," she continued, "what a son John is, and what a blessing to me. He often reminds me of his dear father by his gentle, tender care of me. Sometimes when I am alone, I go over the too happy dream of my married life, and you cannot think how it refreshes my spirit. Almost everything I know I learned from my husband, who was not merely a man of reading, but a man of a large and loving heart. Playing on his own name, he used to say, that 'from the day I became *his Plant*,' he was never tired of cultivating me; and he was pleased to add," said the good old lady, "that I repaid his care with interest;" but he was ever a partial judge where his wife was in question."

"Dear Mrs. Plant," I said, "I should so like to hear



your story, at least as much of it as it would be agreeable to you to give me. I love to listen to old people, and learn wisdom from their experience."

"With pleasure, dear," said Mrs. Plant, "just as I recollect it, and may you have as happy a story to tell at my age; for mine has been on the whole a happy lot, though I lost my poor mother when I was but six years old, and a fine creature she must have been, from all that I have heard of her. The longest thing I can recollect of her, is her playing on the harpsichord for me to dance; then I have a dreamy sort of remembrance of her dressing a doll for me, and laying it in my arms when I was in my little bed, and of her singing me to sleep when I was unwell, and giving me rosy apples from a high shelf in the store room, and I think of her as a lovely looking lady, richly dressed, her silk gown rustling as she came into my nursery, with a candle in her hand, to kiss me and make me comfortable before she went to bed. Then there was a little time when I seldom saw her, and then I recollect standing on a chair to have a black dress put on me, and I cried and said I would not wear it, for mother never put black frocks on me; my nurse had tears in her eyes, and my father left the room suddenly, but I never saw my mother again. My father's aunt, a feeble old lady, made a show of keeping his house after my mother's death, but I was too stirring a child to be an agreeable companion for her; and by her advice, I was sent to a boarding-school at seven years old. There I was kept in great order, and all my natural playfulness repressed; and even when my father came to visit me, I was reproved if I ran to him and threw myself into his arms, in a natural way, without making a formal curtsy on entering the room, and walking gracefully up to him, as I had been taught to do, by Monsieur Rigadoon, our dancing-master. It was a sad change to me too,

after the freedom of the country, to have my exercise restricted to the mournful procession of a boarding-school promenade round the square, for an hour, two or three times a week. And on the alternate days a modified game of romps in the schoolroom, or in the little back green, where we went about like squirrels in a cage.

“Young as I was caught, I was not easily tamed, and the starling in the Bastille never wailed out his cry of ‘*I can’t get out!*’ more pitifully than I did—poor little solitary wilding that I was! for all my schoolmates were older than me, and our governess, a lady who had never been humanised by the sweet influences of maternity; still she did us a sort of justice according to her notions. We had plenty to eat and drink of what was good for us. Our persons were nicely kept, and our morals and manners strictly attended to. Our memory, too, was pretty well taxed; but it did duty for all our other mental powers. However, our hands were kept busy, for we were well taught in the use of the needle, and had to make and mend all our garments, besides accumulating stores of fancy work of every imaginable pattern. From this dull life I was removed at fourteen, and brought home to ‘the Dell’ (my father’s place) with a half maid, half companion, or sort of under governess, to help me to sew, to walk out with me, and to instruct me in the mysteries of housekeeping, under the eye of my grand-aunt, a paralytic lady, who was now confined to her apartment, in which apartment my maid and I had to spend several hours each day at our needle, while we read to her alternately. My sleeping closet, too, was inside my aunt’s room, so that, as far as liberty was concerned, it was ‘out of the frying-pan into the fire,’ to come from school to such a comfortless home as mine.

“I had, however, one bright spot in my dull home. My mother’s nurse (who had gone home with her on her

marriage) was still living with us. My mother had made it a request of my father, that he would not send her nurse away after her death, as she wished her to have charge of me. If my grand-aunt could have had her way, she would have dispatched her immediately after my mother's funeral, for she never liked poor nurse. However, my father showed at once that where the request of his dying wife was concerned, he could, and would be master. So the old lady had to give up the point; but, as I have told you, she indemnified herself by having me sent to school at the end of the same year. I loved nurse dearly, and I had a good right to love her; she was a godly woman, and I have reason to believe had been instrumental in the enlightening of my poor young mother's mind before her death. Certain it is that she was the only one in the house who ever taught me anything on the subject of religion, and though she was a very homely creature in many things, still the love of her Bible had refined her mind so, that she was the most profitable companion I had in the house. My poor father seemed to live only for his horses and dogs, and my maid, Jane Spencer, was not trustworthy. Many an imprudent thing she would have encouraged me to do; but nurse's influence counteracted hers, and I was saved from various evils by her humble instrumentality. To God be all the glory! who watched over the motherless child, and provided for me a protector after his own heart. It was to this faithful old servant that I was indebted for the knowledge of my mother's history, which had a considerable influence on my after life, as you will see, when I come to the more eventful period that succeeded to my school-days, and initiation into home duties in that solitary old country-house, where my father did little but sleep, except when he surrounded his table with the coarse, fox-hunting gentry of the moors that lay about 'the Dell.' "

Now, dear children, although I give you my good old friend Mrs. Plant's story in a continuous form, I had it myself from her in odds and ends, scraps and snatches, from time to time, as our mutual convenience or opportunity happened to suggest; but, as I thought you would understand it better in a narrative form, I have put it into my own words for you. As she herself remarked, her mother's history a good deal affected her own, and in the endeavour to avoid the mistakes of her mother, she went, perhaps, into an opposite extreme; but, certainly, if it be a proof of wisdom to choose the lesser evil, Mrs. Plant was the wiser, and, consequently the happier woman of the two.

"Nurse told me," said Mrs. Plant, "that my mother was a mere child when she married my father, and that her motives in marrying were as childish as her years. In fact, she gave up her dolls and girlish amusements with regret, hoping to be rewarded for the sacrifice by the *éclat* of the wedding, (which in her days was a grand affair), by having a fine stock of rich, new, womanly garments, and being so far her own mistress, that she might wear them every day; have money in her pocket; a fine horse to ride; and be able to go out when she pleased, with her young companions about her, while she was to be the young matron, giving law to the rest on all matters of fashion and amusement. There was an idea of liberty, too, connected with the country, as her parents lived in town. Altogether, she expected to make a fine exchange, and be envied by all the young girls of her acquaintance; for, although my father was not a very young man, he was handsome, and pleasant in his manners, and had a good property. But the event proved that my poor mother's calculations were as childish as her years; for none of her gay anticipations were realised. She was, to be sure, dignified with the title of Mrs. at fifteen; she had plenty of fine

clothes, but she often wore them with a heavy heart. She had money in her pocket, but she had to give a strict account of its expenditure ; and had a fine horse to ride, which she was obliged to ride in all weathers, and however weakly, accompany my father to the hunt, for he was, in his coarse way, fond of her, and proud of his pretty young bride. He would show her off at all times, without considering what was good for her, or rather, without knowing how to treat her at all for her good. As to having a will of her own, or the control of her own movements, it was quite out of the question ; for my father's mother and aunt lived with him, and managed my poor mother as if she had been a mere infant. One of her ambitious desires was to sit at the head of her own table, and be admired for her dexterous carving and helping, in which accomplishments she had been well drilled by her eldest sister ; preparatory to her assuming the duties of a matron. This stepsister was old enough to be her mother, and had trained her as if she had been her own child, or perhaps more strictly ; and the idea of escaping from the duenna at home, added to her wish to marry. However, she found that she was only exchanging one for two ; for her mother-in-law and aunt began to rule her from the day she came home. They persuaded my father that she was too much of a child to take the head of his table. Indeed, his mother said that she should consider him a most undutiful son if he supplanted her in that post, as long as she lived. And even after her death his aunt tried to step into the vacant place ; but my mother was then eighteen, and determined not to be baffled any longer. So one day, before the old lady came down to dinner, she took her place at the head of the table, affecting to look quite at her ease there.

“ When the aunt came into the dining-room she looked thunder, and stood at her side, expecting that she would

vacate the usurped throne ; but she did no such thing. She quietly pointed to a chair at her right hand, saying—‘That is your place, madam, the place of honour at the right hand of the lady of the house, and no one shall ever dispossess you of it while I am at the head of this table.’ The old lady appealed to my father, who, as well as he could speak for laughing, said—‘ Well, Julia, surely you do not want to pretend to us that you can carve that turkey ; and really I am very hungry after my hard run to-day.’

“ ‘ Perhaps I may not do it very well for you to-day, my dear,’ she replied, playfully, gathering strength from his merry face and its puzzled expression, that bore no trace of vexation towards her. ‘ You must excuse my mistakes for a few days, as I have had so little practice at your table ; but I shall begin to-day, and pull this fowl asunder in some way or other ; then to-morrow I will do it better, and, I hope, improve daily—but, surely, it is high time for me to begin.’

“The old lady winced a little, inwardly charging the young lady’s rebellion to the account of her nurse ; but still she was too much of a gentlewoman to show her chagrin before the servant, who stood, with his napkin on his arm, very deferentially behind his young mistress’s chair, chuckling with pleasure, for all the servants idolised my mother, and greatly preferred her gay, pleasant bearing, to the iron yoke of the two haughty old ladies who had preceded her. So my mother plunged her fork into the turkey very adroitly, and astonished my father by her matronly airs and expertness, for at that time it was considered quite a feather in a young woman’s cap, to be able to take the head of her husband’s table with grace and dexterity.

“And she kept her word, and kept her place from that

day forward, so the old lady saw that she might as well retire quietly from the contest. Still, she did not give up the dominion of the tea-table without a struggle. When my mother was seated at the tea-board, she would say to her—‘You put too much sugar in these cups, Julia.’ My mother took no apparent notice, but, as if she had not heard her, immediately put an additional lump in each cup all round. Or, perhaps, it would be at another time—‘Julia, you fill the cups quite too full.’ Then my mother overflowed the cups into the saucers; so that, at length, the tea struggle ceased also, and my mother was put in possession of all her legitimate rights and privileges—keys, linen, silver, and store-room. Of course she rejoiced for a little in the acquisition of her victory, which gave her a sort of womanly interest in the affairs of her own house, to which she was so long a stranger; but, on her first coming home, her life was a perfect worry, from the petty domestic annoyances to which she was subject.

“When she was first in the way of being a mother, her girlish delicacy sought the privacy of her own chamber, in order to prepare her baby-linen; and, inexperienced as she felt herself to be on such an occasion, she often took counsel with her nurse, and asked her to sit with her and help her to sew and cut out her work. But no sooner did the old ladies discover that the young lady and her nurse were closeted together, than they would invent some frivolous excuse for coming to her apartment, where they often sat till they wearied themselves, for she would not do anything while they were present. Tired out, at last, they would leave her; but no sooner did they hear the jingling of her keys, than they would come up again, on some pretext or other, and make another sitting. However, by the time that I was expected, she had attained her emanci-

pation, and could sew for me in peace. Her first children all died in early infancy.

“She never was strong, though her fine spirits would give the idea of a vigorous constitution, and, for two years before her death, she was visibly declining. Still, my father would have her out with him as usual, and contended that open air and exercise, in all weathers, and at all seasons, were necessary for her. ‘They made a strong man of him,’ he said, ‘and why should they not agree with her too?’

“So, to satisfy him, she tried the experiment to the utmost, for she knew that he was really fond of her, in his own coarse way; and many a time she has had to go to the moors with him, when he went shooting, or to wander by the river side with him, on his fishing excursions, when she should have been quietly on her sofa by the fireside. And, in the end, her death was brought on by his wilfulness in insisting on her accompanying him in the carriage to London, when the roads were so covered with snow, that he had to send men on before him to clear a way for the horses! She never recovered from the effects of that journey, and died (as I said before), when I was only six years old, and before she had completed her twenty-fourth year. My father was at first quite wild with grief, but his violence exhausted itself soon, and he returned with fresh zest to his coarse amusements and jolly companions. So that, by the time I had returned from school, his house had become quite a rendezvous for sporting gentlemen; whose late hours, and rude, noisy, and often intemperate habits, made ‘the Dell’ a very unsuitable retreat for an unprotected child like me, just verging on womanhood. I say unprotected, because a girl at that age is exposed to danger on every side, without a mother to guide and foster her maidenly delicacy, and preserve its



freshness from contact with a naughty world. And how peculiarly exposed to danger was I, with such a father, and no proper matron in the house to keep me under her wing ! But, as I said before, my humble pious nurse's watchful eye and faithful counsel were made the means of my preservation. About this time she got a violent inflammation in her eyes, that confined her to her room, and as I spent as much of my time with her as I could steal from my grand-aunt, she often asked me to read for her in the Bible, and what I read for her, was blessed to myself; for 'the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' Then, indeed, I had a safeguard from the corruptions of the world, that, through the divine mercy, kept me unspotted from its naughtiness, and in the end, was made the means of my temporal as well as eternal happiness.

"I believe I was a pleasing looking girl; but at any rate it was well known that I was my father's only child, and that he had a good property. He got no fortune with my mother, whom he had married from love, such as he understood. Indeed, as far he knew how, he was a good husband and father, but he was uncultivated and weak, and often the creature of his companions, who were not the best. I suppose I was about sixteen, when one day Jane Spencer showed me a guinea, and told me that she got it from a gentleman for promising to give me a letter from him, which she produced. It was a fulsome piece of nonsensical flattery, such as was often given to and swallowed by silly girls in my day, but it disgusted me; and, to show Jane my disapprobation of her conduct, I told her that she must give it back to the writer, or I would complain of her to my aunt. You may be sure she never brought me another letter. In the evenings at that time I was often sent for by my father to come to the drawing-room, and make coffee for him and his friends, and their coarse attentions were very disagree-

able to me, particularly those of a certain Squire Airey of Birdtown, our nearest neighbour, a very thoughtless young man, devoted to field sports and amusements of every kind, but a wealthy man and his own master. He had been a sort of ward of my father's long before I was born, and was at this time, I suppose, about two or three and thirty, a good looking man, but coarse and ungodly in his manners, and, like most country gentlemen of that age, what was called 'a free liver.' I could see that my father rather encouraged his attentions to me, which honours were met on my part with great coldness and utter distaste. About this time my father went up to London, and on his return he called me to him, and brought out a very rich, showy, brocaded silk dress, which he gave to me and told me to have it made up according to the fashion of that day. Of course I thanked my father for this expression of kindness to me, but what was my surprise when he gave me also my mother's watch and other ornaments, and said that he should expect to see me at dinner in future ; for from the time I returned from school, Jane Spencer and I dined in my aunt's sitting room with her, and never appeared at my father's table, for his hours were irregular, and generally late, and his company not very suitable for me. I begged of him not to ask me to appear at dinner, but promised to attend him at coffee every evening. I then ran off with my new dress to show it to nurse and Jane Spencer, but they viewed it with very different eyes. Nurse looked very sober and thoughtful, and expressed no pleasure or congratulation, while Jane's eyes sparkled with delight, and she instantly sent me off to rummage out handsome lace to trim it with, as she was determined to make it up for me at once, that she might see, she said, what I should be like when I was dressed like a lady, and, poor silly woman ! she seemed to grow quite proud of me on the strength of my purple and

gold brocade, which, she said, 'had no doubt cost my father a pretty penny.' So the gown was made, and I suppose I did feel a little taller when I rustled about in it, to show it to nurse and my aunt. Just about the time I got the brocade, Mr. Airey told my father that he had it from good authority that young Mr. Blossom (the gentleman whose letter I returned) had laid his plans to run away with me, and that he had better look sharp, and keep me close to the house. My father was quite frightened at this intelligence, and gave orders that I was not to go beyond the gardens in future, except I was accompanied by him, and this I never was, except occasionally to church, where he regularly slept through the whole of Mr. Mellow's drowsy sermons. I was very sorry to have my walks interfered with, for I liked to go amongst the poor people, who knew and loved my mother, and talked to me of her, and many a little help they got from me for her sake. However, I dared not disobey my father, so my exercise was confined to the gardens, which, happily for me, were large and airy. Jane Spencer, however, did not care to accompany me there, but excused herself on the plea of my aunt's increasing infirmities requiring her attention. So that, by degrees, she acquired a good deal of influence with her, and was virtually her companion instead of mine. Nurse, however, used to come with me to the gardens, whenever she could, but, from the weakness of her eyes, she could not go out except in calm weather; but I loved a breeze and often walked for hours alone, and came in quite in a glow of health and spirits from my lonely exercise. I suppose I might have been about seventeen, or thereabouts, when one day my aunt sent me to the garden for a bundle of lavender to make cordial water. There was a thick hedge of lavender that separated the flower ground from the vegetable garden, and I was at one side of the hedge cutting the lavender,

while John Plant, our gardener, was at the other, grafting his trees.

“John and I were on very good terms at all times ; he was glad to have a lady at the ‘Dell who loved flowers,’ and I had a great respect for him, because he had known and loved my mother, and also because nurse told me that he was a man that read his Bible and loved God. I suppose she had told him of the happy change in my mind, and he knew, too, how I was situated, and what dangers I was exposed to. As I stood that morning, cutting the lavender, I could not but admire John, for he was a very handsome man, and I thought, too, how superior he was in his mind and manners to my father’s companions, that were called gentlemen ; and the conviction forced itself upon me, that

those things which are highly esteemed among men, are an abomination in the sight of God.’ As John looked up from his grafting, he noticed my grave, thoughtful face, and coming close to the hedge where I stood, he said with great respect, ‘My dear Miss Borrodale, I have long wished for an opportunity of speaking to you seriously, but have never had courage to do so, and I have often blamed myself for my neglect, for I know there are snares laid for your feet, and it is hard for you to escape. I hope you are able to put your whole trust in heavenly guidance. ‘Fear him, ye saints, and you shall then have nothing else to fear.’” The tears trembled in my eyes, as John spoke so earnestly, and I could scarcely thank him for his solicitude about me, but I did tell him that it was my whole desire to please God, and that I felt I could trust him with body and soul. John looked greatly relieved, and said, ‘Then surely the Lord will provide.’ From that day a new understanding seemed to spring up between John and me. I felt that I had a true friend in him, and my walks were now doubly pleasant, for we generally exchanged a

few words with each other, and I began to feel that our intercourse was mutually agreeable; I saw plainly that he looked at me with great interest, and for my part, the day seemed to drag on heavily when I could not go to the garden. One day in the autumn I took a basket to the garden for damsons, and, meeting John, I asked him to gather them for me. When he was giving me the basket of fruit, I saw that his whole soul was in his eyes, while I cast down mine, and almost trembled as he said to me, 'Miss Martha, I have something to say to you that I am sure you do not know; will you promise me that if you are not pleased with what I have to say, you will try to forget it, and forgive me? for I have long struggled hard to keep it to myself, but I can do so no longer; say you will not be angry with me.' 'Oh! John,' I said, '*you* never could say anything to me, that it would be wrong for me to hear. I will not, indeed, I could not be angry with you.' 'Then, dear Miss Martha,' he said, 'listen to me and pity me: I love you fondly and entirely, I have long loved you so: and you are my first love, and will be my last, for if you cannot return my love, I shall never think of another; my whole heart is yours, and you are never absent from my thoughts; tell me *truly*, can you love me?' 'Oh! yes, dear John,' I said, 'I can and do love you already; I could not help loving one who loved me as you do, for I know you fear and love God, and you would not deceive me.' 'Then,' said John, with rapture, 'we are now married in the sight of God.' 'Yes,' I said, 'if my father will give me to you, for I could not dare to disobey him; but I promise you that if he will not give me to you, I will not give myself to any one else.' That was our betrothal, Grace," said Mrs. Plant, "and in my simplicity I thought it would not be possible for my father to refuse me to such a good man as John was; but I was a silly child to

think so. My father was very angry when I told him, and instantly dismissed John from his employment. Of course this was a bitter grief to us both, and the more so, as I did not feel free to correspond with him without my father's consent; but he wrote often to a friend of his in the neighbourhood, who told him all about our doings at 'the Dell,' and we had to be content with thinking of and praying for each other. Nurse, too, was my confidant, and she encouraged me to hope that, if the Lord saw it good, he could bring about our wishes in his own way; but she said we must be patient, and bear our trial like Christians. I think it was about ten days after John left 'the Dell,' that my father sent a message to me after dinner, that he would expect to see me in the drawing-room that evening at coffee, for he had not asked me from the time of his vexation about John; he also said he wished me to wear my brocade gown. So I obeyed, and, looking as amiable as I could, served the coffee. There was no company that evening but Mr. Airey and Mr. Mellow, the clergyman. When coffee was removed, I was rising to leave the room, but my father told me to stay. He and his two friends looked a little elevated that evening, and somehow I did not feel at all comfortable in their company, but I resumed my seat, and composed myself as well as I could. My father rose from the table, and, taking the large family prayer book, he laid it down before Mr. Mellow, and, taking my hand, he told me to rise. 'Martha,' he said, 'Mr. Airey wishes to make you his wife, and I have given him my consent. Mr. Mellow, you, if you please, will do the rest.' 'Sir,' I said, 'what do you mean?' 'I mean, my dear girl,' he said, 'that you are to be Mrs. Airey this evening. Mr. Mellow, will you be so good as to begin.' 'Dear father,' I said, 'I cannot be Mr. Airey's wife, for I do not love him.' 'All in good time, Miss Martha,' said Mr. Airey;

'you will soon be fond enough of me when you are the mistress of Birdtown.' I burst into tears. 'Father,' I said, 'do not compel me to disobey you; do not ask me to do what you say. I will not marry any one without your consent, but I cannot marry any one that I do not love, and I never can or will love Mr. Airey;' and, so saying, I broke away from his hand, and bounded out of the room like a startled fawn. My father was furious; he called after me, and rang the bell violently, but I was bolted in my own room. Then he came up and thundered at the door, so that I had to open it, and he commanded me again to go down and do as he wished; but I mildly said, 'I could not;' he then turned away in a rage, saying, 'Then, madam, you shall have time enough to repent your disobedience, for you shall never inherit my property, if you disobey my will;' and he kept his word, for he left all his property to a relative of his own name, in case of his only child ever marrying any one of lower rank than an esquire. I was, however, scarcely nineteen when my poor father died suddenly, from the effects of a fall, which he had while out hunting. He had become a large, heavy man, and I was very uneasy about his hunting, and on this occasion I ventured to remonstrate with him, as it was a steeplechase. 'Well, well,' he said, 'don't plague me about this, for I must ride it, but I shan't ride another; now are you satisfied?' It was at a distance from home, too, and I sat up very late to be ready to attend him at supper; but about midnight he arrived in an unconscious state, from which he never rallied, and died the next day. When my grand-aunt found what the terms of his will were, she tried to persuade me to marry my relative who was to succeed to the property, but I was firm and faithful to my first love, and never woman drew a happier lot than mine. As soon as John heard of my poor father's death, he wrote to me, say-

ing that he had heard of my disinherittance in consequence of our attachment, which grieved him on my account, but that, as to himself, he had no ambitious desires, and felt well able to support me comfortably, if I could be contented with his humble lot; but he added, if I felt our engagement to be a burden, he would not be so selfish as to bind me to its fulfilment, but release me at once; however, if my love for him had not diminished, that his for me had increased by our separation, and that he was ready and willing to make me his own, in the sight of the world, whenever it suited me to change my present condition. You can well judge my dear," said Mrs. Plant, "what would be my reply to such a letter as that. I wrote at once to John, and told him that my mind had not altered, either by our separation or my own change of circumstances, and that, as soon as I put off my mourning for my father, I would fulfil my engagement to be his wife. My poor old grand-aunt was greatly annoyed with me, and the more so as she feared it would affect her own position at 'the Dell;' however, our relative, Mr. Borrodale, acted very handsomely by her, and allowed her to remain just as she had been in my father's time. He also behaved with some generosity towards myself, giving me leave to take anything with me from 'the Dell' that I wished. I availed myself of his permission to take the linen, china, books, and wardrobe, that had belonged to my poor mother, and he acted the part of a kinsman, by giving me away at my marriage, and presenting me with a small dowry, which neither John or myself had the least idea of receiving. Immediately on our marriage, I accompanied my husband to his native place, in Aberdeenshire, where we lived very happily for many years, and where I buried four out of my six children. I thought the cold of that coast disagreed with them, and John thought I was losing my own bloom, either from the



climate, or the grief at losing my little ones, and my good old nurse, who had accompanied us to Scotland at our marriage. So, when my son John was about three years old, and little Julia an infant at my breast, old Mrs. Darling wrote to a friend in Scotland, to look out for a person of experience and intelligence, to take charge of her gardens and pleasure-grounds here. Mrs. Darling's friend proposed the situation to my husband, who gladly accepted of it, in order to secure a warmer air for me and my little ones. We all flourished here, our means were good, and we were indeed a happy family. His dear father, however, only lived to complete John's education, and then I lost my earthly idol, and soon after our only daughter, Julia, who had been delicate from her birth. I have now been twelve years a widow ; but if the love and duty of the best of sons can in any measure make up for my overwhelming loss, John will do it ; he is the counterpart of his father, but not so handsome. My husband was indeed 'one of nature's nobility,' and, best of all, he was a son of 'the King of kings;' a happy eternity together lies before us. Indeed, from the day I lost him, 'heaven has had for me one bright attraction more, and earth one less.' How truly says the poet that

'Each friend by death snapt from us, is a plume  
Plucked from the wing of human vanity.' "

## CHAPTER XXII.

### REFLECTIONS, ETC.

“Let not the mouse of my good meaning, lady,  
Be snapp’d up in the trap of your suspicion,  
To lose the tail there—or both head and tail  
Be swallow’d by the cat of misconstruction.”

Mrs. PLANT’s story had not merely deeply interested my feelings, but it likewise gave me some food for thought; and the more I reflected on it, the more I was convinced of the truth of our chaplain’s sage observation, that “it was the man that dignified the station, and not the station the man.” Now, dear children, I would be very explicit with you on this important subject, on the right understanding of which, much of your own future happiness may depend; and, to begin with, I beg you will not let Mrs. Plant’s story, or my reflections upon it, lead you to suppose that I would advocate those levelling doctrines that seek to abolish all differences of rank and station. No, by no means. “Order is heaven’s first law, and this confessed, some are and *must be* greater than the rest.” And with regard to children, and their disposal in marriage, I think it is a hardship for parents to see their children wilfully and recklessly renounce those advantages of birth and station, that, if rightly used, might (like all the other talents committed to us) be made to subserve the glory of God, in the exercise of beneficial influence towards our fellow-creatures. But then, on the other hand, I am for even-handed justice; there is no such thing as a one-sided reciprocity, and we

must fence both sides of our pasture, if we would have our flock secure. And therefore, if it be the bounden duty of children to consult their parents, and, as far as it may be consistent with their own solid happiness for life, defer to their judgment, it is no less the duty of parents to sympathise with their children, and deal gently with their affections. Let parents go back a quarter of a century or so, when they take in hand the affairs of their children. Let them, if possible, call back the shadows of their own early feelings, their freshness, warmth, and tenderness; and remember that such as they were *long, long ago*, such are their children now, before

“The fond—the fairy dreams of youth,  
Have perished at the touch of truth,  
And o’er the heart, all seared and riven,  
The plough-share of the world hath driven.”

Indeed, I believe that parents are abusing that authority divinely delegated to them for the good of their offspring, when they coerce their children’s affections, or deny them legitimate exercise; far less constrain or encourage them to marry without true affection, or prevent them from giving their hands where they have fixed their hearts, merely because the objects of their choice do not happen to have been under circumstances that would enable them to find their escutcheon in the heraldry office. But recollect, on the other hand, that I cannot understand how a gentlewoman can fix her affections on a person who is destitute of that refinement of mind and manner, without which a nobleman would be an ineligible suitor for her. What I contend for is, that refinement of mind and manner is not confined to an exalted station in life; and that a woman would be more secure of happiness with an amiable refined companion of inferior worldly rank, than with one whose

coarseness of mind, vice, or selfishness were gilded over by high rank, wealth, and outward importance. Mere prestige and *éclat* are too empty, too vapid to make ~~one~~ happy; and women are so dependant on their husbands for their happiness, that they should "weigh well that fatal step that cannot be recalled." If a woman can marry a worthy man in her own rank, so much the better; but I would neither advise her to sacrifice her happiness for life, by marrying without true affection, or remain unmarried, merely because her heart's choice rested on a person who happened to be born in a less exalted grade than that of her parents. In fact, after all, nine-tenths of the objections to a humble alliance originate in the fear of *Mrs. Grundy* and her *on dits*. But if moral courage would only look that lady steadily in the face at first, her dreaded aspect would lose half its terrors. That same moral courage, children, is a powerful engine; in fact, when backed by a good conscience, I hardly know what would be able to withstand it. Then the ever-springing fountain of youthful hope carries us along wonderfully. Napoleon the First, in the sanguine pride of his heart, used to say, that there was "no such word as impossible in the French language; in fact, that it was '*the adjective of fools.*'" Now, if a man of the world, like Napoleon, could say and feel so, how much more may not a true Christian look apparent impossibilities in the face, and "hope even against hope," knowing that with the Christian's "God *nothing* is impossible," and that "all things work together for good to those who love God." Surely if we have God for our father and friend, we need never despair of having the crooked things of our lot made smooth for us in his own good time. A "patient continuance in well-doing" works wonders, one of the most valuable of which is, that it prevents our making shipwreck of happiness, by that passionate haste that so generally has

leave to repent at leisure. Now, I hope I have once for all fully explained all my views *pro* and *con* on this delicate subject. Remember, then, dear children, that your grandmother is no leveller of ranks, but merely a warm advocate for native dignity, and a firm supporter of the rights of the oppressed, whether black or white, and always ready to break a lance for the fair young girls who adorn the pleasant homes of the middle class of merrie England. I used to hear an old saw long ago, that ran like this: "When Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman?" The word was evidently derived from the idea of those gentle manners that would seem to have graced the first exemplars of civilization in England—the first who burst the bonds of savagery, and drew from the founts of learning. Let us, then, in our estimate of a gentleman, always resort to first principles, and only confer that honourable title on those who deserve it, by gentle thoughts and affections, gentle actions, and gentle manners. And if our sex would thus learn to call things by their right names, it might exert a happy influence on those who look to our smiles for their encouragement, perhaps more really now than in those days of chivalry, that gave birth to the often mis-used title of gentleman, when the most solemn vows of the knights were made "before the peacock and the ladies."\*

\* A peacock roasted and then adorned with its plumage, was a dish often used on high festal occasions in the middle ages.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### OLD FRIENDS AGAIN.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days of auld lang syne?”

WHEN I was about sixteen I got heavy tidings from Seafield. My beloved old pastor—my spiritual father—had suddenly entered into his rest.

“The cry at midnight came ;  
He started up to hear ;  
A mortal arrow pierced his frame—  
He fell, but felt no fear.  
His spirit with a bound,  
Left its encumbering clay,  
His tent at sunrise on the ground,  
A darkened ruin lay.”

“Oh, my father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!”

For more than a year the good doctor had been obliged to engage the services of a curate who had lived at the rectory, and was now likely to succeed him. Mrs. Moss spoke very largely of Mr. Weston as having been like a son to Dr. Warne, not only in the parish, but at home. Dear Rachel, she added, had taken up her abode with her in the rooms that my mother and I had occupied four years ago. Her means were narrow, so that she thought of having a few pupils while she remained at Seafield; but if possible she wished to procure a situation, either as governess or companion to a lady, and Mrs. Moss begged of me

to mention this to Mrs. Nutley and Mrs. Manley, both of whom knew from Mr. Lovely that her qualifications were very superior. Rachel was indeed a lady in the true sense of the word, both in mind, manner, and acquirements. Mrs. Moss added that dear Rachel's spirits were very much depressed by her loss, and consequent change of circumstances, which was not to be wondered at, for few children had such a parent to lose as him of whom death had now deprived her. Unhappily, too, from the smallness of the living and the Doctor's hospitality and charity, which were liberal and without grudging, it was not possible to make more than a very slender provision for Rachel. Oh, how my heart longed to make some return to this dear friend for all her sympathy and love, when the great stroke of orphanhood had laid me low; however, I did what I could. I wrote to her an outpouring of my heart's love, and I prayed for her to him who had taken me up, that he would open a way for this bereaved one also. I had Mrs. Moss's letter before Christmas, and my mind was so occupied about my poor Rachel and her affairs, that I was not able to keep the feast that year with my usual spirit, for I delighted in Christmas and all its associations. It was a time which my dear mother had always greatly enjoyed, and I had been trained by her from infancy to enter into its spirit. In all her desertion and loneliness she used to make Christmas bowers of holly and ivy for my dolls, and I recollect on one occasion her making a little nest of moss, filling it with sugar eggs, and placing it in the middle of the huge mistletoe bough that hung in our little parlour, for a surprise for me on Christmas morning; and after dinner on that day she always assumed almost childish spirits, so as to enter into my little plays with me until tea-time, and from that until my sleepy hour she would invent and tell me stories. I could not have been more than four years old

at that time. I know we were still in the south of England, yet my memory is as vivid as if it had been but yesterday. This, however, was a dull Christmas with me, from sympathy with my bereaved friends at Seafeld, though at Darlington it was a right merry one. Old Sir Philip Manley, of Tintern Court, kept Christmas at Darlington that year, with several other old friends of the family. Mrs. Manley however, was disappointed, for she had expected the return of her son to England, and also a visit from her aunt, Lady Linton, of Ravenshaw; but the winter proving unusually severe, she was afraid to come across from Ireland until spring, and the young man's regiment was countermanded when ready to take shipping. The poor of the neighbourhood, and especially the almshouse people, had a warm Christmas of it, and to Mrs. Nutley, Janet, and me, it was a busy time on their account, as we all had to assist Mrs. Manley in preparation for them, both of garments and other comforts. So time wore away, and after the severe winter we had a fine open early spring, which put gladness into my heart by the return of the violets and primroses peeping up here and there, like dear old friends to visit me once more with their blue eyes, fair cheeks, and sweet breath. It was on a fine morning early in April that Mrs. Manley came into Mrs. Nutley's apartment with an open letter in her hand, and, patting my cheek as she passed, said, "Cheer up, little maid, I have something pleasant in store for you." Then addressing Mrs. Nutley she said, "My good friend, the Colonel and I are going to instal you and Mr. Lovely as lord and lady of Darlington for a few weeks. My aunt, Lady Linton, has promised to pay me a visit here, if Bella and I go over to Ravenshaw for her, and as the Colonel is going to London, he will see us to the sea-side. Janet will accompany us, of course, and if you have no objection, I will take Grace and leave her with



her dear old friends at Seafeld during my absence, and I shall call for her on my way back. I think she has not looked very well all the winter, and the change will be pleasant and salutary for her."

"With all my heart, dear madam," said Mrs. Nutley; "I was wishing that she had a little change, and this is just the thing for her, is it not, Grace?"

I was so overwhelmed with the sudden and delightful prospect of seeing the dear ones at Seafeld, that I could not answer except by throwing my arms about the necks of my two kind and thoughtful friends, and kissing them; both returned my embrace heartily.

"Now, Grace," said Mrs. Manley, make your little preparations, for we shall set out the day after to-morrow."

Soon after Mrs. Manley left the room, and Mr. Lovely came in to ask me to mend a deplorable-looking pair of gloves for him, and while I did so, Mrs. Nutley drew his attention to my heightened colour and glad expression. "Those roses have grown," she said, "since Mrs. Manley told us just now that she would take Grace to Seafeld for a month, while she goes on to Ireland."

"That is news to me," he said; "I did not see Mrs. Manley since she had her letters this morning; but you must promise not to stay at Seafeld, Grace," he added, smiling; "will you not come back to us? Mrs. Nutley and I would miss our little daughter."

"Oh, dear sir!" I replied, "I hope I shall come back, and soon too; much as I love Seafeld, I love Darlington more. It has been a happy home to me, and my heart is larger than you think. I have room for more than my Seafeld friends there."

When I gave Mr. Lovely his gloves I saw that he looked unusually thoughtful. Mrs. Nutley perceived it too, for she knew his countenance so well, and loved its sunny

beaming expression, and she was concerned to see his brow so cloudy and troubled, and to give a sort of diversion to his thoughts, and chase away his gloom, she turned to me and said playfully :—

“ Well, Grace, dear, I suppose while you are at Seafeld I may have the charge of Mr. Lovely’s buttons ?”

I blushed deeply, and he looked up wonderingly at us both, saying—

“ I always thought I was indebted to your busy fingers for that useful service.”

“ Dear sir, no !” said Mrs. Nutley ; “ I have not leave to set a stitch for you ; indeed, by Grace’s goodwill, I never had since you brought her to Darlington.”

I was really vexed with her now. I did not want such a proclamation of my trifling services, and the very idea that he knew of them took from the character of my quiet enjoyment in rendering them, for “ stolen waters are sweet.” So I suppose I looked foolish enough at the discovery.

“ I thank you, Grace,” said Mr. Lovely.

“ Oh no, sir,” I said, “ you must not thank me for such a trifle. Mrs. Nutley was very good to give me the pleasure ; it was selfish of me to deprive her of it, and I deserve no thanks from you.”

“ Small service is true service while it lasts,” said Mrs. Nutley.

“ Of friends, however humble, scorn not one ;  
The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,  
Protects the lingering dew drop from the sun.”

“ Grace has been doing work that perhaps she did not intend to do elsewhere,” said Mr. Lovely, the shade returning to his brow.

I looked surprised, and said—

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Well, Grace, come and take a walk to the almshouse with me, and I will try to explain my enigma to you."

"I think, Mrs. Nutley," he added, "you know something of what I allude to?"

Mrs. Nutley smiled, and said—

"I had no opportunity to speak to Grace this morning, but you will do it better, sir."

And then, addressing me, she said—

"Go, my dear, and put on your hat quickly, Mr. Lovely waits for you."

I left the room to get my hat and cloak, and when I returned, I found my two friends apparently in earnest conversation as they stood by the fire, but on my entrance Mrs. Nutley turned to me, and said—

"You have lost your roses again, my dear; go and pick up some fresh ones as you cross the park."

I suppose I was pale, for I felt nervous and apprehensive, and when Mrs. Nutley kissed me as I left the room with Mr. Lovely, saying—"The Lord bless you, my dear child!" I had to swallow my tears, I felt so troubled; and Mr. Lovely saw that I was not able to speak to him, so he was silent for a little, and then drew my attention to the bursting buds that gemmed the trees in the park, and when he found that I was looking more composed, he said to me—

"Grace, what is your feeling with regard to our friend John Plant?"

"I think he is a good man, sir," I replied, "and an excellent son, and he has always been very kind and obliging to me. I esteem John Plant very highly."

"No more than that, Grace?" he said.

"No more, indeed, sir," I said, greatly pained that any such suspicion had crossed his mind with regard to me.

"Then, my dear child," he continued, "if that be your mind, you are scarcely prepared to hear that John Plant loves you, and would make you his wife."

I started as if with sudden pain.

"Oh! pray do not say so, Mr. Lovely," I replied; "I am very sorry to hear it."

"And may I ask why, Grace?" he said.

"Because, sir," I replied, "I cannot feel anything more for John than I do at present. I esteem him highly, indeed, I have a true friendship for him, and I quite love his good mother; but I never could be John's wife. Sir," I continued, looking steadily at him, and I suppose I spoke, as I felt, with some warmth, "I could not marry any man whom I did not love beyond all the world. I could not be happy myself, nor could I make him happy; and am I not right, sir?" I added, looking to him for sanction.

"Yes, Grace," he replied, "you are perfectly right as to the principle; but you are very young; and are you quite sure that you know your own mind? John is a good man, and will be a choice husband to his wife."

"Oh, Mr. Lovely," I said, entreatingly, "do not say any more to me about poor John. I am so sorry that he should have thought of me; and his mother will be grieved, and perhaps they will not understand my refusal as I mean it. Has he asked you to speak to me, sir?"

"No," he said; "but his mother asked me by John's desire."

"It was very good of them," I said; "and I feel so grateful to them—far more than I can say; but if it would be right for me to marry John Plant, I should have felt delighted to hear that he loved me, instead of, as I do, feeling deeply pained."

"I wonder," said Mr. Lovely, "that his mother never

hinted anything of the kind to you; she and you have been so very intimate."

"His mother, sir," I said, "was perhaps too honourable to take advantage of my position as her visitor. Indeed, if I could love John, his mother would be a special attraction to me to marry him."

"Grace," said Mr. Lovely, seriously, "do not be grieved with me for acting as a father towards you. I promised Mrs. ~~Morgan~~ that I would treat you as if you were my own child; and I do so now, when I ask you has any one ever spoken to you on the subject of love before?"

"Oh, dear sir, never!" I said; "and I feel so grieved now, that I should tremble to hear of it again. Will you," I added, "bring me to see Mrs. Plant on our way back? I should like to say farewell to her. You know I leave the day after to-morrow."

"Certainly; you are right," he said. "We shall call on our way back."

And we did call; and the good old lady looked so happy to see me that she filled me with sorrow. As she kissed me she felt that I trembled greatly. Mr. Lovely left me with her and said—

"You will find your way back alone, Grace. I must go over the hill to the steward's lodge."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Plant; "our good chaplain has told you news to-day;" and she smiled as she spoke.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied, bursting into tears.

"My dear child," she said, taking me to her arms, "what do you mean?"

I could not speak, but sobbed and wept on her bosom. She sighed deeply.

"Grace," she said, "must my John weep too?"

"Mrs. Plant," I said, "I do love John as a Christian

and as a brother; but I can do no more, and I grieve for him."

"Then I will not urge you further," she replied with great dignity, and I thought with wounded feeling. "My John is worthy of warmer entertainment to his first love than it seems you have to give; but you are right to put an end to his suspense. The Lord will provide him with a suitable helpmate in his own time and way; but I am sorry, and I cannot help feeling disappointed for with a mother's partiality for such a son, I thought that the knowledge of his love would have kindled yours; but I see it is not so, and we may yet see and acknowledge that '*it is well!*' Farewell, dear," she said, as I rose to go. "May the Lord bless and guide you, though you are not to be, as I fondly hoped, my own sweet little daughter!"

We parted affectionately but sorrowfully, and I hastened back to Mrs. Nutley, who was longing to hear the result of our conference in the park. She saw that I looked flushed and anxious, but I did not speak.

"My dear Grace," she said, "I am sorry to see you look so pained. Why is it so with you, my child?"

Her tender tones set me quivering again, and she guessed how matters were.

"You must not grieve so, my dear," she said. "It will, to be sure, be a disappointment to John; but men do not dwell on those things as women do; their life is so much abroad, and so full of active engagement, that it leaves them neither time, ability, or inclination to nurse disappointments of this kind. Indeed, I believe their feeling in general is more akin to vexation than grief, and there is no time when men are so apt to receive new impressions as when they have met with a cross of this kind. Men break where we bend; but John is a sensible man; he will mend this breach, and you must not fret for him

under the impression that he will feel as you would do under a similar disappointment."

"Oh no," I said, "Mrs. Nutley; I should be sorry to think that he would take it as I should. I think it would kill me."

"Then I hope, my dear," she said, "you will remember the divine precept, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' 'Set your affections on things above,' for all on earth is disappointing. But I marvel much, Grace, that you have been so surprised in this matter; every one else could see John's regard for you, and his mother's too, and I began to think that you must know it, and wondered that you never spoke to me, and I called you a shy little puss. And so you really could not respond to his regard for you, dear?"

"Oh no, Mrs. Nutley," I said; "I esteem him highly as a friend, but no more."

"Then I for one would not urge you," she said, "though I know he will be such a good husband; but esteem is a very insufficient foundation for a happy marriage. Indeed, it requires all the love of which we are capable to bear and forbear through the ups and downs of life; 'for how can two walk together except they be agreed?' But come now, my dear, and have something to eat," said Mrs. Nutley; "you will be busy all this evening and to-morrow preparing for your journey. I am so glad now that you are going away for a little; it will do you good and help John to forget you. Mr. Lovely will soften it down to him, and by the time you return you will be able to meet as friends, and blot this page out of your experience altogether."

On the appointed day we set off on our journey, and my reflections were painful enough for a while; it was so hard to feel assured that I had done quite right. We travelled

all day, and when we stopped for the night Bella was so tired and sleepy, that Janet and I had to attend to her and put her to bed. We were to occupy one apartment in the hotel, and when I saw the colonel go out to give directions about horses for the morning, I stole down to my dear patroness's room, and confided to her the source of my anxiety. She said Mr. Lovely had told her of my rejection of John Plant, and that she was sorry, not merely for him and his mother, but for me too, for she thought it would not be easy for me to find such another; and "dear Grace," she said, "I fear you have been hasty. Remember that the affections of another, and of one so worthy, are very sacred." She spoke to me so seriously that I began to feel almost guilty.

"I think if I had been in your place," Mrs. Manley continued, "I could not have refused John Plant; the love of such a man is a treasure not to be lightly thrown away. And do not be romantic, Grace," she said; "it is not necessary for you to be what silly girls call '*in love*' before you marry; I never was so before my marriage, and do I not love my husband? A woman's love increases after her marriage, Grace, if her husband be a worthy man."

"But, dear madam," I replied, "how could love increase if it did not exist? and I have no love for John."

"You must be ungrateful, then," she said, "when he loves you so."

"That is the cause of my sorrow, madam," I said; "I am really sorry for him, but I should be miserable for life if I married him."

"I begin to fear, Grace," said she, "that your heart has listened to some one else, perhaps less worthy. You will never get a better husband, and my mind would be easy about you if you had such a protector. I cannot but think that your dear mother would join with me on the subject."



“Ah, no, Mrs. Manley,” I said, “she always said a woman was wrong to marry any one that she could be happy without.”

“Well,” said she, “I can say no more ; but talk it over with Mrs. Moss, and it will not be too late for you to retrace your steps when you return to Darlington, next month ;” so, hearing the Colonel’s step in the hall, I said, “Good night,” and retired to bed, but not to sleep for a very long while. Our journey seemed so long, that I was very weary of it, but at the end of the second day I saw the well known church tower, and in a few minutes more felt myself in the motherly arms of my good old friend Mrs. Moss, and she seemed as if she could not let me go, although dear Rachel Wynyard and Winny were waiting for their embrace. It was a warm welcome I received at dear old Seafeld, and when we all sat down together to tea, I almost forgot all my troubles ; but the sight of Rachel’s mourning dress gave a check to my joy, and brought me back to the sad thoughts of change, separation, and death, that had filled my childish mind the day I left Seafeld ;—the vacant chair ! and now another place was empty. “And thou shalt be missed,” said Jonathan to David, “for thy seat will be empty.” We had much to say to each other, and our eyes did full duty too. My two old friends looked well, but Rachel pale and thin. They all looked wonderingly at me, now almost a woman, in my seventeenth year, but still their own little Grace.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### COMMUNINGS.

“How blest the scene where spirits blend,  
And friend holds fellowship with friend.”

I SLEPT with dear Rachel at Seafield, at least we occupied the same bed, but it was in the room that I had long ago shared with my beloved mother, and for some time I found it difficult to court rest there. On my lying down, busy memory reigned over all my other faculties and banished sleep, and each morning I awoke unrefreshed. When this phase had partially passed away, it was succeeded by a feeling of anxiety about John Plant; a fear of having done wrong seemed to pursue me night and day, and had I not had the testimony of my conscience that I had never suspected, far less encouraged his regard for me, or trifled with his affections, I think I should have been inconsolable; but I thank God that he never permitted me to entertain for a moment that basest of all the phases of girlish vanity, that selfish, heartless form of vice, alas! so common, yet so equally destructive to the peace of one sex and the purity of the other. A jilt, my dear children, is a disgrace to womanhood; and had I cause to accuse myself of such turpitude, I should have been without that self-respect that was my chief support at this period of my experience. Oh, how I longed to have my own dear mother's bosom to lean on! for I felt that to her alone I could unfold all the secrets of mine—she who so perfectly understood, and entirely sympathised with me, but, alas! the aching void was there;

none ever had, I thought none ever could, supply her place. Many a night, in that visit to Seafield, while dear Rachel Wynyard lay asleep beside me, I have strained my eyes looking out into the moonlit room, alas ! how vainly, for that dear form that embodied all earthly consolation to me. I have even listened, watching for the sound of her voice. At length, I was becoming really unwell, and yet I could not speak of what filled my mind, for I felt as if it would be dishonorable to John Plant to make known his secret. One day, after I had been there about a week, Mrs. Moss said to me, "Come, my dear, and let us have a walk together on the shore ; the air is very sweet and fresh to-day, and it will do us both good." So I put on my things, and we set off to the sea-side, always in itself a sweet and soothing scene to me. We sat down on a rock, and enjoyed the air for a little, and then my good old friend, taking hold of my hand, said, "Dear Grace, I am afraid you are not well enough, my child."

"Oh ! yes, Mrs. Moss, thank you," I replied, "I am not at all unwell, but I sleep badly."

"I should not have put you into Miss Wynyard's room," she said, "but she begged so to have you, and now I see that I was right. You would have been far better with myself ; you must try my room to-night, dear ; you look too white, and excuse me, dear," she added, "but I think I can feel you fretting ; tell me now, surely something is wrong with you ; oh ! I hope it may not be that you have given away your warm little heart." I blushed deeply when she spoke so, and this gave her a sort of confirmation of her fears ; so, to ease her mind, and remove from it not merely her unfounded cause for anxiety on my account, but also lest she should feel that I was treating her with want of confidence, I summoned up courage to tell her poor John Plant's story, from our first acquaintance to my rejection of his suit.

She listened to my tale with great interest, and in a true maternal spirit, until it came to the *finale*, and then, indeed, she looked the picture of chagrin and disappointment.

"Ah! my child," she said, "I fear you have been hasty: you must think it over again; surely if you would only give this good young man an opportunity to gain your heart, he would succeed in the end, and I should see you a happy wife; and this would be an unspeakable relief to my mind. You tell me," she added, "that he is so good, and amiable, and an excellent son; perhaps," she said, looking archly at me, "he is not well-looking."

"Oh, yes, dear Mrs. Moss," I said, smiling at her notion, "John is really quite a handsome young man."

"Then what do you want, dear?" she said, almost pettishly. "I am afraid that you do not know your own mind now, and that you may be sorry hereafter. You would not be afraid to live with his mother? Such a mother-in-law would be a true comfort to you, Grace. I know mine was to me. I could not love my own mother more than I did my mother-in-law; indeed, we never had a quarrel. She kept me up in the eyes of my husband, and I upheld her in the regards of her son, and we lived down the foolish fears of some who would have dissuaded me from going into the house to John Moss's mother, by saying, that 'it would take a great fire to warm a mother-in-law.'"

"Ah, Mrs. Moss," I replied, "if I could love John Plant well enough to make him and myself happy by marrying him, I should be delighted to have his excellent mother to live with; she is a Christian, and a gentlewoman, and loves me so, that I should be quite at home with her."

"Then, dear child," she said, "do not throw away such an opportunity of securing a protector for life. I mean a

legal protector ; for although I should be 'glad to think that your father was dead, (at least for your sake,) I do not feel at all sure of it. Not very long since, I met with a sailor who was in the Brazils with him since your dear mother's death. I could not be mistaken in his description, which quite accorded with your mother's, and her memory of him was true and vivid. Now dear, forgive me for alarming you, but recollect that until you are of age you can be claimed at any time by your father ; the law would give him power over your person, for you know he was no party to your adoption at Darlington."

Dear Mrs. Moss looked almost triumphantly at me, as much as to say that circumstances alter cases, and that I was sure to act the part of a wise young woman, and accept with gratitude the hand held out to me by my worthy suitor. The mention of the dreaded name of my father did indeed sound a key-note of alarm that vibrated through my whole being, and I leaned my head upon my hand as I paused to consider what might be the will of God concerning me. Mrs. Moss's hopes rose, I am sure, by seeing me so thoughtful, and so silent, and at last she roused me from my painful reverie by saying : " Well, now, my dear one, what do you think ? and what would your dear mother think if we had her beside us ?"

" Mrs. Moss," I said, " I have thought, and thought again, of all that you say, and the answer of my own heart is still no, no ; we must not 'do evil that good may come,' and to me it would be positive evil to marry at all, except it should please God to inspire some one with regard for me, whose regard I could fully return, and whom I could love *second only to God*. And as to my poor father, although I should dread to live with him if he be still unchanged, yet, if years and trials have softened his spirit, and made him a different man, do not think that I would

shrink from him. Oh, no; it would be my duty as his child, to minister to him if he required it, and I know dear mother would say so too. How could I enjoy my present ease and prosperity, and know that my only parent needed my services? I could not expect the blessing of God, and I should forfeit my own peace of conscience if I neglected 'the commandment with promise.' So I must just try to leave all with the Lord, and he will never leave or forsake those who trust in him. My mother gave me up to him, and he adopted me into his own family, and what have I to fear?" My good old friend was melted to tears.

"I give it up, Grace," she said; "I shan't urge you any further. 'The Lord will provide;' but come, let us get away home, or Winny will scold us for spoiling her cake. She has tea ready, and waiting for us, dear, and we shall enjoy it after our walk and talk."

When we returned to the farm, we did, indeed, find Winny making quite an outcry at our long absence; but we soon pacified her by enjoying and admiring her good cheer. The heavy weight was gone from my mind by the free intercourse with my good old friend, and I suppose it brightened my eye and made me look more cheerful. My evenings at Seafield were spent in setting Mrs. Moss's wardrobes and presses to rights, and she showed me, with great pride, a goodly store of snowy linen, that she had laid up for my housekeeping; nor did she forget to replenish my purse, and to commend my judicious outlay of her former bounty. She was quite pleased with my style of dress, which was rich and good, but sober for so young a girl as I was then. My mother was my model in this as in other things. She dressed like those simply elegant women commonly called Quakers, in grave, neutral tints, so peculiarly becoming to women professing godliness, and that suggest the very idea of purity, propriety, and good

taste. As a young woman I believe she was exquisitely neat in all the details of her attire; but from the time she became serious, her taste seemed to be toned down to the gravity of her mind, so that she strictly avoided all vain and worldly frippery. There is often a good deal of character displayed in the style of a woman's dress, and as I was naturally very shy, timid, and retiring, my taste in dress was subdued; indeed, since I began to think for myself, it always appeared to me that the object of a modest woman in the matter of dress should be to escape rather than to attract observation. "Good wine needs no bush." I recollect Mrs. Manley telling me of a beautiful friend of hers whose dress, and especially her caps, were remarkably simple, and whenever she was rallied on the subject, she used to reply, that "a pretty face did not want a fine cap, and an ugly face did not deserve one." Yet, simple as her head-dress was, her young friends have often copied it, in the hope of producing the same effect; but her father, who was very proud of her, used to laugh and say—

"You will have to copy the face with the cap, or it won't do."

It seems to me quite a pity to see girls in their first fresh bloom, disfigure themselves as they often do, by adopting the monstrosities of fashion, that *passé belles* invent in order to divert attention from themselves to their attire. However, if taste in dress be at all hereditary, my descendants will avoid a *prononcé* style of adornment, and rather come in at the tail, than at the head of the fashion.

While I was at Seafeld, Rachel and I were looking over some elaborate descriptions of French modes, and being posed by some of the terms, she applied to her friend, Mr. Weston, for the meaning of some of the foreign phrases, as he was such a nice linguist.

"Mr. Weston," she said, "will you assist Miss Leigh and me in our puzzling over these words?"

"I should be sorry, ladies," he replied, "to send you for information to the inventor of this trash, for I do think that the author of evil himself has had a great hand in it. He does not care what absurd trifles fill the female mind, if he can only succeed in excluding that 'meek and quiet spirit which are of such great price in the sight of God.'"

This was Mr. Weston's first visit to us since my arrival. He had been away for some days, making arrangements for bringing his mother, or rather stepmother, and her two daughters to the rectory to live with him. Mrs. Moss could not at all understand how any one could voluntarily live with a stepmother; and she said so to Rachel.

"Well, Mrs. Moss," she said, "I wondered too at first, but Mr. Weston was very young when he lost his own mother, and this excellent lady never suffered him to feel his loss; for she loved and tended him as if he had been her own son, and often made his peace with his father when he fell into delinquency of any kind; and this was the more remarkable, as she had children of her own. He told me, that on one occasion, when his father had brought handsome presents from London to his wife and her daughters, and had overlooked his own two little boys, this judicious and excellent lady went out and purchased gifts for them, which she slipped into their father's portmanteau, so that the motherless children might not feel forgotten."

"The dear woman!" said poor Mrs. Moss, with tears in her eyes, "for her sake, I will never be so hard on stepmothers again; but, indeed, I did not think it was possible to find such a one as Mrs. Weston must be. No wonder he loves and honours her and her children."

"He is longing for their arrival," said Rachel, "and



for his sake we must all make them very welcome to Seafeld."

And they did come to the rectory the next week, and Rachel asked me to accompany her on the first visit. She had never been there from the day of our dear pastor's burial, and it was with conflicting emotions that she wended her way up the breezy hill, and through the trim garden, to the house that had been her happy home from infancy. Her father had been an officer in the Indian army, and her mother, Dr. Warne's only daughter, accompanied her husband to the East, leaving her little girl with her parents. Mrs. Warne lived long enough to mourn for her far-away son and daughter, who never returned, and to bring up their child until she was of age to take her place with the good old man. And then the gentle grandmother faded away from their little circle, and Rachel became everything to her grandfather. Now, with all these memories crowding to her view, she passed the well-known study window, and was met at the door by Mr. Weston, whose first pleasure at seeing Rachel approach the house was instantly checked by her pale tremulous appearance. She held close by my arm, even while he presented her to his mother and sisters—the former, a dignified elderly woman, with a very benign expression of countenance—the latter, two, gay bright girls, younger than Rachel. Mr. Weston addressed himself to me, leaving it to his mother to entertain Rachel; but I was glad to see that while he spoke to me, his eyes were with his heart, glancing anxiously at the impression the ladies were making on each other. Now, I divined the unspoken joy that so often brightened Rachel's countenance, while talking with me on indifferent matters. Several times she seemed upon the point of saying something to me, but as often checked herself, perhaps in the hope that I would speak to her. Mrs. Moss and Winny looked

wise, but said nothing, and I was all in the dark, until I saw Rachel at the rectory, and then I felt that she was carefully scanned by the ladies, old and young, and that Mr. Weston was watching the mutual impression with anxious interest. Our visit was short, and when we rose to take leave, he accompanied us to the gate; and there, as we parted, I saw with joy that my dear Rachel truly loved and was beloved again. He appeared to be very amiable and excellent in every way, but somehow he seemed to me too young for Rachel to look up to with wifely reverence: he was but twenty-four, and she was three or four years older; however, "love levels all distinctions," and love was between these two; pure, earnest love, and I rejoiced to see it for the sake of my dear orphan friend. When we had left the rectory, Rachel looked so beseechingly at me, that I felt it a call to speak out. So I told her I hoped she would be happy, and that I had not suspected her secret before.

"Happy with Henry, I must be," she said, "under any circumstances; but I hope I shall not be jealous of those gay sisters who hang about him so. I felt disappointed when I found that they were to live with him, and yet I am angry with myself for such a feeling. I hope it will wear away. I believe there is a sort of instinctive repulsion between sisters-in-law, Grace, and I felt afraid of them, and of their good mother too. They perhaps think that he is throwing himself away, and would rather have a younger and more showy person for him. But I am wrong," she added, "to let one shade come over such love as I am the object of."

The ice once broken on the subject, I found that Rachel loved to talk, and be talked to, about her prospects, and I believe I was just then a great boon to her. Altogether that visit to Seafeld did me a world of good; we saw a great deal of our new neighbours, and before I left I was

pleased to notice a happy cordiality established between the good Mrs. Weston and Rachel, that made the young man's eyes glisten with delight. I could not help wishing to see the pair united, but that event was not to take place for several months, and meantime my happy visit drew to a conclusion.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### RETURN TO DARLINGTON.

“ Saw ye my father ?  
Saw ye my mother ?  
Saw ye my true love, John ?  
I saw not your father !  
I saw not your mother !  
But I saw your true love, John.”

A HAPPY visit it had been truly, a time of sweet intercourse and loving communion—a type of that happy time to come, when we shall rejoice together in the presence of our King, and see Him in his beauty. Surely He has proved to us that he knew not merely what was in man, but what was good for him ; when he *commanded* us to “ love one another,” for without mutual love this beautiful world would be a bleak desert : “ it is not good for man to be alone.” To be happy, he must be social, and rub off the angularities of selfishness, by a mutual system of good offices, in the very exercise of which we are happy, and make others happy. I think it was that good man, John Newton of Olney, who used to say, “ that there were two heaps in the world : a small one of happiness, and a large one of misery ; and that, if we could take ever so little from the greater, and add it to the lesser heap, we should not live in vain.” Then, too, if we recollect that we are being educated here for eternity, it gives us an additional incentive to practise those lessons of love, that will form our characters to that mould, which we are privileged to see in such full and

glorious relief, in the blessed life of "God manifest in the flesh," "who went about doing good."

It was fully six weeks before my dear patroness called at Seafeld to take me up on her way back to Darlington, and she seemed greatly pleased to see me so improved in health and spirits. She had written to me from Ravenshaw to say when she expected to arrive in Wales; and told me to be prepared to join her at a moment's notice, as the largeness of her party would prevent her staying a night. She was accompanied by her aunt, Lady Linton, who brought with her, in the capacity of companion and attendant, a bright young Irish girl named Lucy Heath, the daughter of a respectable tenant on her estate in the north, who was glad to give one of his large family so good an opportunity of improvement as she was sure to enjoy under the patronage of his excellent landlady. The party landed at Holyhead on a Monday, where the Darlington carriage was waiting for them. They came to us at once, and after a few hour's refreshment they carried me off with them. Both the ladies were quite charmed with dear Rachel Wynyard, and would have been very glad to have secured her services as Bella's governess, but that I gave Mrs. Manley a hint that a brighter prospect lay before her. We were not expected to arrive at Darlington until Saturday, so that we spent two or three days in London on our way—a great treat to Lucy Heath, Bella, and myself; and our kind motherly friends made the most of the opportunity for our sakes. Altogether, it was a most pleasant journey, and as the genial Irish girl and I occupied the same apartment, we were quite at home with each other before we arrived at Darlington. Lady Linton had introduced us to each other, expressing a hope that we should be good friends, and help each other up that hill of difficulty that so often lies before us in the way of duty; and I found, with pleasure,

that Lucy was to join us at Mrs. Nutley's table, and spend as much of her time with us as was not occupied in attendance on Lady Linton, to whom she was to be reader and amanuensis. This was a delightful arrangement for me; for Lucy's gay, bright spirits were as salutary to me, as my sobriety was to her. She was, indeed, happy to have secured such a patroness, for Lady Linton was no ordinary woman; she appeared to be a person of great mental energy and large-hearted benevolence—one to plan and carry out schemes for the good and happiness of all around her. I believe she was quite a Lady Bountiful on her own estate, where she had installed her own woman as almoner in her absence. She was a very fine-looking person, but quite in a different style from Mrs. Manley. Lady Linton was tall and handsome, with dark hair and eyes, and a very dignified presence; while my sweet patroness was transparently fair, with a delicate grace about her that was very attractive. Lucy Heath was a stout, rosy, good-humoured looking girl of two or three and twenty; of a sensible, pleasing countenance and merry, innocent manners. My natural timidity and reserve could not stand long before her hearty, genial look and manner; and by the time we had reached Darlington, I could scarcely believe that it was an acquaintance of a week that I introduced to Mrs. Nutley in the person of her young countrywoman. Dear Mrs. Nutley was very glad to get her right hand (as she called me) back to her side again; and Mr. Lovely, too, welcomed me with great cordiality.

"Mrs. Nutley and I missed you, Grace," he said: "perhaps I had better not tell you how much; we must not make you conceited."

"Oh no, dear sir," I said; "it will, I hope, only make me grateful to both of you; it is pleasant to feel that some-

body misses us. Since I left Darlington, I have often thought, like Alexander Selkirk,

‘My friends, do they now and then send  
A wish, or a thought, after me?’

and I am glad that you have enabled me to give an affirmative to the question.”

Lady Linton and Lucy Heath were established in a pretty suite of rooms, with a balcony looking out on the park, and not far from our turret. There Lucy spent her days until Lady Linton went to dinner, and then we generally had her for the evening. She brought her work with her, and most pleasant evenings we had—one of us occasionally reading to the rest. Lucy, as I have said, was one of a large family, of whom she loved to talk to us. Her father had a small farm and mill near Ravenshaw; and by the time she had spent a month with us, we knew the whole history of all at “Millfall,” from the eleven brothers and sisters who were her juniors, to her flower knot and guinea fowl. It was easy to see that she had been carefully trained by a wise mother, who brought her up in the fear of God, and the love of all around her. Indeed, she was a pleasant addition to our quiet household; and her good lady seemed to infuse new life and spirit into us all. She went through the cottages and almshouses, and visited the tenantry, doing good to mind, body, and estate, of all with whom she came in contact.

When Mrs. Nutley and I found ourselves alone, we sat down together to enjoy a confidential chat over my affairs; and when I had told her that I was confirmed in my conviction that I had done right with regard to John Plant, she said—

“Then I suppose, dear, it is useless for me to give you a message with which he intrusted me. Soon after you

left us, Grace, I went to see his mother, whom I found much troubled on John's account."

"I cannot tell, Mrs. Nutley," she said, "how he gets through the duties of his situation, for he seems to me not to be able to eat, drink, or sleep for sadness. I could not have thought that his regard for Grace was so deep as I find it is; and I am glad to see you," she continued, "because I know you have influence over her, and it seems to me that she has acted hastily, and without due consideration for the feelings of my son. Do you think it would be of any use to write to her, or should John write and plead his own cause?"

I felt very much for the good mother, but I thought that I should be honest with her; and so I said, "Will you send John to me, Mrs. Plant, and we will talk it over, and I will try to reconcile his mind to what I do think is a matter of necessity; for I know Grace so well, and how incapable she is of trifling with the affections of another, that I confess I have but little hope of her changing her mind. Mr. Lovely and I said all that we thought it right to say to her upon the subject, and I think Mrs. Manley did so too; but she seems very strong in her own conviction, that it would be sinful for her to marry without such a measure of love as she has never yet felt for any one; and it is better for John to think no more on the subject if possible. I should not like, at all events, to write to her on the subject, for she was far from being strong or well when she left us, and I assure you she felt so deeply about John's disappointment, and her own inability to remove it, that I think she would have had a serious indisposition if she had not broken away from the scene of her excitement just when she did. So we will let her rest quietly now at Seafeld, and enjoy her visit to her old friends without interruption, and perhaps she may come home in another



mind. I say *perhaps*, for I have not much hope ; she is a very still creature, but deep and solid in her mind, and not easily bent from what she thinks to be her right course."

"Well Mrs. Nutley, I believe you are right," replied Mrs. Plant, "and I confess that it is with great reluctance I would consent to press or urge Grace to re-consider her rejection of John's love, for my ideas of love are very high. I think, to be right or happy, it ought to be spontaneous and reciprocal. But what will a mother not do for her child, and such a one as my John? What would become of me if he sank under this disappointment? He is much of his father's mind and spirit, and my dear husband told me that the day he first named his love to me, he thought a straw would have knocked him down if he had not seen in my eyes a response to his affection. Ah! Mrs. Nutley," she concluded, "Grace will never get a better husband than my John."

"So now, dear, Grace," said Mrs. Nutley, "I do not see how I am to fulfil my promise to John, of asking you to allow him to pay you a visit here, and open his mind to you fully ; for this was the substance of his talk with me when he called, the day after I saw his mother. I was sorry to see such a change in the poor fellow ; I should scarcely have recognised him he looked so worn and haggard. I had to satisfy him by making a sort of promise that I would ask you to receive a visit from him ; and what do you say now, my dear?"

"O, dear Mrs. Nutley!" I replied, "you would not ask me if you had any idea of the effect it would have upon me, and the little benefit that could arise to John from such a sacrifice. It would be more than I should be able to bear, to witness pain that I was utterly unable to relieve, so that, if you would befriend us both in this sad dilemma, it would be by preventing any possible meeting between us."

Just then Mr. Lovely came in for a moment on business of Mrs. Manley's, and I left him with Mrs. Nutley, and retired to my own little room in very dull spirits indeed. I was preparing to go to bed when Mrs. Nutley came in.

"Well, my dear," she said, Mr. Lovely agrees with you, that, with your present feelings, it is better that you and John should not meet; and he will take care to prevent his coming here, so you may make your mind easy."

"Ah! Mrs. Nutley," I said, "it is hard for me to feel at ease, and know that I am the cause of unhappiness to John and his mother. However, I feel that I could not act otherwise: my conscience does not accuse me; and for the rest, I must trust that He, who alone can do so, will bring good out of all this apparent evil."

"Yes, He can and will," said Mrs. Nutley; "man brings evil out of good, but God brings good out of evil. So now, my dear, good-night."

It was a great matter for us at that time to have the gay, bright Lucy Heath coming in and out of our quiet room occasionally, just as if she had been amongst us for years; but there was one drawback to my enjoyment, that we saw less of Mr. Lovely in the evenings; indeed, I do not think he ever came to us except when he knew that Lucy was engaged with Lady Linton. Somehow he and Lucy never gained on each other; her gay face would tone down to an unnatural sobriety at the very sight of him, and his manner towards her was very still and distant. One day Mrs. Nutley was praising her to him, and she said—

"I wish sir, Lucy could share her gaiety with this sober little girl of mine."

"Ah! no, Mrs. Nutley," he said, smiling at me, "I should not recognise Grace in a merry mood; and I believe I like her better as she is. I suppose I am a sort of half hermit, or oddity; but I do not much enjoy the sight of

*great* mirth, except amongst little children : it becomes our Bella at her years ; but it is one of the childish things that it seems graceful to put away with the other toys of childhood."

"Now, sir, do not say so," said Mrs. Nutley ; "surely you are always cheerful."

"Oh ! I hope so," he replied ; "but if I look *merry*, I never feel so. However, I am an old grey-headed man, and I have no right to lay down the law for bright young people like Lucy ; but do not be uneasy about our Grace," he continued ; "just now her sympathies are very naturally excited on behalf of others. This cloud will soon pass away, Grace, and then you will be able again to enjoy as much, in your own quiet way, as those who exhibit their emotions more noisily—at least, I hope so."

Lady Linton was not in strong health, and now passed much of her time out of doors until sundown, and was accompanied in her rambles by Bella and Lucy Heath. These rambles extended to every part of the demesne, either in her chair or on foot ; and as she was a great lover of flowers, she often walked or rode about the pleasance, and delighted John Plant by her admiration of the beauties of his department. She took kind notice of his mother also, and was a great comfort to the good old lady ; indeed, Lady Linton did not live for herself. She told Mrs. Manley, that on the death of her husband and only son, she would have secluded herself from the world altogether, but from a sense of duty to her fellow creatures ; and, having once made the struggle for the sake of others, she felt the benefit of it herself. Her residence at Darlington was a boon to the whole neighbourhood, and was the means of stirring up our own dear gentle lady to follow her more active example. Soon after Lady Linton's arrival, a poor woman in the neighbourhood became the mother of twins, and, having but

scanty provision in the way of wardrobe for one infant, was unable to manage comfortably for the second. Lady Linton had been to see her, and on her return held a consultation with Mrs. Manley about providing some additional baby-linen. Mrs. Manley immediately told her aunt that Janet would look up some of Bella's clothes for the poor woman. "Bella's clothes, my dear!" said her ladyship; "and do you suppose that the poor woman can sit down and transform them into such things as she requires for a baby of three days old? Listen to my plan, and see if it appears more feasible than your own. To begin with, I will provide some flannel, in which I put great faith for babyhood; you know the old recipe for rearing infants: 'Plenty of *milk*, plenty of *sleep*, and plenty of *flannel*;' then, if Mrs. Nutley and Janet will find some old linen for us, we shall soon be able, with the assistance of Lucy and Grace, to make up a few garments that will be a great boon to the little stranger, who, for all that we know, may yet be Lord Chancellor of England, and owe us a good turn for stitching up his first envelope." So Lady Linton's plan was adopted; she and Mrs. Nutley cut out, and we all stitched away with a right goodwill, and soon had quite a nice, comfortable packet of baby-linen made up, which Lucy, Bella, and I carried across the park to the cottage of the poor mother, who was very thankful for the abundant and seasonable supply. This occurred in five or six weeks after my return to Darlington, during which time I had never met John Plant; but on this evening, when returning from the poor woman's cottage, we encountered John on his way from the new plantation to his own house. I felt ready to drop with undefined apprehension, and would have turned up a path that led to the house, opposite to the one on which I saw John; but to my amazement, Lucy said, "Oh! Grace, where are you going? don't you see Mr. Plant?" so I had

to face John, but with such downcast eyes that neither of us were much the wiser for the interview, which was evidently shorter than Lucy wished ; but, short as it was, I saw enough to surprise me. I could scarcely believe the evidence of my senses, when I found the terms on which Lucy and John appeared to be. Evidently there was an excellent understanding established between them, and the meeting appeared to be mutually agreeable. When John turned to go to his mother's, Lucy said to me, with a very surprised look, " Well, Grace, how is it that you and Mr. Plant seem like strangers to each other, and I, who only know him a few weeks, feel as if he were an old friend ?"

" Oh, Lucy," I replied, " you and I are very different ; happily for you, you are not as shy as I am." Lucy looked beaming, and would have said more about John ; indeed she did say how handsome he was, and that she had not seen such a young man since she came to England ; but I put an end to the theme, by turning to dear Bella, and helping her to fill her basket with wood flowers. When Mrs. Nutley and I were alone, I told her what had occurred, and she smiled pleasantly at me, and said, " Come, come, all will be right in time ; you know, dear, ' when things come to the worst, they *must* mend.' "

## CHAPTER XXVI.

“And he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Heb. ii. 8.

“Adieu, sweet land of France!”

AFTER we had supplied the wants of the poor woman on the common of Darlington, we had a good deal of materials on our hands, which the active, excellent Lady Linton proposed that we should work up into similar articles for future use; and we did so; and the work seemed to grow upon our hands, and was, in its results, a comfort to many poor mothers and their babies. Some of our neighbours also interested themselves in the subject, and supplied us with an additional stock of flannel and linen, and Lady Linton arranged that one evening in each month should be devoted to their manufacture; and, in order to combine mental profit to ourselves with our useful handiwork for others, either she or Mrs. Manley read to us while we worked. Sometimes, too, she would induce Mr. Lovely to read to us; for she used to say that it was as good as music to listen to his reading. I have often wondered that there is not more attention paid to this charming accomplishment, so acceptable and useful to others in its exercise, and yet so very rarely to be met with. Nehemiah viii. 8, is a fine instance, and one that always occurred to my mind whenever I had the privilege of listening to our chaplain: “So they read in the book of the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and *caused them to understand the reading*.”

We were all greatly interested on one occasion, by a paper which Mr. Lovely read to us, entitled “A Chapter

of Domestic History in the Days of the Huguenots," and which he assured us was the relation of an incident that had occurred to his own Huguenot ancestors. I shall here transcribe it for you, or rather, give you the substance of it from memory, in my own words; but let me, before I forget the baby-linen subject, remind you that those who give unmade garments to the poor, either large or small, only bestow half the benefit they might do if they would add the boon of their own handiwork. The household engagements of poor mothers of families are always so multiform, and often so laborious, and necessary to be performed, perhaps, with indifferent health or insufficient means, that it is unreasonable to expect that their ingenuity can be as fresh to plan and cut out, or their fingers as deft and nimble to execute, as the well-trained hands and disengaged brains of the lady donors; and how can young ladies be more agreeably or usefully employed on a winter evening than in the manufacture of garments, big or little, for their less fortunate sisters? You will find, too, that, after such a wholesome exercise of affections and energies, you will be able to return to your books, your music, or your *broderie*, with fresh zest and enjoyment.

But now for our chaplain's story, which I must preface by reminding you that the city of Rochelle was the great gathering point for the persecuted Huguenot party. Fox says: "The inhabitants of Rochelle, hearing of the cruelties committed on their brethren, resolved to defend themselves against the power of the king; and their example was followed by various other towns, with which they entered into a confederacy, exhorting and inspiring each other in the common cause. To crush this, the king shortly after summoned the whole power of France, and the greatest of his nobility, among whom were his royal brothers: he invested Rochelle by land and sea, and com-

menced a furious siege, which, but for the immediate hand of God, must have ended in its destruction. Seven principal assaults were made against the town; but none of them succeeded. At one time a breach was made by the tremendous cannonade; but, through the undaunted valour of the citizens, assisted even by their wives and daughters, who could not be restrained, the soldiers were driven back with great slaughter. It is worthy of record, that, amidst every scarcity of provisions, there was found in the river a great multitude of fish, which the people used instead of bread; these fish, on the conclusion of the siege, entirely disappeared. The siege lasted seven months, when the Duke of Anjou being proclaimed King of Poland, he, in concert with the King of France, entered into a treaty with the people of Rochelle, which ended in a peace: conditions, containing twenty-five articles, having been drawn up by the latter, embracing many immunities both for themselves and other Protestants in France, were confirmed by the king, and proclaimed with great rejoicings at Rochelle and other cities. The year following the king (Charles the Ninth) died.”\*

“This siege of Rochelle occurred after the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew, and many of the Huguenot nobles from the other provinces were only too thankful to escape to this city of refuge with the loss of their estates, and engage in commerce with the remnant of their fortunes in order to support their families. The peace of conscience, and free exercise of religious liberty which they had thus secured amply indemnifying them for the losses to which they submitted in the struggle for ability to worship the God they loved, according to his own word, “in spirit and in truth.” The Rochellais gladly welcomed their perse-

\* “Fox’s Martyrology,” page 196.



cuted brethren to participation in their dearly-purchased privileges, and fraternised with them in that sweet bond of Christian fellowship that unites those followers of Christ who have suffered for his sake.

“In the environs of Rochelle dwelt one of those holy families, people of wealth, station, and refinement. They had cast in their lot with the little flock, and were settled at Pont-Gibaud, near the city, where some generations of them enjoyed rest and peace, and were able to afford it to others. But troubles came again. The reign of the Grand Monarque proved another sifting time for religious principle; and, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, (to which Louis XIV. is supposed to have been incited by Madame Maintenon), the R.\* family, with many others, were obliged to fly. The Madame R. of that day, (a young and lovely woman), was on the point of becoming a mother for the first time, and, in these trying circumstances, she accompanied her husband to Ireland, already the home of many of the French refugees. They landed at Cork, carrying with them only their money and jewels, and hoped to be able to reach Dublin before Madame R.’s accouchement; but the fatigue and anxiety of her hurried journey accelerated her illness, and her infant son was born in a hotel in C——, on the banks of the beautiful river Barrow.

“As soon as his wife was able to travel, R. took her to Dublin, where they were warmly welcomed by the little French Church already established in that city. There he opened a bank, and succeeded beyond his hopes in his com-

\* The names of Raboteau and Barré are still to be found in the records of the old Huguenot church, in which they officiated as elders; and, from the difficulty of procuring regular clergy, they were often called to minister to their brethren in the services of the Sabbath.

mercial enterprise; and two daughters were added to their family, who were married to the brothers Phipps, of Sligo. Jean Charles, the only son, was early established in business for himself as a wine merchant; in the pursuit of which he traded between Dublin and France, and entered into commercial relations with the French wine-growers, and as he took in his lading at the port of Rochelle, it enabled him to keep up a friendly communication with his father's old friends, and amongst the rest with his relations at Pont-Gibaud, where he staid while his vessel was preparing for sea. Some of the family seem to have begun by temporising, and ended by giving in their adhesion to the dominant creed; for on one of his visits, he was concerned to hear from two of his young female cousins, that they were then enduring persecution for sake of their principles, and that, if they refused to marry the Roman Catholic husbands that their friends had provided for them, they were to be obliged, as their only alternative, to take the veil in a neighbouring convent. R. not merely sympathised with them in their perplexity, but encouraged them to hope that he would be able, with the divine assistance, to find a safe deliverance for them from this terrible dilemma. They had been given three months by their friends to make their decision, and it so happened that the time would expire while R.'s vessel lay at Rochelle; and as the ladies appeared passive, it was taken for granted that they would prefer the *éclat* of the bridal procession, to the dim solitude of the cloister. It was then very warm weather, and the horses, impatient of confinement in the heated stables, were every night tied under the large walnut-trees that adorned the lawn. One night, within a short time after R.'s return to Dublin, he untied two of the horses, and having previously arranged with his cousins to be prepared for sudden flight, he took them into Rochelle when the family were asleep, and lodged them

safely with a widow lady of his acquaintance, who attended to them herself with such secrecy, that none of her family knew they were in the house. Meantime, he hurried back to Pont-Gibaud, tied up the horses, and went to bed, and when the ladies were missed in the morning, none was apparently more vigorous in the search than their courageous deliverer. But after some days, active pursuit ceased, and, well aware of the cause of their flight being the coercion to which they had been subjected, their friends contented themselves for the present with writing to all their distant acquaintance, to engage their sympathy and assistance in recovering and restoring the wanderers. Still R. kept his ground, and maintained his disengaged manner and appearance, and altogether acted with such tact and prudence that no suspicion rested on him at that time. The day before that on which his vessel was to sail, he took leave of his friends at Pont-Gibaud, and repaired to Rochelle to make his final preparations. There he found his young kinswomen safe and well under the care of his good old friend, the widow; but now came the climax of perplexity; how were they to be got on board? In his former voyages he had often brought his mother a few casks of French apples; so that it was nothing uncommon to see two of them carried on board, and in those two casks were safely packed the fair *émigrés*! The vessel got out of harbour that night, and as soon as they were once fairly out at sea, the prisoners were released, and put in possession of the little cabin, and, arriving safely in Dublin, were joyfully welcomed by the R.'s and their friends—to two of whom they were shortly afterwards happily married—one of them to Colonel Isaac Barré, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons; the other to Monsieur C., both of whom had preceded them but a short time in the tide of emigration. The only dowry which these gentlemen received with their fair

brides, were the jewels they carried with them in the apple-casks of Rochelle. R. continued for some time to make his voyages as usual, but on one of his visits to Pont Gibaud he felt that the eye of suspicion rested on him, and he determined to give no future opportunity for his apprehension. That was his last visit to the fatherland; for although he still carried on the importation of French wines, he never again accompanied his cargo. He soon after married the daughter of an Irish clergyman, with whom he had a numerous and lovely family: "one of whom," said Mr. Lovely, "was my grandmother; a woman of rare mental endowments. She had the happiness of attending on her father in his widowed and declining years, in her own married home, on the banks of the same river Barrow, within sight of which he was born, and now lies buried."

You should have seen our chaplain's face, dear children, as he laid down his manuscript; it was indeed a study, and a fair study. I could not help thinking that he was the very man (all unworldly as he was in his spirit,) who could plan, and carry out, as hazardous and successful a scheme as his ancestor's. How truly says the wise man, that "the wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous is *bold as a lion*!"


NOTE.—The above incident happened in the family of the Author's maternal ancestors: the younger R. was her great grandfather.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### BELLA'S ILLNESS.

"Is there in bowers of endless spring  
One known from all the seraph band  
By softer voice, by smile and wing,  
More exquisitely bland?  
Here let him speed : to day this hallowed air  
Is fragrant with a mother's fondest prayer."

THE remembrance of that summer is very pleasant to me. The presence of a large-souled, enlightened Christian, like Lady Linton, in a household, exercises such a happy (and in our case almost commanding) influence; for my dear patroness, all sweetness and feminine loveliness as she was, wanted nerve and tact for her important position, and but for Mrs. Nutley and Mr. Lovely, (or as she playfully called them, her "head and hands,") her loving spirit would often have failed in the attempt to carry out the desires of her heart for the good of others; however, it is very probable that had she been a less passive character she would not have suited her lord and master as well as she did. Colonel Manley used to call her his "little Mistress Mousie," and so she was; a quiet, unpretending ornament to his massive grandeur; this was her niche, she filled it, and was content. But while her active aunt was beside her it was wonderful to see how she stirred her up to action, and supported her through it. About this time our sweet flower Bella had a terrible illness, which threw us all into sad consternation. Animated as this dear little maid was with the



only element of glee in our sober household, the hushing of her merry voice and bounding footstep left a sad blank; but, painfully missed as she was by all, what must have been the feelings of her idolising mother! Her illness began with what was called worm-fever, but most of the ailments of children in those days were attributed to the same source, so that the worms should have had broad shoulders to bear the brunt of all that was laid to their charge, in the derangements of the little nursery folk; I think we should now call this illness of Bella's gastric, but at all events, her fever ran high, and lasted so long that our dear little one wasted rapidly, and after the third week the flame of life appeared to flicker in its frail socket. Mrs. Nutley and Janet sat up with her the first half of the night, and were relieved by Lucy Heath and myself, or Lady Linton and Mrs. Manley. We had special prayer for our dear little sufferer in the chapel every day at noon—*heart prayer* it was truly, from our chaplain down to the servants. As for the poor colonel, he seemed oppressed and bowed down with a burden of silent woe, that he would not let any human being touch with one of their fingers. One morning the doctor seemed greatly puzzled, and looking at Mrs. Manley with an expression of deep compassion, in answer to her anxious inquiry, he said—

“My dear madam, I am not without hope of a rally in our dear little patient, but I will not conceal from you that there is much to fear. There is so much vitality about a child, and such rebound in a naturally healthy young creature like our invalid, that we must not despair while there is life. Still, I confess I do not feel free to leave her. If you please, I will remain and watch her closely for the next twelve hours. A crisis is evidently approaching, but we cannot calculate upon its nature, and it is only the part

of wisdom to look possible danger in the face, and be prepared for the worst."

I was beside the dear mother while the doctor spoke, and could see that with difficulty she maintained a standing position till he had done, she trembled so violently; and when he ceased speaking she sank back on the chair beside the little bed, looking almost as ill as her darling child. I fetched her a glass of wine, and held it to her lips until she took a mouthful of it, and then took her cold hands in mine, and chafed them, while my heart went out in prayer for mother and child. Just then Lady Linton came into the room, and seeing with a glance how matters were, she took the hand of the poor trembling mother, and drew her down beside her, while she offered up a short but energetic appeal to heaven, for such support for her as would enable her to say from her heart *thy will be done*. My dear patroness with an agonising effort responded to the prayer, the whole burden of which was for a spirit of resignation. When they rose from their knees, Lady Linton held her niece in her arms while she said a few words to her which I never forgot:

"Remember," she said, "my dear love, that I was once the happy mother of the finest boy that ever the sun shone upon; he was my heart's idol, and he was smitten. Frantic creature that I was, I could not make the surrender, but falling on my knees in agony, I cried out with wilful impatience, 'Lord, spare my child! Lord, spare my child!' I could not utter another word, but cried, and cried on, 'Lord spare my child!' I never submitted my will to Him who knew the end from the beginning, and who called loudly to me in that trial, 'Give me thy heart.' My prayer was heard; but it was heard in judgment, not in mercy, and twenty years after, I would have given worlds

if I had them, that my wilful prayer had been denied. My splendid boy recovered from the small-pox without even retaining a trace of the disease. He grew up lovely and loving, and though my heart was rent at sending him abroad, it swelled with pride to see how he became his handsome uniform. He rose rapidly in his profession, and was senior major of his regiment at twenty-seven; but then came my long-delayed punishment, and my sin found me out. In the frenzy of brain fever, he shot himself through the head, leaving me childless and broken-hearted! His poor father sunk under the stroke, and in one short year I was a widow and desolate. Ten years have since elapsed, and although I could now answer in the affirmative the prophet's question, "Is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" and say from the bottom of my heart, 'It *is* well!' I have never forgiven myself what I know God has freely forgiven and forgotten for Christ's sake, and that is, *my wilful prayer*. Dearest Cecilia, be warned by me, and try to say from your heart, '*Thy will be done.*' You knew my afflictions before, but now I have told you their cause, and how my sin found me out. Nothing is too hard for the Lord, and we will hope in his mercy; but let us trust in him *at all times*, and say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' "

Dear Lady Linton (her own features quivering from emotion) held the passive mourner in her arms, and as she did, I could hear the faint murmur echoed over and over again, "Not my will, but thine be done." Just then our dear chaplain came into the room; he had been with the poor colonel, who had now heard the doctor's report, and desired to be left alone. The doctor and Janet were beside the little crib, and we were in the ante-room. I wondered, when Mr. Lovely came in, to see his countenance; it



was beaming. Where, I thought, has Mr. Lovely got that bright sunshine in this house of mourning? but he had not got it there. He walked firmly up to Mrs. Manley, and taking hold of her hand, said—

“My dear friend, cheer up. I have a firm conviction that ‘this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.’”

His smile seemed to reflect itself on all our faces, as we said with one accord, “The Lord grant it, if it be his holy will, for Christ’s sake!” When we returned to Bella’s room we found the good doctor still holding her little wasted hand, and feeling her pulse; he did so for more than half an hour, and at the end of that time turned to her mother saying—

“I thank God, madam, the worst is over;” and then to Mrs. Nutley, “Come now, Mrs. Nutley, the jelly.” The dear child opened her eyes and smiled feebly at her mother, but it was evident that the delirium was gone; still, the doctor watched with us that night, and the next morning he said to Mrs. Nutley—

“Now, Mrs. Nutley, good nursing will do the rest, and I must be off.”

As he went to order his horse, he met the colonel in the corridor: he saw in the doctor’s face that all was right, and, pulling out his pocket-book, thrust it into his hand, saying—

“My good sir, that is not half enough. *Not a word*,” he added, as the doctor stayed him, “not a word,” and waving his hand, he approached the sick-room with rapid strides. The doctor told Mrs. Nutley afterwards that the colonel had given him a princely fee; but that he feared to offend him by giving him back three-fourths of it, as he wished to have done.

“Oh! keep it, by all means, doctor,” she said, “it will

enable you to see many a patient without a fee, that may have a heart as noble as our good colonel's, without his purse."

Our dear Bella recovered rapidly. In a week she could sit up in her bed and nurse her doll; and in another week we were wheeling her up and down the terrace—that was indeed a jubilee in the house; and yet it was a chastened cheerfulness that was amongst us; for it had been a terrible ordeal, and we could not soon forget the time of trial.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### PHILIP'S RETURN.

“The well known arms, and mute embracing.”

“Here no bugle sounds reveillie.”

“All went merry as a marriage bell.”

Soon after Bella's recovery, our house was put into a state of joyful commotion by the welcome news of the return of Philip Manley's regiment to England, and a letter to his mother to say that she might expect him at Darlington in a day or two. The young man was a great favourite on the estate as well as with his family, so that you may imagine what a joyous welcome awaited him; indeed, the people seemed as if they could not do enough to testify their pleasure. Bonfires, and rejoicings of all kinds, threw our quiet neighbourhood quite into a new phase of existence, and old Darlington looked gay and bright as the fine youth that it received with such open arms to his birthplace.

He was, indeed, a fine young man, very handsome, but more like his mother than his father, and with all her sweet playfulness of manner, slightly dashed by that wilfulness that seems so natural to the unbroken spirits of prosperous youth, who know not the meaning of the word sorrow, but fondly dream that the world, the beautiful world that they see, was made for *them*. He was just of age, and a captain in his father's old regiment, and as he was accompanied to Darlington by two or three of his brother officers, our quiet household was metamorphosed, for the time being, into the abode of gaiety, and, as it were, frightened from its propriety.

While his friends were preparing for dinner, Philip came

to see Mrs. Nutley, and kissed her as if she had been his grandmother. She was settled at Darlington long before his birth, and had been his earliest friend.

"Ah, Mrs. Nutley," he said, "I am so glad to see you, and this dear jolly old room again. How many pleasant evenings I spent with you in that bay window, shelling almonds! and do you recollect how you used to help me in all my dilemmas about kites, balls, tops, and marbles? Those big pockets of yours gave me many a bon-bon, or piece of string, or big needle or pin, as the case might be."

The good woman had tears of joy in her eyes as she held the hand of the fine young man, whom she had often nursed as a baby.

"I cannot call you Philip, now," she said; "you have outgrown the boy too much for that; henceforth you are to be Captain Manley."

"No, no, Mrs. Nutley," he said, "I get enough of Captain Manley, and have almost forgotten Philip. You must remind me of that dear naughty boy that you knew twenty years ago; and see," he added, "what I have got for you," putting a chain round her neck, with a very fine double eye-glass. "Now, Mrs. Nutley, say, 'Thank you, my own good boy Philip.'"

"Thank you very much, my dear," she said; "this was so thoughtful of you, and quite what I wanted."

Just then Bella bounded into the room, and sprang into her brother's arms, saying—

"Ah, Philip, I have been all over the house looking for you. I want to help you to dress; but, Philip," she added, "did you see our Grace? mamma's little friend, Grace Leigh, and my own pet Grace, and Mrs. Nutley's little daughter, and Mr. Lovely's too."

"Well, Miss Leigh," said he, smiling at Bella, and

bowing slightly to me, "this is rather a novel sort of introduction."

I blushed deeply at having been thus drawn into notice by the child.

"See, Grace," she continued, "what Philip has brought to me," and she unclasped a beautiful amber necklace from her fair throat.

"And see mine, Bella," said Mrs. Nutley, showing her glass.

"And, Philip," said the little maid, half reproachfully, "poor Grace has not got anything; that is not fair! But you did not know that she was here, I suppose."

"Well, Bella," said Philip, giving her a gold pencil-case from his waistcoat pocket, "will you give this to your friend Grace, to remind her of Philip's return to Darlington?"

And so saying, he caught her up in his arms to carry her off to his room, while she, in passing where I sat at my work in the bay, dropped the pencil-case into my lap, and the next moment I heard the merry voices of the brother and sister as they scampered through the corridor on their way to the captain's room. I did not recover from my surprise until the pair were out of hearing, and then I started up with a glowing face, and ran to Mrs. Nutley, who had gone to her own chamber.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Nutley," I said, "what am I to do about this pencil-case? I would not, indeed, I could not keep it; and I was so confounded at the time of their sudden departure, that I had not power to utter a word."

Just then I caught sight of Mr. Lovely through the glass door. He was coming up our turret stair, and I watched to see if he were coming to our room; but he was passing by, and I felt so agitated that I opened the door suddenly, and seeing me, he turned and said—

"Well, my child, you look out of sorts; what is the matter?"

"Dear sir, do please to come in," I said, "and let me tell you."

Mrs. Nutley anticipated me by saying, "Here, sir, is this little foolish Grace of ours vexing herself about a piece of dear Bella's childish good-nature. She was sorry that her brother had not brought a present to Grace as well as to her and to me, and to gratify her, he gave her this pencil-case for Grace; and she is fussing about it ever since, and says that she cannot keep it. What do you think, sir? I fear the captain will be displeased if she returns it."

"Grace is right, Mrs. Nutley," he said. "She need not, however, return it to Philip; but I will give it to Mrs. Manley for Bella. She will be pleased, I know, with Grace's decision, and if she speaks of it to her son, he will not think the worse of Grace for the delicate instinct that prompted its return."

As he said this, he looked at me, I thought, with a pleased countenance, and I was quite thankful that the affair had ended so happily.

"Now," he said, "I must go, for we all dine together in honour of our young friend; but before I go I have a word to say to you, Grace; keep close to this room for a few days, except Mrs. Nutley is with you, or that Mrs. Manley sends for you. Do not go to walk with Lucy or Bella; those gay young visitors of the Captain's will leave in a few days, but it would not be pleasant for you to be about until our house is quiet again."

"You are right, sir," said Mrs. Nutley, "and we shall keep close to our pleasant room, where we always find plenty to employ us. Grace won't weary, she is almost as staid as myself."

"I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth

it?" said Mr. Lovely, as he heard the voices of the young soldiers in the hall below; "but the world will tell them that time enough, poor fellows," he continued, "and I shan't abridge their merriment, although they are not like our dear boy."

When Mr. Lovely had left us, Mrs. Nutley and I sat down to some job for the evening, and were quite sure of a quiet time together, when we heard the brisk step of Lucy Heath coming in. "This is levée day with us, Grace, my child," said Mrs. Nutley, as the merry girl came in, and throwing herself down upon the rug between us, she leaned an arm on each, and turned up her bright face to us, saying with delight, "I have got a whole evening to spend with you. Lady Linton is gone to the dining-room and I have brought my work."

"Well, my dear, you are very welcome," said Mrs. Nutley, "and after tea you will sing me some of our old Irish airs, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Lucy, "and Scotch ones too, Mrs. Nutley; we'll have 'Robin Gray:' don't you love that?"

"Yes, indeed I do," she replied, "and if you sing it well, I'll tell you and Grace a story about an aunt of mine that we used to call 'Mrs. Robin Gray,' her case was so similar in some respects to that of the gude wife in the ballad."

So, when our tea was over, Lucy sang for us, and then we reminded Mrs. Nutley of her promised story. "My aunt Frances," she said, "was my father's eldest sister, and a very fine young woman; she had been brought up by her maternal grandmother, at the old family place, in the north of Ireland. From the early death of both her parents, this grandmother was her only living parent. When very young, my aunt became attached to a young lad in the neighbourhood, and as boy and girl love,

theirs was ardent and mutual, in the hope that when he had a profession he might make her his wife. He sought military employment, which was then easy to get, as it was in a time of war, and was soon gazetted to a cornetcy in a dragoon regiment; but, contrary to all their hopes, my aunt's grandmother would not allow her to marry a soldier, especially as she had her eye on a neighbour for her, whom she thought so much better a match, that he would never remove her from her side; the young soldier, therefore, was frowned away; but not, however, without a parting word between him and his beloved, in which they promised mutual correspondence, until his promotion might soften the heart of the old woman. And they kept their word, and wrote to each other faithfully; but the wily grandmother intercepted the letters, and then persuaded my aunt that her lover had forgotten her, and she, being a high-spirited girl, could not endure the idea of being forsaken, so that she soon fell into the snare, and promised to become the wife of the person chosen for her. All was in preparation for the wedding, and my aunt at the house of her intended bridesmaid, making arrangements for the coming fête, when her old lover returned to the neighbourhood, major of his regiment. His first visit was to my aunt, to seek an explanation of her unaccountable silence, and breach of promise, and to endeavour to gain consent to their immediate union, and so end all suspense between them. Her old nurse, however, who knew all, met the young man, and when he inquired for her young lady, she tenderly let him into the changed aspect of affairs during his absence. The poor fellow saw the wedding dress lying on the sofa, and, giving himself up to the bitterness of disappointment, he immediately quitted the neighbourhood, and never returned. My poor aunt was soon made aware of her fatal mistake, and we may well suppose that a marriage so



entered upon could not be happy—it was very unhappy ; the bride was deficient in love, and the bridegroom in tenderness, and as he ever afterwards repented having been so unfortunate as to marry a woman without heart, so she never ceased to regret her first love, and when death dissolved the union, the survivor was no mourner. So much,” said Mrs. Nutley, “for interfering with youthful affections. Now, have I not kept my word, Lucy? was not my poor aunt another Mrs. Robin Gray?”

“Ah, Mrs. Nutley,” said Lucy, “that is a sad story ; but tell me, was not your aunt very hasty?”

“Yes, my dear, that is true ; but we cannot well judge, for young people in her day had very little responsibility in the matter of their own disposal ; they were literally *disposed of*, and in some cases the dread of this outrage drew out the latent antagonism of human nature, and to avoid being disposed of, without or against their own consent, young people made very deplorable connexions for themselves. Poor things, they often had only a choice of evils, as it must always be where there is not a proper basis of mutual confidence established between parent and child, the only safeguard for the true happiness of both. Sympathy is, after all, the most powerful engine that poor human nature has to wield, and in the hands of an affectionate parent, it becomes almost omnipotent with the young and impressible beings committed to their guardianship, until they arrive at years to judge for themselves in those matters that most deeply affect their temporal happiness.”

“Well, Mrs. Nutley,” said Lucy—the lively Lucy, who had become wondrously tame since her arrival at Darlington—“if any of our family act foolishly, we cannot charge it upon our parents, for they are as loving as they are wise. I am very sure if our dear mother knew that we loved any one *really*, she would strain a point to gratify us ; for she and

father married from love, and they do not forget their own young days. We never have a secret from mother; and you know we never should tell her everything as we do, if we were not sure that she would feel for us. Sometimes when we have told her all our thoughts and wishes about being married; and, indeed, Mrs. Nutley," added the simple Lucy, with a smile and blush on her innocent face, "I am sure other girls are just as anxious to be married as we are, although they may not tell their mothers so, as we do. But, when we have told her all our nonsense, we wind up by saying that it is her fault that we wish to be married; for that, seeing her so happy with father, we think that we should be the same with our husbands. And then she says, 'Well, girls, whenever you get men like your father to come and ask for you, I will let you go and begin the world for yourselves, and, while I have your father, I'll never be lonely.' Many a time I have seen father smiling behind his newspaper at our chat with mother in the gloamin. We burn peat and bogwood at home," added Lucy, "and we never light candles until supper time all the winter, for the fire gives us such beautiful light to read or knit."

And, as Lucy recollected the home scene by her father's fireside, it would be hard to say whether tears or smiles would be the best index of her feelings.

Lucy and I never saw so much of each other as during Philip's visit to Darlington, for Lady Linton busied herself in assisting Mrs. Manley to entertain her company, and therefore Lucy was more at leisure to be with us at her needle. After a week or so the young officers left us, and then the whole family, except Mr. Lovely, went to Tintern Court to Sir Philip's, and afterwards he accompanied them back to Darlington. Then we had a round of dinner parties and company staying in the house, so that Mrs.

Nutley and I had very busy mornings, and sometimes Lucy was sent to give us a helping hand, for she was very active and useful.

The colonel submitted to the infliction of this succession of visitors and parties for the sake of his son, as he would not have done for any one else; he enjoyed his learned leisure at home, and active exercise abroad, too much to like the open house that Darlington became during the few months of Philip's stay. However, he had a purpose of his own to gain by this sacrifice of private inclination. He had long secretly planned a union between his son and heir and the daughter and heiress of his fellow-member for the county, Sir Harry Bland, of Finchly, whose estate joined that of Tintern Court, which Philip was to inherit at the death of the old baronet Sir Philip, now a very old man. Laura Bland was a bright, sparkling brunette, two or three years older than Philip, and would, perhaps, have been a very suitable companion for him, but that she had been sadly spoiled by both her parents. She was their only child, very handsome, and talented, and far from being naturally unamiable, but then, there was a tone about her that was not made for woman. It was not repulsively commanding, but wholly wanting in feminine softness, and one could see at a glance that whoever she married should allow her to be queen regnant, and subside quietly into her consort, or else——.

I had her character from Mrs. Nutley, who had known her from childhood; for when she and Philip were young they passed a good deal of their time together, either at Darlington or Finchly. Mrs. Nutley made very charitable allowances for the young lady's failings, for she saw that from infancy she had been treated with great want of judgment by her idolising parents, who had always deferred to her lightest wish. It was not what would please Sir

Harry, or suit Lady Bland, that ever was thought of, but Laura was allowed to be the master-spirit of the family. If a new equipage was to be purchased, or horses chosen, Laura's taste should be suited at any cost or sacrifice.

Now, as Mrs. Nutley said, had she been naturally unamiable, this adulation would have made her an intolerable nuisance; but, with all her failings, she loved her parents, and was grateful for their love to her; and who would have the moral courage to decline such spontaneous and systematic adulation and deference as she had been nurtured on from her birth to maturity?

A man of Colonel Manley's discernment might have seen that such a girl was very unlikely to suit the taste of a fine young man, with a very decided will of his own, like Philip; and all the less so, perhaps, that she had been chosen for him from his infancy, so that he began to look upon it as a sort of fate that at some time or other he must marry Laura Bland. Now, however, that he was settled in his profession, and she had arrived at her prime, the colonel and Sir Harry agreed that it was high time to bring matters to an issue; and yet the young people themselves seemed in no manner of hurry. On the contrary, the colonel saw with alarm a very evident desire on the young man's part to carve his own lot in life; and Laura felt neglected. This state of things took the colonel quite back in his *ex parte* calculations, and he hoped, by bringing the pair together as much as possible during the period of Philip's stay, to effect the desired end "by hook or crook."

Mrs. Manley never would have had Philip constrained or dictated to in the matter of his affections; but then, she was a mere cipher. In fact, she had no voice, except she chose to echo the colonel's views, in which case she would

have been considered as barely doing her duty to her liege lord and master; and, for a lord of the creation who was such a perfectly gallant gentleman to all females, the colonel was wondrously oblivious of that feminine influence that, whether confessed or ignored, is as powerful an agent in social and domestic life, as the dew is in the vegetable world. The South Sea Islanders have a very suggestive expression by which to denote an unmarried man. They call him "*one-handed!*" quite in the spirit of our own old proverb that "a man must ask his wife for leave to thrive."

Had the colonel condescended to engage, or at least to seek Mrs. Manley's advocacy with Philip, her influence with her son was so unbounded, that he would have made any sacrifice to please her. But he winced sadly under the colonel's dictation, and matters were quite at sixes and sevens. What connection all this had with my personal history, you shall hear.

I am not so conceited, indeed I never was, as to suppose that it was any peculiar attraction of mine, that drew the young man's attention, admiration, or softer emotions, out of their prescribed channel; for I think that in his case, any gentle, dependant girl in my situation, under his father's roof, would have suited his fancy at the time perhaps quite as well,—just as a rustic bower, however humble, of one's own construction, may be more attractive than the most elaborate Grecian temple made to our hand; and to my cost I found it to be so in Philip Manley's case. This is, therefore, a part of my little history that I never like to dwell upon. I shall gloss it over for you as lightly as truth will admit; and your own vivid imaginations will supply the rest. Certain it is, that the issue was to one of us disappointment, and my share was that peculiar suffering that sympathy inflicts on its possessor. From our

first interview in Mrs. Nutley's room, I could not conceal from myself what under my circumstances I regretted to see—that the young man always looked pleased to meet me, and willing to make any excuse to engage me in doing him some trifling service, with regard to gloves, buttons, or things of that kind. I sometimes met him in his mother's apartments, where I generally waited on her in the forenoons with Bella for a short lesson in French. On such occasions, Philip generally remained in the room, and whenever I raised my eyes from my book or my instructions, I found myself the object of attention, always perfectly delicate and gentlemanly, and for that reason the more insinuating. He had wormed out of Mrs. Manley that I was her relative by my mother; and on one occasion said to her, with boyish simplicity—

“I say, dear mother, I should like to call Grace Leigh, cousin. Eh, mother?” he continued, as if to gain her over to his point; but she put it down with her gentle—

“Hush, my dear boy, don't talk to me just now, until I send these children away.”

On another occasion, he was turning over his mother's workbox, and, lighting on a purse which I had netted for her of purple silk, he said—

“This is a pretty purse mother; may I have it?”

“That was Grace's work for me,” she said; “but she will make me another, and you may have it if you want one. But do you really want my empty purse,” she said, laughing. “Stay, Philip, I have got a much handsomer one of silver twist here, that I'll give you.”

“No, thank you, dear mother,” he replied, putting it into his pocket, “this, if you please, and no other.”

And as she reached her hand to him with the silver purse he sauntered out of the room. I suppose I blushed, for I

saw that Mrs. Manley noticed me particularly, and this made me worse.

"You are not vexed, Grace," she said, "that I parted with your gift; you see that naughty boy would have his way."

"Oh, no, madam," I replied, "I shall make you another directly." And as soon as I could I glided away. Another time in Mrs. Nutley's room, Bella was there, and Philip came in looking for a pencil. Bella took from her little pocket the identical pencil case that he had given to her for me, and handed it to him. He looked at it for a moment, and then casting a reproachful glance at me, said—

"You did not keep it, Grace!"

"No, Captain Manley," I said, "I would not, under the circumstances, have been happy to deprive dear Bella of it."

I could not understand his look, but I saw that he was not himself for a little; and he soon left the room after returning the pencil to his little sister.

I seldom saw Mrs. Plant now; Lucy seemed to have taken my place with her; for although my rejection of John's suit would never have interfered with my intimacy with his mother, I soon found that she was less free with me than before; that sense of constraint perhaps oppressed us both, that is so generally felt, when there is one subject on which we are mutually bound to silence; and by degrees a feeling sprang up between us, that although not amounting to absolute estrangement, was so void of the endearing character of our former intimacy, that, as a matter of course, we saw less of each other. She did not ask me so frequently to go to see her; and I did not offer my services with such freedom as heretofore, fearing that they were not so acceptable as in the days of our first friendship. Mrs. Nutley thought this a great pity, for she saw no reason why I

should be rejected as a friend, because I could not be a daughter. However, so it was, and this perhaps helped to make that opening for our good Lucy Heath in the affections of the mother, that paved the way to the regard of her son ; and, in the end, left none of the trio anything to regret, with regard to my declension. But I must let Lucy tell her own story.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### LUCY HEATH'S WOOING.

“ Woo'd and married and a' ;  
Married and carried awa' !  
And is she na vera weel aff,  
To be woo'd and married and a' ? ”

THE old proverb says, “ Happy is the wooing that's not long in doing ;” and our good Lucy's was a case in point. At this time, as I said, she spent most of her evenings with us, and the more we saw of her, the more we admired her transparency of character, thorough good humour, and sound principle. One evening, when she had been about four months at Darlington, she came to Mrs. Nutley's room much more carefully dressed than usual, and instead of, as was her custom, flinging off her shawl carelessly on the nearest chair, and plumping down between us, to idle for awhile, and then make up for it by brisk work, she walked up to the fireplace with a very subdued look, and stood gazing at us abstractedly, without speaking, but now and then with a pleased smile breaking forth at the corners of her pretty mouth. Mrs. Nutley and I looked wonderingly, and would have spoken to her, but that each moment she seemed on the point of saying something herself. “ Come, now, Lucy, my good girl,” said Mrs. Nutley at last, “ have done with this dumb show, and tell us what has bewitched your tongue this evening ; are your brains wool-gathering, or have you been eating dumb cake ? for you look brimful of something, and I can't make out what you would be at. Grace, my dear,” she added,

"tickle Lucy, or do something to make her speak out if she can." The smiles now vanished, and poor Lucy's full heart overflowed in tears, as, throwing her arms round my neck, she sobbed out, "Oh! dear Grace, John Plant loves me! I am so happy, and I want to tell you, but there is a choking in my throat when I try to speak." It was now our turn to congratulate, and quiet down Lucy's excitement, in which we succeeded after Mrs. Nutley had made her swallow a cup of coffee, her grand panacea on all occasions.

"Oh, Lucy," I said, "we are very glad for you, and you will be very happy."

"Shan't I?" she replied; "I used to think his wife would be a happy woman, but somehow I am overcome now, and I hardly know what to think."

"Well, I will tell you what I think, dear," said Mrs. Nutley, "that you should give God thanks; for if ever a man made 'a happy fireside for weans and wife,' it will be John. See what a son he is, Lucy, and remember the old proverb. But now tell us all about it, dear, if you can; for although we have had our suspicions about you for some time back, we never heard a word, and we began to think that you were not as open as you looked, or you would have given us a hint how matters stood."

"Dear Mrs. Nutley," said Lucy, "you knew as much as I did until this evening, although I had hopes now and then from John's kind looks and manners, and his mother's apparent pleasure in my company; but he never said a word to me of love, not one. I used to think if he did, that I should be bounding with delight. I did not think it would have sobered me so, but I will tell you how it came about. I was with Lady Linton in the pleasance before dinner, and when she had finished her walk, she said to me, 'Lucy, go and ask John Plant to give you a nosegay for me, from the

greenhouse, and do you tie it up and bring it to me before I go to the dining-room; not a large one,' she said, 'Lucy—something sweet but small; and come as soon as you can.' So I went to the greenhouse, where John was watering the flowers, and gave Lady Linton's message, and he gathered the nosegay and gave it to me; I admired it so that he gave me another for myself, and as he gave it to me, he looked confused, and I blushed, for I was afraid he would see that I loved him, and my cheeks burned with the thought, and as I was turning to come away, he caught hold of my hand, and said, 'Dear Miss Lucy, could you come over to the cottage for half-an-hour this evening? mother wants to speak to you;' I said, 'I should be very glad to go to see her, and that I loved to be with her.' 'I know she loves to have you with her,' said John, still holding my hand; and then, blushing as deeply as myself, he said in a low voice, 'Dear Lucy, she and I too would be very glad if you could stay with us altogether.' Then I began to suspect his meaning, but I was not sure; so I said, 'Oh! Mr. Plant, I am not going away. Lady Linton says she will spend the winter at Darlington.' I am glad of that,' he replied, 'for all our sakes, for she does us all good here; but wherever she is, Lucy,' and he pressed my hand between his, 'will you stay with me and help me to take care of mother?' I felt hardly able to speak a word, and John trembled, I could see that; and as I was going to speak he said, 'But, Lucy, I must be honest with you, and tell you that you are not my first love.' I started at this; and then he went on, 'You will not think the less of me for having suffered disappointment,' and he sighed heavily. This roused me, and I made a great effort to say all I felt, and now I hope I did not say anything wrong. 'Oh! John, I replied, 'I am very much obliged to your first love for

leaving you for me, for indeed you are mine; and if father and mother give me leave, I will be very happy to spend my life with you, and be a daughter to your mother.' Poor John was delighted; and Mrs. Nutley," said Lucy, blushing again, "he put his arm round my waist, and kissed me, and said that, 'God being his helper, I should never have to repent either my choice, or its frank confession.' Now, Mrs. Nutley," she continued anxiously, "do tell me have I done wrong? for I am all trembling ever since, and thinking what mother would say if she knew that any man had kissed me; for she told us that she never kissed our father until she was his wife."

"Well, my poor Lucy, make your mind easy; you did not kiss John, but you could not help his kissing you."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Nutley," said the simple Lucy, "I could have helped it, but I did not want to prevent him; I think I met him half way, and now I feel ashamed."

"Well my dear," replied Mrs. Nutley, "it is a serious affair this, I fear, and I see nothing you can do now but ask John to give you back that hasty kiss as soon as convenient."

Mrs. Nutley looked very serious, but I, who knew her face so well, could see the playful humour under the mask, and I laughed out, so Lucy said, "You are joking with me now, Mrs. Nutley," and then she laughed too, as she saw that we thought it no hanging matter, at all events; so she jumped up and said good-bye.

"Where now, dear?" said Mrs. Nutley; "I thought you were come to stay with us—you are not going for that kiss."

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Lucy, laughing, "but Lady Linton gave me leave to go to see Mrs. Plant. I have not told her ladyship yet, but I will do so to-night, and ask her to write to father, and I will write to mother. I think if they got one sight of John they would say 'yes,' and I hope

they may do so, although I shall be so far away from them all; but I think John will remember that, and be very tender with me if I have a good cry about them now and then."

"Well, dear Lucy, I will not keep you longer from Mrs. Plant; she has a right to your pleasant company this evening; and remember, my dear, that if 'a good wife is from the Lord,' so also is a good husband; but do not fall into the common mistake, that when your bird is caught, you have no more to do but listen to him while he sings to you;—you must now learn the way to keep him—a valuable lesson, and needful with the best of husbands; for, as the poet tells us—

‘As similarity of mind,  
Or something not to be defined,  
First fixes the attention;  
So manners decent and polite,  
*The same we practised at first sight,*  
Must save it from declension.’

And now, my dear, good-bye, and God bless you." And away tripped Lucy, blithe as a bird.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Nutley to me, when Lucy was gone, "did not I tell you that John Plant would not die of grief? That artless creature, without intending it, gave him encouragement that he would succeed in his suit with her."

"Oh, Mrs. Nutley," I replied, "I am so happy for him and his mother, as well as for Lucy. What a happy family they will be!"

"And I am so glad, my dear," she said, "that you acted with such prudence, and never indulged in a confidential gossip with Lucy. John will now find that you kept his secret honourably, and his wife will hear from himself that you were the object of his first love; for

depend upon it, that will be one of Lucy's first questions when she is married. She longs to know, I am sure ; but she does not suspect the truth."

"Indeed, Mrs. Nutley," I said, "I think it is very naughty of girls to boast to one another of their conquests. It is not doing as we would be done by, so it must be wrong."

"It is wrong—very wrong and ungenerous, too ; and you have no notion how grateful a man feels to a woman who respects his secret. When I was a young girl, I was courted by a very good young man, who in many respects would have been a better match for me than the one I married ; but somehow or other I suppose it was not to be, and I did not give him encouragement, although he was very urgent in his suit. I kept it close to myself, and no one was the wiser for his disappointment, and in after years, when on intimate terms with his sweet young wife, I could see that his respect and gratitude were very strong towards me. It is a mean, selfish, ungenerous triumph ; and a man has no loss of the woman who could boast of having refused him. You will always have a friend in John Plant, and when he is a married man, you will be free to go there again, and the old lady will forgive you."

"She can well afford to forgive me then, Mrs. Nutley," I said ; "for that fine, hearty creature will be worth half-a-dozen like me."

Lucy lost no time in writing home, and from Lady Linton's account of John Plant, her parents were well pleased, and gave their full consent to her marriage, which Lady Linton undertook to have arranged. So Lucy was as busy as possible making her little preparations ; and we helped her with her work, and gave her suitable presents. Indeed, she got a great many useful things from Lady

Linton, and was well furnished for her happy, humble home. Those were pleasant evenings when we were doing Lucy's work. She was so merry, and happy, and full of anticipation, that it was a refreshment to look at her bright face, as she sat with us stitching away as vigorously as if her life depended on her dispatch of this pleasant job. In those days it was not necessary to go to church in order to be married; and as old Mrs. Plant was a fixture owing to her rheumatism, Mr. Lovely married John and Lucy in the house with his happy mother. Mrs. Nutley, Mr. Lovely, Bella, and myself formed the bridal party at tea after the ceremony; and, to please the old lady, Lucy took her place at once at the head of John's humble board, and did its honours with great agreeability and cheerfulness, considering that she had to pour out a cup of tea for Mr. Lovely, of whom she always stood in such awe. He left immediately after tea, and we soon afterwards. John looked as radiant as Lucy herself, and the old woman was a picture of calm enjoyment, and devout gratitude to "the Giver of every good and perfect gift." I felt, as she kissed me when Mrs. Nutley and I were coming away, that I was forgiven; and from that time no shadow darkened our happy intimacy. So in six months from the time that Lucy came to us we saw the merry Irish girl settled to her heart's content in her happy English home.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE CAPTAIN.

“ He loved, and he rode away.”

*Old Song.*

It might have been about a fortnight or so after Lucy's marriage, (in which time, by the way, she had settled down into a comely, tidy housekeeper, cheery enough to make a less domestic man than John enjoy his pretty home,) and Mrs. Nutley and I were rejoicing in the departure of most of our visitors, and the prospect of a quiet house again, when Mrs. Manley sent for Mrs. Nutley to give her a large parcel of linen to be made up for Philip—sheets, towels, table-linen, and shirting; which Lady Linton had just got over for him from Ireland.

“ This linen,” she said, “ Mrs. Nutley, should have been here more than a month ago, and now I fear you will be short of time, for Philip's leave will expire in another month; so what will you do?”

“ I suppose, madam,” she replied, “ I must look about me for hands. I will cut it all out in lots, and I think we might have some done at the almshouse; Janet, too, will help us. Grace and Lucy Plant will manage the fine-stitching, Janet marks nicely and quickly too, so we all leave that to her; and between us, you know, ‘ many hands will make light work,’ and you'll find by this division of labour that we shall accomplish our job in time. As fast as they are completed we'll send them on to the laundry, and Bella will get us plenty of lavender and rosemary for the packing up.”



"Now," said Mrs. Manley, with a relieved look, that weight is off my mind. How glad I often feel, Mrs. Nutley, that you were born before me!"

"So the store of linen was sent down to Mrs. Nutley's room, and she cut out, and I put away for her, and we sent every one her portion of work before dinner. The Finchley family were the only guests, and they were homelike now, as the two families often passed the alternate days at Finchley and Darlington. Mrs. Nutley and I, as usual, dined early, and then sat down to our work. I loved my needle, so that I rather enjoyed the prospect of my task; for with such a companion as Mrs. Nutley, time passed with me not merely rapidly, but with equal pleasure and profit. I always loved the society of old people, and found it rather agreeable than otherwise to defer to their judgment, which, as the result of experience, I felt to be a better guide than it would be possible for my own to be. One of my dear mother's wise sayings was, that 'it was better to do the will of another than one's own;'—and as she meant it, and I understood it, I believe it to be indeed *far better*, and for that reason, very useful for young people to be domiciled (as I was) with those so much wiser than themselves; but to return to my story. It was rather late in the evening, and we had just put away our tea-things, and were about to return to our work. I was looking out for a fine needle from my housewife, and Mrs. Nutley was wiping her spectacles, when we heard a foot in the corridor outside of our turret, and both hoped it might be Mr. Lovely, who never sat long after dinner and often had a little spell with us before he went to the ladies in the tea-room;—we knew who it was, however, when we heard a light tap at the glass door, for Mr. Lovely never tapped, but said, "Are you at home, Mrs. Nutley? the chaplain is here;" or something like that. But the captain was more of a stranger at home than Mr. Lovely, and

he always tapped ; following his tap so rapidly, and instantly, that it would scarcely have been possible to prevent his coming in if we had been coining, or the custards on the point of projection. It was, indeed, as we supposed, Philip ; who had evidently had wine enough to elevate him a little, but not more than that—the bright eye and colour a little heightened, and the smile more *prononcé* than in the mornings. Bowing gracefully to us, as he would have done to a circle of duchesses, he said—

“Do pray, Mrs. Nutley, let me have a cup of your good tea. What a boon it used to be to me long ago, when I was on schoolboy diet—bread and milk, and milk and bread for variety ! But,” he added, looking at his watch, “perhaps you have had your tea, Mrs. Nutley.”

“Yes, Captain,” she replied, “we have had our tea, but I will give you a cup all the same.”

“Thank you, good Mrs. Nutley ;” he said, “but pardon me, it will not be all the same, for I meant to have been in time to have had it with you.”

While she was preparing his tea, he strolled about the room, humming an opera air, and then stopping short by the table where I sat at my work.

“Ah, Grace !” he said, “you will ruin those eyes of yours, doing that fine work at night. What in the world is it ?” he continued, taking it up in his hand to examine it.

“It is one of your shirts,” said Mrs. Nutley, “and I only hope we may have them ready for you. We have had short notice to rig you out.”

“Then if it be for me,” he said, “I request you will not allow Grace to work at it except in daylight.” Mrs. Nutley smiled, and he said, “I am serious ; those stitches will give me a pain in my heart if they blind poor little Grace. I should then be in honour bound to lead her about. “Well,

Grace," he concluded, "stitch away, and the sooner you are blind, the better for me."

Mrs. Nutley, I could perceive, was uneasy at this strain; and as for me, my brain swam: I could not think what was coming next. He sat down by me and watched me closely, while I was, I am sure, red and white by turns, and my hands trembled so that I could scarcely hold my needle.

"Now Captain," said Mrs. Nutley, "come over to the fire and have your tea."

"Thank you, Mrs. Nutley," said he, rising to take the cup of tea from her hand, and then returning to his chair at my side. After he had finished the cup of tea he asked Mrs. Nutley to let him have a second, and said it was better than drawing-room tea. While she poured it out he went over to the bay and took up a pot of myrtle in fine bloom, that Mr. Lovely had given me when I was a child, as a reward for some lesson or other, and which I had never cut since, except for him. He carried the pot over to the table, and laid it down beside his cup.

"This is luxury!" he said, "how pretty flowers look by candlelight! eh, Grace, do they not?" I assented in some lame way or other, and then he asked me if the plant were mine. I said, "Yes."

"Then do, please, Grace," he said, "cut off that sprig for my button-hole, like a good little girl as you are."

"Oh, Captain," I said, "pray excuse me. Mr. Lovely gave me that myrtle when I first came to Darlington, and I never cut a sprig of it for anybody but him."

"Then you will not give me a flower for my coat, little cousin!" he said, reproachfully. Mrs. Nutley, in an agitated voice, called to him that his tea would be cold.

"No matter, Mrs. Nutley," he said; "cold tea is not as

bad as other cold things. You naughty girl!" he said, "you will not refuse me!"

"Ah! captain," said Mrs. Nutley, "it is you who are naughty; you are keeping Grace from her work, and deserting your mother's company in the drawing-room; and Miss Laura there too," she added, shaking her head at him.

"Mrs. Nutley," he replied, "I wish the same Miss Laura were at the antipodes."

"Oh! do not say so, my dear," said she, looking frightened, for she knew the colonel's hopes about Finchley.

"I may as well say it as feel it and think it, my good friend," he said; "the truth will out some time or other."

"I must be allowed to choose for myself, on one point at least," he said, looking excited; "and I tell you I would rather have a sprig of myrtle from the fair hand of my little kinswoman here, (provided she gave it to me willingly," and as he spoke he inclined his head, and gazed at me with respectful, but apparently warm and tender admiration,) "than the costliest string of pearls that ever adorned the neck of my father's queen of brunette's, Laura Bland."

I blushed deeply, and was meditating flight to my own little sleeping closet, and poor Mrs. Nutley looked all terror and amazement, when, to my unspeakable relief, I saw the shadow of Mr. Lovely's tall figure, and with his usual "*Etes-vous seul, mon ami?*" he came into the room.

Philip bent over his cup of tea rather guilty looking but we were lightened by his presence amongst us at such a crisis.

"Ah, Philip, my dear boy," he said, "is it here I find you? this is really naughty of you. Your father has been inquiring for you, and I set off on the quest, to spare him the trouble of looking up the deserter. Get away, do now,

my good boy, and 'Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land.' "

Mr. Lovely's authority in the house, though so gently exercised, was second only to the colonel's, and the young man stood up from his unfinished tea, with all the docility of a child, crumbling his macaroon, and picking at it as he caught up his forage cap.

"Well, now, Mr. Lovely," he said, "I will go, if you give Grace leave to cut me a sprig of that myrtle."

"Certainly, Philip," he said, feeling for his knife to cut it; but the young man stayed his hand. Mr. Lovely looked puzzled and troubled.

"Why, my boy," he said, "what can you mean?"

Philip smiled at me, and, addressing Mr. Lovely, replied—

"I want Grace to cut it for me, sir."

"Here, Grace," said Mr. Lovely, "then cut it quickly, and let the captain go. You dear wilful boy," he added, "you always had your way with me; we spoiled him between us, Mrs. Nutley."

Meantime, I had cut the flower, and was handing it to Mr. Lovely, when Philip reached his hand across the chaplain's arm, and took it from me gently, saying—

"I thank you, Grace," and then, sticking it in his button hole, "there you stay," he said, as if addressing the flower, "as long as I can keep you alive," and as he was leaving the room, he bowed to me, saying—

"Ah! Grace, you will 'not unsought be won.' "

Another moment, and we heard his clear whistle on the stair, and we looked at each other in consternation. At last, tears came to my relief, and I said to Mr. Lovely—

"Oh! dear sir, what shall I do? you saw and heard Captain Manley?"

" 'What time I am afraid I will trust in thee,' " said the

good man; "but what would you wish to do or to have done, Grace?"

"Please, sir," I said, "tell Mrs. Manley, and she will advise us."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Nutley, "that is the best thing to do."

"Well, good-night," he said; "I hope you will have no more visitors this evening."

When he left us we sat down by the fire, not to resume our work, but to ruminate over the events of the day. We could not change the theme of our discourse, for we were both anxious, and one of us unhappy.

"Oh! Mrs. Nutley," I said, "is not Lucy Plant a happy girl? So safe, and so rich in the honourable love of her worthy husband! I need not tell you that I do not envy Lucy, although I cannot help just now contrasting her present position with my own; for I do not think I ever felt the desolation of orphanhood so keenly as I do this evening."

My good old friend tried to comfort and encourage me, although I saw she was herself deeply troubled, and could not see any safe outlet from this dilemma.

"Mr. Lovely, at all events," she said, "will give Mrs. Manley a hint before she retires this evening; and you, my dear, must lose no time in following it up, by waiting on her as early as you can to-morrow. Tell her plainly all your fears, and confide in her, as you may safely do, to the very utmost. If any one can set matters right, she and Mr. Lovely will do so. Her heart, and his head, seem to me to be a match for almost any difficulty; and now go to your bed, my child, and sleep away your cares."

When I found myself alone in my own little closet, I did indeed pour out my whole heart before my Heavenly Father, that he would give me wisdom to guide and direct

me in all my difficulties, and above all, that he would keep me "unspotted from the world." After a long spell of cogitation I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was again a happy child with my mother at Seafeld, and that I brought my lap full of white roses to her to make a crown for my birthday; and I wakened, as I thought, singing with her, "Merrily every bosom boundeth," as we had often sung it together long ago. When I saw that it was clear daylight I rose, feeling little merriment, though a measure of sweet peace in my bosom so troubled the night before, with the multitude of my thoughts within me; the vivid sight of my mother in my dream seemed to have refreshed my perturbed spirit, and after my quiet hour of retirement, I felt newly strung and nerved for the day, whatever it might bring. "*Our Father* which art in heaven," I repeated over and over to myself, feeling that my Father, my omnipotent and loving Father, was at the helm of my frail little bark, now in some measure afloat on the ocean of life, with "sweet fields beyond its swelling flood," in the distance. Oh! surely even if the infidel's wild dream were to prove after all true, still, if religion were at last *only* a delusion, would it not be a *happy delusion*? We have "an anchor of the soul," of which he knows nothing. Yes, "let God be true, and every man a liar." "Surely it shall be well with those that fear God."

When I came out to Mrs. Nutley's pleasant sitting room, I found her (early as it was) stirring about breakfast.

"Well, my poor child," she said, kissing me, "slept well, did you?"

"Yes, ma'am," I said, "and dreamed of mother. I am all right to-day."

"Then here is a cup of coffee for you, that will make you better still," she said, "and nice toast, and marmalade."

lade, and eggs, and what not. Remember that you had no supper last night."

So we sat down by our bright fire, in pleasant companionship, and had our comfortable breakfast. Oh! surely "two are better far than one, for counsel or for fight." I never could have enjoyed my morsel alone, whether mental or bodily. The remembrance of that dear good woman is refreshing to me even now, "mother in Israel" as she was. I believe it was Luther who used to say that, "Nothing on earth was sweeter than the heart of a pious woman," and when that woman's heart and its affections are matured by age, experience, and personal trial, what a wise, loving, comfortable counsellor she becomes to the young and inexperienced of either sex, but especially of her own! When breakfast was over, Mrs. Nutley gave me a little pencilled note from Mrs. Manley, telling me to come to her at ten to the pleasance rooms. So I busied myself in assisting Mrs. Nutley until it was time to go, and then put on my hat, and, according to her advice, avoided the general passage through the house, and, descending our own turret stair, got out upon the terrace that led to Mrs. Manley's room, by a glass door. She was waiting for me, and seemed a good deal agitated when she saw me looking pale and tremulous, as I could not help doing, when I found myself with her; for although my conscience was clear, I felt greatly for her perplexity.

"My dear Grace," she began, "you must not think that I blame you in the least about what Mr. Lovely told me last night; for I feel and know that you are incapable of doing or wishing anything that would give trouble to the colonel. But now, my dear, be calm, and tell me all."

So I told her the whole scene of the evening before, at the same time assuring her of my perfect confidence in her son's honour and purity.



"And, my poor child," she said, "are you quite sure that this feeling is not mutual?"

"Perfectly sure, madam," I said. "I love Captain Manley simply and solely as your child and Bella's brother—no more."

"Then you have given him no encouragement to hope for any response from you?"

"None at all, madam," I replied; "I was too much confused to speak, but he must have seen by my whole manner that it was no pleasing excitement that I felt."

"You would not, then, wish to be Philip's wife, even if he had consent to make you so?"

"No, madam," I said; "if ever I marry I must be able to '*reverence* my husband;' and Captain Manley would be no suitable head for me, if he were his own master to-morrow."

"Well, my dear," she said, "this being the case, we have only one to think of; but, in order to do what is right for him, it would be well if you were away for a little."

"There is a home for me at Seafeld, madam," I replied, "as long as Mrs. Moss lives," and I with difficulty commanded myself to add, "if I survive her, the Lord will provide."

The dear lady folded me to her bosom.

"My noble little Grace," she said, "I will never give you up; your mother gave you to me. But, listen to me, dear;—you know Lucy Plant's marriage has deprived Lady Linton of her young companion. She is now about to pass some months in Scotland, and has proposed your accompanying her. Would you like that? I know she thinks a great deal of you, and values your services to herself since she lost Lucy. What shall I say to her, my dear?"

"Say that I am ready to accompany her, madam," I replied.

"Then you have no time to lose, dear," she said, "for her ladyship will set out to-morrow, and Philip is going to Tintern Court with his father, to-day, for a week or so. Then, cheer up, my child; do not fear, all will be well. You know, dear, I shall never love a daughter-in-law as I love you; but the colonel has his own views for his son, and I could not interfere, even if you loved him,—which I rejoice, for your own sake, to find that you do not. Now, get away and look up your things. First, perhaps, though, you should go round to Lady Linton's rooms and see if she has anything for you to do for her."

So she kissed me, and I left her with a very relieved heart, though I did not want to go away from Mrs. Nutley, but I saw it was best that I should do so just now.

"I think you will find Lady Linton in the library, if she is not in her own room, Grace," said Mrs. Manley, following me to the door.

She closed the door, and returned to her own sitting-room, and I had just got out upon the terrace, when, to my dismay, I met Philip, looking the very picture of youthful prime and beauty.

"Ah! my little Grace," he said, taking my hand, "I am so glad to see you. I thought Mrs. Nutley had shut you up this morning, when I did not find you with her. Look at my myrtle blossom, Grace," he continued; "I kept it in a glass of water last night."

"Captain Manley," I said, "pray do not walk with me. I am going to Lady Linton."

"Grace," he said, looking excited, "you are not afraid of me? I do love you passionately, but in all honour and purity; no man could love *you* otherwise."

"Sir," I said, "please to let me go to Lady Linton; I

cannot listen to you; it is wrong for me and for you too."

I looked entreatingly at him, and the tears were in my eyes.

"Then—then," he said, "I must let you go, but you must listen to me in some way. You *can* love me, my sweet cousin, and nothing less will make *me* happy. Go, then," he said, pressing my hand between his, "you shall hear from me soon."

Before I was able to compose myself to see Lady Linton, I went up to Mrs. Nutley, and told her of my fresh trouble.

"Well, dear," she said, "as he goes to-day, you will have a respite."

"And to-morrow you and I must part, Mrs. Nutley," I said.

She burst into tears when I told her the plan laid down for me.

"Well, my dear," she said, "remember who it is that says, 'I will never leave thee, or forsake thee.'"

When I was composed I went to Lady Linton's room, where I had to stay for an hour or so, to assist Janet in packing up some books for her ladyship, and making other arrangements for her journey. When Janet left the room the good lady spoke very affectionately to me, and told me that I should be to her as her own child until she restored me to my patroness.

"And you will like Scotland, Grace," she said, "'the land of the mountain and flood;' I will show you Edinboro'—that beautiful boro'—and you will gain so much by our tour, that you will yet look on this little *contretemps* quite in the light of a happy accident."

When I returned to Mrs. Nutley, she handed me a letter from Philip. *Burning words* they looked to me. He spoke out openly of his pure love for me from our first meeting,

and entreated me most beseechingly to listen to his vows. He did not want me to run away, he said, or to do anything wrong; all he wanted was, that I should engage to be his wife, whenever circumstances enabled him to choose for himself as his own master. No one, he said, need know of our engagement, and that he would make secure arrangements for our correspondence in his absence.

I confess, in one sense, it was a great temptation to a young, portionless girl, as I was, to have not merely the heart of a fine young man offered to me, but the title and estate that his wife would share, and all this without the sacrifice of honour or self-respect. I covered my face with my hands, and, going down into the depths of my own spirit, I asked myself, if all this could be accomplished should I be happy? and my heart said "*no*." First of all, he is "a man of this world, who has his portion in this life." He could not pray with me, he could not understand me. I could not look up to him and reverence him as "a man of God" who would help me through trial and temptation, and sympathise with me in trouble and in joy, as "a fellow heir of the grace of life."

"Then," I said to myself, "even if I loved Philip Manley, he is not the husband for me."

In my hasty opening of his letter, a ring, which he had enclosed, fell at my feet. It was the diamond I had so often seen on his white hand, and he offered it to me, he said, as an emblem of the purity and duration of his regard for me, and to remind me of the hand on which I had seen it when he should be far away. I cried bitterly over the letter, and so did Mrs. Nutley.

"My dear," she said, "we must see Mr. Lovely; you would find him in his study."

"Please, Mrs. Nutley," I said, "do you go to him and tell him all."

So she went, and he returned with her, looking greatly dejected.

"This is sad, my poor Grace," he said; "what do you wish me to do?"

"To take charge of a note from me to Captain Manley," I said; "and to give him back his ring."

"Ah, my poor boy!" he said, "I can feel for him as well as for you, Grace. You must write very soothingly to him."

As well as I was able, I wrote my letter—very tenderly, but firmly and decidedly—telling him that I could not do as he wished, and entreating that he would give up the idea of so unsuitable a union. "Even," I said, "if I could fully respond to his love, my gratitude to his parents would forbid my consenting to a union so opposed to their views. I told him that I should ever love him as my dear friend, and never cease to pray for him, that his happiness for time and eternity might be secured by divine wisdom and love."

Mr. Lovely's hand trembled while he read my note.

"And you are going away, Grace," he said to me.

"Only for a little while, sir; we leave Darlington to-morrow."

"Then," he said, "I will not deliver this until Philip is going to Tintern this evening. You have acted nobly, Grace," he said. You need never be ashamed to meet your mother in a better world. You are trying to act worthy of her, and her teaching and example."

When Mr. Lovely left us, Mrs. Nutley and I busied ourselves in putting up my things. I then wrote to Mrs. Moss, and told her of my journey; but nothing more of my present circumstances. Philip and his father left soon after dinner, and after tea Mr. Lovely came in for a few minutes,

to commit me to the special protection of God in my journey.

“You will write to us often, Grace,” he said, “and tell us how you do, and I promise you to take care of Mrs. Nutley until you come back. I may not see you to-morrow,” he concluded, “so farewell, my dear child. Grace, mercy, and peace be ever with you!”

Early the next day, Lady Linton and I set off for Scotland, after a sad parting with my dear Mrs. Nutley. To my great delight I saw Mr. Lovely again at the carriage door. He was on horseback on his way to the rectory.

“I have your letter still, Grace,” he said; “I thought it better to keep it till the Tintern visit is concluded. I will tell Mrs. Nutley how it is received, and you shall hear from us. Farewell!”

## CHAPTER XXXI.

AFLOAT.

“ Mine own romantic town.”

SIR. W. SCOTT.

LADY LINTON and I travelled post to London, attended by the upper housemaid from Darlington, Jane Bray, a steady woman, who had waited on her ladyship since Lucy Plant's marriage. She meant to have got a sister of Lucy's over from Ireland to take her place, but this sudden move to the north put it out of the question for the present. My new patroness was very kind and motherly to me on the journey, and I felt ashamed of my own evident abstraction. I am sure I often answered her at random; so she handed me a book from the carriage-pocket, which at another time I should have revelled in, “ Dr. Johnson's tour to the Hebrides;” but I believe I took in very little of it beyond the sense of sight at that time. Mr. Lovely had given me two verses the night before, as a sort of *travelling charges*, and they were ever running through my mind, when I could disengage it from the cause of my sudden journey and its possible consequences. The verses were, “ The Almighty shall be thy defence,” and “ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee;” and Mrs. Nutley's last words to me kept them company. “ All things work together for good to them that love God.”

We spent a week in London on our way, and there the good lady gave me several handsome additions to my simple wardrobe, by which I gathered that she meant to introduce me into

company. I had no desire for this new phase of my existence, although I am sure it was just what I wanted at the time. Indeed, her whole conduct towards me was that of a wise, judicious parent, who chalks out the right path for the child, asking no questions. She showed me a good deal of what was interesting in London during our stay, and we visited several of her friends; so that it was quite a peep at the world, such as I never could have had through the loopholes of my quiet retreat at Darlington. On one occasion she dined abroad and I accompanied her, she herself presiding over my simple toilet. I had not at all expected this when she brought me away; and just then it was very salutary. To be sure I was (however remotely) her kinswoman, as well as Mrs. Manley's; but my subordinate position at Darlington had almost made me forget my consanguinity. We sailed from London to Edinburgh in about a fortnight after we set out from home, and my rapture at the sight of the beautiful city was quite a treat to my kind patroness, who gave me every facility for its enjoyment. It has been like a beautiful dream to me all through my life—that delightful visit. Lady Linton had a large circle of friends there, as Sir George had been a Scotchman; and as she had a handsome suite of rooms in Princes Street, she exercised a very liberal and enlightened hospitality towards them, and saw a good deal of company. Two evenings in each week she saw company at home, and visited her friends abroad once or twice to dinner, and whether at home or abroad I was at her side. Then my mornings were devoted to mental improvement, with the best masters, under her supervision, and when the books were put away, we rode out together in a noddy, and enjoyed the picturesque beauties with which the neighbourhood of Edinburgh so richly abounds; so that my time was most happily and usefully occupied, and I felt like a flower



suddenly transplanted into a bright, sunny spot, where all its latent powers are, as it were, coaxed out into full development. It often occurred to me that Lady Linton thought it likely that her nephew might have secured a place in my heart, that he would yet occupy it as my husband; and like a wise woman as she was—wise and good—she was preparing me for my possible future; but whatever were her views in her management of me, I felt, and still feel, deeply indebted to her. My education hitherto, though far beyond that of many young women of superior prospects in my day, did not satisfy Lady Linton's enlarged views. It was too desultory, not thorough or systematic enough, and quite wanting in those lighter graces that are so becoming to our sex; but now, under the kind care, tuition, and example of my elegant patroness, the quiet little maid of Darlington was acquiring an external polish, that was afterwards destined to that most honourable use to which a woman's accomplishments can be dedicated,—the gracing of a domestic fireside;—and in no other way did I ever value my advantages, than as they contributed to the adornment and enjoyment of a home, where love, joy, and peace had their blessed abode for many happy years of my favoured pilgrimage.

When we had been about a fortnight at Edinburgh, I had a long letter from dear Mrs. Nutley, which she said had been on hand from the week I left her. "I know," said my good old friend, "that my dear Grace will be wearying for news from Darlington. You will be glad to hear that things did not turn out *quite* so badly as we feared, but bad enough after all. Mr. Lovely told you that he would keep your letter till the father and son returned from Tintern Court. It was a prudent thought, for even without that element of discord, there was not much unity between the father and son. Colonel Manley went in the carriage, and

Philip rode beside him, and when they drew near Finchley gates, the colonel proposed a visit there, on their way to Tintern. Philip, it seems, made some excuse about a dog that he wanted to get from some gentleman's gamekeeper across the fields, which he had promised to bring to one of his brother officers, on his return to the regiment; and, in spite of the colonel's remonstrances, he gave him the slip, and left him to pay the visit at Sir Harry Bland's alone. Then, when they were at Tintern, the colonel applied to Sir Philip to assist him in bringing the young man over to his views; but it seems Philip was beforehand with his father in the matter, and had begged of his aged relative, (who idolises him,) not to join his father against him; so, when the colonel spoke to the old baronet, he gave a decided refusal, and said he should not then be a childless, desolate old man, but for his own early affections having been coerced, and the object of his love made the victim of their mutual disappointment. So the colonel came home out of sorts, before the week had expired, and was very cool with Philip, and Mrs. Manley was sad enough between them. Mr. Lovely was away for a day or two at the bishop's, when they returned, and was surprised to find them at Darlington before him. When poor Philip came back, he soon found his way to my room, and his consternation was great when he found that his bird had flown. He was sadly disappointed, and said he was the victim of a conspiracy, of which his father was the head. He asked, had you left any message or letter for him. I said, 'Not with me, but that perhaps Mr. Lovely could give him some information.' 'And where is Lovely?' he said impatiently. I said, 'He was at the Bishop's, and that he would be home in a day or two.' He met Mr. Lovely in the avenue, on his way to the house, and then and there, he got your letter and his ring, accompanied by much soothing advice from our

good friend. He instantly flew to his mother, and, though all love and duty to her, sadly agitated and distressed her, by saying that he was fully determined to put an end to the colonel's illusions about the Finchly alliance, and he was as good as his word; for that day, after his mother and Mr. Lovely had left the dining-room, he respectfully, but firmly, told the colonel his decision on that subject. His father was greatly excited, and I believe ordered the young man to leave the room. Philip instantly rose, bowed, and retired, and without saying a word to any of the family, he got Holmes up, and packed away everything belonging to him, ready for his departure on the morrow, although his leave wanted a fortnight to its expiration. Before he went to bed he took leave of his mother as if for a day or two, then went to the nursery, and kissed the sleeping Bella, and shook hands with Mr. Lovely; but even to him he did not say he would not return. He left a letter with Holmes to give to his father, and set off early in the morning. All the family supposed he was off on a hunting party, but the colonel's letter enlightened us all. Mr. Lovely says it was perfectly respectful, apologising for having given him unavoidable pain, by his inability to comply with his wishes, and adding that, under the circumstances, he thought it better to return to his regiment immediately. In saying 'good bye' to me, he left his love for you, my dear; he said you had been spirited away by his clever aunt, lest you should be induced to listen to him. 'Tell Grace,' he said, 'that I trust she will alter her mind, and if so, I depend upon you, Mrs. Nutley, to let me know at once;' and he left his address with me. I was sadly troubled to see the fine young man leaving his home so, and when I saw his poor mother, I should hardly have known her, she looked such a spectre. She is fretting sadly, and now more than at first, as the colonel has just seen Philip's

name gazetted to a regiment under orders for foreign service. He evidently sought the exchange while under the influence of the wounded feelings with which he left Darlington. I am glad to be able to tell you that we have got Bella's new governess, Miss Finch, the last week, and I expect she will be a comfort to Mrs. Manley. She seems a nice young person, and Bella has taken to her very pleasantly. She is in deep mourning for her father, and has a homesick look, poor girl, that will excite our good lady's sympathy, and divert her thoughts a little from her own sorrows, in drawing out her kind heart towards the young stranger. You will want to hear of Lucy Plant, who is as happy as her heart can wish. She comes to see me whenever she can, and I often take my tea with them, to help me to divert my loneliness, for I miss you, my child, at every step. I understand from Mrs. Manley that Lady Linton is not coming back till next year, so that we have no chance of seeing you as soon as we hoped when you left us; but I am pleased to see by your letter that you are enjoying your trip. I shall see you changed for the better, I hope, when we meet, having thrown off all your anxieties for others, which were generally your heaviest burdens. Perhaps by the time the spring birds renew their songs in the park, I shall have my little bird of the bay window singing to me again, as in the happy days of our companionship, in our own pleasant room here; but whatever is best for you, my dear, I shall submit to with as good a grace as I can.

"Mrs. Manley and Bella send you their love, and our chaplain (who often takes a cup of tea with me since the colonel went to parliament) says, 'Please, Mrs. Nutley, give my love to our dear Grace, and say I do not forget her, and that she has left her welcome at Darlington.' By the way, Grace, he has enabled me to solve an

enigma that often puzzled me since I knew him, and that was why he never married, or seemed attracted to any one, though so loving and loveable himself. I am sure he would not have been so communicative, but that the poor captain's affairs stirred up the memory of his own early days and early sorrows. It seems when he was about Philip's age, and a student at Cambridge, that he became attached to a young lady there, a Miss Dashwood. They were engaged to each other, and were to have been married with full consent of all parties, as soon as he should be ordained; and all his spare hours were spent with her riding, walking, singing, reading to her, taking her picture, and doing his own for her, with all the endearments common between young people of their age, and under their circumstances. From his description she was very attractive, though a perfect contrast to him in every way. She was very warm and animated in her manners, all life and spirits, clever, and remarkably handsome. Bright dark blue eyes, and sparkling waves of golden hair about her fair shoulders, a fine complexion, and perfect figure. Altogether, he said she was strikingly attractive, and had a very fine voice. When they had been engaged for about a year, I suppose the novelty of the affair had subsided, and the young lady wanted fresh excitement, and to his great surprise, expressed her intention of spending a little time in London, where she had been invited to visit a young friend who resided there, and to whom she had lately acted as bridesmaid. During her absence the university recess occurred, and he went away to the moors for some shooting, keeping up an affectionate correspondence weekly with his betrothed; who on her part was equally attentive. When she had been in London about six weeks, he had a letter from her requesting him to put on his shooting-jacket at once, and make his fowling-piece do double duty, as her friends were

about to give a large party, in order to return all the bridal attentions they had received, and she was anxious to have a good bag of game for them, which she depended on his forwarding to her by coach, against an early day which she named. Of course he lost no time in complying with her request, and accordingly the hares and pheasants paid for his anxiety to gratify her;—but what was his consternation the following week, when expecting to hear from her as usual, and receive her acknowledgments for his attention to her commission, to find that the party for which the game was ordered, was to celebrate her own marriage with a young officer, with whom she became acquainted during her visit to London, and whom she was about to accompany abroad, where his regiment lay! He had been at home on leave—met her at a ball, proposed, and was accepted, and the matter concluded in less than a fortnight! Mr. Lovely's first intimation of it was from the newspapers, and we may imagine what a shock his tender nature received from this base treatment. He said it quite shattered him for some time, so that he had to give up his studies and go abroad for a year. For a long time his confidence in human nature, at least in the female part of it, was sorely shaken; but time softened the bitterness of his wounded feelings, and he was enabled to fix his affections on heavenly things, which can never disappoint us. In this respect, he says, it was a blessed trial for him; and that perhaps a less severe blow would not have done the work. But since he recovered his habitual serenity, and with it his confidence in his fellow-creatures, he has had such a distrust of his own attractions for the softer sex, that it has been his constant endeavour to banish the subject from his mind. 'Though, Mrs. Nutley,' he added with great simplicity, 'I think I should have been happy, and made a wife happy, as a married man; for after all, mere

tranquillity is unsatisfying to an ardent nature. We require a certain amount of positive enjoyment, and as far as I can judge, we cannot attain that in single life. Legitimate, social, and domestic enjoyment is provided for us in the marriage relation, and we should not despise or neglect the means if we wish to attain the end. But I got such a crush in my self-esteem, that I have never recovered it sufficiently to try again, always fearful of another rebuff, and now I am becoming an elderly man and resigned to my fate; but I do pity my poor boy, Philip, for I know he has a warm heart. Still his trial is not as great as mine; for it is still more bitter to have loved an unworthy object, than to have lost a worthy one.' " You may imagine, dear children, with what sensations I perused this letter, so abounding with interest to those with whose happiness my own seemed to be bound up. I went over and over it, till I think I had it by heart; and in my sleeping hours snatches of it would force through my busy brain in some wild way. For dear Mrs. Manley I felt greatly, but I tried to commit her and all my dear ones to that guidance and consolation that were my own best inheritance; and my time with Lady Linton was so full of interest, that my anxieties about home were amply alleviated. I was now *Miss Leigh*, the openly acknowledged kinswoman, and chosen companion of an elegant, accomplished, Christian lady, to whom I daily became (as in duty bound) more attached; and whom I must ever remember with the most lively gratitude.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE NORTH COUNTRY.

“ The moon had climbed the highest hill,  
Which rises o’er the source of Dee ;  
And from the eastern summit shed,  
Her silver light on tower and tree.”

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“ To Norroway—to Norroway—to Norroway over the foam !”

It was far on in September when we arrived in Edinburgh ; we remained there until February, and then Lady Linton announced her intention of going northwards. Aberdeenshire was Sir George’s native place ; and we took Perth and Stirling on our way. Her ladyship’s physician had prescribed sea-bathing for her, which she meant to enjoy at Aberdeen, where we arrived the first of June. I had often heard the Scotch spoken of as “ *cold-hearted Northerns*,” but never without a stout contradiction on my part, after my residence amongst them ; indeed, the remembrance of their kind, genial hospitality is still most pleasing to me. At Aberdeen we were delightfully domiciled in a pleasant manse, where body and mind were amply cared for. Lady Linton’s friend, the minister, presented the rare combination of the head of a man and the heart of a child. A man of *one work*, and that the glorious one of proclaiming a free salvation to perishing sinners, he considered it his duty to give to it all the powers of his fine, literary taste and commanding intellect ; and, not satisfied with “ giving to God that which had cost him nothing,” he truly ploughed in the study, that he might reap in the



pulpit. Is it not Luther, who says, "*Bene precasse est bene studuisse?*" This good man acted out the godly maxim, for he was a man of prayer, and bore on his countenance the reflection of the glory of the mount, when he joined his family circle;—simple, polite, genial, even playful in manner, but ever having evidently set before him the glory of his divine Master as his end and aim, whether as the wise teacher, or the charming companion. He was ably helped in his parochial duty by his talented, amiable wife, and their cheerful hospitable table was graced by her two sweet young nieces and their widowed mother. With those dear girls, I had a delightful time; and in their company I saw all that was interesting in the city of the Dee and Don. The "*Aulton*," separated from the new town by a mile of spital, is a delightful, mossy, dreamy old place, with its ancient college, churches, and professors' houses, standing in their pleasant gardens. The houses are quaint in structure and appearance, and many of them have a motto over the entrance; even the old obelisk pumps in the streets looked unlike what I had seen anywhere else. The cold north-easterly blasts on that coast are unfavourable to the culture of flowers, and perhaps for that reason the people seem to take a special delight in their cultivation, from the stimulus afforded by the hope of overcoming natural difficulty; but whatever fails in Aberdeenshire, strawberries never disappoint. I never saw them so abundant, or (to my taste) so good anywhere. The generous Scottish pint of berries (equal to five of ours) and the mutchkin of cream (a pint and a quarter of our measure) were to me a dessert fit for an emperor. I hope there never was much of the gourmand about me, so I will not add my quota to the trite and hacknied praise of a Scottish breakfast. But this much I must say, that the flavour of the Aberdeen herrings freshly caught, often helped me to

eat a heartier breakfast than I ever enjoyed anywhere else. The fisher-bodies are an interesting race on that coast, living quite apart from the rest of the population, with whom they do not even intermarry. They have their own little square of village, with its red tiled roofs, and humble kirk; and some of the fishwives, with their tall white mutches (which add considerably to their height), are really very fine, handsome women, and form a striking feature in the market at Aberdeen, with its beautiful fountain of Peterhead granite. The division of labour is pretty equal between the fishermen and their gudewives. The former labour all night in catching the fish, but from the moment it is brought to shore, they have done with it. The men then go home, refresh themselves, and go to sleep, and the women unlade the boats, spread out the nets to dry, and carry away and dispose of the fish. Lady Linton was greatly interested in them, and paid the fishing village many a visit during our stay. She enjoyed the bathing, and the pleasant walk to and fro over the links, greatly, but she never was pleased with my style of bathing. I quite scorned the assistance of a bathing woman, having been accustomed to the sea from my infancy; and my kind patroness often threatened me with the Norsemen, if I went out farther than she did. Indeed, it is not always safe for a lady to venture out far; the retiring wave (or "outhawl" as it is called), has such power on that coast. But after all the threats of the Norsemen, I was greatly surprised when she said to me, one day—

"You cannot think, Grace, what a fancy I have to see Norway. It is quite a temptation to me to have it just opposite, and I am inclined to avail myself of Captain MacBean's invitation to go across for a week or two. You know, my doctor says that he should have nothing to do for me if I lived on the sea. If you do not wish to accom-

pany me, my dear," she added, "I will not ask you ; but if you have no objection, your company will be very agreeable."

Of course, I decided on accompanying her; "whether her lot were weal or woe, that lot I meant to share;" and to "Norroway over the foam" we went, and enjoyed our trip greatly. While we were at Aberdeen, we often walked to the site of old Mrs. Plant's early married home, the auld brig of Don, a sweet, romantic spot, full of interest of its own, as well as that of association. But our pleasant visit should come to an end, and its memory is sweet. We made a short *détour* to the western highlands, and islands, before we left Scotland, which we did in September, for Guernsey, to visit an old friend of Lady Linton's, with whom we passed part of the winter. My studies still went on regularly and pleasantly, the attachment between my patroness and me being daily cemented and strengthened by mutual good offices. She was my kind and valuable teacher and protector, and I on my part sought in every way to make myself useful and agreeable to her. We had past the Christmas, and got into the new year, when her ladyship had a letter from Mr. Lovely, that I saw by her countenance troubled her no little.

"Grace," she said, "you would like to see Mr. Lovely's letter. I fear our excellent friend the colonel is seriously unwell, and we must try to get back to Darlington as soon as we can."

I found by Mr. Lovely's letter that the colonel had never been quite well since his son's departure from England. His agitation had commenced in the disappointment about Finchley, and was increased by Philip's exchange to another regiment from his own dear old "*fighting 50th*," of which he had hoped to see him colonel, as he had been himself; and before he had time to recover from the effects of his

excitement, he was obliged to go to London to attend the House. If he had had Mrs. Manley with him he might have got over the winter pretty well; but, unhappily, he never would allow her to accompany him to London. He used to say that "he had a horror of handboxes." But that was not all. He was too good a husband, and too perfect a gentleman to neglect any lady that was dependent on him, much less his wife; and therefore he cut the knot that he had not inclination or patience to untie, and she remained at Darlington, while he and his man lived at his club in town. He feared, too, I believe, that if Darlington were deserted, the people would be neglected; and he trusted to Mrs. Manley's increased energy in his absence, to make up for the eye of the master. Mr. Lovely often asked him (at Mrs. Manley's desire) to allow her to accompany him; but he would say, "Oh! not now, Walter; I am like the little boy who would not say A lest he should have to say B, and so on. If Cecilia comes, Bella must come, and that involves Janet and the footman; we should be quite an establishment, and I should have to neglect her in the end." Then this last winter Miss Finch should have gone too, and that would be the last straw to break the camel's back. However, like all independent men, a time comes when they would be glad to have the despised aid of the womenkind; and he had to write for Mrs. Manley, saying he should be glad to see her without Bella, merely with a personal attendant. So she arranged at once for Bella and her governess to live with Mrs. Nutley, and Mr. Lovely accompanied her to London. They saw at once that the poor colonel was far from being well, and, greatly against his own wish, induced him to see a physician. The doctor made light of his symptoms, but sent him away home at once, saying that his mind had been overwrought, and that perfect rest would set him up again

directly. And so it seemed to be; for the very sight of Darlington revived him, and he had a good summer. Then late in the autumn he went to the moors, as usual, and looked remarkably well at Christmas. However, on New Year's Day, when Mr. Lovely wrote, he had an alarming seizure of some kind, that, although it soon appeared to pass off, left a sense of dread on Mrs. Manley's mind, that made her anxious to have her aunt to lean on; and accordingly we were summoned home with as little delay as possible. "Tell Grace," concluded Mr. Lovely, "that we shall all be very glad to see her back at Darlington again; and pray let us meet you at as early a date as you can make convenient; not that I apprehend any immediate danger to our dear friend, but it is evident that a change has passed upon his constitution that makes us less confident than we were about his ultimate restoration."

So Jane Bray was set to pack up, and we were all ready and waiting for a packet, which was not then, as now, an easy matter to obtain, especially in winter. At length we succeeded; and after a rough, tedious passage, in which we were all very sick, we got over to England; but Lady Linton was so weak and poorly, that we had to stay several days at Southampton. We then posted to London, where we were met by the Darlington carriage, in which we made a slow journey, arriving at the dear old place about the third week of January. I need not say that we received a most emphatic welcome. Lady Linton's arrival seemed to put a new spirit into the house. Mrs. Manley looked really relieved, and the colonel quite pleased, to have her reliable aunt beside her. Dear Bella was very glad to see me, and impatient to introduce me to her governess, and see the new doll unpacked that I had brought her from London, and that was to be called Grace in honour of the giver. Then as to my poor dear Mrs. Nutley, she cried with joy at

having me again. Lucy Plant was rapturous, and the more so, as she had a dear little infant to surprise me with, which she would not let Mrs. Nutley write about, that she might enjoy the sight of my face when I beheld her first-born peeping from beneath her mantle. It was a fine, lively little boy, the miniature of John, but with a roguish Irish twinkle in his black eye, for which he must have been indebted to the Heath branch of his parentage, as John was the personification of quietness and sobriety—a canny Scot. The old grandmother's cup of earthly joy seemed full, as she nursed the little household treasure. She was greatly improved in health by her good daughter's nursing of her; and her spirits quite bright. Indeed, the genial Lucy seemed to have reflected her own brightness in both mother and son.

“And now, dear Grace,” said Lucy, “you are so good, I should like you to be the godmother of our little son. I do not want to ask Lady Linton or Mrs. Manley, for it would look like what neither John or I mean.”

“No, indeed,” Lucy went on, kindling and bridling with honest pride as she spoke; “we don't want to pension our little boy on any one; but we do want,” and now the changeful countenance melted, and the bright eye softened with feeling, “we do want some one to stand for our infant, who will never forget to pray for him, that ‘he may lead the remainder of his life according to this beginning.’”

I wished so that Mr. Lovely had been present, that he might share in my admiration of the warm, sterling, Irish-woman, who had now fairly won my heart. So I promised Lucy that I would do as she wished.

“And now, John,” she said, “I have chosen the godmother, and you may choose the godfather; but let it be some one that Grace will have no objection to call gossip.”

"I have asked Mr. Lovely already, Lucy," said John, quietly.

"You did," she said, "and you never told me! You want to have your ears boxed for you, John Plant; but I shouldn't be able to do it myself, I'm too busy, and in too good a humour, looking at Grace here. And will Mr. Lovely consent?"

"He has done so already," said John, "and I think Grace will have no objection."

When I was leaving the cottage, the old lady, when she kissed me, said very archly, but *sotto voce*—

"You see you were to be a mother to *my* grandchild, Grace, in some way or other."

She raised my colour a little by the allusion; but I made no reply, and the happy Lucy and her baby saw me across the park on my way back to Mrs. Nutley.

Mr. Lovely was not at home the day we arrived. He had gone over to Tintern Court, to make his report of the state of the colonel's health to Sir Philip, who was too feeble to come to Darlington. When he returned the next day, he went immediately to pay his respects to Lady Linton, and then came to Mrs. Nutley's room to see me. He looked (I thought) happier—more joyous than ever I had seen him; but after he had welcomed me with his usual parental tenderness, he scanned me from head to foot very narrowly.

"*The same, and not the same,*" he said. "Mrs. Nutley, is she our little Grace still?"

"Yes, sir, that she is," replied my old friend.

"Well, what is it, then? Grace, my dear child, tell me what is about you, different from the Grace that left us more than a year ago?"

"Indeed, sir," I said, "I cannot tell; I feel *quite* the

same; but I have been more out in the world, and have been dressed rather by Lady Linton's taste than my own."

"Your head," he said, "seems to me to be of a different shape. You know I am no judge of female attire; but your head seems another thing, Grace."

I laughed.

"Well, sir," I said, "Lady Linton has been trying to fill my head with a store of what is good and useful from her own teeming brain, but I do not feel that it has swelled my head yet: it was very empty, and would bear more still, without either swelling or bursting."

Mrs. Nutley's little dog "Fly" lay on the rug asleep, and Mr. Lovely caught it by the ears, and turned it round, as he said—

"*Eureka!* it is this frizzing of your hair, Grace; and why did you let Lady Linton spoil your hair so?"

"It shall soon come back to its pristine rusticity, sir," I replied. "When I was at Rome, I did as they did; but I shan't bewilder the inside of your head any more with the outside of mine."

"That's a good child," he said; "smooth down all that French stuff, and then I'll know you."

I was glad to see him so cheerful, and augured from it that his mind was easy about the colonel.

"Our good colonel, Mrs. Nutley," he said, "is so much better to-day; the sight of Lady Linton has done him and Mrs. Manley a world of good. I must go now and enjoy a sight of their happiness."

After my return to Darlington I had to continue my attendance on Lady Linton occasionally; and whenever she kept her own apartments I was her companion there, so that my dear Mrs. Nutley began to feel that she had lost her hold of me. However, Anne Heath, Lucy's sister, arrived, and took my place with her ladyship, and I became



only a visitor at her apartments, in order to continue my lessons. She found me not merely a willing, but an eager and admiring pupil, as she was a talented and interested teacher. Mrs. Nutley, however, was appeased when she found that her right to me was acknowledged to be paramount; and I, on my part, was glad to have our quiet evenings together once more. Then, indeed, we indemnified ourselves for our long separation, by full and unreserved interchange of thought and feeling, so enjoyable by those who understand, appreciate, and sympathise with each other; and that half-hour of thorough domestic *abandon*, when we lingered with our feet on the fender together, before lighting the chamber candles, was the charmed time when all the little secrets came out on both sides; only then I had courage to ask for news of poor Philip.

"His mother," Mrs. Nutley said, "seems quite satisfied that he has forgotten that little episode in his history, because he has never alluded to it in his letters to her; but I do not agree with her, though I do not tell her my own suspicions; for I think his silence is partly the result of his regard for her, and his reluctance to say anything that would grieve or annoy her; and partly, perhaps, wounded feeling, that is too proud to complain. I may be wrong, but I do not think Philip as oblivious as his mother's hopes would lead her to conclude. I know Mr. Lovely has kept up a regular correspondence with him; but, of course, it is confidential, so I would not ask a question on the subject, as he has never spoken to me about it."

"I wish Mr. Lovely could have seen Lucy Plant the other day, Mrs. Nutley," I said, "when she asked me to become sponsor for her little son, and he should have loved her."

"I do not think, my dear," she replied, "that he dislikes Lucy by any means; but when he told me about his

early disappointment, of which I wrote to you, he said, in describing Miss Dashwood, 'she had a very bright expression in her face, something like Lucy Plant's.' This at once explained to me that it was no dislike of Lucy that made him look so much more sober than usual in her presence, but I suppose her merry countenance reminded him of the author of his early sorrows; and, perhaps, involuntarily, he identified the look and manner with the disposition in connection with which he had first occasion to notice it with disapprobation. But it is hard to judge of him with regard to our sex, for there is Bella's governess, poor Miss Finch, who is as quiet as a mouse, and yet I do not think that he and she have yet got beyond the bounds of mere formal politeness to each other. I am sure she never would think of looking to him for sympathy or advice. She would not be able to seek him, and he will never make an advance to any lady.

"Is it not a pity, Grace," she added, "that such a man should not have the enjoyment of his own fireside?"

I hesitated a little.

"You have not answered me, dear," she said.

"Indeed, ma'am," I replied, "I was just thinking that if he had married, we could not have had him here with us, and what should we have done without him? To me he has taken the place of father and mother. I have no reserves with him, and I trust his wisdom and love so fully, that it seems to me that Darlington would be almost a desert to me without him."

Mrs. Nutley sighed. I looked at her, and perceived a very clouded, pained expression on her usually placid face that I could not understand at all.

"Dear Mrs. Nutley," I said, "are you unwell or unhappy, or what makes you look like that?"

"Do not ask me, dear," she replied; "'where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'"

"Ah! dear Mrs. Nutley," I said, "now you have set me thinking, and I can come to no conclusion, so I shan't sleep all night. That is my way, you know,—to lie tossing and puzzling till day-dawn, and then fall into a troubled slumber."

"Well, then, my dear," she said, "it seems to be only a choice of evils in your case, and I suppose you should know it soon."

My heart beat violently, and I laid my hand on her arm, and looked up at her with an anxious face.

"Tell me, Mrs. Nutley," I said, "what is it? Has anything happened, or is anything about to happen to Mr. Lovely? You were speaking of him when you looked so sorry that you frightened me."

"Just this, dear," she said, "that Darlington will not be our chaplain's home, if anything serious happens with regard to Colonel Manley."

"Oh! why, Mrs. Nutley?" I said, in great agitation. "Surely our dear lady would then want his aid and counsel more than ever?"

"But he could not remain, Grace," she said, "and I will tell you why. An old college friend of his, Lord Openshaw, has lately come to his title and estate, and, having a small living in his gift, he wished to secure the neighbourhood of his old and dear friend by presenting it to him. It is at 'Ivyberry,' about thirty miles south of us here, on the borders of Devon and Somerset. He was inducted into the living just before the new year, and has retained the services of the old curate for six months, or at pleasure, for during the colonel's life he would not leave him; indeed, but for the failing health and strength of

his dear friend, I do not think he would have accepted the living at all; and, only for the disappointment about the captain, his father might have been a strong man for many years; for his constitution was good, and his parents lived to a great age."

Mrs. Nutley paused, and I felt unable to make any reply to her communication: my breath came quick and short for a moment, and then I felt cold and faint all over. Mrs. Nutley said no more, but rose to light our candles for bed, and I lay down on the little settee beside the fire. Mrs. Nutley was going about, locking her presses, gathering up her keys, and arranging the room, as she did every night before retiring. When she was quite ready she came to the fireplace, and, as the light of the candle fell on my face, she saw that I looked very white.

"My child," she said, in a frightened way, "is anything the matter with you?"

"Oh! no, ma'am," I said, faintly, "nothing to speak of: I feel a little cold and weak, but I shall be better when I get to bed."

"I'm afraid you took too long a walk to-day, dear," she said. "Miss Finch and Bella are such walkers, they don't mind it; but you should not go so far with them; and on the snow it was heavy."

"No, ma'am," I said, "the snow was crisp, and the park looked so beautiful, I did not feel any fatigue."

"Then you have taken cold," she said, "and you must have some mulled elder wine and a biscuit, and I will warm your bed."

I went to bed, but not to sleep. Do as I might, the thought pursued me, "Mr. Lovely is going away: this will not be his home much longer, and what shall I do?" Then I thought, "I must keep it to myself, for no one would understand me: he is not to any one what he has

been to me since I lost my mother :” and I cried bitterly. My tears relieved me a little, and then I called myself to account, and thought, “ Am I a child of God ? If I am, have I not a Father in heaven, to whom I can tell all my trouble ; He will sympathise with my weakness, and strengthen me, and He has promised never to leave or forsake me ?” So I comforted myself with these reflections, and towards morning fell asleep, and I thought I was telling my mother about Mr. Lovely’s going away, and that she smiled, and said, “ When you were a little child, Grace, you used to weep when your flowers withered ; but when you saw the garden blooming again next day, you would smile at me, and say, ‘ Look, mother, my flowers have come back ! ’” And her sweet face beamed on me, so that I wakened full of pleasure. But then I thought, “ What has happened ? is anything the matter ?” and the sorrowful feeling of the night came back ; but I struggled it down, and said to myself, “ It must not appear ; I will tell it all to the Lord, and try to cast my burden on him.” And I did so, and came out to breakfast looking as cheerful as I could, so that Mrs. Nutley’s fears were set at rest, and I helped her at her work as usual.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### CLOUDS.

“This, our hope for all that’s mortal,  
And we too shall burst the bond ;  
Death keeps watch beside the portal,  
But ’tis life that dwells beyond.”

I HAVE not said anything of Anne Heath—a pleasant girl, easily to be known as the sister of Lucy ; as artless and amiable, but more shy. She was fond of books, and this pleased Lady Linton, who often had a controversy with Lucy on her mental idleness ; but she made up for it by her activity of body, and quickness of feeling : different from each other were the sisters as the leaves on the trees, but each fitting into the peculiar niche designed for her. I believe it was Charles the Fifth (the emperor) who, as a recluse, amused himself with horology ; and after several vain attempts to make the time-pieces go together, he drew the important lesson, that he had spent many years, and sacrificed much, in order to bring men into unison on the subject of religion, and had failed so signally ; because it never was intended that the conscience of one man should be in the keeping of another. I suppose the older we grow the more tolerant we become of the prejudices and opinions of others. Young blood is hot, and will not brook opposition. But when we look back upon our own past experience, and review all our exploded theories and rejected opinions, we are more willing to accord to others that liberty we prize for ourselves. My

own great error, at least in friendship, was the setting up of a certain standard, to which I measured every new claimant; and, like the Procrustian bed, my childish heart said, that "if too short they should be stretched, cut off if they're too long." My list of friends was not a long one; they should all wear a uniform, and whoever it did not fit was to be rejected. I am ashamed when I think how unjust I was to Anne Heath. Not that I ever showed it to her, but I did not open my heart to her, and welcome her to my sympathy as I should have done; and I found afterwards that she said to her sister Lucy, "I could love Miss Leigh so, if she would only let me!" But Lucy would not intrude her sister on me, and so I did not learn my mistake until it was too late for me to rectify. With regard to our other inmate, Miss Finch, dear Bella took the initiative; for as soon as I returned to Darlington, she brought us together in such a way, that we should at least try to fraternise for sake of the dear little bond of union between us. One day when they were going for their daily walk in the park, the child stopped at Mrs. Nutley's door, and called me to her—

"Dear Grace," she said, "do come out and walk with us, and see the trees in the park, how they glitter in the sunshine after the frost. Oh! do come, and we'll see the squirrels eating their nuts."

So I said, "Yes, dear Bella, if Miss Finch wishes I will go with you."

"Grace," said Bella, looking up at me with her sweet smile, "Miss Finch wishes whatever I wish,—except at lessons."

Miss Finch laughed, and said—

"A necessary exception, is it not, Miss Leigh? But do, please, come and have a walk with us."

"Well," said Mrs. Nutley, "do you two come in first,

and have something to eat with Grace; for she must not stir a step until she has lunched. So they came in, and she gave them something appetising out of her inexhaustible stores: and from that day, Miss Finch and I, (having as it were partaken of each other's salt, like the Arabs,) were good friends; and I believe it was a comfort to her to be free of our apartment, and to spend an hour with us occasionally, after she had disposed of her little charge for the night. The walks became a daily institution, and then the intimacy grew apace. When people become walking companions, I have always thought they were on the high road to friendship; for an intimacy very endurable between four walls would often be oppressive to both parties, if pushed together out of doors. So true is the Scripture that says, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

I found that poor Miss Finch had been brought up in the enjoyment of every luxury, in one of the elegant suburban villas of London, as the eldest and cherished child of one of its merchant princes; but some commercial crisis had so materially affected his position and circumstances, that his spirits, and finally his health, sank under the shock, and his delicate wife and her five children were left almost penniless. His creditors, however, behaved very generously to the family, as Englishmen know how to do under such circumstances, and settled an annuity on Mrs. Finch out of the wreck, telling her at the same time that, from the honourable character of her husband, they knew he was in no way accountable for the deficiencies in his accounts, and that they felt it due to his memory to make some provision for her two sons, whom they forthwith furnished with handsome outfits as cadets in the East India Company's service, of which they had been with Mr. Finch joint directors. Those two fine lads



were younger than Caroline, and the two youngest children were girls. In order to support them, this good girl proposed to her mother that she should turn her talents to account in tuition; and a friend of Lady Linton's, hearing of her desire for a situation as governess, recommended her for the opening at Darlington, as Bella's teacher. So, in one short year, poor Mrs. Finch had been not merely hurled from the summit of worldly prosperity, but called to part from her three eldest children. The separation between Caroline and her mother was deeply felt by both: the latter was still so young a woman that, but for her mourning garb, she might have passed as Caroline's elder sister; and such they were to each other in all companionship and tenderness, added to the instinctive feelings of maternity on one side, and those of filial reverence on the other. It was of course a sad parting, and one that left visible traces on the fair cheeks of the pensive governess for a long time. Under any circumstances, the position of a governess must be a trying one. It is hard enough to be obliged by penury to make merchandise of those talents and accomplishments that are the legitimate ornaments of a happy home; but, added to this, a governess has generally to contend with a sort of undefined, unrecognised position in the household, that, to a sensitive girl, pining for her mother's bosom to lean on, is very hard. She is too good for the servants' hall, and not good enough for the drawing-room; unable to claim sympathy from the one, and unwilling to accept it from the other. I knew a refined, intelligent girl once, who was obliged to take occupation in this way, and she assured me that, had she continued in her situation, she thought her reason would have been in danger from the coldness and hauteur to which she had been subject.

Some governesses may be too exacting, but, on the

whole, the position is an unnatural one, and therefore generally unhappy. The governess is often an exotic, transplanted to an ungenial soil, and exposed to a wintry sky; and the employers are in the end the losers, by the want of that energy and affection in their teachers which they might have called out and strengthened by such sympathy, respect, and kindness as would cheat the stranger into a sort of homelike feeling in her situation. I recollect to have seen somewhere a sister's application to her brother, to look out for a governess for her children, who, from her description, was required to be such a paragon of female perfection, that the brother replied as follows—

“My dear Sister,—I have never met with any lady such as you describe—when I do, I shall make her *my wife*, and *not your governess*.”

And I believe this gentleman's feeling would explain, in part at least, the enigma that ladies find it so difficult to solve—namely, Why it is that governesses often make such good matches? The gentlemen pity them for the indignities to which they are so often subject, either from mothers, children, or both, and we know that “pity is akin to love.” But if ladies would act as my dear patroness acted towards poor Caroline Finch, in the spirit of the golden rule, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,” they might, in soothing the stranger's woe, secure the devoted affection and willing service of a refined and grateful heart, and at last secure a friend in the governess.

Miss Finch had been rather more than a year at Darlington when I returned, and I found the happiest understanding established between her and Mrs. Manly, so that the roses were coming back to her cheek, and the sparkle to her eye, in the firm confidence that she had a friend

in her employer, who would enter into her feelings, and insure for her from the whole household the respect and deference due to a gentlewoman. She and I became fast friends—our tastes were very similar, and we helped each other on in our studies like sisters. She was four or five years older than me, and looked older than she was, from her very staid expression and manner; she was, indeed, an admirable teacher for Bella, and in many respects an acquisition to Mrs. Manly also.

Meantime, the poor colonel continued to complain more or less: he was very variable. Sometimes able for a drive, and at others unable to cross the library, where his little camp-bed was set up for him, and where his excellent lady attended on him night and day, with the most sedulous attention. The pleasance rooms were now almost entirely given up to Bella and her governess, and Lady Linton passed much of her time with Mrs. Manley in the little music room that adjoined the library. On the whole, none of us now felt much hope of ultimate restoration for the invalid; although in the course of the summer he made a wonderful rally, improved in energy and spirits, and said that he had ten years' work in him still. Then all the household revived, and there was some visiting to and fro; and in July the whole party moved to the sea-shore for some weeks: Mrs. Nutley, Mr. Lovely, and myself at home, and Anne Heath staying at the cottage with her sister Lucy, whose fine boy, now nine or ten months old, was the life of their little party. His baptism had taken place soon after my return, and I felt it a solemn undertaking that had been put upon me, but one from which I had no right to shrink. I never could listen to that beautiful service without being deeply moved; and, on that occasion, as I was myself one of the actors, for the first time, I felt it still more tender and solemn. To see the little helpless babe, (that has, without

his own knowledge, been already redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and whose duty it is to become, and remain, "his faithful soldier and servant to his life's end,") beside the font, unable to take the oath of allegiance to the "Captain of his salvation," and, as it were, appealing to the old soldiers present to answer for him, until he shall be able to take upon himself, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of the promise made for him by his *sponsors, responders, answerers, or sureties*. As I said, I felt little John Plant's baptism so deeply, and thought it over so seriously, that I have not merely never been able to refuse to be a sponsor since, but have even offered my services, when the infant was an orphan, or without friends who understood and appreciated the initiatory rite of Christianity. My little godson soon began to know me, and look pleased when I sang to him, as I often did, when Lucy brought him up to see Mrs. Nutley. And I remarked that a plaintive air would bring a quiver to his lip, or a moisture to his eye, that showed his sensitive nature, and that his little "soul was a stream, that flowed at pleasant sounds." One of Mrs. Nutley's favourites was that sweet Scottish ballad—

"Will ye go, lassie, go,  
To the braes of Balquither?  
Where the blaeberries grow,  
'Mang the bonnie bloomin' heather.

I will twine thee a bower,  
By the clear silver fountain;  
And we'll roam by the hour,  
O'er the gorse-mantled mountain."

And our little Jock liked it too, and showed it in his own pretty way very plainly, so that Lucy used to say to Mrs. Nutley—

“Dear ma’am, isn’t Grace a born nurse?”

Lucy’s was the first baby I had ever nursed, so that he awakened in me those sympathies for babyhood in general that had their first germs in my doll’s house. But while I kept up an appearance of outward cheerfulness, the under-current of sadness (that had set in the evening I heard of the coming change with regard to Mr. Lovely), held its course steadily, and I had never renewed the subject with Mrs. Nutley. I could not do so without betraying feelings which might be misunderstood, and therefore, at great personal sacrifice I kept them to myself; and many a tear my pillow received that none could suspect who saw my general demeanour. Mrs. Nutley, however, remarked a change in my colour and strength, that made her uneasy, and she often questioned me closely as to my health.

“My dear child,” she said to me one day, “I am really troubled to see you look so poorly, and your appetite, too, grows worse and worse. Are you well enough, my dear Grace? Do, dear, be candid with me, and tell me, is anything the matter with you?”

I smiled at her anxiety, and tried to elude it, by saying I was not ill, and that she only fancied I was out of health. While we were speaking, Mr. Lovely came in; and lest she should speak to me before him, and that I should have to break down, I made my escape into my own little sanctuary; but when I returned to the room, to my surprise our chaplain was there still.

“Grace,” he said, “I have been waiting for you: I want you to put a string to these bands for me.” And as I stitched on the strings I felt, rather than saw, that he was watching me closely, and I grew very nervous. I felt the tears gathering, and at length dropping on my work, and I tried to conceal my face on handing them to him, but he

saw that the tears had left their mark. Just then Mrs. Manly sent for Mrs. Nutley, and when she left the room he said to me—

“Grace, I hope you will be open with me, and tell me if any thing troubles you. I have been anxious about you almost ever since your return to us; and this day, when Mrs. Nutley told me her fears that you were unwell, it occurred to me to ask you. You know, my child, you are very dear to me, and I am pained to see you look so unlike yourself. Do not be vexed with me if I ask you to tell me truly, is there anything on your mind with regard to Philip Manley? Do not be afraid to tell *me*, for I was obliged to promise to let him know if your feelings with regard to him should undergo any change in his absence. Trust me, dear Grace, as you did when you were a child, coming to Darlington. I will act by you as if you were my own daughter.”

My tears were now flowing so rapidly that my utterance was choked, and I could not speak out, or I should at once have told him how much astray he was in his suspicions with regard to my feelings about Philip; so I just wept on, and he sighed deeply. At length he laid his hand on my shoulder, and said, in a tone of touching tenderness—

“My dear Grace, I am sorry; and can *I* then do nothing for you?”

“Oh, dear Mr. Lovely,” I said, “please do not say any more. You are wrong in your suspicions about me. I feel to Captain Manley as a dear friend, but he never can be more to me than that.”

“You do not know, Grace,” he said; “he *may* be more to you.”

“But, sir,” I said, (gathering up all my energy, to quell once for all this erroneous notion,) “I do not wish him to

be more to me than a friend, for my feelings towards him can never go beyond friendship; you may depend on my word, sir," I added; "for I *could* not deceive *you* if I *would*."

"Then your heart is still your own, Grace?"

"Quite my own, sir," I said. "I am, I believe, a little nervous; but it will pass away."

"Go, then," he said, "and take a walk to Lucy Plant's, and see our little godson, and the walk will do you good."

So I went; and as I was leaving the room I met Mrs. Nutley returning.

"Well, Grace," she said, "I am glad you are going abroad this fine day, the air will serve you; but," she continued, (looking closely under my gipsy hat), "what is wrong with you? have you been making a clean breast to your father confessor?"

"Mr. Lovely," she said, "what penance have you inflicted on my daughter?"

"Just a visit to her little godson, Mrs. Nutley," he replied. "Could it be a lighter task?"

I found afterwards from Mrs. Nutley that when I went out he remained for some minutes buried in deep thought, and then said, with a careless air—

"By the way, Mrs. Nutley, did you ever tell Grace about the new parson of Ivyberry?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, "you did not forbid me."

"No, no," he said, "not at all."

"Since you remind me of it," said she, "I think I can date the change in Grace's spirits from that evening. She has never named it to me since, and I have not reminded her; but she is so still, that I fear she is fretting inwardly."

"Well," he said, "I think you might try in some casual way to find out if your suspicions are right, and then I might be able to reason her out of this depression, for I have

quite failed with her. I had an idea that she might still think of Philip; and, had it been so, I should have written to him, for my conscience to both would compel me to act openly; and our good friend the colonel might be brought round, he is such a changed man in many ways; the coils of the world are loosening, and the spirit of the little child becomes daily more evident in his whole bearing that betokens a preparation for the kingdom of heaven. And why," he added, "should I repine, or mourn, at the advancement of the best interests of my best friend? But to return to Grace, it will not do to have her pining in this noiseless way; she must be encouraged to speak out, and the relief will do her a world of good."

"I will do what I can, sir," said Mrs. Nutley, "but I do not think I shall succeed where you have failed."

"We can but try," he said, "and I will remind you to let me know the result of your tactics."

But all thoughts of me and my affairs were banished from our minds by the events of the next day. Early in the morning, Mr. Lovely was summoned to Tintern Court, to witness the last moments of the good old baronet, by which the colonel inherited the title and estate. This threw our whole party into sad consternation; for hitherto everything that could possibly agitate our invalid, was studiously kept from his knowledge: but here was an event that could not be concealed. Mr. Lovely should be necessarily absent, not merely to conduct the interment, but to take the necessary steps afterwards, in order to the colonel's succession to the estate. The family held a council on the subject, and at length it was decided that Lady Linton should undertake to break the news, as gently as possible. And she did, with all her feminine tact, bring it about by degrees, so that all were hopeful that the shock had passed without inflicting the dreaded injury; but the colonel was very undemon-



strative—singularly so : and perhaps in the effort to conceal his feelings, he made too violent a strain on a mind already partially weakened by disease ; for that night he had a return of the seizure that had first alarmed us. Like the former, however, it passed off, and Lady Manley was all hope that the worst was over ; but on Mr. Lovely's return he saw that another pin of the earthly tabernacle had been loosened, and that it was now only a question of time, as to the ultimate result. The attendance in the sick-room became more instant and more anxious, and fresh hands had to be employed. Mrs. Nutley and Janet now relieved the two ladies occasionally ; and one day when the colonel had been urging on his lady the necessity of overcoming her reluctance to leave him for needful air and exercise, he said, " By the way, Cecilia, there is your douce little handmaid, Grace Leigh, let her come in for an hour or two every day with Mrs. Nutley, and you can have a ramble or a ride : you must not be sacrificed to me altogether, my dear. Now do oblige me, and do as I say. Walter," he said to Mr. Lovely, " tell that good little damsel, that I am not a tame ogre, or anything that way. I am sorry I did not know that child better in my health, she seems so modest and wise-like in her manner."

To my amazement, Bella was sent to fetch me, so that from that day I was installed for a couple of hours in the sick-room and there I witnessed for the first time, how true religion can enable the lofty spirit of the old English gentleman to bow to suffering and weakness, and that too, so as to save the feelings of all who surrounded him, and leave an impression on their minds that " the chamber where the good man meets his fate is privileged beyond the common walks of life quite on the verge of heaven." It was a pleasure to attend on him, and a boon to be permitted to alleviate his sufferings.

I little thought, the first time I saw and admired the towering, martial figure and lofty bearing of the noble-looking master of Darlington, that I should yet mourn his removal, as I might mourn for a revered and loved father, and shed almost filial tears at his tomb. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

His illness, now so hopeless in its character, and so tedious in its sufferings, was a deep trial to the sympathetic nature of our dear chaplain, who was tenderly attached to his kinsman, whom he had always regarded as a sort of second father, from his own early orphanhood. No matter who nursed or kept watch by the little camp-bed, Mr. Lovely, like a guardian angel, was ever near, and ever ready to offer consolation to the mind, or assistance and refreshment to the earthly tabernacle, now slowly, but gradually, disappearing from our midst. On one occasion, when sitting up with him, the poor colonel entered very freely into the subject of his approaching dissolution, and his own bright hopes of an entrance into that "kingdom of heaven which Christ has opened to all believers." He expressed the most lively gratitude for the goodness of God, in having preserved him through the dangers of the campaigns in which he had seen such active, and to many such deadly service, and now allowing him to depart in peace, in the midst of his happy, home, surrounded with every alleviation of his sufferings that his malady admitted; "But, best of all, dear Walter," he added, "that I am given to see with sorrow the errors of my life, and endeavour to attain some degree of meetness of spirit for enjoying 'the glorious inheritance of the saints in light.'" His mental acuteness never forsook him for an instant, but in spirit he seemed to have come back to the freshness and tenderness of childhood. One day he asked Mr. Lovely to open the private drawer of his cabinet, and hand him a small paper parcel,

marked "M. L." Mr. Lovely, at his request, opened the little packet, and found it to contain a bunch of faded violets. "These violets, Walter," he said, "I picked last spring, on our dear Polly's grave! You may think it strange," he added, "that, as a married man, I should still feel so deeply on that subject; but my love for her had become a part of my nature in its most tender and impressible stage, and continued and intensified through the more vigorous part of my existence; and I confess it would be a great gratification to me to be buried beside my loved cousin. Cecilia, I am sure, would not oppose my wish, for she has always been a most yielding, gentle wife. You might speak to her on the subject, but not now." He then put the paper of violets under his pillow, and each time the bed was changed he looked it out and replaced it. All his worldly affairs were arranged with scrupulous exactness, so that they required but little revision. He greatly augmented the revenue of the almshouses, and left a number of bequests to his friends and servants. Bella was provided for by her mother's fortune, and Philip was, of course, heir to the great bulk of the property. Strange to say, he seldom spoke of his son; but when he heard that he had been written to, "Poor boy!" he said, "it will be heavy tidings to him. I fear I was not just to him. Tell him so, with my love and blessing, and say that no son was ever dearer to the heart of a father than he is to me, and will be while life lasts. I need not commend his mother to him—he has always been a good boy—and I know Bella will not miss me while Philip is spared to her. You will look after my children, Walter; but they will then be able to appropriate some of the richest blessings of the Bible—'the Father of the fatherless' will bless my children."

Lady Manley had become so weak from her watching

and anxiety, that Mr. Lovely insisted on her returning to her own apartment at night; and she consented with reluctance, on his promising to call her if any change should occur. Mr. Lovely lay on a sofa beside his friend, and Holmes on a stretcher in the music room close by. It was then the end of August, and the nights were bright and beautiful. The colonel had sat up to tea with Lady Manley and Lady Linton; Bella playing about the room with her doll, unconscious of her approaching loss. Mr. Lovely had lain down to prepare for his night watch; and the colonel would not have had him disturbed when the ladies' hour for retiring had arrived; but Lady Manley tapped at his study door, and he soon took his post beside his friend, who welcomed him cheerily, chatted pleasantly for an hour or two, and then fell asleep. About midnight he awoke, and seemed pleased to find Mr. Lovely looking at him. Suddenly he said, in a hurried way, "Call Cecilia." Holmes was immediately dispatched on the errand, but before Lady Manley was able to reach the library the spirit had returned to God who gave it!"

Darlington was a sad house for some time: the poor colonel's long illness had, in some measure, prepared our minds for the shock; but still it was deeply felt. Poor Lady Manley was quite broken down, and it was well for her to have her good aunt beside her at such a time of trial. Mr. Lovely managed all business affairs for the family, and for that purpose had to make a journey to London. That was a lonely time to us all. When he returned Lady Linton called in his aid, to influence the widowed lady to accompany her to Ireland for a few months, during which time she would make such a disposition of her own affairs at Ravenshaw as would enable her to reside with her niece at Darlington, until the return of Sir Philip from abroad. Mr. Lovely urged Lady Manley

to acquiesce in her aunt's arrangement, for he saw that in her weak and grieved state Darlington was not a suitable place to recover either her health or spirits. Mr. Lovely saw the ladies, with Bella, Miss Finch, and their attendants, across the Channel, and then made a second journey to London, to complete Lady Manley's business. While he was away, Mrs. Nutley and I had the house quite to ourselves, as Anne Heath had accompanied the party to Ravenshaw. We then saw a good deal of Lucy Plant, who devoted herself to us as much as her home duties would allow. The sight of Mr. Lovely, on his return, was the first beam of sunshine that had visited us since Darlington had become a house of mourning: he lived at our table whenever he was able to enjoy regular meals; but the secular business which he had now to manage, added to his pastoral care, occupied his time so fully and anxiously, that we only saw him by snatches—precious snatches to me—feeling as I did that “each left but the number less;” and, as this conviction deepened, all my sadness, that had been for a little (partly at least) diverted into another channel, now returned in full force. Lady Manley, in taking leave of me, said it was with much regret she left me behind at Darlington, but that she could not leave Mrs. Nutley alone, and she hoped to return to us by the spring. Secretly I was relieved to find that I was not to go to Ireland, which, under other circumstances, would have been a trip quite to my mind; but now I felt that I could not have borne to leave Darlington as long as it was the home of my second father, Mr. Lovely. I have often attempted to describe to you that the chief charm in his appearance was expression—a something above and beyond beauty of form or feature—and which we can conceive, or rather feel, better than describe. But this expression was never so telling as when he was engaged

in the sacred duties of his holy office—"blessings brighten as they take their flight"—and therefore it was, I suppose, that as the crisis drew near that was to separate him from us, I thought he had never appeared to such advantage in the pulpit: "*holiness to the Lord*" seemed then, indeed, to be stamped on his countenance; and as I gazed upon him with reverent regard, many an impossible, or at least improbable scheme flitted through my perturbed fancy, and insensibly drew my thoughts from the discourse to the speaker.

I recollect, one day, to have caught myself thinking, Was Lord Openshaw a married man? Had he a family? Did his lady require a companion, or his children a governess? Or was there a village school on his estate, where I could exercise the humble vocation of schoolmistress, and by this means secure a proximity to my best friend, and the enjoyment of his much prized ministrations? And such a lot (could I have had it) would gladly have been chosen by me, in preference to a place beside the young, amiable, and wealthy Sir Philip Manley, as his chosen bride, and the lady of Tintern.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### A CLEAR SHINING AFTER RAIN.

“How stands your disposition to be married?  
It is an honour that I dream not of;  
But he that hath the steerage of my course,  
Direct my sail?”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeper—dearer understood;  
Behold! I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.”

TENNYSON.

It was in September, early in the month, too, and soft bright weather, when Mrs. Nutley and I sat in the open bay, making up house linen for the parson of Ivyberry, and, like Penelope's web, if he had had to wait for it, I should have been only too glad to undo as I went on, and make my work last as long as my life. It was about that time that I had pleasant letters from Seafeld; dear Rachel had become Mrs. Weston, and her letter conveyed an invitation from her and her husband that I should pay them a visit, as soon as the spring weather would afford me pleasant travelling. Mrs. Moss and Winny were longing to see me also, and had I been situated differently, I should not have waited for the spring; but duty and inclination bound me to Darlington for the present. Mrs. Nutley's claims could not be set aside; and even if they could, I would not have spent a day from under the roof, which, for so brief a season, was

to shelter the head of my revered friend and guardian. For some time back, he had installed me as reader at the almshouses, two or three times a week. His own necessary absence first brought this about, and then, when it was established, he did not interrupt the arrangement, but rather added to my work, by giving me the oversight of the accounts with the matron, and the care of some poor families on the near end of Darlington Common, where it joined the park.

I felt this to be quite as much a note of preparation as the making up of his house linen; and although I loved to read to the widows, and help them in every way that I had seen him do, still I did it with a sad heart, as if it were a loosening by degrees of some of the many ties that bound him to his little flock at our end of the parish of Orchardton. I heard that he and Mrs. Nutley had many a conference in my absence, some of which, though confidential at the time, were afterwards made known to me, and therefore I give them to you in the order of their occurrence, rather than that in which I received them.

One day, about this time, he came to Mrs. Nutley's room, looking unusually anxious and troubled.

"I suppose," he said, "Grace is gone to the almshouse?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, "she has been gone about half an hour."

"Well," he said, "I am glad to see you alone for a little. I am troubled on many accounts to-day, and, as two heads are better than one, I have come to talk over my perplexities with you. Here," he said, giving her a letter, "this is for Grace, and from Sir Philip. Of course, we are bound to give it to her, and yet I fear it will only vex her. The poor lad has not yet heard of his father's death, but his mind is full of Grace, and the sanguine hopes of youth



are still bright. This letter was enclosed in one to myself. What do you think, Mrs. Nutley? has he any chance that she may alter her decision with regard to him?"

"I do not think it, Mr. Lovely," she replied; "but, really, Grace is now so silent and pensive, I can hardly know what to think about her."

"Did you ever find out," he asked, "if my leaving Darlington had any connexion with this painful change in her manner and appearance?"

"I tried to speak of it to her once or twice," said Mrs. Nutley, "but Grace scarcely answered me; she hurried away to her own little room, and when she came back, she looked still paler, and there were traces of tears on her face. I do think she grieves about your leaving; but whether there is anything else on her mind I cannot find out. Then we are so lonely here now, it may affect her spirits. She and Miss Finch were good friends, and she must miss her and Bella. One day I asked her, was she sorry to stay here in Lady Manley's absence? and she said, 'No, Mrs. Nutley, nor am I glad to hear that on her return I am to take my place in the family as her relative and adopted daughter, and resign my post in this pleasant room to Anne Heath. However,' she added, 'I shall see you every day, and spend an evening with you whenever I can. I have had five happy years here, and I shall never be happier anywhere else.' So now, sir," concluded Mrs. Nutley, "I am but little wiser than when you spoke to me last about this dear child."

Mr. Lovely looked very thoughtful for a little, and then said, "Well, you will give her this letter, and I suppose it will be right for her to send a reply at once. I am about to send a packet of letters and papers to Sir Philip, early next week, and you can tell her that I will enclose hers. Now to another of my quandaries. When

I was last in London, I met my friend, Lord Openshaw, who strongly urged my going to Ivyberry as soon as possible: the old curate is failing very fast, and the people are neglected; so here is a plain call of duty. And, you know, Darlington would not be a suitable residence for me much longer. The ladies will return early in the new year, and, meantime, the steward and under-agent will have charge here, and sleep in the house. I have written to Lady Manley, and she agrees with me, that it would be wrong to neglect the call to Ivyberry longer than is absolutely necessary. Doctor Meadows has succeeded in getting a very suitable curate for this end of the parish, who will attend to the duty of this house, and the almshouse, and will reside in the village; so that my way seems plain as to duty, and would (now that my dear friend is gone) be equally so as to inclination, but for two things—one is the parting with you, my second mother; and the other is the deserting of that poor child, Grace, in her present state of health and spirits, and, I fear, in danger of being reclaimed by her unworthy father.”

“Oh, sir!” said Mrs. Nutley, “you make me tremble for her. What do you mean?”

“When I was in London,” he replied, “I saw an advertisement in one of the leading newspapers, that I am sure was for her—‘George Leigh, Captain in the Merchant Service (formerly of Portsmouth) is anxious to hear particulars with regard to the present abode and circumstances of his only child, Grace Leigh, now between eighteen and nineteen years of age, whom he has not seen from her childhood; she was a fair, slightly-made child, with fine dark eyes, and a profusion of light brown hair.’ Here is the advertisement, Mrs. Nutley,” he said; “I think there can be no mistake. The advertiser gives an address in New York. I wrote at once to Mrs. Moss, who feels much

alarmed about it. She says, what I think is very likely, that Captain Leigh may have heard of his wife's death, and also of her having had a bequest from her aunt, on which she had been living for some years, and he thinks that, by securing Grace, he would secure the property also. However, Mrs. Moss says it was a life annuity, and died with Mrs. Leigh, so that Grace had no provision whatever, when she was adopted by Lady Manley. Mrs. Moss could not protect her, in fact, no one could protect her from her father; and she wants nearly two years of being of age. Now, what do you suggest, Mrs. Nutley? Can you think of anything?"

"I know not, sir," she said, "except she could be induced to marry."

"True," he replied, "a husband would be her only legal protector. I do not think, however, that she will ever marry Sir Philip—is there any one else now seeking her?"

"I know one who would be only too happy to have the opportunity," she said: "Gilbert Woods, the under-agent. He met her once at Lucy Plant's, and begged of Lucy to ask me to allow him to come to visit Grace here; he would be a fine match for her, and is a good young man, too. Lady Manley thinks a great deal of him, and has promised him that pretty Wood house, and the Greenlot farm, and he has money saved besides."

"Well, Mrs. Nutley, and what did Grace say?"

"Indeed, sir, I can hardly tell what she said—very little; and the substance of it was, 'Do you imagine, Mrs. Nutley, that I could be happy with such a man as Mr. Woods?' 'Indeed Grace,' I said, 'if I were you, I think I should be thankful for such an opportunity.' 'Please, Mrs. Nutley,' she said, 'say no more; pray do not encourage Mr. Woods in the slightest degree; he is very good to

think of me, but I had rather not hear any more about him or any one else on that subject.' 'And my child,' I said, 'have you made up your mind to be an old maid?' 'It is not for me to do that,' she said; 'the Lord only knows what is best for me, and I leave myself in his hands: if he sees it to be right or good for me to be married, I hope and trust he will choose for me a man after his own heart, whose portion is not in this life; one who will help me on my way to heaven; and if he should do so, he will enable me to love him so entirely, that it will be my pleasure to 'do him good, and not evil, all the days of my life.' 'Well now, Grace,' I said, 'was not John Plant such a man as you describe?' 'Yes, Mrs. Nutley,' she said, 'John is, I believe, a good man; but it is very plain that the Lord did not mean to unite us, or he would have given me such love for him as would have made me thankful and happy to be his wife.' 'So now, sir,' said Mrs. Nutley, 'though I cannot say that she is determined to live single, I see no disposition towards marriage about her: if there be, certainly the right person to gain her has not yet appeared; and it will be somebody's loss if Grace is not married, for I do think she would make a sweet wife.'

"It is a marvel to me," said Mr. Lovely, "how she could look coldly on Philip; other girls would have been caught by his attractions before they were aware of any difficulties in the way. In general, I believe, the affections are entangled before reason has had time to offer a suggestion: but you see we are as far from a conclusion as ever; she is in danger, and I fear to tell her so; and yet I see no safe outlet for her, that is not encompassed with difficulty: she is a heavy weight on my mind, in the prospect of leaving Darlington."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Nutley, "before you go away, you can take an opportunity, when she is alone, to try and

get at her mind and advise her ; for if you have not influence with her, no one else need try : and to tell you the truth, I shall not know what to do with her in Lady Manley's absence, after you leave us ; she grows whiter and thinner every day, and if she gets any illness, she has no energy now to throw it off."

While they were speaking, I came in, and I suppose the walk had made me look better, for my dear old friend remarked it with pleasure, and said—

"The air has done you good, Grace ; I hope you are hungry for your supper. Mr. Lovely is come to have his tea with us, and we waited for you."

While she laid the cloth, I threw off my hat and cloak, and when I had sat down, Mr. Lovely took the letter from the mantel and gave it to me.

"You will have to reply to this, Grace," he said, "and I will enclose your letter in my own."

I knew the handwriting at once, so I replied—

"If you please, sir, I should rather return it unopened, and you could say that I thought it better not to read it."

"Then your mind has not changed, Grace?"

"No, sir ; it can never change on the subject of that letter."

"Well, then," he said, "read it, and reply as briefly as you please, but *tenderly*, Grace—*tenderly*. I could not be happy to return it unopened."

I opened the letter, read it, and then handed it back to Mr. Lovely, saying—

"It is as I feared, and I cannot retain this letter : pray do take it, and return, or keep, or destroy it, as you please."

"Well, Grace," he said, "in any case write a line in reply."

"I shall write, sir," I replied, "as you wish me to do so. I am very sensible of the high and unmerited compli-

ment paid me by Sir Philip, but nothing could induce me to give the slightest encouragement to his hopes."

Mrs. Nutley had now returned from the buttery, and we had our tea, and then we went down to the hall for evening worship. When I came to Mrs. Nutley's room, I wrote a few lines to Sir Philip Manley, entreating of him to banish hopes which should end in disappointment, and to consult his mother, and act according to her wishes for him. I added, that his writing to me any more on such a subject would grieve me sadly, knowing as I did, my own utter inability to return, as it deserved, the regard with which he had favoured me. So I gave Mr. Lovely the letter next day, and he sent it with a packet that he was about to forward to his young friend.

It was soon well known all through the house, that Mr. Lovely was going away, and I heard of it on every side. It was now October, and he was to preach his first sermon at Ivyberry on Advent Sunday, which was just six weeks off. Our work for him was not completed yet; we had finished the house linen, but the shirts were still in hand, and as my eyes were better adapted for fine stitching than Mrs. Nutley's, I begged that she would leave them to me; indeed, I took a sort of melancholy pleasure in this last work that ever I expected to do for my revered friend and pastor. Mrs. Nutley had gone to the almshouse, to see one of the widows who was very ill; and I was busily engaged at my sewing, when Mr. Lovely came in: "*Hemp and steel!*" he said, smiling; "Grace, you are working very hard for me: I shall miss those busy little fingers when I go to Ivyberry." This was the first time he had ever spoken to me of his departure, and like a fountain unsealed, I gave way, not to violent weeping, but the silent tears chased each other down my cheeks, and fell upon my work like rain. I could hear Mr. Lovely sigh, but he did not affect to per-

ceive my agitation at first, but said carelessly, "Grace, I met Mrs. Nutley in the park, on her way to the almshouse, and she desired me to say, that she had been detained at Lucy Plant's for some time, as the little boy has a teething fit, and that she could not be home before five o'clock; but that, if you had the tea ready for her by that time, she expected to be ready to enjoy it with you; and I think," he added, "I shall be able to join your little party this evening: I thought I should have had to go to the rectory, but I wrote to Dr. Meadows instead." He did not look towards me while he spoke, but appeared to be engaged with the plants in the window. So I laid my work aside, and prepared to set the cloth, making a great struggle to regain my composure, but all in vain—I just wept on. Suddenly he turned round and looked at me; I am sure I must have been the picture of sorrow, and the sight of me affected him greatly. "My dear Grace," he said, coming over to the fireplace, where I was setting muffins in the toaster, "My dear Grace, you distress me to see you so sad; I have been grieved for some time back, by your changed appearance and manner, and almost angry with you for your want of confidence in me. Why will you not tell me what is the matter with you? Many causes have occurred to me, but I cannot tell what to think; will you not be candid with me now? Do tell me is it the prospect of my going to Ivyberry that distresses you?" I now wept more freely, but was not able to speak to him, so he took my hand, and tried to compose and soothe me. "Oh, do tell me," he said at length, almost passionately, "do tell me, dear Grace, am I directly or indirectly the cause of your sorrow? Look at me, my child, and tell me the truth; it is important for me to know, most important; you cannot know how much so."

I could not not dissemble with him: those pure, soft,

earnest eyes, demanded the truth from me ; and I felt as it were compelled to call up all my energy, and give him the satisfaction he required. With a violent effort I commanded my voice, and as well as I could I said, "Oh, dear sir, you are not, you never were the wilful cause of sorrow to me; you have been more than a father to me, and when I lose you, I shall be more than an orphan. I believe I have been very weak, and very wrong, but I must now tell you all my naughtiness : I have wished to die before you would leave Darlington ! I have struggled very hard to put down my rebellious feelings, and have prayed for strength and resignation, to enable me to bear this trial ; but from the first moment I heard of it, I felt as if the shock had overpowered me, and that I could not rise from under the pressure. It was as if I had been leaning all my weight on a pillar of strength, that I thought was to be my permanent support, and that it suddenly broke away from under me, and I was hurled to the earth unable to rise. Now, there is my feeling, as well as I am able to describe it to you, and I wish I could have told you long ago, and it might have relieved me of a part of the burden that has been weighing me down and crushing my body and mind at the same time. But oh, sir," I continued, "I know I have been very wrong ; I should not have leaned on anything earthly, as I have leaned on you. I deserve your reproof, and I will bear it, and thank you for it, say what you will." I stopped from pure exhaustion ; for my tongue, once loose on the subject of my sorrow, I felt as if it would have been a delightful relief to talk on ; but the flesh was weak, and I should rest. While I spoke, Mr. Lovely sighed deeply, and walked about the room in an agitated manner, while I stood by the fire leaning on the mantel. When I stopped he came over to me, with his whole soul in his eyes, and stood before me, with an appealing, reverential look, that



awed me greatly, for I could not understand it. "Dearest Grace," he said, "may I hope that this is the voice of God, and that we shall not be separated?"

I started with surprise, as a gleam of almost impossible hope glanced through my mind, and I said, "Oh, dear sir, if that could only be! but can you really stay with us?"

"Oh no," he said smiling, "that could not be; but I will take you to Ivyberry, if you will only come with me."

"Dear sir," I replied, "do not deceive me; what can you mean?"

"I will tell you, my beloved Grace," he said, as he took my hand between his, and held it with the most impassioned fervour; "I will tell you what I mean. Oh that you may be disposed to respond to it, if it be the Lord's will! I loved you, my dearest Grace, when I saw you first an orphan at Seafield; and I wished then that you were my own child; but for the last two years I have ceased to wish so: a nearer—dearer wish, has had possession of me, since the day I met you in the pleasance with John Plant, but I have not had courage to name it to you; I have scarcely power to tell you even now. I am indeed old enough to be your father; but I love you well enough, and tenderly enough, to be your husband. Grace, tell me truly, and at once, if I have a hope; my whole heart is yours, if you will only have it. Oh! beloved one, will you—can you be my own? my own!" he repeated, drawing me to his bosom. And as I heard him murmur "*my own!*" in that soft, earnest tone, I could scarcely believe my ears: it seemed too good to be true. I was almost speechless from excess of emotion. "My own Grace," he continued, "are you not?"

Whatever my attempt at a reply was, it satisfied him: and as for me, I felt like one in some blessed dream or trance. My head leaning on the shoulder of that (in my

eyes) peerless man : the man that I thought too good to be the husband of any woman in the world, wooing me to be *his own ! his own wife !* the poor, timid little orphan maid, Grace Leigh, the possessor of his priceless love ! his whole heart offered to my acceptance ! Oh ! how did my thirsty soul drink in, like a long-parched flower, this refreshing dew ; the sweet assurance of the deep, earnest, pure love, of such a man as Mr. Lovely ! Never had I, in my wildest dreams of earthly bliss, dared to aspire to such a lot as was now provided for me by "the Father of mercies : the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift." We were thus standing by the fireplace, hand in hand, having both experienced, in one short hour, the extremes of sorrow and joy, when our good old friend Mrs. Nutley entered, calm as an evening sunbeam, as was her wont, little dreaming that her quiet, pleasant room, had been, in her brief absence, the scene of such emotion as had now subsided into the commencement of a life-long happiness for the two beings, I believe, dearest to her on earth. For an instant she paused, as she beheld the terms on which we were ; but then, with true womanly tact and maternal tenderness, she approached us, and taking both our hands between her own, she said, in her sweet, homely way, "May God give you both grace to be thankful ! I wish you joy with all my heart." So we sat down to tea—certainly the happiest meal that two of us had ever enjoyed—that large, tall, grey-headed man of forty-five and his little orphan bride of nineteen, already man and wife in the sight of "God, who looketh on the heart ;" surely "it was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes." Soon after tea Mr. Lovely rose, saying, "Now, my dear friend, I must go ; I leave it to Grace to explain to you the enigma of this evening."

"I anticipate Grace's explanations, my dear sir," she

replied; "I read it double-dyed on those cheeks that I left so white after dinner."

"Well," he said, "knowing us both as you did, there was but one way of accounting for our appearance on your entrance. It was well you came just then, Mrs. Nutley; I do not know how my little treasure here felt, but I believe I was bewildered with the sudden transition in my circumstances. Now, however," he added, smiling at me, "I begin to recognise 'the sober certainty of waking bliss.' I am not dreaming now; and to prove that I am awake, I must take care of '*my own*,' and as he spoke, he laid his hand softly on my shoulder, and said to Mrs. Nutley, "You will send your little daughter to bed very early, Mrs. Nutley; she wants some quiet sleep. But you will forgive me, my own Grace," he concluded, "the excitement of this evening; I shall try to atone for it in some way or other, by-and-by:" and so saying, he waved his hand to us and departed. When we found ourselves alone, I threw myself into Mrs. Nutley's arms, and poured into her maternal bosom my too happy tale. She was quite as much surprised at the unexpected *denouement* as I was myself, and warmly sympathised with me in my new-found joy; for she could indeed "rejoice with those that rejoiced, as well as weep with those that wept." Now this is not as common an aptitude as one might at first suppose; for we can find two to weep with us, for one that can enter into our joy. Sorrow brings us down to the average lot of humanity, as joy raises us above it; and the one phase exposes us to the envy of our fellows, as the other inspires them with pity. I think it is Rochefoucauld who says, "Il y a quelque chose dans les malheurs de nos meilleurs amis, qui ne nous déplaisons pas;" and, revolting as this sentiment seems at first sight, I suppose it has some foundation in human experience: but my dear old friend's feeling towards me

was in the true spirit of that "more excellent way," that teaches us to "love our neighbour *as ourselves*." We talked together with such mutual pleasure of past, present, and to come, that, so far from wishing to retire to rest, the very idea of sleep was distasteful to me. Sleep, I thought, is the refuge of the sorrowful, and I have often longed for it; but I cannot bear to lose, in sleep, the sweet consciousness that I am the betrothed bride of Mr. Lovely. And dear Mrs. Nutley had quite forgotten her charge of sending me to bed early; but at once I recognised that authority to which love delights to submit, and in the midst of our happy converse, I reminded her that I was not to sit up long to-night.

"You naughty little puss," she said; "how readily you have slipped your neck into another yoke than mine! But you are right, my dear," she added, kissing me fondly; "you will be an obedient, and so a happy wife. Good night, Grace: I need not wish you happy dreams."

But joy to a sensitive person is quite as great an enemy to sleep as sorrow, perhaps greater; for sorrow sometimes stupifies, as it did the disciples, who were found "*sleeping for sorrow*," while joy is sure to excite us to wakefulness. Indeed, it was many hours before I slept—hours, every minute of which were fully enjoyed, in blissful retrospection of the past happy day: for though anticipation may gild at will the coming hours, the apprehension of unseen but possible disappointment (always possible, and often probable, when we build below the skies), may mar our prospective pleasure; but the retrospection of a recently enjoyed good is tangible, and we hold, as it were, in our own bosoms, the sweet tokens of its reality. Such were my golden hours on that night of my betrothal. My whole time at Darlington passed in review before me like a panorama; the one bright figure still standing out in bold

relief; and I asked myself over and over again, did I ever suspect this? did I never even hope that he loved me, or would love me as he does? and I could, and did answer my own heart, with perfect truth—no, never! As for myself, I should as soon have thought of loving and seeking to wed “some bright, particular star,” he seemed so above my region, so out of my sphere: though I could not deny that when I beheld and admired his beautiful character in detail, and compared it with all else whom I had ever known, like poor Desdemona, I perhaps may have wished, “that Heaven had made me such a man;” but the wish was too vague to intensify into desire. Still, I doubt not, that unknown to myself, it was this almost worshipped image of the good and beautiful, embodied in my revered friend, that rose up between me and every thought of marriage, like that “*covering of the eyes*,” that Abimelech, the King of Gerar, told Sarah her noble husband Abraham should be to her. (Gen. xx. 16.). If I had been asked for the original of the ideal I had set up in my own mind, and that was as powerful as an instinct, I should have pointed to Mr. Lovely as its exemplar, but without one solitary thought of possible appropriation. My surprise, therefore, was so perfect, so thoroughly unexpected, that it added to my enjoyment: still, it did not raise me in my own estimation, or puff me up with an idea that I was ever so remotely entitled to the happy lot that was offered to me; and to my love being so tempered with reverence, I attribute a great deal of the happiness of my after life. For where reverence preponderates with the wife, and tenderness with the husband, they form the surest pillars for that domestic temple, where the golden lamp of conjugal love is ever bright, and where the dove of peace waves her purple wings over the sacred portal. Still, my humble thoughts and estimation of myself, as compared

with my affianced husband, never raised a doubt in my mind of my ability to make him happy, any more than of my own capacity to be made happy by him. I had such full confidence in his greatness of mind, his single-eyed simplicity, and unworldliness of spirit, that I felt quite confident that my heart full of love would satisfy him at all times. And now that glorious object in life rose before my eyes in full prominence—that object, second only to the worship of our great Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; that object for which woman was created, and to which she can dedicate all her earthly powers with such unselfishness, and therefore with such pure enjoyment—the object of making *one man* happy. Yes, I repeat it, *happy*; in spite of poverty, sickness, or any other adversity; for that man *must* be happy, who feels that he is as it were the very inspiration of a pure, loving, devoted wife. Ah! why then will men, and women too, spoil for themselves, the one by tyranny, and the other by independence, the rich provision made for them by the Father of their spirits, “who knew what was in man,” and what was good for him, when he commanded, “that the man *love* his wife even as himself, as Christ loved the Church; and the wife see that she *reverence* her husband.”

And now began five or six weeks of exquisite enjoyment to me—a time of sweet refreshment, that brought back colour to my cheek, life to my eye, and energy to every movement, as I went through the pleasing occupation of preparing for the grand, the crowning event of woman’s life—her bridal. My beloved gave as much of his time to me as he could; and in sweet companionship and loving intercourse with the holy man that, “through the good hand of my God upon me,” had been chosen to be my husband, I enjoyed that exquisite pleasure that we all feel in the assurance that *where we love well,*

we love *worthily*. Each day's experience revealed to me some new and beautiful aspect of that character, that had long been my earthly guiding star, and of which I now found that the half had not been told me by my brightest fancy, I had seen it so partially developed hitherto; but now, under the inspiring, enlivening influence of this powerful attraction to a cherished being, who so entirely loved and revered him, he seemed to be quite another creature, so bright and happy, almost joyous, but ever preserving in his whole demeanour that graceful, childlike purity that adorns the holy, happy man, who can meet his partner for life upon equal terms. Our ages were different; but we were alike in purity of mind and thought. And how much more of true enjoyment is in store for such a man in married life, than for him who can only offer to his unsullied bride the paltry remnant of a jaded heart! The blessing of God rests on a union of equal hearts; and he will help them to move on in an equal yoke through all the ups and downs of life's chequered pilgrimage, as true yokefellows, and "heirs together of the grace of life." I forget what good man it was who said, "Give me a wife that can pray with me—a woman with whom I can *think aloud*." "If there be an elysium on earth, it is this;" the very best thing that has survived the Fall: the carrying out of the great mystery of Christ and his Church; perfect union, perfect love. Our engagement was kept strictly private, in the house and neighbourhood; but my dear friends Mrs. Moss and Rachel Weston were early made partakers of my joy, as Lady Manley and Lord Openshaw were of Mr. Lovely's.

We each received letters of congratulation, and in addition to words, I had from dear Mrs. Moss deeds also: for she replenished my purse with such thoughtful liberality, that she anticipated, and so disappointed, Lady Manley and

Mr. Lovely; each of whom wished to be my banker on the occasion; but from each, as well as from Lady Linton, Rachel Weston, and Mrs. Nutley, I had substantial tokens of their desire to deck me for my bridal. Mrs. Moss truly joyed in my joy, as a fond mother over her darling child; and Lady Manley's letter to Mr. Lovely (which he showed me) was quite worthy of her; and if I have not failed in this little history, in my attempt to describe her as she was, that is saying a good deal for her letter. The surprise to her was perfect: for she not only never suspected that I was the object of his regard, but the idea of his ever marrying at all never seemed to have crossed her imagination. "I give you my adopted daughter and kinswoman, Walter," she said, "in the full confidence that yours will be a marriage to make *two* happy; and though I am aware that you are too independent to make a dowry with your bride any object to you, still, I think it would gratify my little Grace to have something to offer to her husband, as her moiety of a foundation for housekeeping. I will therefore make such an arrangement for that purpose as you will both gratify me by accepting, for sake of your mutual friend and relative,

"CECILIA MANLEY."

And now, dear children, although this charmed epoch of my existence is stereotyped in my memory, I find it difficult to chronicle it as it deserves; it is indeed a time when the best and loveliest sentiments that adorn fallen humanity, have the pre-eminence; it is, as it were, *their day, par excellence*. And if we analyse the charm that hangs about this delightful little episode in human life, generally called "courtship," we shall find that it is its unselfishness: each lives for and in the other, and therefore both are happy—is it not so? and if it be, why is the charm not



retained as a talisman that would make earth an emblem of heaven? For my own part, I felt, as it were, taken out of myself, and absorbed in the being of my best friend; and each day showed me the wisdom and love that appointed the holy ordinance of matrimony, "for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity." A marriage, undertaken, as ours was, reverently, advisedly, and prayerfully, was not likely to throw aside all tender consideration for each other's feelings with our bridal attire. Oh, no—I thank my God that it was not so with us; and that our happy courtship was but the portal to that happier marriage that was to be life-long, at least with one of us, and the memory of which has been a perpetual feast to the other. I have often heard people deprecate what they called unequal, disproportioned matches, where there was a disparity of years on either side; but I attach no weight whatever to such animadversions, either from my own experience, or that of others. The celebrated Doctor Johnson's marriage was the very reverse of ours, relatively speaking; for he was as much younger than his wife, as I was younger than Mr. Lovely; and yet, his was not merely an eminently happy marriage, but one that left the tenderest and most abiding remembrance in the heart of the survivor: so true it is that

"There is not young, or old, if love decrees;  
He levels orders—he confounds degrees :  
There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,  
Or grave, or sprightly—love reduces all :  
From each abundant good, a portion takes,  
And for each want, a compensation makes;  
Then tell me not of years—Love's power divine,  
Took as he willed from his, and gave to mine."

CRABBE.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### CONCLUSION.

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.”

“Her husband also and he praiseth her.”—PROVERBS, chap. xxxi.

WHEN we had arrived at the middle of November, Mr. Lovely thought it was only due to his good-natured old rector, Dr. Meadows, to give him some idea of the posture of affairs at Darlington; and he went over to the rectory for that purpose, at the same time determining, if possible, to preserve *my* incognito to the last moment. He found the Doctor in his study; and, after some chat on indifferent subjects, the old gentleman gave the desired opening—

“Well, Lovely,” he said, “I passed by that little gem of a church of yours last week on my way from Nuthurst. By the way, it would rejoice the heart of an antiquary. It really is a piece of *vertu*, as well as its new incumbent.”

“I am glad you like it, Doctor,” said Mr. Lovely; “my own first impression of it was very pleasing; and anything but a rural district, a little behind the age, would hardly suit me now, I have rusticated so long here.”

“But,” rejoined the Doctor, “if I was pleased with the church, Mrs. Meadows was delighted with the picturesque little parsonage. She says, however, it will be thrown away upon an old bachelor like you. What a pity, my dear fellow, that your paradise should be without an Eve! It’s never too late to mend, Lovely; and I could help you to a choice of wives yet, as blue-moulded as you are, and full of

quips, cranks, and oddities. But I suppose it would be hardly possible to please you now?"

"I think I am pleased sir," he said.

"What! with single blessedness?"

"No, Doctor, I have really found my Eve at last!"

"You don't say so!" said the Doctor, bouncing up from his writing chair with great agility; "really, sir."

"Oh! come, then, nothing short of a fit of the gout shall keep me from dancing at *your* wedding. But are you serious, Lovely?"

"Quite so, sir."

"Do I know the fair lady?"

"You have seen her."

"But where?"

"At Darlington."

"Eh! who *can* she be?"

"You shall see her, Doctor, this day-week, in Darlington chapel; where I hope you will join our hands for life."

"But, Lovely, you don't mean that I am to be kept in a state of suspense for a whole week?" Oh! I see I must set Mrs. Meadows to catechise you; and let me see if you escape her. Come, my dear," he said, throwing up the window, and calling to his lady, who was busy with her chrysanthemums outside, "Lovely has a secret for you. Now," he said, rubbing his hands, "you are in for it: though you have mystified me; but let me not forget to congratulate you. I do, indeed, from my heart; and, if I were a young girl, I should not be afraid to take you myself. Mind, I say a *young* girl. For a settled woman, with her tastes and habits formed, would wince at your angularities, while a yielding creature will rub them away for you without hurting herself."

Mrs. Meadows came in as he was speaking, with a huge

bunch of those lovely winter flowers in her hand, and giving the other hand to Mr. Lovely, said, in her easy, graceful way—

“Well now, Mr. Lovely, I am ready for your secret.”

“But is the Doctor *de trop*? I am afraid I should not be able to keep it from him—it would be no breach of confidence either, you know, as he and I are one.”

“Well, my dear,” said the Doctor, “I must help Lovely out with his secret. He is going to be married!”

“Oh! I am so glad,” said the good-natured old lady; “you only want a nice wife to make you happy in that dove’s nest at Ivyberry. But am I not to know the happy lady, at least by name?”

“He says we know her, Cordelia: there is the puzzle,” said the Doctor, “and that we have seen her at Darlington: but I am on the fidgets to know who she is. And he says we are to see her at his wedding this day week. Can you wait so long? As for me, I shall have this old carpet of mine worn into holes with pacing about in the agonies of suspense. *Lovely’s wife*, you know, my dear, must be a sort of *tenth muse*, or something out of the way, and we should remember her if we had seen her.”

“Well, Doctor, you are more impatient than Mrs. Meadows after all. So much for masculine curiosity; but not to have your carpet to answer for, I must tell you that my bride elect is young and fair, and will make a gentle, wise parson’s wife. She is a relative of Lady Manley’s. I cannot, however, expect you to think of her as I do, because you do not know her so well; but I believe I have reason to be thankful to God for giving me such a treasure. If you knew her as I do you would say that

“Heaven’s rich instincts in her grew,  
As effortless as woodland nooks  
Send violets up, and paint them blue.”

"Well, Cordelia," said the good Doctor, looking fondly at his partner, "we shan't laugh at Lovely; we remember our own day, long as it is since I used to spout Milton about you, my 'eye in a fine frenzy rolling,' as I quoted

'Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture dignity and love.' "

Mrs. Meadows playfully laid her hand on the old man's mouth, but he kissed it with old-fashioned gallantry, saying to Mr. Lovely—

"You see half a century has not tired us of each other. May you and your fair unknown be as happy!"

"Thank you, sir; I know how you and my good friend Mrs. Meadows feel towards me, and I hope we shall see you at Ivyberry before long. I shan't think the house-warming complete without you." He then took up his hat, and said, "I will see you again before this day week;" and so got off without giving them any further information than that, as Lady Manley was absent, and the family in mourning, the wedding was to be strictly private; and that we were to set off for Ivyberry without waiting for a wedding dinner—which the Doctor thought a great pity, but said he could not expect Lovely to do things like other folk. The *qui vive* was now carried on in all quarters, and Mrs. Nutley had something to do to parry the general curiosity; but I had the satisfaction to see that nobody suspected my having anything to say to the matter. Amongst my bridal presents were an Indian scarf of rich white crape from Lady Manley, and a beautiful dress of peachblow silk, flowered with white, in a pattern of small wavy wreaths, with a lace shawl of fine point, from Lady Linton. These shawls were worn over the hat, cap, or hair, with the corners falling over the shoulders, back and front, and were very elegant; but I thought the whole para-

phernalia too fine for me—or, shall I say it? for a parson's wife; and I thought of the verse, "The deacons' wives must be *grave*;" so I determined to show them to Mr. Lovely, and if he did not approve of my wearing them, I would not do so for all the ladies in the land, as I wanted to please no eye but his now. But, to my surprise, he looked at them with apparent admiration, and said, "It was very thoughtful and kind of the ladies, Grace, and you must not disappoint them. And why should you not for once look like a spring blossom, my own?" And he added, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" And to show you that I have not forgotten them for you, my little Grace," he said, "I have brought out of its casket a little relic of my beloved sister's;" and he handed me a fair rose-diamond to fasten my gown at the throat, saying, "You will not be vain of those pretty things, Grace, for

' Let you be drest fine as you will,  
Flies, flowers, and worms exceed you still.'

It is little matter to me personally what you wear on your wedding-day, my Grace; for it is my bride herself, and not her garments, that will occupy my attention. Whatever *you* wear, my love, those sweet, modest eyes will tone down to a chaste and becoming propriety. And now," he said, "let me try if this tiny symbol will fit the fourth finger of my little woman's left hand. It was my mother's wedding-ring, Grace, and she was a happy bride. The Lovely's never made bad husbands."

The ring, to his satisfaction, fitted me nicely. It was not such a substantial (I had almost said clumsy) thing as brides wear now-a-days, but a tiny thing, like a golden thread. It clung to my finger for many happy years; for I should have thought it little less than sacrilege to remove

it, from the day on which it was placed there by your grandfather. It lasted his life, but wore away so that, to prevent its snapping asunder, I laid it up safely in the seventh year of my widowhood, and it was with a pang and some tears that I even then effected the separation.

My beloved expected me to call him by his Christian name from the evening of our betrothal, but I could not accomplish it.

"You will have to do it so soon before witnesses, Grace," he said, "therefore you should get accustomed to it beforehand."

But I did not; nor did I ever call him Walter till we were man and wife. Nor did he ever offer me a kiss till the day of our marriage! Old-fashioned courtship ours was; but we lost nothing by our mutual deference: each seemed satisfied of possessing in the heart of the other an inexhaustible store of tenderness, without desiring any needless demonstration. We fully understood each other, and, I believe, thought and felt together; and the mutual assurance of this unspoken sympathy afforded us a more exquisite pleasure than could have been purchased by the most ardent or showy profession. As for myself, I felt that my inmost heart, that had been, as it were, "cribbed, cabin'd, and confined," since I lost my beloved mother, now expanded to its fullest development in the smile of my best friend; and my only ungratified wish was, that my long-lost parent could rejoice in my joy. She it was who, by her lovely example and patient culture, had educated and trained my affections to the capacity for my present enjoyment; and her full success in my own case was my encouragement in after-life, when entrusted with the care of precious immortals. Oh that mothers were more fully aware of the high dignity of their position, their immense influence, and their exceeding great reward, when "their

children rise up and call them blessed." Let every remembrance of a mother be associated with pleasantness, peace, and purity, so that her children may be able to refer to her as their exemplar "of whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report;" and she will in the great day be able to present them to their Redeemer, when He makes up His jewels, saying, "Behold, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me: I have lost none." But I must hasten to the conclusion of my happy story.

I had written to Lady Manley, to say that I should like to be guided by her with regard to our wedding, at the same time informing her that we both desired it to be as private as was consistent with propriety. Her reply, however, gave us to see that, notwithstanding her necessary absence, and the present circumstances of the Darlington family, it was her wish that the little details of our wedding should be suitable to our position as her relatives, and therefore we were obliged to sacrifice, in some measure, our own notions on the subject.

Very opportunely, Mr. Lovely had a letter from his friend Lord Openshaw, to say that he and Lady Maria wished to make my acquaintance as Miss Leigh, and proposing, if agreeable, to spend a day or two at Darlington, on their way to London; and that, if our arrangements did not clash, they might be present at the celebration of our marriage. They were to be accompanied by their children, twin girls of eight or nine years old, Mr. Lovely's godchildren, who were most anxious, Lord Openshaw said, to officiate as my bridesmaids.

"And now, my little Grace," said Mr. Lovely, "you see we are quite taken back in our ex parte calculations; however, as the change will give pleasure to others so justly valued, we shall, I hope, submit with a good grace to be for the nonce Punch and Punchinello. Do not be



frightened, dearest; let us keep each other up in the prospect, and when the day arrives we shan't mind its concomitants. We are both deeply indebted to our good friends for the substantial interest they have taken in our affairs. Lord Openshaw, with his habitual grace and delicacy, alludes almost accidentally, at the close of his kind letter, to Lady Maria's thoughtful arrangements for us at Ivyberry: they have actually furnished the parsonage, and made it a home for us at once, so that we shall not be obliged to go to London, as I expected, for that purpose. So you see we owe them some deference to their wishes."

Of course, I acquiesced at once in his decision, and forthwith Mrs. Nutley and I enlisted good Mrs. Meadows in our service, and our preparations were completed early on the day before the arrival of our friends. Lady Manley had very thoughtfully sent over Janet and Anne Heath, not merely to assist us, but to take my place with Mrs. Nutley, so as to give me more time to devote to my own work in the mornings, and to the society of my beloved in the evenings—happy evenings! Never to be forgotten these were, and fully enjoyed, not merely by us, but by our excellent old friend, and almost mother, Mrs. Nutley.

Mr. Lovely's manner, as I have said, was dignified, manly, and gentlemanly; social, cheerful, and genial, in all simplicity and almost childlike gracefulness; his smile was evidently the index of sunny peace within, eye and lip harmonising beautifully; but he was no laughter, and yet it was scarcely possible to be dull in his company: quite naturally, he seemed to draw out all that was pleasant and amiable in others, and in those delightful evenings to which I especially refer, it was indeed good for us to be where he was, and pleasant to sun ourselves in his radiant smile. He often asked me to sing with him, and this was a great boon

to Mrs. Nutley, who loved music with all her heart. She had taught me to sing an old Scottish lament, that she had learned from her covenanting grandfather; a sweet, plaintive thing that was a great favourite of Mr. Lovely's; and when he sang it with me, I felt almost wafted back to the days that gave it birth, when the old worthies addressed their grandchildren in a similar strain. The sound of the air at any time is to me most suggestive, and the words suited it admirably; sound and sense, indeed, harmonised most appropriately in—

#### THE COVENANTER'S LAMENT.

“There's nae cov'nant noo, lassie,  
There's nae cov'nant noo!  
The solemn league and covenant  
Are a' broken through!  
There's nae Rennick, noo, lassie!  
There's nae gude Cargill!  
Nor holy Sabbath preaching  
Upon the Martyr's Hill.

“The Martyr's Hill's forsaken,  
In summer's dusk sae calm!  
There's nae gath'rin' noo, lassie,  
To sing the ev'nin' psalm!  
But the martyr's grave shall rise, lassie,  
Abune the warrior's cairn,  
And the martyr soun' shall sleep  
Aneath the wavin' fern.”

Our marriage was to be on Thursday, and early on Tuesday the Openshaws arrived, with their sweet little maids, Amy and Ella, as like each other as twin rosebuds, and the joy of their parents by their infantile grace and gaiety. They had lost several children, and almost despaired of the blessing of living healthy offspring, when those

sweet little girls were sent to cheer their loneliness. Their son and heir was an infant, and was at Openshaw, with his nurse. Mrs. Nutley received the guests, and Mr. Lovely introduced me to them as his bride elect. My apprehensions of the discomfort of such publicity soon wore away in the bland, gracious courtesy that surrounded me, as an atmosphere, in that goodly company; and before evening the little ones were my fast friends, to the evident pleasure of their graceful mother.

My packing was all complete, so that with as much self-forgetfulness as I could command under my circumstances, I devoted my services to my new friends. Well, dear children, the eventful Thursday arrived, and, early as I had risen, Mr. Lovely was waiting for me in Mrs. Nutley's room, that we might together commend ourselves to the special blessing of our heavenly Father, who was thus crowning our earthly bliss by giving us to each other. He cheered me by his presence, and gave me confidence for the approaching ceremony.

Coffee had been served to our guests in their apartment, as we were not to breakfast till our return from the chapel. Lord Openshaw took me up to the altar, and acted as my father, in giving me away; and as I returned from the spot where we had been made one before God, in the sight of our fellows, leaning upon the arm of my beloved, I felt as if I were scarcely able to hold steadily such an overflowing cup of felicity. I suppose he felt that I trembled, for he looked down at me with a smile of inexpressible tenderness, as he said, "See, Grace, the little chapel is glorified with sunshine for us; and listen to the congratulations of the robins; you must throw them some crumbs of your marriage cake, for assisting us with their little voluntary."

Then, having succeeded in bringing out a cheerful smile on my countenance, he led me up to his friends, who, with Mrs. Nutley, the Plants, Dr. and Mrs. Meadows, and all the servants, were waiting to give us joy of our bridal. Amy and Ella were most officious in their attendance on me, and amused the whole party by their importance on the occasion.

Never since that happy day have I been able to listen to that beautiful service with dry eyes; but my tears at my own bridal were indeed a sunshiny shower, that refreshed and relieved a heart almost oppressed with a wealth of reverent tenderness and gratitude to him who had cherished me as a child in the first desolation of my orphanhood, and had now received me to his bosom as his beloved bride. Father and friend, guide and protector, lover and husband, all in one—never woman drew a happier lot. “Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.”

And now, my maidens, I must take the advice of one who, feeling life to be a changing scene, counsels all “storytellers to stop when they come to a happy day, lest they should never have another”—and, having worn my pen to a stump, in giving you my memorial of the life of Grace Leigh, the orphan maid of Darlington Manor, I must take a long rest before I begin to chronicle the joys and sorrows of the wife of the parson of Ivyberry. And this I must say, in conclusion, that, although I would not have you to go parson-hunting, it has ever been my conviction that a woman, whose heart is in the right place, might be happier with a godly minister, than as the wife of the first noble in the land. Other good men have many drawbacks connected with their position in life, but a clergyman has everything to help him upwards—and, perhaps, in no

other profession can a woman so fitly and acceptably hold out a helping hand to her husband. Many a hindrance to his usefulness she can remove out of the way; and her cheering word, sunny smile, feminine tact, and diligent hand, may accomplish an amount of positive good to him and his flock, that will render her position equally useful and honourable. She can take sweet counsel, and walk to the house of God in company, with one of the divine ambassadors; interested in the success of his mission, as a true yokefellow, and holding forth the word of life by her own godly example of gravity, sobriety, and faithfulness in all things.

There was no vestry to our little church at Ivyberry, and as the parsonage was close by, it was my weekly privilege to tie on my husband's bands and arrange his gown, before I accompanied him through our pleasant garden to the church; and I can tell you, that I felt more elevated as I walked beside him to the sanctuary, than if I had been the Queen Consort of any monarch in Europe. I was, indeed, highly honoured in having been chosen by God to be the help-mate of such a man as Walter Lovely, whose infinite superiority to me was principally manifested by his assisting me to bear my share of the burden of life—for enduring is, after all, the lot of the happiest woman. But how different is the amount of strength she is able to bring to the conjugal yoke, when she feels that the loving eye of her husband rests upon her, with fond appreciation and tender solicitude. That is the grand secret of woman's success—"her husband also, and he praiseth her"—with that a woman can do anything—without it she is powerless. "A bird that hath but one imperfect wing to soar upon," her flight will be low and laboured, painful and ineffectual.

“Take care of her, Lovely,” said good old Dr. Meadows; “take care of her; she’s worth caring, and she’ll pay you with interest, I promise you.

‘Be to her faults a little blind,  
And to her virtues very kind;  
Let all her ways be unconfined,  
And place your padlock on her mind.’

This was my father’s advice to me the day I was married,” he added. “I took it, and never had cause to repent of it; for the more I trusted my wife, the more worthy she proved of my confidence. And you, little woman,” he said, pressing my hand with fatherly cordiality, “you have a world of love for your husband in those eyes; let it inspire you to be “discreet, chaste, a keeper at home, good, obedient to your own husband,” and an example to his flock. May God bless you both! I will soon go to see you, and Mrs. Meadows and I will grow young again when we see you together at Ivyberry.”

It has refreshed my spirit, dear children, to go over this happy day; but do not think all women are so happy as I was. Some there are—noble creatures! *God loves them* who are “kind to the unthankful and the evil;” they “endure as seeing him who is invisible;” and he “will yet reward their patient continuance in well-doing;” “they shall yet reap, if they faint not.” The unbelieving husband may yet be won by the chaste conversation, the meek and quiet spirit of the godly wife; and her husband may praise her in the day of the Lord’s appearing. And after all, the time is short until it will be little matter whether we were married or single, if our names be written “in the “Lamb’s book of life,” and that our Maker is our husband, “the Lord of hosts is his name;” this is the only union that never can be broken up, for “nothing can separate us

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." To you, my children, and to all young maidens, I would say this parting word. Do not expect too much from anything earthly; the doctrine of compensation holds good everywhere; and "marriage," said the sage, "has *many* pains." Do not, then, expect too much from married life; for believe me, it is not one maiden in a thousand that is privileged to draw such a prize in the matrimonial lottery as your happy grandmother

G. L.

THE END.







