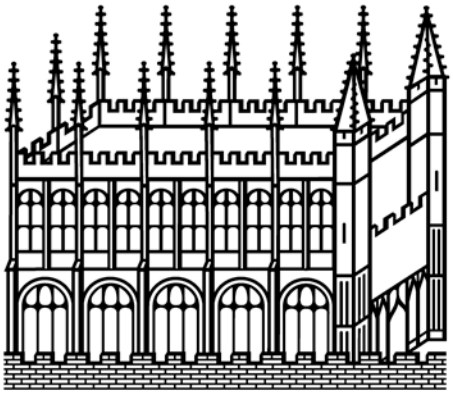

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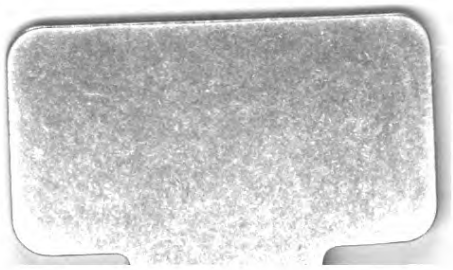

# CASTLE WARLOCK

## *A HOMELY ROMANCE*

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"ALEC FORBES," "MARY MARSTON," "THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER,"
"GUILD COURT," "SIR GIBBIE," ETC.

*IN THREE VOLUMES*

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# CASTLE WARLOCK.

## CHAPTER I.

### THAT SAME NIGHT.

The wind had now risen to a hurricane—a rage of swiftness. The house was like a rock assaulted by the billows of an ocean-tempest. The laird had closed all the shutters, and drawn the withered curtains across them: through windows and shutters, the curtains waved in the penetrating blasts. But for all the onset the sturdy old house did not shake; nothing under an earthquake could have made it tremble. The snow was fast gathering in sloped heaps on the window-sills, on the frames, on every smallest ledge where it could lie; in the midst of the blackness and the roaring wind, the

house was being covered with spots of silent whiteness; they rested on every projection, every roughness even, of the building. A sense of fierce desolation, of foreign invasion and siege, took possession of the soul of the laird. He had made a huge fire, and had heaped up beside it a great store of fuel, but, though his body was warm and likely to be warm, his spirit felt the ravaging cold outside—remorseless, and full of mock, the ghastly power of negation, of unmaking. He had got together all the screens he could find, and with them inclosed the fireplace, so that they sat in a citadel within a fortress. By the fire he had placed for his lordship the brocade-covered sofa, that he might lie down when he pleased, and himself occupied the great chair on the other side. From the centre of this fire-defended heart, the room outside looked cold and waste: it demanded almost courage to leave the stockade of the screens, and venture into the champaign of the floor beyond. And then the hell of wind and snow that

raved outside that! and the desert of air in which the clouds that garnered the snow were shaken by mad winds, whirled and tossed and buffeted to make them yield their treasures! Lord Mergwain heard the storm, and drank. The laird heard it, and lifted up his heart.

Not much passed between them. For one thing the memories of the English lord were not fit to share with the dull old Scotchman beside him who knew nothing of the world. And in truth the laird knew neither how pitilessly selfish, nor how meanly clever, a man of this world may be and bate not a jot of his self-admiration. But men who address a neighbour as a man of the world, paying him the greatest compliment they know in acknowledging him of their kind, recoil with a sort of fear from the man alien to their thoughts, and impracticable for their purposes. They say "He is beyond me," and despise him. So is there a world beyond them with which they yet hold a frightful relationship—that of unrecognized, unattempted duty!

Lord Mergwain regarded the odd-looking laird as a fool; the laird looked on him with something of the pity an angel must feel for the wretch to whom he is set to give his last chance—ere sorer measures be taken in which angels are not the ministers.

But the wine was at last beginning to work its too oft repeated and now nearly exhausted influence on the sagging and much frayed nerves of the old man. A yellowish remnant of withered rose began to smear his far-off west: he dared not look to the east—that lay terribly cold and gray; and he smiled with a little curl of his lip now and then, as he thought of this and that advantage he had had in the game of life, for alas! struggle had never with him risen to the dignity of a battle. But he was as proud of a successful ruse, as any hero of a well fought and well won field. "I had him there!" stood with him for the joy of work done and salvation wrought. It was a repulsive smile—a smile that might move even to hatred the onlooker not yet

divine enough to let the outrushing waves of pity swamp human judgment: it curled the cruel upper lip, while the lower continued to hang, thick, and curveless, and drawn into a protuberance in the middle. He seemed to himself, as he drank, to be gradually recovering the common sense of his self-vaunted, vigorous nature. He assured himself that now he saw plainly the truth and fact of things—that his present outlook and impression were the genuine, and the horrors of the foregone night but fancies bred of a disordered stomach. He was a man once more, and beyond the sport of a foolish imagination!

But alas for the man who draws his courage from wine! The same *alas* for the man whose health is its buttress! The touch of a pin on some one of certain points of his mortal house will suffice to change him from a leader of armies over mountains, or a hunter of tigers in the jungle, to one who shudders at a centipede! There is but one real source of real courage. Conscience, as it ought,

makes cowards of us all. The courage which is of insensibility crumbles at once before any object of terror able to stir the sluggish imagination; and there is a fear, this for one, that for another, which can appal the stoutest who is not one with the essential.

Lord Mergwain came from under the influence of his imagination and his fears, and went under that of his senses and *himself*. He took his place beside the Christian in his low, common moods, when the world, with its laws and its material insistence, presses upon him, and he does not believe that God cares for the sparrow, or can possibly count the hairs of his head; when the divine power, and law, and help, seem nowhere but in a passed-away fancy of the hour of prayer. Only the Christian is then miserable, and lord Mergwain was now relieved; for had he not come to himself? and did he yet know anything better to arrive at than just that wretched self of his?

A glass or two more, and he laughed at the terror by night. He had been a

damned fool not to go to bed like other people, instead of sitting by the fire with a porridge-eating and folio-reading Scotchman, who regarded him as one of the wicked, and afraid of the darkness! He was afraid of nothing—not of the devil himself!

The thought may have passed from his mind to that of his host, for the self-same moment the laird said,

"Don't you think, when you have finished your bottle, my lord, you had better go to bed?"

With the words, a cold swell, as from the returning tide of some dead sea, so long ebbed that men had ploughed and sown and built within its bed, stole in, swift and black, filling every cranny of the old man's conscious being.

"My God!" he cried, "I thought better of you than that, laird! I took you for a man of your word! You promised to sit up with me!"

"I did, my lord, and am here to keep my promise. I only thought you looked as if you might have changed your mind;

and in such a night as this, beyond a doubt bed is the best place for every body that has one to go to."

"That depends," answered his lordship, and drank.

The laird held his peace for a time, meditating—then spoke again.

"I hope your lordship will not think me rude if I go on with my book?"

"I don't want a noise. It don't go well with old wine like this. It wants attention! Sound jars the palate.—No, I thank you."

"I did not propose to read aloud, my lord—only to myself."

"Oh! that alters the matter! That I by no means object to. I am but poor company, I know!"

The laird resumed his folio, and lost and found himself in the communion of a kindred soul.

By and by the boat of his lordship's brain was again drifting towards the waste coast of such imagination as was in him. The half-tide restoring the physical mean was past, and intoxication

was setting in. He began to shoot uneasy glances towards the old folio. It certainly had a look of venerable significance, and whether it called up some association of childhood concerned in some fearful fancy, or suggested to his muddled brain the art of the necromancer, it made him uneasy.

"What's that you're reading, Glenwarlock?" he said at length. "It looks like a book of magic."

"On the contrary," answered the laird, "it is a religious book, and of the best sort."

"Oh, indeed! ah!—I have no objection to a little religion in its own place. I never was one of those mockers—those Jacobins, those sans-culottes! Arrogant fools they always seemed to me!"

"Would your lordship like to share a little of my book?"

"No, no; by no means! *In its own place*, I said. Things sacred ought not to be mixed up with things profane—with such an uncommon bottle of wine, for instance. I dictate to no one, but for

my part I keep my religion for church. That is the proper place for it, and there you find yourself in the fitting mood. I beg you will not mistake me; it is out of respect I decline."

He drank, and the laird dropped back into the depths of his volume. The night wore on. His lordship did not drink fast. There was no hope of another bottle, and the wine must cover the period of necessity: he dared not encounter the night without the sustaining knowledge of its presence. His god was a Baal whom he knew finite. At last he began to nod, and by slow degrees sank back on the cushions of the sofa. Very softly the laird covered him, and resumed his book.

The storm went raging on, as if it would never cease. The sense of desolation it produced in the heart of the laird was such, that he closed his mind against it, and gave all his attention to George Fox. The minutes crawled slowly along, but he lost all measure of time, because he read with delight. At length he found

himself invaded by that soft physical peace which heralds the approach of sleep. He roused himself; he did not want to sleep; he wanted to read: he was in one of the most interesting passages he had yet found! But presently the sweet enemy was again within his outworks. Once more he roused himself, heard the storm raving on—over buried graves and curtained beds, heedless of human heeding—fell a listening to its shriek-broken roar, and so into a soundless and dreamless sleep.

He woke so suddenly that for a moment he knew himself only as somebody he knew. The weight of an indefinable oppression—the horror of a darkness too vague to be combated, lay upon him. The fire had burned low, and his very bones seemed chill with the chill of death. The candle flames were down in the sockets of the candlesticks, sunk at last into their graves and dying. The voice of the storm had risen to a scream of victory. Had the assaulting death-cold won its way into the house? Was

gluttonous annihilation having its will with them all?

He rose and cast his eyes on his guest. Sleeping still, he half lay, half leaned in the corner of the sofa, breathing heavily. The laird could not well see his face, because of the flapping and flickering of the half buried candle-flames, and the shadows they sent waving huge over all like the flaunting of a black flag. Through the flicker and the shadow he was still peering at him, when suddenly the old man assumed a sitting posture—rising all of a piece, and without opening his eyes, like a wooden figure lifted from behind. The laird then saw his face: it bore the expression of one suffering from a horrible nightmare. It was terrified, wrathful, disgusted—all in one. He hastened to rouse him from some drunken dream. But ere he reached him, his eyes opened, and his expression changed—not to one of relief, but one of utter collapse—as if the sleep-dulled horrors of the dream grew veritable to him as he woke. His under lip trembled like a dry

leaf in a small wind, his right arm rose slowly from the shoulder and stuck straight out in the direction of his host with the hand hanging slack from the wrist, and he stared as upon one loosed out of hell to speak of horrors. But it seemed to the laird that, although turned towards him, his eyes did not rest on him, but were focussed for something beyond him. The stare was like that of one demented, who sees what is not. It invaded the laird—possessed him. A something which I can describe only as a physical terror seized him. He felt his gaze returning that of the man before him, as a mirror returns a face. The skin of his head was contracting, his hair about to stand on end! The spell must be broken!

With a mighty self-energy of the will he forced himself forward—just a step, to lay his hand on lord Mergwain and bring him to himself. His lordship uttered a terrible cry, scream and yell in one, and sank again on the sofa. The same instant the laird was himself, and sprang to him.

He lay with his mouth wide open, and just such a look as the last night when they found him on the floor. His arm stuck straight out from his body. The laird pressed it down, but it rose again. He did not for a moment doubt he was dead, but he could not have told what it was that assured him of it.

The first thought that came to him was that lady Joan might have heard his cry and she must not see him so. He bound up his fallen jaw, laid him straight on the sofa, lighted fresh candles, and went to call Grizzie.

He felt his way down the dark stair, fought his way through the wind to the kitchen, and thence climbed to Grizzie's room. She was already out of bed, and putting on her clothes. She had not been asleep, she said, and added the obscure remark, which the laird took to mean she had been expecting a summons,

"Whan Ane's oot, nane's in."

"He's gane til's accoont, Grizzie," said the laird, nor could help a tremble in his voice.

"Say ye sae, laird?" rejoined Grizzie with perfect calmness. "Eh, sirs!"

She said no more, for if she was cool she was not irreverent. The man who had no reverence for the corpse on a gallows, I could scarce help imagining capable of the crime that brought it there.

"Ye winna wauk the hoose, will ye, sir?" she added presently. "I dinna think it wad be ony service to deid or livin'."

"I'll no du that, Grizzie. But speed ye, an' come an' luik at 'im," returned the laird, "an' tell me what ye think. I makna a doobt he's deid, but gien ye hae ony, we'll du what we can. An' we'll sit up the nicht throuw wi' the corp thegither, an' lat yoong an' auld tak the rist they hae mair need o' nor the likes o' you an' me."

It was a proud moment in Grizzie's life, one never forgotten, when the laird addressed her thus. But her private pride was almost always speechless.

"The Prence is haein' his ain w'y the

nicht!" she murmured to herself, as they bored their way through the wind to the great door.

When she came where the corpse lay, she looked down upon it without uttering a sound, neither was there any emotion in her fixed gaze. She had been brought up in a stern and nowise pitiful school.

"Ye doobtna he's deid — div ye, Grizzie?" said the laird, in a voice that seemed to himself intrusive on the solemn silence.

She removed the handkerchief, and the jaw fell.

"He's gane til's accoont," she said. "It's a great amoont; an' mair on ae side nor he'll weel bide. It's sair eneuch, laird, whan ane has to gang at the Lord's call; but whan the messenger comes frae the laich yett (*low gate*), we maun jist lat gang an' forget. Sae lang's he's a man, hooever, we maun du what we can—an' that's what we did last nicht. I'll rin an' fess the watter. It 'll be het i' the b'iler yet."

She soon returned, and they used every

means they could think of for his recovery. When at length they gave it up, they heaped the body over with blankets: there was yet the last chance of a spontaneous revival. Then sitting down they waited the slow-travelling, feeble dawn.

They sat in silence for nearly an hour; then the laird spoke.

"We'll read a psalm thegither, Grizzie," he said.

"Ay, du ye that, laird. It'll haud them awa' for the time bein', though it profit little i' the hin'er en'."

The laird drew from his pocket a small, much worn bible which had been his Marion's; and by the body of the sinner, in the heart of the howling storm and the dead waste of the night, rose his voice, trembling with a strange emotion, upborne on the glorious words of the ninety-first psalm.

When he ended they were aware that the storm had begun to yield. By slow degrees it sank as the morning came on. Through all the continuing darkness not

a word more was said between them. But when the first faintest glimmer of dawn began to appear, Grizzie rose in haste like one that had overslept herself, and said—

"I maun to my wark, laird—what think ye?"

The laird rose also, and by a common impulse they went and looked at the corpse—for corpse it was beyond all question, cold now as the snow without. After a brief, low-voiced conference they proceeded to carry it to the guest-chamber. There they laid it upon the bed, and there, when Grizzie had done for it all that custom required, she left it covered with a sheet, lying dead in the room where it dared not sleep, a mound cold and white as any snow-wreath outside. It looked as if Winter had forced his way into the house, and left this one drift in signal of his capture.

A great awe fell upon Cosmo when he heard what visit and what departure had taken place in the storm and darkness. Lady Joan turned white as the dead. A

few tears rolled from the luminous dusk of her eyes, like the dew slow-gathering in a night of stars, but she was very still. The bond between her and her father had not been a pleasant one, neither had she for him that reverence which so grandly heightens love. She had loved him pitifully—perhaps, dreadful thought! a little contemptuously. The laird persuaded her not to see the body.

All the day things went on in the house as usual, with a little more silence where had been much. The wind lay moveless on the frozen earth, the sun shone cold as a diamond, and the fresh snow glittered and gleamed and sparkled like a dead sea of lightning.

The laird was thinking which of his men he should send to the village, when the door opened and in came Agnes. Grannie had sent her, she said, to inquire after them. Grannie had had a troubled night, and the moment she woke had begun to talk about the laird and his visitors, and what the storm must have been at Castle Warlock. The drifts were

tremendous, she said. Partly to give him a breath of the world of life, the laird sent Cosmo back with Aggie, instructing him to give directions to the carpenter for the making of a coffin.

How long the body might have to lie with them no one could tell, for the storm had ceased in a hard frost, and there could be no communication with England for many days, perhaps for weeks. The laird judged it better, therefore, so soon as the shell should arrive, to place the body in a death-chapel provided for it by nature herself. With their spades he and Cosmo fashioned the mound, already hollowed in sport, into the shape of a huge sarcophagus; and when the coffin came and the soul's cenotaph was laid in it, they opened wide the side of the snow-sepulchre to receive it, and closed it again with snow. Where Cosmo's hollow man of light had shone, lay the body of the vanished lord Mergwain.

## CHAPTER II.

### A WINTER IDYLL.

Lady Joan, the same day on which her father died, wrote to her brother Borland, now Mergwain, telling him what had taken place. But it was many days before her letter could leave Muir o' Warlock. The laird told her she must have patience, and assured her she was welcome as the summer.

And now began for Cosmo an episode of enchantment, as wondrous as any dream of tree-top- or summer-wave-city, for it had at the heart of it a live and beautiful lady.

Lady Joan was a girl of nearly eighteen, looking older—shapely, strong, and graceful. But her life-consciousness and its joy had been greatly suppressed by the

home-relations in which she had lived. Her father loved her with what love was in him, and therefore was jealous; trusted, and therefore enslaved her; could make her useful, and therefore oppressed her. When his health began to decline, he would go nowhere without her, but seldom spoke a pleasant word to her, and often an unpleasant one. To her face he never praised her, but swore deeply to her excellence in ears that cared little to hear of it. She must always be within his reach when beyond his call; but he was not slow to anger with her, which she dreaded more from nicety than either love or fear, for when angry he would say ugly things to her. One hears of ruling by love and ruling by fear, but this man ruled by disgust. At home he lived much as we have seen him in the house of another, cared for nobody's comfort but his own, and was hard to keep in good humour—such good humour as was possible to him. He paid no attention to business or management: his estates had long been under trustees; lolled about in

his room, diverting himself with a horrible monkey which he taught ugly tricks; drank almost constantly, and would throw dice by himself for an hour together—doing what he could, which was little, towards the very murder of time. He kept a poor larder, but a rich cellar; almost always without money, he yet contrived to hold his bins replenished, and that from the farther end: he might have been expecting to live to a hundred and twenty! Of visitors he had none, except an occasional time-belated companion of his youth whom the faint muddled memories of old sins would bring to his door, when they would spend a day or two together, soaking, and telling bad stories, hardly restrained until Joan left the room, if her brother was not present, before whom her father was a little on his good behaviour.

The old man was in evil repute with his neighbours, and they never called upon him. This they would have found it hard to justify, seeing some who were not better they treated as quite respect-

able. No doubt he was the dilapidated old reprobate they counted him, but if he had not made himself poor they would have found his morals no business of theirs. They pitied the daughter, or at least spoke pityingly of her, but could not for her sake countenance the father! Neglecting thus their duty towards her, they soon came to regard her with a disapproval which was the shadow of their neglect. They thought of her as partaking in her father's defilement. The uncleansed call the pure unclean. But it was better to be so judged and so excluded than by intercourse to run the risk of growing after the pattern of her judges. I suspect the man who leads a dissolute, and the man who leads a commonly selfish life, will land from the great jump pretty nearly in the same spot. Those who have despised each the other's sins, will one day be shut up to stare at their own, until each finds his own the hateful thing.

Of the latter, the respectably selfish class, was Borland. He knew his pre-

sence a protection to his sister, yet gave himself no trouble in consequence. As the apple of his eye would he cherish and isolate the fluid in which he hoped to surprise some secret of nature; but he was not his sister's keeper, and a drop of mud more or less cast into her spirit was to him of no consequence. Yet he would as soon have left a woman he wanted to marry unwarned in the dark by the cage of a tiger as within reach of the miasms that now and then surrounded Joan.

From the poverty of the family, then, the ill repute of her father, and the pride and self-withdrawal of her brother, she led a lonely life. Her home was as much neglected as herself. Everything around her was left to run wild. The lawn was a meadow, and the park a mere pasture; the shrubbery an impassable tangle, and the flower-garden a wilderness. She could do nothing to set things right, and lived about the place like a poor relation. She had at school, which she left at fifteen, learned nothing so as to draw from it any vital help. She returned possibly a little

less capable than she went, for some of her natural perceptions could hardly escape being blunted by the artificial, false, and selfish judgments and regards which had there surrounded her; and without a mother, without a companion, without a piano in the huge house fit to play upon, had to find for herself what solace, what pastime she could. Her only cistern of amusement indoors was a library containing a large disproportion of books in old French bindings, with much tarnished gilding. But a native purity of soul kept her lovely, and capable of becoming lovelier.

The mystery of all human mysteries is the upward tendency of certain souls through so much that clogs and would defile their wings, while so many others do not even look up: how do these last ever come to raise their eyes to the hills? The keenest of us moral philosophers are but mole-eyed! But we shall yet smile at many a difficulty now insurmountable —and many another will rise as we go.

Lady Joan did not like ugly things, so

shrank from evil things, and was the less in danger from liberty, because of the disgust which certain tones and words of her father had repeatedly occasioned her.

Influenced by no conventionalities, she saw no reason for making a difficulty when, the day after her father's death, Cosmo proposed a walk in the snow. He saw her properly provided for what seemed to her an adventure—with short skirts, and stockings over her shoes—and they set out together, in the brilliant light of a sun rapidly declining towards the western horizon, though it had but just passed the low noon.

The moment she stepped from the threshold, she was invaded by an almost giddy sense of freedom. The keen air and impeding snow sent the warm blood to her cheeks, and her heart beat as if new-born into a better world. She felt annoyed. But in vain she called herself heartless; in vain she accused herself of insensibility, called herself a worthless girl: there was the sun in the sky—not warm, but dazzling bright—and shining

straight into her very being! while the air, instinct with life, was to her lungs like water to a thirsty soul, making her heart beat like the heart of Eve when first she woke alive, and felt what her Maker had willed! Life was indeed good! It was a blessed thing for the eyes to behold the sun!—Let death do what it may, there is one thing it cannot destroy, and that is just life. Never in itself, only in the unfaith of man does life recognize any sway of death.—A new birth of healthy vigour seemed to answer every fresh effort. They crossed the torrent on a vault of snow, and listening could hear, far down, the noise of its hidden rushing through the white tunnel. Away and up the hill they went; the hidden torrent of Joan's blood flowed yet clearer as they ascended; her heart sang to her soul; everything began to look like a thing in a story; she was a princess, with her younger brother, travelling to meet the tide of lovely adventure. Such a brother was very different from an older one! She was the happier for his presence! there was

strength and peace and a better sunshine in it! He talked very strangely, it was true—now like a child, now like an old man, but she felt a charm in both ways, and was hardly conscious that she understood neither.

Capable, through confidence in his father, of receiving wisdom far beyond what he could have thought out for himself, Cosmo sometimes said things, because he understood them, which seemed to most who heard them beyond his years. Such reception by faith turns to insight, and forms the atmosphere of individual vision.

They had been climbing a steep ascent, in the snow difficult, and had at length reached the top, where they stood for a moment panting. Beyond them rose another ascent.

"Aren't you always wanting to climb and climb, lady Joan?" said the boy.

"Call me Joan, please," rejoined the girl.

"How kind you are!—Then, Joan—don't you always want to be getting up higher?"

"No; I don't think I do."

"I believe you do, only you don't know it. When I am here, I always want to get on the top of yon hill there, and when I do, it always seems such a little way up! —and Mr. Simon tells me I should feel much the same if it were the highest peak of the Himmalays."

She did not reply, and Cosmo was silent for a while.

"Don't you think," he began again, "though life here is so good, you would get very tired if you thought you had to live in this world always—for ever and ever and ever? You would want to get out of it, wouldn't you?"

"No, I shouldn't," answered Joan. "—Not that I think life so very good, but one keeps hoping it may turn to something better."

She counted it childish talk for a boy of his years—one so manly too beyond his years!

"That is very strange!" he returned. "Now I am quite happy, but at once I should feel in a prison, if I were told I

should never leave this world; for what you can't get out of must be your prison."

"Yes—but if you don't want to get out?"

"Ah, that is true! But when that comes to a prisoner, it is a sign that he is worn out, and has not life enough left in him to look the world in the face. I was talking about it the other day with Mr. Simon, else I shouldn't have got it so plain in my mind. Our blue roof is very different from the vault of a prison, for no man ever touched the stones of it. But if you could never get away from under it, never get off the floor at the bottom of it, to me it might as well be something solid. There would be no promise in the stars then. They look like promises, don't they? For God would never show us a thing he did not mean to give us. That's the way one boy teases another."

"You are a very odd boy, Cosmo. I am almost afraid to listen to you saying such presumptuous things!"

Cosmo laughed gently. There was a

tone in the laugh such as Joan seemed never to have heard before.

"How can you love God, Joan, and be afraid because one speaks of him without fear? I should no more fancy him angry with me for believing he made me for great and glad things, than my father angry with me for believing he will always do his very best for me."

"Ah, but he is your father, and that is very different!" said Joan with a sigh, of which a full interpretation, unknown to herself, may have been, that, after all, there was more difference between one father and another than between some fathers and God.

"I know it is very different," replied Cosmo; "—God is so much, much more my father than is the laird of Glenwarlock! He is eternally more to me, eternally nearer to me than my father, though my father is the best father that ever lived. God, you know, Joan—God is more than anybody knows what to say about. Sometimes, when I am lying awake at night, my heart swells and swells

in me, that I hardly know how to bear it, with the thought that here I am, come out of God, and yet not *out of* him—close to the very life that said to everything *Be*, and it was!—You think it strange I should talk so?"

"Rather, I must confess! It *can't* be good to think at your age so much about religion. There is a time for everything. If you go on like this, you will die of the blues. I know it is all very proper, but such solemnity would kill me!"

Cosmo laughed again.

"Which of us is the merrier—you or me, Joan? The instant I saw you, I thought you hadn't enough of something—you weren't happy. If you knew the great beautiful person we call God, and knew he was always with you, nearer than your own soul, and that you could talk to him any time, you could not keep sad for long together."

Joan gave a great sigh: her heart knew its own bitterness, and there was little joy in it for a stranger to intermeddle with. But she said to herself the boy would be

a gray-haired man before he was twenty, and she must help him out of such morbid fancies.

"While we are in this world, Cosmo, we must live as creatures of this world," she said.

"As men and women of this world—yes; but you do not surely imagine that, when he put us here, he banished us from himself! He is the same—in this world and in every other, and no creature can do without him. Everything beautiful is but a bit of love frozen: the love that gives is to the gift as water is to ice. Ah, you should hear our torrent shout in the spring! The thought of God fills me so full of life, that I want to go and do something for everybody. I am never miserable. I don't believe I shall be when my father dies."

"Oh, Cosmo!—with such a father as yours! I am shocked."

But it was into her own heart that her words struck a pang, for she had compared his father and hers, and over hers she was not miserable! The poor

old man lay forsaken among strangers, and she had grown strange to him also!

The sun was close upon the horizon, and his level rays shone through the hair of the boy, as, taking off his cap, he turned and looked at her.

"Lady Joan," he said slowly, and with a tremble in his voice, "I should just laugh with delight to have to die for my father. But if he were to die, I should be so proud of him I should have no room to be miserable. As God makes me glad though I cannot see him, so my father would make me glad though I could not see him. I cannot see him now, and yet I am glad because he *is*—away down there in the old castle; and when he is gone from me, I shall be glad still, for he will be *somewhere* all the same—with God, as he is now. The summer of souls will come again, and we shall run at each other."

It was an odd phrase, but lady Joan did not laugh.

The sun was down, and the cold blue-gray twilight came creeping from the

east. They turned and walked home through a luminous dusk. It would not be dark all night, though the moon was very late, for the snow gave out a ghostly radiance. It must be one of the substances that have the power of drinking and hoarding the light of the sun, that with their memories of it they may thin the darkness. I suspect everything does it more or less. Far below were the lights of the castle, and across an unbroken waste of whiteness, the gleams of the village. The air was keen as an essence of points and edges, and the thought of the kitchen-fire grew pleasant. Cosmo took Joan by the hand, and down the hill they sped, swiftly descending what they had toilsomely climbed. But as she ran, the thought that one of those lights was burning by the body of her father, aroused in Joan fresh self-accusation. She was not glad, and she could not be sorry! If Cosmo's father were to die, Cosmo would be both sorry and glad! But the boy turned his face, ever and again as they ran, up to hers, and

his look always comforted her. An attendant boy-angel he seemed, whose business it was to rebuke and console her. If he were her brother, she could be well content never more to leave the savage place! The strange old man in the red nightcap was a thorough gentleman, and this odd boy, absolutely unnatural in his goodness, was nevertheless charming! She did not yet know that goodness is the only nature. She regarded it as a noble sort of disease—at least as something of which it was possible to have too much. She had not a suspicion that goodness is simply life and health—that what the lord and heart of the universe demands of us is just to be good boys and girls. To judge religion, we must have it—not stare at it from the bottom of a broken-rundled, interminable dream-ladder.

When she reached the door she felt as if waking from a vision, in which she had been led along strange paths by a curious angel. But not to himself was Cosmo like an angel! He was a vigorous,

hopeful, trusting boy of God's this world, and would be just such a boy in the next—one namely who did his work, and was ready for whatever should come.

When, from that great world of snow outside, Joan entered the kitchen with its red heart of fire, she knew for a moment how a little bird feels as he creeps under the wing of his mother. Those Hebrews—what poets they were! Holy and homely and daring, they delighted in the wings of the Almighty; but the Son of the Father took the lovely figure and made it more homely yet, likening himself to the hen under whose wings her chickens would not creep for all her crying and calling. Such thoughts indeed were not in Joan's mind, yet then first in all her remembered life was she aware of simple confidence, of safety and satisfaction and loss of care. The old man in the red nightcap would see to everything for her! And hardly was she seated ere she felt a new fold of his protection: he had had her room changed, that she might be near his mother and Grizzie, he said.

Cosmo heard with delight that his father had given up his room to lady Joan, and would share his. To sleep with his father was one of the greatest joys the world held for him. Such safety and comfort—such hen's wings—were nowhere else on the face of the round world! It was peace in the heart of strength, a nest of down inside a castle of stone.

They sat together round the kitchen fire. By unintended degrees the laird glided into a gentle monologue, in which, to Joan's thinking, he talked even more strangely than Cosmo. Things born in the fire and the smoke, like the song of the three holy children, issued from the furnace clothed in softest moonlight. Joan said to herself it was plain where the boy got his oddity; but what she called oddity was but sense from a deeper source than she knew anything of. Then he read them passages from his folio, and Joan wondered what attraction such a jumble of good words and no meaning could have for a man sensible in ordinary things.

After supper, for the first time in her life, she was present where a man had the presumption to speak aloud to his maker direct from his heart without the mediation of a book. This she found odder than all the rest: she had never even heard of such a thing! And for the utterance, although it was as simple in word as its matter was high, so peculiar, so unfathomable was it to her, that she never suspected the man might be meaning something; farther from her still was the thought that perhaps God liked to hear him, was listening to him and understanding him, ready to give him the things he asked for. All she heard was an extraordinary gibberish, doubtless regarded as the proper thing for the religious observance—family prayers she took it to be! She felt confused and ashamed — so grievously out of her element that she never knew until they rose that the rest were kneeling while she sat staring into the fire. Then she felt guilty and shy, but as nobody took any notice, persuaded herself the peculiarity of her behaviour

had passed unobserved. Disagreeable as all this was, it did not, however, prevent her from saying to herself as she went to bed, "How delightful it would be to live in a house where everybody understood, and loved, and thought about everybody else!" She did not know that her wish was just for the kingdom of heaven—the very thing she thought the laird and Cosmo so strange for troubling their heads about. If men's wishes are not always for what the kingdom of heaven would bring them, their miseries, at least, are all for the lack of that kingdom.

The same night Joan dreamed herself in a desert island, where she had to endure great hardships, but where everybody was good to everybody, and never thought of taking care except each of the other; and that, when a beautiful ship came to carry her away, she cried and would not go.

Three weeks of all kinds of weather, except warm, followed, ending with torrents of rain, and a rapid thaw. But during that time Joan got as careless of the weather as Cosmo, till nothing

delighted her more than to encounter any sort of it with him. And as she always attended to Grizzie's precautionary injunctions, she took no harm, and grew much stronger. It is not encountering the weather that is dangerous, but encountering it when the strength is not equal to the encounter. These two would come home wet from head to foot, change their clothes, have a good meal, sleep well, and wake in the morning without the slightest cold. They would pass the hours between breakfast and dinner ascending the course of a hill stream, which, dammed by snow and swollen by thaw, was now rushing with a roar to the valley; or fighting their way through wind and sleet to the top of some wild expanse of hill-moorland, houseless for miles and miles—waste bog and dry stony soil as far as eye could reach, with here and there a solitary stalk or bush bending low to the ground in the steady bitter wind—a hopeless region, making the hope in their hearts glow the redder; or climbing a gully, deep-worn by the few wheels of a

month but the many of centuries, and more by the torrents that rushed down its trench when it rained heavily or thawed after snow—hearing the wind sweep across it, but feeling not a breath of its presence, till emerging suddenly upon its plane they had to struggle with it for very foothold upon the round earth. In such contests Joan delighted. It was glorious, she said, to have a downright good fight, and nobody out of temper! She would come back from the windy war with her face glowing, her eyes flashing, her hair challenging storm from every point of the compass, and her heart merry with very peacefulness. Her only thoughts of trouble were, that her father's body lay unburied, and that Borland would come and take her away.

When the thaw came at last, the laird had the coffin brought back into the guest-chamber, there to wait the arrival of the new lord Mergwain.

Outstripping the letter that announced his departure, he came unexpected, bringing with him his man of business. Lady

Joan's heart gave a small flutter of pleasure at sight of him, then beat quietly, but felt sad and apprehensive. The cold proper salute he gave her seemed, after the life she had of late been living, rather to belong to some sunless world than the region of humanity. He uttered one commonplace concerning his father's death, and never alluded to it again; behaved in a dignified, recognizant manner to the laird, but as to an inferior to whom he was under more obligation than he liked; and, after meeting his friendly approach with a snub, took not the slightest notice of Cosmo. Seated three minutes, he began to require rather than request the laird's assistance towards the removal of the body; would accept no refreshment; had a messenger despatched at once to procure the nearest hearse and four horses; and that same afternoon started for England, taking his sister with him.

## CHAPTER III.

### AN INTERLUNAR CAVE.

And so the moon died out of Cosmo's heaven. But it was only the moon. The sun remained to him—his father—visible type of the great sun, whose light is too keen for souls, and heart and spirit only can bear. But when he had received Joan's last smile, when she turned away her face, and the Ungenial, who had spoiled everything at Glenwarlock, carried her with him, then indeed for a moment a great cloud came over the light of his life, and he sought where to hide his tears. It was a sickening time. Suddenly she had come, suddenly entered his heart, and suddenly departed! But such things are only clouds, and cannot but pass. Ah, reader, whose cloud has not

yet passed! do you scorn to hear it called cloud, priding yourself that your trouble is eternal? Just because you are eternal, your trouble cannot be. You may cling to it, and brood upon it, but you cannot keep it from either blossoming into a bliss, or crumbling into dust. Be such while it lasts, that, when it passes, it shall leave you loving more, not less.

There was this difference between Cosmo and most young men of clay finer than ordinary: after the first few moments of the seemingly unendurable, he did not wander about moody, nursing his sorrow, and making everybody uncomfortable because he was uncomfortable; he sought at once the presence of his father, and of Mr. Simon.

From the latter he had been much separated while lady Joan was at the castle, for such a visit was an opportunity for him precious in the eyes of the laird. With the loving insight of a true father, he perceived what the society of the girl would do for his boy—how it would at once soften and ripen and shape him, and

reveal him to himself. And two days had not passed before he was aware of a gentling and clearing of his speech; of greater readiness and directness in his replies; of an indescribable sweetening of the address that had been sweet, with a rosy shadow of something like apology cast over every approach; of a deepening of the atmosphere of his reverence, which yet as it deepened grew more diaphanous. And now when the episode of angelic visitation was over, he understood the wrench her abrupt departure must have given his being, and the sick sense of lack it must have left, and by silent sympathy allowed him time to recover. Once he came upon him weeping: not with the faintest shadow of displeasure did he rebuke him, not with farthest hint suggest weakness in his tears. He went up to him, laid his hand on his head, stood thus a moment, then turned and left him. Nor because of his sorrow did he once regret the freedom he had allowed to the intercourse between them. He knew what the sharp things of life are to

the human plant; that its frosts are needful as well as its sunshine, its great passion-winds as well as its gentle rains; that an imperative result is required, that his human son had to be made divine, and that in aid of this end man must humbly follow the great lines of Nature, ready to withhold his hand, anxious not to interfere. Many would foil the marvellous process, call in worldly wisdom to guide to other and worldly ends, bring the experience of their own failures to bear for the production of worse. But he who would escape the mill that grinds slow and grinds small, must yield to the hammer and chisel; for those who refuse to be stones of the living temple must be ground into mortar for it.

Mr. Simon also knew well how to treat the growing plant when beaten down by the storm. He set Cosmo to such work as in ways remote harmonized with his condition, and so he drew him gently from his past. Mere labour would have but driven him deeper into it. Yesterday is as much our past as the bygone cen-

tury, and sheltering in it from an uncongenial present, we are lost to our morrow. Thus motion slid back into its old grooves. An era of blessedness had vanished, but was not lost; it was added to his life, gathered up into his being; it was dissolved into his consciousness, and interpenetrated his activity. Where is no ground of regret, or shame, or self-reproach, new joy will not cast out the old; now that the new joy was itself old, the older joys came softly trooping back to their attendance.

But besides all this, the vanished woman left behind her a gift that had never been hers, and the youth began to be a poet. Truly it is strange! Many a woman, caring for his verses never a cambric handkerchief or pair of gloves, has yet made of a man, for the time at least, and sometimes for ever, a poet. A wretched man to whom a poem is not worth a sneer, may set a woman singing to the centuries!

Any gift of the nature of poetry, however poor or small, is of value inestimable

to the development of the individual, ludicrous even though it may show itself should conceit clothe it in print. The desire of fame is the ruin of the small, sometimes of the great poet. Next motive in vileness to the love of money, is the love of fame. A man may have a wife who is all the world to him, but must he therefore set her on a throne and call on the world to worship her? Cosmo, essentially and peculiarly practical, never thought of the world and his verses together, but gathered life for himself in the making of them. The fools of the world claim to be the practical men, but the spiritual men are the only truly practical—and that it needs but a little time beyond the edge of what the world calls time to show. If the fool could stop where his ideas stop, he would but be fixed a fool. These children of Cosmo's, like all real children, strengthened his heart, and upheld his hands. In them truth took shape; in them she submitted herself to his contemplation. Thus from the days of his mourning he came out

more of a man, abler to look the world in the face.

From that time also he learned and understood more rapidly. No more than his master did he ever manifest superiority in the faculties most prized of the world, but not the less desirable therefore did it seem in the eyes of his father and his tutor that he should go the next winter to college. As to how this could be managed, the laird took much serious thought, but saw no glimmer in the darkness of apparent impossibility. An unsuspected oracle was however at hand.

Old servants of the true sort have, I fancy, a kind of family instinct. From the air about them, almost from the personal carriage, from words dropped that were never meant for them, from the thoughtful, troubled, or eager look, and the sought or avoided conference, they get possessed by a notion both of how the wind is blowing, and of how the ship wants to sail. But Grizzie was capable also of reasoning from what she saw. She marked the increase of care on the

brow of her master; noted that it was always greater after he and Mr. Simon had had a talk at which Cosmo, the beloved of both, was not present; and concluded that the talk and the trouble must be about Cosmo. She noted also that both were as much pleased with him as ever, and concluded therefrom that it was his prospects and not his behaviour that caused uneasiness. Then again she noted how fervently at prayers her master entreated guidance to do nothing other than the right thing; and from all put together, and considered in the light of a tolerably accurate idea of the laird's circumstances, Grizzie was able not only to arrive at a final conclusion, but to come to the resolution of offering—not advice—upon that she would never have presumed—but a suggestion.

One night the laird sat in the kitchen revolving the matter for the many-hundredth time. Was it right to spend on his son's education what might go to the creditors? Was it not better for the world, for the creditors, for all, that one

of Cosmo's vigour should be educated? Was it not the best possible investment of any money he could lay hold of? For the creditors, there was the land! the worst for him would be the best for them; and for the boy it was infinitely better he should go without land than without education! But, all this granted and settled, *where was the money to come from?* That the amount required was small, made no difference, when it was neither in his hand, nor, so far as he could see, anywhere near his hand!

He sat in his great chair, with his book open upon his knees. His mother and Cosmo were gone to bed, and Grizzie was preparing to follow them: he was generally the last to go. But Grizzie, who had been eyeing him at intervals for the last half-hour, having finished her preparations for the morning, now drew near, and stood before him, her hands and bare arms under her apron. Her master taking no notice of her, she stood thus in silence for a moment, then began. It may have been noted that her proclivity

to rime generally manifested itself in the start of a speech, and mostly vanished as she went on.

"Laird," she said, "ye're in trouble, for ye're sittin' double, an' castna a leuk upo' yer buik! Gien ye wad lat a body speyk 'at kens naething, 'cep' 'at oot o' the moo' o' babes an' sucklin's—an' troth I'm naither babe nor sucklin' this mony a lang, but I'm a muckle eneuch gowk to be ane o' the Lord's innocents, an' hae him perfec' praise oot o' the moo' o' me!——"

She paused, feeling it was time the laird should say something—which immediately he did.

"Say awa', Grizzie," he answered; "I'm hearin' ye. There's nane has a better richt to say her say i' this hoose."

"I hae *no* richt," retorted Grizzie, almost angrily, "but what ye alloo me, laird; an' I wadna hae mair. But whan I see ye in tribble—eh, mony's the time I haud my tongue till my hert's that grit it's jist swallin' in blobs an' blawin' like the parritch whan it's dune makin', afore

I tak it frae the fire! for I hae naething to say, an' naither coonsel nor help intil me. But last nicht, whan I leukitna for't, there cam a thoucht til my door, an' seein' it was a stranger, I bad it walcome. It micht hae come til a wysser heid nor mine, but seein' it did come to mine, it's the mair like 'at the Lord sent it—for the exaltation o' ane o' low estate, wha, gien she be a gowk, is muckle the same as he made her wi' 's ain blissit han'. Sae, quo' I, I s' jist submit it to the laird as it cam to me. The laird's the man to discern whether it be frae the Lord or only frae mysel'!"

"Say on, Grizzie," returned the laird, for again she had paused. "It sud surprise nane to get a message frae the Lord by the moo' o' ane o' his handmaidens."

"Weel, it's jist this, laird:—I hae times ower (*many times*) been i' the gran' drawin'-room, whan ye wad be lattin' the yoong laird, or some ae body or anither ye wad be special til, see the bonny things ye hae sic a fouth (*plenty*) o' i' the caibinets again' the wa's; an' I hae aye

h'ard ye say o' ane o' them—yon 'at the auld captain, 'at's no laid yet, gied yer gran'-father—the bit horsie, ye ken—I hae aye h'ard ye say o' that 'at hoo it was solid silver—'*said to be*' ye aye tackit to the tail o' 't."

"True! true!" responded the laird, a hopeful gleam beginning to break upon his darkness.

"Weel, ye see, laird," Grizzie went on, "I'm no sic a born idiot as think ye wad set the han'-haudin' o' a playock like yon again' the yoong laird's edication; sae I bude to conclude ye had some rizzon for no meltin' o' 't doon—seein' siller maun aye be worth siller—ay, gowd, gien there be eneuch o' 't.—But I hae yer leave, laird?"

"Gang on, gang on, Grizzie," replied the laird, almost eagerly.

"Weel, laird—I wad never alloo to mysel' 'at ye was feart, for I never saw yer lairdship"—she had got into the way of saying *yer lordship*, and from that had come not unfrequently to say *yer lairdship*—"feart afore bull or bully, but I micht

weel think ye wadna be wullin' to anger ane 'at the Lord lats gang up an' doon upo' the earth, whan he wad be far better intil't, ristin' in 's grave till the resurrection—only he was never ane o' the sancts to rist ony gait! But anent that, michtna ye jist ca' to min', laird, 'at a gi'en gift's yer ain, to du wi' what ye like; an' I wadna heed man, no to say cratur belangin' richtly to nae warl' ava', 'at wad play the bairn, an' want back what he had gien. For *him*, he's a mere deid man 'at winna lie still. There's mony a bairn canna sleep 'cause he's behavet himsel' ill the day afore! But gien, by coortesy like, he war to be alloot a word i' the case, he cudna objec'—that is, gien he hae onything o' the gentleman left intil 'im, the whilk nae doobt may weel be doobtfu'; for wasna he a byous expense wi' his drink, an' a' the ootlandish dishes he bude to hae! I hae h'ard auld Grannie say as muckle, an' she kens mair aboot that portion o' oor history nor ony ither body, for, ye see, I cam raither late intil the faimily mysel'. Sae, as I say, it may

be jeedged but fair the auld captain sud contreebit to the needcessities o' the hoose, war it in 's richt to withhaud what I mainteen it 's no."

"Weel rizzont, Grizzie!" cried the laird. "But I thank ye mair for yer thoucht nor yer rizzons; yer thoucht I was sair in want o', yer rizzons I was na. The thing s' be luikit intil, an' that the first thing the morn's mornin'! The bit playock cam never i' my heid! I maun be growin' auld, Grizzie, no to hae thoucht o' a thing sae plain! But it's the w'y wi' a' the best things! They're sae plain whan ye get a grip o' them, 'at ye canna un'erstan' hoo ye never thoucht o' them afore."

"I'm aul'er nor you, sir, sae it's the liklier to be the Lord himsel' 'at pat it intil me."

"We'll see the morn, Grizzie. I'm no that sure there's onything mair intil the siller o' 't nor a mere fule word. For onything I ken, the thing may be but a Nehushtan. I hae thoucht, mony 's the time, it luikit, in places, unco like braiss.

But I s' tak it, an' that the morn's morn-in', to Sandy Merson. We'll see what he'll hae to say til 't. Gien there be ane i' these pairts o' authority in sic maitters, that ane 's Sandy. An' I thank ye hertily, Grizzie."

But Grizzie was not well pleased that the laird should pass the greater portion of her utterance so lightly by; like many another prophet, she prized more the large part of her prophecy that came from herself, than the small part that came from the Lord.

"Sae plain as he cam an' gaed, laird, I thoucht ye micht hae been in some swither (*doubt*) aboot *him*."

"Hoots, Grizzie, wuman!" replied the laird, "wasna ye jist tellin' me no to heed him a hair? An' no ae hair wad I heed him, 'cep' to gie rist til 's puir wan'erin' sowl."

"I but thoucht the thing worth a thoucht, laird!" said Grizzie, humbly and apologetically. "Guid nicht to ye, sir," she added, and turning away, went up the stair to her room.

The moment she was gone, the laird fell on his knees, and gave God thanks for the word received by his messenger—if indeed Grizzie should prove such to be.

"O Lord," he said, "with thee the future is as the present, and the past as the future. In the long past it may be thou didst provide this supply for my present need—even then preparing the answer to the prayers with which thou knewest I should assail thine ear. Never in all my need have I so much desired money as now for the good of my boy. But if this be but one of my hopes, not one of thy intents, give me the patience of a son, O Father."

With these words he rose, and taking his book, sat down, and read and enjoyed into the dead of the night.

That same night, Cosmo, who, again in his own chamber, was the more troubled with the trouble of his father that he was no longer with him in his room, dreamed an odd, confused dream, of which he could give himself but little account in the morning—but there were in it horses shod

with shoes of gold, which grew upon their heels, which they cast from them in a shoe-storm as they ran, and which anybody might have for the picking up. Throughout the dream was diffused a flavour of the old villain the sea-captain, but he did not come into the story.

At breakfast his father told him, to his delight, that he was going to Muir o' Warlock, and would like him to go with him. He ran like a hare up the waterside to let Mr. Simon know, and was back by the time the laird was ready to start.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WATCHMAKER.

It was a lovely day. There would be plenty of cold and rough weather yet, but the winter was over and gone, and even to that late boreal region the time of the singing of birds was come. The air was soft, with streaks of cold in it. The fields lay about all wet, but there was the sun above them, whose business it was to dry them. There were no leaves yet on the few trees and hedges, but preparations had long been made, and the sap was now rising in their many stems like the mercury in the thermometers. Up rose the larks also, joy fluttering their wings and quivering their throats. They always know when their time to praise is come, for it is when they begin to feel happy:

more cannot be expected of them, nor are they therein below the level of most of us Christians, who in this mood and that praise God. And are not the birds and the rest of the creatures Christians in the same way as the mass of those that call themselves by the name? Do they not belong to the creation groaning after a redemption it does not understand? The children of God groan in misery from not being the sons and daughters of God; yet so dull of heart are they, that they regard nothing as redemption but the getting of their own way, a thing the devil only wants to give them, that being their own slaves they may be his also.

As they went, the laird told Cosmo what was taking him to the village, and the boy walked by his father's side as in a fairy-tale: they bore with them a thing that might prove the talismanic opener of many doors to treasure caves!

They went straight to the shop, if shop it could be called, of Sandy Merson, the watchmaker of the village. There all its ornamental business was done—a silver

spoon was now and then engraved, new pins were put into brooches, wedding rings of sterling gold were purchased, or earrings of glass lovely as amethyst or topaz, or a second-hand watch might be had, with choice from a score. Sandy was poor, for there was not much trade in his line, and was never able to have much of a stock, but he was an excellent watchmaker—none better in the county—so at least his town-folk believed, and in a village it is soon settled whether a watchmaker has got the thing in him. He was a thin, pale man, with a mixed look of rabbit and ferret, a high, narrow forehead, and keen gray eyes. His workshop and show-room was the kitchen, partly for the sake of his wife's company, partly because there was the largest window the cottage could boast. In this window hung almost the whole of his stock, and a table before it was covered with his work and tools. When the laird and Cosmo entered he was seated at this table, stooping over it, his lens in his eye, busy with a watch, of which several pieces lay beside him protected from the dust by

footless wine-glasses. He put down pinion and file, pushed back his chair, and rose to receive them.

"A fine mornin', Sandy!" said the laird. "I houp ye're weel, and duin' weel."

"Muckle the same as usual, laird, an' I thank ye, sir," answered Sandy, with a large smile. "I'm no jist upo' the ro'd to be what they ca' a millionaire, an' I'm no jist upo' the perris—something 'atween the twa, I'm thinkin'."

"I doobt there's mair o' 's in like condition, Sandy," responded the laird, "or we wadna be comin' to tax yer skeel at this present."

"Use yer freedom, laird; I'm yer heumble servan'.—It wadna be a watch for the yoong laird?" he added doubtfully. "I kenna——"

He stopped, and turned an anxious eye towards the window where his watches hung.

"Na, na," interrupted the laird, sorry to have raised even so much of a vain hope in the mind of the man, "I'm as far

frae a watch as ye are frae the bank. But I hae here i' my pooch a bit silly playock 'at's been i' the hoose this mony a lang; for jist this last nicht it was pitten intil my heid there micht be some virtue intil the chattel, seein' i' the tradition o' the faimily it's aye been hauden for siller. For my ain pairt, I hae my doobts; but gien onybody can bare the trowth o' 't, yersel' maun be the man."

"I'll du my best to lowse yer doobt, laird," returned Sandy. "Lat's hae a luik at the article."

Glenwarlock took the horse from his pocket, and handed it to him. The watchmaker regarded it with interest, and examined it with care.

"It's a bonny bit o' carved wark," he said at length; "—a bairnly kin' o' a thing for shape — mair like a timmer horsie; but whan ye come to the ornamentation o' the same, it's something better nor roon' spots o' reid paint—wi' its rubies an' stanes an' a'! This has taen a heap o' time, an' a pooer o' painsfu' labour. It's the w'y o' the haithens wi'

their graven eemages, but what for wi' a horsie like this, I'm sure I dinna ken. Hooever, that's naither here nor there: ye dinna come to me to speir hoo or what for the thing was made; it's what it's made o' 's the queston. It's some yallow like for siller; an' it's unco black, which is mair like it—but that may be wi' dirt. —An' dirt I'm thinkin' it maun be, barkit intil the gravin'," he went on, taking a tool and running the point of it along one of the fine lines. "Troth, ohn testit I wadna like to say what it was. But it's an unco weicht!—I doobt—na, I mair nor doobt it canna be siller."

So saying, he put it down on the table, and went to a corner-cupboard. Thence he brought a small stoppered phial. He give it a little shake, and took out the stopper, which was followed by a dense white fume. With the stopper he touched the horse underneath, and looked closely at the spot. Replacing the stopper in the bottle and the bottle in the cupboard, he stood for a moment gazing at nothing, then turning to the laird, said,

with peculiar look and hesitating expression,

"Na, laird, it's no silver. Aquafortis winna bite upo' 't. I wad mix 't wi' muriatic, an' try that, but I hae nane handy, an', forby, it wad tak time to tell. Ken ye whaur it cam frae?—Ae thing I'm sure o'—it's no siller!"

"I'm sorry to hear it," rejoined the laird, with a faint smile and a little sigh. —"Well, we're no worse off than we were, Cosmo! — But poor Grizzie! she'll be dreadfully disappointed!—Gie me the bit horsie, Sandy; we'll e'en tak him hame again. It's no his faut, puir thing, 'at he's no better nor he was made!"

"Wad ye no tell me whaur the bit thing cam frae, or is supposit to hae come frae, sir? H'ard ye it ever said, for enstance, 'at the auld captain they tell o' hed broucht it?"

"That's what I hae h'ard said," answered the laird.

"Weel, sir," returned Sandy, "gien ye had nae objections, I wad fain hae made oot what the thing *is* made o'."

"It maitters little," said the laird, "seein' we ken what it's *no* made o'; but tak your wull o' 't, Sandy."

"Sit ye doon than, laird, gien ye hae naething mair pressin', an' see for yersel' what I mak o' 't," rejoined the watchmaker, setting a chair.

"Wullin'ly," replied the laird; "—but I dinna like takin' up yer time."

"Ow, my time's no sae dooms precious! I can aye win throu' wi' my wark ohn swatten," said Sandy, with a smile in which mingled a half comical sadness. "An' it wad set me to waur't (*puzzle me to spend it*) better to my ain min' nor servin' yersel'—i' the sma'est, sir."

The laird thanked him, and sat down. Cosmo placed himself on a stool beside him.

"I hae naething upo' han' the day," Sandy Merson went on, "but a watch o' Jeames Gracie's, up o' The Know—ane o' yer ain fowk, laird. He tells me it was your gran'father, sir, gied it til his gran'father. It's a queer auld-fashiont kin' o' a thing—some complicat; an' whiles it's

'maist ower muckle for me. Auld age is aboot the warst disease horses an' watches can be ta'en wi': there's sae little left to come an' gang upo'!"

While the homely assayer thus spoke, he was moving about, making his preparations.

"What for no men as weel's horses an' watches, Sandy?" suggested the laird.

"Men I wadna meddle wi'. I lea' them to the doctors an' minnisters," replied Sandy, with another wide, silent laugh.

By this time he had got a pair of scales nicely adjusted, a small tin vessel in one of them, and balancing weights in the other. Then he went to the rack over the dresser, and mildly lamenting his wife's absence and his own inability to lay his hand on the precise vessels he wanted, brought thence a dish and a basin. The dish he placed on the table with the basin in it, and filled the latter with water to the very brim. He then took the horse, placed it gently in the basin, which was large enough to receive it entirely, and

setting basin and horse aside, took the dish into which the water had overflowed, and poured its contents into the tin vessel in one of the scales. Having thereafter put weights into the opposite scale until they balanced each other afresh, he made a note with a piece of chalk on the table. Next, he removed everything from the scales, took the horse, wiped it in his apron, weighed it carefully, and made another note on the table. These things done, he sat down, and leaning back in his chair, seemed to his visitors to be making a calculation. But the supposition did not quite fit the strange, inscrutable expression of his countenance. The laird began to think he must be plastering knowledge with mystery.

"Weel, Glenwarlock," said Sandy at length, "trowth is the responsibility ye hae laid upo' me maks me doobtfu' whaur nae doobt sud be. But I'm b'un' to say —ootside the risk o' some mistak o' the gr'un's o' which I ken naething or I wadna hae made it—'at this bit horsie o' yours, by a' 'at my knowledge or skeel,

which is naither o' them muckle, warran's —this bit horsie—an' gien it binna as I say, I can *not* see what for it sudna be—only, ye see, laird, whan we think we ken a'thing there's a heap ahint oor *a'thing;* an' feow ken better, at least feow hae a richt to ken better nor mysel' what a puir cratur is man, an' hoo liable to mistaks, e'en whan he's dune his best to be i' the richt; an' for oucht I ken there may hae been sic discoveries made, an' never come to my hearin', as upsets a'thing I ever was gi'en to tak an' haud by for true; an' yet I daurna withhaud the conclusion I'm driven til, for maybe whiles the hert o' man may gang the wrang gait by bein' ower wise in its ain conceit o' expeckin' ower little, jist as weel's in expeckin' ower muckle; an' sae I'm b'un' to tell ye, laird, 'at yer expectations o' this knot o' metal—for metal we maun alloo 't to be, whatever else it be or bena —yer expectations, I say, are a'thegither wrang, for it's no more silver nor my wife's kitchie-poker."

"Weel, man!" said the laird, with a

laugh just touched with childlike scorn, "gien the thing be sae plain 's a' that, what gars ye gang this gait aboot the buss to say 't? Tak ye me an' Cosmo here for bairns 'at wad fa' a greetin' gien ye tellt them their ba-lamb was naething but a fussoch o' cotton-'oo' rowed roon' a bit stick? We're naither o' 's complimentit.—Come, Cosmo.—I'm nane the less obleeged to ye, Sandy," he added as he rose, "though I cud weel wuss yer opingon had been sic as wad hae pitten't i' my pooer to offer ye a fee for't."

"The trowth's the trowth, whether it's worth peyin' for or no," replied Sandy with imperturbability, and his large, silent smile. "But afore ye gang, it's but fair to tell ye—only I wadna like to be hauden ower strickly accoontable for the opingon, seein' I dinna profess a knowledge o' a' the metals; I hae dune my best, an' gien I be i' the wrang, I naither hae nor hed ony ill design intil't."

"Bless my soul!" cried the laird, with more of impatience than Cosmo had ever

seen him show, "is the man mad, or does he take me for a fool?"

"There's some things, laird," resumed Sandy, "that hae to be approcht oontil wi' circumspection an' a proaper regaird to the impression they may mak. Noo, disclaimin' ony desire to luik like an ill-bred scoon'rel, whilk I wad raither til onybody nor yersel', laird, I ventur to jaloose 'at maybe the maitter o' a poun' or twa micht be o' some sma' consequence to ye; an'——"

"Ilka fule i' the country-side kens that 'at kens Glenwarlock," interrupted the laird, not a little annoyed, and turned hastily. "Come, Cosmo."

Cosmo went to open the door, troubled to see his father troubled with the unintelligibility of the man.

"Weel, gien ye *wull* gang," said Sandy, "I maun e'en tak my life i' my han', an'——"

"Hoot, man! tak yer tongue i' yer teeth—that'll be mair to the purpose," cried the laird laughing, for he had already mastered his ill humour. "My life i' my

han', quo' he!—Man, I haena cairriet a dirk this mony a day! I laid it aff wi' the kilt."

"Weel, it micht be better ye hadna, gien ye binna gaein' hame afore nicht; I saw some cairds (*gypsies*) o' the ro'd the day. Gien ye wad but hearken til ane 'at confesses he oucht to ken, even sud he be i' the wrang, I wad tell ye that horsie is *not* siller—no, nor noathing like it!"

"Dogs hunt ye!—what is 't, than?" cried the laird.

"What for didna ye speir that at me afore?" rejoined Sandy. "It wad hae set me at leeberty to tell ye—to the best o' my abeelity, that is. Whan I'm no cocksure—an' it's ower muckle a ventur to daur be cocksure aboot—I wadna volunteer onything. I wadna say a word till I was adjured like an evil speerit."

"Weel," quoth the laird, entering now into the humour of the thing, "herewith I adjure thee, thou contrairy and inarticulate speerit, to disclose, and that without further circumlocution, the sub-

stance whereof this same toy-horse is composed."

"Toy here, toy there!" returned Sandy, "sae far as ony cawpabeelity o' mine, or ony puir skeel I hae, wull able me to testifee—though min' ye, laird, I winna tak the consequences o' bein' i' the wrang—though I wad raither tak them, an' ower again, nor be i' the wrang,——"

The laird turned and went out, followed by Cosmo. He began to think the man must have lost his reason.

But when the watchmaker, who hurried to the door after them, saw them moving steadily along the street in the direction of home, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, he darted out of the house and ran and overtook them.

"Gien ye *wad* gang, laird," he said, in an injured tone, "ye micht hae jist latten me en' the sentence I hed begun!"

"There's nae en' to ony o' yer sentences the day, man!" said the laird. "The en' 's jist the ae thing 'at wasna to them —'cep' maybe the sense."

"Weel, guid day to ye, laird!" returned

Sandy. "Only," he added, drawing a step closer, and speaking in a subdued, confidential voice, "dinna lat yer horsie rin awa' upo' the ro'd hame. For I sweir til ye, gien there be ony trowth i' the laws o' natur, he's no siller nor onything like it,——"

"Hoots!" said the laird, and turning away once more, walked off with great strides.

"—but," the watchmaker continued, almost running to keep up with him, and speaking in a low voice, tinged with something like terror, harsh and hurried as if he were thrusting the words into his ears, "naither mair nor less nor solid gowd—pure gowd—no a grain o' alloy!"

That said, he turned, went back at the same speed, shot himself into his cottage, and closed the door.

Father and son stopped, and looked at each other for a moment. Then the laird walked slowly on. After a minute or two Cosmo glanced up in his face, but the laird did not return the glance, and the boy saw that he was talking to another.

By and by he heard him murmur to himself, "The gifts of God are without repentance!"

Not a word passed between them as they went home, though all the time it seemed to both father and son that they were holding closest converse. The minute they reached the castle, the laird went to his room—to the closet where his few books lay, and getting out a volume of an old cyclopædia, sat down and read all he could find in it about gold. Then returning to the kitchen, he rummaged out a rusty pair of scales, and with their help arrived at the conclusion that the horse weighed about three pounds avoirdupois: it might be worth a hundred and fifty pounds sterling. This was treasure in the eyes of one whose hand had seldom closed upon more than ten pounds at once, and was indeed large provision for the four sessions of college, with a margin for the creditors by no means too small for consideration! True, the golden horse with the jewelly hair could do but little to cart away the cairn of debt that

crushed Glenwarlock; but not the less was he a heavenly messenger of good will to the laird.

Some men are so pitiful over their poor neighbour that, finding they cannot lift him beyond the reach of the providence which intends they shall have the poor with them always, they will do for him nothing at all: "Where is the use?" they say. They treat their money like their children, and will not send it to a sad house. But if they had themselves no joys but their permanent ones, where would the hearts of them be? Have they no notion of the relief, the glad rebound of the heart of the poor man, the inburst of light upon him, the re-creation of the world to him, when help, however temporary, lays hold of him? If, like the laird of Glenwarlock, he be a man of large outlook, reaching beyond the widespread skirts of his poverty, he sees in every help an arc of the mighty rainbow that circles the world, a well in the desert he is crossing to the pastures of red kine and woolly sheep. It is to him a foretaste of

the final deliverance. While the rich giver is saying, "Poor fellow, he will be just as bad next month again or sooner!" the poor fellow is breathing the air of paradise, reaping more joy of life in half a day than his benefactor in half a year. Help in such soil is a quick seed and of rapid growth, bourgeoning in a moment into the infinite aeons. Everything in this world is but temporary: why should temporary help be undervalued? Would you leave a drowning bather to drown because he would be sure to bathe again to-morrow? Is help help or is it not? If it be help then it is divine, and comes of God our saviour. Jonah might grumble at the withering of his gourd, but if it had not grown at all, would he ever have preached to Nineveh? It set the laird on a Pisgah-rock, whence he gazed into the promised land.

The rich man who, without pitying his friend that he is not rich also, cheerfully helps him over a stone where he cannot carry him up the hill of his difficulty, rejoicing to do for him what God allows,

is like God himself, who gives to a man infinitely, but will not take from him his suffering until strength is perfected in his weakness.

The laird called Cosmo, and they went for a stroll in the fields, to commune in quiet. They talked over the calculation the laird had made of the worth of the horse; nor did the father, like most prudent men, think it necessary to warn his son against too sure an expectation. He did not imagine that disappointment, like the small-pox, requires the inoculation of apprehension, or think it well that a man, lest he should be more miserable afterwards, should make himself miserable now. In matters of hope as well as of fear, he judged the morrow must look after itself; believed that the God who to-day is alive in to-morrow, sees to our affairs where we cannot be ourselves. Next to love of the will of God, the best preparation for a disappointment is the hope that precedes it. Let us hold fast by our hopes. All colours are shreds of the rainbow. There is a rainbow of

the cataract, of the paddle-wheel, of the falling wave; none of them is the rainbow, yet they are all of it; they and the arch-rainbow itself, the bow set in the cloud, all vanish; but that which set them in their places and will set them again, the rainbow in the heart of God, vanishes never. Say not they are but hopes, for by our hopes we are saved. It is because they are not the thing hoped for that they are precious, for the thing itself would block the way of a higher gift, for which the deeper nature is longing through and beyond the hope, and which includes the object of it. The rainbow is the colour light-gendered of the dark tear-drops of the world; hope is the shimmer on the web of history, whose dingy warp of trouble is shot with the golden wool of God's intent.

> Nothing almost sees miracles
> But misery.

Cosmo never forgot that walk in the fields with his father. When the money was long gone after the melted horse, that hour, spent chiefly amongst the

great *horse-gowans* that adorned the thin soil of one of the few fields yet in some poor sense their own, remained with him —his for ever—a portion of the inheritance of the meek. The joy of the golden horse had drawn their hearts yet closer to each other, for one of the lovelinesses of true love is that it may and must always be more. In a gravelly hollow, around which rose hillocks heaped by far-off tides in times afar, they knelt together on the thin grass, among the ox-eyes, and gave God thanks for the precious steed he had sent to carry Cosmo to the temple of knowledge. After praying, they sat a long time talking over the strange thing. All these years then the lump of gold had been lying in the house, ready for their great need! For what was lands to them, or family, or ancient name, in comparison with the learning that opens doors, the handmaiden of the understanding, which is the servant of Wisdom, who reads in the heart of him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of

waters, and the conscience of man! Then they imagined together how the thing had come thus to pass. It could not be that the old captain did not know the thing he gave! Doubtless he had intended sometime to reveal its true worth, and only in the meantime, with cunning for its better safety, had treated it as a thing of value indeed, but of value comparatively slight! How it had come into existence, they next debated—with the conclusion that either it had belonged to some wealthy prince, or the old captain had got it made for himself, in order to carry with him some immediately available portion of his property in the shape of a mere curiosity. Cosmo suggested that possibly, for better concealment, it had been silvered; and the laird afterwards learned from the jeweller to whom he sold it, that such was indeed the case. I may mention also that its worth considerably exceeded the laird's calculation, partly because of the jewels with which it was studded.

Then Cosmo—and now it seemed to

himself strange he had never done it before—repeated to his father the rime he had learned from dreaming Grannie, and told him when and how he had heard it, and what Grannie herself had said about it. The laird smiled and the laird looked grave, but neither he nor Cosmo could suggest any plausible connection of the rime with this horse of gold. For one thing, great as was the wealth it brought them, the old captain could hardly have looked upon it as sufficient to embolden any one to the degree of arrogance specified. What man would call the king his brother on the strength of a hundred and fifty pounds!

When Grizzie learned the result of her advice, she said only, "Praise be thankit!" and turned away. The next minute Cosmo heard her murmuring to herself,

"Whan the coo loups ower the mune,
The reid gowd rains intil men's shune."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LUMINOUS NIGHT.

That night Cosmo could not sleep. It was a warm night like one of summer—a soft dewy night, full of the genial magic of growth. It felt as if some fire-bergs of summer had drifted away out into the spring, and got melted up in it. He dressed himself, and went out. The night was cool, deliciously cool and damp, but with no shiver in it. The stars were bright-eyed as if they had been weeping and were so joyously consoled that they forgot to wipe away their tears. They were brilliant but not clear—large and shimmering, as if reflected from some invisible sea. The gulfs in which they floated were black-blue with profundity. There was no moon, but the

night was yet so far from dark, that it seemed conscious throughout of some distant light that illumined it without shine. And his heart felt like the night, as if it held a deeper life than he could ever know. He wandered on till he came to the field where he had so lately been with his father. He was not thinking; the least effort would break the world-mirror in which he moved! For the moment he would be but a human plant, gathering comfort after the heat of the day from the soft coolness and the dew. They sank into him, and made his soul long for the thing that waits the asking. He came to the spot where his father and he had prayed together, and there kneeling lifted up his face to the stars. Oh, mighty, only church! whose roof is a vaulted infinitude! whose lights come burning from the maker! Church of all churches—where the Son of Man prayed! In the narrow temple of Herod he taught the people, and out of it drove the dishonest traders; but here, under the starry roof, was his house of

prayer! Church where is not a mark of human hand! church that is all church, and nothing but church, built without hands, despised and desecrated more by unbelief than by any sin! church of God's own building! thou alone in thy grandeur art fitting type of a yet greater, a yet holier, yea the one real church, whose stars are the burning eyes of unutterable, self-forgetting love, whose worship is a ceaseless ministration of self-forgetting deeds—the one real ideal church, the body of the living Christ, compact of the hearts and souls of men and women of every nation and every creed through all time and over all the world—redeemed alike from Judaism, paganism, and all the self-asserting Christianities that darken and dishonour the self-forgetting Christ, and growing together in him to one great God-reflecting family of the living Father!

Cosmo, I say, knelt and looked up. Then awoke his will, and he lifted up his heart—sent his spirit aloft upon every upward sail it could spread, on every

wing it could put forth, as if, through the visible, he would force his way to the unseen.

Softly through the blue night came a gentle call:

"Cosmo!"

He started, not with fear, and looked round, but saw no one.

"Cosmo!" came the call again.

The sky was shining with the stars and that other light that might be its own: save the stars and the sky he saw nothing. He looked all round his narrow horizon—the edge of the hollow between him and the sky, where the heaven and the earth met among the stars and the grass, and the stars shimmered like glow-worms among the thin stalks: nothing was there; its edge was unbroken except by shapes of grass, daisies, ox-eyes, and stars. A soft dreamy wind came over it, and breathed once on his cheek.

The voice came again—

"Cosmo!"

It seemed to come from far away, so soft and gentle was it, and yet it seemed near.

"It has called me three times!" said Cosmo, and rose to his feet.

There was the head of Peter Simon, slow-ascending like a dark sun over the horizon of the hollow! In the faint light Cosmo knew him at once, gave a cry of pleasure, and ran to meet him.

"You called so softly," he said, "I did not know your voice."

"And you are disappointed! You thought it a voice from some region beyond this world! I am sorry. I called softly because I wanted to let you know I was coming, and was afraid of startling you."

"I confess," replied Cosmo, "a little hope was beginning to flutter in my heart that I was called from the unseen like Samuel; but I was too glad to see you to be much disappointed. I do sometimes wonder though, that, if there is indeed such a world beyond as we sometimes talk about, there should be so little communication between it and us. When I am out in the still time of this world, and there is nothing to interfere—when

I am not even thinking, so as to close any doors, why should never anything come? Never in my life have I heard a whisper."

"You are saying what you cannot possibly know, Cosmo," answered Mr. Simon. "That you have had no open communication—one recognized by you as such—so far as that, your testimony serves. And I, who am so much older than you, must say the same. If there be any special fitness in the night, in its absorbing dimness and isolating silence, for such communication—and who can well doubt it?—I have put myself in the heart of it a thousand times, when, longing after an open vision, I should have counted but the glimpse of a ghostly garment the mightiest boon, and never therefrom has the shadow of a shade fallen upon me. Yet here I am, hoping no less, and believing no less!—yea hoping more and believing more every year—I think I might say every day I live! The air around me may be full of ghosts—I do not know; I delight to

think they may somehow be with us for all they are so hidden; but so long as I am able to believe and hope in the one great ghost, the holy ghost that fills all, it would trouble me little to learn that betwixt me and the visible centre was nothing the senses of man even could not take account of. If there is a God, he is all in all, and filleth all things, and all is well. What matter where the region of the dead may be? Nowhere but here are they called the dead. When, of all paths, that to God is alone always open, and alone can lead the wayfarer to the end of his journey, why should I stop on that path to peer through the fence on either side of it? If he does not care to reveal, is it well I should make haste to know? I shall know one day, why should I be eager to know now?"

"But why might not something show itself once—just for once, if only to give one a start in the right direction?" said Cosmo.

"I will tell you one reason," returned

Mr. Simon, "the same why everything else is as it is, and neither this nor that other way—namely—truism grandly true! —that it is best for us it should be as it is. But I think I can see a little way into the thing itself. Suppose some sign or wonder were granted you—one of two things, it seems to me likely, would follow:—you would either doubt it very soon after it had vanished, or it would grow to you as one of the common things of your daily life. But take it that a vision would make us sure, it follows either that God does not care about the kind of sureness it would give us, or that he does not care for our being made sure in that way. God will have us sure of a thing through knowing its source, the heart whence it comes; that is the only worthy assurance. To know, he will have us go in at the grand entrance of obedient faith. If any one thinks he has found a back stair, he will find it land him at a doorless wall. It is the assurance that comes of inmost beholding of himself, of seeing what he is, that God

cares to produce in us. He would not have us think we know him before we do. Because they think they know him when they do not, thousands are walking in a vain show. At the same time I think myself free to imagine if I imagine holily—that is, as his child. I imagine space full of life invisible, and that the young man needed but the opening of his eyes to see horses and chariots of fire encompassing his master. As I came now through this luminous night, I lost myself for a time in the feeling that I was walking in the midst of lovely people I had known. Perhaps they were with me—are with me—are speaking to me now. For if all our thoughts, whether immediately from God, or from the working of the life he has given us in ourselves, seem to enter the chamber of our consciousness by the same door, why may there not be among them some that have passed to us from other beings? It may be that the dead speak to me, and I am unable to distinguish their words from my thoughts. For the moment a thought

approaches me, my own thought rushes to mingle with it, and I can no more part them. It may be that some hints from the world beyond mingle even with the stupidity and folly of my dreams."

"But if you cannot distinguish those hints as such, where is the good?" Cosmo ventured to ask.

"Nowhere for deductive certainty. Neither, if the things dreamed be not in themselves worth remembering or worthy of influencing us, is there any reason for speculating on their origin. Shall I mind a thing that is not worth minding, because it came to me in a dream, or was told me by a ghost? The quality of a thing, not how it arrived, is the first point. But true things are often mingled with things grotesque, and for aught I know, at one and the same time a spirit may be taking advantage of the door set ajar by sleep to whisper a message of love or repentance, and the troubled brain or heart or stomach may be generating fancies wild as those of fairyland, or terrible as those of the valley of the

shadow. When you look at any bright thing for a time, and then close your eyes, you still see the shape of it, but in a different colour. The thing came to you from the outside world, but the brain has altered it. Even the shape itself is reproduced often with but partial accuracy: some imperfection in the recipient sense, or in the receptacle, has caused imperfection in the re-presentation. In a manner something like may contact with dwellers beyond fare in our dreams. My unknown mother may have just spoken to me in my sleep, when up comes a responsive but stupid dream-cloud of my own, to mingle with and ruin the descended grace.

"It is well, however, to remind you," Mr. Simon went on, "that the things around us are just as full of marvel as those into which you would so gladly look. Our people in the other world, even although they have proved these earthly things before, probably feel them now somewhat strange, and full of a marvel which the things about them have

in a measure lost. All is well. The only thing worth a man's care is the will of God, and that will is the same in this world as in the next. All things are ours, but each in its time. That will has made this world ours, not the next; for nothing can be ours until God has given it to us. Curiosity is but the contemptible human shadow of the holy thing wonder. No, my son, let us make the best we can of this life, that we may become able to make the best of the next also."

"And how make the best of this?" asked Cosmo.

"By walking in the fore-front with the will of God—not letting yourself be but dragged behind him in the sweep of his garment that makes the storm. To walk with God is to go hand in hand with him, like a boy with his father, desiring and doing his pleasure—falling in with his design in the making of you, a design that cannot be effected without you. As to other worlds, present sorrows, vanished joys, coming fears, all is well; for the design of the making, loving, pitiful,

glorious God is ever moving towards divine completion, that is, a never ending end. Yea, even if his infinite be awful to me, yet will I face it, for it is his. Let your prayer, my son, be like this: 'Maker of me, go on making me, and let me help thee. Come, O Father! here I am; let us go on. I know that my words are those of a child, but it is thy child who prays to thee. It is thy dark I walk in; it is thy hand I hold.'"

The words of his teacher sank into the heart of Cosmo, for he was already in the high condition of being able to receive wisdom direct from another. All his height came of faith in those who were higher. He had not yet been tested; but the trials of a teachable youth must, however severe, differ greatly from those needful for one who, declining to learn through eye or ear, must be taught through the skin. The former are for growth, the latter for change.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT COLLEGE.

THE summer and autumn had yet to pass before he should leave his home for the university of the north. He spent them in steady work with Mr. Simon. But the steadier his work, and the greater his enjoyment of it, the dearer was his liberty, and the keener his delight in the world around him. He worked so well that he could also afford to dream, and his wanderings and his imaginings alike took wide and wider sweeps; while for both, ever in the near or far distance, lay the harbour, the nest of his home. It drew him even when it lay behind him, and he returned to it as the goal he had set out to seek. It was as if, in every excursion or flight, he had but sought to find his

home afresh, to approach it by a new path—had gone but that he might return.

But—the windfall?—nay, the God-send of the golden horse gave him such a feeling of wealth and liberty that he now began to dream, no longer like a child but like a man, of things he would really do if he were rich, his fancy turning chiefly towards the enlarging and beautifying of the castle—with the impossibility understood of destroying a single feature of its ancient dignity or history.

A portion of the early summer he spent in improving the garden on the south side, or back of the house. A part of the ground there seemed to have been neglected—that between the two blocks which stood at right angles to each other. But he found the rock here so nigh the surface, that he could not make much of the space, and this set him planning how it might be used for building upon. In the angle itself, the rock came above ground, and was the foundation of a thick wall connecting the two corners,

built of huge stones, and looking as solid as the rock on which it stood. In the pauses of his gardening he would sit with his back against this wall, dreaming of the days to come; and here he built a small summer-house, whither he would bring his books, and where he would read or write for hours, and sometimes draw plans of the changes he would make in the house, and of additions to it, of passages and galleries to connect the various portions of it, and of its restored defences. If this was all as visionary as Tree-top-city, it yet exercised his constructive faculty, and exercise is growth.

The days glided by. The fervid Summer slid away round the shoulder of the world, and made room for her dignified matron sister; my lady Autumn swept her frayed and discoloured robe out of the great hall-door of the world; and old brother Winter, who so assiduously waits upon the house to keep down its vermin, was creeping around it, biding his time, but eager to get to his work. The day drew near when Cosmo must leave the home

of his fathers, where it was his one unchanging dream to spend the life of this world.

I will not follow his intellectual development. The *real* education of the youth is enough for my narrative. His mind was too much filled with high hopes and judgments to be tempted like a common nature in the new circumstances wherein he found himself. There are many who, believing of others what is true of themselves, represent the youth of our country as vile; but let not the pure thence imagine himself alone in his purity. There is life in the nation yet, and a future yet before her—none the less that the weak and cowardly and self-indulgent neither enter into the kingdom of God, nor believe that others are entering in.

He had few companions. Those whom he liked best yet had not much to impart to him. They looked up to him more than he knew, for they had a vague suspicion of his being a genius, but they ministered almost only to his heart. The

unworthy of his fellow-students scorned him with looks askance, and called him Baby Warlock; for more than once had he literally turned his back on certain of them when their conversation displeased him; but none of them cared to pick a quarrel with him. The devil finds it easier to persuade fools that there is dignity in the knowledge of evil, and that ignorance of it is contemptible, than to give them courage. It is true that, if ignorance be the foundation of any man's goodness, it is not worth the wind that upsets it; nevertheless, in its mere self, ignorance of evil is a negative good. The grinders did not care about Cosmo, for neither was he of their sort. Now and then one of them would be mildly startled by a question from him respecting something in which, because he did not *go in* for what they counted scholarship, they could hardly believe him interested; but Cosmo regarded everything from the heart of associations of which they perceived few or none, and in his instinctive reach after life, assimilated something

of all food that came in his way. While his growing life was his sole impellent after knowledge, already he saw a glimmer here and there in regions of mathematics from which had never fallen a ray into the corner of an eye of those grinding men—and that was mainly because he read books of poetry and philosophy of which they had not heard. He did all his set work first, however, and thoroughly, before he gave himself to what he hungered after, and so passed his examinations creditably, and indeed, in more than one subject, with unexpected as unsought distinction.

Of what is called society he gained no knowledge, but amongst the shopkeepers made one or two acquaintances.

His father had been so much pleased with the jeweller to whom he parted with the golden horse, that he desired Cosmo to call upon him as soon as he was settled. Cosmo did so, and found him a dignified old gentleman—none the less a gentleman, and all the more a man, that he had in his youth worked with his own hands. He

took a liking to Cosmo, and, much pleased with his ready interest, for Cosmo was never tired of listening to any one who talked of what he knew, told him many things belonging to his trade, and communicated not a few of his experiences. Indifferent to the opinion of any to whom he had not first learned to look up, nobody ever listened better than Cosmo to a story of human life, however humble. Everybody seemed to him of his own family; and the greater was the revulsion in his feeling when he encountered anything false or low. Incapable of excusing himself, he was incapable also of excusing others. But though gentleness towards the faults of one's neighbour is an indispensable fruit of life, it is perhaps well it should be a comparatively late one: there is danger of foreign excuse reacting on home behaviour. Excuse ought to be one of the blossoms of love rooted in obedience. To say anything is too small to matter, is of the devil; to say anything is too great to forgive, is not of God. He who would soonest die to divide evil and his fellows,

will be the readiest to make for any one of them all *honest* excuse.

Cosmo liked best to hear Mr. Burns talk about precious stones. Upon them he was great, for he had a passion for them, and Cosmo was more than ready to be infected with it. By the hour together would he discourse of them; now on the different and comparative merit of individual stones which had passed through his hands, and on the way they were cut, or ought to have been cut; now on size, shape, and water, as determining the special way to cut a stone; now on the various settings, as bringing out the qualities of different kinds and differing stones.

One day he came upon the subject of the weather in relation to stones, and thence in relation to the trade in them: on such a sort of day you ought to buy this or that kind of stone; on such another you must avoid buying this or that kind, and seek rather to sell. Up to this moment and the mention of this last point, Cosmo had believed Mr. Burns an immacu-

late tradesman: here the human gem was turned at that angle to the light which revealed the flaw in it! There are tradesmen irreproachable in regard to money by itself who are not so concerning the quality of their wares in relation to their price: they take and do not give the advantage of their superior knowledge. I imagine the laugh of such a one at the idea that his knowledge ought to be for his customer as much as for himself! for to him every customer is more or less of a pigeon.

"If I could buy my will of such sapphires," said Mr. Burns, "on a foggy afternoon like this, when the air is as yellow as a cairngorm, and sell them the first summer-like day of spring, when the air is blue enough to be their mother, I should make my fortune in a year."

"But you wouldn't do it, Mr. Burns?" faltered Cosmo, in a sudden foreboding anxiety caused by the tone of his friend: he must have an express repudiation of the advantage that could thus be gained.

"Why not?" rejoined Mr. Burns, lifting

his keen gray eyes, with some wonder in them, and looking Cosmo straight in the face. His mind also was crossed by a painful doubt: was the young man a mere innocent? Was he *no a' there?*

"Because it would not be honest," replied Cosmo.

"Not honest!" exclaimed the jeweller, in a tone loud with anger,—whether at the idea that he should be capable of a dishonest thing, or at the possibility of having, for honesty's sake, to yield a money-making principle, I do not know; "I display the thing as it is, and leave my customer to judge according to his knowledge. Is mine to be worth nothing to me? There is no deception in the affair. A jeweller's business is not like a horse-dealer's! The stone is as God made it, and the day is as God made it; and if my knowledge turns the scale in my favour, who has any call to find fault?"

He ceased with an air of injured honesty.

"Then a man's knowledge is for himself alone, and not for the common advantage

of himself and his neighbour?" said Cosmo.

"Mine is so far for my neighbour, that I never offer him a stone that is not all I say it is. He gets the advantage of his knowledge, let us say, in selling me wine, which he understands to fit my taste with; and I get the advantage of my knowledge in selling him the ring that pleases him. Both are satisfied. Neither asks the other what he paid for this or that. Why make any bones about it? The first principle of business is, to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest."

"Where does the love of your neighbour come in then?"

"That has nothing to do with business; that belongs to society. No command must be interpreted so as to make it impossible to obey it. Business would come to an immediate standstill if such extravagant ideas were allowed to have any relation to it. No man would make a fortune that way."

"You think then that what we are sent here for is to make a fortune?"

"Most people do. I don't know about *sent for;* but that's what I find myself behind this counter for. The world would hardly go on upon any other supposition."

"Then the world had better stop. It wasn't worth making," said Cosmo.

"Young man," rejoined Mr. Burns, "if you speak blasphemy, it shall not be on my premises."

Bewildered and unhappy, Cosmo turned away, left the shop, and for years never entered it again.

Mr. Burns had been scrupulous to half a grain in giving Mr. Warlock the full value of his gold. Nor was this because of the liking he had taken to the old gentleman. There are not a few who will be carefully honest, to a greater or less compass, with persons they like, leaving those they do not like to protect themselves. But Mr. Burns was not of their sort; he would have treated his enemy with equal justice. His interest in the laird, and his wounded liking for Cosmo, took shape in another fashion however. Although he was willing

enough to think evil of one who denounced as dishonest the main principle in his conduct of affairs, it yet gave him concern that Cosmo should speak, as he judged, blasphemously. No doubt it was in keeping with his disregard of the acknowledged laws of business, but it was sad for his old father! Possibly, however, the real source of the pain that Cosmo's words caused him was that, though scarcely yet conscious of the fact, the jeweller was more willing than able to justify to himself the mode he had defended. The same evening he wrote to the laird to the effect that he feared his son must have taken to bad company, for he had that day spoken in his shop words irreverent and indeed wicked—not to call them anything worse. The young man would never, he was certain, have dared to speak such in his father's hearing. But college was a dangerous place for the undermining of the good principles learned at home! He hoped Mr. Warlock would excuse the interest he took in his son's welfare. Nothing was more sad than to see the

seed of the righteous turning from the path of righteousness!—&c. &c.

The laird made reply that he was obliged to Mr. Burns for his communication and his anxiety about his boy, but could only believe there was some mistake, as it was impossible he should have been guilty of anything to which his father would apply the adjectives used by Mr. Burns. So little did the thing trouble the laird, that he never troubled Cosmo with a word on the matter—only when he came home asked him what the good man could have meant.

But in after days Cosmo repented of having so completely dropped the old gentleman's acquaintance: he was under obligation to him; and if a man will have to do only with the perfect, he must needs break with himself first, and then go out of the world. Mr. Burns knew nothing of art. A stone, its colour, light, quality, he enjoyed like a poet; but his settings, though good in quality, were thoroughly common. There are some with even a child's delight in pure colours who have no feeling for the

melodies of their arrangement, or the harmonies of their mingling. So are there some capable of much pleasure in a single musical tone, who have but little reception for complex harmony. Whether a condition analogical might not be found in the moral world, and contribute to the explanation of Mr. Burns, I may not now inquire. But Cosmo owed him much. The very rainbow was lovelier to him after he had learned certain secrets of the precious stones. The regard he had turned upon them served also his metaphysico-poetic nature, rousing questions of the relations between beauty fixed and beauty evanescent; between the beauty of stones and the beauty of flowers; between the beauties of art and the beauties of sunsets and faces; and every question is a door-handle. He saw that where life entered, it brought greater beauty—with evanescence and reproduction—an endless fountain flow and fall. Many were the strange, gladsome, hopeful, corrective thoughts born in him through Mr. Burns and the gems in his

shop, and he was the debtor therefore of the man whose friendship he had cast from him.

At college Cosmo lived as simply as at home—in some respects more barely, costing a sum for his maintenance incredibly small. It may be hinted that the education was on a par with the expense; and, if education consisted in the number and accuracy of the things learned, and the worth of money in that poor country be taken into account, the hint might pass unchallenged. But if education is the supply of assimilable material to a growing manhood, that provided was enough for a man who was man enough to aid his own growth; and for those who have not reached that point of manhood, it is of infinite inconsequence what they or their parents find or miss in any education. But I am writing of a period long gone by.

In his second year, willing to ease his father however little, he sought engagements in teaching; and was soon so far successful as to have two hours of every day occupied—one with a private pupil,

the other in a public school. The master of that school used afterwards to say the laird of Glenwarlock had in him the elements of a real teacher. But Cosmo had more teaching power than the master knew, for not in vain had he been the pupil of Peter Simon—whose perfection stood in this, that he not only taught, but taught to teach. Life is propagation. The perfect thing, from the spirit of God downwards, sends *itself* onward, not its work only, but its life. And for the reaction, Cosmo found that he learned more by trying to teach what he thought he knew, than by trying to learn what he knew he did not know.

In his third year it had become yet more necessary he should gain what money he could. For the laird found that his neighbour, lord Lumbiggin, had been straining every means to get possession of his liabilities, and had in great part succeeded. The discovery sent a pang to his heart, for he could scarcely doubt his lordship's object must be to foreclose every mortgage, and compel him to

yield the last scrap of his ancestral inheritance. He had refused him James Gracie's cottage, and he would have his castle! But the day was not yet come; and as no one knew what was best for his boy, no one could tell what would come to pass, or say what deliverance might not be in store for them! The clouds must break, and when they broke there was the sun! So, as a hundred times before, he gathered heart, and went on, doing his best, and trusting his hardest.

The summers at home between the sessions were seasons of paradise to Cosmo. He seemed to himself each time he returned then first beginning to understand the simple greatness of his father, and value aright the teaching of Mr. Simon; each time he better descried the outline of the bases on which they stood so far above him.

And now rose the question what was he to do when he had taken his degree. It was impossible he should remain at home. There was nothing for him to do at Castle Warlock but labour on the

farm. That he would have done with joy had the property been secure, for the sake of being with his father; but the only chance of relieving the land was in some way to make money. The one profession he had a leaning to was that of chemistry, at the time receiving much attention in view of agricultural and manufacturing prospects, and offering a sure income to any man borne well in front upon its rising tide. But for the realization of the possible hope, more money must first be forthcoming. A large sum must be spent before his knowledge would be of money-value, and fit for offer in the scientific market. For that he must go to Germany to Liebig, or to Edinburgh to Gregory. His father had less than no money, and the idea could not, for the present at least, be entertained. For the same reason there was no alternative but go on teaching.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A TUTORSHIP.

It cannot but be an unpleasant change for a youth to pass from a house where he is son—ah, how much better than master! —and take the position of a servant in another; but the discipline is invaluable. To meet what but for dignity would be humiliation; to do one's work in spite of misunderstanding; and to accept the position thoroughly, rampiring it with duty, is no easy matter. As to how Cosmo stood this ordeal of honesty, I will only say that he never gave up trying to be more faithful than he was.

His great delight and consolation were his father's letters. They wrote regularly, sharing their best and deepest thoughts with each other. The letters also of

Mr. Simon did much to uplift him, and enable him to endure and strive.

Nobody knows to what the relation of father and son may yet come. Those who accept the Christian revelation, are bound to recognize in it depths infinite. For is it not a reproduction in small of the loftiest mystery in human ken—that of the infinite Father and infinite Son? If man be made in the image of God, then is the human fatherhood and sonship the image of the eternal relation between God and Jesus.

One happy thing for Cosmo was that he had a good deal of time to himself. He set his face against being with the children outside of school-hours, telling their parents that if he had to act the *pedagogue* or nursemaid, it would be impossible for him to do the more important part with the freshness which was as desirable for them as for him.

The situation one of his friends in the university-senate had found for him, was in the south of Scotland, almost on the borders. The heads of the family were

neither pleasant nor interesting—but more from stupidity than anything worse. Had they had some knowledge of Cosmo's history, they would have taken pains to be agreeable to him, for, having themselves nothing else, they made much of birth and family. But Cosmo had no desire to come nearer where it was impossible to be near, and was content with what grace they accorded him as a poor student and careful teacher. They lived in the quietest way; for the heir of the house, by a former marriage, was a bad subject, and kept them drained of more than the superfluous money about the place.

Cosmo filled the office for two years, during which time he did not go home, that there might be the more money to go instead; but as he entered his third year, he began to feel life growing heavy, and longed unspeakably after his father.

One day, the last of the first quarter, Mr. Baird sent him a message desiring his presence; and with some hesitation and effort informed him that circumstances over which he had no control

compelled him to dispense with further service from him. He regretted the necessity much, he said, for the children were doing satisfactorily. He would be glad to hear from him, and know how he was getting on.

Indignant for his father's sake more than his own, Cosmo remarked that it was customary to give a tutor at least a quarter's notice—which brought the reply, that nothing would please Mr. Baird better than to have him remain another quarter if it was any convenience to him; but as he had had a serious mishap within the last month, and must therefore beg him to excuse a consequent delay in the payment of his quarter's salary now due, he had thought it the kindest thing to let him look out at once for another situation. Cosmo was thereupon sorry for the man, and said what he could to make the obligation to himself press lightly. He did not know that what he had fairly earned went to save a rascal from the punishment he deserved, therefore needed. Mr. Baird judged it

more for the honour of his family to come between the wicked and his deserts, than to pay the workman his wages. Of that money Cosmo never received a farthing. The worst of it was, that he had all but come to the bottom of his purse, and had not nearly enough to take him home.

He went to his room in no little perplexity. He could not, would not trouble his father. There are not a few sons, I think, who would be more considerate than they are, if like Cosmo they had been trusted from the first, and allowed to know thoroughly the circumstances of their parents. The sooner mutual confidence is initiated the better.

A servant knocked at his door, and, true to the day, there was his father's letter—this time enclosing one from lady Joan.

The Warlocks had never had sight of her since the dreary day she left them, but they had never lost hearing of each other. Lady Joan retained a lively remembrance of her visit, and to both

father and son her occasional letter was a true pleasure. Old man as was the one, and child as was the other, some impression of the dignity and end of life had been left with Joan from their influences, while to the imagination of Cosmo she was still the type of all beauty. To the inner ear of the laird her letters sent a tone of oppression for which they gave him no means of accounting; and concerning her circumstances she said so little, not even alluding to her brother, that he knew things could not be going well with her. The letter he had now sent was even sad, and had so touched his heart, that he suggested Cosmo should pay her a visit in his coming holidays. It might comfort her, he said, to see one who cared so much though he could do so little for her.

Cosmo jumped up. What better could he do than go at once! He had not known what to do next, and here was direction! It would also be much easier to find a situation in England! For the journey he had Shanks' mare, and knew

well how to make a little money go a great way! He wrote therefore to his father, telling him what had occurred, and saying he would go at once. The moment he had dispatched his letter, he set about his preparations. Like a bird the door of whose cage had been opened, he could scarcely endure his captivity an instant longer. To write and wait a reply from Joan was impossible. He must start in the morning before the sun was up. It would take him days to reach Yorkshire, on the northern border of which she lived; but the idea of the journey and the end of it, not to mention the release from books and boys, was entrancing. To set out free, to walk on and on, without a notion of what at any turn of the road was to appear—it was like reading a story that came to life as you read it! And then in the last chapter to arrive at the loveliest lady in the world, her whose form and face mingled with his every day-dream—it was a chain of gold with a sapphire at the end of it—a flowery path to heaven!

The same night he took his leave of the family. The father and mother were plainly sorry; the children looked grave, and one of them cried. He wrote to Mr. Baird once, but had no answer—nor ever heard more of them than that they had to part with everything, and retire into poverty.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE TRAMP.

It was a lovely spring morning when with his stick and knapsack he set out, his heart as light as that of the skylark that seemed for a long way to accompany him—for one after another of them took up the song of his heart, and made it audible to his ears, and what better convoy in such mood could man desire! He walked twenty miles that day for a beginning, and slept in a village whose cocks that woke him in the morning seemed all to have throats of silver and hearts of golden light. He increased his distance every day, and felt as if he could go on for years.

But before he reached his destination, what people call a misfortune befel him.

I do not myself believe in misfortune; anything to which men give the name is merely the shadow-side of a good.

He had one day passed through a lovely district, and in the evening found himself on a dreary moorland. As night overtook him, it came on to rain, and grew very cold. He resolved therefore to seek shelter at the first house he came to. Just ere it was dark, he arrived at some not very inviting abodes on the brow of the descent from the moor, and the first of them was an inn. The landlady received him, and made him as comfortable as she could, but as his quarters were not to his taste, he rose very early and, having paid his bill the night before, started in a pouring rain, intending to break his fast with the first loaf he could buy on his way.

The clouds were sweeping along in great gray masses with yellow lights between, and every now and then they would let the sun look out for a moment, when the valley would send back the loveliest smile from sweetest grass or

growing corn, all wet with the rain that made it strong for the sun. He saw a river, and bridges, and houses, and in the distance the ugly chimneys of a manufacturing town. Still it rained and still the sun would shine out, and still he walked a lonely road. By the time he reached at length a hamlet he had grown very hungry; but presently he came to a cottage whose window displayed loaves. He went in, took up the largest he saw, and was on the point of tearing a great piece out of it, when he bethought himself it would be but polite to pay for it first, and put his hand in his pocket. It was well he did so, for there was no purse! He searched his other pockets in vain. He had lost it.

He put down the loaf.

"I am sorry," he said, thinking first of apology, "but I have lost my purse."

The woman looked him in the face with keen inquiring eyes. Apparently satisfied with her scrutiny, she smiled and said:—

"Ne'er trouble yorsel', sir. Yo can

pey mo as yo coom back. Aw hope yo'n lost noan so mich?"

"Not much, but all I had," answered Cosmo. "—I am much obliged to you, but I am not likely ever to be this way again."

"Aw'm sorry for that," said the woman.

"And I am sorry to have troubled you," said Cosmo. "—But after all I have the worst of it," he added, smiling, "for I am very hungry."

As he spoke, he turned away, and had laid his hand on the latch of the door, when the woman spoke again.

"Tak th' loaf," she said; "it'll be aw th' same in a hun'er year."

She spoke crossly, almost angrily. Cosmo understood her entirely. Had she looked well-to-do, he would have taken the loaf, promising to send the money; but he could not trouble the thoughts of a poor woman, possibly with a large family, to whom the price of such a loaf must be of consequence. He thanked her again, but shook his head. She looked more angry than before:

having constrained herself to give, it was hard to be refused!

"Yo micht tak what's offered yo!" she said.

Cosmo stood thinking: was there any way out of the difficulty? He began searching his pockets; but he had very few *things* anywhere. All he encountered was a penknife too old and worn to represent any value, a stump of cedar-pencil, and an ancient family-seal his father had given him when he left home. This last he took out, glanced at it, felt that only to save his life could he part with it, put it back, turned once more, and with a *Good morning* whose cheerfulness was a little feigned, left the shop.

He had not gone many steps, when he heard the shop-bell ring, and the woman came running after him. Her eyes were full of tears. What fountain had been opened I cannot tell—perhaps only that of sympathy with a hungry youth.

"Tak th' loaf," she said again, but in a very different voice this time, and held it out to him. "Dunnot be vexed with

a poor woman. Hoo dunnot knaw sometimes wheer to get th' bread for her own."

"That's why I wouldn't take it," rejoined Cosmo. "If I had thought you were well off, I would not have hesitated."

"Oh! aw'm noan so pinched for th' day," she answered with a smile. "Tak th' loaf, an' welcome! Yo can pey mo when yo can."

Cosmo wrote her name and address in his pocket-book, and took the loaf, kissing the toil-worn hand that gave it him. She uttered a little cry of remonstrance, threw her apron over her head, and walked slowly back to the house, sobbing as she went.

The tide rose in Cosmo's heart too, but he fell to eating almost ravenously. Another might have asked himself where dinner was to come from, and spared a portion; but that was not Cosmo's way. He would at once have given half his loaf to a hungry man, but he would not save the half of it in view of a possible lack. Every minute is a to-morrow to

the minute that goes before it, and is bound to it by the same duty-roots that make every moment one with eternity; but there is no more occasion to bind minute to minute with the knot-grass of anxiety, than to ruin both to-day and the grand future with the cares of a poor imaginary to-morrow. To-day's duty is the only true provision for to-morrow; and those who are careful about the morrow are but the more likely to bring its troubles upon them by that neglect of duty which care always occasions. There are who say that care for the morrow is what distinguishes the man from the beast; certainly it is one of the many things that distinguish the slave of Nature from the child of God.

Cosmo ate his loaf with as hearty a relish as ever Grizzie's porridge, and that is saying much for his appetite, if not necessarily for the bread. He had swallowed it almost before he knew, and felt at first as if he could eat another, but after a drink of water from a well by the road-side, found that he had had enough, and

strode on his way, as strong and able as if he had had coffee and eggs and a cutlet, and a dozen things besides.

He was passing the outskirts of the manufacturing town he had seen in the distance, leaving it on one hand, when he became again aware of the approach of hunger. One of the features of Cosmo's character was a childlike confidence: coming to a villa with a smooth-shaven lawn, and a man leaning over the gate, he went up to him and said,

"Do you happen to have anything wants doing about the place, sir? I should like some dinner, and I have no money."

The man—with whom the world seemed to have gone to his wish, looked him all over.

"A fellow like you ought to be ashamed to beg," he said.

"That is precisely what I am not doing," rejoined Cosmo, "—except as everybody more or less must be a beggar. It is one thing to beg work, and another to beg food. I didn't ask you to make a job for me; I asked if there was any work

about the place you wanted done. Good morning, sir."

He turned—and the second time that day was stopped as he went.

"I say!—If you can be as sharp with your work as with your tongue, I don't care if I give you a job. Look here: my coachman left me in a huff this morning, and it was time too, I find! The stable is in a shocking mess: clean it out and set things to rights, and you shall have your dinner."

"Thank you, sir," returned Cosmo. "But I give you warning I'm very hungry; only on the other hand I don't care what I eat."

"All right!" said the man. "—But," he added, "your hands look a precious sight more like loafing than work! I don't believe you'll be worth your dinner."

"Then don't give me any," rejoined Cosmo, laughing. "If the proof of the pudding be in the eating, the proof of the stable must be in the cleaning. Let me look at the place."

Much pondering what a fellow scouring

the country, with a decent coat and no money, could be, the dweller in the villa led the way to his stable.

In a mess that stable certainly was.

"The new man is coming this evening," he said, "and I would rather he didn't see things in such a state. He might think anything good enough after it. The rascal took to drink—and that, young man," he added in a monitory tone, "is the end of all ambition."

"I'll soon get the place decent," said Cosmo. "Let's see—where shall I find a graip?"

"A grape? How the deuce should there be grapes in a stable? And what should you want with them if there were?"

"I forgot I was in England, sir," answered Cosmo, laughing. "I am a Scotchman, and have old-fashioned names for things. A graip is what we call a three- or four-pronged fork in my country. The word comes from the same root as the German *greifen*, and our own *grip*, and *gripe*, and *grope*, and *grab*—and *grub* too,

which in the present case has its significance," he added, again laughing.

"Oh! you are a scholar—are you? Then you must either be a gardener on the tramp, or a gentleman who has made a bad use of his learning!"

"Do you draw that conclusion from the fact that I have no money, or from my readiness to undertake the first job that comes to my hand?" asked Cosmo, who, having lighted on a tool to serve his purpose, was already at work. "—But never mind! Here goes for a clean stable and a good dinner."

"How do you know your dinner will be good?"

"Because I am so hungry."

"If you're so sharp-set as all that, I don't mind your having a snack before you go further. You'll be scamping the work to get at your dinner!"

"No, thank you, sir. Of the quality of my work you must judge, but I am too luxurious to sit down to my food before I have finished it."

"Not a bad way of being luxurious,

that!" said the man. "It puzzles me that a young fellow with such good principles should be going about the country like—"

"Like a tinker—would you say, sir?—or like Abraham when he had no abiding city?"

"You seem to know your Bible too!—Come now, there must be some reason why you're adrift like this!"

"Of course there is, sir; and if I were sure you would believe me, I would tell it you."

"A cautious Scotchman!"

"Yes.—Whatever I told you, you would doubt; therefore I tell you nothing."

"You have been doing something wrong!"

"You are rude," returned Cosmo—quietly, and without stopping his work. "—But," he resumed, "were *you* never in any difficulty? Have you always had your pockets full? It is not just to suspect a man because he is poor. The best men have rarely been rich."

Receiving no reply, he raised his head: the man was gone.

"Somebody has been telling him about me!" he had said to himself. For the stable Cosmo was then cleaning out, the horses in it, and the house to which it belonged, were of the results of a late judicious failure.

Cosmo finished his job, set everything right as far as he could, and going to the kitchen-door, asked a maid to tell her master that the stable was ready for his inspection. But he only sent orders to the cook to give the young man his dinner, and let him go about his business.

Cosmo ate none the less heartily, for he knew the work was properly done; and cook and maid were more polite than their master. He thanked them and went his way; and in the strength of the dinner they had given him walked many miles into the night—for now he set no goal before him but the last.

It was a clear, moonless, starry night, cold after the rain, but the easier to walk in. The wind now and then breathed

a single breath and ceased, but that breath was piercing. With buttoned coat he trudged on. The hours went and went. He could not be far from Cairncarque! and hoped by break of day to be, if not within sight of it, at least within accurate hearing of it.

Midnight was long past when a pale old moon came up, and looked drearily at him. For some time he had been as if walking in a dream; and now the moon mingled with the dream right strangely. Scarce was she above the hill when an odd-shaped cloud came upon her; and in the cloud Cosmo's sleep-bewildered eyes saw the body and legs of James Gracie's cow, straddling across the poor, withered cheese-paring she was. Then another cloud, high among the stars, began to drop large drops upon his head. "That's the reid gowd rainin'!" he said to himself. He was gradually sinking under the power of invading sleep. Every now and then he would come to himself for an instant, and say he must seek shelter, and the next moment was asleep

again. He had often wondered that horses could sleep and get over the road: here he was doing it himself and not wondering at all! The wind rose, and blew sharp wet stings in his face. He woke up a little, and looked about him. Was there no shelter for him? But if he had found himself in a street, who would have taken him in at that hour? and here he was in a long lane without sign of turning! It had neither beginning nor end—like a lane in a dream! It might be a lane in a dream! He could remember more than once dreaming he was overwhelmed with sleep, just as he felt now! Still he did not think he was dreaming! For one thing, although he had dreamed worse situations, he had never been so physically uncomfortable in a dream!

The lane opened at last on a triangular piece of sward: it was a village-green. In the middle of it stood a great old tree, with a bench round it. He dropped on the bench, and was asleep in a moment.

The wind blew, and the rain fell. Cold

and misery swayed his dim consciousness, but he slept like one of the dead. When the sun rose, he found him at full length on the bare-worn earth at the foot of the tree: he had fallen from the bench without waking. For a long time the sun, shining full upon him, did not break his sleep. When at last it yielded and he came to himself, it was to the knowledge of a body that was a burden, of a tabernacle that ached as if all its cords were strained, yet all its stakes loosened. With nightmare difficulty he compelled his limbs to raise him, but was then so ill able to govern them, that he staggered like a drunken man, and again and again almost dropped. Such a night's-rest after such a day's-weariness had but just failed of mastering him.

Spying a pond in the green, he made for it, washed his face, and felt a little revived. As he wiped it with his handkerchief, he saw on the other side of the green a little shop, in the unshuttered window of which lay bread. Mechanically he put his hand in his pocket: to

his surprise he found there sixpence. Long after, he learned that the maid who waited on him at dinner had dropped it in. Rejoiced at the discovery he tried to run, hoping to rouse some life in his limbs, but had no great success: his legs would hardly move, and he had to give it up almost immediately, from exhaustion and dread of falling. He sat down, and waited—a long time—till the shop was opened. Then he spent his sixpence, learned that he was but about three miles off the end of his journey, and set out again with good courage. But alas! the moment he tried to eat, mouth and throat refused their office. As he walked, however, he got a little better, and trudged manfully though slowly on. By and by he was able to eat a mouthful of bread, and then he felt better still. But as his physical nature recovered his moral nature grew uneasy, for he became gradually aware that his appearance must be disreputable in the extreme, and how was he to approach lady Joan in such plight? If at once she recognized him, he would

but be the more ashamed! What could she take him for but a weakling, whose character had given way when deprived of home-support, and who now came to sponge upon her! Better lie down and die on the roadside than be ill at Cairncarque! he thought—for the shadow of sickness was upon him.

Coming to a pool by the roadside, he sat down, and having opened his knapsack, was proceeding to make what toilet was possible, when round the near corner of a cross-road he had not observed came a lady, walking slowly, and reading as she came. It was lady Joan! and there was he without coat or waistcoat! He knelt, and began to wash in the pool. As she passed he fancied he heard her stop, felt her presence from head to foot, and washed wildly. But if she stopped at all it was but for the time of one step; and when he thought she must be at a safe distance, he caught up his garments and hastened away, drying himself as he went.

At the turn of the road, all at once he

saw the towers of Cairncarque. There was a castle indeed!—with its huge square tower at every corner, and its two huger towers in front—with its moat, and its causeway across it! Yes, there once had been the drawbridge, though now the causeway was continuous! and there were the spikes of the portcullis, sticking down from the top of the gateway, like the long upper teeth of an ogre! This was a real castle—such as he had read of in books and seen in pictures! Castle Warlock would go into half a quarter of it—would be swallowed up like a mouthful, and never seen again! Why had not lady Joan told him about her castle instead of letting him gabble on about theirs? She could not love her home as he did his! Ah, she had never had such a father in it—that must be why! It was no wonder she did not care to talk about it! But was he actually going to see her again? Would he find her the same as before? As he stood and gazed, the shadows of years far away crept nigh and folded him round: again

he was the boy who climbed the wintry hills with her, and ran down with her through the snow hand in hand. He roused himself with an effort, and walked towards the great pile: it grew as he approached it, and his heart sank within him. His head began to ache; an unwonted diffidence laid hold upon him: he could not go up to the door. How could he in the guise of one just risen from his lodging on the cold ground! Would any servant in England admit a fellow like him to the presence of his mistress? He must reconnoitre a little, and find some way more covert of approaching the house! Perhaps he might come upon a corner in which to change what might be changed of his attire! He turned away therefore from the frowning front of the castle, and followed the road, skirting dilapidated fortifications too open for his purpose, till he came to a door in a brick wall, apparently that of a garden—ancient, and green and gray with lichens. In the eyes of his imagination he saw on the other side the

loveliest picture of order and ancient peace—a region stately with yews and cedars, fruit-trees and fountains, gravelled walks and shady alleys. The red wall, mottled and clouded with its lichens, and tufted with many a thready weed, showed to his fancy like the reverse of a gorgeous brocade: on its sunny side must emerge all richest blossoms, the glory of great trees, spreading out obedient arms and multitudinous branches against it, like nets to gather in the hot sunshine! What a sight would such a garden be at Glen-warlock!

He lifted the latch, pushed hard at the unwilling door, and the vision vanished. Not a few visions vanish when taken for fact, instead of only for the visions of fact that must be wrought out into being.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GARDENER.

He beheld indeed a garden, but one whose ragged desolation looked as if it had the devil for its gardener. Worse than a grief, it was a pain, a disgust to see. The fruit-trees grew wild with endless shoots; they stuck like a hog's mane up above the tops of the walls; they shot out in every direction from the faces of them, like the hair on the head of a street-urchin. All the fastenings were broken away, and only the branches with which bondage had grown habit kept their old places. Things all about seemed striving back to the dear disorder of a *salvage* liberty. The walks were covered with weeds, and almost impassable with overgrowing branches, while here lay a

heap of rubbish, there a smashed flower-pot, here a crushed water-pot, there a broken dinner-plate. Following the main path for some distance, he came first to a fountain that had no water, its basin cracked, and dry as a lizard-haunted wall; then to a sun-dial without a gnomon, leaning wearily away from the sun; and then to a noseless marble statue, streaked about with green. The careless sentinels of an army of desolation, they revealed its long possession. He came next to a wing built out from the back of the inner court of the castle: it was in a dilapidated, almost dangerous condition. Beyond this, at some distance across a shrubbery, he spied a great hedge of yew, and the same moment heard some sounds of a spade. Going on to the hedge, not well knowing why, he found it very thin, like a fence of old wire with cart-loads of withered rubbish in its meshes. And now he heard an accompaniment to the spade, revealing that the implement was handled by an old man. He peeped through the hedge,

and saw him. Though bent with age he appeared tough, wiry, and sound; and to Cosmo the sighs and groans, or rather grunts, which he uttered, seemed rather of impatience and discontent than of oppression or weakness. He stood regarding him, desirous of discovering with what sort of man he had to deal. A moment or two and he ceased digging, drew himself up as straight as he might, leaned on the handle of his spade, and began to speak, as if addressing his congregation of cabbages over the book-board of a pulpit.

"Wha cares for an auld man like me?" he grumbled in objectless expostulation. "I kenna what for auld men sud be cultivat! The banes o' me micht melt i' the belly o' me, an' never a sowl alive du aucht for me but beery me to get quit o' the stink! No 'at I'm that dooms auld them 'at wad hae my place wad hae me!"

Here was a happy chance, thought Cosmo—a fellow-countryman! He forced his way through the hedge, and ap-

proached him. He had resumed his work in a listless fashion, and was turning over slow spadeful after spadeful, as if neither he nor the cabbages cared much, and all would be in good time if either done or overtaken by the end of the world. As he came nearer, Cosmo saw peevishness and ill-temper plain in every line of his countenance, yet advanced with confidence, for Scotsmen out of their own country are of good report for hospitality to their fellows.

"Hoo's a' wi' ye?" he cried, sending his mother-tongue as a pursuivant before him.

"Wha's speirin'? An' what richt has he to speir?" returned the old man in an angry voice, and lifting himself quickly with an aching sigh, looked at him through hard blue eyes.

"A countryman o' yer ain," answered Cosmo.

"I doobtna! Mony ane's that 'at's nane the better nor the walcomer. Gie an accoont o' yersel', an' that aff han', or the doags 'ill be upo' ye in a

jiffey. Haith, this is nae houf for lan'-loupers!"

"Hae ye been lang aboot the place?" asked Cosmo.

"Langer nor ye're like to be, I'm thinkin', gien ye haudna the ceeviler tongue i' yer heid, my man!—Whaur come ye frae? Answer me this enstant."

As he spoke he dropped his spade; Cosmo took it up, and began to dig.

"Lay doon that spaud," cried its owner, and would have taken it from him, but Cosmo delayed rendition.

"Hoot, man!" he said, holding the tool at arm's length, "I wad fain pruv til ye I'm nae lan'louper. Stan' ye by a bit, an' rist yer banes, an' I s' caw throuw a triffle o' yer wark, an' lat ye see hoo I can han'le a spaud."

"An' what expec' ye o' that? Ye're efter aething or anither, as sure's the deevil at the back yett, though ye're nae freely sae sure to win in."

"What I expec' it micht be ill to say; but what I dinna expec' is to be traitit like a vaggabon.—Come, I'll gie ye a

guid hoor's guid wark for a beild (*shelter*) to wash mysel' in an' put on a clean sark. That's a fair offer."

"Whaur's the sark?"

"Here i' my bag."

"An' what for du ye want to put on a clean sark? What'll ye be efter whan ye hae't on?"

"Giein' ye anither hoor's wark for the heel o' a loaf an' a drink o' watter."

"Ye're no wantin' to be taen on! Na, I s' wad (*wager*) ye a worm!" said the old man, with an expression of the uttermost sarcasm.

"Gien ye *cud* gie me a day's wark, or maybe twa,—" began Cosmo, for he thought how much better it would be if he could fall in with lady Joan about the garden.

"I weel thoucht there sud be mair intil't!" cried the gardener with the triumph of conscious sagacity. "Ye wad gie the skin o' yer teeth to be i' the auld man's shune, an' wad fain mak sure o' them afore he kickit them frae 'im! Mine's a place maks the likes o' you

fidgin' fain (*restlessly eager*) as ony cat at a moose-hole. Ye think it's a' ait an' play! Gang awa' wi' ye, an' latna me see the face o' ye again, or I s' gie a ca' to them'll tak accoont o' ye."

"Hoot, man!" rejoined Cosmo, and went on turning the ground over, "ye're unco hard upon a neibour!"

"Neibour! ye're no neibour o' mine! Gang awa' wi' ye, I tell ye!"

"Did naebody never gie *you* a helpin' han', 'at ye're sae dooms hard upo' him 'at sair wants ane?"

"Gien onybody ever did, it wasna you."

"Dinna ye think a body's a kin' o' b'un' to du the like again?"

"Ay, to him 'at did it—but I tell ye ye're no the man; sae gang aboot yer business."

"Consider, man—the day may come again whan ye'll want a guid turn!"

"I hae a claim on consideration; I hae grown auld upo' the place."

"Heard ye never tell o' him 'at said: 'Ye wad du naething for nane o' mine, an' therein ye refeesed mysel'"?"

"'Deed, an' I wull refeese yersel'!" returned the old man. "Sic a chield for jaw an' cheek—saw I never nane! quo' the auld sang. Whaur on this earth cam ye frae?"

As he spoke, he gave Cosmo a round punch on the shoulder next him, and when he looked up began eyeing him from top to toe, and from toe to top, in the most supercilious manner. He was a small, withered, bowed man, with a thin wizened face, crowned by a much worn fur cap. His mouth had been so long drawn down at each corner by a weight of discontent, that it formed a half-circle; the eyebrows over his red-lidded blue eyes were lifted as high as they would go, making a couple of semicircles above to correspond, and there was a succession of small ripply wrinkles over each of them; the two concentric masses met in the middle of his forehead, which was thus covered with arches. Below his cap stuck out enormous ears—greatly too large for his face. Huge veiny hands hung trembling by his sides—trembling more from anger than age.

"I tellt ye a'ready," answered Cosmo. "I come frae the auld cuintry."

"Deil tak the auld cuintry! What care I for the auld cuintry! It's a braid place, an' langer nor it's braid, an' there's mony ane intil't an' oot o' 't 'at's no worth the parritch his mither pat intil 'im. Eh, the fowth it breeds o' fusionless beggars like yersel'!—Ow ay! it was aye they wad hae wark—an' cud du nae mair nor a flee amo' triacle!—What coonty are ye frae? Tell me that—wi' the lang legs an' the lang back-bane o' ye!"

Cosmo told him his county. The hands of the gardener rose from his sides, and made right angles of his elbows.

"Weel," he said slowly as if considering the matter, "that's no an ill coonty to come frae. I may say *that* muckle for 't, for I come frae 't mysel'. But frae what pairt o' 't tuik ye leg-bail?"

"Frae nae pairt; I cam frae the north o' 't upo' the tap o' the co'ch," answered Cosmo, and bent again to his work.

The old man came a step nearer, and

Cosmo, without looking up, was aware he was regarding him intently.

"Ay! ay!" he said at last, in a tone of reflection mingled with dawning interest, "I ance kent a terrible rascal 'at cam frae owerby that gait. What ca' they the perris ye're frae?"

Cosmo told him the name of his parish.

"Lord bless me!" he cried, and came close up to him. "—But na!" he cried again, and recoiled a pace; "it's somebody's been tellin' ye!"

Cosmo held his peace. The old man stood a moment expectant, then broke out in fresh anger.

"What for makna ye answer whan a body speirs ye a queston?" he said, with the thin fierceness of querulous age. "That wasna mainners whan I was at hame. Lord! ye micht be ceevil! It's easy eneuch to lee!"

"I will answer no man who looks for a lie from me," said Cosmo quietly.

The dignity of his English had far more effect on the man than the friendliness of his mother-tongue.

"Gien ye hae nae sairious objections, I wad fain hear frae ye what was the neist toon to ye whan ye was at hame," he said, with much altered manner and tone.

"Muir o' Warlock," answered Cosmo.

"Lord, man! come into the hoose. Ye maun be sair in want o' something to pit intil ye! A' the gait frae Muir o' Warlock! A toonsman o' my ain! Scotlan's a muckle place—but Muir o' Warlock!—Guid guide 's! Come in, man; come in!"

He took the spade from Cosmo's hands, threw it down with a contemptuous cast, and led the way towards the house.

He had a heart after all! Strange power in that comparatively poor thing, local association! it brought out in this man a glimmer of that eternal love which was at the root of his being! Though his heart was not yet large enough to love a Scotsman, it was large enough to love a Muir-o'-Warlock-man—a beginning as good as any. It matters nothing where or how one begins—

only that one do begin! There are many, doubtless, who have as yet got no farther in love than their own family; there are others to whom there is neither Frenchman nor Englishman, Jew nor Greek, white nor black—only the sons and daughters of God, only the brothers and sisters of the Lord. There may be who have learned to love the people of their own planet, but not yet to look with patience even upon those of Saturn or Mercury; others there must be, who, wherever they come upon a creature of God's making, love it up to the measure of the contact of their capacity of loving with its possibility of being loved. Some there must surely be capable of loving all life—from that of the archangel before God's throne, to that of the creeping thing he may yet have to destroy—from the beings of their own kind to those of systems never yet brought within ken of heaven-poring sage! Or is the heart of God only able for all the varied loves of his endless creations? This is sure, that, until we love all we know, we are

not true men, the children of him in whose image we are being made.

Cosmo followed willingly. The exposure of the night was telling upon him more than he knew; all the time he was at work, he had been cramped by pains hitherto unknown to his limbs, and now his head throbbed and he felt strangely drowsy. Arrived at the half-ruinous wing already mentioned, his conductor opened the door of a small kitchen, shadowed by a great sloping buttress, and presented him to his wife, an English woman some ten years younger than himself. She received him with a dignified withdrawal, but had breakfast ready for him by the time his poor toilet was finished. He sat down, and drank some tea, but felt shivery, and could not eat. In dread lest, if he yielded a moment to the sickness he now knew to be threatening him, it should at once overpower him, he made haste to get again into the sun, and presently rejoined the old man in his cabbage-ground, where he pulled off his coat, and seized the spade: to work was

to meet his enemy hand to hand! He had scarcely begun before he was too hot, and the moment he stopped to breathe, he felt ready to shiver. But as long as he could stand he would not give in!

Finding the old man's interrogations troublesome, he betook himself to questioning him.

"How many years have you been gardener here?" he asked.

"Five an' forty year, an' I'm tired o' 't," was the answer.

"The present lord is a young man, is he not?"

"Ay—ower yoong. He'll be jist five an' thirty the twalt o' the incomin' month."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"Weel, it's some hard to say. He's ane o' them 'at naebody says weel o', an' naebody's begud to say ill o'—yet."

"There can't be much amiss with him then, surely!"

"Weel, I wadna gang freely sae far as say that. You 'at's a man o' sense

maun un'erstan', gien 't be but frae yer carritchis (*catechism*), 'at there's baith sins o' o-mission, an' sins o' co-mission. Noo what sins o' co-mission may lie at my lord's door, I dinna ken, an' we're no to jeedge; but for the o-mission, ye hae but to luik upo' 's negleck o' that bonny sister o' his, to fa' short o' thinkin' a sanct o' 'im."

Silence followed: Cosmo would go no farther in that direction: it would be fair neither to lady Joan nor the gardener, who spoke as to one who knew nothing of the family.

"Noo the father," resumed the old man with peevish garrulity, "—puir fallow, he's deid an' damnt this mony a day!—an' eh, he was an ill ane!—but as to leddy Joan, he cud hardly bide her oot o' the sicht o' his e'en. He cudna be jist that agreeable company to the likes o' her, puir leddy! for he was a rouch-spoken, sweirin' auld sinner as ever lived; but sic as he had he ga'e her. Some wad hae 't he was a fine gentleman an' a bonny laad in 's yoong days: he was

nane sic sin' ever I kenned him; an' they said he cheenged a'thegither o' a suddent, an' wad hae't it cam o' bluid-guiltiness—for 'at he had liftit the reid han' again' his neibour. An' they warnt me forby, lang as it was sin' I had left it, no to lat 'im ken whaur I cam frae, or he wad be rid o' me in a jiffey, ae w'y or anither. —Ay, it was a gran' name, yon o' Warlock, i' thae pairts! though they tell me it gangsna for muckle noo. I hae h'ard said, an' doobtless ye can tell me hoo muckle's the trowth intil 't, 'at never sin' the auld lord here made awa' wi' the laird o' Glenwarlock, has the faimily there had ony luck. I wad like to ken what you, 'at 's a man o' sense, wad say to that same. It's a some contraventible kin' o' justice! No 'at I'm daurin' or wad daur say a word again' the w'y the warl' 's governnt, but there's things intil 't naebody can un'erstan'—I defy them!—an' yon 's ane o' them:—what for, 'cause oor graceless auld lord tuik the life o' the laird o' Glenwarlock, the faimily o' that same sud never thrive

frae that day to this!—Read me that riddle, yoong man, gien ye can."

"Maybe it was to haud them 'at cam efter frae ony mair keepin' sic ill company," Cosmo ventured to suggest: knowing what his father was, and something of what most who preceded him were, the dispensation did not to him seem inscrutable.

"That wad be hard lines," insisted the old man, grudging to yield the unintelligibility of the ways of providence.

"But," said Cosmo, "doon there they haud it was a brither o' the laird, no the laird himsel', 'at the English lord killt."

"Na, na; they're a' wrang there, whaever says that. For auld Jean—a weelfaured wuman whan I saw her first, though doobtless no sae bonny as whan he broucht her, a yoong lass—maybe to gar her haud her tongue—auld Jean, I tell ye, said as I say. But that was lang efter the thing was ower far gane to be thoucht o' mair. An' forby, you 'at's a man o' sense, gien it wasna the laird himsel' 'at he killt, hoo wad there, i'

that case, be onything worthy o' remark i' their no thrivin' efter 't! I' that case, the no thrivin' cud hae had naething ava' to du wi' the killin'. Na, na! it was the laird himsel' 'at the maister killt—the father o' the present laird, I'm thinkin'. What-aged man micht he be—did ye ever hear tell?"

"He's a man well on to seventy," answered Cosmo, with a pang at the thought.

"Ay; that 'll be aboot it! The father o' 'im it was oor lord killt—an' syne gaed doon the braid ro'd as fest 's ever he cud rin. It was jist like as Judas—he maun gang till 's ain. Some said he had sellt himsel', but I'm thinkin' it was na necessar'; the deevil was to hae him ony gait! An' troth it's baith said an' believt he cam by his deith i' some exterordnar mainner, no plain, but plainly no canny! The ae thing sure is, he was ta'en suddent i' the verra hoose whaur, mony a lang afore, he committit the deed o' darkness! Hoo ever he cam to shaw himsel' there, the Lord kens—an' maybe the ill ane."

A pause followed, but presently the narrator, or rather commentator, resumed.

"Aften I hae won'ert wi' mysel' what for it cud be, but I'm thinkin' whan he begud to ken himsel' growin' auld, his ill deed cam back upon 'im fresh-like, an' that bude to be hoo he cudna bide my leddy, if no jist oot o' the sicht o' his e'en, ony gait ayont the cry o' his tongue. Troth! he wad whiles brak oot efter her, an' appear upo' me at my wark, as it micht be the day, cursin' an' sweirin' as gien he had sellt his sowl to a' the deevils in hell thegither, an' micht jist tak his wull o' onything he cud get his tongue roon'! I never heedit him that muckle, for ye see it wasna him 'at peyt me—the mair by token 'at gien it had been him 'at had the peyin' o' me, it's never a baubee wad I hae seen o' my ain siller! but the trustees peyt me, ilka plack, an' sae I was indepen'ent like, an' luit him say his say. But it was aye an oonsaitisfactory kin' o' a thing; for the trustees they cared na a bodle aboot the dacency o' the place themsel's, an' tuik sae sma' delicht in ony

pleesurin' o' my lord 'at they jist allooed him me, an' no a man mair—that is, to the gairden. Gien it hadna been for rizzons o' my ain, I wad hae gane, mony's the time, for the sicht o' the ruin gaein' on aboot me was jist 'ayont beirin'. But I bude to beir 't. Sae I bore 't, an' bore 't, till by beirin' o' 't I cam to tak it verra quaiet—ay, even to luik upo' 't as the wull o' a providence 'at wasna to be meddlet wi'. I broucht mysel' in fac' to sic a degree o' submission, 'at I gied mysel' nae mair concern, but jist confint my ainergies to the raisin' o' the kail an' ingons an' pitawtas needfu' aboot the place. An' that's hoo it comes to be in sic a disgracefu' condeetion."

"Are things no better," asked Cosmo, "under the new lord?"

"No a hair—'cep' it be 'at there's no sae mony ill words fleein' aboot the place. My lord ne'er sets his nose intil the gairden, or speirs—no ance in a twalmonth—hoo things is gangin' on. He dis naething but rowt aboot in 's boaratory, as he ca's 't—bore-a-whig or bore-a-tory,

it's little to me!—makin' stinks fit to scomfish a whaul, an' gar 'im stick his nose 'aneth the watter to get a glamp o' fresh air. He's that hard-hertit he never sae muckle as chows his denner anent his ain sister 'cep' whan he has company an' wad luik like ither fowk. Gien it gaedna ower weel wi' her i' the auld man's time, it gangs waur wi' her the noo; for sae lang as he was abune the yird there was aye somebody to ken whether she was deid or livin'. To see a bonnie lass like her strayin' aboot the park nae better companied nor wi' an auld buik—it's tantamunt to brakin' a man's hert, but 'at age kills rage."

"Do the neighbours take no notice of her?"

"Nane o' her ain dignity, like. Ye see she's naething but bonny. She *has* naething. An' for a' 'at she's as guid a cratur as ever lived, the cauld grun' o' her poverty gaithers the fog o' an ill report. Haith, for her faimily, the ill's to the fore, report or no report; but, a' the same, gien she had been rich, an' her

father—I'll no say the hangman, but him 'at he last hangt, there wad be fowth (*plenty*) o' coonty-fowk wad hae her til her denner wi' them."

"Does she go nowhere then?"

"She gangs whiles to the doctor's. He's a kin' o' a freen' o' the yerl's: he likes stinks. That's the yoong doctor, I mean."

"Does the earl never take her with him anywhere?"

"Whaur sud that be? There's naebody cares a bodle aboot his lordship i' the haill country-side. Ane or twa—great men, I daursay—whiles comes doon frae Lon'on to smell the new stinks he's fun' oot; but deil a neibour comes nigh the hoose. Ow, he's a great man, I makna a doobt—awa' frae hame! He's aye writin' letters to the newspapers, an' they're aye prentin' at them—aboot this an' aboot that,—aboot beasties i' the watter, an' lectreesity, an' I kenna what a'; an' it's said he'll be a rich man the moment he's dune fin'in' oot something or ither he's been warslin' at for the feck o' a ten year or sae. But

the gentry never thinks naething o' a man sae lang as he's only makin' clauchts at the siller fleein' aboot him; whan he's gotten't, it's doon they're a' upo' their knees til 'im thegither. But gien they be prood, he's prooder. Ance get his heid up, an' him rid o' the trustees, an' fowk upo' their marrow-banes til 'im, haith, he'll lat them sit there!"

"Has my lady no friends at all then?"

"She has the doctor's lass. She gangs an' sees her, as I tellt ye; an' whiles she comes here an' has her denner wi' her."

All this time, Cosmo had been busy with the spade, working the harder in the hope of working off the sickness that yet kept growing upon him. The sun was hot, and his head, which had been aching more or less all day, now throbbed violently.

The spade fell from his hands, and he on his face in the soft mould.

"What's this o' 't?" cried the old man, terrified.

He went to him, caught hold of an arm, and turned him on his back. His face was colourless, and the life seemed to have gone out of him.

## CHAPTER X.

### LOST AND FOUND.

When Cosmo came to himself, all was dark both around him and in him. He had not a notion where he was, hardly, indeed, knew what he was. His chief consciousness was of an emptiness and a weight combined, that seemed to paralyze him. He would have turned on his side, but some ponderous heap seemed to prevent him; he could not even raise an arm. He tried to think back and find what he knew of himself last, but could for a long time recall only a confused dream of multitudinous discomfort and painful effort. At last, however, came the garden, the spade-work, and the old man's talk; and then it seemed as if the cracked complaining voice had never left his ears.

"I've been ill!" he said to himself. "I hope they haven't buried me!"

With a straining agony of will he got in motion an arm which he found lying like that of another man outside the coverlid, and felt feebly about him. The hand struck against something solid, and the sound of earth falling with a hollow rumble followed. He *was* in his coffin! But he was too weak, and had been wandering too long in the miserable limbo of sick fancies, to be much dismayed at the conclusion. He would not have to suffer long! He must soon go to sleep, and so die!

Fatigued with that one effort, he lay for some time motionless. By and by he became aware of something that suggested light. Thin, dim, darkly gray, a particle at a time, it grew about him, and his eyes seemed of themselves to be making inquiry of his surroundings. They discovered that, if he was buried, it must be in a large sepulchre, for the wall of it looked miles away! The light grew, and brought the conviction that he was not buried.

The consolation was however but a negative one, for the still growing light revealed nothing pleasant in his surroundings. Over his head was a low, water-stained ceiling, whose plaster in parts hung slack, ready to fall, and in one place had a great hole, through which stuck skeleton ribs of lath. Around him were bare, dirty, white walls, that seemed to grow out of the gray foggy light of a wet morning as the natural deposit from such a solution. Close to the bed, at the back of it, was a hole in the wall revealing laths with intercostal protrusions of plaster; and from the hole came a wind reminding him of the gust that whistled through the bones of Death in the ears of the Ancient Mariner. Two slender poles, meant to support curtains, but without a rag upon them, rose at his feet, like the masts of a Charon's boat. He could hardly be in a workhouse, for surely no workhouse could be in such disrepair! Again he tried to turn, and this time succeeded, discovering in the process how hard was the bed, and how sharp were his

bones. A wooden chair stood in the middle of the room, and on it a bottle and teacup; not another article was visible. Under the hole in the ceiling a hole was rotted in the floor, and the cold, damp air, smelling of earth and decaying wood, that filled the place, must come up there, he thought. A few minutes' rest and he would rise! He must come to himself a little first!—Now he would try!—But what had befallen him? Where was his strength? Could one night's illness have reduced him thus?

He seemed to himself unable to think, yet the profoundest thought went on thinking itself almost shapelessly in him:—Where had his strength lain before he lost it? Could that ever have been *his* which he could not keep? If a thing were ours, nothing could ever take it from us! Was his strength ever his, then? Yes, for God had given it him. Then he could not have lost it! He had it still! The branches of it were gone, but the root remained, hid in God. All was therefore well. If God chose that his child should

lie there to-day, and to-morrow, or till next year—or if it pleased him that he should not rise again in this world, was that a thing to trouble him? He turned his back on the ugly room, and was presently fast asleep again.

Not a few read the poems of a certain king brought up a shepherd lad; from Sunday to Sunday they read them, and in their turn these words: "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety;" but how many of them enter into the feeling, or even imagine that David meant what he said? Deeper and grander things still, uttered by this same shepherd-warrior, do they read as truth, and yet in their wisdom will declare it preposterous that a Scotch lad should cherish any such feeling towards God! "Doth God care for oxen?" says St. Paul. Does God care for kings? I ask, or for Jew-shepherds? Does he not care all over for all of us—oxen and kings and sparrows and Scotch lairds? Is less to be expected of humanity since the Son of David came than

it was capable of in his father? It is little wonder so many reject Christianity while so many would-be champions of it hold theirs from them at arm's length—in their bibles, in their creeds, in their churches, in their prayer-books, in the last devotional page they have read. They do not brood on it in their hearts on their beds in the stillness; it is not their comfort in the night-watches; it is not the strength of their days, the joy of their conscious being. From them it is a separable thing, not the essential of their life! God is nearer to us than the air we breathe, nearer to us than the heart of wife or child, nearer to us than our own consciousness of ourselves, nearer to us than the words in which we speak to him, nearer than the burning of our hearts at the story of his perfect Son—or there is no God at all. The unbelievers might well rejoice in the loss of such a God as many Christians would make of him. But if he be indeed the Father of our Lord Christ, of that Jew who lived and died doing the will of his Father, and *nothing*

*but that will*, then the one prayer worth offering is, "Let thy will be done, O God, and nothing but thy will!"

Cosmo had been lying unconscious for seven days, and was now helplessly weak. When he dropped, the old man had gone for his wife, and when he revived a little they had between them persuaded him, all but unconscious, to exert himself so far that they managed to get him to the house. The efforts he then made he could recall—in the shape of an interminable season during which he had been supporting the heavens for Atlas, that the poor fellow might get a little sleep: he had been urging Atlantean force to carry only the aching weight of his own microcosm. They took him to the half ruinous room where he now lay, and had done their *next best* for him, sparing some of their things to clothe the skeleton bed. They put him in it, and left him, like one adrift in a rotten boat on the ebbing ocean of life, while the old woman trudged away to the village to tell the doctor.

Dr. Jermyn sent his son, who prescribed

for Cosmo, and every day had come to see him. The night before, perceiving the crisis at hand, he had been with him from dark to dawn.

Lady Joan, informed that a young Scotch gardener who came seeking employment had been taken suddenly ill, and was lying in the old wing, had spoken to the housekeeper to let Mrs. Howie have whatever was wanted for him; when she saw the doctor, which was every time he came to see Cosmo, she inquired how his patient was going on; and she interfered upon the housekeeper's complaint of the difficulty she had in getting wine from the butler—who was doing his best to drink up the stock his old master had left behind him, intending to depart when it was finished; but further she had taken no interest in the affair. The castle was like a village; and what was going on in one part of it was not necessarily regarded in another.

This same morning, however, she received a letter from the laird, saying he was uneasy about his boy. He had been

so inconsiderate, he wrote, as to set out to visit her without first asking her permission, or even warning her of his intent; and since the letter announcing his immediate departure, received a fortnight before, he had heard nothing of him. This had set Joan thinking—with the immediate result that she went to Mrs. Howie and questioned her concerning her patient. In the old woman's description of him she did not recognize much likeness to the Cosmo she had known seven years before, but she must see the young man to get rid of the haunting shadow of a possibility!

Cosmo lay fast asleep, and dreaming—pleasant dreams now, for, the fever gone, life was free to build its own castles. He thought he was dead, and floating through the air at his will, volition enough to propel him like a dragon-fly in the direction he chose to take. He was about to go to his father, to tell him to make haste and die; for then the creditors would have their own, and they two and his mother be happy for ever. But first he must have one sight of lady Joan, in the

hope of which he was now hovering about the battlements of the castle. But suddenly, as he was slowly circling the two great towers of the gateway, and in the act of crossing an eight-figure over the gallery of the portcullis, he dropped to the ground, and lay there bruised and heavy, unable by fiercest effort to move an inch from the spot. He was thinking how foolish to fly before making sure he was quite dead: he must be more prudent another time! when he felt a warm cloud come over him, and opened his eyes. As they cleared he saw above him the face of his dreams—a little sadder than in them, but more beautiful.

He had so much of the childlike in him that illness made him a very child again, and when he saw Joan's face bending over him like a living sky, he put his arms as any child might have done round her neck, and drew her face to his. Hearts get uppermost in sickness, and make people do as they would not in health. There lies a prayer in every spirit, generally frozen, sometimes only dumb, *to be taken*

*like a child*, and weakness lets it out sometimes.

Till he opened his eyes lady Joan had been unable to satisfy herself whether the pale, worn, yet grand-looking youth was or was not Cosmo; she was therefore far from prepared for such precipitate familiarity, and drew back with some feeling, if not of offence, yet of annoyance. But such a smile flooded Cosmo's face, mingled with such a pleading look of apology and excuse—seeming to say, "How *could* I help it?" that she was ashamed of herself.

The youth's was the same true face as the boy's, and wore the old shine of devotion and gentle worship! She stooped and kissed his forehead.

"Thank you," murmured Cosmo, his voice sounding in his ears like that of another. "Don't be vexed with me. I am but a baby, and have no mother. When I saw you, heaven had come down into hell, and I never thought of not taking it. How beautiful you are! How good of you to come to me!"

"Oh, Cosmo!" cried Joan—and her tears were now flowing—"to think of the way you took me in, and then to think of your lying here in our house, I don't know how long, ill, and me not coming near you—in a place fit for a beggar!"

"That's just what I am!" returned Cosmo with a smile, feeling already almost well. "I have such a long story to tell you, Joan! I remember all about it now."

"Why didn't you write?" she said, and there checked herself, for, if he had written, what choice would she have had? what would she not have been compelled to do? This illness was a cloudy veil without which he could not have entered Cairncarque! "—Why didn't you send for me at once?" she went on. "They told me there was a young gardener lying ill: how could I dream it was you! But I know if you had heard a stranger was lying ill somewhere about Castle Warlock, you would have gone to him at once! It was hard-hearted of me, and I am sorely punished!"

"It's all right now," said Cosmo, his very soul in his eyes. "I have you, and it makes me well. When I see you standing there, looking just the same, all the time between is shrivelled to nothing, and the present joins right on to the past. But you look sad, Joan!—I *may* call you Joan still, mayn't I?"

"Surely, Cosmo! what else? I haven't too many to call me Joan!"

"What makes you look so sad?"

"Isn't it enough to know how I have behaved to you?"

"You didn't know it was me!"

"That is true. But if, as your father taught us, I had done it to *Him*,——"

"Ah, my father!" murmured Cosmo. "And you've been learning of him, have you, Joan? Well, one thing is certain—you will do better another time."

"I can't be sure of that; my very heart grows stupid, living here all alone."

"You won't be alone for a while anyhow! Fast as your eyes will heal me, I sha'n't be able to go for a long time," said Cosmo, who began to feel faint.

Joan's face flushed with pleasure, and then grew pale at the thought of how little she could do for him.

"The first thing," she said, "is to write to your father. When he knows I have got you, he won't be uneasy. I will go and do it at once."

Cosmo would not have fallen asleep so soon after she left him, had he known in what difficulties he had involved her. Had he written she must have begged him not to come—therefore she was glad he had given her no warning; but she dared not tell her brother that he was in the house; and although it made her miserable to see him in such a place, yet she dared not move him, certain that the butler would carry to his master all he might come to know of the proceeding—for the less faith carried, the more favour curried! One thing only was left her—to make the wretched room he was in as comfortable as she could. The moment therefore she had finished her hasty letter to the laird, she began a raid upon the rooms nearest the neglected part where

Cosmo was, making hurried choice of this and of that piece of stuff or furniture. These, with the assistance of the gardener's wife, she carried to Cosmo's chamber; and finding him again asleep, she strained every nerve to get the aspect of the place altered before he should wake. With noiseless steps she entered and left the room fifty times. Making use of a door which had not been opened for perhaps a hundred years, she succeeded in avoiding notice and consequent observation.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A TRANSFORMATION.

When Cosmo the second time opened his eyes, he was afresh bewildered. Which was the dream—that vision of wretchedness, or this of luxury? It was marvellous as a story in the Arabian Nights! If this was no dream, how had they moved him without disturbing his sleep? Could it be the same chamber? In nothing did it seem the same, yet within him moved a doubtful denial of transportance. Yes, the ceiling was the same! the power of the good fairy had not reached to that! But the walls! Instead of the great hole in the plaster by his bed, his eyes fell on a piece of rich old tapestry! Curtains of silken damask, all bespotted with quaintest flowers, each

like a page from Chaucer, hung around and behind him: the bed was like Cleopatra's barge, no more the Stygian boat; they made it as different as the vine in summer from the vine in winter. A quilt of red satin, faded into loveliness, lay where the patchwork coverlid had been. About him was colour harmonious as a sunset, beneath him was softness! No, the latter was but a fancy: before the fire he saw the feather-bed appointed to lie between him and the pebbly flock! He felt like a tended child, quiet with absolute peace and bliss—or like one just dead, still weary with the successful struggle to break forth. He seemed to recall the content, of which some few vaguest filaments, here and there a glancing line and no more, yet float in the summer-air of many a memory, wherein the child lies just awaked to consciousness and the mere bliss of being, ere wrong has begun to cloud its pure atmosphere. For the youth had nothing on his conscience to trouble it; his mind was stored with lovely images and was

fruitful in fancies: in temperament, faith, and use, he was a poet; the vapours of fever had just lifted from his brain, and were floating away in the light of the sun of life; he felt the pressure of no duty, no responsibility—was like a bird of the air lying under its mother's wing; while around him the most cherished of his childhood's dreams had grown fact: there was the sylph, the oread, the naiad of them all—a live lady before his eyes—nor the less a creature of his imagination's heart! From her, the centre of power, the marvellous transformation proceeded! And the lovely strength had kissed him on the forehead! Well might the soul of Cosmo float in rapturous quiet, like the evening star in a rosy cloud!

But I return to the earthly shore that bordered this heavenly sea.

The old-fashioned, out-swelling grate, loose and awry, had a keen little fire burning in it: summer as it was, the mustiness of the atmosphere and the damp of the walls made it as welcome as

needful. The hole in the floor had vanished under a richly faded Turkey carpet; and a luxurious sofa, in blue damask, faded almost to yellow, stood before the fire, to receive him the moment he should cease to be a chrysalis. And there in an easy chair by the corner of the hearth, wonder of all beautiful wonders, sat half reclined the fairy-godmother herself, as if she had but just waved her wand, and everything had come to her will!—the fact being, however, that the poor fairy was not a little tired in legs and arms and back and feet and hands and head, and much preferred contemplating what she had already done to doing anything more for the immediate present.

Cosmo lay watching her. He dared not move a hand, lest she should move: it might be to come to him, but would it not be a change?—and what he saw he would see for ever, desiring nothing else!

She turned her eyes, and seeing the large orbs of the youth fixed upon her, smiled as she had not smiled before—

smiled like her old self: a weight was off her heart now the room would give him a welcome. True, it was a hypocrite of a room—but a hypocrite after all whose meaning, deeper than its walls, was better than its looks!

Almost unconsciously he put out his hand. She rose and came to him and laid hers in it. He withdrew his. She looked a little surprised.

"I beg your pardon," he said: "I don't know when my hands were washed! The last thing I remember is digging in the garden. I should like to wash my face and hands!"

"You mustn't think of it! You can't sit up to do it yet," said Joan. "But never mind: some people are always clean. You should see my brother's hands sometimes! I will, if you like, bring you a towel with a wet corner. I dare say that will do you good."

She poured water from a kettle on the hob, and brought him the towel. He tried to use it, but his hands would scarcely obey him. She took it from him,

and herself wiped his face and hands, and dried them—gently, softly, like a mother. Then she set about preparing him tea and toast, and he lay watching her every motion. Meal like that he had never had any. After it he fell asleep once more, and when he woke next, he was alone.

An hour later, the gardener's wife brought him a basin of soup, and when he had taken it, told him she was going to leave him for the night, and if he should want anything, he must pull the string she tied to the bed-post. He was so comfortable, so quietly happy, his brain full of bright yet soft-coloured things, that he felt to be left ages alone would not trouble him.

By the middle of the night, however, the tide of returning health showed a check; then came a reaction, with delirium; terrible fancies tormented him; and through each with persistent recurrence kept passing the figure of the old captain, swinging his stick about his head, and crooning to himself the rime—

Catch yer naig an' pu' his tail;
In his hin' heel caw a nail;
Rug his lugs frae ane anither:
Stan' up, an' ca' the king yer brither.

At last, just as once more his persecutor was commencing his childish ditty, Cosmo saw, from the top of a mountain a hundred miles away, a cold cloud come journeying through the sky, and felt it descend upon him. He opened his eyes: there was Joan; the cold cloud was her soft cool hand on his forehead. The next thing he knew was that she was feeding him. He did not know that she sat by his bedside till she saw him at length in a deep and quiet sleep, when she stole away like a ghost in the gray dawn.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RECOVERY.

THE next day he was better; but every night for a week the fever returned; and all his dreams were variations on the theme of the old captain. Then followed quiet nights, and he began to recover rapidly. But for several days he felt as if he did not want to get better—would rather lie and dream for ever in the glamoured ruin.

Every morning, afternoon, and evening, Joan visited him, and staid a longer or shorter time, waiting on him, talking, reading to him. Only once was she a whole evening absent: lord Mergwain, having some one to dine with him of the ordinary social stamp, had required her

presence as lady of the house. Even then she had a peep at him before she went to bed, but found him asleep.

She did not know much about books, but would go into the library and take anything she fancied looked interesting; and Cosmo cared little what she read, so long as he could hear her voice. Often it beguiled him into the sweetest sleep, in which were sure to come visions of home and his father. If the story she read was foolish, not the less would he mingle it, as his soul sank under the waves of sleep, with his own livelier fancies, weaving all into the loveliest of foolish dreams, made up of the most reasonable incongruities: the most puzzling of things to him who would fathom his own unreason, is the sensible look in dreams of what to the waking mind is utterly, absurdly incoherent. Nor were the wild *märchenhaft* lovelinesses that then fashioned themselves in his brain—outwardly lawless, but inwardly harmonious and credible—scattered in the fluttering limbo of outlawed foolish invention, but

appeared again, with gait more gracious and form less fantastic, when in after years he sought vent for the hardly utterable. In these voice-charmed slumbers he would often begin to talk verse, when Joan would stop her reading and listen. It was sometimes lovely, she said, but she never could get a hold of it to remember it; for always, just as she seemed on the point of understanding it, he would cease, and with the voice everything would go from her, leaving both her heart and her ears aching with the silence.

One warm evening, when now a good deal better, and able to sit up a part of the day, Cosmo was lying on the sofa, watching her face as she read. Through the warped and thick-dusted glass of a westerly window came the glowing beams of the setting sun, lined and dulled and blotted. They fell on her hands, and her hands reflected a pale-rosy gleam on her face.

"How beautiful you are in the red light, Joan!" said Cosmo.

"That's the light, not me," she returned.

"No, it *is* you," he insisted. "It shows you as you are—more than the common light. In the dark even *you* do not look beautiful. Then you may say, if you like, 'It is the dark, not me.' Remember how Portia puts it—

> The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
> When neither is attended; and I think
> The nightingale, if she should sing by day
> When every goose is cackling, would be thought
> No better a musician than the wren.
> How many things by season seasoned are
> To their right praise and true perfection!

She says, you see, not that beautiful things owe their beauty, but that the seers or hearers of them owe the right seeing or hearing of their beauty to fitly related circumstance. So this red light makes me *see* you more beautiful—not than you are—that could not be—but than I could see you in another light—a gray one, for instance. Your beauty needs a beautiful light to show it."

"You mustn't flatter me, Cosmo. You don't know what harm it may do me."

"I love you too much to flatter you," he said.

She raised the book from her knees, and began to read again.

Cosmo had never narrowed the channels that lay wide and free betwixt his soul and that of his father and of his teacher; Joan had no such aqueducts to her ground, and many a bitter wind blew across its wastes; it is therefore no matter of surprise that Cosmo, although younger, should be ahead of her. The conversations they now had were to Joan like water to a thirsty soul. Where death had seemed waiting at the door, the hope of the secret of life had now crept up out of the dark. She would listen to the youth, whose bodily weakness heightened the show of his enthusiasm, as to a messenger from the land of truth. In the old time he used to say the strangest things as if they were the commonest everybody knew; now he said stranger things still, but as if he knew they must look strange, and must need explanation. She wondered whether, if his history had

been like hers, he would have kept his soul shining so through all its dreariness, would have been able still to see through the dusty windows the changeless beauty of things, and save alive his glorious hope. She began to understand that she had not got at any beginning, that she had let things draw her this way and that, had put forth no righteous effort to master circumstance by accepting its duty.

On Cosmo the passion of the believer in the unseen had laid hold; and as the gardener watches for the blossom of some strange plant of whose loveliness marvellous tales have reached his ears, so did he await some unknown entrancing beauty gathering itself from the sweet twilight sadnesses of her being, its gleams that died into dusk, and the deep voiceless ponderings in which she would so often lose herself.

As he grew stronger they would talk more about the book they happened to be reading; it mattered little yet what it was, for a stupid book may serve as well

as another to set live fountains flowing: it is only mere cisterns of which a stupid book cannot turn the tap. That same afternoon of the red light, Joan was reading from one partly written, partly compiled in the beginning of the century—somewhat before its time in England, which might have been the work of an imitator at once of de la Motte Fouqué and of the old British romancers: I will set down what she read.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE STORY OF THE KNIGHT WHO SPOKE THE TRUTH.

THERE was a land in which dwelt a knight whom no lady therein would love, and that because he spake the truth. For the other knights of that land would say every one to the lady he loved, that of all ladies in the world she was the most beautiful and the most gracious, yea in all things the very first; and thereby the ladies of the land learned to love their own praise best, and after that each the knight who was her chief praiser, for that he best enabled her to think well of herself, and that in spite of natural doubt. So the knight who would not speak save truly, they in mockery did name Sir Verity—which name some of them would

again miscall Severity; for the more this knight loved, the more it became to him impossible to speak a lie. And thus it came about that, one after another, he was hated of all those ladies. For so it was, that, the more greedy of his commendation that to their thinking it was so sparingly sparsed, this lady and that would as it were covertly lead him on to speak of the thing wherein she made it her pleasure to take to herself excellence; but nowise thus did any one of them draw from him other than his true judgment. As thus: One day said unto him a certain lady, "Which of us, think you, Sir Verity, hath the darkest eyes of all the ladies here at the court of our lord the king?" And he thereto made answer, "Verily, me thinketh the queen." Then said that lady to him, "Who, then, hath the bluest eyes of all the ladies at the court of our lord the king?"—for that her own were of the colour of the heavens when the year is young. And he answered, "I think, truly, the lady Coryphane hath the bluest of all their blue

eyes." Then said she, for that she was angered greatly, "And I think truly from thine answer, Severity, that thou lovest me not; for else wouldst thou have known that mine eyes are as blue as the eyes of Coryphane." "Truly, nay!" he answered; "for my heart knoweth well that thine eyes are blue, and that they are lovely, and unto me verily are they the dearest of all eyes; but to say they are the bluest of all eyes, that I may not, for therein should I be no true man." Then was the lady some deal shamed, and seeking to cover her vanity, did answer and say, "It may well be, sir knight, for how should I tell who see not mine own eyes, and would therefore know of thee, of whom men say, some that thou speakest truly, other some that thou speakest naughtily! But be the truth as the truth may be, yet saith every knight to his mistress that in all things she is the paragon of the world." "Then," quoth the knight, "she that knoweth every man so saith, must know also only one of them all saith the thing that is true! Verily,

not of my will would I swell the multitude of lies that do go about the world!" "Now verily I know and am sure thou dost not love me!" cried the lady; "for all men do say of mine eyes—", and therewith she stinted, and held her peace, that so she might cause him again to speak. "Lady," said then Sir Verity, and spake right solemnly, "as I said before, I do say again, and in truth, that thine eyes are to me the dearest of all eyes. Therefore were they the bluest or the blackest, the greenest or the grayest, I would love them all the same. For that because of none of those colours would they be dear to me, but only because they were thine eyes. For I love thine eyes because they are thine, not thee because thine eyes are or this or that." Then that lady brake forth into bitter weeping, and would not be comforted, neither thereafter would grant the knight any speech of her. For that it was the pride of a lady's life in that land to lie lapt in praises, greedily drinking in the flatteries blown into her ears by them who would be counted her

lovers. Then said the knight to himself, "Nay, verily, and yet again nay, for her eyes are not the bluest in the world! And it seemeth to me that a lady will never love man aright, who loveth not the truth from a man's lips. And for the ladies of the land, save and except each may think herself better than all the rest, then is not life dear unto them! I will forsake this land, and go where the truth may be spoken nor the speaker thereof hated." He graithed him in his armour, never lady nor squire nor page to draw thong or buckle spur, and mounted his horse, and rode forth to leave that land. And as he rode it came to pass that on his way he entered a great wood. And as through the wood he yode, he heard a sobbing and a crying in the wood. And he said to himself, "Here is some one grievously wronged, for grievously she lamenteth! I will go and succour her." So about he rode searchingly, and he came to the place whither he was led of her cries. And there, at the foot of a great oak, he found an aged woman in a gray cloak,

with her face in her hands, weeping right on, neither ceased she for the space of a sigh. "What aileth thee, good mother?" he said. "I am not good, and I am not thy mother," she answered, and fell again to her weeping. "Ah," thought the knight, "here is a woman that loveth the truth, and would not that aught but the truth be spoken!—Wherein may I help thee, woman," he said, "albeit thou art not my mother, neither may I call thee good?" "In taking thyself from my sight," she answered. "Then will I ride on my way," said the knight, and turning, he rode on his way. Then rose the woman to her feet, and followed him. "Wherefore followest thou me," said the knight, "if in nothing I may do thee service?" "I follow thee," she answered him, "because thou speakest the truth, and because thou art not true." "If thou speakest the truth, truly in a mystery speakest thou it," said he. "Wherefore then ridest thou through the world?" she asked. And he replied, "Verily to succour them that are oppressed, for I have no

mistress to whom I may do honour." "Nay, sir knight," said she, "but to get thee a name and great glory thou ridest about the world. Said I not well, saying thou wast no true man? Verily thou lovest not the truth so well as thine own glory!" At these words of the woman the knight clapped spurs to his horse, and would have ridden from her, for he loved not to be reviled, and so he told her. But she followed him, and laid her hand on his stirrup, and ran as he rode, and said to him as she ran, "Yea, thine own heart whispereth thee that I said but the truth! It is from thyself thou wouldst flee!" Then did the knight make a silence, and listen to the sounds within him; and, lo, in very truth his heart was telling him that what the woman said was indeed so. Thereupon instantly he drew the reins of his bridle, and looked down upon the woman, and said to her, "Verily thou hast well spoken; but if I be not true, yet would I be true. Come with me. I will take thee behind me upon my horse, and together we will ride through

the world; thou shalt speak to me the truth, and I with my sword will plead thy cause. So shall it go well with thee and me, for my desire is not only to love what is truly spoken, but to be in myself a true man." So saying he reached down to her his hand, and she placed her hand in his hand, and her foot upon his foot, and so sprang she lightly up behind him, and they rode on together. And as they rode, he said unto her, "Verily thou art the first woman I have found who to me hath spoken the truth, as I to others. Only thy truth is better than mine. Therefore must thou love the truth better than I!" But she returned him no answer. Then said he to her again, "Dost thou not love the truth?" and again she gave him no answer, whereat he marvelled greatly. Then said he unto her yet again, "Surely it may not be thou art one of those who speak the truth out of envy and ill-will, and on their own part love not to hear it spoken, but are as the rest of the children of vanity! Woman, lovest thou the truth, nor only to speak it when it is

sharp?" "If I love not the truth," she answered, "yet love I them that love it. But tell me now, sir knight, what thinkest thou of me?" "Nay," answered the knight, "that is what even now I would fain have known from thyself, namely what to think of thee." "Then will I now try thee," said she, "whether indeed thou wilt speak the truth or no.—Tell me to my face what thou thinkest of that face." Then said the knight to himself, "Never surely would I, for the love of pity, of my own will say to a woman she was evil-favoured! But if she will have what I think, then must she hear the truth." "Nay, nay," said the woman, "but thou wilt not speak the truth!" "Yea, but I will," answered he. "To my face thou darest not," she said. "Yea, but I dare," he answered. "Then I ask thee again," she said, "what thinkest thou of me?" And the knight replied, "Truly I think not of thee as of one of the well-favoured among women." "Dost thou then judge," said she, and her voice was full of anger, which yet it seemed as

she would hide, "that I am not pleasant to look upon? Verily no man hath yet said so of me, though many have turned from me because I spoke the thing they loved not to hear!" "Now surely thou sayest the thing that is not so," returned the knight; for he was grieved to think she should have spoken the truth but of contention, not of love to the same, inasmuch as she also did seek that men should praise her. "Truly I say that which is so," she answered. Then was the knight angered, and said to her, "Therefore, woman, will I tell thee all thou demandest of me: Verily I think of thee as, to my thinking, one the worst-favoured, and least to be desired among women; neither would I any more look upon thee again." Then laughed she aloud, and said unto him, "Nay, but did I not tell thee?—for now thou speakest it not to my face, but behind thine own back!" And in wrath the knight turned him in his saddle, crying, "I tell thee to thy ill-shaped and worse-hued countenance, that—", and there ceased, and spake no more, but

with open mouth sat gazing. For he beheld a woman the glory of her kind, more beautiful than man ever hoped to see out of heaven. "I told thee," she said, "thou couldst not say the thing to my face!" "For that it would be the greatest lie ever in this world uttered," answered the knight, "seeing that verily I believe thee the loveliest among women, God be praised! Nevertheless will I not go with thee one step farther, so to peril my soul's health, except, as thou thyself hast taught me, thou love the truth in all ways, in great ways as well as in small." "This much will I say to thee," she answered, "—that I love thee because thou lovest the truth. If I say not more, it is that mortal must be humble speaking of great things. The truth is mighty, and will subdue my heart unto itself." "And wilt thou help me to do the truth?" asked the knight. "So the great truth help me!" she answered. And together they rode on, and parted not thereafter. Here endeth the story of the knight that spoke the truth.

Lady Joan ceased, and there was silence in the chamber, she looking back over the pages, for she had not quite understood, and Cosmo, who had understood entirely, watching the lovely, dark, anxious face. He saw she had not mastered the meaning of the story, but, which was next best, knew she had not. He began therefore to search her difficulty, or rather to help it to take shape to her, whereon followed a talk neither of them ever forgot — concerning what Cosmo designated the hierarchy of truth—whose grades he showed ascending from the truth of fact to the truth of vital relation and the truth of action.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### NEW EXPERIENCE.

THE next day he was up almost the whole of it. But that very day was Joan less with him than heretofore, and thereafter came not so often, and stayed a shorter time. She would now bring him books and leave them, saying he did not require a nurse any more, and was able to feed himself; and Cosmo could not help thinking her manner towards him was a little changed. "What can have come between us?" he would ask himself twenty times a day. Had he hurt her anyhow? he pondered. Had he unconsciously donned the schoolmaster with her? Had he presumed on her kindness and made himself disagreeable? With many such questions he plagued himself, but found to none of

them an answer. At times he almost imagined her a little cross with him, but the next moment she would be as sweet as ever. Each time they met, she seemed farther off than when they parted. They always got back to nearly the same place before they parted again, and Cosmo tried to persuade himself that if there was any change it was only the result of growing familiarity; but not the less did he find himself ever again mourning over something that was gone—a delicate colour vanished from the verge of the meeting sky and sea of their two natures.

How differently the hours went when she was with him, and when he lay thinking whether she was coming! His heart swelled like a rose-bud ready to burst into flaming flower when she drew near, and folded itself together when she went, as if to save perfume and strength for her return! Everything in what he read that pleased him must be shared with Joan—must serve them as a thought-atmosphere in which to draw nigh to each other. Everything beautiful he saw in two

aspects—as it seemed in his own eyes, namely, and as he imagined it in the eyes of Joan: he was always trying to see things as she must see them. He did not care to read anything she would not enjoy; yet he assured himself that everything he liked she must one day enjoy.

But between them an unrest had crept in; they were no more so sure of each other as to be certainly at ease together; though often yet, for many minutes, thought and word would go well betwixt them, and all be as simple and clear as ever.

Suddenly one day as he sat alone, Cosmo made the discovery that since his illness he had been forgetting his master. He had not once been brooding over the story of the sole true life! not once had he lost himself in prayer to the Father of Jesus and of him! not once since finding Joan had he thirsted for God, or been flooded with a glory as from the presence of the living One! neither had any fresh vision of truth filled him like the wine of the new heavens and the

new earth! It troubled him greatly. When Joan came she saw that he was sad, and questioned him. But even to her he could not open his mind on such a matter; near as they were to each other they had not yet come near enough for that.

In the history, which is the growth, of the individual man, there is a constant succession of epochs of individual truth and differing moods or modes of being, the new one ever displacing that which preceded; and this must go on until the mind shall at length have gained power to blend the new at once with the antecedent whole. But this cannot be until our knowledge of the Life absolute is so full that it will flow into every possible necessity of our nature. A new mood is as a dry well for the water of life to fill. The man who does not yet understand God as the very power of his conscious as well as his unconscious being, as more in him than intensest presence of bliss or of pain, must have many a treeless expanse, many a mirage-haunted desert,

many an empty cistern and dried-up river in the world of his being! There was not much of this kind of waste in Cosmo's world, but God was not yet inside his growing love to Joan—that is, consciously to Cosmo—and his spirit was therefore of necessity troubled. That love to any lovely thing—how much more to the loveliest being God had made!—should lead him, in any smallest degree, or for any shortest time, to forget him whose will is the soul of loveliness, and grow strange to the thought of him, was reason good for perplexing dread. The cause was this, that, having found his treasure, he had not yet taken it home to his Father! Jesus himself, when first he was out of the grave, could not be altogether at home with his own, until he had first been home to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God. For as God is the source, so is he the bond of all love. There are Christians who in portions of their being, of their life, of their judgment, of their carriage and action, of their aims, are absolute heathens, for

with those portions, so far as their thought or will is concerned, God has nothing to do. There God is not with them, for there they are not with God. And whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CHARLES JERMYN.

The doctor who attended Cosmo had, after completing his course of study, travelled for some years about Europe as medical attendant on an English nobleman, gathering thereby experiences of many kinds, and after that had settled down as his father's assistant in a large country-practice. He was now about thirty years of age. Through his sister's acquaintance with her chiefly, he had seen lady Joan pretty often, and had more than begun to entertain aspiring hopes concerning her. His father, although he favoured his son's ambition, partly because he hated the earl, and would be glad to see him annoyed, partly because

he liked lady Joan, and also because he was far from blind to the consequence his family would gain by such an alliance, yet had no great hope of his success; for experience, of which few have more than a country-doctor, had taught him that, in every probability, his son's first definite advance would be to lady Joan the signal for retiring within the palisades of her rank: he knew only too well that there are many who will show plentiful familiarity and friendliness with agreeable inferiors up to a certain point, but that point reached, the old Adam, or perhaps rather the old Satan, is instantly up in full pride, like a turkey-cock with swollen neck, trembling wattles, roused feathers, and hideous gabble. His doubt, however, was nowise founded on the fact that such was precisely the reception he had himself given to a prayer for the hand of his daughter from one whom he counted her social inferior. The younger man, who had also had his experiences, reflected that the utter isolation of the lady through the character of her father, the

unsociableness of her brother, and the poverty into which the family had sunk, gave him advantages.

The father had been for many years the medical adviser of the house; and although the present lord Mergwain accorded the medical practice of his day a relation to the unborn science of therapeutics such as the old alchemy bore to modern chemistry, yet, the moment he felt ill, he was sure to send for young Jermyn. Charles had also of late attended lady Joan in several illnesses: she was not in such health as when she used to climb the wintry hills with Cosmo. On those occasions she had sent for the father, but, with one excuse and another, he had always sent his son in his stead. The third time he came she was so much annoyed that she had almost refused to receive him; but from dislike of seeming to care she admitted him, and had got used both to his attendance and to himself. He managed to improve the occasional opportunity into the privilege of tolerably free access to her, on which he

congratulated himself the more from confidence that he had no rival.

Nor was there anything absurd in his hope to win her. He was a man of good breeding and more than agreeable manners —with a large knowledge of places, therefore plenty to talk about, and a social experience so far from restricted that, had Joan been less ignorant of things belonging to her proper station, she would have found in him the more to interest her. He was also a man of some insight, and at the same time possessed of considerable versatility, so that, readily discovering any peculiarity, he was ready to meet it, and laid himself out to talk of the things and in the ways he judged she would like: such men are very ready to imagine that to discover is to understand. No longer young enough, as he said to himself, to be greatly interested in anything but success, he could yet easily lay his hands on many properties belonging to the part he chose as the fittest to represent him. The greater part of conventionally honest

men try to look the thing they would like to be; others, along with what they would like to be, act that which they would like to appear; the downright rascal acts the part that will serve his immediate purpose; and the downright honest man thinks of being, not of appearing.

But if Jermyn merely took upon him at first to represent himself as in love with lady Joan, he must soon have imagined himself, and thereafter soon have become actually more or less in love with her. He did not therefore relax his caution, however; and so far as his attentions had yet gone, they continued to be pleasant to her;—his visits were at least a break in the ennui of the day, a help towards the oblivion of the night. She was not one of those who, unable to quicken the hour, must kill it lest it kill them; but neither was she of those who make their time so alive that the day is too short for them. Hence, by and by, she would, when he called, offer him tea; and when he took his leave would walk with him

a short way through the garden, and at length sometimes accompany him as far as the lodge on his way home.

Charles Jermyn was a tall, well-made man, with a clever and refined face, which, if not much feeling, expressed great intelligence. By the ladies of the neighbourhood he was greatly admired—by some of them pronounced good-looking, by others declared to be *beautiful.* Certain of them said he was much too handsome for a doctor. He had a jolly air with him which was yet far from unrefined, and a way of shaking hands which gave an impression of honesty; and indeed I think honesty would have been comparatively easy to him, had he set himself to cultivate it; but he had never given himself trouble about anything except *getting on.* If he gave it solemnly, you might rely on his word, but not otherwise. Absolute truth he would have counted a hindrance in the exercise of his profession. His oath was better than his word.

Women, even more than men, I pre-

sume, see in one who interests them, not so much what is there, as a reflection of what they construct from glimpses that have pleased them. Some it takes a whole miserable life of marriage to undeceive; for others not even that will serve; they continue to see, if not an angel, yet a very pardonable mortal, therefore altogether loveable man, in the husband in whom everybody else sees only a vile rascal. Whether in some cases the wife or the world be nearer the truth, will one day come out: the wife *may* be a woman of insight, and see where no one else can.

In his youth Jermyn had read a good deal of poetry, enjoying it in a surface-sort of fashion, which enabled him to discover that lady Joan had a fine taste in verse: he made use of his old acquaintance with it, and effected the greater impression, that a limited experience always takes familiarity for a sign of knowledge: he, for instance, who quotes largely, must intimately understand what he quotes! whereas it had

never even entered the doctor's head that poetry could have anything to do with life—not in the case of the poet himself —how much less in that of his reader or even admirer! Never once had it occurred to him to ask himself how any one could be such a fool as enjoy a thing so false as to have no being save in the brain of the poet, therefore a mere lie—for that which has nothing to do with life, what is it but a lie! And now he got down book after book, for many a day undusted on his shelves, and read and re-read passage after passage which had once borne him into the seventh heaven of feeling! Is it any wonder he was struck with a mild surprise at finding how much had lost even the appearance of the admirable, and how much of what had seemed bitter he could now thoroughly accept? He did not ask whether the change came of a truer vision or a sourer judgment, but put all down to the experience that makes a man wise, none to the experience that hides the truth. He was not able to imagine himself in any-

thing less than he had been, in anything less than he would be; and that although poetry had become to him the merest munition of war—feathers to trim the darts of Cupid! That was how the lover of poetry now to himself expressed himself: he was laying in store of weapons, he said! For when a man uses that in which he does not believe, he cannot fail to be vulgar. But lady Joan saw no vulgarity in the result; that was for the time hid behind the show-man. To her he seemed a profound lover of poetry: he knew by heart poets of whom she had never even heard! Once he contrived to spend nearly an afternoon with her in the library—for of the bindings and title-pages of books he knew something: one of his patients — with whom he first travelled, then for a time resided—was a book-collector and a student of catalogues; and this knowledge he would make opportunity to show. Judiciously poured out, it passed with lady Joan for a marvellous knowledge of books, and the country doctor began to assume in

her eyes the aspect and proportions of a man of universal culture. He knew how to bring all he had to the front, and by one mean and another had succeeded in making himself of no small account in the lonely life, so ignorant and unsupported, of his patient. He could play the violin too, and that with no mean expression—caring far more for that, like many another artist, than for the feeling expressed; and this accomplishment also he contrived that accident should betray.

In the judgment of most who knew him, he was an excellent, and indeed admirable man. "No nonsense about him, don't you know?" men would say. "A thorough family-doctor!" those mammas would add who were fond of holding private confabulations about their children with doctor and clergyman.

But where his professional duty bordered on that of the nurse, the best that was in Jermyn came out. Few men could handle a patient at the same time so firmly and tenderly; few were less sparing of self in the endeavour to make

him comfortable. From the moment when the simple-minded Cosmo saw him with eyes aware, his heart went out to him—from the moment, that is, when he lifted him in his arms that lady Joan and the old woman might place a feather-bed and mattress under him: from the heavenly cloud of ease on which he laid him down, his spirit rose in thanks to his minister. Nor was Cosmo one in whom gratitude was less enduring than ready. All the time he was recovering, the daily visit of the doctor was welcome to him for the doctor's sake. And the doctor never came without receiving the reward of an interview with the lady—wherein to prosecute a fresh advantage he had gained by Cosmo's illness; for Joan had found herself compelled to take him into her confidence as to her brother's ignorance of the presence of Cosmo in the house, and a secret shared is a hold given. He did not quite welcome the discovery of the Scotch cousinship, but plainly the youth was too young for Joan, and if there was any need to beware of him, he

would soon find it out, by which time also he would have learned how!

For the first week Joan did not mind how often Jermyn found her with Cosmo, but after that she began to dislike being in the room when he came—she could scarcely have told why, and managed to avoid it. The doctor became suspicious, and called cunning to his aid. Arriving one morning an hour before the time of his customary visit, he walked straight into the room, as of course he might without offence where his patient was a young man. But lady Joan had heard or felt his coming, and as he entered was handing Cosmo a newspaper with the words,

"There! you are quite able to read to yourself to-day. I am sorry I could not find the book you wanted. I will go and have another look for it."

With that she turned, and gave a little start.

"Oh, Mr. Jermyn!" she exclaimed, "I did not know you were there!" and held out her hand. "Your patient is

getting on wonderfully now.—You will let me see you before you leave the castle —will you not?"

She left the room, and hastened to her own. There in the mirror she saw the red stain of a lie. "What will Cosmo think?" she cried to herself—and burst into tears, the first since the day she found him.

The doctor was not taken in, but Cosmo was troubled and puzzled.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### COSMO AND THE DOCTOR.

To the eyes of Jermyn, Cosmo appeared, mainly from his simplicity, younger than he was; while the doctor's manners and knowledge of the world made Cosmo regard him as a much greater man than, in any sense or direction, he really was. Nor was this all, for, his kindness having gained the youth's heart, he was ready to see in him everything that love would see in the loved.

"You are very good to me, Mr. Jermyn," he said one day, "—so good, that I am the more sorry, though the less unwilling—"—The doctor could not keep hold of the thread of Cosmo's speech, but did not interrupt him.—" to tell you that I do not know when I shall be

able to hand you your fees. All I can say is that the first money I earn you shall at least have part of."

The doctor laughed. It was a genuine relief to Cosmo to find him take it so lightly.

"You were robbed on the way, my lady tells me," Jermyn said.

"I am not sure that I was robbed," returned Cosmo; "but had I brought every penny I started with, I could not have paid you. My father and I are very poor, Mr. Jermyn."

"And my father and I are pretty well to do," said the doctor, laughing again.

"But," resumed Cosmo, "neither condition is a reason why you should not be paid. I mention mine only as the cause why you will not be paid at once."

"My dear fellow," said the doctor, laying his hand on the boy's, "it is not so long since I was a student myself—in your country too—at Edinburgh—that I should forget how scarce money was then in my own pocket."

"But I am not exactly a student now.

I have been making a little money as tutor; only——"

"Don't trouble your head about it, I beg," interrupted the doctor. "It is the merest trifle. Besides, I should never think of taking a fee from a friend. I am well paid in the pleasure of your acquaintance.—There is a way too," he added, after a pause, "in which you could make me a return."

"What is that?" asked Cosmo eagerly.

"To borrow a little money of me for a few months. I had to borrow many a time when I was in Edinburgh, but I am not hard up now."

Cosmo's heart swelled in his bosom, and for a time he could not answer. "Here is a man of the true sort!" he thought with himself; "—a man after my father's own heart! He uses the ground of his rights only to plant fresh favours in it! This is a rare man! But it would be a wrong to Joan to borrow money of him!" So, with every acknowledgment, he declined the generous offer.

Now the doctor was quite simple in treating Cosmo thus. He was a friendly man and a gentleman, and liked the youth as no respectable soul could help liking him. It had not yet come into his head to make him useful. That same night, however, he began to ask himself whether Cosmo might not serve his hope, and soon had thought the matter out.

It would be necessary to make more sure of him first, he concluded, and prepare his ground by sowing a previous crop. The grain he would scatter should be notions of himself, in the hope they might bear the winged seed of speech! He must first make himself something in the eyes of the youth, plant himself firmly in his estimation, cause his idea of him to blossom! And, first of all, for the sake of these means to his end, he must understand the boy!

Nor was it long before the doctor imagined he did understand the boy; and indeed, sceptical as his knowledge both of himself and of the world had made him, he did so far understand him as to believe

him innocent as on the day he was born. His eyes could not shine so, his mouth could not have that childlike—the doctor called it childish—smile otherwise! Having put out various feelers to satisfy himself there was no pretence, he had found his allusions either pass over him like a breath of merest air, or actually puzzle him. It was not that Cosmo did not now and then know what a suggestion *might* mean, but that he could not believe Jermyn meant that—perceiving which, the doctor would make haste to alter the shadow into something definitely unobjectionable. Jermyn had no design of corrupting Cosmo; he was above that, even could he have fancied anything to be gained by it, whereas his interest lay in the opposite direction, his object being to use the lad unconsciously to himself.

He discovered also that he had lofty ideas of duty; that he was trusting, and unready to doubt; and that with him poetry was not, as with lady Joan, a delight, but an absolute passion—all which facts favoured the conclusion that it

would neither be difficult to make for himself a high place in the imagination of the youth, nor to influence him farther for his purpose. To the former of these ends first, he brought to bear upon him his choicest fragments of knowledge, and all his power to interest; set forth his acquaintance with not a few of the more delicate phases of humanity, and displayed his familiarity with the world of imagination in books; professed much admiration in the lines of Cosmo's—going into raptures, for example, over Milton's profoundest gems, although in truth he was moved only in a reflected, cold-moony way by the beauty of their external finish; directed his attention to Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*, of which he professed, and truly, that he had pasted it on his wall when a student, that at any moment he might read it; and introduced him to the best poems of Shelley—a benefit in return for which alone Cosmo felt as if he must serve him for life.

Cosmo was himself so entire, so utterly honest, that he could not but regard the

channel through which any good reached him as of like nature with that which came to him through it: how could that serve to transmit which was not one with the thing transmitted? To his eyes, therefore, Jermyn sat in the reflex glory of Shelley, and of every other radiant spirit of whom he had widened his knowledge. How could Cosmo regard him as the common man he was through whom reached him that thrilling trumpet-cry, full of the glorious despair of a frustrate divinity, the *Ode to the West Wind*, grandest of pagan-pantheistic utterances! The whole night, and many a night after, was Cosmo haunted with the æolian music of its passionate, self-pitiful self-abandonment; and for long time its "Be thou me, impetuous one!" would take embodiment to him in dream-reality; he and the wind would be one, careering wildly through the sky, combing to their length the maenad locks of the approaching storm, and answering the cry of weary poets everywhere over the world.

As he sat by his patient's bed, Jermyn

would also talk of his travels, relating passages of adventure in various parts of the world, and making no secret of the share he had had in the happy issue of most of them. He came oftener, and staid longer, and talked more and more freely, until at length in Cosmo's vision, the more excitable from his weakness, his friend seemed a hero, an admirable Crichton, the paragon of doctors.

In all this, Jermyn, to draw from his own dignified imagery, was but preparing an engine of assault against the heart of lady Joan. With no really delicate feeling of the relation of man and woman, I doubt if he would, had he had the chance of using her, have hesitated much to follow the loverly custom in low plays of *cultivating* the lady's maid, and bribing her to chaunt the praises of the briber in the ears of her mistress. Something seemed always, in his intercourse with lady Joan, to come between and prevent him from showing himself to the best, which he never doubted the truest advantage; but if he sent her a reflection

of him in the mind-mirror of such an admirer as he was making of Cosmo, she would then see him as he desired to be seen, and as he did not question he was.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE NAIAD.

Cosmo was at length able to go out, and Joan did not leave him without an attendant. At first he could walk only a few paces, but he sat a good deal in the sun, and rapidly recovered strength. One glorious morning Joan judged they might now attempt a little walk in the grounds.

Although she first made sure lord Mergwain was in his laboratory, she dared not lead Cosmo to any part ever visited by him. She took him therefore, through various walks, some wide and bordered with stately trees; some narrow and encroached upon by shrubs, but all grown with weeds and moss, to a part with which she soon found he had already made a passing acquaintance. It lay as

when first he entered, all careless of the present, hopeless of the future, and hardly dreaming of the past. Years many had gone by since foot of lady save her own had pressed these ancient paths, since laugh or merry speech had been heard in them. Nothing is lovelier than the half neglect of great grounds when the owner's fancy has changed and his care turned to a more favoured spot; when there is moss on the walks, but the weeds are few and fine; when the trees stand in their old honour, and yet no branch is permitted to obstruct a path; when flowers have ceased to be sown or planted, but those that bloom are not disregarded; while yet it is only through some stately door that entrance is gained, nor chance foot is free to stray in. But here it was altogether different. That stage of neglect was long past; the place was quite untended, ruinous, and overgrown—half-way back to wilderness. Between that picture and this reality lay all the painful difference between stately, beautiful matronhood and the old age that, no

longer possessed of the comely, has grown careless of the decent.

"At this time of the morning there is plenty of sun here," said Joan, with an inflection of voice that savoured of apology.

"I think," said Cosmo, the look of the place making him sadder than he cared to feel just then, "the gardener told me there were parts better kept than this."

"Yes," answered Joan; "but none are what they should be: we are so poor that Mergwain requires for his experiments almost all the money the trustees allow for keeping the place in order."

"You don't know what poverty is!" said Cosmo.

"Oh, don't I!" returned Joan.

"I don't mind the wild look of it," said Cosmo; "but somehow it is all so melancholy! If I were here, I should work night and day till I had it in some sort of order."

"Are you as strong as you used to be, Cosmo—I mean when you are well?" asked Joan, willing to change the subject.

"A good deal stronger, I hope," answered Cosmo; "but I am glad not just at this moment, for then I should not be leaning on you, Joan."

"Do you like to lean on me, Cosmo?"

"It makes me very happy, Joan.—But why don't you take me to a more cheerful part?"

She made him no answer. He looked in her face. It was very pale.

"Must I tell you, Cosmo?" she said, looking up, her eyes full of tears.

"No, certainly, if you would rather not."

"But you would think it strange of me not to tell you!"

"I should never doubt you had a good reason for it."

"I have a good reason for not taking you anywhere else, but not a good enough reason for not telling you why: my brother does not know you are here."

Now Cosmo had never even suspected this, and it nearly took from him what little breath he had, to learn that he had been all this time in a man's house with-

out the man knowing it. Lord Mergwain had not once come to see him, but nothing needed explanation less: lord Mergwain must as little desire to see Cosmo as Cosmo desired to see lord Mergwain! Doubtless in all justice the house was Joan's too, however little the male aristocracy may be inclined to admit such an assertion, but some one must be at the head of it, and that place being naturally his lordship's, he had at least a right to know whom he sheltered! Huge discomfort therefore invaded Cosmo, and a restless desire to be out of the place. For a moment he could not speak, and his silence frightened Joan.

"Are you very angry with me, Cosmo?" she said.

"Angry! No, Joan! How could I be angry with you! But I find myself where I have no business to be, and it makes me feel like a thief!"

"I am so sorry! But what could I do? You don't know my brother, or you would not wonder. He seems to have a kind of hatred to your family—I do not

in the least know why. Could my father have said anything about you? No, that cannot be!—And yet my father must have known something of Castle Warlock!"

"As to how lord Mergwain may regard me," said Cosmo, "I need give myself small concern; but it would anger a saint he should behave so to you that you dared not tell him a thing. I *am* sorry I did not write first!—I don't know though, for then perhaps I should not be here now.—I can't say I am sorry I was taken ill, notwithstanding the trouble I have caused you—so much more than I had any idea of, for without that I should never have known how beautiful and good you are."

His voice trembled, and he could scarcely speak for something in his throat.

"I'm not good! and I'm not beautiful!" cried Joan, and burst into tears of humiliation and sore-heartedness. What a contrast was their house to Castle Warlock! What a reception Cosmo's to hers! "But," she resumed, choking

back her sobs, "you must not think I had no right to do what I have done. My father left all his personal property to me; and I know there was money in his bureau, saved up for me—I *know* it; and I know too that my brother took it! I never said a word about it to him or any one—never mentioned the subject before, but I can't have you feeling as if you had been taking what you had no right to!"

Cosmo was almost too sad for Joan, to rejoice in the lovely way she thus made common case with him.

They had now come to the dry fountain, with its great cracked basin, in which stood the parched naiad, pouring an endless nothing from her inverted vase. Forsaken and sad she looked, and well she might! All her world had changed; she only was still the same—and her memory of old friends, vanished ways, and things forgotten of all save her! She, alas, could not alter, but must for ever stand the changeless centre of change! All the winters would beat upon her, all the summers would burn

her; but never more would the glad water pour plashing from her dusty urn! never more would the birds make showers in her cool basin with their beating wings! The dead leaves would keep falling year after year to their rest, but she could not fall—must, through the slow ages, stand and stand, while storm and sunshine wasted her atom by atom away!

It was the spirit of Cosmo that had gone into the naiad, and thus made her think. For on the broad rim of the basin they sat, Cosmo turned towards the weary statue, thoughts many such as those I have written throbbing in his brain like the pale electric pulse in an exhausted receiver, Joan with her back to the figure, and her eyes on the ground, full of dim trouble, for she fancied Cosmo was brooding vexed over his newly discovered position. It was a sad picture. The two were as the type of Nature and Art here at strife—together, but the more apart—Oberon and Titania with ruin all about them. In a chance vista stood the leaning altar of Time, forsaken of its deity—a

sundial where not a sunray could reach it. "It is well," thought Cosmo. "Time is nothing, does nothing; and where progress is but disintegration, why should the mere medium in which the forces work be noted? Time can no more cure or cause our ills, than space can unite or divide our souls!"

Had Cosmo suspected Joan's thought, he would have spoken eager words to remove it; but from the naiad his own had lighted upon her urn, and that had roused the memory of the thousand thoughts and imaginations that used to gather and brood about the hidden source of the torrent that for ever wore the basement-rock of Castle Warlock. In the dry urn he saw the end of life that knows not its source: when the water of its consciousness fails, how shall it find its way back, and unite itself afresh with the self-existent parent of springs? The lamp is out that might have shown the way to the house of them that sell oil!

Then was Cosmo's mouth opened, and he began to pour out to Joan the whole

metaphysical history of the development in him of the idea of life in connection with the torrent and its origin ever receding. It had been to him like a decoy-hope—is not the world well haunted with such?—ever enticing him on after the truth, until at length he came to God, found him the one only origin, the fountain of fountains, the Father of lights.

He had yet to find him the God of consolation, the healer of hurts, the righter of wrongs; not the embracer of children only, but the lifter up of men; the giver of hearts' desires, the One

Who makes the joy the last in every song.

"If we were to come upon such an urn as that," said Cosmo, pointing to the naiad's, "in whose heart the water was ever renewing itself without pipe or spring, we should call it a miracle; unable to follow the appearance farther back, we should cease thought, and wonder only in the presence of the making God: such an urn would be a true picture of the heart of God, ever sending forth life

of itself, and of its own will, into the consciousness of us made by the very gift the vessels to receive it."

He grew eloquent, and talked as even Joan had never heard him before. She understood him too, for the lonely desire after life had wrought in her, making her capable of the same. She felt more than ever that he was a messenger to her from a higher region, come to make it possible for her to live her life, instead of merely longing after it.

Suddenly came a breach in the chain of association; the thought-current leaped across, and leaping became a spark; and the spark was a recollection: he had not yet sent the woman whose generous trust saved him from long pangs of hunger, the price of her loaf. He turned quickly to Joan: here was a fresh opportunity of showing his faith in her! and what so precious thing between two lives as faith —ever a new creation in midst of the old! Indebted to one, herself poor, on whom he had no claim, it would be wrong not to ask help of Joan! He told her, there-

fore, now for the first time, the whole story of his adventures on his way to her, and ending said,

"Lend me a half-sovereign, please, Joan. I want to put it in a letter. I've got the woman's address that gave me the loaf. I will send the girl something afterwards."

Joan burst again into tears, and it was some time before she could speak; but at last she told him she had no money, and dared not ask her brother, because, whether he let her have it or not, he would insist on knowing what she wanted it for.

"Last week I could have asked him," she sobbed, "for then I would have told a lie; but not even for your sake will I ever do that again."

Cosmo was too indignant to say a word: he must not give shape to what he thought of her brother! She looked up anxiously in his face.

"Dear Cosmo," she said, "do not be angry with me. I will borrow the money from the housekeeper. You shall send it

to-morrow. Of course you must send it."

"No, no, dearest Joan!" cried Cosmo; "I will not hear of such a thing. I should be worse than lord Mergwain to lay a feather on the burden he makes you carry."

"I shouldn't mind it *much*. It would be sweet to hurt my pride for your sake."

"Joan, if you do," said Cosmo, "I will not touch it. Don't trouble your dear heart about it. God is taking care of the woman as well as of us. I will send it afterwards."

They sat silent—Cosmo thinking how he was to escape from the poverty-stricken grandeur of this heaven with one angel, where he was so little yet so delightfully welcome, and which he would be so sorry to leave. He knew his father could not send him the sum he would require without borrowing it, and he knew also what that involved to a debtor ever struggling to pay.

He looked at Joan. Her eyes were red with weeping. She glanced up with an

expression half of shame, half of pity. He put both his arms about her in vain longing to comfort her. That moment came a voice, calling her name in a loud, angry tone. She turned white as the marble on which they sat, and cast a look of agonized terror on Cosmo, who had instinctively withdrawn from her side.

"It is Mergwain!" said her lips, but hardly her voice.

The blood rushed in full tide from Cosmo's heart, colouring all his thin face, and he rose with the look of one ready for love's sake. But Joan threw her arms round him now, and held him.

"No, no!" she said in a sharp whisper; "—this way! this way!" and letting him go, she darted into the shrubbery.

Cosmo hated turning his back on person or thing, but the danger here was to Joan, and he followed her instantly.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE GARDEN-HOUSE.

Regardless of thorns and striping twigs, she threaded and forced her way swiftly through the thick-grown shrubs. It was a tangled wilderness across which Cosmo with some difficulty followed her for about a furlong, when the bushes seemed to part suddenly, and he saw before him a neglected building, overgrown with ivy, whether temple or stable or dwelling it would have been hard for him to say, for it was the product of a time when everything was made to look like something else. The door, thick with many layers of green paint, stood half open, looking as if the last who left the place had failed in a hurried attempt to shut it. Like a creature pursued Joan darted in, and up

the creaking stair that fronted her. Cosmo followed, every step threatening to give way under him. On the walls were great green stains; fallen plaster lay here and there in hillocks; the landings and steps, rotted with damp, were sinking this way and that; yet had there been no wanton destruction, for in the windows little glass was broken. Merest neglect is enough to make of both man and his works a heap; for speedily nature resumes or the devil usurps what the will of man is not in earnest to hold. The house had a worse repute than mere ghost could give it—worse than Joan knew, for no one had told her about it what was all to her father's discredit.

At the top of the stair, Joan turned through a door, and keeping along the wall, went cautiously to a window, and standing at the side, so as not to be seen from without, listened anxiously.

"I don't think he will venture here," she panted under her breath. "They say his lordship is just as much afraid of the place as the rest of them. I am the only

one who doesn't mind it much—and that is in the daytime only.—You are never frightened, I suppose, Cosmo ? ''

Here she turned on him a face which, for all the exertion she had been making, was pale as death.

"I haven't often had much cause to be frightened," replied Cosmo. "All I can venture to say is, that I hope God will keep me from turning my back on anything, however frightened I may be."

But the room they were in seemed the most fearful place he had ever beheld. His memory of the guest-room at home, in its age and outworn stateliness and evil report, showed mere innocence beside the small, ordinary, square, low-pitched apartment in which he found himself. If a room dead and buried for years then dug up again be imaginable, that is what this was like. It was furnished as a drawing-room or boudoir, and everything in it was, as to its position, plainly just as it had been left by her who last occupied it. Many things only to be seen in a lady's room, were at once recognizable

here and there, but the aspect of the whole was indescribably awful. The rottenness and dust and displacement of simple decay looked enough to scare even the ghosts if they had any scare left in them. No doubt the rats had at one time had their share in the destruction, but it was long since they had forsaken the house. And there was no disorder. The only thing that suggested hasty abandonment was the door of a closet standing wide open.

Something in a corner of the closet caught Cosmo's eye, and he had taken one step towards it when a sharp moan from the lips of his companion arrested him. He turned, saw her face agonized with fresh fear, and was rushing to the window, when she ran *at* him, pushed him back, and stood visibly trembling. He thought she would fall, for she seemed, as he told her afterwards, just like what he had felt when first he tried to walk from his bed to the sofa, and made haste to support her. Together they stood, with faces like two moons in the daytime,

listening, speechless. Presently Cosmo heard the rustling of twigs, and the sweep of back-swinging branches. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Joan gazed with expanding eyes of terror in Cosmo's face, gazed as if she must not look anywhere else, for there was that on every side the sight of which would kill her.

"Joan!" cried the same voice they had heard at the fountain. She shook, and held so to Cosmo's arm that she left the marks of her fingers, a dear sign to his heart for days that followed. The sympathy of her fear invaded him, and he would have darted to meet the enemy, but she held him fast and he yielded. Now, however, came a resolve, with its accompanying dawn of strength; she recovered a little, and began to pull him towards the closet. Involuntarily for a moment he resisted, fearing for her a worse discovery; but her action and look were imperative, and again he yielded.

They entered the closet, and he pulled the door to shut it upon them. It resisted; he pulled harder; a rusted hinge gave

way, and the door dropped and rested on its own corner, so that he had partly to lift it to get it to. He had just succeeded, when Mergwain's voice yet again calling Joan, sent her name from the open door echoing fearfully through the mouldy silences of the house. In the darkness of the closet, where there was just room for them to stand, she clung like a child to Cosmo, trembling in his arms like one in an ague-fit. The thought of what a terror many men are to the women of their house is both horrible and sad. The woman-fear in the world is one of its most mournful and pitiful outcries after a saviour.

The sounds of hesitating steps came from below. They went from one to another of the rooms, then began to ascend the stair.

"Now, Joan, dear Joan," said Cosmo, holding her to him, "whatever you do, keep quiet. Don't utter a sound. Please God, I will take care of you."

She pressed his arm, but did not speak.

The steps had reached the top of the

stair, and now entered the room. As one person Cosmo and Joan seemed to feel the eyes that looked all about it. Then the steps came towards the closet. Now was the decisive moment! Cosmo had made up his mind to keep still to the very last. He put a hand on the lock, and pressed the fallen corner of the door down against the floor. In the faint light that came through the crack at the top of it, he could see the dark terror of Joan's eyes fixed on his face. A hand laid hold of the key, tried the lock, and pulled and pulled, but in vain. It then tried the key the other way, and turned it, locking them in. The steps left the room, went down the stair, and out of the house.

"He's not gone far!" said Cosmo. "He will have the door open! We must get out at once! Please, give me what room you can, Joan, dear!"

She drew back from him as far as the space would allow. He put his shoulder to the door, and sent it into the middle of the room with a great crash, then ran and lifted it.

"Come, Joan! quick!" he cried; "help me to set it up again."

The moment there was something that had to be done, Joan's heart returned to her. In an instant they had the door jammed into its place, with the bolt in the catch as Mergwain had left it.

"Now," said Cosmo, "we must get down the stair and hide somewhere below till he pass."

They ran to the kitchen, Joan leading, and into a dark cellar opening off it. Hardly were they in when they heard Mergwain re-enter and go up the stair. Instantly they crept out, and keeping close to the house till they got to the back of it, went softly through the thicket to a neighbouring path, which led them to a little gate opening on the highway. The hurried walk was a severe trial to Cosmo's strength now that the excitement of adventure had relaxed and left him the weaker. Again and again had Joan to urge him on; but when they reached a little wood on the other side of the highway, she made him sit on a fallen tree.

"I believe," she said, "that wicked old butler has come to suspect something, and put Mergwain on our track. I would not for the world he knew all! You can't conceive, Cosmo, what he would think—and tell me to my face too! It was not an easy life with my father, Cosmo, but I would rather be with him now, wherever he is, than here with that brother of mine!"

Her eyes flashed and her cheeks reddened with indignation as she spoke.

"What had we better do?" said Cosmo, trying to hide his exhaustion.

"I am going to take you to the Jermyns. They are the only friends I have. Julia will be kind to you for my sake. I will tell *them* all about it. Mr. Jermyn of course knows already. I had to tell him, lest he should happen to mention it."

To Cosmo it was being sent from paradise to purgatory! But we must make the best of our purgatories.

"You will come and see me, won't you, Joan?" he said sadly.

"Yes, indeed!" she answered. "It will be in some ways easier than before. At home I never was free of the dread of being found out. But how shall I keep clear of telling stories! When you are safe, though, I sha'n't be so much tempted."

In truth, although she had seemed to fear all for herself, her chief dread had been of having Cosmo insulted.

"What you must have gone through for me!" said Cosmo. "It makes my heart ache to think of it!"

"It will be pleasant to look back on," returned Joan with a sad smile; "—nearly as pleasant as those days on the frozen hills! There are the hills again every winter! will the old days ever come again, Cosmo?"

"Old days never come again," answered Cosmo. "But do you know why, Joan?"

"No," murmured Joan, very sadly.

"Because they would be getting in the way of the new days, whose turn it is, and which are better," replied Cosmo. "You tell God, Joan, all about it, and he

will give us better days than those. To some it may seem absurd to believe in a great hearing Life, but it is what you and I need so much that it cannot look absurd to us!—Joan, if you should ever find you cannot pray any more, tell me, and I will try to help you. Always hitherto, when I seemed to be at the last gasp, things have taken a turn, so that it grew possible to go on again."

"Ah, you are younger than me, Cosmo!" said Joan, more sadly than ever.

Cosmo laughed. He was recovering breath, and with it his spirits.

"Now I won't submit to any airs on that ground," he said. "I've had enough of the sort from Agnes. As far back as I can remember she has always insisted she was old enough to be my mother."

"And how much older is she?"

"Two years."

"I am more than two years."

"How much—exactly?"

"Three years and a month."

"Then you must be old enough to be

my grandmother!—But I don't mean to be sat upon for all that."

Whether Joan had begun to feel a little jealous of Agnes, or only more interested in her, it would be hard to say, but Cosmo had now to answer a good many questions concerning her; and when she learned what a capable girl Agnes was, understanding Euclid and algebra, as Mr. Simon said, better than any boy he had ever had to teach, Cosmo himself included, certainly my lady's heart became aware of a little pain because of the cottar's daughter.

They reached at last the village and the doctor's house, where, to Joan's relief, the first person they met was Mr. Jermyn, to whom at once she told the main part of their adventure that day. He instantly proposed the very thing Joan was wishing, and was by no means sorry at the turn matters had taken—putting so much more of the game, as he called it, in his hands.

All that was necessary was soon told his father and sister, arrangements were speedily made, Cosmo was sent to bed, and

Joan invited to take lunch with them. This she thought it better to do, especially as both Jermyn and his sister offered to walk home with her after. What he would say if they met Mergwain, she did not venture to ask him: she knew he would say anything to get her out of a scrape, whereas Cosmo would only do or endure anything—from thrashing her brother to being thrashed himself.

She did not see Cosmo again, for Jermyn told her he was asleep—which was not true, but might have been for all the doctor knew, as he had not been to his room.

She did not see her brother for a week, and when she did he made no allusion to the affair. What was in his mind concerning her she did not know—farther than that he was always prepared for the discovery that the mantle of the wickedness of his fathers, which he had himself so righteously refused to put on, had been taken up by his sister instead.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### CATCH YOUR HORSE.

When Cosmo was left alone in his room, with orders from the doctor to put himself to bed, he sank wearily on a chair that stood with its back to the light, and his eye fell upon the stick he carried: it was not his own which he had taken up when he set out with Joan. How could he have changed it? Where could he have caught up this? He had no recollection either of laying down one or of taking up one. After a time he recalled this much, that, in the garden-house, at the moment when Joan cried out hearing her brother's approach, he was going towards the open closet, where a something, dull-shining in the dusk, which he took for the hilt of a sword, had attracted his attention: the

silver-handled walking-stick he now held must be that something! Either he had caught it up in obedience to some passing suggestion of defence, or in the dark his hand had come into contact with it and instinctively closed upon it.

But why was his gaze fixed on the mere head of a stick with such a strange expression of wondering interest? Because in all but size it was a very facsimile of the golden horse that had carried him to the university! The shape and ornamentation were both so peculiar, that there could be no mistake in deciding them common to the two. The more familiar any one was with their appearance, the stronger must be his conviction that the things themselves had a common origin, and if any significance, then a common one. There was an important difference however besides that of size—that of weight, namely: the stick was a bamboo, rather thick, but, handle and all, very light.

Proceeding to examine it, Cosmo found that every joint was double-mounted and

could be unscrewed. There were three of them, each forming a small box. In the first were a few grains of snuff, in the second a little of something that looked like gold dust, and the third smelt of opium. The top of the cane had a cap of silver, with a screw; this went into the lower part of the horse, and made of it a crutch-handle to the stick. He had screwed off this handle, and was in the act of replacing it, when his gaze was suddenly arrested, his heart seemed to stand still, and the old captain's foolish rime came rushing into his head. He started from his chair, took the handle to the window, and there stood regarding it fixedly.

Turning the horse upside down in his hand, to see the spot where the screw of the stick entered, ere he brought them together, his keen glance had spied, in one of the horse's delicately finished shoes, an empty hole where a nail ought to be. It was a hind shoe. In rushed the rime, as I have said—

> Catch yer naig, an' pu' his tail;
> In his hin' heel caw a nail!

"I do believe," he cried to himself, "this was the auld captain's stick, an' this is the verra horse was i' the villain's heid ilka time he cam ower the fule verse!"

There was then most likely some secret contrivance in the horse! Had that already been discovered, or did it remain for him now to discover it? A passion of curiosity seized him. But the stick was not his property: any discovery concerning or by means of it, must be made with the consent of its owner—Joan, namely, to whom her father had left his personal effects!

And now came to him an experience as strange as new: by nature and habit of a quietly expectant disposition, he began to burn with such a desire after the secret of the stick as seemed to savour of *possession*. Both angry and ashamed to feel so unlike himself, he replaced the handle, set the stick aside, and went to bed as the doctor had directed him. But the haunting eagerness would not let him rest; he kept

tossing from side to side in utter lack of repose. Then came and mingled with the longing an equally obtrusive and persistent dread lest the stick should vanish as mysteriously as it had come — lest when he woke he should find it nowhere. This at least he was able so far to encounter: he got up, unscrewed the horse, and taking it with him placed it under his pillow. But though the fear of losing it was less, the longing to penetrate its mystery seemed now doubled in force; under his head he felt the thing through the pillow, and it tormented him like an aching spot. It kept drawing him, tempting him, mocking him. His hand *would* go to it. A hundred times he resolved he would not touch it again, and as a matter of course kept his resolution so long as it was present to him; but the moment he forgot it the horse would be in his hand before the memory of it had time to return. Invariably on waking from however brief a slumber, he would find it in his grasp. Why, oh why did not Joan come to him! He

began almost to hate the thing. A servant brought him food, but he did not touch it, and kept constantly falling asleep and waking again.

On his return from accompanying lady Joan, Jermyn found him feverish, and brought him a draught. But when he learned that Joan was gone, disappointment displaced curiosity so entirely that he could not even recall how he had so lately felt, and never imagined the possible return of the passion. Neither did it return so long as he was awake, but all his dreams were about the stick and the old captain, who was continually telling him that it was his own, and saying, "Do it; do it; don't put off," with incessant repetition. As often, however, as Cosmo asked him what it was he would have him do, he became unintelligible or inaudible, and Cosmo would wake yet again with the horse in his hand. In the morning he screwed it on, and set the stick by his bedside.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PULL HIS TAIL.

About noon the next day Joan came, and was more like her former self than for a long time. Hardly was she seated when he showed her the stick and said,

"Did you ever see that before, Joan?"

"Do you remember a horse just like it, only larger?" she returned. "You showed it me in the drawing-room at Castle Warlock."

"I remember showing it you quite well," he answered. "That was the golden horse we wrote to you about afterwards. I should never have reached college but for that horse."

"I know," she returned. "Well, at the time, it made me think of the one you have in your hand. I had often

seen it in that same closet where, I suppose, you found it yesterday."

Cosmo told her he never knew he had taken it till he was in his room. How he had come to take it he could only conjecture. He then unscrewed the joints and showed her the different boxes.

"There's nothing in them," he said; "but I suspect there is something in the stick. Do you remember the silly rime you told me I said in my sleep once when I was ill?"

"Yes, very well," she answered.

"It was one that a grand-uncle of my father's, not yet forgotten in our part of the country, and spoken of as the old captain, used to repeat very often."—Joan started a little, and turned pale, but her back was to the light, and Cosmo saw in her face only what he took for a natural interest.—"I will repeat it presently in English; but first I must tell you that I am all but certain this stick once belonged to that same great grand-uncle of mine; and last night, as I was looking at it, I saw something

that made me all but certain also that this must be the horse, insignificant as it looks, on which the rime was made to run."

"How very odd! Show me, will you?"

"I can't be sure, you know, because I couldn't try it without your leave."

"Try what?"

"The stick with the rime."

"I don't understand."

"I will soon show you, if you will allow me."

"Why should you need my permission?"

"Because the stick is your property."

"How should that be, if it belonged to your great uncle?"

"Because it has been more than fifty years in your family, and your father left it to you. Besides, I cannot be absolutely certain it is the same."

"Do what you like with it, Cosmo. I give it back to you."

"I will not accept it, Joan—at least before you know what it may be.—And

now for the rime! This is how it goes in English:

> **Catch your nag and pull his tail;**
> **In his hind heel drive a nail;**
> **Pull his ears from one another:**
> **Stand up and call the king your brother.**

If you allow me, I will do to this horse what the rime says, and if the rime and the horse belong to each other, we shall have some result, I fancy."

"Do whatever you please, Cosmo," returned Joan, with a tremble in her voice.

Cosmo began to screw off the top of the stick. Joan left her chair, drew nearer to the bed, and presently sat on the edge of it, gazing with great wide eyes, and a shadow of horror in her look. She dreaded some frightful revelation: her father's habit of unconscious utterance had given her many things she dared not put together lest she should understand something. When the horse was free, Cosmo set the stick aside and said,

"The first direction the rime gives, is to pull his tail."

He pulled the horse's tail—of silver, apparently, like the rest of him—pulled it hard; but it seemed of a piece with his body, and there was no result visible.

"He doesn't seem to mind it," he said. "We'll try the next thing—which is to drive a nail in his hind heel. Now look here, Joan!—here, in one of his hind shoes, is a hole that looks as if a nail had come out of it! That is what brought the rime to my mind."

"Perhaps a tack would go in," said Joan, rising. "I shall pull one out of the edge of the carpet."

"It would be much too large," said Cosmo. "Perhaps a brad out of the gimp of that chair—— No, that might be larger still. Stay, I know! Have you got a hair-pin about you?"

She sat down again upon the bed, took off her bonnet, and soon found a hair-pin. Cosmo took it eagerly, and applied it to the hole in the shoe. Nothing the least larger would have gone in. He pushed

it gently, then a little harder—felt as if something yielded a little, returning his pressure, and pushed a little harder still. Something gave way, and a low vibrant noise followed, as of a watch running down. The two faces looked at each other, one red, and one pale. The sound ceased. They waited a little, in almost breathless silence. Nothing followed.

"Now," said Cosmo, "for the last thing!"

"Not quite the last," returned Joan, with what was nearly an hysterical laugh, for she felt her fear growing upon her, and must make an effort to shake it off: "the last thing is to stand up and call the king your brother."

"That much, as a mere tag and non-essential, I dare say we shall in any case omit," replied Cosmo. "—The next then is to pull his ears from each other."

He took hold of one of the tiny ears betwixt the finger and thumb of each hand, and pulled. The body of the horse came asunder, dividing down the back, and showed inside a piece of paper. It

was crushed, rather than folded, round something soft. Cosmo took it out and handed it to Joan.

"It is your turn now, Joan," he said. "I have done my part. You open it."

Cosmo's eyes were now fixed on Joan's fingers as hers had been on his. In the paper was a piece of cotton wool. She dropped the paper, and opened the wool. Bedded in it were two rings. The eyes of Cosmo fixed on one—the eyes of Joan on the other. One was a large diamond; the other a bloodstone, engraved.

"This is a valuable diamond," said Cosmo, who had taken it, and was regarding it closely.

"It shall be your share of the spoil, Cosmo," returned Joan. "I will keep this, if you don't mind."

"What have you got?" asked Cosmo.

"My father's signet-ring, I believe," she answered. "I have often heard him lament the loss of it."

Lord Mergwain's ring in the old captain's stick!—Things began to put themselves together in Cosmo's mind. He lay

thinking. Here and there he saw the glimmer of a theory. By degrees, though not just yet, it took form, and its form was this:

The old captain had won these rings from the young lord and put them for safety in the horse; Borland suspected, probably charged him with false play; they fought, and his lordship carried away the stick to recover his own; but he had failed to find the rings, probably taking the boxes in the bamboo for all its stowage.

He was not a little disappointed. Was this the great mystery of the much berimed horse? It was as if a supposed opal had burst and proved but a soap-bubble!

Joan sat silent, looking at the signet-ring, and the tears came slowly in her eyes.

"I *may* keep this ring, may I not, Cosmo?" she said.

"My dear Joan!" exclaimed Cosmo, "the ring is your own, not mine. If you will give me the stick, I shall be greatly obliged to you."

"But you *will* take the other ring, Cosmo?" answered Joan. "I do not care about rings. The stick of course is yours."

"I do care about rings," answered Cosmo; "but sooner than take this from you, Joan, I would part with the hope of seeing you again. Why, dear Joan, you don't know what this diamond is worth! —and you have no money!"

"Neither have you!" retorted Joan. "—What is the thing worth?"

"If I could weigh it, I should be better able to tell you. But its worth must anyhow be, I think—somewhere towards two hundred pounds."

"Then take it, Cosmo. Or give it to your father, with my dear love."

"My father would say—'How could you, Cosmo!' and from him that would be terrible to me. But I will give him the spirit of it, the message of the gift. That he will be delighted to have."

"But, Cosmo! it is of no use to me. How could I get money for it? If I made the attempt, Mergwain would hear

of it. I had far better give it him at once."

"That difficulty is soon got over," answered Cosmo. "I know where to get a fair price for it, and will send you the money. You will be quite rich for a little while!"

"My brother opens all my letters," replied Joan.

"I could send it to Mr. Jermyn."

Joan hesitated a moment, but did not object. The next instant they heard the doctor's step at the door, and his hand on the lock. She rose hastily, caught up her bonnet, and took a chair a little way off. Cosmo hid the ring and the horse under the bedclothes.

Jermyn cast a keen glance on the pair as he entered, and took for confusion the remains of excitement: he must make haste, he said to himself. He felt Cosmo's pulse, pronounced him feverish, and turning to Joan, said he must not talk, for he had not got over yesterday: it would be awkward if he were to have a relapse. Joan rose and took her leave, saying she

would come again the next morning. Jermyn went down with her, and sent Cosmo a draught.

As soon as he had taken it almost, he felt inclined to sleep, and turned from the light. But in so doing he knocked down the stick, which was leaning against the bed, and the noise it made roused him. Then he bethought him he must put the ring in a place of safety before he went to sleep—and where better than in the horse! He refolded it in the cotton wool, replaced them in the horse, and set about discovering how to close it again. But spring, nor notch, nor any sign of possible attachment between the two halves of the animal could he find. At length however he noted that the tail had slipped a little way out, and was loose; and experimenting with it, by and by found that by holding the parts together, and turning the tail three or four times round, the horse—though how he had not an idea—was restored to its former apparent solidity.

And now where would the horse be

safest from possibly prying eyes? Clearly, in its own place. He got out of bed therefore to pick up the stick, and seeing on the carpet the piece of paper which had been round the cotton, picked that up also, and having replaced the handle, smoothed out the paper to get a look at what seemed a diagram of some sort. It was plainly a lineation of something—but of what, or even of what kind of thing, he could not tell. It might be of the fields constituting a property; it might be of the stones in a wall; it might be a schoolboy's exercise in trigonometry applied to the measuring of land. He did not think it could have anything to do with nautical matters. It must mean something; but that something could hardly be of consequence to anybody! In all probability it had merely been caught up as a wrap to hold the cotton about the rings lest they should rattle and betray a hollow. Still there could be no harm in replacing it also where he had found it. Once more he unscrewed the horse, opened it again with Joan's hair-pin, deposited the paper,

and reclosed the horse, then lay down, glad that Joan had such a diamond, but thinking the old captain had made a great fuss about a small matter. In a few moments he fell fast asleep—slept soundly, and woke much better.

In the evening came the doctor, and spent the whole of it with him, interesting and pleasing him more than ever, displaying one after another traits of character which Cosmo, more than prejudiced in his favour already, took for additional proofs of an exceptional elevation of character and aim. Nor am I capable of determining how far Jermyn may not have attributed the same to himself.

And now that Joan had a diamond of such value, Cosmo gladly recalled the offer Jermyn had made of lending him money. He had but to take the ring to Mr. Burns on his way home, and Joan would repay him out of what he sent her for it. He told Jermyn, therefore, as he sat by his bedside, that he found himself obliged to accept his generous proposal, but would repay the money within a week or so after his departure.

The doctor smiled—with some grounds of satisfaction unsuspected of Cosmo, and taking out his pocket-book, said as he opened it,

"I have just cashed a cheque, fortunately; so you had better have the money at once.—Don't bother yourself about it," he added, as he handed him a few notes; "there is no hurry. I don't want it."

"This is too much," said Cosmo.

"Never mind; better too much in your pocket than too little. You needn't spend a penny the more."

Cosmo thanked him and put the notes under his pillow. The doctor bade him good night and left him.

The moment he was alone, a wild longing sprang up in his heart to see his father. The first minute he was able to travel, he would set out! His brain haunted with flashing water and speedwells and daisies and *horse-gowans*, he fell fast asleep, and dreamed that his father and he were defending the castle from a great company of pirates with the old captain at the head of them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE THICK DARKNESS.

The next day he was still better, and could not think why the doctor would not let him get up. But as the hours went on, he wondered yet more why Joan did not come to him. The thought never crossed him that it was the doctor's doing. Jermyn would have as little intercourse between them as might be till he should have sprung his spiritual mine. But he did all he could to prevent him from missing her, and the same night opened his heart to Cosmo—that is, the show-part of it.

In terms extravagant, which he seemed to use only because he could not repress them, he revealed to his half frozen listener that his whole nature, heart and soul and

brain, had been for years bound up in lady Joan; that he had again and again been tempted to escape despair by death; and that if he had to live without her, his use in the world would be over, for he must cease to care for anything, and could no longer endure life. He begged therefore his friend Cosmo Warlock, seeing he had so much influence with the lady, to speak what he honestly could in his behalf. He had often been driven to doubt whether there was indeed a God that cared for his creatures; and if he were now disappointed of his soul's desire, it would be impossible for him to believe at all any longer.

Such words at any former time would have been sufficient to displace any man from such a pedestal as that on which Cosmo had set Jermyn. What if all the ladies in the world should forsake him, was not God yet the all in all? But now as he lay shivering, the words that entered his ears seemed to issue from his own soul. Listening he lay like one whom the first sting has paralyzed, but who only feels the

more every advance in the invasion of death. It was a silent, seemingly a nerveless, yet in truth an agonizing wrestle of life with death, raising a storm in his soul whose waves went deeper than his consciousness. He held down his heart like a wild beast which, if he let it up for a moment, would fly at his throat and strangle him. Nor could the practised eye of the doctor fail to perceive what was going on in his patient. He said to himself—"Better him than me! He is young and will get over it." He read nobility and self-abnegation in every shadow that crossed the youth's countenance—indication ah how faint of the hail mingled with fire that swept his universe!—and said to himself that he had neither mistaken the lad nor presumed on his own faculty a hair's breadth. He took care to give no sign that he saw Cosmo's heroic efforts to hide his sufferings, leaving him to imagine them successful. How Cosmo longed for his departure that he might in peace despair! Hardly had he closed the door behind him when a cry

half of agony half of relief broke from his tortured heart. It reached the ears of Jermyn: he said "Poor boy!" and went quietly down the stair.

What is it in suffering that makes man and beast long for loneliness? I think it is an unknown something, more and deeper and nearer than self, calling out of solitude—"Come to me!—come!" How little of the tenderness that human souls need, and after which consciously or unconsciously they hunger, do we give or receive! The cry of the hurt heart for solitude, seems to me the call of the heart of God—changed by the echo in the hollows of that of his creature, and sounding to it like its own—"Come out from among them; come to me and I will give you rest!" In him alone broods waiting the profound repose of perfect love—the one only peace after which our nature, unrevealed to itself, yearns. Hurt by the selfishness and greed and lying to which more or less we have contributed our share, and to escape which it were useless to go out of the

world; worse hurt by our own indignation at wrong and lack of patience under it, each one of us has in his house a door of escape—how seldom opened, although haunted with the knockings of the hand of Love! The right God claims as his affair, and he will see it done; but the wrong is by us a thousand times well suffered, if it but drive us to open that door into the infinite quiet—not the solitude the wounded spirit imagines, least of all a waste, for there the silence itself is God.

That was a terrible night to Cosmo—a night billowy with black fire. It reminded him afterwards of nothing so much as that word of the Lord—*the power of darkness.* It was not merely darkness with no light in it, but darkness alive and operative. He had hardly dared suspect the nature, only now knew the force, and had not yet proved the strength of the love with which he loved Joan. Great things may be foreseen, but they cannot be known until they arrive. Disease and weakness and love had been ripening

him; now only was such loss and suffering possible to him. Some hearts must break that they may blossom. Cosmo's heart was now in blossom—I may not say in *full* blossom, for what the full blossom of the human heart is, the holiest saint with the mightiest imagination cannot know, he can but feel its radiance from afar—and it was not broken.

It was a severe duty that was now required of him. I do not mean the performance of his *friend's* final request, namely, that he would speak to Joan on his behalf; that he had forgotten, for it was not to be done; it could not have been attempted with honesty even towards Jermyn: inevitable emotion would have pleaded for himself and not his friend. It was enough that he must yield the lady of his dreams, become the lady of his living soul. Whether she loved Jermyn or not he did not know, and neither could alter the case: Jermyn was his friend and had trusted in him—had confessed that his soul was bound up in the lady: one of them had to go to the

torture-chamber; and when the *question* lay between him and another, Cosmo knew what must follow. Cosmo alone was in Cosmo's hands; his own self was all he held, all he had power over, all he could offer, could yield. Mr. Simon had taught him that as a mother gives her children money to put in the plate on a Sunday, so God gives his children *selves*, with wishes and choices, that they may have the true offering to lay upon the true altar; for on that altar nothing will burn but *selves*.

"Very tyrannical! A cruel theory and a hard!" says my reader? So will it ever appear to the man who has neither the courage nor the sense of law to obey it. He shall be the eternal slave who says to Duty *I will not*. What use to tell such a man of the "*thousandfold*," or set forth to him the fact that that altar is in truth the nest of God's heart, and that there the poor, unsightly, callow offerings shall lie, brooded upon by divinest love, until they come to shape and loveliness, and wings grow upon them to bear them back

to the sacrificer divinely precious? Cosmo was not able to *think* such things now; the memory even of what he had thought and been taught was gone from his consciousness, but the truth of it all was alive in his life, and moved in his action; he did not feel, he *did* it—did it when nothing seemed worth doing.

The things he was able to think were such as these: how much greater a man than he was Jermyn!—how much more worthy of the love of a woman like Joan! How good he had been to him! What a horrible thing it would have been had Jermyn saved his life and he destroyed Jermyn's! Perhaps Joan might have come one day to love him; but how miserable she was with her brother, and when could he have delivered her! Here was one who would, the moment he might, give her a house of her own, make her a free woman! For him to come in the way would be to put his hand to the rack on which the life of Joan lay stretched!

But for what he *felt* all through the

fearful night, that must remain formless in its own chaos. His suffering was too intense, and conviction of duty too strong, to leave room for anything that was really thought. The darkness billowed and rolled about him, and life was a frightful thing.

For where was God this awful time? He was not within the ken of the banished youth! Cosmo's consciousness was outside the city of life—not even among the dogs—outside with bare nothingness—cold negation. Alas for him who had so lately offered to help another to pray, thinking the hour would never come when he could not pray! It had *come!* He did not try to pray. The thought of it did not wake in him. But let no one say he was punished for his presumption! There was no presumption concerned—only ignorance. He did not know—nor does any one know save in part—what awful possibilities lie in us. He had but spoken from what he knew—life seemed to him inseparable from prayer. And was it then separable? Surely not. He could

not now pray—but was he alive? To live, one must choose to live. He was dead in himself, though his angel was alive with God. His was not the real death. There is a death that is content and suffers nothing: that is death indeed. But annihilation is not death—is nothing like it—is one of the opposites of death—would be a refuge from it. Cosmo's condition was more like annihilation. It had no evil in it—only a ghastly imperfection—an abysmal lack—an exhaustion at the very roots of being. God seemed away. True, God could never be away and be God; neither could man be man with God away; but every common day, he who would be a live child of the living has to fight the God-denying look of things, to believe that, in spite of their look, they are God's, and God is in them, and working his saving will in them! Cosmo had not turned his back; he had but fallen in the fight, and God seemed gone, and *things* had rushed in and overwhelmed him. He was dead, as one in a swoon is dead. Although he did not

yet know it, it was not the loss of Joan, but the seeming loss of his God that had hollowed the last depth of his misery. But such a shadow is of all ills the surest to pass; for God changing not, his life must destroy every false show concerning him. Cosmo was now as one of those holy children bound hand and foot in the furnace, ere the fire had consumed their bonds and let them pace their glowing prison. Stifled with the smoke and the heat, he must yet for a time lie helpless; not yet could he lift up his voice and call upon the ice and the cold, the frost and the snow, to bless the Lord, to praise and exalt him for ever. But God was not far from him. Feelings are not scientific instruments for that which surrounds them; they but speak of themselves when they say, "I am cold; I am dark." The final perfection will be when our faith is utterly and absolutely independent of our feelings. I dare to imagine such the final victory of our Lord—when he followed the cry of *Why hast thou*

*forsaken me?* with—*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

Shall we then bemoan ourselves in any darkness? Shall we not rather gird up our strength to encounter it, that we too from our side, as well as God from his, may break the passage for the light beyond? He who struggles with the darkness all the night shall know the gentleness that makes man great—the face of God bringing the dawn. But the night must fulfil its hours. Men are meant and sent to be troubled—that they may rise above the region of storm, above the possibility in themselves of being troubled.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE DAWN.

STRANGE to say, there was no return of the fever. He seemed through the utter carelessness of agony so to have abandoned his body that he no longer affected it. To be aware of his body at all a man must have some hope. As the darkness began to yield, he fell asleep.

Then came to him a curious dream.—For ages Joan had been persuading him to go with her, and the old captain to go with him—the latter angry and pulling, the former weeping and imploring. He would go with neither. At last they vanished both, and he sat solitary on the side of a bare hill. Below him in the valley stood all that remained of Castle Warlock. He had been dead so many

years that it was now but a half-shapeless ruin of roofless walls, haggard and hollow and gray and desolate, sticking up from its ridge of rock like a solitary tooth from the jaw of some skeleton beast. But where was his father? If he had been so long dead, how was it he had not yet found him? He must rise and seek him! He must be somewhere in the universe! He rose. But therewith came softly stealing, at first hardly audible, a strain of music up from the valley below. He listened. It grew as it came, and held him bound. Like an upward, a fountain river it rose, and grew with a strong rushing. Heart and brain it flooded all, working in him a marvellous good, a calm glory, a live peace, which yet he did not understand. And all the time that the music filled him thus, his eyes were upon the dead home of his fathers. But, wonder of wonders! what did he see? The ruin began to change! it grew before his eyes! It was growing out of the earth like a plant! It grew and grew until it was high as in the old days, and then it

grew higher! A roof gathered upon it! Up went towers and turrets, with bartizan and battlements, growing still—all to the sound of that creative music! Like fresh shoots from their stem, out from it went wings and walls, with rampart and ravelin, bastions and glacis! Like some water-plant in the great mere of the universe it was rushing visibly on to a blossom of unknown grandeur, of aeonian perfection—when the music dropped, the dream glode away, and he woke.

But instead of the enemy coming in like a flood at the gate the dream left open behind it, to his astonishment he found, as his consciousness returned, his soul as calm as it was sad. God had given him while he slept, and now he knew him near as his own heart. The first *thought* that came was, that his God was Joan's God too, and therefore all was well; so long as God took care of her, and was with him, and his will was done in them both, all was on the way to be well so as nothing could be better. And with that he knew what he had to

do—knew it without thinking—and proceeded at once to do it. He rose and dressed himself.

It was still the gray sunless morning. The dream, with its dream-ages of duration, had not crossed the shallows of the dawn. Quickly he gathered his few things into his knapsack, took his bamboo, made sure he had his money safe, stole quietly down the stair and softly out of the house, and had left the village by the southward road ere any of its inhabitants were astir.

When he had gone about a mile, coming to a road that led eastward, he turned into it, with the design of going a few miles in that direction, and then going as straight north as he could. When he had walked what to his weakness was a long distance, all at once, with the dismay of a perverse dream, he saw among the trees before him the towers of Cairncarque. Was he never to escape them in the body any more than in the spirit? He turned back, and again southwards.

But disappointment increased both weakness and weariness; as he measured back the way he had come, he had often to sit down; as often, however, he got up again and walked. Coming at length to a village, he learned that a coach for the north would arrive within an hour; he went to the inn, had some breakfast, and waited for it. Finding it would pass through the village he had left, he took an inside place. When it stopped for a few moments in its one street, he saw Jermyn cross the road a little way off, and that was the last he saw of him.

After travelling some fifty miles, he left the coach, and betook himself to his feet, partly to save his money, partly because he felt the need of exercise—not to stifle thought, but to clear it. Alternately walking and riding, he found his strength increase as he went. His sorrow continued in general that of a cloudy summer day, nor ever again, so long as the journey lasted, rose to the passion of the wintry tempest.

At length he drew nigh the city at

whose university he had studied. On foot, weary and dusty and worn, he entered it like a returning prodigal. Few Scotchmen would think he could have made good use of his learning! But he had made the use of it God required of him; and there are Scotchmen capable of believing that in itself a sufficient success, seeing a man is sent into the world neither to make money nor to gain position, but to seek the kingdom and righteousness of God.

He walked straight into Mr. Burns's shop.

The jeweller did not know him at first, but the moment he spoke, recognized him. Cosmo had been dubious what his reception might be, but Mr. Burns held out his hand as if they had parted only the day before, saying,

"I thought you would get to me before Death! Man, you ought to give a body time."

"Mr. Burns," replied Cosmo, still holding his hand, "I am very sorry I behaved to you as I did. I am not sorry

I said what I said, but I am sorry I never came again to see you. Perhaps we did not quite understand on either side."

"We shall understand each other better now, I fancy," rejoined Mr. Burns. "I am glad you have not changed your opinions, for I have changed mine. If it weren't for you, I should be retired by this time, and you would have found another name over the door. But we'll have a talk about it all by and by. Allow me to ask whither you are bound."

"I am on my way home," answered Cosmo. "I have not seen my father for more than two years."

"You'll do me the honour to put up at my house to-night, will you not? I am a bachelor, as you know, but I will do my best to make you comfortable."

Cosmo gladly assented, and as it was now evening, Mr. Burns hastened the shutting of his shop. In a few minutes they were seated at supper.

As soon as they were alone, they began an earnest talk. And now indeed they found that they understood each other.

Much was said between them concerning divine righteousness in business, and its special operation in that of the jeweller. Then Cosmo told him about the ring—how he had found it, the position of lady Joan with regard to it, that he had brought it to him, and why he had done so.

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Warlock," responded the jeweller, "for placing such confidence in me, and that notwithstanding the mistaken principles you heard me advocate. The words you then spoke, and I took so ill, kept returning, in spite of my scorn of them, and that always at the most inconvenient moments, until at last I resolved to look the thing in the face, and think it fairly out. The result is that, although I dare say nobody recognizes any difference in my way of doing business, there is a great difference. I now think of my neighbour's side of the bargain as well as my own, and abstain from doing what it would vex me to find I had not been sharp enough to prevent him from doing. In consequence, I am

not so rich as I might have been, but I enjoy life more, and hope the days of my ignorance God winks at."

Cosmo could not reply for pleasure. Mr. Burns saw his emotion, and understood it. From that hour they were friends who loved each other.

"And now for the ring!" said the jeweller.

Cosmo produced it.

Mr. Burns looked at it as if his keen eyes would pluck out the heart of its mystery, turned it all ways, examined it in every position relative to the light, removed it from its setting, went through the diamond-catechism with it afresh, weighed it, thought over it, and said,

"What do you take the stone to be worth, Mr. Warlock?"

"I can only guess, of course," replied Cosmo; "but the impression on my mind is that it is worth nearer two hundred than a hundred and fifty pounds."

"You are right," answered Mr. Burns. "You ought to be in the trade. I could make a good jeweller of you. This ring

is worth two hundred guineas, fair market-value. But as I must sell again, and cannot ask more than it is worth, I must take my profit off you: do you think that fair?"

"Perfectly," answered Cosmo.

"Then I must give you only two hundred pounds for it, and take the shillings myself. You see it may be some time before I get my money again."

As soon as the bargain was concluded, Cosmo sat down and wrote to Joan. So long as there was nothing that must be said, he had feared writing.

"My dearest Joan,

"As you have trusted me hitherto, so trust me still, and wait for the reason of my going away without bidding you good-bye till the time for giving it comes. It must come one day, for the Master says there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. I know therefore I shall be allowed to tell you everything.

"I enclose a cheque, as good as bank-notes, and much safer to send. Mr.

Jermyn will easily turn it into money for you.

"I borrowed of him fifteen pounds—a good deal more than I wanted. I have therefore given Mr. Burns, the jeweller, five pounds to add to the two hundred he pays for the ring; and I beg you, Joan, to pay for me the fifteen pounds to Mr. Jermyn, because I would rather be your debtor than his. The ten pounds I will pay you when I can—perhaps not in this world. In the next—but for that we must wait—who more earnestly than I!

"To all eternity, Joan, I shall never cease to love you—first for yourself, then for your great lovely goodness to me. May Love take you to his heart—as he is always trying to do with all of us!

"I mean to let him have me out and out.

"Dearest Joan,

"Your far-off cousin, but near friend,

"Cosmo Warlock."

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