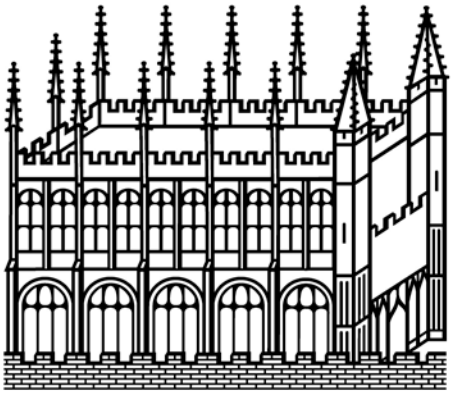

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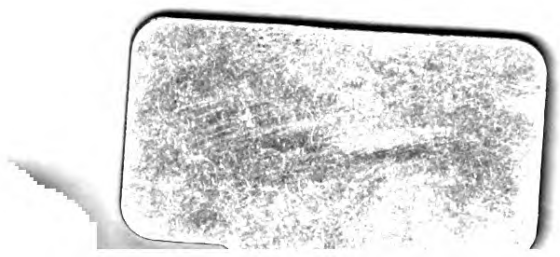

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CHAPTER XXX.

A STRANGE TEXT.

FOR some time after the events last related, things went on pretty smoothly with us for several years. Indeed, although I must confess that what I said in my haste, when Mr. S. wanted me to write this book, namely, that nothing had ever happened to me worth telling, was by no means correct, and that I have found out my mistake in the process of writing it, yet, on the other hand, it must be granted that my story could never have reached the mere bulk required if I had not largely drawn upon the history of my friends to

supplement my own. And it needs no prophetic gift to foresee that it will be the same to the end of the book. The lives of these friends however have had so much to do with all that is most precious to me in our own life, that if I were to leave out only all that did not immediately touch upon the latter, the book, whatever it might appear to others, could not possibly then appear to myself anything like a real representation of my actual life and experiences. The drawing might be correct, but the colour— ?

What with my children, and the increase of social duty resulting from the growth of acquaintance — occasioned in part by my success in persuading Percivale to mingle a little more with his fellow-painters—my heart and mind and hands were all pretty fully occupied; but I still managed to see Marion two or three times a week, and

to spend about so many hours with her, sometimes alone, sometimes with her friends as well. Her society did much to keep my heart open and to prevent it from becoming selfishly absorbed in its cares for husband and children. For love which is *only* concentrating its force, that is, which is not at the same time widening its circle, is itself doomed, and for its objects ruinous, be those objects ever so sacred. God himself could never be content that his children should love him only; nor has he allowed the few to succeed who have tried after it: perhaps their divinest success has been their most mortifying failure. Indeed, for exclusive love, sharp suffering is often sent as the needful cure—needful to break the stony crust which, in the name of love for one's own, gathers about the divinely glowing core—a crust which, promising to cherish by keeping in the heat, would yet

gradually thicken until all was crust; for truly, in things of the heart and spirit, as the warmth ceases to spread, the molten mass within ceases to glow, until at length, but for the divine care and discipline, there would be no love left for even spouse or child — only for self — which is eternal death.

For some time I had seen a considerable change in Roger. It reached even to his dress. Hitherto, when got up for dinner, he was what I was astonished to hear my eldest boy the other day call "a howling swell," but at other times he did not even escape remark—not for the oddity merely, but the slovenliness of his attire. He had worn, for more years than I dare guess, a brown coat, of some rich-looking stuff, whose long pile was stuck together in many places with spots and dabs of paint, so that he looked like our long-haired Bedlington

terrier Fido, towards the end of the week in muddy weather. This was now discarded, so far at least as to be hung up in his brother's study, to be at hand when he did anything for him there, and replaced by a more civilized garment of tweed, of which he actually showed himself a little careful; while, if his necktie *was* red, it was of a very deep and rich red, and he had seldom worn one at all before; and his tall brigand-looking felt-hat was exchanged for one of half the altitude, which he did not crush on his head with quite as many indentations as its surface could hold. He also began to go to church with us sometimes.

But there was a greater and more significant change than any of these. We found that he was sticking more steadily to work. I can hardly say *his* work, for he was a Jack-of-all-trades, as I have already indi-

cated. He had a small income, left him by an old maiden aunt, with whom he had been a favourite, which had hitherto seemed to do him nothing but harm, enabling him to alternate fits of comparative diligence with fits of positive idleness. I have said also, I believe, that, although he could do nothing thoroughly, application alone was wanted to enable him to distinguish himself in more than one thing. His forte was engraving on wood; and my husband said that, if he could do so well with so little practice as he had had, he must be capable of becoming an admirable engraver. To our delight then, we discovered, all at once, that he had been working steadily for three months for the Messrs. D., whose place was not far from our house. He had said nothing about it to his brother, probably from having good reason to fear that he would regard it only as a *spurt*. Hav-

ing now however executed a block which greatly pleased himself, he had brought a proof impression to show Percivale; who, more pleased with it than even Roger himself, gave him hearty congratulation, and told him it would be a shame if he did not bring his execution in that art to perfection —from which, judging by the present specimen, he said it could not be far off. The words brought into Roger's face an expression of modest gratification which it rejoiced me to behold: he accepted Percivale's approbation more like a son than a brother, with a humid glow in his eyes and hardly a word on his lips. It seemed to me that the child in his heart had begun to throw off the swaddling clothes which foolish manhood had wrapped around it, and the germ of his being was about to assert itself. I have seldom indeed seen Percivale look so pleased.

"Do me a dozen as good as that," he said, "and I'll have the proofs framed in silver-gilt."

It *has* been done, but the proofs had to wait longer for the frame than Percivale for the proofs.

But he need have held out no such bribe of brotherly love, for there was another love already at work in himself more than sufficing to the affair. But I check myself: who shall say what love is sufficing for this or for that? Who with the most enduring and most passionate love his heart can hold, will venture to say that he could have done without the love of a brother? Who will say that he could have done without the love of the dog whose bones have lain mouldering in his garden for twenty years? It is enough to say that there was a more engrossing, a more marvellous love at work.

Roger always however took a half-holiday on Saturdays, and now generally came to us. On one of these occasions I said to him:

"Wouldn't you like to come and hear Marion play to her friends this evening, Roger?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," he answered, and we went.

It was delightful. In my opinion Marion is a real artist. I do not claim for her the higher art of origination—though I could claim for her a much higher faculty than the artistic itself. I suspect for instance that Moses was a greater man than the writer of the book of Job, notwithstanding that the poet moves me so much more than the divine politician. Marion combined in a wonderful way the critical faculty with the artistic—which two, however much of the one may be found with-

out the other, are mutually essential to the perfection of each. While she uttered from herself she heard with her audience; while she played and sung with her own fingers and mouth, she at the same time listened with their ears, knowing what they must feel, as well as what she meant to utter. And hence it was, I think, that she came into such vital contact with them even through her piano.

As we returned home, Roger said, after some remark of mine of a cognate sort—

"Does she never try to teach them anything, Ethel?"

"She is constantly teaching them whether she tries or not," I answered. "If you can make any one believe that there is something somewhere to be trusted, is not that the best lesson you can give him? That can be taught only by being such that people cannot but trust you."

"I didn't need to be told that," he answered. What I want to know is, whether or not she ever teaches them by word of mouth—an ordinary and inferior mode, if you will."

"If you had ever heard her, you would not call hers an ordinary or inferior mode," I returned. "Her teaching is the outcome of her life, the blossom of her being, and therefore has the whole force of her living truth to back it."

"Have I offended you, Ethel?" he asked.

Then I saw that, in my eagerness to glorify my friend, I had made myself unpleasant to Roger—a fault of which I had been dimly conscious before now. Marion would never have fallen into that error. She always made her friends feel that she was *with* them, side by side with them and turning her face in the same direc-

tion, before she attempted to lead them further.

I assured him that he had not offended me, but that I had been foolishly backing him from the front, as I once heard an Irishman say—some of whose bulls were very good milch-cows.

"She teaches them every Sunday evening," I added.

"Have you ever heard her?"

"More than once. And I never heard anything like it."

"Could you take me with you sometime?" he asked, in an assumed tone of ordinary interest, out of which however he could not keep a slight tremble.

"I don't know.—I don't quite see why I shouldn't.—And yet—"

"Men do go," urged Roger, as if it were mere half-indifferent suggestion.

"Oh, yes; you would have plenty to

keep you in countenance!" I returned; "—men enough—and worth teaching too—some of them at least!"

"Then I don't see why she should object to me for another."

"I don't know that she would. You are not exactly of the sort—you know—that—"

"I don't see the difference. I see no essential difference, at least. The main thing is, that I am in want of teaching—as much as any of them. And if she stands on circumstances, I am a working man as much as any of them—perhaps more than most them. Few of them work after midnight, I should think, as I do not unfrequently."

"Still, all admitted, I should hardly like—"

"I didn't mean you were to take me without asking her," he said. "I should never have dreamed of that."

"And if I were to ask her, I am certain she would refuse. But," I added, thinking over the matter a little, "I will take you without asking her. Come with me to-morrow night. I don't think she will have the heart to send you away."

"I will," he answered, with more gladness in his voice than he intended, I think, to manifest itself.

We arranged that he should call for me at a certain hour.

I told Percivale, and he pretended to grumble that I was taking Roger instead of him.

"It was Roger and not you that made the request," I returned. "I can't say I see why you should go because Roger asked. A woman's logic is not equal to that."

"I didn't mean he wasn't to go. But why shouldn't I be done good to as well as he?"

"If you really want to go," I said, "I don't see why you shouldn't. It's ever so much better than going to any church I know of—except one. But we must be prudent. I can't take more than one the first time. We must get the thin edge of the wedge in first."

"And you count Roger the thin edge?"

"Yes."

"I'll tell him so."

"Do.—The thin edge, mind, without which the thicker the rest is, the more useless!—Tell him that, if you like. But, seriously, I quite expect to take you there too the Sunday after."

Roger and I went. Intending to be a little late, we found when we reached the house, that, as we had wished, the class was already begun. In going up the stairs, we saw very few of the grown inhabitants, but in several of the rooms, of which the doors

stood open, elder girls taking care of the younger children—in one, a boy nursing the baby with as much interest as any girl could have shown. We lingered on the way, wishing to give Marion time to get so thoroughly into her work that she could take no notice of our intrusion. When we reached the last stair we could at length hear her voice, of which the first words we could distinguish, as we still ascended, were—

"I will now read to you the chapter of which I spoke."

The door being open, we could hear well enough, although she was sitting where we could not see her. We would not show ourselves until the reading was ended: so much at least we might overhear without offence.

Before she had read many words, Roger and I began to cast strange looks on each

other. For this was the chapter she read:

"And Joseph, wheresoever he went in the city, took the Lord Jesus with him, where he was sent for to work, to make gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; the Lord Jesus was with him wheresoever he went. And as often as Joseph had anything in his work to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch his hand towards it. And presently it became as Joseph would have it. So that he had no need to finish anything with his own hands, for he was not very skilful at his carpenter's trade.

"On a certain time the king of Jerusalem sent for him, and said, I would have thee make me a throne of the same dimensions with that place in which I commonly sit. Joseph obeyed, and forthwith began the work, and continued two years in the king's

palace before he finished it. And when he came to fix it in its place, he found it wanted two spans on each side of the appointed measure. Which when the king saw, he was very angry with Joseph; and Joseph afraid of the king's anger, went to bed without his supper, taking not anything to eat. Then the Lord Jesus asked him what he was afraid of. Joseph replied, Because I have lost my labour in the work which I have been about these two years. Jesus said to him, Fear not, neither be cast down; do thou lay hold on one side of the throne, and I will the other, and we will bring it to its just dimensions. And when Joseph had done as the Lord Jesus said, and each of them had with strength drawn his side, the throne obeyed, and was brought to the proper dimensions of the place: which miracle when they who stood by saw, they were astonished, and praised God. The

throne was made of the same wood, which was in being in Solomon's time, namely, wood adorned with various shapes and figures."

Her voice ceased, and a pause followed.

"We must go in now," I whispered.

"She'll be going to say something now; just wait till she's started," said Roger.

"Now what do you think of it?" asked Marion, in a meditative tone.

We crept within the scope of her vision, and stood. A voice which I knew, was at the moment replying to her question.

"*I* don't think it's much of a chapter, that, grannie."

The speaker was the keen-faced, elderly man, with iron-grey whiskers, who had come forward to talk to Percivale on that miserable evening when we were out searching for Little Ethel. He sat near where we stood by the door, between two respectable-

looking women, who had been listening to the chapter as devoutly as if it had been of the true gospel.

"Sure, grannie, that ain't out o' the Bible?" said another voice, from somewhere farther off.

"We'll talk about that presently," answered Marion. "I want to hear what Mr. Jarvis has to say to it: he's a carpenter himself, you see—a joiner, that is, you know."

All the faces in the room were now turned towards Jarvis.

"Tell me why you don't think much of it, Mr. Jarvis," said Marion.

"'Tain't a bit likely," he answered.

"What isn't likely?"

"Why, not one single thing in the whole kit of it. And first and foremost, 'tain't a bit likely the old man 'ud ha' been sich a duffer."

"Why not? There must have been stupid people then as well as now."

"Not *his* father," said Jarvis decidedly.

"He wasn't but his step-father, like, you know, Mr. Jarvis," remarked the woman beside him in a low voice.

"Well, he'd never ha' been *hers* then. *She* wouldn't ha' had a word to say to *him*."

"I have seen a good—and wise woman too—with a dull husband," said Marion.

"You know you don't believe a word of it yourself, grannie," said still another voice.

"Besides," she went on without heeding the interruption, "in those times, I suspect, such things were mostly managed by the parents, and the woman herself had little to do with them."

A murmur of subdued indignation arose—chiefly of female voices.

"Well, *they* wouldn't then," said Jarvis.

"He might have been rich," suggested Marion.

"I'll go bail *he* never made the money then," said Jarvis. "An old idget! I don't believe sich a feller 'ud ha' been *let* marry a woman like her—I *don't*."

"You mean you don't think God would have let him?"

"Well, that's what I *do* mean, grannie. The thing couldn't ha' been—nohow."

"I agree with you quite. And now I want to hear more of what in the story you don't consider likely."

"Well, it ain't likely sich a workman 'ud ha' stood so high i' the trade, that the king of Jerusalem would ha' sent for *him* of all the tradesmen in the town to make his new throne for him. No more it ain't likely—and let him be as big a duffer as ever was, to be a jiner at all—that he'd ha' been two year at work on that there throne—an' a

carvin' of it in figures too!—and never found out it was four spans too narrer for the place it had to stand in. Do ye 'appen to know now, grannie, how much is a span?"

"I don't know.—Do you know, Mrs. Percivale?"

The sudden reference took me very much by surprise; but I had not forgotten happily the answer I received to the same question, when anxious to realise the monstrous height of Goliath.

"I remember my father telling me," I replied, "that it was as much as you could stretch between your thumb and little finger."

"There!" cried Jarvis triumphantly, parting the extreme members of his right hand against the back of the woman in front of him—"that would be seven or eight inches! Four times that?—Two foot and a half at least! Think of that!"

"I admit the force of both your objections," said Marion.—"And now to turn to a more important part of the story—what do you think of the miracle attributed to our Lord in it? What do you think of the way in which according to it he got his father out of his evil plight?"

I saw plainly enough that she was quietly advancing towards some point in her view—guiding the talk thitherward, steadily, without haste or effort.

Before Jarvis had time to make any reply, the blind man, mentioned in a former chapter, struck in, with the tone of one who had been watching his opportunity.

"*I* make more o' that pint than the t'other," he said. "A man as is a duffer may well make a mull of a thing, but a man as knows what he's up to can't. I don't make much o' them miracles, you know, grannie—that is, I don't know, and what

I don't know, I won't say as I knows; but what I'm sure of is this here one thing—that man or boy as *could* work a miracle, you know, grannie, wouldn't work no miracle as there wasn't no good working of."

"It was to help his father," suggested Marion.

Here Jarvis broke in almost with scorn.

"To help him to pass for a clever fellow when he was as great a duffer as ever broke bread!"

"I'm quite o' your opinion, Mr. Jarvis," said the blind man. "It 'ud ha' been more like him to tell his father what a duffer he was, and send him home to learn his trade."

"He couldn't do that, you know," said Marion gently. "He *couldn't* use such words to his father, if he were ever so stupid."

"His step-father, grannie," suggested the woman who had corrected Jarvis on the same

point. She spoke very modestly, but was clearly bent on holding forth what light she had.

"Certainly, Mrs. Renton; but you know he couldn't be rude to any one—leaving his own mother's husband out of the question."

"True for you, grannie," returned the woman.

"I think though," said Jarvis, "for as hard as he'd ha' found it, it would ha' been more like him to set to work and teach his father, than to scamp up his mulls."

"Certainly," acquiesced Marion. "To hide any man's faults, and leave him not only stupid but in all probability obstinate and self-satisfied, would not be like *him*. Suppose our Lord had had such a father, what do you think he would have done?"

"He'd ha' done all he could to make a man of him," answered Jarvis.

"Wouldn't he have set about making him comfortable then, in spite of his blunders?" said Marion.

A significant silence followed this question.

"Well, *no;* not first thing—I don't think," returned Jarvis, at length. "He'd ha' got him o' some good first, and gone in to make him comfortable arter."

"Then I suppose you would rather be of some good and uncomfortable than of no good and comfortable?" said Marion.

"I hope so, grannie," answered Jarvis; and "*I* would;" "Yes;" "That I would," came from several voices in the little crowd, showing what an influence Marion must have already had upon them.

"Then," she said—and I saw by the light which rose in her eyes that she was now coming to the point—"Then surely it must be worth our while to bear discomfort in

order to grow of some good! Mr. Jarvis has truly said that if Jesus had had such a father, he would have made him of some good before he made him comfortable: that is just the way your Father in heaven is acting with you. Not many of you would say you are of much good yet; but you would like to be better. And yet—put it to yourselves—do you not grumble at everything that comes to you that you don't like, and call it bad luck, and worse—yes, even when you know it comes of your own fault, and nobody else's? You think if you had only this or that to make you comfortable, you would be content; and you call it very hard that So-and-so should be getting on well, and saving money, and you down on your luck, as you say. Some of you even grumble that your neighbours' children should be healthy when yours are pining. You would allow that you are not of much

good yet, but you forget that to make you comfortable as you are, would be the same as to pull out Joseph's misfitted thrones and doors, and make his mis-shapen buckets over again for him. That you think so absurd that you can't believe the story a bit; but you would be helped out of all *your* troubles, even those you bring on yourselves, not thinking what the certain consequence would be—namely that you would grow of less and less value, until you were of no good either to God or man. If you think about it, you will see that I am right. When, for instance, are you most willing to do right? When are you most ready to hear about good things? When are you most inclined to pray to God? When you have plenty of money in your pockets, or when you are in want? When you have had a good dinner, or when you have not enough to get one? When you are in jolly

health, or when the life seems ebbing out of you in misery and pain? No matter that you may have brought it on yourselves; it is no less God's way of bringing you back to him, for he decrees that suffering shall follow sin; it is just then you most need it; and if it drives you to God, that is its end, and there will be an end of it. The prodigal was himself to blame for the want that made him a beggar at the swine's trough; yet that want was the greatest blessing God could give him, for it drove him home to his father.

"But some of you will say you are no prodigals; nor is it your fault that you find yourselves in such difficulties that life seems hard to you. It would be very wrong in me to set myself up as your judge, and to tell you that it *was* your fault. If it is, God will let you know it. But if it be not your fault, it does not follow that you

need the less to be driven back to God. It is not only in punishment of our sins that we are made to suffer: God's runaway children must be brought back to their home and their blessedness—back to their Father in heaven. It is not always a sign that God is displeased with us when he makes us suffer. 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.' But instead of talking more about it, I must take it to myself, and learn not to grumble when *my* plans fail."

"That's what *you* never goes and does, grannie," growled a voice from somewhere.

I learned afterwards it was that of a young tailor who was constantly quarrelling with his mother.

"I think I have given up grumbling at my circumstances," she rejoined; "but then

I have nothing to grumble at in them. I haven't known hunger or cold for a great many years now. But I do feel discontented at times when I see some of you not getting better so fast as I should like. I ought to have patience, remembering how patient God is with my conceit and stupidity, and not expect too much of you. Still, it can't be wrong to wish that you tried a good deal more to do what he wants of you. Why should his children not be his friends? If you would but give yourselves up to him, you would find his yoke so easy, his burden so light! But you do it only half, and some of you not at all.

"Now however that we have got a lesson from a false gospel, we may as well get one from the true."

As she spoke, she turned to her New Testament which lay beside her. But Jarvis interrupted her.

"Where did you get that stuff you was a readin' of to us, grannie?" he asked.

"The chapter I read to you," she answered, "is part of a pretended gospel, called, 'The First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ.' I can't tell you who wrote it, or how it came to be written. All I can say is, that, very early in the history of the church there were people who indulged themselves in inventing things about Jesus, and seem to have had no idea of the importance of keeping to facts, or, in other words, of speaking and writing only the truth. All they seem to have cared about was the gratifying of their own feelings of love and veneration; and so they made up tales about him, in his honour, as they supposed, no doubt, just as if he had been a false god of the Greeks or Romans. It is long before some people learn to speak the truth, even after they know it is wicked to lie. Perhaps,

however, they did not expect their stories to be received as facts, intending them only as a sort of recognized fiction about him—amazing presumption at the best."

"Did anybody then ever believe the likes of that, grannie?" asked Jarvis.

"Yes; what I read to you seems to have been believed within a hundred years after the death of the apostles. There are several such writings—with a great deal of nonsense in them—which were generally accepted by Christian people for many hundreds of years."

"I can't imagine how anybody could go inwentuating such things!" said the blind man.

"It is hard for us to imagine. They could not have seen how their inventions would, in later times, be judged anything but honouring to him in whose honour they wrote them. Nothing, be it ever so well

invented, can be so good as the bare truth. Perhaps, however, no one in particular invented some of them, but the stories grew, just as a report often does amongst yourselves. Although everybody fancies he or she is only telling just what was told to him or her, yet, by degrees, the pin's-point of a fact is covered over with lies upon lies, almost everybody adding something, until the report has grown to be a mighty falsehood. Why, you had such a story yourselves, not so very long ago, about one of your best friends! One comfort is, such a story is sure not to be consistent with itself; it is sure to show its own falsehood to any one who is good enough to doubt it, and who will look into it, and examine it well. You don't, for instance, want any other proof than the things themselves to show you that what I have just read to you can't be true."

"But then it puzzles me to think how anybody could believe them," said the blind man.

"Many of the early Christians were so childishly simple that they would believe almost anything that was told them. In a time when such nonsense could be written, it is no great wonder there should be many who could believe it."

"Then what was their faith worth," said the blind man, "if they believed false and true all the same?"

"Worth no end to them," answered Marion, with eagerness; "for all the false things they might believe about him, could not destroy the true ones, or prevent them from believing in Jesus himself, and bettering their ways for his sake. And as they grew better and better by doing what he told them, they would gradually come to disbelieve this and that foolish or bad thing."

"But wouldn't that make them stop believing in him altogether?"

"On the contrary, it would make them hold the firmer to all that they saw to be true about him. There are many people, I presume, in other countries, who believe those stories still; but all the Christians I know, have cast aside every one of those writings, and keep only to those we call the gospels. To throw away what is not true, because it is not true, will always help the heart to be truer; will make it the more anxious to cleave to what it sees must be true. Jesus remonstrated with the Jews that they would not of themselves judge what was right; and the man who lets God teach him is made abler to judge what is right a thousand fold."

"Then don't you think it likely this much is true, grannie"—said Jarvis, pro-

bably interested in the question, in part at least, from the fact that he was himself a carpenter—"that he worked with his father, and helped him in his trade?"

"I do indeed," answered Marion. "I believe that is the one germ of truth in the whole story. It is possible even that some incidents of that part of his life may have been handed down a little way, at length losing all their shape however, and turning into the kind of thing I read to you. Not to mention that they called him the carpenter, is it likely he who came down for the express purpose of being a true man, would see his father toiling to feed him and his mother and his brothers and sisters, and go idling about, instead of putting to his hand to help him? Would that have been like him?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Jarvis.

But a doubtful murmur came from the

blind man, which speedily took shape in the following remark:

"I can't help thinkin', grannie, of one time—you read it to us not long ago—when he laid down in the boat and went fast asleep, takin' no more heed o' them a slavin' o' theirselves to death at their oars, than if they'd been all comfortable like hisself: that wasn't much like takin' of his share—was it now?"

"John Evans," returned Marion with severity, "it is quite right to put any number of questions, and express any number of doubts you honestly feel; but you have no right to make remarks you would not make if you were anxious to be as fair to another as you would have another be to you. Have you considered that he had been working hard all day long, and was in fact worn out? You don't think what hard work it is, and how exhausting,

to speak for hours to great multitudes—and in the open air too, where your voice has no help to make it heard. And that's not all; for he had most likely been healing many as well; and I believe every time the power went out of him to cure, he suffered in the relief he gave; it left him weakened—with so much the less of strength to support his labours—so that, even in his very body he took our iniquities and bare our infirmities. Would you then blame a weary man, whose perfect faith in God rendered it impossible for him to fear anything, that he lay down to rest in God's name, and left his friends to do their part for the redemption of the world in rowing him to the other side of the lake—a thing they were doing every other day of their lives? You ought to consider before you make such remarks, Mr. Evans. And you forget also that, the moment they called him, he rose to help them."

"And find fault with them," interposed Evans, rather viciously, I thought.

"Yes; for they were to blame for their own trouble, and ought to send it away."

"What! To blame for the storm? How could they send that away?"

"Was it the storm that troubled them then? It was their own fear of it. The storm could not have troubled them if they had had faith in their Father in heaven."

"They had good cause to be afraid of it anyhow."

"He judged they had not, for he was not afraid himself. You judge they had, because you would have been afraid."

"He could help himself, you see."

"And they couldn't trust either him or his Father, notwithstanding all he had done to manifest himself and his Father to them. Therefore he saw that the storm about them was not the thing that most required

rebuke. The miserable faithlessness within them was a far worse thing, and the cause of all the fear. For children of the great God to believe that they were at the mercy of winds and waves, puffs of air, and splashes of water, was most miserable and degrading. Did he not do well to find fault with them, John Evans?—The fact is," she went on after a short pause, "that at this very moment you are laying yourself open to the same rebuke. If they had known him, the disciples would not have been afraid. If you had known him, you would not thus lightly have brought such a charge against him. To you also belongs the word —*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*"

"I never pretended to much o' the sort," growled Evans. "Quite the contrairy."

"And why? Because, like an honest

man, you wouldn't pretend to what you hadn't got. But if you carried your honesty far enough, you would have taken pains to understand our Lord first. Like his other judges, you condemn him beforehand. You will not call that honesty?"

"I don't see what right you've got to badger me like this afore a congregation o' people," said the blind man rising in indignation. "If I 'ain't got my heye-sight, I ha' got my feelin's."

"And do you think *he* has no feelings, Mr. Evans? You have spoken evil of *him;* I have spoken but the truth of *you!*"

"Come, come, grannie," said the blind man, quailing a little, "don't talk squash. I'm a livin' man afore the heyes o' this here company, an' he ain't nowheres. Bless you, *he* don't mind!"

"He minds so much," returned Marion

in a subdued voice, which seemed to tremble with coming tears, "that he will never rest until you think fairly of him. And he is here now, for he said—'I am with you always, to the end of the world;' and he has heard every word you have been saying against him. He isn't angry like me, but your words may well make him feel sad—for your sake, John Evans—that you should be so unfair."

She leaned her forehead on her hand, and was silent. A subdued murmur arose. The blind man, having stood irresolute for a moment, began to make for the door, saying—

"I think I'd better go. I ain't wanted here."

"If you *are* an honest man, Mr. Evans," returned Marion, rising, "you will sit down and hear the case out."

With a waving, fin-like motion of both

his hands, Evans sank into his seat, and spoke no word.

After but a moment's silence, she resumed as if there had been no interruption.

"That he should sleep then during the storm was a very different thing from declining to assist his father in his workshop; just as the rebuking of the sea was a very different thing from hiding up his father's bad work in miracles. Had that father been in danger, he might perhaps have aided him as he did the disciples. But——"

"Why do you say *perhaps*, grannie?" interrupted a bright-eyed boy who sat on the hob of the empty grate. "Wouldn't he help his father as soon as his disciples?"

"Certainly—if it was good for his father —certainly not, if it was not good for him— therefore I say *perhaps*.—But now," she went on, turning to the joiner, "Mr. Jarvis, will you tell me whether you think the

work of the carpenter's son would have been in any way distinguishable from that of another man?"

"Well, I don't know, grannie. He wouldn't want to be putting of a private mark upon it. He wouldn't want to be showing of it off—would he? He'd use his tools like another man, anyhow."

"All that we may be certain of. He came to us a man, to live a man's life and do a man's work. But just think a moment: I will put the question again: Do you suppose you would have been able to distinguish his work from that of any other man?"

A silence followed. Jarvis was thinking. He and the blind man were of the few that can think. At last his face brightened.

"Well, grannie," he said, "I think it would be very difficult in anything easy, but very easy in anything difficult."

He laughed,—for he had not perceived the paradox before uttering it.

"Explain yourself, if you please, Mr. Jarvis. I am not sure that I understand you," said Marion.

"I mean that, in an easy job, which any fair workman could do well enough, it would not be easy to tell his work. But where the job was difficult, it would be so much better done, that it would not be difficult to see the better hand in it."

"I understand you then to indicate that the chief distinction would lie in the quality of the work—that whatever he did he would do in such a thorough manner, that, over the whole of what he turned out—as you would say — the perfection of the work would be a striking characteristic. Is that it?"

"That is what I do mean, grannie."

"And that is just the conclusion I had come to myself."

"*I* should like to say just one word to it, grannie, so be you won't cut up crusty," said the blind man.

"If you are fair, I shan't be crusty, Mr. Evans. At least I hope not," said Marion.

"Well, it's this: Mr. Jarvis he say as how the jiner-work done by Jesus Christ would be better done than e'er another man's—tip-top-fashion, and there would lie the differ. Now it do seem to me as I've got no call to come to that 'ere conclusion. You been a tellin' on us, grannie, I dønno how long now, as how Jesus Christ was the son of God, and that he come to do the works of God—down here like, afore our faces, that we might see God at work, by way of. Now I ha' nothin' to say agin that: it may be, or it mayn't be—I can't tell. But if that be the way on it, then I don't see how Mr. Jarvis can be right; the two don't curryspond—not by no

means. For the works o' God—there ain't one on 'em as I can see downright well managed—tip-top jiner's work, as I may say; leastways,—now stop a bit, grannie; don't trip a man up, and then say as he fell over his own dog,—leastways, I don't say about the moon an' the stars an' that; I dessay the sun he do get up the werry moment he's called of a mornin', an' the moon when she ought to for her night-work;—I ain't no 'stronomer strawnry, and I ain't heerd no complaints about *them;* but I do say as how, down here, we ha' got most uncommon bad weather more 'n at times; and the walnuts they turns out, every now an' then, full o' mere dirt; an' the oranges awful. There 'ain't been a good crop o' hay, they tells me, for many's the year. An' i' furren parts, what wi' earthquakes an' wolcanies an' lions an' tigers, an' savages as eats their wisiters,

an' chimley-pots blowin' about, an' ships goin' down, an' fathers o' families choked an' drownded an' burnt i' coal-pits by the hundred—it do seem to me that if his jinerin' hadn't been tip-top, it would ha' been but like the rest on it. There, grannie! Mind I mean no offence; an' I don't doubt you ha' got somethink i' your weskit pocket as 'll turn it all topsy-turvy in a moment. Anyhow I won't purtend to nothink, and that's how it look to me."

"I admit," said Marion, "that the objection is a reasonable one. But why do you put it, Mr. Evans, in such a triumphant way, as if you were rejoiced to think it admitted of no answer, and believed the world would be ever so much better off if the storms and the tigers had it all their own way, and there were no God to look after things?"

"Now you ain't fair to *me*, grannie. Not

'avin' of my heyesight like the rest on ye, I may be a bit fond of a harguyment; but I tries to hit fair, and when I hears what ain't logic, I can no more help comin' down upon it, than I can help breathin' the air o' heaven. And why shouldn't I? There ain't no law agin a harguyment. An' more an' over, it do seem to me as how you and Mr. Jarvis is wrong i' *this* harguyment."

"If I was too sharp upon you, Mr. Evans, and I may have been," said Marion, "I beg your pardon."

"It's granted, grannie."

"I don't mean, you know, that I give in to what you say—not one bit."

"I didn't expect it of you. I'm a-waitin' here for you to knock me down."

"I don't think a mere victory is worth the breath spent upon it," said Marion. "But we should all be glad to get or give more light upon any subject, if it be

by losing ever so many arguments. Allow me just to put a question or two to Mr. Jarvis, because he's a joiner himself—and that's a great comfort to me to-night:—What would you say, Mr. Jarvis, of a master who planed the timber he used for scaffolding, and tied the cross pieces with ropes of silk?"

"I should say he was a fool, grannie—not only for losin' of his money and his labour, but for weakenin' of his scaffoldin'—summat like the old throne-maker i' that chapter, I should say."

"What's the object of a scaffold, Mr. Jarvis?"

"To get at something else by means of—say build a house."

"Then so long as the house was going up all right, the probability is there wouldn't be much amiss with the scaffold? You will allow that I suppose."

"Certainly—provided it stood till it was taken down."

"And now, Mr. Evans," she said next, turning to the blind man, "I am going to take the liberty of putting a question or two to you."

"All right, grannie. Fire away."

"Will you tell me then what the object of this world is?"

"Well, most people makes it their object to get money, and make theirselves comfortable."

"But you don't think that is what the world was made for?"

"Oh! as to that, how should I know, grannie? And not knowin', I won't say."

"If you saw a scaffold," said Marion, turning again to Jarvis, "would you be in danger of mistaking it for a permanent erection?"

"Nobody wouldn't be such a fool," he

answered. "The look of it would tell you that."

"You wouldn't complain then if it should be a little out of the square, and if there should be no windows in it?"

Jarvis only laughed.

"Mr. Evans," Marion went on, turning again to the blind man, "do you think the design of this world was to make men comfortable?"

"If it was, it don't seem to ha' succeeded," answered Evans.

"And you complain of that — don't you?"

"Well, yes, rather"—said the blind man, adding, no doubt as he recalled the former part of the evening's talk—"for harguyment, ye know, grannie."

"You think, perhaps, that God, having gone so far to make this world a pleasant and comfortable place to live in, might have

gone farther and made it quite pleasant and comfortable for everybody?"

"Whoever could make it at all could ha' done that, grannie."

"Then as he hasn't done it, the probability is he didn't mean to do it?"

"Of course. That's what I complain of."

"Then he meant to do something else?"

"It looks like it."

"The whole affair has an unfinished look, you think?"

"I just do."

"What if it were not meant to stand then? What if it were meant only for a temporary assistance in carrying out something finished and lasting, and of unspeakably more importance? Suppose God were building a palace for you, and had set up a scaffold, upon which he wanted you to help him;—would it be reasonable in you to complain that you didn't find the scaffold at all a

comfortable place to live in? — that it was draughty and cold? This world is that scaffold; and if you were busy carrying stones and mortar for the palace, you would be glad of all the cold to cool the glow of your labour."

"I'm sure I work hard enough when I get a job as my heyesight will enable me to do," said Evans, missing the spirit of her figure.

"Yes; I believe you do. But what will all the labour of a workman who does not fall in with the design of the builder come to? You may say you don't understand the design: will you say also that you are under no obligation to put so much faith in the builder—who is said to be your God and Father—as to do the thing he tells you? Instead of working away at the palace, like men, will you go on tacking bits of matting and old carpet about the corners of the scaf-

fold to keep the wind off, while that same wind keeps tearing them away and scattering them? You keep trying to live in a scaffold, which not all you could do to all eternity would make a house of. You see what I mean, Mr. Evans?"

"Well, not ezackly," replied the blind man.

"I mean that God wants to build you a house whereof the walls shall be *goodness:* you want a house whereof the walls shall be *comfort.* But God knows that such walls cannot be built—that that kind of stone crumbles away in the foolish workman's hands. He would make you comfortable; but neither is that his first object, nor can it be gained without the first, which is to make you good. He loves you so much that he would infinitely rather have you good and uncomfortable—for then he could take you to his heart as his own children—than com-

fortable and not good, for then he could not come near you, or give you anything he counted worth having for himself or worth giving to you."

"So," said Jarvis, "you've just brought us round, grannie, to the same thing as before."

"I believe so," returned Marion. "It comes to this, that when God would build a palace for himself to dwell in with his children, he does not want his scaffold so constructed that they shall be able to make a house of it for themselves, and live like apes instead of angels."

"But if God can do anything he please," said Evans, "he might as well *make* us good, and there would be an end of it."

"That is just what he is doing," returned Marion. "Perhaps, by giving them perfect health and everything they wanted, with absolute good temper, and making them very fond of each other besides, God might have

provided himself a people he would have had no difficulty in governing, and amongst whom, in consequence, there would have been no crime and no struggle or suffering. But I have known a dog with more goodness than that would come to. We cannot be good without having consented to be made good. God shows us the good and the bad; urges us to be good; wakes good thoughts and desires in us; helps our spirit with his spirit, our thought with his thought; but we must yield; we must turn to him; we must consent, yes, try to be made good. If we could grow good without trying, it would be a poor goodness; *we* should not be good after all; at best we should only be not bad. God wants us to choose to be good, and so be partakers of his holiness; he would have us lay hold of him. He who has given his Son to suffer for us, will make us suffer too—bitterly, if needful—that

we may bethink ourselves and turn to him. He would make us as good as good can be—that is, perfectly good; and therefore will rouse us to take the needful hand in the work ourselves—rouse us by discomforts innumerable.

"You see then, it is not inconsistent with the apparent imperfections of the creation around us, that Jesus should have done the best possible carpenter's work; for those very imperfections are actually through their imperfection the means of carrying out the higher creation God has in view, and at which he is working all the time.

"Now let me read you what King David thought upon this question."

She read the hundred and seventh psalm. Then they had some singing, in which the children took a delightful part. I have seldom heard children sing pleasantly. In Sunday-schools I have always found their

voices painfully harsh. But Marion made her children restrain their voices and sing softly, which had, she said, an excellent moral effect on themselves, all squalling and screeching, whether in heart or morals, being ruinous to either.

Towards the close of the singing, Roger and I slipped out. We had, all but tacitly, agreed it would be best to make no apology, but just vanish, and come again with Percivale the following Sunday.

The greater part of the way home we walked in silence.

"What did you think of that, Roger?" I asked at length.

"Quite Socratic as to method," he answered, and said no more.

I sent a full report of the evening to my father, who was delighted with it, although of course much was lost in the reporting of the mere words, not to mention the absence

of her sweet face and shining eyes, of her quiet, earnest, musical voice. My father kept the letter, and that is how I am able to give the present report.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ABOUT SERVANTS.

I WENT to call on Lady Bernard the next day—for there was one subject on which I could better talk with her than with Marion, and that subject was Marion herself. In the course of our conversation I said that I had had more than usual need of such a lesson as she gave us the night before—I had been, and indeed still was, so vexed with my nurse.

"What is the matter?" asked Lady Bernard.

"She has given me warning," I answered.

"She has been with you some time—has she not?"

"Ever since we were married."

"What reason does she give?"

"Oh! she wants *to better herself*, of course," I replied—in such a tone, that Lady Bernard rejoined:

"And why should she not better herself?"

"But she has such a false notion of bettering herself! I am confident what she wants will do anything but better her—if she gets it."

"What is her notion then? Are you sure you have got at the real one?"

"I believe I have *now*. When I asked her first, she said she was very comfortable, and condescended to inform me that she had nothing against either me or her master, but thought it was time she was having more wages, for a friend of hers, who had

left home a year after herself, was having two pounds more than she had."

"It is very natural, and certainly not wrong, that she should wish for more wages."

"I told her she need not have taken such a round-about way of asking for an advance, and said I would raise her wages with pleasure. But instead of receiving the announcement with any sign of satisfaction, she seemed put out by it; and after some considerable amount of incoherence, blurted out that the place was dull, and she wanted a change. At length, however, I got at her real reason, which was simply ambition: she wanted to rise in the world—to get a place where men-servants were kept—a more fashionable place in fact."

"A very mistaken ambition certainly," said Lady Bernard, "but one which would be counted natural enough in any other line

of life. Had she given you ground for imagining higher aims in her?"

"She had been so long with us that I thought she must have some regard for us."

"She has probably a good deal more than she is aware of. But change is as needful to some minds for their education as an even tenor of life is to others. Probably she has got all the good she is capable of receiving from you, and there may be some one ready to take her place for whom you will be able to do more. However inconvenient it may be for you to change, the more young people who pass through your house the better."

"If it were really for her good, I hope I shouldn't mind."

"You cannot tell what may be needful to cause the seed you have sown to germinate. It may be necessary for her to

pass to another class in the school of life, before she can realize what she learned in yours."

I was silent, for I was beginning to feel ashamed, and Lady Bernard went on.

"When I hear mistresses lamenting over some favourite servant as marrying certain misery in exchange for a comfortable home with plenty to eat and drink and wear, I always think of the other side to it, namely, how, through the instincts of his own implanting, God is urging her to a path in which, by passing through the fires and waters of suffering, she may be stung to the life of a true humanity. And such suffering is far more ready to work its perfect work on a girl who has passed through a family like yours."

"I wouldn't say a word to keep her if she were going to be married," I said;

"but you will allow there is good reason to fear she will be no better for such a change as she desires."

"You have good reason to fear, my child," said Lady Bernard, smiling so as to take all sting out of the reproof—"that you have too little faith in the God who cares for your maid as for you. It is not indeed likely that she will have such help as yours where she goes next; but the loss of it may throw her back on herself and bring out her individuality, which is her conscience. Still I am far from wondering at your fear for her—knowing well what dangers she may fall into. Shall I tell you what first began to open my eyes to the evils of a large establishment? Wishing to get rid of part of the weight of my affairs, and at the same time to assist a relative who was in want of employment, I committed to him, along with larger matters, the oversight of my

household expenses, and found that he saved me the whole of his salary. This will be easily understood from a single fact. Soon after his appointment, he called on a tradesman to pay him his bill. The man, taking him for a new butler, offered him the same discount he had been in the habit of giving his supposed predecessor—namely twenty-five per cent.—a discount, I need not say, never intended to reach my knowledge any more than my purse. The fact was patent—I had been living in a hotel, of which I not only paid the rent, but paid the landlord for cheating me. With such a head to an establishment, you may judge what the members may become."

"I remember an amusing experience my brother-in-law Roger Percivale once had of your household," I said.

"I also remember it perfectly," she

returned. "That was how I came to know him. But I knew something of his family long before. I remember his grandfather a great buyer of pictures and marbles."

Lady Bernard here gave me the story from her point of view, but Roger's narrative being of necessity the more complete, I tell the tale as he told it me.

At the time of the occurrence, he was assisting Mr. F., the well-known sculptor, and had taken a share in both the modelling and the carving of a bust of Lady Bernard's father. When it was finished and Mr. F. was about to take it home, he asked Roger to accompany him and help him to get it safe into the house and properly placed.

Roger and the butler between them carried it to the drawing-room, where were Lady Bernard and a company of her friends,

whom she had invited to meet Mr. F. at lunch, and see the bust. There being no pedestal yet ready, Mr. F. made choice of a certain small table for it to stand upon, and then accompanied her ladyship and her other guests to the dining-room, leaving Roger to uncover the bust, place it in the proper light, and do whatever more might be necessary to its proper effect on the company when they should return. As she left the room, Lady Bernard told Roger to ring for a servant to clear the table for him, and render what other assistance he might want. He did so. A lackey answered the bell, and Roger requested him to remove the things from the table. The man left the room, and did not return. Roger therefore cleared and moved the table himself, and with difficulty got the bust upon it. Finding then several stains upon the pure half-transparency of the marble, he rang the

bell for a basin of water and a sponge. Another man appeared, looked into the room, and went away. He rang once more, and yet another servant came. This last condescended to hear him, and, informing him that he could get what he wanted in the scullery, vanished in his turn. By this time Roger confesses to have been rather in a rage; but what could he do? Least of all allow Mr. F.'s work, and the likeness of her ladyship's father to make its début with a spot on its nose; therefore, seeing he could not otherwise procure what was necessary, he set out in quest of the unknown appurtenances of the kitchen.

It is unpleasant to find oneself astray, even in a moderately sized house, and Roger did not at all relish wandering about the huge place, with no finger-posts to keep him in its business-thoroughfares, not to speak of directing him to the remotest recesses of

a house "full," as Chaucer says, "of crenkles." At last, however, he found himself at the door of the servants' hall. Two men were lying on their backs on benches, with their knees above their heads in the air; a third was engaged in emptying a pewter pot, between his draughts tossing facetiæ across its mouth to a damsel who was removing the remains of some private luncheon; and a fourth sat in one of the windows reading *Bell's Life*. Roger took it all in at a glance, while to one of the giants supine, or rather to a perpendicular pair of white stockings, he preferred his request for a basin and a sponge. Once more he was informed that he would find what he wanted in the scullery. There was no time to waste on unavailing demands, therefore he only begged further to be directed how to find it. The fellow, without raising his head or lowering his knees, jabbered out

such instructions as, from the rapidity with which he delivered them, were, if not unintelligible, at all events incomprehensible, and Roger had to set out again on the quest, only not quite so bewildered as before. He found a certain long passage mentioned, however, and happily, before he arrived at the end of it, met a maid, who with the utmost civility gave him full instructions to find the place. The scullery-maid was equally civil, and Roger returned with basin and sponge to the drawing-room, where he speedily removed the too troublesome stains from the face of the marble.

When the company re-entered, Mr. F. saw at once from the expression and bearing of Roger that something had happened to discompose him, and asked him what was amiss. Roger having briefly informed him, Mr. F. at once recounted the facts to Lady Bernard, who immediately requested a full

statement from Roger himself, and heard the whole story.

She walked straight to the bell, and ordered up every one of her domestics, from the butler to the scullery-maid.

Without one hasty word, or one bodily sign of the anger she was in, except the flashing of her eyes, she told them she could not have had a suspicion that such insolence was possible in her house; that they had disgraced her in her own eyes, as having gathered such people about her; that she would not add to Mr. Percivale's annoyance by asking him to point out the guilty persons, but that they might assure themselves she would henceforth keep both eyes and ears open, and if the slightest thing of the sort happened again, she would most assuredly dismiss every one of them at a moment's warning. She then turned to Roger and said:

"Mr. Percivale, I beg your pardon for the insults you have received from my servants."

"I did think," she said, as she finished telling me the story, "to dismiss them all on the spot, but was deterred by the fear of injustice. The next morning, however, four or five of them gave my housekeeper warning: I gave orders that they should leave the house at once, and from that day, I set about reducing my establishment. My principal objects were two—first, that my servants might have more work; and second, that I might be able to know something of every one of them; for one thing I saw—that until I ruled my own house well, I had no right to go trying to do good out of doors. I think I do know a little of the nature and character of every soul under my roof now; and I am more and more confident that nothing of real and lasting

benefit can be done for a class except through personal influence upon the individual persons who compose it—such influence I mean, as at the very least sets for Christianity."

CHAPTER XXXII.

ABOUT PERCIVALE.

I SHOULD like much, before in my narrative approaching a certain hard season we had to encounter, to say a few words concerning my husband, if I only knew how. I find women differ much, both in the degree and manner in which their feelings will permit them to talk about their husbands. I have known women set a whole community against their husbands by the way in which they trumpeted their praises; and I have known one woman set everybody against herself by the way in which she published her husband's faults. I find

it difficult to believe either sort. To praise one's husband is so like praising oneself, that to me it seems immodest, and subject to the same suspicion as self-laudation; while to blame one's husband even justly and openly seems to me to border upon treachery itself. How then am I to discharge a sort of half duty my father has laid upon me by what he has said in "The Seaboard Parish" concerning my husband's opinions? My father is one of the few really large-minded men I have yet known; but I am not certain that he has done Percivale justice. At the same time, if he has not, Percivale himself is partly to blame, inasmuch as he never took pains to show my father what he was; for had he done so, my father of all men would have understood him. On the other hand, this fault, if such it was, could have sprung only from my husband's modesty, and his horror of pos-

sibly producing an impression on my father's mind more favourable than correct. It is all right now, however.

Still my difficulty remains as to how I am to write about him. I must encourage myself with the consideration that none but our own friends, with whom, whether they understood us or not, we are safe, will know to whom the veiled narrative points.

But some acute reader may say,

"You describe your husband's picture: he will be known by that."

In this matter I have been cunning—I hope not deceitful, inasmuch as I now reveal my cunning. Instead of describing any real picture of his, I have always substituted one he has only talked about. The picture actually associated with the facts related, is not the picture I have described.

Although my husband left the impression on my father's mind, lasting for a long time,

that he had some definite repugnance to Christianity itself, I had been soon satisfied, perhaps from his being more open with me, that certain unworthy representations of Christianity, coming to him with authority, had cast discredit upon the whole idea of it. In the first year or two of our married life we had many talks on the subject, and I was astonished to find what things he imagined to be acknowledged essentials of Christianity, which have no place whatever in the New Testament; and I think it was in proportion as he came to see his own misconceptions, that, although there was little or no outward difference to be perceived in him, I could more and more clearly distinguish an under-current of thought and feeling setting towards the faith which Christianity preaches. He said little or nothing even when I attempted to draw him out on the matter, for he was almost mor-

bidly careful not to seem to know anything he did not know, or to appear what he was not. The most I could get out of him was —but I had better give a little talk I had with him on one occasion. It was some time before we began to go to Marion's on a Sunday evening, and I had asked him to go with me to a certain little chapel in the neighbourhood.

"What!" he said merrily; "the daughter of a clergyman be seen going to a conventicle?"

"If I did it, I would be seen doing it," I answered.

"Don't you know that the man is no conciliatory, or even mild dissenter, but a decided enemy to Church and State and all that?" pursued Percivale.

"I don't care," I returned. "I know nothing about it. What I know is, that he's a poet and a prophet both in one. He

stirs up my heart within me, and makes me long to be good. He is no orator, and yet breaks into bursts of eloquence such as none of the studied orators, to whom you profess so great an aversion, could ever reach."

"You may well be right there. It is against nature for a speaker to be eloquent throughout his discourse, and the false will of course quench the true. I don't mind going if you wish it. I suppose he believes what he says, at least."

"Not a doubt of it. He could not speak as he does from less than a thorough belief."

"Do you mean to say, Wynnie, that he is *sure* of everything—I don't want to urge an unreasonable question—but is he *sure* that the story of the New Testament is in the main actual fact? I should be very sorry to trouble your faith, but——"

"My father says," I interrupted, "that a true faith is like the pool of Bethesda: it is

when troubled that it shows its healing power."

"That depends on where the trouble comes from, perhaps," said Percivale.

"Anyhow," I answered, "it is only that which cannot be shaken that shall remain."

"Well, I will tell you what seems to me a very common-sense difficulty. How is any one to be *sure* of the things there recorded? I cannot imagine a man of our time absolutely certain of them. If you tell me I have testimony, I answer, that the testimony itself requires testimony. I never even saw the people who bear it, have just as good reason to doubt their existence as that of him concerning whom they bear it, have positively no means of verifying it, and indeed have so little confidence in all that is called evidence, knowing how it can be twisted, that I should distrust any conclu-

sion I might seem about to come to on the one side or the other. It does appear to me that if the thing were of God, he would have taken care that it should be possible for an honest man to place a hearty confidence in its record."

He had never talked to me so openly, and I took it as a sign that he had been thinking more of these things than hitherto. I felt it a serious matter to have to answer such words, for how could I have any better assurance of that external kind than Percivale himself? That I was in the same intellectual position, however, enabled me the better to understand him. For a short time I was silent, while he regarded me with a look of concern—fearful, I fancied, lest he should have involved me in his own perplexity.

"Isn't it possible, Percivale," I said,

"that God may not care so much for beginning at that end?"

"I don't quite understand you, Wynnie," he returned.

"A man might believe every fact recorded concerning our Lord, and yet not have the faith in him that God wishes him to have."

"Yes, certainly. But will you say the converse of that is true?"

"Explain, please."

"Will you say a man may have the faith God cares for without the faith you say he does not care for?"

"I didn't say that God does not care about our having assurance of the facts; for surely if everything depends on those facts, much will depend on the degree of our assurance concerning them. I only expressed a doubt whether in the present age he cares that we should have that assurance first.

Perhaps he means it to be the result of the higher kind of faith which rests in the will."

"I don't at the moment see how the higher faith, as you call it, can precede the lower."

"It seems to me possible enough. For what is the test of discipleship the Lord lays down? Is it not obedience? 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' 'If a man love me, he will keep my commandments.' 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Suppose a man feels in himself that he must have some saviour or perish; suppose he feels drawn, by conscience, by admiration, by early memories, to the form of Jesus dimly seen through the mists of ages; suppose he cannot be sure there ever was such a man, but reads about him, and ponders over the words attributed to him until he feels they are the right thing

whether *he* said them or not, and that if he could but be sure there were such a being, he would believe in him with heart and soul; suppose also that he comes upon the words, 'If any man is willing to do the will of the Father, he shall know whether I speak of myself or he sent me;' suppose all these things, might not the man then say to himself, 'I cannot tell whether all this is true, but I know nothing that seems half so good, and I will try to do the will of the Father in the hope of the promised knowledge?' Do you think God would or would not count that to the man for faith?"

I had no more to say, and a silence followed. After a pause of some duration, Percivale said,

"I will go with you, my dear," and that was all his answer.

When we came out of the little chapel—the same into which Marion had stepped on

that evening so memorable to her—we walked homeward in silence, and reached our own door ere a word was spoken. But when I went to take off my things, Percivale followed me into the room and said—

"Whether that man is *certain* of the facts or not, I cannot tell yet; but I am perfectly satisfied he believes in the manner of which you were speaking—that of obedience, Wynnie. He must believe with his heart and will and life."

"If so, he can well afford to wait for what light God will give him on things that belong to the intellect and judgment."

"I would rather think," he returned, "that purity of life must react on the judgment, so as to make it likewise clear, and enable to recognize the true force of the evidence at command."

"That is how my father came to believe," I said.

"He seems to me to rest his conviction more upon external proof."

"That is only because it is easier to talk about. He told me once that he was never able to estimate the force and weight of the external arguments until after he had believed for the very love of the eternal truth he saw in the story. His heart, he said, had been the guide of his intellect."

"That is just what I would fain believe. But oh, Wynnie, the pity of it if that story should not be true after all!"

"Ah, my love!" I cried—"that very word makes me surer than ever that it cannot but be true. Let us go on putting it to the hardest test; let us try it until it crumbles in our hands—try it by the touch-stone of action founded on its requirements."

"There may be no other way," said Percivale, after a thoughtful pause, "of becoming capable of recognizing the truth.

It may be beyond the grasp of all but the mind that has thus yielded to it. There may be no contact for it with any but such a mind. Such a conviction then could neither be forestalled nor communicated. Its very existence must remain doubtful until it asserts itself. I see that."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MY SECOND TERROR.

"PLEASE, ma'am, is Master Fido to carry Master Zohrab about by the back o' the neck?" said Jemima in indignant appeal, one afternoon late in November, bursting into the study where I sat with my husband.

Fido was our Bedlington terrier, which, having been reared by Newcastle colliers, and taught to draw a badger—whatever that may mean—I am hazy about it—had a passion for burrowing after anything buried. Swept away by the current of the said passion, he had with his strong fore-paws

unearthed poor Zohrab, which, being a tortoise, had ensconced himself, as he thought, for the winter, in the earth at the foot of a lilac-tree; but now, much to his jeopardy, from the cold and the shock of the surprise more than from the teeth of his friend, was being borne about the garden in triumph, though whether exactly as Jemima described may be questionable. Her indignation at the inroad of the dog upon the personal rights of the tortoise had possibly not lessened her general indifference to accuracy.

Alarmed at the danger to the poor animal, of a kind from which his natural defences were powerless to protect him, Percivale threw down his palette and brushes, and ran to the door.

"Do put on your coat and hat, Percivale," I cried—but he was gone.

Cold as it was, he had been sitting in the light blouse he had worn at his work all the

summer. The stove had got red-hot, and the room was like an oven, while outside a dank fog filled the air. I hurried after him with his coat, and found him pursuing Fido about the garden, the brute declining to obey his call, or to drop the tortoise. Percivale was equally deaf to my call, and not until he had beaten the dog did he return with the rescued tortoise in his hands. The consequences were serious—first the death of Zohrab, and next a terrible illness to my husband. He had caught cold; it settled on his lungs and passed into bronchitis.

It was a terrible time to me, for I had no doubt, for some days, that he was dying. The measures taken seemed thoroughly futile.

It is an awful moment when first death looks in at the door. The positive recognition of his presence is so different from any vividest imagination of it! For the moment

I believed nothing—felt only the coming blackness of absolute loss. I cared neither for my children, nor for my father or mother. Nothing appeared of any worth more. I had conscience enough left to try to pray, but no prayer would rise from the frozen depths of my spirit. I could only move about in mechanical and hopeless ministration to one whom it seemed of no use to go on loving any more; for what was nature but a soul-less machine, the constant clank of whose motion sounded only, "Dust to dust; dust to dust," for evermore? But I was roused from this horror-stricken mood by a look from my husband, who, catching a glimpse of my despair, motioned me to him with a smile as of sunshine upon snow, and whispered in my ear:

"I'm afraid you haven't much more faith than myself after all, Wynnie."

It stung me into life—not for the sake of

my professions, not even for the honour of our heavenly Father, but by waking in me the awful thought of my beloved passing through the shadow of death with no one beside him to help or comfort him, in absolute loneliness and uncertainty. The thought was unendurable. For a moment I wished he might die suddenly, and so escape the vacuous despair of a conscious lingering betwixt life and the something or the nothing beyond it.

"But I cannot go with you!" I cried, and forgetting all my duty as a nurse, I wept in agony.

"Perhaps another will, my Wynnie—one who knows the way," he whispered, for he could not speak aloud, and closed his eyes.

It was as if an arrow of light had slain the Python coiled about my heart. If *he* believed, *I* could believe also; if *he* could encounter the vague dark, *I* could endure

the cheerless light. I was myself again, and, with one word of endearment, left the bedside to do what had to be done.

At length a faint hope began to glimmer in the depth of my cavernous fear. It was long ere it swelled into confidence; but although I was then in somewhat feeble health, my strength never gave way. For a whole week I did not once undress, and for weeks I was half awake all the time I slept. The softest whisper would rouse me thoroughly, and it was only when Marion took my place that I could sleep at all.

I am afraid I neglected my poor children dreadfully. I seemed for the time to have no responsibility, and even, I am ashamed to say, little care for them. But then I knew that they were well attended to; friends were very kind—especially Judy—in taking them out; and Marion's daily visits were like those of a mother. Indeed

she was able to mother anything human except a baby, to whom she felt no attraction—any more than to the inferior animals, for which she had little regard beyond a negative one: she would hurt no creature that was not hurtful; but she had scarcely an atom of kindness for dog or cat, or anything that is petted of woman. It is the only defect I am aware of in her character.

My husband slowly recovered, but it was months before he was able to do anything he would call work. But even in labour success is not only to the strong. Working a little at the short best time of the day with him, he managed, long before his full recovery, to paint a small picture which better critics than I have thought worthy of Angelico. I will attempt to describe it.

Through the lighted windows of a great hall, the spectator catches broken glimpses of a festive company. At the head of the

table, pouring out the red wine, he sees one like unto the Son of Man, upon whom the eyes of all are turned. At the other end of the hall, seated high in a gallery, with rapt looks and quaint yet homely angelican instruments, he sees the orchestra pouring out their souls through their strings and trumpets. The hall is filled with a jewelly glow, as of light suppressed by colour, the radiating centre of which is the red wine on the table; while mingled wings, of all gorgeous splendours, hovering in the dim height, are suffused and harmonized by the molten ruby tint that pervades the whole.

Outside, in the drizzly darkness, stands a lonely man. He stoops listening, with one ear laid almost against the door. His half-upturned face catches a ray of the light reflected from a muddy pool in the road. It discloses features wan and wasted with sorrow and sickness, but glorified with the

joy of the music. He is like one who has been four days dead, to whose body the music has recalled the soul. Down by his knee he holds a violin, curiously fashioned like those of the orchestra within, which, as he listens, he is tuning to their pitch.

To readers acquainted with a poem of Dr. Donne's—"Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness,"—this description of mine will at once suggest the origin of the picture. I had read some verses of it to him in his convalescence, and having heard them once he requested them often again. The first stanza runs thus:—

> Since I am coming to that holy room
> Where with the choir of saints for evermore
> I shall be made thy musique, as I come,
> I tune the instrument here at the door;
> And what I must do then, think here before.

The painting is almost the only one he has yet refused to let me see before it was finished; but when it was, he hung it up in

my own little room off the study, and I became thoroughly acquainted with it. I think I love it more than anything else he has done. I got him, without telling him why, to put a touch or two to the listening figure, which made it really like himself.

During this period of recovery, I often came upon him reading his Greek New Testament, which he would shove aside when I entered. At length one morning I said to him:

"Are you ashamed of the New Testament, Percivale? One would think it was a bad book from the way you try to hide it."

"No, my love," he said; "it is only that I am jealous of appearing to do that from suffering and weakness only, which I did not do when I was strong and well. But sickness has opened my eyes a good deal I think, and I am sure of this much, that whatever truth there is here, I want it all

the same whether I am feeling the want or not. I had no idea what there was in this book."

"Would you mind telling me," I said, "what made you take to reading it?"

"I will try.—When I thought I was dying, a black cloud seemed to fall over everything. It was not so much that I was afraid to die—although I did dread the final conflict—as that I felt so forsaken and lonely. It was of little use saying to myself that I mustn't be a coward, and that it was the part of a man to meet his fate, whatever it might be, with composure; for I saw nothing worth being brave about; the heart had melted out of me; there was nothing to give me joy, nothing for my life to rest upon, no sense of love at the heart of things. Didn't you feel something the same that terrible day?"

"I did," I answered. "I hope I never

believed in death all the time; and yet for one fearful moment the skeleton seemed to swell and grow till he blotted out the sun and the stars, and was himself all in all; while the life beyond was too shadowy to show behind him. And so death was victorious until the thought of your loneliness in the dark valley broke the spell, and for your sake I hoped in God again."

"And I thought with myself—Would God set his children down in the dark, and leave them to cry aloud in anguish at the terrors of the night? Would he not make the very darkness light about them? Or if they must pass through such tortures, would he not at least let them know that he was with them? How then can there be a God? Then arose in my mind all at once the old story, how, in the person of his son, God himself had passed through the darkness now gathering about me, had gone

down to the grave, and had conquered death by dying. If this was true, this was to be a God indeed. Well might he call on us to endure who had himself borne the far heavier share. If there were an Eternal Life who would perfect my life, I could be brave; I could endure what he chose to lay upon me; I could go whither he led."

"And were you able to think all that when you were so ill, my love?" I said.'

"Something like it—practically very like it," he answered. "It kept growing in my mind—coming and going and gathering clearer shape. I thought with myself that if there was a God, he certainly knew that I would give myself to him if I could; that, if I knew Jesus to be verily and really his son, however it might seem strange to believe in him and hard to obey him, I would try to do so; and then a verse about the smoking flax and the bruised reed came

into my head, and a great hope arose in me. I do not know if it was what the good people would call faith, but I had no time and no heart to think about words: I wanted God and his Christ. A fresh spring of life seemed to burst up in my heart; all the world grew bright again; I seemed to love you and the children twice as much as before; a calmness came down upon my spirit which seemed to me like nothing but the presence of God; and, although I dare-say you did not then perceive a change, I am certain that the same moment I began to recover."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CLOUDS AFTER THE RAIN.

BUT the clouds returned after the rain. It will be easily understood how the little money we had in hand should have rapidly vanished during Percivale's illness. While he was making nothing, the expenses of the family went on as usual, and not that only, but many little delicacies had to be got for him, and the doctor was yet to pay. Even up to the time when he was taken ill, we had been doing little better than living from hand to mouth, for as often as we thought income was about to get a few yards ahead in the race with expense,

something invariably happened to disappoint us.

I am not sorry that I have no *special* faculty for saving; for I have never known any in whom such was well developed, who would not do things they ought to be ashamed of. The savings of such people seem to me to come quite as much off other people as off themselves, and, especially in regard of small sums, they are in danger of being first mean, and then dishonest. Certainly, whoever makes saving *the* end of her life, must soon grow mean, and will probably grow dishonest. But I have never succeeded in drawing the line betwixt meanness and dishonesty: what is mean, so far as I can see, slides by indistinguishable gradations into what is plainly dishonest. And what is more—the savings are commonly made at the cost of the defenceless. It is better far to live in constant diffi-

culties, than to keep out of them by such vile means as must besides poison the whole nature, and make one's judgments both of God and her neighbours mean as her own conduct. It is nothing to say that you must be just before you are generous, for that is the very point I am insisting on—namely, that one must be just to others before she is generous to herself. It will never do to make your two ends meet by pulling the other ends from the hands of those who are likewise puzzled to make them meet.

But I must now put myself at the bar, and cry *Peccavi;* for I was often wrong on the other side, sometimes getting things for the house before it was quite clear I could afford them, and sometimes buying the best when an inferior thing would have been more suitable, if not to my ideas, yet to my purse. It is, however, far more difficult for

one with an uncertain income to learn to save, or even to be prudent, than for one who knows how much exactly every quarter will bring.

My husband, while he left the whole management of money matters to me, would yet spend occasionally without consulting me. In fact he had no notion of money, and what it would or would not do. I never knew a man spend less upon himself, but he would be extravagant for me, and I dared hardly utter a foolish liking lest he should straightway turn it into a cause of shame by attempting to gratify it. He had besides a weakness for over-paying people, of which neither Marion nor I could honestly approve, however much we might admire the disposition whence it proceeded.

Now that I have confessed, I shall be more easy in my mind, for in regard of the troubles that followed, I cannot be sure that

I was free of blame. One word more in self-excuse, and I have done: however imperative, it is none the less hard to cultivate two opposing virtues at one and the same time.

While my husband was ill, not a picture had been disposed of, and even after he was able to work a little, I could not encourage visitors: he was not able for the fatigue, and in fact shrunk, with an irritability I had never perceived a sign of before, from seeing any one. To my growing dismay, I saw my little stock—which was bodily in my hand, for we had no banking account—rapidly approaching its final evanishment.

Some may think that, with parents in the position of mine, a temporary difficulty need have caused me no anxiety: I must therefore mention one or two facts with regard to both my husband and my parents.

In the first place, although he had as

complete a confidence in him as I had—both in regard to what he said and what he seemed, my husband could not feel towards my father as I felt. He had married me as a poor man, who yet could keep a wife; and I knew it would be a bitter humiliation to him to ask my father for money, on the ground that he had given his daughter. I should have felt nothing of the kind, for I should have known that my father would do him as well as me perfect justice in the matter, and would consider any money spent upon us as used to a divine purpose. For he regarded the necessaries of life as noble, its comforts as honourable, its luxuries as permissible—thus reversing altogether the usual judgment of rich men, who in general like nothing worse than to leave their hoards to those of their relatives who will degrade them to the purchase of mere bread and cheese, blankets and clothes and

coals. But I had no right to go against my husband's feeling. So long as the children had their bread and milk, I would endure with him. I am confident I could have starved as well as he, and should have enjoyed letting him see it.

But there were reasons because of which even I, in my fullest freedom, could not have asked help from my father just at this time. I am ashamed to tell the fact, but I must: before the end of his second year at Oxford, just over, the elder of my two brothers had, without any vice, I firmly believe, beyond that of thoughtlessness and folly, got himself so deeply mired in debt, both to tradespeople and money-lenders, that my father had to pay two thousand pounds for him. Indeed, as I was well assured, although he never told me so, he had to borrow part of the money on a fresh mortgage in order to clear him. Some

lawyer, I believe, told him that he was not bound to pay; but my father said that although such creditors deserved no protection of the law, he was not bound to give them a lesson in honesty at the expense of weakening the bond between himself and his son, for whose misdeeds he acknowledged a large share of responsibility; while on the other hand he was bound to give his son the lesson of the suffering brought on his family by his selfishness; and therefore would pay the money—if not gladly, yet willingly. How the poor boy got through the shame and misery of it, I can hardly imagine; but this I can say for him, that it was purely of himself that he accepted a situation in Ceylon, instead of returning to Oxford. Thither he was now on his way, with the intention of saving all he could in order to repay his father; and if at length he succeeds in doing so, he will doubtless make a

fairer start the second time, because of the discipline, than if he had gone out with the money in his pocket.

It was natural then that in such circumstances a daughter should shrink from adding her troubles to those caused by a son. I ought to add that my father had of late been laying out a good deal in building cottages for the labourers on his farms, and that the land was not yet entirely freed from the mortgages my mother had inherited with it.

Percivale continued so weak that for some time I could not bring myself to say a word to him about money. But to keep them as low as possible did not prevent the household debts from accumulating, and the servants' wages were on the point of coming due. I had been careful to keep the milkman paid, and for the rest of the tradesmen I consoled myself with the certainty that,

if the worst came to the worst, there was plenty of furniture in the house to pay every one of them. Still, of all burdens, next to sin, that of debt I think must be the heaviest.

I tried to keep cheerful, but at length, one night, during our supper of bread and cheese, which I could not bear to see my poor pale-faced husband eating, I broke down.

"What *is* the matter, my darling?" asked Percivale.

I took a half-crown from my pocket, and held it out on the palm of my hand.

"That's all I've got, Percivale," I said.

"Oh! that all — is it?" he returned lightly.

"Yes—isn't that enough?" I said with some indignation.

"Certainly—for to-night," he answered, "seeing the shops are shut.

But is that all that's troubling you?" he went on.

"It seems to me quite enough," I said again; "and if you had the housekeeping to do, and the bills to pay, you would think a solitary half-crown quite enough to make you miserable."

"Never mind—so long as it's a good one," he said. "I'll get you more to-morrow."

"How can you do that?" I asked.

"Easily," he answered. "You'll see. Don't you trouble your dear heart about it for a moment."

I felt relieved, and asked him no more questions.

The next morning, when I went into the study to speak to him, he was not there, and I guessed that he had gone to town to get the money, for he had not been out before since his illness, at least without me.

But I hoped of all things he was not going to borrow it of a money-lender, of which I had a great and justifiable horror, having heard from himself how a friend of his had in such case fared. I would have sold three fourths of the things in the house rather. But as I turned to leave the study, anxious both about himself and his proceedings, I thought something was different, and soon discovered that a certain favourite picture was missing from the wall: it was clear he had gone either to sell it or raise money upon it.

By our usual early dinner-hour, he returned, and put into my hands, with a look of forced cheerfulness, two five-pound notes.

"Is that all you got for that picture?" I said.

"That is all Mr. —— would advance me upon it," he answered. "I thought he had made enough by me to have risked a little

more than that; but picture-dealers——. Well, never mind. That is enough to give time for twenty things to happen."

And no doubt twenty things did happen, but none of them of the sort he meant. The ten pounds sank through my purse like water through gravel. I paid a number of small bills at once, for they pressed the more heavily upon me that I knew the money was wanted; and by the end of another fortnight we were as badly off as before, with an additional trouble, which in the circumstances was anything but slight.

In conjunction with more than ordinary endowments of stupidity and self-conceit, Jemima was possessed of a furious temper, which showed itself occasionally in outbursts of unendurable rudeness. She had been again and again on the point of leaving me, now she, now I giving warning, but ere the day arrived, her better nature had always

got the upper hand; she had broken down and given in. These outbursts had generally followed a season of better behaviour than usual, and were all but certain if I ventured the least commendation, for she could stand anything better than praise. At the least subsequent rebuke, self would break out in rage, vulgarity, and rudeness. On this occasion, however, I cannot tell whence it was that one of these cyclones arose in our small atmosphere; but it was Jemima, you may well believe, who gave warning, for it was out of my power to pay her wages. And there was no sign of her yielding.

My readers may be inclined to ask in what stead the religion I had learned of my father now stood me. I will endeavour to be honest in my answer.

Every now and then I tried to pray to God to deliver us, but I was far indeed

from praying always, and still farther from not fainting. A whole day would sometimes pass under a weight of care that amounted often to misery, and not until its close would I bethink me that I had been all the weary hours without God. Even when more hopeful, I would keep looking and looking for the impossibility of something to happen of itself, instead of looking for some good and perfect gift to come down from the Father of Lights; and when I awoke to the fact, the fog would yet lie so deep on my soul that I could not be sorry for my idolatry and want of faith. It was indeed a miserable time. There was, besides, one definite thought that always choked my prayers: I could not say in my conscience that I had been sufficiently careful either in my management or my expenditure. "If," I thought, "I could be certain that I had done my best, I should be

able to trust in God for all that lies beyond my power; but now, he may mean to punish me for my carelessness." Then why should I not endure it calmly and without complaint? Alas! it was not I alone that thus would be punished, but my children and my husband as well. Nor could I avoid coming on my poor father at last, who of course would interfere to prevent a sale; and the thought was, from the circumstances I have mentioned, very bitter to me. Sometimes, however, in more faithful moods, I would reason with myself that God would not be hard upon me even if I had not been so saving as I ought. My father had taken his son's debts on himself, and would not allow him to be disgraced more than could be helped; and if an earthly parent would act thus for his child, would our Father in heaven be less tender with us? Still, for very love's sake, it might be necessary to

lay some disgrace upon me, for of late I had been thinking far too little of the best things. The cares more than the duties of life had been filling my mind. If it brought me nearer to God, I must then say it had been good for me to be afflicted; but while my soul was thus oppressed, how could my feelings have any scope? Let come what would however, I must try and bear it—even disgrace, if it was *his* will. Better people than I had been thus disgraced, and it might be my turn next. Meantime it had not come to that, and I must not let the cares of to-morrow burden to-day.

Every day almost, as it seems in looking back, a train of thought something like this would pass through my mind. But things went on, and grew no better. With gathering rapidity, we went sliding—to all appearance—down the inclined plane of disgrace.

Percivale at length asked Roger, if he had any money by him, to lend him a little; and he gave him at once all he had, amounting to six pounds—a wonderful amount for Roger to have accumulated—with the help of which we got on to the end of Jemima's month. The next step I had in view was to take my little valuables to the pawnbroker's—amongst them a watch, whose face was encircled with a row of good-sized diamonds. It had belonged to my great-grandmother, and my mother had given it me when I was married.

We had had a piece of boiled neck of mutton for dinner, of which we, that is my husband and I, had partaken sparingly, in order that there might be enough for the servants; Percivale had gone out, and I was sitting in the drawing-room, lost in anything but a blessed reverie, with all the children chattering amongst themselves

beside me, when Jemima entered, looking subdued.

"If you please, ma'am, this is my day," she said.

"Have you got a place, then, Jemima?" I asked; for I had been so much occupied with my own affairs that I had thought little of the future of the poor girl to whom I could have given but a lukewarm recommendation for anything prized amongst housekeepers.

"No, ma'am. Please, ma'am, mayn't I stop?"

"No, Jemima. I am very sorry, but I can't afford to keep you. I shall have to do all the work myself when you are gone."

I thought to pay her wages out of the proceeds of my jewels, but was willing to delay the step as long as possible—rather I believe from repugnance to enter the pawnshop than from disinclination to part with

the trinkets. But as soon as I had spoken, Jemima burst into an Irish wail, mingled with sobs and tears, crying between the convulsions of all three—

"I thought there was something wrong, mis'ess. You and master looked so scared-like. Please, mis'ess, don't send me away."

"I never wanted to send you away, Jemima. You wanted to go yourself."

"No, ma'am; *that* I didn't. I only wanted you to ask me to stop. Wirra! wirra! It's myself is sorry I was so rude. It's not me—it's my temper, mis'ess. I do believe I was born with a devil inside of me."

I could not help laughing, partly from amusement, partly from relief.

"But you see I can't ask you to stop," I said. "I've got no money—not even enough to pay you to-day—so I can't keep you."

"I don't want no money, ma'am. Let me stop, and I'll cook for yez and wash and scrub for yez to the end o' my days. An' I'll eat no more than'll keep the life in me. I *must* eat something, or the smell o' the meat would turn me sick, ye see, ma'am; and then I shouldn't be no good to yez. Please 'm, I ha' got fifteen pounds in the savings' bank: I'll give ye all that if ye'll let me stop wid ye."

When I confess that I burst out crying, my reader will be kind enough to take into consideration that I hadn't had much to eat for some time, that I was therefore weak in body as well as in mind, and that this was the first gleam of sunshine I had had for many weeks.

"Thank you very much, Jemima," I said, as soon as I could speak. "I won't take your money, for then you would be as poor as I am. But if you would like to

stop with us you shall, and I won't pay you till I'm able."

The poor girl was profuse in her thanks, and left the room sobbing in her apron.

It was a gloomy drizzly dreary afternoon. The children were hard to amuse, and I was glad when their bed-time arrived. It was getting late before Percivale returned. He looked pale, and I found afterwards that he had walked home. He had got wet, and had to change some of his clothes. When we went in to supper, there was the neck of mutton on the table, almost as we had left it. This led me, before asking him any questions, to relate what had passed with Jemima, at which news he laughed merrily, and was evidently a good deal relieved. Then I asked him where he had been.

"To the city," he answered.

"Have you sold another picture?" I asked, with an inward tribulation, half

hope, half fear; for much as we wanted the money, I could ill bear the thought of his pictures going for the price of mere pot-boilers.

"No," he replied; "the last is stopping the way. Mr. —— has been advertising it as a bargain for a hundred and fifty. But he hasn't sold it yet, and can't, he says, risk ten pounds on another. What's to come of it, I don't know," he added. "But meantime it's a comfort that Jemima can wait a bit for *her* money."

As we sat at supper I thought I saw a look on Percivale's face which I had never seen there before. All at once, while I was wondering what it might mean, after a long pause, during which we had been both looking into the fire, he said,

"Wynnie, I'm going to paint a better picture than I've ever painted yet. I can, and I will."

"But how are we to live in the meantime?" I said.

His face fell, and I saw with shame what a Job's comforter I was. Instead of sympathizing with his ardour, I had quenched it. What if my foolish remark had ruined a great picture! Anyhow it had wounded a great heart, which had turned to labour as its plainest duty, and would thereby have been strengthened to endure and to hope. It was too cruel of me. I knelt by his knee, and told him I was both ashamed and sorry I had been so faithless and unkind. He made little of it; said I might well ask the question; and even tried to be merry over it; but I could see well enough that I had let a gust of the foggy night into his soul, and was thoroughly vexed with myself. We went to bed gloomy, but slept well, and awoke more cheerful.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SUNSHINE.

AS we were dressing, it came into my mind that I had forgotten to give him a black-bordered letter which had arrived the night before. I commonly opened his letters, but I had not opened this one, for it looked like a business letter, and I feared it might be a demand for the rent of the house, which was over due. Indeed at this time I dreaded opening any letter the writing on which I did not recognize.

"Here is a letter, Percivale," I said. "I'm sorry I forgot to give it you last night."

"Who is it from?" he asked, talking through his towel from his dressing-room.

"I don't know. I didn't open it. It looks like something disagreeable."

"Open it now, then, and see."

"I can't just at this moment," I answered, for I had my back hair half twisted in my hands. "There it is on the chimney-piece."

He came in, took it, and opened it, while I went on with my toilet. Suddenly his arms were round me, and I felt his cheek on mine.

"Read that," he said, putting the letter into my hand.

It was from a lawyer in Shrewsbury, informing him that his godmother, with whom he had been a great favourite when a boy, was dead, and had left him three hundred pounds.

It was like a reprieve to one about to be

executed. I could only weep and thank God, once more believing in my Father in Heaven. But it was a humbling thought, that, if he had not thus helped me, I might have ceased to believe in him. I saw plainly that, let me talk to Percivale as I might, my own faith was but a wretched thing. It is all very well to have noble theories about God, but where is the good of them except we actually trust in him as a real present living loving being, who counts us of more value than many sparrows, and will not let one of *them* fall to the ground without him?

"I thought, Wynnie, if there was such a God as you believed in, and with you to pray to him, we shouldn't be long without a hearing," said my husband.

There was more faith in his heart all the time, though he could not profess the belief

I thought I had, than there ever was in mine.

But our troubles weren't nearly over yet. Percivale wrote acknowledging the letter, and requesting to know when it would be convenient to let him have the money, as he was in immediate want of it. The reply was that the trustees were not bound to pay the legacies for a year, but that possibly they might stretch a point in his favour if he applied to them. Percivale did so, but received a very curt answer, with little encouragement to expect anything but the extreme of legal delay. He received the money, however, about four months after—lightened, to the great disappointment of my ignorance, of thirty pounds legacy-duty.

In the meantime, although our minds were much relieved, and Percivale was working away at his new picture with great

energy and courage, the immediate pressure of circumstances was nearly as painful as ever. It was a comfort, however, to know that we might borrow on the security of the legacy; but greatly grudging the loss of the interest which that would involve, I would have persuaded Percivale to ask a loan of Lady Bernard. He objected—on what ground do you think?—That it would be disagreeable to Lady Bernard to be repaid the sum she had lent us! He would have finally consented, however, I have little doubt, had the absolute necessity for borrowing arrived.

About a week or ten days after the blessed news, he had a note from Mr. ——, whom he had authorized to part with the picture for thirty guineas. How much this was under its value, it is not easy to say, seeing the money-value of pictures is dependent on so many things; but if the fairy

godmother's executors had paid her legacy at once, that picture would not have been sold for less than five times the amount; and I may mention that the last time it changed hands, it fetched five hundred and seventy pounds.

Mr. —— wrote that he had an offer of five and twenty for it, desiring to know whether he might sell it for that sum. Percivale at once gave his consent, and the next day received a cheque for eleven pounds, odd shillings; the difference being the amount borrowed upon it, its interest, the commission charged on the sale, and the price of a small picture frame.

The next day Percivale had a visitor at the studio—no less a person than Mr. Baddeley, with his shirt-front in full blossom, and his diamond wallowing in light on his fifth finger—I cannot call it his little finger, for his hands were as huge as they were

soft and white—hands descended of generations of laborious ones, but which had never themselves done any work beyond paddling in money.

He greeted Percivale with a jolly condescension, and told him that having seen and rather liked a picture of his the other day, he had come to inquire whether he had one that would do for a pendent to it, as he should like to have it, provided he did not want a fancy price for it.

Percivale felt as if he were setting out his children for sale, as he invited him to look about the room, and turned round a few from against the wall. The great man flitted hither and thither, spying at one after another through the cylinder of his curved hand, Percivale going on with his painting as if no one were there.

"How much do you want for this sketch?" asked Mr. Baddeley at length, pointing to

one of the most highly finished paintings in the room.

"I put three hundred on it at the Academy Exhibition," answered Percivale. "My friends thought it too little, but as it has been on my hands a long time now, and pictures don't rise in price in the keeping of the painter, I shouldn't mind taking two for it."

"Two tens, I suppose you mean," said Mr. Baddeley.

"I gave him a look," said Percivale as he described the interview to me; and I knew as well as if I had seen it what kind of a phenomenon that look must have been.

"Come now," Mr. Baddeley went on, perhaps misinterpreting the look, for it was such as a man of his property was not in the habit of receiving, "you mustn't think I'm made of money, or that I'm a green

hand in the market. I know what your pictures fetch, and I'm a pretty sharp man of business, I believe. What do you really mean to say and stick to? Ready money, you know."

"Three hundred," said Percivale coolly.

"Why, Mr. Percivale," cried Mr. Baddeley, drawing himself up, as my husband said, with the air of one who knew a trick worth two of that, "I paid Mr. —— fifty pounds, neither more nor less, for a picture of yours yesterday—a picture, allow me to say, worth——"

He turned again to the one in question with a critical air, as if about to estimate to a fraction its value as compared with the other.

"Worth three of that, some people think," said Percivale.

"The price of this then, joking aside, is——?"

"Three hundred pounds," answered Percivale—I know well how quietly.

"I understood you wished to sell it," said Mr. Baddeley, beginning for all his good nature to look offended—as well he might.

"I do wish to sell it. I happen to be in want of money."

"Then I'll be liberal, and offer you the same I paid for the other. I'll send you a cheque this afternoon for fifty—with pleasure."

"You cannot have that picture under three hundred."

"Why!" said the rich man, puzzled, "you offered it for two hundred, not five minutes ago."

"Yes; and you pretended to think I meant two tens."

"Offended you, I fear."

"At all events betrayed so much ignorance

of painting that I would rather not have a picture of mine in your house."

"You're the first man ever presumed to tell me I was ignorant of painting," said Mr. Baddeley, now thoroughly indignant.

"You have heard the truth, then, for the first time," said Percivale, and resumed his work.

Mr. Baddeley walked out of the study.

I am not sure that he was so very ignorant. He had been in the way of buying popular pictures for some time, paying thousands for certain of them. I suspect he had eye enough to see that my husband's would probably rise in value, and, with the true huckster spirit, was ambitious of boasting how little he had given compared with what they were really worth.

Percivale in this case was doubtless rude. He had an insuperable aversion to men of Mr. Baddeley's class—men who could have

no position but for their money, and who yet presumed upon it, as if it were gifts and graces, genius and learning, judgment and art, all in one. He was in the habit of saying that the plutocracy, as he called it, ought to be put down—that is, negatively, and honestly—by showing them no more respect than you really entertained for them. Besides, although he had no great favour for cousin Judy's husband, he yet bore Mr. Baddeley a grudge for the way in which he had treated one with whom, while things went well with him, he had been ready enough to exchange hospitalities.

Before long, through Lady Bernard, he sold a picture at a fair price; and soon after, seeing in a shop-window the one Mr. —— had sold to Mr. Baddeley, marked ten pounds, went in and bought it. Within the year he sold it for a hundred and fifty.

By working day and night almost, he

finished his new picture in time for the Academy, and, as he had himself predicted, it proved, at least in the opinion of all his artist friends, the best that he had ever painted. It was bought at once for three hundred pounds, and never since then have we been in want of money.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHAT LADY BERNARD THOUGHT OF IT.

MY reader may wonder that, in my record of these troubles, I have never mentioned Marion. The fact is I could not bring myself to tell her of them, partly because she was in some trouble herself, from strangers who had taken rooms in the house, and made mischief between her and her grandchildren; and partly because I knew she would insist on going to Lady Bernard, and, although I should not have minded it myself, I knew that nothing but seeing the children hungry would have driven my husband to consent to it.

One evening, after it was all over, I told Lady Bernard the story. She allowed me to finish it without saying a word. When I had ended, she still sat silent for a few moments; then, laying her hand on my arm, said,

"My dear child, you were very wrong, as well as very unkind. Why did you not let me know?"

"Because my husband would never have allowed me," I answered.

"Then I must have a talk with your husband," she said.

"I wish you would," I replied, "for I can't help thinking Percivale too severe about such things."

The very next day she called, and did have a talk with him in the study—to the following effect.

"I have come to quarrel with you, Mr. Percivale," said Lady Bernard.

"I'm sorry to hear it," he returned. "You're the last person I should like to quarrel with, for it would imply some unpardonable fault in me."

"It does imply a fault—and a great one," she rejoined, "though I trust not an unpardonable one. That depends on whether you can repent of it."

She spoke with such a serious air, that Percivale grew uneasy, and began to wonder what he could possibly have done to offend her. I had told him nothing of our conversation, wishing her to have her own way with him.

When she saw him troubled, she smiled.

"Is it not a fault, Mr. Percivale, to prevent one from obeying the divine law of bearing another's burden?"

"But," said Percivale, "I read as well, that every man shall bear his own burden."

"Ah!" returned Lady Bernard, "but I

learn from Mr. Conybeare, that two different Greek words are there used, which we translate only by the English *burden.* I cannot tell you what they are: I can only tell you the practical result. We are to bear one another's burdens of pain, or grief, or misfortune, or doubt—whatever weighs one down is to be borne by another; but the man who is tempted to exalt himself over his neighbour, is taught to remember that he has his own load of disgrace to bear and answer for. It is just a weaker form of the lesson of the mote and the beam. You cannot get out at that door, Mr. Percivale. I beg you will read the passage in your Greek Testament, and see if you have not misapplied it. You *ought* to have let me bear your burden."

"Well, you see, my dear Lady Bernard," returned Percivale, at a loss to reply to such a vigorous assault, "I knew how it

would be. You would have come here and bought pictures you didn't want; and I, knowing all the time you did it only to give me the money, should have had to talk to you as if I were taken in by it; and I really could *not* stand it."

"There you are altogether wrong. Besides depriving me of the opportunity of fulfilling a duty and of the pleasure and the honour of helping to bear your burden, you have deprived me of the opportunity of indulging a positive passion for pictures. I am constantly compelled to restrain it lest I should spend too much of the money given me for the common good on my own private tastes; but here was a chance for me! I might have had some of your lovely pictures in my drawing-room now—with a good conscience and a happy heart—if you had only been friendly. It was too bad of you, Mr. Percivale! I am not pretending in the

least when I assert that I am really and thoroughly disappointed."

"I haven't a word to say for myself," returned Percivale.

"You couldn't have said a better," rejoined Lady Bernard; "but I hope you will never have it to say again."

"That I shall not. If ever I find myself in any difficulty worth speaking of, I will let you know at once."

"Thank you. Then we are friends again. —And now I do think I am entitled to a picture—at least I think it will be pardonable if I yield to the *very* strong temptation I am under at this moment to buy one. Let me see: what have you in the slave market, as your wife calls it?"

She bought "The Street Musician," as Percivale had named the picture taken from Dr. Donne. I was more miserable than I ought to have been when I found he had

parted with it, but it was a great consolation to think it was to Lady Bernard's it had gone. She was the only one, except my mother or Miss Clare, I could have borne to think of as having become its possessor.

He had asked her what I thought a very low price for it; and I judge that Lady Bernard thought the same, but after what had passed between them, would not venture to expostulate. With such a man as my husband I fancy she thought it best to let well alone. Anyhow, one day soon after this, her servant brought him a little box, containing a fine brilliant.

"The good lady's kindness is long-sighted," said my husband, as he placed it on his finger. "I shall be hard up, though, before I part with this. Wynnie, I've actually got a finer diamond than Mr. Baddeley! It *is* a beauty, if ever there was one!"

My husband, with all his carelessness of dress and adornment, has almost a passion for stones. It is delightful to hear him talk about them. But he had never possessed a single gem before Lady Bernard made him this present. I believe he is child enough to be happier for it all his life.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RETROSPECTIVE.

SUDDENLY I become aware that I am drawing nigh the close of my monthly labours for a long year. Yet the year seems to have passed more rapidly because of this addition to my anxieties. Not that I haven't enjoyed the labour while I have been actually engaged in it, but the prospect of the next month's work would often come in to damp the pleasure of the present; making me fancy as the close of each chapter drew near, that I should not have material for another left in my head. I heard a friend once remark that it is not

the cares of to-day, but the cares of to-morrow that weigh a man down. For the day we have the corresponding strength given; for the morrow we are told to trust: it is not ours yet.

When I get my money for my work, I mean to give my husband a long holiday. I half think of taking him to Italy, for of course I can do what I like with my own, whether husband or money—and so have a hand in making him a still better painter. Incapable of imitation, the sight of any real work is always of great service to him, widening his sense of art, enlarging his idea of what can be done, rousing what part of his being is most in sympathy with it—a part possibly as yet only half awake; in a word leading him another step towards that simplicity which is at the root of all diversity, being so simple that it needs all diversity to set it forth.

How impossible it seemed to me that I should ever write a book! Well or ill done, it is almost finished, for the next month is the twelfth. I must look back upon what I have written, to see what loose ends I may have left, and whether any allusion has not been followed up with a needful explanation; for this way of writing by portions, the only way in which I could have been persuaded to attempt the work however, is unfavourable to artistic unity—an unnecessary remark, seeing that to such unity my work makes no pretensions. It is but a collection of portions detached from an uneventful, ordinary, and perhaps in part *therefore* very blessed life. Hence perhaps it was specially fitted for this mode of publication. At all events I can cast upon it none of the blame of what failure I may have to confess.

A biography cannot be constructed with

the art of a novel, for this reason, that a novel is constructed on the artist's scale, with swift returning curves; a biography on the divine scale, whose circles are so large that they shoot beyond this world, sometimes even before we are able to detect in them the curve by which they will at length round themselves back towards completion. Hence every life must look more or less fragmentary, and more or less out of drawing perhaps—not to mention the questionable effects in colour and tone where the model himself will insist on taking palette and brushes, and laying childish, if not passionate, conceited, ambitious, or even spiteful hands to the work.

I do not find that I have greatly blundered, or omitted much that I ought to have mentioned. One odd thing is, that in the opening conversation in which they urge me to the attempt, I have not mentioned

Marion. I do not mean that she was present, but that surely some one must have suggested her and her history as affording endless material for my record. A thing apparently but not really strange, is, that I have never said a word about the Mrs. Cromwell mentioned in the same conversation. The fact is that I have but just arrived at the part of my story where she first comes in. She died about three months ago, and I can therefore with the more freedom narrate in the next chapter what I have known of her.

I find also that I have, in the fourth chapter, by some odd cerebro-mechanical freak, substituted the name of my aunt *Martha* for that of my aunt Millicent, another sister of my father, whom he has not, I believe, had occasion to mention in either of his preceding books. My aunt Martha is Mrs. Weir, and has no children ;

... ...illicent is Mrs. Parsons, married ... ...d-working attorney, and has twelve ... ..., now mostly grown up.

... ...nd also in the thirteenth chapter, an ... ...xplained allusion. There my husband ... ...: "Just ask my brother his experience ... regard of the word to which you object." The word was *stomach*, at the use of which I had in my ill-temper taken umbrage: however disagreeable a word in itself, surely a husband might, if need be, use it without offence. It will be proof enough that my objection arose from pure ill-temper when I state that I have since asked Roger to what Percivale referred. His reply was, that, having been requested by a certain person who had a school for young ladies—probably she called it a college—to give her pupils a few lectures on physiology, he could not go far in the course without finding it necessary to make a not unfrequent

use of the word, explaining the functions of the organ to which the name belonged, as resembling those of a mill. After the lecture was over, the school-mistress took him aside, and said she really could not allow her young ladies to be made familiar with such words. Roger averred that the word was absolutely necessary to the subject upon which she had desired his lectures; and that he did not know how any instruction in physiology could be given without the free use of it. "No doubt," she returned, "you must recognize the existence of the organ in question, but as the name of it is offensive to ears polite, could you not substitute another? You have just said that its operations resemble those of a mill: could you not as often as you require to speak of it refer to it in future as *the mill?*" Roger, with great difficulty repressing his laughter, consented; but in his next lecture

made far more frequent reference to *the mill* than was necessary, using the word every time—I know exactly how—with a certain absurd solemnity that must have been irresistible. The girls went into fits of laughter at the first utterance of it, and seemed, he said, during the whole lecture intent only on the new term, at every recurrence of which their laughter burst out afresh. Doubtless their school-mistress had herself prepared them to fall into Roger's trap. The same night he received a note from her, enclosing his fee for the lectures given, and informing him that the rest of the course would not be required. Roger sent back the money, saying that to accept part payment would be to renounce his claim for the whole; and that besides, he had already received an amount of amusement quite sufficient to reward him for his labour. I told him I thought he had been rather

cruel; but he said such a woman wanted a lesson. He said also that to see the sort of women who sometimes had the responsibility of training girls, must make the angels weep; none but a heartless mortal like himself could laugh where conventionality and insincerity were taught in every hint as to posture and speech. It was bad enough, he said, to shape yourself into your own ideal, but to have to fashion yourself after the ideal of one whose sole object in teaching was to make money, was something wretched indeed.

I find besides that several intentions I had when I started, have fallen out of the scheme. Somehow the subjects would not well come in, or I felt that I was in danger of injuring the persons in the attempt to set forth their opinions.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MRS. CROMWELL COMES.

THE moment the legacy was paid, our liabilities being already nearly discharged, my husband took us all to Hastings. I had never before been to any other sea-coast town where the land was worthy of the sea, except Kilkhaven. Assuredly there is no place within easy reach of London to be once mentioned with Hastings. Of course we kept clear of the more fashionable and commonplace St. Leonard's end, where yet the sea is the same—a sea such that, not even off Cornwall, have I seen so many varieties of

ocean-aspect. The immediate shore with its earthy cliffs, is vastly inferior to the magnificent rock about Tintagel, but there is no outlook on the sea that I know more satisfying than that from the heights of Hastings, especially the East Hill; from the west side of which also you may, when weary of the ocean, look straight down on the ancient port, with its old houses, and fine multiform red roofs, through the gauze of blue smoke which at eve of a summer day fills the narrow valley, softening the rough goings-on of life into harmony with the gentleness of sea and shore, field and sky. No doubt the suburbs are as unsightly as mere boxes of brick and lime can be, with an ugliness mean because pretentious —an altogether modern ugliness; but even this cannot touch the essential beauty of the place.

On the brow of this East Hill, just where

it begins to sink towards Ecclesbourne Glen, stands a small old rickety house in the midst of the sweet grass of the downs. This house my husband was fortunate in finding to let, and took for three months. I am not however going to give any history of how we spent them—my sole reason for mentioning Hastings at all being that there I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Cromwell. It was on this wise.

One bright day about noon—almost all the days of those months were gorgeous with sunlight—a rather fashionable maid ran up our little garden, begging for some water for her mistress. Sending her on with the water, I myself followed with a glass of sherry.

The door in our garden-hedge opened immediately on a green hollow in the hill, sloping towards the glen. As I stepped from the little gate on to the grass, I saw to

my surprise that a white fog was blowing in from the sea. The heights on the opposite side of the glen, partially obscured thereby, looked more majestic than was their wont, and were mottled with patches of duller and brighter colour as the drifts of the fog were heaped or parted here and there. Far down, at the foot of the cliffs, the waves of the rising tide, driven shorewards with the added force of a south-west breeze, caught and threw back what sunlight reached them, and thinned with their shine the fog between. It was all so strange and fine, and had come on so suddenly, for when I had looked out a few minutes before, sea and sky were purely resplendent, that I stood a moment or two and gazed, almost forgetting why I was there.

When I bethought myself and looked about me, I saw, in the sheltered hollow before me, a lady seated in a curiously

shaped chair, so constructed in fact as to form upon occasion a kind of litter. It was plain she was an invalid—from her paleness, and the tension of the skin on her face, revealing the outline of the bones beneath. Her features were finely formed but rather small, and her forehead low—a Greek-like face, with large pale-blue eyes that reminded me of little Amy Morley's. She smiled very sweetly when she saw me, and shook her head at the wine.

"I only wanted a little water," she said. "This fog seems to stifle me."

"It has come on very suddenly," I said. "Perhaps it is the cold of it that affects your breathing. You don't seem very strong, and any sudden change of temperature——"

"I am not one of the most vigorous of mortals," she answered, with a sad smile; "but the day seemed of such indubitable

character that after my husband had brought me here in the carriage, he sent it home and left me with my maid, while he went for a long walk across the downs. When he sees the change in the weather, though, he will turn directly."

"It won't do to wait him here," I said. "We must get you in at once. Would it be wrong to press you to take a little of this wine—just to counteract a chill?"

"I daren't touch anything but water," she replied. "It would make me feverish at once."

"Run and tell the cook," I said to the maid, "that I want her here. You and she could carry your mistress in—could you not? I will help you."

"There's no occasion for that, ma'am—she's as light as a feather," was the whispered answer.

"I'm quite ashamed of giving you so

much trouble," said the lady, either hearing or guessing at our words. "My husband will be very grateful to you."

"It is only an act of common humanity," I said.

But as I spoke, I fancied her fair brow clouded a little, as if she was not accustomed to common humanity, and the word sounded harsh in her ear. The cloud however passed so quickly that I doubted, until I knew her better, whether it had really been there.

The two maids were now ready, and, Jemima instructed by the other, they lifted her with the utmost ease and bore her gently towards the house. The garden-gate was just wide enough to let the chair through, and in a minute more she was upon the sofa. Then a fit of coughing came on which shook her dreadfully. When it had passed, she lay quiet with closed eyes, and a smile hovering about her sweet, thin-

lipped mouth. By and by she opened them and looked at me with a pitiful expression.

"I fear you are far from well," I said.

"I'm dying," she returned quietly.

"I hope not," was all I could answer.

"Why should you hope not?" she returned. "I am in no strait betwixt two. I desire to depart. For me to die will be all gain."

"But your friends?" I ventured to suggest, feeling my way, and not quite relishing either the form or tone of her utterance.

"I have none but my husband."

"Then your husband," I persisted.

"Ah!" she said, mournfully, "he will miss me, no doubt, for a while. But it *must* be a weight off him, for I have been a sufferer so long!"

At this moment, I heard a heavy hasty step in the passage; the next, the room door opened, and in came, in hot haste,

wiping his red face, a burly man, clumsy and active, with an umbrella in his hand, followed by a great lumbering Newfoundland dog.

"Down, Polyphemus!" he said, to the dog, which crept under a chair; while he, taking no notice of my presence, hurried up to his wife.

"My love! my little dove!" he said eagerly; "did you think I had forsaken you to the cruel elements?"

"No, Alcibiades," she answered, with a sweet little drawl; "but you do not observe that I am not the only lady in the room." Then turning to me—"This is my husband, Mr. Cromwell," she said. "I cannot tell him *your* name."

"I am Mrs. Percivale," I returned, almost mechanically, for the gentleman's two names had run together and were sounding in my head:—*Alcibiades Cromwell!* How could

such a conjunction have taken place without the intervention of Charles Dickens?

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said Mr. Cromwell, bowing. "Permit my anxiety about my poor wife to cover my rudeness. I had climbed the other side of the glen before I saw the fog, and it is no such easy matter to get up and down these hills of yours. I am greatly obliged to you for your hospitality. You have doubtless saved her life; for she is a frail flower—shrinking from the least breath of cold."

The lady closed her eyes again, and the gentleman took her hand and felt her pulse. He seemed about twice her age—she not thirty, he well past fifty—the top of his head bald, and his gray hair sticking out fiercely over his good-natured red cheeks. He laid her hand gently down, put his hat on the table and his umbrella in a corner, wiped his face again, drew a chair near the

sofa, and took his place by her side. I thought it better to leave them.

When I re-entered after a while, I saw from the windows, which looked sea-ward, that the wind had risen, and was driving thin drifts no longer, but great thick white masses of sea-fog landwards. It was the storm-wind of that coast—the south-west—which dashes the pebbles over the Parade, and the heavy spray against the houses. Mr. Alcibiades Cromwell was sitting as I had left him, silent by the side of his wife, whose blue-veined eyelids had apparently never been lifted from her large eyes.

"Is there anything I could offer Mrs. Cromwell?" I said. "Could she not eat something?"

"It is very little she can take," he answered; "but you are very kind. If you could let her have a little beef-tea? She

generally has a spoonful or two about this time of the day."

"I am sorry we have none," I said; "and it would be far too long for her to wait. I have a nice chicken though, ready for cooking: if she could take a little chicken-broth, that would be ready in a very little while."

"Thank you a thousand times, ma'am," he said heartily; "nothing could be better. She might even be induced to eat a mouthful of the chicken. But I am afraid your extreme kindness prevents me from being so thoroughly ashamed as I ought to be at putting you to so much trouble for perfect strangers."

"It is but a pleasure to be of service to any one in want of it," I said.

Mrs. Cromwell opened her eyes and smiled gratefully. I left the room to give orders about the chicken—indeed to superintend the preparation of it myself, for Jemima

could not be altogether trusted in such a delicate affair as cooking for an invalid.

When I returned, having set the simple operation going, Mr. Cromwell had a little hymn-book of mine he had found on the table open in his hand, and his wife was saying to him,

"That is lovely! Thank you, husband. How can it be I never saw it before? I am quite astonished."

"She little knows what multitudes of hymns there are!" I thought with myself—my father having made a collection, whence I had some idea of the extent of that department of religious literature.

"This is a hymn-book we are not acquainted with," said Mr. Cromwell, addressing me.

"It is not much known," I answered. "It was compiled by a friend of my father's for his own schools."

"And this," he went on, "is a very beautiful hymn. You may trust my wife's judgment, Mrs. Percivale. She lives upon hymns."

He read the first line to show which he meant. I had long thought, and still think it the most beautiful hymn I know. It was taken from the German, only much improved in the taking, and given to my father to do what he pleased with, and my father had given it to another friend for his collection. Before that, however, while still in manuscript, it had fallen into the hands of a certain clergyman, by whom it had been published without leave asked, or apology made; a rudeness of which neither my father nor the author would have complained, for it was a pleasure to think it might thus reach many to whom it would be helpful; but they both felt aggrieved and indignant that he had taken the dishonest liberty of alter-

ing certain lines of it to suit his own opinions. As I am anxious to give it all the publicity I can, from pure delight in it, and love to all who are capable of the same delight, I shall here communicate it, in the full confidence of thus establishing a claim on the gratitude of my readers.

O Lord, how happy is the time
  When in thy love I rest!
When from my weariness I climb
  Even to thy tender breast!
The night of sorrow endeth there—
  Thou art brighter than the sun;
And in thy pardon and thy care
  The heaven of heaven is won.

Let the world call herself my foe,
  Or let the world allure:
I care not for the world—I go
  To this dear friend and sure.
And when life's fiercest storms are sen
  Upon life's wildest sea,
My little bark is confident,
  Because it holds by thee.

When the law threatens endless death
  Upon the awful hill;
Straightway from her consuming breath
  My soul goes higher still;—

Goeth to Jesus, wounded, slain,
And maketh him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
And where death cannot come.

I do not fear the wilderness
Where thou hast been before;
Nay rather will I daily press
After thee, near thee, more.
Thou art my food; on thee I lean;
Thou makest my heart sing;
And to thy heavenly pastures green
All thy dear flock dost bring.

And if the gate that opens there
Be dark to other men,
It is not dark to those who share
The heart of Jesus then.
That is not losing much of life
Which is not losing thee,
Who art as present in the strife
As in the victory.

Therefore how happy is the time
When in thy love I rest!
When from my weariness I climb
Even to thy tender breast:
The night of sorrow endeth there—
Thou art brighter than the sun;
And in thy pardon and thy care
The heaven of heaven is won.*

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* "Wie wohl ist mir, O Freund der Seelen;" translated by a friend of the author.

In telling them a few of the facts connected with the hymn, I presume I had manifested my admiration of it with some degree of fervour.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Cromwell, opening her eyes very wide, and letting the rising tears fill them—"Ah, Mrs. Percivale! you are—you must be one of us!"

"You must tell me first who you are," I said.

She held out her hand; I gave her mine; she drew me towards her, and whispered almost in my ear—though why or whence the affectation of secrecy I can only imagine—the name of a certain small and exclusive sect. I will not indicate it, lest I should be supposed to attribute to it either the peculiar faults or virtues of my new acquaintance.

"No," I answered, speaking with the calmness of self-compulsion, for I confess I

felt repelled; "I am not one of you, except in as far as we all belong to the church of Christ."

I have thought since how much better it would have been to say "Yes; for we all belong to the church of Christ."

She gave a little sigh of disappointment, closed her eyes for a moment, opened them again with a smile, and said, with a pleading tone—

"But you do believe in personal religion?"

"I don't see," I returned, "how religion can be anything but personal."

Again she closed her eyes, in a way that made me think how convenient bad health must be—conferring not only the privilege of passing into retirement at any desirable moment, but of doing so in such a ready and easy manner as the mere dropping of the eyelids.

I rose to leave the room once more. Mr. Cromwell, who had made way for me to sit beside his wife, stood looking out of the window, against which came sweeping the great volumes of mist. I glanced out also. Not only was the sea invisible, but even the brow of the cliffs. When he turned towards me as I passed him, I saw that his face had lost much of its rubicund hue, and looked troubled and anxious.

"There is nothing for it," I said to myself, "but keep them all night," and so gave directions to have a bedroom prepared for them. I did not much like it, I confess; for I was not much interested in either of them, while of the sect to which she belonged I knew enough already to be aware that it was of the narrowest and most sectarian in Christendom. It was a pity she had sought to claim me by a would-be

closer bond than that of the body of Christ. Still I knew I should be myself a sectary if I therefore excluded her from my best sympathies. At the same time I did feel some curiosity concerning the oddly yoked couple, and wondered whether the lady was really so ill as she would appear. I doubted whether she might not be using her illness both as an excuse for self-indulgence, and as a means of keeping her husband's interest in her on the stretch. I did not like the wearing of her religion on her sleeve, nor the mellifluous drawl in which she spoke.

When the chicken-broth was ready, she partook daintily; but before she ended, had made a very good meal, including a wing and a bit of the breast; after which she fell asleep.

"There seems little chance of the weather clearing," said Mr. Cromwell in a whisper,

as I approached the window where he once more stood.

"You must make up your mind to remain here for the night," I said.

"My dear madam, I couldn't think of it," he returned—I thought from unwillingness to incommode a strange household. "An invalid like her—sweet lamb!"—he went on, "requires so many little comforts and peculiar contrivances to entice the repose she so greatly needs, that—that—in short, I must get her home."

"Where do you live?" I asked, not sorry to find his intention of going so fixed.

"We have a house in Warrior Square," he answered. "We live in London, but have been here all the past winter. I doubt if she improves though. I doubt—I doubt."

He said the last words in a yet lower and more mournful whisper; then, with a shake

of his head, turned and gazed again through the window.

A peculiar little cough from the sofa made us both look round. Mrs. Cromwell was awake, and searching for her handkerchief. Her husband understood her movements, and hurried to her assistance. When she took the handkerchief from her mouth, there was a red spot upon it. Mr. Cromwell's face turned the colour of lead; but his wife looked up at him, and smiled—a sweet, consciously pathetic smile.

"He has sent for me," she said. "The messenger has come."

Her husband made no answer. His eyes seemed starting from his head.

"Who is your medical man?" I asked him.

He told me, and I sent off my housemaid to fetch him. It was a long hour before he arrived, during which, as often as I peeped

in, I saw him sitting silent and holding her hand—until the last time, when I found him reading a hymn to her. She was apparently once more asleep. Nothing could be more favourable to her recovery than such quietness of both body and mind.

When the doctor came, and had listened to Mr. Cromwell's statement, he proceeded to examine her chest with much care. That over, he averred in her hearing that he found nothing serious, but told her husband apart that there was considerable mischief, and assured me afterwards that her lungs were all but gone, and that she could not live beyond a month or two. She had better be removed to her own house, he said, as speedily as possible.

"But it would be cruelty to send her out a day like this," I returned.

"Yes, yes; I did not mean that," he said. "But to-morrow, perhaps. You'll

see what the weather is like. Is Mrs. Cromwell an old friend?"

"I never saw her until to-day," I replied.

"Ah!" he remarked, and said no more.

We got her to bed as soon as possible. I may just mention that I never saw anything to equal the *point-devise* of her underclothing. There was not a stitch of cotton about her, using the word *stitch* in its metaphorical sense. But indeed I doubt whether her garments were not all made with linen thread. Even her horse-hair petticoat was quilted with rose-coloured silk inside.

"Surely she has no children!" I said to myself—and was right, as my mother-readers will not be surprised to learn.

It was a week before she got up again, and a month before she was carried down the hill, during which time her husband sat up with her, or slept on a sofa in the room

beside her, every night. During the day I took a share in the nursing—which was by no means oppressive, for she did not suffer much and required little. Her chief demand was for hymns, the only annoyance connected with which worth mentioning was, that she often wished me to admire with her such as I could only half like, and occasionally such as were thoroughly distasteful to me. Her husband had brought her own collection from Warrior Square—volumes of hymns in manuscript, copied by her own hand, many of them strange to me—none of those I read altogether devoid of literary merit, and some of them lovely both in feeling and form. But all, even the best, which to me were unobjectionable, belonged to one class—a class breathing a certain tone difficult to describe—one however which I find characteristic of all the Roman Catholic hymns I have read. I will not

indicate any of her selection; neither, lest I should be supposed to object to this or that one answering to the general description, and yet worthy of all respect, or even sympathy, will I go further with a specification of their sort than to say that what pleased me in them was their full utterance of personal devotion to the Saviour, and that what displeased me was a sort of sentimental regard of self in the matter—an implied special, and thus partially exclusive predilection or preference of the Saviour for the individual supposed to be making use of them; a certain fundamental want of humility therefore, although the forms of speech in which they were cast might be laboriously humble. They also not unfrequently manifested a great leaning to the forms of earthly show as representative of the glories of that kingdom which the Lord says is *within us.*

Likewise the manner in which Mrs. Cromwell talked, reminded me much of the way in which a nun would represent her individual relation to Christ. I can best show what I mean by giving a conversation I had with her one day when she was recovering—which she did with wonderful rapidity up to a certain point. I confess I shrink a little from reproducing it, because of the sacred name which, as it seemed to me, was far too often upon her lips, and too easily uttered. But then she was made so different from me!

The fine weather had returned in all its summer glory, and she was lying on a couch in her own room near the window, whence she could gaze on the expanse of sea below—this morning streaked with the most delicate gradations of distance, sweep beyond sweep, line and band and ribbon of softly, often but slightly varied hue, leading

the eyes on and on into the infinite. There may have been some atmospheric illusion ending off the show, for the last reaches mingled so with the air that you saw no horizon line, only a great breadth of border, no spot in which could you appropriate with certainty either to sea or sky; while here and there was a vessel to all appearance pursuing its path in the sky and not upon the sea. It was, as some of my readers will not require to be told, a still grey forenoon, with a film of cloud over all the heavens, and many horizontal strata of deeper but varying density near the horizon.

Mrs. Cromwell had lain for some time with her large eyes fixed on the farthest confusion of sea and sky.

"I have been sending out my soul," she said at length, "to travel all across those distances, step by step, on to the gates of pearl. Who knows but that may be the

path I must travel to meet the bridegroom?"

"The way is wide," I said: "what if you should miss him?"

I spoke almost involuntarily. The style of her talk was very distasteful to me, and I had just been thinking of what I had once heard my father say—that at no time were people in more danger of being theatrical than when upon their death beds.

"No," she returned, with a smile of gentle superiority; "—no; that cannot be. Is he not waiting for me? Has he not chosen me, and called me for his own? Is not my Jesus mine? I shall *not* miss him. He waits to give me my new name, and clothe me in the garments of righteousness."

As she spoke, she clasped her thin hands and looked upwards with a radiant expression. Far as it was from me to hint, even

in my own soul, that the Saviour was not hers, tenfold more hers than she was able to think, I could not at the same time but doubt whether her heart and soul and mind were as close to him as her words would indicate she thought they were. She could not be wrong in trusting him, but could she be right in her notion of the measure to which her union with him had been perfected? I could not help thinking that a little fear, soon to pass into reverence, might be to her a salutary thing. The fear, I thought, would heighten and deepen the love, and purify it from that self which haunted her whole consciousness, and of which she had not yet sickened, as one day she certainly must.

"My lamp is burning," she said. "I feel it burning. I love my Lord. It would be false to say otherwise."

"Are you sure you have oil enough in

your vessel as well as in your lamp?" I said.

"Ah, you are one of the doubting!" she returned kindly. "Don't you know that sweet hymn about feeding our lamps from the olive-trees of Gethsemane? The idea is taken from the lamp the prophet Zechariah saw in his vision, into which two olive branches, through two golden pipes, emptied the golden oil out of themselves. If we are thus one with the olive tree, the oil cannot fail us. It is not as if we had to fill our lamps from a cruse of our own. This is the cruse that cannot fail."

"True, true," I said; "but ought we not to examine our own selves whether we are in the faith?"

"Let those examine that doubt," she replied; and I could not but yield in my heart that she had had the best of the argument.

For I knew that the confidence in Christ which prevents us from thinking of ourselves, and makes us eager to obey his word, leaving all the care of our feelings to him, is a true and healthy faith. Hence I could not answer her, although I doubted whether her peace came from such confidence—doubted for several reasons; one, that, so far from not thinking of herself, she seemed full of herself; another, that she seemed to find no difficulty with herself in any way—and surely she was too young for all struggle to be over! I perceived no reference to the will of God in regard of anything she had to do, only in regard of what she had to suffer, and specially in regard of that smallest of matters—when she was to go. Here I checked myself, for what could she *do* in such a state of health? But then she never spoke as if she had any anxiety about the welfare of other people.

That however might be from her absolute contentment in the will of God. But why did she always look to the Saviour through a mist of hymns, and never go straight back to the genuine old good news, or to the mighty thoughts and exhortations with which the first preachers of that news followed them up and unfolded the grandeur of their goodness? After all, was I not judging her? On the other hand, ought I not to care for her state? Should I not be inhuman, that is unchristian, if I did not?

In the end I saw clearly enough that except it was revealed to me what I ought to say, I had no right to say anything; and that to be uneasy about her, was to distrust him whose it was to teach her, and who would perfect that which he had certainly begun in her. For her heart, however poor and faulty and flimsy its faith might be, was yet certainly drawn towards the one object

of faith. I therefore said nothing more in the direction of opening her eyes to what I considered her condition: that view of it might after all be but a phantasm of my own projection. What was plainly my duty was to serve her as one of those the least of whom the Saviour sets forth as representing himself. I would do it to her as unto him.

My children were out the greater part of every day, and Dora was with me, so that I had more leisure than I had had for a long time. I therefore set myself to wait upon her as a kind of lady's-maid in things spiritual. Her own maid, understanding her ways, was sufficient for things temporal. I resolved to try to help her after her own fashion and not after mine, for, however strange the nourishment she preferred might seem, it must at least be of the *kind* she could best assimilate. My care should be

—to give her her gruel as good as I might, and her beef-tea strong, with chicken-broth instead of barley-water and delusive jelly. But much opportunity of ministration was not afforded me, for her husband, whose business in life she seemed to regard as the care of her—for which in truth she was gently and lovingly grateful—and who not merely accepted her view of the matter but, I was pretty sure, had had a large share in originating it, was even more constant in his attentions than she found altogether agreeable, to judge by the way in which she would insist on his going out for a second walk, when it was clear that, besides his desire to be with her, he was not inclined to walk any more.

I could set myself however, as I have indicated, to find fitting pabulum for her—and that of her chosen sort. This was possible for me in virtue of my father's collec-

tion of hymns and the aid he could give me. I therefore sent him a detailed description of what seemed to me her condition, and what I thought I might do for her. It was a week before he gave me an answer, but it arrived a thorough one—in the shape of a box of books, each bristling with paper marks, many of them inscribed with some fact concerning or criticism upon the hymn indicated. He wrote that he quite agreed with my notion of the right mode of serving her, for any other would be as if a besieging party were to batter a postern by means of boats instead of walking over a lowered drawbridge and under a raised portcullis.

Having taken a survey of the hymns my father thus pointed out to me, and arranged them according to their degrees of approximation to the weakest of those in Mrs. Cromwell's collection, I judged that in all

of them there was something she must appreciate, although the main drift of several would be entirely beyond her apprehension. Even these, however, it would be well to try upon her.

Accordingly, the next time she asked me to read from her collection, I made the request that she would listen to some which I believed she did not know, but would, I thought, like. She consented with eagerness, was astonished to find she knew none of them, expressed much approbation of some, and showed herself delighted with others.

That she must have had some literary faculty seems evident from the genuine pleasure she took in simple, quaint, sometimes even odd hymns of her own peculiar kind. But the very best of another sort, she could not appreciate. For instance, the following, by John Mason, in my father's

opinion one of the best hymn-writers, had no attraction for her:—

Thou wast, O God, and thou wast blest
  Before the world begun;
Of thine eternity possest
  Before time's glass did run.
Thou needest none thy praise to sing,
  As if thy joy could fade:
Couldst thou have needed anything,
  Thou couldst have nothing made.

Great and good God, it pleased thee
  Thy Godhead to declare;
And what thy goodness did decree,
  Thy greatness did prepare:
Thou spak'st, and heaven and earth appeared,
  And answered to thy call;
As if their maker's voice they heard,
  Which is the creature's All.

Thou spak'st the word, most mighty Lord;
  Thy word went forth with speed:
Thy will, O Lord, it was thy word,
  Thy word it was thy deed.
Thou brought'st forth Adam from the ground,
  And Eve out of his side:
Thy blessing made the earth abound
  With these two multiplied.

Those three great leaves, Heaven, Sea, and Land,
  Thy name in figures show;
Brutes feel the bounty of thy hand,
  But I my maker know.

Should not I here thy servant be,
  Whose creatures serve me here?
My Lord, whom should I fear but thee,
  Who am thy creatures' fear?

To whom, Lord, should I sing but thee,
  The maker of my tongue?
Lo! other lords would seize on me,
  But I to thee belong.
As waters haste unto their sea,
  And earth unto its earth,
So let my soul return to thee,
  From whom it had its birth.

But ah! I'm fallen in the night,
  And cannot come to thee,
Yet speak the word, *Let there be Light:*
  It shall enlighten me;
And let thy word, most mighty Lord,
  Thy fallen creature raise:
Oh make me o'er again, and I
  Shall sing my maker's praise.

This and others, I say she could not relish; but my endeavours were crowned with success in so far that she accepted better specimens of the sort she liked than any she had; and I think they must have had a good influence upon her.

She seemed to have no fear of death,

contemplating the change she believed at hand not with equanimity merely, but with expectation. She even wrote hymns about it—sweet, pretty, and weak, always with herself and the love of her Saviour for *her* in the foreground. She had not learned that the love which lays hold of that which is human in the individual, that is, which is common to the whole race, must be an infinitely deeper, tenderer, and more precious thing to the individual than any affection manifesting itself in the preference of one over another.

For the sake of revealing her modes of thought, I will give one more specimen of my conversations with her, ere I pass on. It took place the evening before her departure for her own house. Her husband had gone to make some final preparations, of which there had been many. For one who expected to be unclothed that she might be

clothed upon, she certainly made a tolerable to-do about the garment she was so soon to lay aside; especially seeing she often spoke of it as an ill-fitting garment—never with peevishness or complaint—only, as it seemed to me, with far more interest than it was worth. She had even, as afterwards appeared, given her husband—good, honest, dog-like man—full instructions as to the ceremonial of its interment. Perhaps I should have been considerably less bewildered with her conduct had I suspected that she was not half so near death as she chose to think, and that she had as yet suffered little.

That evening, the stars just beginning to glimmer through the warm flush that lingered from the sunset, we sat together in the drawing-room looking out on the sea. My patient appearing, from the light in her eyes, about to go off into one of her ecstatic

moods, I hastened to forestall it, if I might, with whatever came uppermost; for I felt my inability to sympathize with her in these, more of a pain than my reader will perhaps readily imagine.

"It seems like turning you out to let you go to-morrow, Mrs. Cromwell," I said; "but you see our three months are up two days after, and I cannot help it."

"You have been very kind," she said, half abstractedly.

"And you are really much better. Who would have thought three weeks ago to see you so well to-day?"

"Ah! you congratulate me, do you?" she rejoined, turning her big eyes full upon me; "—congratulate me that I am doomed to be still a captive in the prison of this vile body? Is it kind? Is it well?"

"At least you must remember—if you are *doomed*—who dooms you."

"'Oh that I had the wings of a dove!'" she cried, avoiding my remark, of which I doubt if she saw the drift. "Think, dear Mrs. Percivale—the society of saints and angels!—all brightness, and harmony, and peace! Is it not worth forsaking this world to inherit a kingdom like that? Wouldn't *you* like to go? Don't *you* wish to fly away and be at rest?"

She spoke as if expostulating and reasoning with one she would persuade to some kind of holy emigration.

"Not until I am sent for," I answered.

"*I am* sent for," she returned. "'The wave may be cold, and the tide may be strong, But, hark, on the shore, the angels' glad song!' Do you know that sweet hymn, Mrs. Percivale?—There I shall be able to love him aright, to serve him aright!

'Here all my labour is so poor!
Here all my love so faint!
But when I reach the heavenly door,
I cease the weary plaint.'"

I couldn't help wishing she would cease it a little sooner.

"But suppose," I ventured to say, "it were the will of God that you should live many years yet."

"That cannot be. And why should you wish it for me? Is it not better to depart and be with him? What pleasure could it be to a weak worn creature like me to go on living in this isle of banishment?"

"But suppose you were to recover your health: would it not be delightful to *do* something for his sake? If you would think of how much there is to be done in the world, perhaps you would wish less to die and leave it."

"Do not tempt me," she returned reproachfully.

And then she quoted a passage, the application of which to her own case appeared to me so irreverent that I confess I felt like Abraham with the idolater—so far at least as to wish her out of the house, for I could bear with her, I thought, no longer.

She did leave it the next day, and I breathed more freely than since she had entered it.

My husband came down to fetch me the following day, and a walk with him along the cliffs in the gathering twilight, during which I recounted the affectations of my late visitor, completely wiped the cobwebs from my mental windows, and enabled me to come to the conclusion that Mrs. Cromwell was but a spoilt child, who would, somehow or other, be brought to her senses before all was over. I was ashamed of my impatience with her, and believed if I could have learned her history, of which she had told

me nothing, it would have explained the rare phenomenon of one apparently able to look death in the face with so little of the really spiritual to support her, for she seemed to me to know Christ only after the flesh. But had she indeed ever looked death in the face?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MRS. CROMWELL GOES.

I HEARD nothing more of her for about a year. A note or two passed between us, and then all communication ceased. This, I am happy to think, was not immediately my fault; not that it mattered much, for we were not then fitted for much communion:—we had too little in common to commune.

"Did you not both believe in one Lord?" I fancy a reader objecting. "How then can you say you had too little in common to be able to commune?"

I said the same to myself, and tried the

question in many ways. The fact remained that we could not commune—that is, with any heartiness; and, although I may have done her wrong, it was, I thought, to be accounted for something in this way. The Saviour of whom she spoke so often, and evidently thought so much, was in a great measure a being of her own fancy—so much so that she manifested no desire to find out what the Christ was who had spent three and thirty years in making a revelation of himself to the world. The knowledge she had about him was not even at second hand, but at many removes. She did not study his words or his actions to learn his thoughts or his meanings; but lived in a kind of dreamland of her own which could be interesting only to the dreamer. Now if we are to come to God through Christ, it must surely be by knowing Christ; it must be through the knowledge of Christ that the

Spirit of the Father mainly works in the members of his body; and it seemed to me she did not take the trouble to "know him and the power of his resurrection." Therefore we had scarcely enough of common ground, as I say, to meet upon. I could not help contrasting her religion with that of Marion Clare.

At length I had a note from her, begging me to go and see her at her house at Richmond, and apologizing for her not coming to me, on the score of her health. I felt it my duty to go, but sadly grudged the loss of time it seemed, for I expected neither pleasure nor profit from the visit. Percivale went with me, and left me at the door to have a row on the river, and call for me at a certain hour.

The house and grounds were luxurious and lovely both—too often dissociated qualities. She could have nothing to desire of

this world's gifts, I thought. But the moment she entered the room into which I had been shown, I was shocked at the change I saw in her. Almost to my horror, she was in a widow's cap; and disease and coming death were plain on every feature. Such was the contrast, that the face in my memory appeared that of health.

"My dear Mrs. Cromwell!" I gasped out.

"You see," she said, and sitting down on a straight-backed chair, looked at me with lustreless eyes.

Death had been hovering about her windows before, but had entered at last—not to take the sickly young woman longing to die, but the hale man, who would have clung to the last edge of life.

"He is taken, and I am left," she said abruptly, after a long pause.

Her drawl had vanished: pain and grief had made her simple. "Then," I thought

with myself, "she did love him!" But I could say nothing. She took my silence for the sympathy it was, and smiled a heart-rending smile—so different from that little sad smile she used to have!—really pathetic now, and with hardly a glimmer in it of the old self-pity. I rose, put my arms about her, and kissed her on the forehead; she laid her head on my shoulder, and wept.

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," I faltered out, for her sorrow filled me with a respect that was new.

"Yes," she returned, as gently as hopelessly; "and whom he does not love as well."

"You have no ground for saying so," I answered. "The apostle does not."

"My lamp is gone out," she said "—gone out in darkness, utter darkness. You warned me, and I did not heed the warning. I thought I knew better, but I was full of

self-conceit. And now I am wandering where there is no way and no light. My iniquities have found me out."

I did not say what I thought I saw plain enough—that her lamp was just beginning to burn. Neither did I try to persuade her that her iniquities were small.

"But the bridegroom," I said, "is not yet come. There is time to go and get some oil."

"Where am I to get it?" she returned, in a tone of despair.

"From the bridegroom himself," I said.

"No," she answered. "I have talked and talked and talked, and you know he says he abhors talkers. I am one of those to whom he will say, 'I know you not.'"

"And you will answer him that you have eaten and drunk in his presence, and cast out devils, and——?"

"No, no; I will say he is right—that it

is all my own fault; that I thought I was something when I was nothing, but that I know better now."

A dreadful fit of coughing interrupted her. As soon as it was over, I said—

"And what will the Lord say to you, do you think, when you have said so to him?"

"Depart from me," she answered in a hollow, forced voice.

"No," I returned. "He will say—'I know you well. You have told me the truth. Come in.'"

"*Do* you think so?" she cried. "You never used to think well of me."

"Those who were turned away," I said, avoiding her last words, "were trying to make themselves out better than they were; they trusted, not in the love of Christ, but in what they thought their worth and social standing. Perhaps if their deeds had been as good as they thought them, they would

have known better than to trust in them. If they had told him the truth; if they had said, 'Lord, we are workers of iniquity; Lord, we used to be hypocrites, but we speak the truth now: forgive us'—do you think he would then have turned them away? No, surely. If your lamp has gone out, make haste and tell him how careless you have been; tell him all, and pray him for oil and light—and see whether your lamp will not straightway glimmer—glimmer first and then glow.

"Ah, Mrs. Percivale!" she cried; "I would *do* something for his sake now if I might, but I cannot. If I had but resisted the disease in me for the sake of serving him, I might have been able now; but my chance is over; I cannot now; I have too much pain. And death looks such a different thing now! I used to think of it only as a kind of going to sleep, easy though

sad—sad, I mean, in the eyes of mourning friends. But, alas! I have no friends now that my husband is gone. I never dreamed of him going first. He loved me—indeed he did, though you will hardly believe it, but I always took it as a matter of course. I never saw how beautiful and unselfish he was till he was gone. I have been selfish and stupid and dull, and my sins have found me out. A great darkness has fallen upon me, and, although weary of life, instead of longing for death, I shrink from it with horror. My cough will not let me sleep; there is nothing but weariness in my body and despair in my heart. Oh how black and dreary the nights are! I think of the time in your house as of an earthly paradise. But where is the heavenly paradise I used to dream of then?"

"Would it content you," I asked, "to be able to dream of it again?"

"No; no. I want something very different now. Those fancies look so uninteresting and stupid now! All I want now is to hear God say, 'I forgive you.' And my husband—I must have troubled him sorely. You don't know how good he was, Mrs. Percivale. *He* made no pretences like silly me.—Do you know," she went on, lowering her voice, and speaking with something like horror in its tone—"Do you know—I cannot *bear* hymns!"

As she said it, she looked up in my face half-terrified with the anticipation of the horror she expected to see manifested there. I could not help smiling. The case was not one for argument of any kind: I thought for a moment, then merely repeated the verse:—

"When the law threatens endless death,
Upon the awful hill,
Straightway from her consuming breath,
My soul goeth higher still;

Goeth to Jesus, wounded, slain,
And maketh him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
And where Death cannot come."

"Ah! that is good," she said, "—if only I could get to him! But I cannot get to him. He is so far off! He seems to be—nowhere."

I think she was going to say *nobody*, but changed the word.

"If you felt for a moment how helpless and wretched I feel, especially in the early morning," she went on; "how there seems nothing to look for, and no help to be had; you would pity rather than blame me, though I know I deserve blame. I feel as if all the heart and soul and strength and mind with which we are told to love God, had gone out of me—or rather as if I had never had any. I doubt if I ever had. I tried very hard for a long time to get a sight of Jesus, to feel myself in his pre-

sence; but it was of no use, and I have quite given it up now."

I made her lie on the sofa, and sat down beside her.

"Do you think," I said, "that any one, before he came, could have imagined such a visitor to the world as Jesus Christ?"

"I suppose not," she answered listlessly.

"Then no more can you come near him now, by trying to imagine him. You cannot represent to yourself the reality, the being who can comfort you. In other words, you cannot take him into your heart. He only knows himself, and he only can reveal himself to you. And not until he does so, can you find any certainty or any peace."

"But he doesn't—he won't reveal himself to me."

"Suppose you had forgotten what some friend of your childhood was like—say, if it were possible—your own mother; suppose

you could not recall a feature of her face, or the colour of her eyes; and suppose that, while you were very miserable about it, you remembered all at once that you had a portrait of her in an old desk you had not opened for years;—what would you do?"

"Go and get it," she answered like a child at the Sunday-school.

"Then why shouldn't you do so now? You have such a portrait of Jesus—far truer and more complete than any other kind of portrait can be—the portrait his own deeds and words give us of him."

"I see what you mean; but that is all about long-ago, and I want him now. That is in a book, and I want him in my heart."

"How are you to get him into your heart? How could you have him there except by knowing him? But perhaps you think you do know him?"

"I am certain I do not know him—at least as I want to know him," she said.

"No doubt," I went on, "he can speak to your heart without the record, and, I think, is speaking to you now, in this very want of him you feel. But how could he show himself to you otherwise than by helping you to understand the revelation of himself which it cost him such labour to afford? If the story were millions of years old, so long as it was true, it would be all the same as if it had been ended only yesterday; for, being what he represented himself, he never can change. To know what he was then, is to know what he is now."

"But if I knew him so, that wouldn't be to have him with me."

"No; but in that knowledge he might come to you. It is by the door of that knowledge that his spirit, which is himself, comes into the soul. You would at least be

more able to pray to him; you would know what kind of a being you had to cry to. *You* would thus come nearer to him; and no one ever drew nigh to him to whom he did not also draw nigh. If you would but read the story as if you had never read it before—as if you were reading the history of a man you heard of for the first time——"

"Surely you're not a Unitarian, Mrs. Percivale!" she said, half lifting her head, and looking at me with a dim terror in her pale eyes.

"God forbid!" I answered. "But I would that many, who think they know better, believed in him half as much as many Unitarians do. It is only by understanding and believing in that humanity of his, which in such pain and labour manifested his Godhead, that we can come to know it—know that Godhead, I mean, in virtue of which

alone he was a true and perfect man—that Godhead which alone can satisfy with peace and hope the poorest human soul—for it also is the offspring of God."

I ceased, and for some moments she sat silent. Then she said feebly,—

"There's a Bible somewhere in the room."

I found it, and read the story of the woman who came behind him in terror, and touched the hem of his garment. I could hardly read it for the emotion it caused in myself; and when I ceased I saw her weeping silently.

A servant entered with the message that Mr. Percivale had called for me.

"I cannot see him to-day," she sobbed.

"Of course not," I replied. "I must leave you now, but I will come again—come often if you like."

"You are as kind as ever!" she re-

turned, with a fresh burst of tears. "Will you come and be with me when—when—?"

She could not finish for sobs.

"I will," I said, knowing well what she meant.

This is how I imagined the change to have come about: what had seemed her faith had been in a great measure but her hope and imagination occupying themselves with the forms of the religion towards which all that was highest in her nature dimly urged. The two characteristics of amiability and selfishness, not unfrequently combined, rendered it easy for her to deceive herself, or rather conspired to prevent her from undeceiving herself as to the quality and worth of her religion. For if she had been other than amiable, the misery following the outbreaks of temper which would have been of certain occurrence in the state of her health, would have made her aware in some

degree of her moral condition; and if her thoughts had not been centred upon herself, she would, in her care for others, have learned her own helplessness; and the devotion of her good husband, not then accepted merely as a natural homage to her worth, would have shown itself as a love beyond her deserts, and would have roused the longing to be worthy of it. She saw now that he must have imagined her far better than she was; but she had not meant to deceive him: she had but followed the impulses of a bright, shallow nature.

But that last epithet bids me pause and remember that my father has taught me, and that I have found the lesson true, that there is no such thing as a shallow nature; every nature is infinitely deep, for the works of God are everlasting. Also there is no nature that is not shallow to what it must become. I suspect every nature must

have the subsoil ploughing of sorrow before it can recognize either its present poverty or its possible wealth.

When her husband died, suddenly, of apoplexy, she was stunned for a time, gradually awaking to a miserable sense of unprotected loneliness—so much the more painful for her weakly condition, and the over-care to which she had been accustomed. She was an only child, and had become an orphan within a year or two after her early marriage. Left thus without shelter, like a delicate plant whose house of glass has been shattered, she speedily recognized her true condition. With no one to heed her whims, and no one capable of sympathizing with the genuine misery which supervened, her disease gathered strength rapidly, her lamp went out, and she saw no light beyond, for the smoke of that lamp had dimmed the windows at

which the stars would have looked in. When life became dreary, her fancies, despoiled of the halo they had cast on the fogs of selfish comfort, ceased to interest her; and the future grew a vague darkness, an uncertainty teeming with questions to which she had no answer. Henceforth she was conscious of life only as a weakness, as the want of a deeper life to hold it up. Existence had become a during faint, and self hateful. She saw that she was poor and miserable and blind and naked; that she had never had faith fit to support her.

But out of this darkness dawned at least a twilight—so gradual, so slow, that I cannot tell when or how the darkness began to melt. She became aware of a deeper and simpler need than hitherto she had known —the need of life in herself—the life of the Son of God. I went to see her often. At the time when I began this history, I was

going every other day—sometimes oftener, for her end seemed to be drawing nigh. Her weakness had greatly increased; she could but just walk across the room, and was constantly restless. She had no great continuous pain, but oft-returning sharp fits of it. She looked genuinely sad, and her spirits never recovered themselves. She seldom looked out of the window; the daylight seemed to distress her; flowers were the only links between her and the outer world—wild ones, for the scent of greenhouse-flowers, and even that of most garden ones, she could not bear. She had been very fond of music, but could no longer endure her piano: every note seemed struck on a nerve. But she was generally quiet in her mind, and often peaceful. The more her body decayed about her, the more her spirit seemed to come alive. It was the calm of a gray

evening, not so lovely as a golden sunset or a silvery moonlight, but more sweet than either. She talked little of her feelings, but evidently longed after the words of our Lord. As she listened to some of them, I could see the eyes which had now grown dim with suffering, gleam with the light of holy longing and humble adoration.

For some time she often referred to her coming departure, and confessed that she feared death,—not so much what might be on the other side, as the dark way itself—the struggle, the torture, the fainting; but by degrees her allusions to it became rarer, and at length ceased almost entirely. Once I said to her—

"Are you afraid of death still, Eleanor?"

"No—not much," she replied, after a brief pause. "He may do with me whatever he likes."

Knowing so well what Marion could do to comfort and support, and therefore desirous of bringing them together, I took her one day with me. But certain that the thought of seeing a stranger would render my poor Eleanor uneasy, and that what discomposure a sudden introduction might cause, would speedily vanish in Marion's presence, I did not tell her what I was going to do. Nor in this did I mistake. Before we left, it was plain that Marion had a far more soothing influence upon her than I had myself. She looked eagerly for her next visit, and my mind was now more at peace concerning her.

One evening, after listening to some stories from Marion about her friends, Mrs. Cromwell said:

"Ah, Miss Clare—to think I might have done something for *him* by doing it for *them!* Alas! I have led a useless life, and

am dying out of this world without having borne any fruit! Ah me! me!"

"You are doing a good deal for him now," said Marion, "—and hard work too!" she added, "—harder far than mine."

"I am only dying," she returned—so sadly!

"You are enduring chastisement," said Marion. "The Lord gives one one thing to do and another another. We have no right to wish for other work than he gives us. It is rebellious and unchildlike, whatever it may seem. Neither have we any right to wish to be better in *our* way; we must wish to be better in *his*."

"But I *should* like to do something for *him;* bearing is only for myself. Surely, I may wish that?"

"No, you may not. Bearing is not only for yourself. You are quite wrong in thinking you do nothing for him [in enduring,"

returned Marion, with that abrupt decision of hers which seemed to some like rudeness. "What is the will of God? Is it not your sanctification? And why did he make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering? Was it not that he might, in like manner, bring many sons into glory? Then if you are enduring, you are working with God—for the perfection through suffering of one more; you are working for God in yourself, that the will of God may be done in you; that he may have his very own way with you. It is the only work he requires of you now: do it not only willingly then, but contentedly. To make people good is all his labour: be good, and you are a fellow-worker with God—in the highest region of labour. He does not want you for other people—*yet*."

At the emphasis Marion laid on the last word, Mrs. Cromwell glanced sharply up.

A light broke over her face: she had understood, and with a smile was silent.

One evening, when we were both with her, it had grown very sultry and breathless.

"Isn't it very close, dear Mrs. Percivale?" she said.

I rose to get a fan, and Marion leaving the window as if moved by a sudden resolve, went and opened the piano. Mrs. Cromwell made a hasty motion, as if she must prevent her. But, such was my faith in my friend's soul as well as heart, in her divine taste as well as her human faculty, that I ventured to lay my hand on Mrs. Cromwell's. It was enough for sweetness like hers; she yielded instantly, and lay still, evidently nerving herself to suffer. But the first movement stole so "soft and soul-like" on her ear, trembling as it were on the border-land between sound and silence, that she missed the pain she expected, and found

only the pleasure she looked not for. Marion's hands made the instrument sigh and sing, not merely as with a human voice, but as with a human soul. Her own voice next evolved itself from the dim uncertainty, in sweet proportions and delicate modulations, stealing its way into the heart, to set first one chord, then another, vibrating, until the whole soul was filled with responses. If I add that her articulation was as nearly perfect as the act of singing will permit, my reader may well believe that a song of hers would do what a song might.

Where she got the song she then sung, she always avoids telling me. I had told her all I knew and understood concerning Mrs. Cromwell—and have my suspicions. This is the song.

I fancy I hear a whisper
As of leaves in a gentle air:
Is it wrong, I wonder, to fancy
It may be the tree up there—

The tree that heals the nations,
Growing amidst the street,
And dropping, for who will gather,
Its apples at their feet.

I fancy I hear a rushing
As of waters down a slope:
Is it wrong, I wonder, to fancy
It may be the river of hope—
The river of crystal waters
That flows from the very throne,
And runs through the street of the city
With a softly jubilant tone.

I fancy a twilight round me,
And a wandering of the breeze,
With a hush in that high city,
And a going in the trees.
But I know there will be no night there—
No coming and going day;
For the holy face of the Father
Will be perfect light alway.

I could do without the darkness,
And better without the sun;
But oh, I should like a twilight
After the day was done!
Would he lay his hand on his forehead,
On his hair as white as wool,
And shine one hour through his fingers,
Till the shadow had made me cool?

But the thought is very foolish:
If that face I did but see,
All else would be all forgotten—
River and twilight and tree;

I should seek, I should care for nothing,
Beholding his countenance;
And fear only to lose one glimmer
By one single sideway glance.

'Tis again but a foolish fancy
To picture the countenance so
Which is shining in all our spirits,
Making them white as snow.
Come to me, shine in me, master,
And I care not for river or tree;
Care for no sorrow or crying
If only thou shine in me.

I would lie on my bed for ages,
Looking out on the dusty street,
Where whisper nor leaves nor waters,
Nor anything cool and sweet—
At my heart this ghastly fainting,
And this burning in my blood,
If only I knew thou wast with me—
Wast with me and making me good.

When she rose from the piano, Mrs. Cromwell stretched out her hand for hers, and held it some time, unable to speak. Then she said—

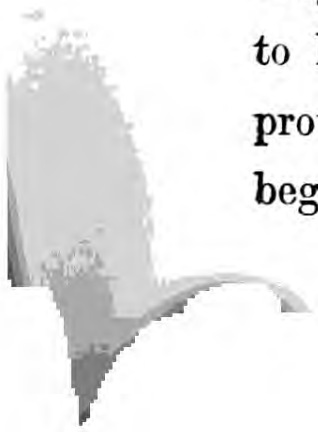
"That has done me good, I hope. I will try to be more patient, for I think he *is* teaching me."

She died at length in my arms. I cannot linger over that last time. She suffered a good deal, but dying people are generally patient. She went without a struggle. The last words I heard her utter were, "Yes, Lord;" after which she breathed but once. A half smile came over her face, which froze upon it, and remained, until the coffin-lid covered it. But I shall see it, I trust, a whole smile some day.

CHAPTER XL.

ANCESTRAL WISDOM.

I DID think of having a chapter about children before finishing my book, but this is not going to be the kind of chapter I thought of. Like most mothers, I suppose, I think myself an authority on the subject, and, which is to me more assuring than any judgment of my own, my father says that I have been in a measure successful in bringing mine up—only they're not brought up very far yet. Hence arose the temptation to lay down a few practical rules I had proved and found answer. But as soon as I began to contemplate the writing of them



down I began to imagine So-and-so and So-and-so attempting to carry them out, and saw what a dreadful muddle they would make of it, and what mischief would thence lie at my door. Only one thing can be worse than the attempt to carry out rules whose principles are not understood, and that is the neglect of those which are understood and seen to be right. Suppose, for instance, I were to say that corporal punishment was wholesome, involving less suffering than most other punishments, more effectual in the result, and leaving no sting or sense of unkindness; whereas mental punishment, considered by many to be more refined, and therefore less degrading, was often cruel to a sensitive child, and deadening to a stubborn one:—suppose I said this, and a woman like my aunt Millicent were to take it up:—*her* whippings would have no more effect than if her rod were made of butterflies'

feathers; they would be a mockery to her children, and bring law into contempt; while if a certain father I know were to be convinced by my arguments, he would fill his children with terror of him now, and with hatred afterwards. Of the last-mentioned result of severity I know at least one instance. At present, the father to whom I refer disapproves of whipping even a man who has been dancing on his wife with hob-nailed shoes, because it would tend to brutalize him. But he taunts, and stings, and confines in solitude for lengthened periods high-spirited boys, and that for faults which I should consider very venial.

Then again if I were to lay down the rule that we must be as tender of the feelings of our children as if they were angel-babies who had to learn, alas! to understand our rough ways—how would that be taken by a certain French couple I know, who, not ap-

pearing until after the dinner to which they had accepted an invitation was over, gave as the reason—that it had been quite out of their power; for darling Desirée, their only child, had declared they shouldn't go, and that she would cry if they did;—nay, went so far as to insist on their going to bed, which they were, however reluctant, compelled to do? They had actually undressed and pretended to retire for the night; but as soon as she was safely asleep, rose and joined their friends, calm in the consciousness of abundant excuse.

The marvel to me is that so many children turn out so well.

After all, I think there can be no harm in mentioning a few general principles laid down by my father. They are such as to commend themselves most to the most practical.

And first for a few negative ones.

1. Never *give in* to disobedience; and

never threaten what you are not prepared to carry out.

2. Never lose your temper. I do not say *Never be angry.* Anger is sometimes indispensable, especially where there has been anything mean, dishonest, or cruel. But anger is very different from loss of temper.*

3. Of all things, never sneer at your

* My aunt Millicent is always saying, "I am *grieeeved* with you." But the announcement begets no sign of responsive grief on the face of the stolid child before her. She never whipped a child in her life. If she had, and it had but roused some positive anger in the child instead of that undertone of complaint which is always oozing out of every one of them, I think it would have been a gain. But the poor lady is one of the whiny-piny people, and must be in preparation for a development of which I have no prevision. The only stroke of originality I thought I knew of her was this: To the register of her children's births, baptisms, and confirmations, entered on a grandly ornamented fly-leaf of the family bible, she has subjoined the record of every disease each has had, with the year, month, and day, (and in one case the hour), when each distemper made its appearance. After most of the main entries you may read—"*Cut his* (or her) *first tooth*"—at such a date. But, alas for the originality! she has just told me that her maternal grandmother did the same. How strange that she

children; and be careful, even, how you rally them.

4. Do not try to work on their feelings. Feelings are far too delicate things to be used for tools. It is like taking the mainspring out of your watch and notching it for a saw. It may be a wonderful saw, but how fares your watch? Especially avoid doing so in connection with religious things, for so you will assuredly deaden them to all that is finest. Let your feelings, not your efforts on theirs, affect them with a sympathy the more powerful that it is not forced upon them; and in order to this, avoid being too English in the hiding of your feelings. A man's own family has a right to share in his *good* feelings.

5. Never show that you doubt except you

and my father should have had the same father! If they had had the same mother too, I should have been utterly bewildered.

are able to convict. To doubt an honest child is to do what you can to make a liar of him; and to believe a liar, if he is not altogether shameless, is to shame him.

The common-minded masters in schools who, unlike the ideal Arnold, are in the habit of *disbelieving* boys, have a large share in making the liars they so often are. Certainly the vileness of a lie is not the same in one who knows that whatever he says will be regarded with suspicion; and the master who does not know an honest boy after he has been some time in his class, gives good reason for doubting whether he be himself an honest man, and incapable of the lying he is ready to attribute to all alike.

This last is my own remark, not my father's. I have an honest boy at school, and I know how he fares. I say honest, for though as a mother I can hardly expect to be believed, I have ground for believing that

he would rather die than lie. I know *I* would rather he died than lied.

6. Instil no religious doctrine apart from its duty. If it have no duty as its necessary embodiment, the doctrine may well be regarded as doubtful.

7. Do not be hard on mere quarrelling, which, like a storm in nature, is often helpful in clearing the moral atmosphere. Stop it by a judgment between the parties. But be severe as to the *kind* of quarrelling, and the temper shown in it. Especially give no quarter to any unfairness arising from greed or spite. Use your strongest language with regard to that.

Now for a few of my father's positive rules.

1. Always let them come to you, and always hear what they have to say. If they bring a complaint always examine into it, and dispense pure justice, and nothing but justice.

2. Cultivate a love of *giving* fair-play. Every one, of course, likes to *receive* fair-play, but no one ought to be left to imagine therefore, that he *loves fair-play*.

3. Teach from the very first, from the infancy capable of sucking a sugar-plum, to share with neighbours. Never refuse the offering a child brings you except you have a good reason—and *give* it. And never *pretend* to partake: that involves hideous possibilities in its effects on the child.

The necessity of giving a reason for refusing a kindness, has no relation to what is supposed by some to be the necessity of giving a reason with every command. There is no such necessity. Of course there ought to be a reason in every command. That it *may* be desirable sometimes, to explain it, is all my father would allow.

4. Allow a great deal of noise—as much as is fairly endurable; but the moment they

seem getting beyond their own control, stop the noise at once. Also, put a stop at once to all fretting and grumbling.

5. Favour the developement of each in the direction of his own bent. Help him to develope himself; but do not *push* developement. To do so is most dangerous.

6. Mind the moral nature, and it will take care of the intellectual. In other words, the best thing for the intellect is the cultivation of the conscience, not in casuistry, but in conduct. It may take longer to arrive, but the end will be the highest possible health, vigour, and ratio of progress.

7. Discourage emulation, and insist on duty—not often, but strongly.

Having written these out, chiefly from notes I had made of a long talk with my father, I gave them to Percivale to read.

"Rather—ponderous, don't you think, for weaving into a narrative?" was his remark.

"My narrative is full of things far from light," I returned.

"I didn't say they were heavy, you know. That is quite another thing."

"I am afraid you mean generally uninteresting. But there are parents who might make them useful, and the rest of my readers could skip them."

"I only mean that a narrative, be it ever so serious, must not intrench on the moral essay or sermon."

"It is much too late, I fear, to tell me that. But, please, remember I am not giving the precepts as of my own discovery, though I *have* sought to verify them by practice, but as what they are—my father's."

He did not seem to see the bearing of the argument.

"I want my book to be useful." I said. "As a mother, I want to share the help I have had myself, with other mothers."

"I am only speaking from the point of art," he returned.

"And that's a point I have never thought of—any farther, at least, than writing as good English as I might."

"Do you mean to say you have never thought of the shape of the book your monthly papers would make?"

"Yes.—I don't think I have.—Scarcely at all, I believe."

"Then you ought."

"But I know nothing about that kind of thing. I haven't an idea in my head concerning the art of book-making. And it is too late, so far at least as this book is concerned, to begin to study it now."

"I wonder how my pictures would get on in that way."

"You can see how my book has got on. Well or ill, there it all but is. I had to do with facts and not with art."

"But even a biography, in the ordering of its parts, in the arrangement of its light and shade, and in the harmony of the—"

"It's too late, I tell you, husband. The book is all but done. Besides, one who would write a biography after the fashion of a picture, would probably, even without attributing a single virtue that was not present, or suppressing a single fault that was, yet produce a false book. The principle I have followed has been to try from the first to put as much value, that is, as much truth, as I could, into my story. Perhaps instead of those maxims of my father's for the education of children, you would have preferred such specimens of your own children's sermons as you made me read to you for the twentieth time yesterday?"

Instead of smiling with his own quiet kind smile, as he worked on at his picture of St. Athanasius with "no friend but God and

Death," he burst into a merry laugh, and said,

"A capital idea! If you give those, word for word, I shall yield the precepts."

"Are you out of your five wits, husband?" I exclaimed. "Would you have everybody take me for the latest incarnation of the oldest insanity in the world—that of maternity? But I am really an idiot, for you could never have meant it!"

"I do most soberly and distinctly mean it. They would amuse your readers very much, and, without offending those who may prefer your father's maxims to your children's sermons, would incline those who might otherwise vote the former a bore, to regard them with the clemency resulting from amusement."

"But I desire no such exercise of clemency. The precepts are admirable; and those need not take them who do not like them."

"So the others can skip the sermons; but I am sure they will give a few mothers at least a little amusement. They will prove besides that you follow your own rule of putting a very small quantity of sage into the stuffing of your goslings; as also that you have succeeded in making them capable of manifesting what nonsense is indigenous in them. I think them very funny: that may be paternal prejudice; *you* think them very silly as well: that may be maternal solicitude. I suspect that, the more of a philosopher any one of your readers is, the more suggestive will he find these genuine utterances of an age at which the means of expression so much exceed the matter to be expressed."

The idea began to look not altogether so absurd as at first; and a little more argument sufficed to make me resolve to put the absurdities themselves to the test of passing

leisurely through my brain while I copied them out possibly for the press.

The result is that I am going to risk printing them, determined, should I find afterwards that I have made a blunder, to throw the whole blame upon my husband.

What still makes me shrink the most is the recollection of how often I have condemned, as too silly to repeat, things which reporting mothers evidently regarded as proofs of a stupendous intellect. But the folly of these constitutes the chief part of their merit; and I do not see how I can be mistaken for supposing them clever, except it be in regard of a glimmer of purpose now and then, and the occasional manifestation of the cunning of the stump orator, with his subterfuges to conceal his embarrassment when he finds his oil failing him, and his lamp burning low.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHILD NONSENSE.

ONE word of introductory explanation.

During my husband's illness, Marion came often, but, until he began to recover, would generally spend with the children the whole of the time she had to spare, not even permitting me to know that she was in the house. It was a great thing for them; for although they were well enough cared for, they were necessarily left to themselves a good deal more than hitherto. Hence perhaps it came that they betook themselves to an amusement not uncommon with children, of which I had as yet seen nothing amongst them.

One evening, when my husband had made a little progress towards recovery, Marion came to sit with me in his room for an hour.

"I've brought you something I want to read to you," she said, "if you think Mr. Percivale can bear it."

I told her I believed he could, and she proceeded to explain what it was.

"One morning, when I went into the nursery, I found the children playing at church —or rather at preaching, for except a few minutes of singing, the preaching occupied the whole time. There were two clergymen, Ernest and Charles, alternately incumbent and curate. The chief duty of the curate for the time being was to lend his aid to the rescue of his incumbent from any difficulty in which the extemporaneous character of his discourse might land him."

I interrupt Marion to mention that the

respective ages of Ernest and Charles were then eight and six.

"The pulpit," she continued, "was on the top of the cupboard under the cuckoo-clock, and consisted of a chair and a cushion. There were prayer-books in abundance, of which neither of them, I am happy to say, made other than a pretended use for reference. Charles, indeed, who was preaching when I entered, *can't* read; but both have far too much reverence to use sacred words in their games, as the sermons themselves will instance: I took down almost every word they said, frequent embarrassments and interruptions enabling me to do so. Ernest was acting as clerk, and occasionally prompted the speaker when his eloquence failed him, or reproved members of the congregation, which consisted of the two nurses and the other children, who were inattentive. Charles spoke with a good deal of *unction*,

and had quite a professional air when he looked down on the big open book, referred to one or other of the smaller ones at his side, or directed looks of reprehension at this or that hearer. You would have thought he had cultivated the imitation of popular preachers, whereas he tells me he has been to church only three times. I am sorry I cannot give the opening remarks, for I lost them by being late; but what I did hear was this."

She then read from her paper as follows —and lent it me afterwards. I merely copy it.

"Once,"—(*Charles was proceeding when Marion entered*)—"there lived an aged man, and another who was a *very* aged man; and the very aged man was going to die, and every one but the aged man thought the other, the *very* aged man, wouldn't die.—I do this to *explain* it to you.—He, the man

who was *really* going to die, was—I will look in the dictionary—" (*He looks in the book, and gives out with much confidence*) " — was two thousand and eighty-eight years old. Well, the other man was—well, then, the other man 'at knew he was going to die, was about four thousand and two—not nearly so old, you see."—(*Here Charles whispers with Ernest, and then announces very loud*)— "This is out of St. James.—The *very* aged man had a wife and no children, and the other had no wife but a *great many* children. The fact was—*this* was how it was—the wife *died*, and so *he* had the children. Well, the man I spoke of first, well, he died in the middle of the night;" (*A look as much as to say, "There! what do you think of that?"*) —" an' nobody but the aged man knew he was going to die. Well, in the morning, when his wife got up, she spoke to him, and he was dead!"—(*A pause.*) —" Perfectly,

sure enough—*dead!*"—(*Then, with a change of voice and manner*)—"He wasn't really dead, because you know"—(*abruptly and nervously*)—"Shut the door!—you know where he went, because in the morning next day—" (*He pauses and looks round. Ernest, out of a book, prompts*—"The angels take him away") "—came the angels to take him away, up to where you know."—(*All solemn. He resumes quickly, with a change of manner*)—"They, all the rest, died of grief. Now you must expect, as they all died of grief, that lots of angels must have come to take *them* away.—Freddy *will* go when the sermon isn't over! That *is* such a bother!"

At this point, Marion paused in her reading, and resumed the narrative form.

"Freddy however was too much for them; so Ernest betook himself to the organ, which was a chest of drawers, the drawers doing duty as stops, while Freddy went up

to the pulpit to say 'Good-bye,' and shake hands, for which he was mildly reproved by both his brothers."

My husband and I were so much amused, that Marion said she had another sermon, also preached by Charles, on the same day, after a short interval; and at our request she read it. Here it is.

"Once upon a time—a long while ago, in a little—— Ready now ?—Well, there lived in a rather big house, with *quite* clean windows—it was in winter, so nobody noticed them—but they were quite *white*, they were so clean. There lived some angels in the house—it was in the air, nobody knew why, but it did. No, I don't think it did—I dunno, but there lived in it lots of children —two hundred and thirty-two—and they— Oh ! I'm gettin' distracted ! It is too bad!" —(*Quiet is restored.*)—"Their mother and father had died, but they were very rich.

Now you see what a heap of children, two hundred and thirty-two ! and yet it seemed like *one* to them, they were so rich. *That* was it ! it seemed like *one* to them because they were so rich. Now the children knew what to get, and I'll explain to you *why* they knew—and *this* is how they knew. The angels came down on the earth, and told them their mother had sent messages to them ; and their mother and father— *Don't* talk ! I'm gettin' extracted !" (*Puts his hand to his head in a frenzied manner.*) "Now, my brother," (*This severely to a still inattentive member.*) "I'll tell you what the angels told them—what to get. What—how—now I will tell you how—yes, *how* they knew what they were to eat. Well, the fact was that —— Freddy is just towards my face, and he's laughing !——I'm going to explain. The mother and father had the wings on, and so, of course——Ernest, I want you—" (*They*

whisper,) "——they were he and she angels, and they told them what to have. Well, one thing was—shall I tell you what it was?—Look at two hundred and two in another book——one thing was a leg of mutton. Of course, as the mother and father were angels, they had to fly up again. Now I'm going to explain how they got it done. They had four servants and one cook, so that would be five. Well, this cook did them. The eldest girl was sixteen, and her name was Snowdrop, because she had snowy arms and cheeks, and was a very nice girl. The eldest boy was seventeen, and his name was John. He always told the cook what they'd have—no, the girl did that. And the boy was now grown up. So they would be mother and father." (*Signs of dissent among the audience.*) "*Of course*, when they were so old, they would be mother and father, and master of the servants. And they were very happy, *but*

—they didn't quite like it. And—and—" (*with a great burst*) "*you* wouldn't like it if *your* mother were to die! And I'll end it next Sunday. Let us sing."

"The congregation then sung *Curly Locks*," said Marion, "and dispersed—Ernest complaining that Charley gave them such large qualities of numbers, and there weren't so many in the whole of his book. After a brief interval the sermon was resumed."

"Text is No. 66. I've a good congregation! I got to where the children did not like it without their mother and father. Well, you must remember this was a long while ago, so what I'm going to speak about *could* be possible. Well, their house was on the top of a high and steep hill, and at the bottom, a little from the hill was a knight's house. There were three knights living in it. Next to it was stables with three horses in it. Sometimes they went up to this

house, and wondered what was in it. They never knew, but saw the angels come. The knights were out all day, and only came home for meals. And they wondered what *on earth* the angels were doin'—goin' in the house. They found out *what*—what, and the question was—I'll explain what it was. Ernest, come here." (*Ernest remarks to the audience*, "I'm curate," *and to Charles*, "Well but, Charles, you're going to explain, you know;" *and Charles resumes.*) "The fact was that this was——If you'd like to explain it more to yourselves, you'd better look in your books, No. 1828. Before, the angels didn't speak loud, so the knights couldn't hear; *now* they spoke louder, so that the knights could visit them 'cause they knew their names. They hadn't many visitors, but they had the knights in there, and that's all."

I am still very much afraid that all this

nonsense will hardly be interesting even to parents. But I may as well suffer for a sheep as a lamb, and as I had an opportunity of hearing two such sermons myself not long after, I shall give them, trusting they will occupy far less space in print than they do in my foolish heart.

It was Ernest who was in the pulpit and just commencing his discourse when I entered the nursery, and sat down with the congregation. Sheltered by a clothes-horse, apparently set up for a screen, I took out my pencil, and reported on a flyleaf of the book I had been reading.

"My brother was goin' to preach about the wicked: I will preach about the good. Twenty-sixth day. In the time of Elizabeth there was a very old house. It was so old that it was pulled down, and a quite new one was built instead. Some people who lived in it did not like it so much now as

they did when it was old. I take their part, you know, and think they were quite right in preferring the old one to the ugly bare new one. They left it—sold it—and got into another old house instead."

Here I am sorry to say his curate interjected the scornful remark,—

"He's not lookin' in the book a bit!"

But the preacher went on without heeding the attack on his orthodoxy.

"This other old house was still more uncomfortable — it was very draughty; the gutters were always leaking; and they wished themselves back in the new house. So you see, if you wish for a better thing, you don't get it so good after all."

"Ernest, that *is* about the bad, after all!" cried Charles.

"Well, it's *silly*," remarked Freddy severely.

"But I wrote it myself," pleaded the

preacher from the pulpit, and, in consideration of the fact, he was allowed to go on.

"I was reading about them being always uncomfortable. At last they decided to go back to their own house which they had sold. They had to pay so much to get it back, that they had hardly any money left, and then they got so unhappy, and the husband whipt his wife and took to drinking. That's a lesson." (*Here the preacher's voice became very plaintive.*) "—That's a lesson to show you shouldn't try to get the better thing, for it turns out worse, and then you get sadder and everything."

He paused, evidently too mournful to proceed. Freddy again remarked that it was *silly;* but Charles interposed a word for the preacher.

"It's a good *lesson*, I think.—A good *lesson*, I say," he repeated, as if he would not be supposed to consider it much of a sermon.

But here the preacher recovered himself and summed up.

"See how it comes—wanting to get everything, you come to the bad and drinking. And I think I'll leave off here. Let us sing."

The song was *Little Robin Redbreast*, during which Charles remarked to Freddy, apparently by way of pressing home the lesson upon his younger brother—

"Fancy! floggin' his wife!"

Then he got into the pulpit himself and commenced an oration.

"Chapter eighty-eight. *The Wicked.*—Well, the time when the story was, was about Herod. There were some wicked people wanderin' about there—and they—not *killed* them, you know, but—went to the judge. We shall see what they did to them. I tell you this to make you understand. Now the story begins—but I

must think a little. Ernest, let's sing *Since first I saw your face.*

"When the wicked man was taken then to the good judge—there were *some* good people: when I said I was going to preach about the wicked, I did not mean that there were no good, only a good lot of wicked. There were pleacemans about here, and they put him in prison for a few days, and then the judge could see about what he is to do with him. At the end of the few days, the judge asked him if he would stay in prison for life or be hanged."

Here arose some inquiries among the congregation as to what the wicked, of whom the prisoner was one, had done that was wrong; to which Charles replied:

"Oh! they murdered and killed; they stealed, and they were very wicked altogether. Well," he went on, resuming his discourse, "the morning came, and the

judge said, 'Get the ropes and my throne, and order the people *not* to come to see the hangin'.' For the man was decided to be hanged. Now the people *would* come. They were the wicked, and they would *persist* in comin'. They were the wicked, and if that was the *fact*, the judge must do something to them.

"Chapter eighty-nine. *The Hangin'*.—We'll have some singin' while I think."

Yankee Doodle was accordingly sung with much enthusiasm and solemnity. Then Charles resumed.

"Well, they had to put the other people who persisted in coming, in prison, till the man who murdered people was hanged. I think my brother will go on."

He descended, and gave place to Ernest, who began with vigour.

"We were reading about Herod—weren't we? Then the wicked people *would* come,

and had to be put to death. They were on the man's side, and they all called out that he hadn't had his wish before he died, as they did in those days. So of course he wished for his life, and of course the judge wouldn't let him have *that* wish, and so he wished to speak to his friends, and they let him. And the nasty wicked people took him away, and he was never seen in that country any more. And that's enough to-day, I think. Let us sing *Lord Lovel he stood at his castle-gate, a-combing his milk-white steed.*"

At the conclusion of this mournful ballad, the congregation was allowed to disperse. But before they had gone far, they were recalled by the offer of a more secular entertainment from Charles, who reascended the pulpit, and delivered himself as follows:

"Well, the play is called—not a proverb or a charade it isn't—it's a play called *The Birds and the Babies.* Well!

"Once there was a little cottage and lots of little babies in it. Nobody knew who the babies were. They were so happy! Now, I can't explain it to you how they came together; they had no father and mother but they were brothers and sisters. They never *grew*, and they didn't like it. Now *you* wouldn't like *not* to *grow*—would you? They had a little garden, and saw a great many birds in the trees. They *were* happy, but didn't *feel* happy—that's a funny thing now! The wicked fairies made them unhappy, and the good fairies made them happy; they gave them lots of toys. But then, how they got their living!

"Chapter second, called *The Babies at Play*.—The fairies told them what to get—*that was it!*—and so they got their living very nicely. And now I must explain what they played with. First was a house. *A house.* Another, dolls. They were very

happy, and felt as if they had a mother and father, but they hadn't, and *couldn't* make it out. *Couldn't—make it—out!*

"They had little pumps and trees. Then they had babies' rattles. *Babies' rattles.*—Oh! I've said hardly anything about the birds—have I?—an' it's called *The* Birds *and the Babies!*—They had lots of little pretty robins and canaries hanging round the ceiling, and—*shall* I say?—"

Every one listened expectant during the pause that followed.

"*—And—lived—happy—ever—after.*"

The puzzle in it all is chiefly what my husband hinted at—why and how both the desire and the means of utterance should so long precede the possession of anything ripe for utterance. I suspect the answer must lie pretty deep in some metaphysical gulf or other.

At the same time, the struggle to speak

where there is so little to utter can hardly fail to suggest the thought of some efforts of a more pretentious and imposing character.

But more than enough!

CHAPTER XLII.

DOUBLE, DOUBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE.

I HAD for a day or two fancied that Marion was looking less bright than usual, as if some little shadow had fallen upon the morning of her life. I say *morning*, because, although Marion must now have been seven or eight and twenty, her life had always seemed to me lighted by a cool clear dewy morning sun—over whose face it now seemed as if some film of noon-day cloud had begun to gather. Unwilling at once to assert the ultimate privilege of friendship, I asked her if anything was amiss with her friends. She answered that

all was going on well—at least so far that she had no special anxiety about any of them. Encouraged by a half conscious and more than half sad smile, I ventured a little farther.

"I am afraid there is something troubling you," I said.

"There is," she replied, "something troubling me a good deal; but I hope it will pass away soon."

The sigh which followed, however, was deep though gentle, and indicated a fear that the trouble might not pass so soon.

"I am not to ask you any questions, I suppose," I returned.

"Better not at present," she answered. "I am not quite sure that—"

She paused several moments before finishing her sentence, then added,

"—that I am at liberty to tell you about it."

"Then don't say another word," I rejoined. "Only when I can be of service to you, you *will* let me—won't you?"

The tears rose to her eyes.

"I am afraid it may be some fault of mine," she said. "I don't know. I can't tell. I don't understand such things."

She sighed again, and held her peace.

It was enigmatical enough. One thing only was clear, that at present I was not wanted. So I too held my peace, and in a few minutes Marion went, with a more affectionate leave-taking than usual, for her friendship was far less demonstrative than that of most women.

I pondered, but it was not of much use. Of course the first thing that suggested itself was—Could my angel be in love?—and with some mortal mere? The very idea was a shock, simply from its strangeness. Of course, being a woman, she *might* be in

love; but the two ideas, *Marion* and *love*, refused to coalesce. And again, was it likely that such as she, her mind occupied with so many other absorbing interests, would fall in love unprovoked, unsolicited? That indeed was not likely. Then if, solicited, she but returned love for love, why was she sad? The new experience might, it is true, cause such commotion in a mind like hers as to trouble her greatly. She would not know what to do with it, nor where to accommodate her new inmate so as to keep him from meddling with affairs he had no right to meddle with: it was easy enough to fancy him troublesome in a house like hers. But surely of all women *she* might be able to meet her own liabilities. And if this were all, why should she have said she hoped it would soon pass? That might, however, mean only that she hoped soon to get her guest brought amenable to

the law and ordered range of her existing household economy.

There was yet a conjecture, however, which seemed to suit the case better. If Marion knew little of what is commonly called love, that is, "the attraction of correlative unlikeness," as I once heard it defined by a metaphysical friend of my father's, there was no one who knew more of the tenderness of compassion than she; and was it not possible some one might be wanting to marry her to whom she could not give herself away? This conjecture was at least ample enough to cover the facts in my possession—which were scanty indeed—in number hardly dual. But who was there to dare offer love to my saint? Roger? Pooh! pooh! Mr. Blackstone? Ah! I had seen him once lately looking at her with an expression of more than ordinary admiration. But what man that knew any-

thing of her could help looking at her with such an admiration? If it was Mr. Blackstone—why, *he* might dare—yes, why should he not dare to love her—especially if he couldn't help it, as, of course, he couldn't? Was he not one whose love—simply because he was a *true* man from the heart to the hands — would honour any woman, even Saint Clare—as she must be when the church has learned to do its business without the pope? Only he mustn't blame me, if, after all, I should think he offered less than he sought—or her, if, entertaining no question of worth whatever, she should yet refuse to listen to him—as truly there was more than a possibility she might.

If it were Mr. Blackstone, certainly I knew no man who could understand her better, or whose modes of thinking and working would more thoroughly fall in with

her own. True, he was peculiar; that is, he had kept the angles of his individuality for all the grinding of the social mill; his manners were abrupt, and drove at the heart of things too directly, seldom suggesting a *by-your-leave* to those whose prejudices he overturned; true, also, that his person, though dignified, was somewhat ungainly—with an ungainliness, however, which I could well imagine a wife learning absolutely to love; but on the whole the thing was reasonable. Only—what would become of her friends? There, I could hardly doubt, *there* was the rub!

Let no one think, when I say we went to Mr. Blackstone's church the next Sunday, that it had anything to do with these speculations. We often went on the first Sunday of the month.

"What's the matter with Blackstone?" said my husband as we came home.

"What do *you* think is the matter with him?" I returned.

"I don't know. He wasn't himself."

"I thought he was more than himself," I rejoined; "for I never heard even *him* read the litany with such fervour."

"In some of the petitions," said Percivale, "it amounted to a suppressed agony of supplication. I am certain he is in trouble."

I told him my suspicions.

"Likely—very likely," he answered, and became thoughtful.

"But you don't think she refused him?" he said at length.

"If he ever asked her," I returned, "I fear she did, for she is plainly in trouble too."

"She'll never stick to it," he said.

"You mustn't judge Marion by ordinary standards," I replied. "You must remem-

ber she has not only found her vocation, but for many years proved it. I never knew her turned aside from what she had made up her mind to. I can hardly imagine her forsaking her friends to keep house for any man, even if she loved him with all her heart. She is dedicated as irrevocably as any nun, and will, with St. Paul, cling to the right of self-denial."

"Yet what great difficulty would there be in combining the two sets of duties, especially with such a man as Blackstone? Of all the men I know, he comes the nearest to her in his devotion to the well-being of humanity, especially of the poor. Did you ever know a man with such a plentiful lack of condescension? His feeling of human equality amounts almost to a fault, for surely he ought sometimes to speak as knowing better than they to whom he speaks. He forgets that too many will but use his

humility for mortar to build withal the Shinar-tower of their own superiority."

"That may be; yet it remains impossible for him to assume anything. He is the same all through, and—I had almost said—worthy of Saint Clare. — Well, they must settle it for themselves. We can do nothing."

"We can do nothing," he assented; and, although we repeatedly reverted to the subject on the long way home, we carried no conclusions to a different result.

Towards evening of the same Sunday, Roger came to accompany us, as I thought, to Marion's gathering, but, as it turned out, only to tell me he couldn't go. I expressed my regret, and asked him why. He gave me no answer, and his lip trembled. A sudden conviction seized me. I laid my hand on his arm, but could only say, "Dear Roger!" He turned his head aside, and,

sitting down on the sofa, laid his forehead on his hand.

"I'm so sorry!" I said.

"She has told you then?" he murmured.

"No one has told me anything."

He was silent. I sat down beside him. It was all I could do. After a moment he rose, saying,—

"There's no good whining about it—only she might have made a man of me. But she's quite right. It's a comfort to think I'm so unworthy of her. That's all the consolation left me, but there's more in that than you would think till you try it."

He attempted to laugh, but made a miserable failure of it, then rose and caught up his hat to go. I rose also.

"Roger," I said, "I can't go, and leave you miserable. We'll go somewhere else—anywhere you please, only you mustn't leave us."

"I don't want to go somewhere else. I don't know the place," he added, with a feeble attempt at his usual gaiety.

"Stop at home, then, and tell me all about it. It will do you good to talk. You shall have your pipe, and you shall tell me just as much as you like, and keep the rest to yourself."

If you want to get hold of a man's deepest confidence, tell him to smoke in your drawing-room. I don't know how it is, but there seems no trouble in which a man can't smoke. One who scorns extraneous comfort of every other sort, will yet, in the profoundest sorrow, take kindly to his pipe. This is more wonderful than anything I know about our kind. But I fear the sewing machines will drive many women to tobacco.

I ran to Percivale, gave him a hint of how it was, and demanded his pipe and

tobacco-pouch directly, telling him he must content himself with a cigar.

Thus armed with the calumet, as Paddy might say, I returned to Roger, who took it without a word of thanks, and began to fill it mechanically, but not therefore the less carefully. I sat down, laid my hands in my lap, and looked at him without a word. When the pipe was filled I rose and got him a light, for which also he made me no acknowledgment. The revenge of putting it in print is sweet. Having whiffed a good many whiffs in silence, he took at length his pipe from his mouth, and as he pressed the burning tobacco with a forefinger, said—

"I've made a fool of myself, Wynnie."

"Not more than a gentleman had a right to do, I will pledge myself," I returned.

"She *has* told you then?" he said once more, looking rather disappointed than annoyed.

"No one has mentioned your name to me, Roger. I only guessed it from what Marion said when I questioned her about her sad looks."

"Her sad looks?"

"Yes."

"What did she say?" he asked eagerly.

"She only confessed she had had something to trouble her, and said she hoped it would be over soon."

"I daresay!" returned Roger dryly, looking gratified, however, for a moment.

My reader may wonder that I should compromise Marion even so far as to confess that she was troubled; but I could not bear that Roger should think she had been telling his story to me. Every generous woman feels that she owes the man she refuses at least silence; and a man may well reckon upon that much favour. Of all failures, why should this be known to the world?

The relief of finding she had not betrayed him helped him, I think, to open his mind: *he* was under no obligation to silence.

"You see, Wynnie," he said, with pauses, and puffs at his pipe, "I don't mean I'm a fool for falling in love with Marion. Not to have fallen in love with her would have argued me a beast. Being a man, it was impossible for me to help it, after what she's been to me. But I was worse than a fool to open my mouth on the subject to an angel like her. Only there again, I couldn't, that is, I hadn't the strength to help it. I beg, however, you won't think me such a down-right idiot as to fancy myself worthy of her. In that case I should have deserved as much scorn as she gave me kindness. If you ask me how it was then that I dared to speak to her on the subject, I can only answer that I yielded to the impulse common to all kinds

of love to make itself known. If you love God, you are not content with his knowing it even, but you must tell him as if he didn't know it.—You may think from this cool talk of mine that I am very philosophical about it; but there are lulls in every storm, and I am in one of those lulls, else I shouldn't be sitting here with you."

"Dear Roger!" I said, "I am very sorry for your disappointment. Somehow I can't be sorry you should have loved——"

"*Have loved!*" he murmured.

"*Should love* Marion, then," I went on. "That can do you nothing but good, and in itself must raise you above yourself. And how could I blame you that, loving her, you wanted her to know it? But come now, if you can trust me, tell me all about it, and especially what she said to you. I dare not give you any hope, for I am not in her confidence in this matter—and it

is well that I am not, for then I might not be able to talk to you about it with any freedom. To confess the real truth, I do not see much likelihood, knowing her as I do, that she will recall her decision."

"It could hardly be called a decision," said Roger. "You would not have thought, from the way she took it, there was anything to decide about. No more there was; and I thought I knew it, only I couldn't be quiet. To think you know a thing, and to know it, are two very different matters, however. But I don't repent having spoken my mind: if I am humbled, I am not humiliated. If she *had* listened to me, I fear I should have been ruined by pride. I should never have judged myself justly after it. I wasn't humble, though I thought I was. I'm a poor creature, Ethelwyn."

"Not too poor a creature to be dearly loved, Roger. But go on and tell me all

about it. As your friend and sister, I am anxious to hear the whole."

Notwithstanding what I had said, I was not moved by sympathetic curiosity alone, but also by the vague desire of rendering some help beyond comfort. What he had now said, greatly heightened my opinion of him, and thereby, in my thoughts of the two, lessened the distance between him and Marion. At all events, by hearing the whole I should learn how better to comfort him.

And he did tell me the whole, which, along with what I learned afterwards from Marion, I will set down as nearly as I can, throwing it into the form of direct narration. I will not pledge myself for the accuracy of every trifling particular which that form may render it necessary to introduce; neither, I am sure, having thus explained, will my reader demand it of me.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ROGER AND MARION.

DURING an all but sleepless night, Roger had made up his mind to go and see Marion—not certainly for the first time, for he had again and again ventured to call upon her; but hitherto he had always had some pretext sufficient to veil his deeper reason, and, happily or unhappily, sufficient also to prevent her, in her more than ordinary simplicity with regard to such matters, from suspecting one under it.

She was at home, and received him with her usual kindness. Feeling that he must

not let an awkward silence intervene, lest she should become suspicious of his object, and thus the chance be lost of interesting, and possibly moving her before she saw his drift, he spoke at once.

"I want to tell you something, Miss Clare," he said as lightly as he could.

"Well?" she returned, with the sweet smile which graced her every approach to communication.

"Did my sister-in-law ever tell you what an idle fellow I used to be?"

"Certainly not. I never heard her say a word of you that wasn't kind."

"That I am sure of. But there would have been no unkindness in saying that, for an idle fellow I was, and the idler because I was conceited enough to believe I could do anything. I actually thought at one time I could play the violin. I actually made an impertinent attempt in your presence one

evening—years and years ago. I wonder if you remember it."

"I do; but I don't know why you should call it impertinent."

"Anyhow I caught a look on your face that cured me of that conceit. I have never touched the creature since—a Cremona too!"

"I am very sorry—indeed I am. I don't remember—— ——. Do you think you could have played a false note?"

"Nothing more likely."

"Then I dare say I made an ugly face. One can't always help it, you know—when something unexpected happens. Do forgive me."

"Forgive *you*, you angel!" cried Roger, but instantly checked himself, afraid of reaching his mark before he had gathered sufficient momentum to pierce it. "I thought you would see what a good thing

it was for me. I wanted to thank you for it."

"It's such a pity you didn't go on, though! Progress is the real cure for an over-estimate of ourselves."

"The fact is, I was beginning to see what small praise there is in doing many things ill and nothing well. I wish you would take my Cremona. I could teach you the A B C of it well enough. How you would make it talk! That *would* be something to live for—to hear *you* play the violin! Ladies do now-a-days, you know."

"I have no time, Mr. Roger. I should have been delighted to be your pupil; but I am sorry to say it is out of the question."

"Of course it is. Only I wish—well, never mind, I only wanted to tell you something. I was leading a life then that wasn't worth leading; for where's the good of being just what happens—one time full of

right feeling and impulse, and the next a prey to all wrong judgments and falsehoods? It was you made me see it. I've been trying to get put right for a long time now. I'm afraid of seeming to talk goody, but you will know what I mean. You and your Sunday evenings have waked me up to know what I am, and what I ought to be. I *am* a little better. I work hard now. I used to work only by fits and starts. Ask Wynnie."

"Dear Mr. Roger, I don't need to ask Wynnie about anything you tell me. I can take your word for it just as well as hers. I am very glad if I have been of any use to you. It is a great honour to me."

"But the worst of it is, I couldn't be content without letting you know, and making myself miserable."

"I don't understand you, I think. Surely

there can be no harm in letting me know what makes me very happy! How it should make you miserable, I can't imagine."

"Because I can't stop there. I'm driven to say what will offend you, if it doesn't make you hate me—no, not that, for you don't know how to hate. But you must think me the most conceited and presumptuous fellow you ever knew I'm not that, though; I'm not that; it's not me; I can't help it; I can't help loving you—dreadfully—and it's such impudence!—To think of you and me in one thought! And yet I can't help it. O Miss Clare! don't drive me away from you."

He fell on his knees as he spoke, and laid his head on her lap, sobbing like a child who had offended his mother.—He almost cried again as he told me this.—Marion half started to her feet in confusion, almost in terror, for she had never seen such emotion

in a man; but the divine compassion of her nature conquered: she sat down again, took his head in her hands, and began stroking his hair as if she were indeed a mother seeking to soothe and comfort her troubled child. She was the first to speak again, for Roger could not command himself.

"I'm very sorry, Roger," she said. "I must be to blame somehow."

"To blame!" he cried, lifting up his head; "*You* to blame for my folly! But it's not folly," he added impetuously; "it would be downright stupidity not to love you with all my soul."

"Hush! hush!" said Marion, in whose ears his language sounded irreverent; "—you *couldn't* love me with all your soul if you would. God only *can* be loved with all the power of the human soul."

"If I love him at all, Marion, it is you who have taught me. Do not drive me

from you—lest—lest—I should cease to love him, and fall back into my old dreary ways."

"It's a poor love to offer God—love for the sake of another," she said, very solemnly.

"But if it's all one has got?"

"Then it won't do, Roger. I wish you loved me for God's sake instead. Then all would be right. That would be a grand love for me to have."

"Don't drive me from you, Marion," he pleaded. It was all he could say.

"I will not drive you from me. Why should I?"

"Then I may come and see you again?"

"Yes—when you please."

"You *don't* mean I may come as often as I like?"

"Yes—when I have time to see you."

"Then," cried Roger, starting to his feet

with clasped hands, "—perhaps—is it possible?—you will—you will let me love you? O my God!"

"Roger," said Marion, pale as death, and rising also, for alas! the sunshine of her kindness had caused hopes to blossom whose buds she had taken only for leaves—"I thought you understood me! You spoke as if you understood perfectly that that could never be which I must suppose you to mean. Of course it cannot. I am not my own to keep or to give away. I belong to this people—my friends. To take personal and private duties upon me, would be to abandon them; and how dare I? You don't know what it would result in, or you would not dream of it. Were I to do such a thing, I should hate and despise and condemn myself with utter reprobation. And then what a prize you would have got, my poor Roger!"

But even these were such precious words to hear from her lips! He fell again on his knees before her as she stood, caught her hands, and hiding his face in them, poured forth the following words in a torrent.

"Marion, do not think me so selfish as not to have thought about that. It should be only the better for them all. I can earn quite enough for you and me too, and so you would have the more time to give to them. I should never have dreamed of asking you to leave them. There are things in which a dog may help a man, doing what the man can't do: there may be things in which a man might help an angel."

Deeply moved by the unselfishness of his love, Marion could not help a pressure of her hands against the face which had sought refuge within them. Roger fell to kissing them wildly.

But Marion was a woman, and women, I think, though I may be only judging by myself and my husband, look forward and round about more than men do:—they would need at all events;—therefore Marion saw other things. A man-reader may say that if she loved him, she would not have thus looked about her; and that if she did not love him, there was no occasion for her thus to fly in the face of the future. I can only answer that it is allowed on all hands women are not amenable to logic: look about her Marion did, and saw that, as a married woman, she might be compelled to forsake her friends more or less, for there might arise other and paramount claims on her self-devotion. In a word, if she were to have children, she would have no choice in respect of whose welfare should constitute the main business of her life; and it even became a question whether she

would have a right to place them in circumstances so unfavourable for growth and education. Therefore to marry might be tantamount to forsaking her friends.

But where was the need of any such mental parley? Of course she couldn't marry Roger. How could she marry a man she didn't look up to? And look up to him she certainly did not—and could not.

"No, Roger," she said, this last thought large in her mind, and as she spoke, she withdrew her hands—"it mustn't be. It is out of the question.—I can't look up to you," she added, as simply as a child.

"I should think not," he burst out. "That *would* be a fine thing! If you looked up to a fellow like me, I think it would almost cure me of looking up to you; and what I want is to look up to you every day and all day long. Only I can do that whether you let me or not."

"But I don't choose to have a—a—friend to whom I can't look up."

"Then I shall never be even a friend," he returned sadly. "But I would have tried hard to be less unworthy of you."

At this precise moment, Marion caught sight of a pair of great round blue eyes, wide-open under a shock of red hair, about three feet from the floor, staring as if they had not winked for the last ten minutes. The child looked so comical, that Marion, reading perhaps in her looks the reflex of their own position, could not help laughing. Roger started up in dismay, but beholding the apparition, laughed also.

"Please, grannie," said the urchin, "mother's took bad and wants ye."

"Run and tell your mother I shall be with her directly," answered Marion, and the child departed.

"You told me I might come again," pleaded Roger.

"Better not. I didn't know what it would mean to you when I said it."

"Let it mean what you meant by it—only let me come."

"But I see now it can't mean that. No. I will write to you. At all events, you must go now, for I can't stop with you when Mrs. Foote——"

"Don't make me wretched, Marion. If you can't love me, don't kill me. Don't say I'm not to come and see you. I *will* come on Sundays anyhow."

The next day came the following letter.

DEAR MR. ROGER, — I am very sorry both for your sake and my own, that I did not speak more plainly yesterday. I was so distressed for you, and my heart was so friendly towards you, that I could hardly

think of anything at first but how to comfort you; and I fear I allowed you after all to go away with the idea that what you wished was not altogether impossible. But indeed it is. If even I loved you in the way you love me, I should yet make everything yield to the duties I have undertaken. In listening to you, I should be undermining the whole of my past labours, and the very idea of becoming less of a friend to my friends is horrible to me.

But, much as I esteem you, and much pleasure as your society gives me, the idea you brought before me yesterday was absolutely startling; and I think I have only to remind you, as I have just done, of the peculiarities of my position, to convince you that it could never become a familiar one to me. All that friendship can do or yield, you may ever claim of me; and I thank God if I have been of the smallest

service to you; but I should be quite unworthy of that honour, were I for any reason to admit even the thought of abandoning the work which has been growing up around me for so many years, and is so peculiarly mine that it could be transferred to no one else.

Believe me yours most truly,

MARION CLARE.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ROGER, AND ABOUT MR. BLACKSTONE.

AFTER telling me the greater part of what I have just written, Roger handed me this letter to read, as we sat together that same Sunday evening.

"It seems final, Roger?" I said with an interrogation, as I returned it to him.

"Of course it is," he replied. "How could any honest man urge his suit after that—after she says that to grant it would be to destroy the whole of her previous life, and ruin her self-respect? But I'm not so miserable as you may think me, Wynnie," he

went on; "for, don't you see? though I couldn't quite bring myself to go to-night, I don't feel cut off from her. She's not likely, if I know her, to listen to anybody else so long as the same reasons hold for which she wouldn't give me a chance of persuading her. She can't help me loving her, and I'm sure she'll let me help her when I've the luck to find a chance. You may be sure I shall keep a sharp look out. If I can be her servant, that will be something—yes, much. Though she won't give herself to me—and quite right too!—why should she?—God bless her!—she can't prevent me from giving myself to her. So long as I may love her, and see her as often as I don't doubt I may, and things continue as they are, I shan't be down-hearted.—I'll have another pipe, I think."—Here he half-started, and hurriedly pulled out his watch. —"I declare there's time yet!" he cried,

and sprung to his feet.—"Let's go and hear what she's got to say to-night."

"Don't you think you had better not? Won't you put her out?" I suggested.

"If I understand her at all," he said, "she will be more put out by my absence, for she will fear I am wretched, caring only for herself and not for what she taught me. You may come or stay—*I*'m off.—You've done me so much good, Wynnie!" he added, looking back in the door-way. "Thank you a thousand times. There's no comforter like a sister!"

"And a pipe," I said, at which he laughed, and was gone.

When Percivale and I reached Lime Court, having followed as quickly as we could, there was Roger sitting in the midst, as intent on her words as if she had been an old prophet, and Marion speaking with all the composure which naturally belonged to her.

When she shook hands with him after the service, a slight flush washed the white of her face with a delicate warmth—nothing more. I said to myself, however, as we went home, and afterwards to my husband, that his case was not a desperate one.

"But what's to become of Blackstone?" said Percivale.

I will tell my reader how afterwards he seemed to me to have fared; but I have no information concerning his supposed connection with this part of my story. I cannot even be sure that he ever was in love with Marion. Troubled he certainly was, at this time; and Marion continued so for a while —more troubled, I think, than the necessity she felt upon her with regard to Roger, will quite account for. If, however, she had to make two men miserable in one week, that might well cover the case.

Before the week was over, my husband

received a note from Mr. Blackstone, informing him that he was just about to start for a few weeks on the continent. When he returned I was satisfied from his appearance that a notable change had passed upon him: a certain indescribable serenity seemed to have taken possession of his whole being; every look and tone indicated a mind that knew more than tongue could utter—a heart that had had glimpses into a region of content. I thought of the words —"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," and my heart was at rest about him. He had fared, I thought, as the child who has had a hurt, but is taken up in his mother's arms and comforted. What hurt would not such comforting outweigh to the child? And who but he that has had the worst hurt man can receive, and the best comfort God can give, can tell what either is?

I was present the first time he met Marion after his return. She was a little embarrassed—he showed a tender dignity—a respect as if from above—like what one might fancy the embodiment of the love of a wise angel for such a woman. The thought of comparing the two had never before occurred to me, but now for the moment I felt as if Mr. Blackstone were a step above Marion. Plainly, I had no occasion to be troubled about either of them.

On the supposition that Marion had refused him, I argued with myself that it could not have been on the ground that she was unable to look up to him. And notwithstanding what she had said to Roger, I was satisfied that any one she felt she could help to be a nobler creature, must have a greatly better chance of rousing all the woman in her, than one whom she must regard as needing no aid from her. All her

life had been spent in serving and sheltering human beings whose condition she regarded with hopeful compassion: could she now help adding Roger to her number of such? and if she once looked upon him thus tenderly, was it not at least very possible that, in some softer mood, a feeling hitherto unknown to her might surprise her consciousness with its presence—floating to the surface of her sea from its strange depths, and leaning towards him with the outstretched arms of embrace?

But I dared not think what might become of Roger should his divine resolves fail—should the frequent society of Marion prove insufficient for the solace and quiet of his heart. I had heard how men will seek to drown sorrow in the ruin of the sorrowing power—will slay themselves that they may cause their hurt to cease—and I trembled for my husband's brother. But the days

went on, and I saw no sign of failure or change. He was steady at his work, and came to see us as constantly as before; never missed a chance of meeting Marion; and at every treat she gave her friends, whether at the house of which I have already spoken, or at Lady Bernard's country place in the neighbourhood of London, whether she took them on the river, or had some one to lecture or read to them, Roger was always at hand for service and help. Still I was uneasy—for might there not come a collapse—especially if some new event were to destroy the hope which he still cherished, and which I feared was his main support? Would his religion then prove of a quality and power sufficient to keep him from drifting away with the receding tide of his hopes and imaginations? In this anxiety perhaps I regarded too exclusively the faith of Roger, and thought too little about the

faith of God. However this may be, I could not rest, but thought and thought until at last I made up my mind to go and tell Lady Bernard all about it.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DEA EX.

"AND you think Marion likes him?" asked Lady Bernard, when she had in silence heard my story.

"I am sure she *likes* him. But you know he is so far inferior to her—in every way."

"How do you know that? Questions are involved there which no one but God can determine. You must remember that both are growing. What matter if any two are unequal at a given moment, seeing their relative positions may be reversed twenty times in a thousand years. Besides, I doubt very much if any one who brought his

favours with him would have the least chance with Marion. Poverty to turn into wealth, is the one irresistible attraction for her; and, however duty may compel her to act, my impression is that she will not escape *loving* Roger."

I need not say I was gratified to find Lady Bernard's conclusion from Marion's character run parallel with my own.

"But what can come of it?" I said.

"Why, marriage, I hope."

"But Marion would as soon think of falling down and worshipping Baal and Ashtaroth as of forsaking her grandchildren."

"Doubtless. But there would be no occasion for that. Where two things are both of God, it is not likely they will be found mutually obstructive."

"Roger does declare himself quite ready to go and live amongst her friends, and do his best to help her."

"That is all as it should be, so far as he—as both of them are concerned; but there are contingencies; and the question naturally arises—How would that do in regard of their children?"

"If I could imagine Marion consenting," I said, "I know what she would answer to that question. She would say—why should her children be better off than the children about them? She would say that the children must share the life and work of their parents."

"And I think she would be right—though the obvious rejoinder would be: 'You may waive your own social privileges, and sacrifice yourselves to the good of others, but have you a right to sacrifice your children, and heap disadvantages on their future?'"

"Now give us the answer on the other side, seeing you think Marion would be right after all."

"Marion's answer would, I think, be—that their children would be God's children, and he couldn't desire better for them than to be born in lowly conditions, and trained from the first to give themselves to the service of their fellows—seeing that in so far their history would resemble that of his own Son, our Saviour. In sacrificing their earthly future, as men would call it, their parents would but be furthering their eternal good."

"That would be enough in regard of such objections. But there would be a previous one on Marion's own part. How would her new position affect her ministrations?"

"There can be no doubt, I think," Lady Bernard replied, "that what her friends would lose thereby—I mean what amount of her personal ministration would be turned aside from them by the necessities of her new position—would be far more than made

up to them by the presence among them of a whole well-ordered and growing family, instead of a single woman only. But all this yet leaves something for her more personal friends to consider—as regards their duty in the matter. It naturally sets them on the track of finding out what could be done to secure for the children of such parents the possession of early advantages as little lower than those their parents had as may be; for the breed of good people ought, as much as possible, to be kept up. I will turn the thing over in my mind, and let you know what comes of it."

The result of Lady Bernard's cogitations is, in so far, to be seen in the rapid rise of a block of houses at no great distance from London, on the North Western railway, planned under the instructions of Marion Clare. The design of them is to provide accommodation for all Marion's friends, with

room to add largely to their number. Lady Bernard has also secured ground sufficient for great extension of the present building, should it prove desirable. Each family is to have the same amount of accommodation it has now, only far better, at the same rent it pays now, with the privilege of taking an additional room or rooms at a much lower rate. Marion has undertaken to collect the rents, and believes that she will thus in time gain an additional hold of the people for their good, although the plan may at first expose her to misunderstanding. From thorough calculation she is satisfied she can pay Lady Bernard five per cent. for her money, lay out all that is necessary for keeping the property in thorough repair, and accumulate a fund besides to be spent on building more houses should her expectations of these be answered. The removal of so many will also make a little room for the accommoda-

tion of the multitudes constantly driven from their homes by the wickedness of those who, either for the sake of railways or fine streets, pull down crowded houses, and drive into other courts and alleys their poor inhabitants to double the wretchedness already there from over-crowding.

In the centre of the building is a house for herself, where she will have her own private advantage in the inclusion of large space primarily for the entertainment of her friends. I believe Lady Bernard intends to give her a hint that a married couple would, in her opinion, be far more useful in such a position than a single woman. But although I rejoice in the prospect of greater happiness for two dear friends, I must in honesty say that I doubt this.

If the scheme should answer, what a strange reversion it will be to something like a right reading of the feudal system!

Of course it will be objected that, should it succeed ever so well, it will all go to pieces at Marion's death. To this the answer lies in the hope that her influence may extend laterally—as well as downwards—moving others to be what she has been; and in the conviction that such work as hers can never be lost, for the world can never be the same as if she had not lived; while in any case there will be more room for her brothers and sisters who are now being crowded out of the world by the stronger and richer. It would be sufficient answer, however—that the work is worth doing for its own sake and its immediate result. Surely it will receive a *well-done* from the judge of us all; and while his idea of right remains above hers, high as the heavens are above the earth, his approbation will be all that either Lady Bernard or Marion will seek.

If but a small proportion of those who love the right and have means to spare, would, like Lady Bernard, use their wealth to make up to the poor for the wrongs they receive at the hands of the rich—let me say, to defend the Saviour in their persons from the tyranny of Mammon, how many of the poor might they not lead with them into the joy of their Lord!

Should the plan succeed, I say once more, I intend to urge on Marion the duty of writing a history of its rise and progress from the first of her own attempts. Then there would at least remain a book for all future reformers and philanthropists to study, and her influence might renew itself in others ages after she was gone.

I have no more to say about myself or my people. We live in hope of the glory of God.

Here I was going to write—THE END, but

was arrested by the following conversation between two of my children—Ernest, eight, and Freddy, five years of age.

Ernest. I'd do it for mamma, of course.

Freddy. Wouldn't you do it for Harry ?

Ernest. No ; Harry's nobody.

Freddy. Yes, he is somebody.

Ernest. You're nobody ; I'm nobody ; we are all nobody, compared to mamma.

Freddy (*stolidly*). Yes ; I am somebody.

Ernest. You're nothing ; I'm nothing; we are all nothing in mamma's presence.

Freddy. But, Ernest, *every thing* is some thing ; so I must be something.

Ernest. Yes, Freddy, but you're *no thing;* so you're nothing. You're nothing to mamma.

Freddy. But I'm mamma's.

THE END.

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