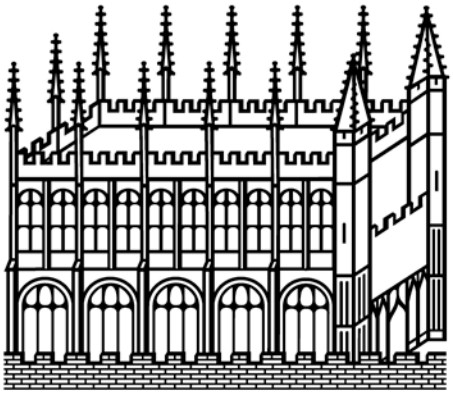

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Ada's Thoughts.

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ADA'S THOUGHTS,

OR THE

POETRY OF YOUTH.

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OR THE

POETRY OF YOUTH.

BY

E. M. S.,

AUTHOR OF "BLANCHE MORTIMER."

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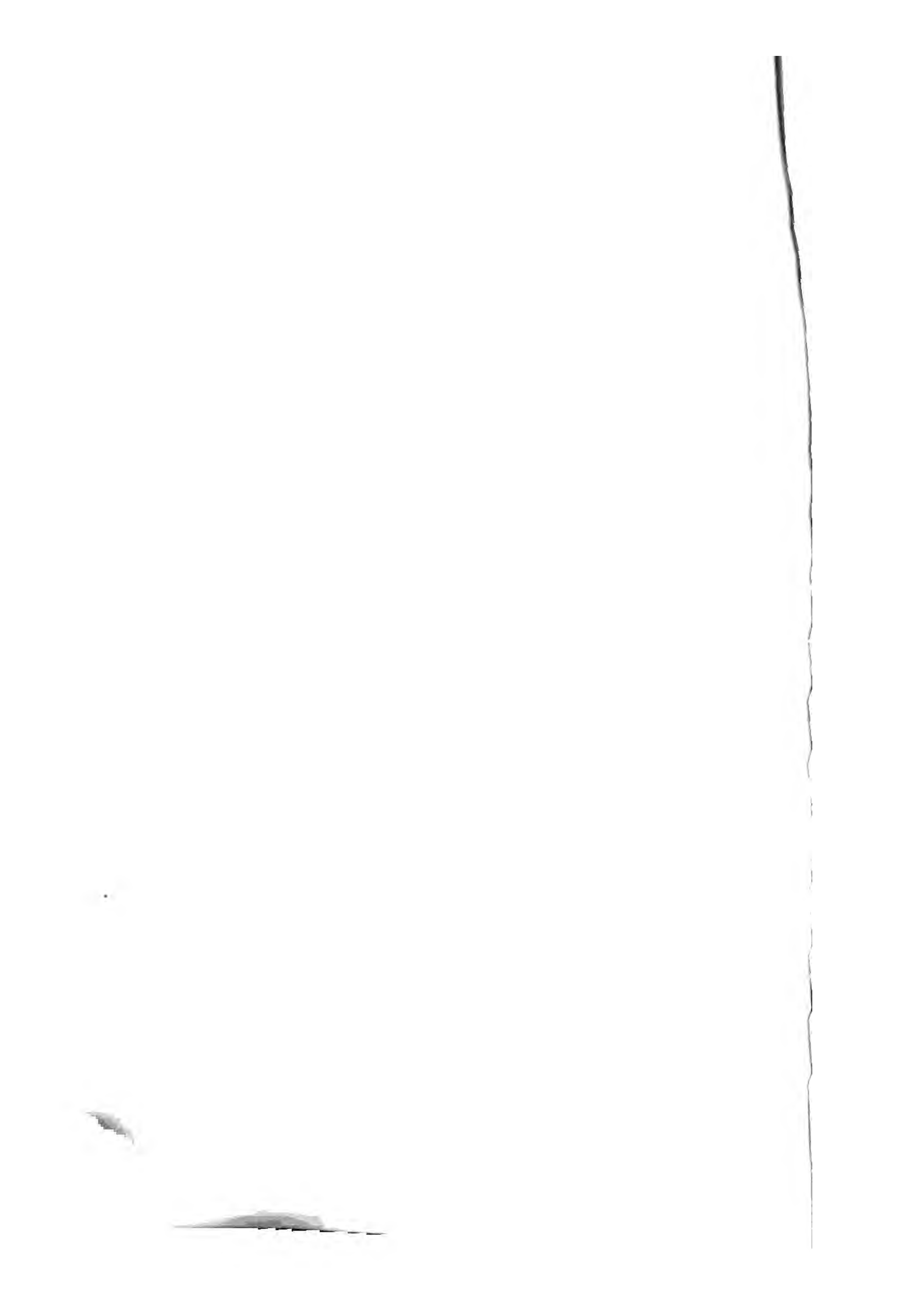
PREFACE.

THE endeavour of this little book is to follow out the natural development of a poetical, reflective mind, trained in high principles, and preserved in early life from the influence of ill example. It will not be supposed that the thoughts crossing so young a mind would be all either logical or definite—but such as they are, it may not be altogether uninteresting to trace through them, in a measure, to its source, the character which by the grace of God may be formed from such delicate materials.

OUR BIRTH IS BUT A SLEEP AND A FORGETTING:
THE SOUL THAT RISES WITH US, OUR LIFE'S STAR,
HATH HAD ELSEWHERE ITS SETTING,
AND COMETH FROM AFAR.
NOT IN ENTIRE FORGETFULNESS,
AND NOT IN UTTER NAKEDNESS,
BUT TRAILING CLOUDS OF GLORY WE DO COME
FROM GOD WHO IS OUR HOME.
HEAVEN LIES ABOUT US IN OUR INFANCY,
SHADES OF THE PRISON HOUSE BEGIN TO CLOSE
UPON THE GROWING BOY;
BUT HE BEHOLDS THE LIGHT AND WHENCE IT FLOWS,
HE SEES IT IN HIS JOY.
THE YOUTH WHO DAILY FURTHER FROM THE EAST
MUST TRAVEL, STILL IS NATURE'S PRIEST,
AND BY THE VISION SPLENDID
IS ON HIS WAY ATTENDED.
AT LENGTH THE MAN PERCEIVES IT DIE AWAY,
AND FADE INTO THE LIGHT OF COMMON DAY.

Wordsworth.



"SHADES OF THE PRISON-HOUSE BEGIN TO CLOSE
UPON THE GROWING BOY."

I.

This is indeed a lovely evening, perhaps the more delightful to me for having been from home.—Dear home! Although I have had such a pleasant visit among kind friends, and the world is much more delightful than I ever imagined it to be, yet there is no place after all like this old seat by the yew.—I always enjoyed Saturday evening, I wonder why I did not altogether like it while I was visiting! It seemed different then, it was like a grave friend refusing to be merry, and I know I thought it rather oppressive sometimes. I cannot think why it should be so, for my occupations were all innocent, and if friends were kind and indulgent, and praised me, that was not my fault. Perhaps it made me think too much about such things, yet surely God would

not suffer me to be tempted beyond my strength!—I wish my birth-day had been spent at home! if it had, I should have been happier I think, but Aunt Jane was so anxious for me to have a pleasant day. There were a great many surprises, and a large party came in the evening, and they all made so much of me.—I did not know before how much pleasure my singing could give. Sometimes I thought of dear Papa's letter, but I did not *then* fancy it altogether applied to me. He said he was glad I was so happy, and hoped it might please God to keep me so always, in a right way, but that I should remember how full life is of temptation, and that this world can give no lasting satisfaction. He reminded me that I am already sixteen, and no longer a child, that therefore I must be more than ever on my guard, since my friends cannot watch for me as they have hitherto done; but that as I overcome temptation early, so will be the amount of power and progress gained in after life; that one temptation is to prepare us for another, and that if we fail under those of early youth, we shall lose the advantages they are intended to convey to us. It is a strange thing that a temptation should be the means of conveying a blessing to us, when it is more than probable we shall be overcome by it!—It is true our blessed Saviour over-

came all temptations, and we have His example to go by, but then *we* are so weak and helpless, and we cannot be compared with Him, every thing is so *difficult* to us!

Yes, very difficult! I often wish I were a child again. I suppose it is in some measure that which makes me feel dissatisfied sometimes: and then I wish I could get back again to the borders of heaven, for I do not think I am as happy as I used to be, and I have every thing to make me so, just the same!

II.

Papa preached to-day upon the afflictions of Job, and God's mysterious dealings with His people. How often it happens that after something has puzzled me a great deal, I hear an explanation so good and clear that I wonder it never occurred to me before! I was thinking only a few days ago why we should be tempted so much when we are almost certain to be overcome. I know this is a trial world, and that without continual temptations to do wrong we should not be able to offer continually a service of choice to our heavenly Father; but I began to think it hard that the most innocent pleasures of life should prove to be temptations. I shall now in future remember,

whenever I find myself perplexed with God's mysterious dispensations, that God is in heaven and I upon earth, and how therefore am I to understand or judge what He does? I wish I had believed it without having doubted, it would have been much more humble. I am afraid now, that when temptations come upon me, I shall fall under them, I am so weak, and then they will not have the right effect upon me. I know I ought to be sorry for having been led into vanity and love of the world, as I have been lately, and if I were religious I should be so; but I cannot even make myself *feel* sorry, for if I were, I should wish never again to be tempted in the same manner. But I feel very often that I should like it all to come over again, and look forward to next summer, when I have been invited to go to my aunt's again, and love to dwell upon all the things that occurred during my visit at Hexworth.—I am afraid I am not really good, certainly not holy, and the Bible says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: yet how *am* I to become holy? I wonder if every one who lives in the world feels it as difficult to be holy and to acquire self-command as I do, after having been in it only three weeks! I think I will go to my old place by Ella's grave, for I want to feel that peace which used to come to me there.—

III.

I have had a letter from Edith, she is always bright and cheerful, yet her uncle and aunt are not half so kind to her as Papa and Mama are to me. She always finds every thing pleasant and agreeable, though she *does* sometimes write a Philippic against all the world.—Edith is a strange girl, quite different from me, which is perhaps the reason I cannot understand her, but she has a very kind heart, and I suppose it is that which makes her so fond of me. I am afraid I have never been kind to her as I ought to be, and I certainly do not deserve that she should care for me. I had not seen her for two years until we met at Hexworth, but it seems only like yesterday since she was staying here. I remember sitting together under the willow tree by the pond, and talking over all the things we remembered of the time she first came to us;—she told me she never forgot about the moss-rose, and how she had resolved at the time, to give me the first one that grew in her garden, though she afterwards forgot all about it. Poor Edith! she told me, with her arms round my neck, that though I *was* such a grave mopish old woman, she loved me better than any one else in the world! How she used to pick up all my nonsense verses

and write them in a book, though I know she does not care for poetry in the least! and how she used to sit by the piano and like me to sing to her, till I was tired, or play nonsense out of my head, and say she never cared for any body else's playing and singing! I suppose it must be because of little Rose and her dying among us; but I don't know how it is, I really don't particularly care for Edith, at least I did not think any thing of all she did when she was with us; but now I feel it was very ungrateful. What can it be that makes us like some people and not others? There is nobody but Papa and Mama I care so very much about. I am afraid I have not a loving heart! I wish I had! for we cannot do our duty, I know, without.—

IV.

I recollect, when I was a little girl, thinking how happy it would be to die alone—to be the last of all I cared for on earth, waiting to be reunited to them. It seemed a very beautiful thought then, but now it is very fearful.—I hardly know why I don't feel as if heaven were my home so much as I used to do: I know that is because I am growing unholy, and think less about it.—How sad it is to feel one's

self growing every day worse and worse without knowing how to stop! I have thought a great deal how it can happen that I do not love others as I should, how selfish I am, how rebellious my spirit often is to the wishes of dear Mama, how I wish sometimes to be free of all restraint, and am angry at being considered a child! an unloving, selfish, rebellious heart! and worse than that, I do not care to be alone with my heavenly Father as I did when I was a child. But nothing oppresses me more than Papa's dear smile, when he comes and finds me in one of my musing fits, and when I say I am not good, and he puts his arm so lovingly round me, and says that we are all weak and liable to sin, and that we must trust something to God's mercy.—Oh Papa! you little know how much bad there is in me, or you would never smile when you see me, or call me your little curate, and look so kind when I am coming home from the cottages. Oh no! I am not fit to die now—I cannot help wishing I had died when I was a baby, and then dear Papa would never have known sorrow through me!—

V.

I have just seen Mrs. Heathe's baby. I went to speak about the baby-clothes which she had not re-

turned, and I saw directly she had been crying. I knew her baby had been very ill, and I guessed something was the matter with it. Poor Mrs. Heathe! she said, "You know about the baby! but perhaps you would not like to see it," and burst into tears. I did not know what to do, or how to comfort her, so I just put my arm round her neck and said, "We must submit to God's holy will." She then tried to speak about the clothes she had been unable to finish, for she had been sitting by her baby for three days and three nights. I told her not to think a moment about them, for they were of no consequence whatever, and I added, seeing her tears flow faster, "I should like to see the baby," for I thought it might make her happier to get back to it again. Dear little lamb! it was not quite dead, but it was dying very fast; it looked like a little piece of wax, and lay so still, one might have thought it was dead, but for a convulsive movement of its lips now and then. The mother stood by and fanned the flies off its little face, and we watched it in silence. She lay her head on my shoulder, and I felt how much I wished I knew how to speak. I thought what a great deal Papa could have said to comfort her, and wished I could say something too; at last she exclaimed in a low voice, "My own baby! my own

little lamb!" and that reminded me of its being one of Christ's lambs, and I said, "But we know it is going to Him who loves it better even than you, and its little suffering life will be exchanged for one of peace and blessedness." "Yes, Miss Ada, that is my hope," she replied. Poor Mrs Heathe! I felt all I could do was to commend her in my heart to God, and so I left her. Her last link to life is this poor baby:—but God will comfort her, He has promised to bless the orphan and the widow, and she has learnt to trust that promise.—

VI.

Oh blessed breath of Summer eve,
That fann'st my burning cheek and brow,
Say on what errand comest thou,
Or what the message thou wouldst leave?

Say, art thou borne on angels' wings,
Heaven's ether? wafting holy sighs,
And purest gentlest sympathies,
O'erflowings of immortal things?

There's love upon that genial breath,
That comes invisibly to me:
My angel! it perchance may be—
So near in life, so near in death!

So near in death, so near in life!
  So near us in our wanderings lone!
  Each mossy mound with flow'rs o'ergrown
With tokens of that love is rife.

My angel speaks: the whispering wind
  With sighing breath, the message gives,—
  Then dies among the flow'rs, and leaves
The blessing of its trust behind.

So near in death! by Ella's grave
  You come to tell me, life is brief,
  And mind me of the withered leaf
That tosses on the grassy wave.

So near in life! Ah—stay that tone,
  That murmuring tone, and let me weep
  That yet I may not rest in sleep,
By that dear form for ever gone!

VII.

Papa picked up some verses I wrote yesterday, in the churchyard:—I was certainly not in a cheerful mood, and I should not have thought of shewing them to him; I hardly imagined however that he would have looked so grave when he gave them to

me—but it was his kind grave face, and he kissed me and told me I had better not indulge in those kind of thoughts. He said that they were the result of a morbid imagination, and would unfit me for my real duties.—I don't think there is anything more agreeable than to muse as I was doing yesterday, but I will try and leave it off, for it would please Papa to see me endeavouring to follow his advice. I told him that it came so naturally to me, I could hardly help it, particularly since I have done no regular lessons with Mama; but he said that was no reason why I should indulge such thoughts, and that I ought not to wish to die, or permit myself to imagine myself unhappy.—To-day I do not feel disposed to be moody, as poor Edith says, for Papa sent me to read to a good many old people, and to see the schools. He has given me leave to attend a class regularly twice a week, and I am to follow my own plan. I felt rather alarmed at the responsibility, but Papa says that experience will wear that feeling away.—He is going to take me with him to see some of the sick. There are a great many sick people in the parish just now, and it is said there never was more sickness known. The poor people are very much afraid of a bad harvest, there has been such a long drought, and the corn is not filled,

besides which we are dreading something worse. Dr. Snow said, that the poor woman who died so suddenly in Mr. S——'s parish was certainly a case of cholera. We have been spared till now, while it has been raging every where else. People used to talk about a national scourge for national sins, but it all seemed like news in a book, or in a sermon; not *real*.—I cannot imagine the cholera *here;* it would certainly be very dreadful, but then we should have the opportunity of being sisters of mercy, as Mama says. When Papa read the account of the devoted way in which the sisters at D——t have visited the sick and the wretched, I thought it must be a great privilege to be a sister of mercy; but Papa said it was a privilege to do Christ's work any where and any how, and that Christians have always and every where some of Christ's work given them to do. Then dear Mama said, when she saw I was rather down-cast at the reply: "Yes, Ada, we may do Christ's work at home while we admire and love the good sisters of mercy for Christ's sake; but if it should please God to send the cholera here, we can then be sisters of mercy at home."

"Not more than you are now, my love," replied my Papa; "you may indeed be called upon to make greater apparent sacrifices, but if your *will* is already sacrificed, that will be a comparatively easy trial."

"But," I urged, "can we be sure of our wills till they are tried, dear Papa?"

"Not quite Ada," he answered, kissing me, "but we must watch and pray lest the trial when it comes *be* too great. We are more likely to be prepared for great trials if we meet them in our natural path, than if by seeking for them, we quit our appointed sphere."

So perhaps it *is* coming.—I sometimes feel glad, and sometimes afraid. I hope there is nothing presumptuous in being glad. It seems shocking to be so, but I am only glad because of Mama's remarks about the sisters of mercy; for though Papa *did* say we are sisters of mercy now, we shall be more *really* like them then.

VIII.

Two sisters side by side had grown
  In twin communion, one bright flood
  Receiv'd them to the ark of God.—
The stroke that laid them low, was one!

The baby at its mother's breast;
  The father by his household hearth;
  The sister, best beloved on earth,
Have laid them down to sleep, to rest!

The village homes sad vigil keep,
  The sable garb is all forgot;
  In silence round each mournful spot
The stricken heart forgets to weep!

The hand that strikes the blow is nigh.
  Oh very nigh that Presence seems,
  Which visited us late in dreams,—
An awful, dread reality!

The closéd windows tell a tale
  From house to house, of woe within;
  The shadow passing by of sin,
When sorrow breathes its lonely wail.

Oh! grief to see from day to day,
  The rosy hue of health decline
  From little forms, those lambs of mine;
Borne hence by Angel hands away.

Three babes beneath the old yew tree,
  Like three young buds of early spring
  Nipp'd in their fragrant blossoming,
Have found their resting place to be.

And one, the tenderest flow'r of all,
  Sweet Annie from the cottage glen,—
  Ah! never shall I feel again
The pressure of those fingers small,

Or hear the music of her voice,
  Or see the trusting full blue eye,
  And changeful colour come and fly ;—
Oh ! death is dainty in his choice !

The young and healthy forms are gone,
  Bright promises of future years.
  And hearts, though breaking, know not tears.
They cannot *feel* they are alone !

They droop and fall, like blighted leaves
  From summer trees, so late, how fair !
  And they who mourn'd them, too, are there,
Borne from the sickle to the sheaves.

Death's angel ! stay thy heavy hand !
  Have mercy, Lord, on us so frail !
  The widow's prayer, the orphan's wail
Hear, for before Thee who may stand ?—

IX.

This is the third week of the cholera, and it appears unabated. I have hardly time even to *think*. Mama has been up two nights with Sara, and says she fears she is sinking.—Papa looks so full of care, and we go silently together to see the sick and the dying. Mama and Sara used to go together, and Papa takes me: but now that Sara is ill, Mama

cannot leave her.—My poor nurse! but my head is so confused I do not think I should cry even if you were to die!—I have nursed so many, yet I am quite well, and able to do every thing. Mama looks weary, but she never complains, and often takes her own dinner to some poor person.—I have strange things to do, for since Sara has been ill, I have had to superintend the soup-kitchen, and to serve it out, but no one asks me any thing about it; and the poor people entreat me, as I pass them, to go into their cottages where any new case has occurred, and I don't even think of asking permission.—

The village is like a churchyard before a thunderstorm! There is something awfully still in the low sad way the poor people speak, and in the way Mama moves about every where; and when Papa speaks, it sounds quite solemn, like a voice from the graves.—I often go with him to the funerals; it is the only occasion when there seems to be hope and comfort. Heaven seems to stoop near to us when a sister or a brother enters the grave, and when we return to our homes, it is as though we came back to care, sorrow, and dread again!—

X.

What can I say! what can I think! Oh Father! both, both, gone! gone I know to Thee, but why, oh why am I left an orphan, so young, so helpless! Oh Father, stay me, keep me, or I shall grow wicked and rebel!—They took me from him, my own Papa! I would have clung to him, I wished to die with him, but they would not let me see him again, never! never more!—Oh Heavenly Father! have compassion on me, for I am all alone!—

Part the Third.

"THE YOUTH WHO DAILY FURTHER FROM THE EAST
MUST TRAVEL, STILL IS NATURE'S PRIEST;
AND BY THE VISION SPLENDID
IS ON HIS WAY ATTENDED."

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MUST TRAVEL, STILL IS NATURE'S PRIEST;
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I.

I WONDER what it could be I cared so much about when I was at Hexworth last year. The people and the place are quite changed, or perhaps it is that I am altered myself. I certainly feel a great deal older, and though I always was shy, I am much more so now. The only person who is the same as ever, is dear Edith. I never shall forget when I saw her first after I came here. She did not *say* much, but just took my hand and kissed it, and she looked so affectionate and sorry;—no one else did. Strangers sometimes said in a whisper, "Is that Ada? Poor thing!" and I felt as if I could shrink far away from them all. But I could speak to Edith; I could give her Mama's message, and tell her what Papa said just before he became insensible.

She took me to an arbour in the garden which she had called mine, because she thought I should like it, and listened patiently to all I wanted to say; so I do not feel I am quite alone whilst I have Edith. We shall live near each other for this year, and perhaps the next, and then!—God will provide for His orphan child, I know not how; I am but little calculated to earn my bread, and there is no one to give it me, and if there were, it would be wrong to be dependent.—I will not think about it now, but try and be happy with Edith, for I know I ought to be so, though I never can be the same I used to be. The very birds and flowers seem strange to me now, and I feel as if they had forgotten me. Pretty happy things, dependent on God; unconscious of all but the present happiness He provides! It never can be so with us, weary, heavy laden, sorrowful sinners!

II.

I have seen Edith's friend Mildred. What a beautiful girl she is! only beautiful is not quite the word. Her face is more heavenly than beautiful; pale, gentle, calm, with such deep thought in those soft blue eyes, fixed with so much earnestness on me whenever I spoke. I am sure I shall love her, only she is too

much superior to me for her ever to care for *me*. I dare not talk to Edith about her, for she would laugh at it, as she has never said anything, but that "Mildred was a nice girl." I wish I knew her very well. —Edith is very good, and I love her dearly, but she does not always quite understand me; I think Mildred would. She spoke more like dear Papa than any one I have ever seen, but her voice is low and sweet, like Mama's. I never saw her laugh, but she was always ready to be amused with Edith's funny ways; only she seemed too earnest to take things lightly, as Edith does. Edith is very much attached to her I think, and seems almost thoughtful when with her. She tells me Mildred has had a great many troubles; she lost her father when she was very young, and her mother died after a long illness when she was fifteen; since then she has lived with her grandmother, who has kept her very strictly, and, as Edith says, is very tiresome, but I don't quite know what that means. I wonder how it is that some people (though very few) *do* appear to attain a high degree of holiness. I wonder whether it is that they have always been kept from falling, from their very early childhood, and whether angels ever do *really* live so very near good people as to be their companions, and keep them from thinking what is wrong, and from

growing light-minded and frivolous. There is no one to tell me now; dear Papa! if you are near me, be at my side and say if I am right.—

III.

Edith is gone away for a time, and I feel quite alone now. My aunt does not interfere with me, but only bids me not waste my time. I wish she would! I remember how I used to long for liberty, and now indeed I have it. If I am glad or sorry, no one cares; if I do well or ill, no one cares; if I go out or stay in, no one cares; I must only be ready at all times to account for myself, and not keep dinner waiting.—How different from what it used to be!—I have chosen this lime-tree for my seat, because it is out of sight of the house, and I can see on one side a little corner of the churchyard, and on the other the window of Mildred's room. They are very different things to be fond of. I wonder why they should be connected in my mind. Guardian Angel, can you tell me?

"*You imagine Mildred to be the type of perfection.*"

I think she is very near it!

"*The grave is the gate to perfection.*"

And when I think of her I am meditating on that which exists through the gate of the grave.

"*And the attributes of your ideal are what?*"

Love! Purity! Patience!

The grave conquers all but love! the grave is the purifier of all! and patience sees her perfect work in the waiting of the saints for their Redeemer's call!"

The angel-whisper ceases. The grave conquers all but love! The strength of the mighty; the power of the great; the pain of the suffering; the strong hold of the proud; the sorrows of the wretched; beauty, form, sweetness, proportion, excellence, faith, endurance, all falls low before its mighty crushing hand. All, *all* but love! The grave conquers all but love; but love conquers the grave! Through its dark gates love rises triumphant on her heaven-wrought wings, bearing the purified soul to the fountain of her birth, to the source of love ineffable, unfathomable, eternal!

IV.

I have at last seen Mildred at her own house; she is just what I had imagined her to be. She seldom leaves home unless it is to visit the poor, as her

grandmother is aged and infirm, being nearly blind and paralytic, and requires all the care and watching of a child; her temper too is unequal and irritable, and though Mildred is as patient and as gentle as an angel, she is exacting, peevish, and discontented. Mildred says she is extremely glad to find that her grandmother has no objection to Mr. Vyvian's visits, (he is Mr. Highgrave's curate,) and as he is the only person she will admit, he kindly spends much time with the old lady, which must be a great relief to Mildred, I should think.—

I have had a long conversation with her about every thing, and found myself quite able to tell her all my thoughts and difficulties. I never knew them myself so clearly before, but she has such a kind way of listening, and half suggesting what I want to say, that all my shyness and reserve vanished; she has put me in a better way to meet my difficulties, but it is strange that she should say nothing but what I have heard dear Papa repeat over and over again; it never seemed so *real* before.—Doing everything for the sake of Christ! it is so beautiful, so inspiring! and yet how seldom I think of Him when doing common things. The thought of Him and of them do not seem connected.—I think dear Papa must have had a really holy frame of mind. He was continu-

ally alluding in some way to our Saviour's presence, even when we were doing little things which appeared trifles.—I suppose that was why he never permitted me to call any thing a trifle. I could almost fancy I heard him! Dear, dear Papa! speak to me as you used to do, about the greatness of all we do, and think, and say.—You may not! no, not *now*, but when I am less unlike you, more like what you wish me to be, then will you speak to me and comfort me on my way? I think I hear him! Hush! "My child, my Ada, look not to me for comfort and guidance, look not even to angels as thy best companions; look higher still! These may turn the longings of thy soul from Him who stands knocking at the door of thy heart. He is thy Father, thy Friend, thy All. He will guide, He will preserve, He will comfort thee, He will tell thee what thou must do, and lead thy footsteps in the right way;—He takes away, and He can also give. He has taken thy natural guardian from thee, but thou art His care, as much as if none other than thou were in His keeping. Seek converse with Him, my Ada, and thou shalt know comfort, and peace, and joy!"—

V.

Edith is certainly very clever, and much admired;

I am not sure that it is doing her any good, but I can't tell. She is very good-natured, though she *does* laugh at me for plodding as she calls it; if I did not do so I shouldn't learn anything; as it *is* I can't talk away and be as agreeable as she can, and if I did not study a good deal, I shouldn't be able to feel interest in the conversation of wiser people than myself; as it is I don't care for the conversation that Edith shines in, but it is agreeable generally, and I should have liked to be able to enter into it. As I can't do this however, I must do my best to inform my mind in my own way.

I heard some books on Metaphysics spoken of highly the other day, and the conversation which led to the mention of them, between Dr. Evans and Mr. Highgrave, I thought very agreeable. It was about the faculties of the mind and the control of the will; the harmony which should exist between the intellectual, physical, and moral powers, to insure a perfect control over any individual one. Mr. Highgrave said he imagined they could not have naturally an inseparable connection, since moral and intellectual strength is often met with in minds not particularly subject to religious discipline, while great vigour of the bodily functions may be attained by cultivation, independent of an active, healthy frame of mind. From

this he inferred that the religious part of our nature may be in a state of great perfection while the intellectual and bodily powers are comparatively weak and even useless. If so, why are we endowed with powers which need not be considered necessary to our eternal welfare, for that after all is the one thing needful? This is Dr. Evans's argument. I did not hear it concluded, but from what I *did* hear, neither seemed to me to be wrong, as far as I was able to understand; for, considering ourselves as human creatures merely, Mr. Highgrave appeared most right; but if we regard ourselves as creatures made to be happy in a perfect state of existence, Dr. Evans's view appeared most satisfactory. God has not given to all equally the power of exercising every faculty of our nature, therefore the most important, which is the religious and moral part, may be cultivated sufficiently to make us what He would have us, as His children on earth; but in order to serve Him perfectly in heaven, and to be perfectly happy there, it may be necessary to possess other powers, which will be perfected as He sees fit.—I shall read those books if I can get them, Edith will I dare say borrow them for me, and I should like to understand clearly what Dr. Evans means.

VI.

Edith's birth-day! ten years ago she first came to us. She is a woman now, but she still reminds me of what she was then. Sensible, warm-hearted, quick, lively and elastic, there are the same thoughtless high spirits, though tamed by womanly feeling and a rough education. She has known reverses and has borne them well I think,—for as long as she was penniless, she had a good deal to try her, from the neglect and unkindness of her uncle's wife, with whom she has lived since she left us; and when, two years ago, her own aunt died in India, leaving her all her wealth, it did not upset her in the least. Dear Edith! she came to me the very morning she received the news, and said,—"Now Ada dear, you will have no more trouble,—you need only manage till I am twenty-one, and then we will live together, so happily!—and all I could do, I could not persuade her that it would be wrong for me to comply.—

I have been working a square for her table-cover, I made the device myself,—a faded, broken lily of the valley, supported by a beautiful moss-rose. I meant the moss-rose to be herself, and of course the

poor lily is me, only I don't suppose any one will find it out, and I don't mean to tell her, for I think she would just say, "Oh Ada, how like you!" or something of that sort, which I should not like.

But it is very true; my Aunt Jane spoke to me the other day upon the necessity of turning my mind to leaving Hexworth. Of course I know what that means; I have talked with Edith about it, but all she will say is: "Oh, coax the aunty to manage one year more, and then come to me."

I have three months to determine whether I will teach in a family where there are seven children, or in a school as half boarder, or go to India as companion to a cousin of Mildred's,—I sometimes think I don't care *what* becomes of me. If God would but shew me the way, I would willingly follow; but how am I to *judge?* Three months! and at the end a strange new life to which I *know* I am unequal. Guardian Angel! you once used to speak with me, now are you silent!—will you never again comfort me?

"*As thy day so shall thy strength be.*"

Oh make me trustful, Lord! let me bow before Thy will; and while the whirlwind passes by, let me bend like the reed, bruised but not broken; sheltered, though stricken by Thy almighty arm.

VII.

I have determined not to think of what is coming, but simply to ask God to shew me what to do, for Papa always said, that if we accustom ourselves to look through outward things to Him, He will invariably order little circumstances in such a way as will leave us no difficulty in finding out His will. I have been talking with Mildred about it, and she says I am right. She has done so much for me in directing my studies; I never shall forget her look of surprise when she found me studying a little work on metaphysics one day. She never before said anything so decided without being asked, but closing the book she said:

"My pet is doing herself no good; if we must be deep, we may be deep in a safer way." I had not thought about its being deep, and I am sure I was not wishing to be so myself, only the subject interested me, and had occupied my thoughts for a long time. "I will bring you a novel, darling," she added; "it will do you more good than the ideas and abstract forms of things." So she made me read some novels; I did not however like them, although it *was* Mildred who recommended them.—

But all this happened long ago; since then Mildred and I have become very dear friends, and we go together to visit the poor people, who are all so fond of her, and seem to think her always able to do every thing they want; but since she lost her grandmother she seems to have grown more retired,—more sadly earnest,—and far more removed from me. Her cheek is paler, and her blue eyes more deeply thoughtful,—they are almost melancholy sometimes.—I do not in the least understand her, though I love her so dearly. One day last week, when I was particularly unhappy about my own affairs, I went into the churchyard as usual, and seeing the church door open, I thought I would go in for a few minutes, and try to leave my troubles there. I went to my own dear place by the arch, and when I rose to come away, I saw Mildred kneeling by the altar rails: her face was raised towards the window, she appeared in great distress, but suddenly she covered her face with both hands, and I saw it no more. I left the church very quietly, for I was afraid she might be disturbed, and I waited by her grandmother's grave, hoping she might come to me there, but she did not. When she left the church her veil was down, and she went quickly past towards her home.—I have thought so much of it since,—I wonder what can have happened!

VIII.

I met Mr. Highgrave on the common as I was going to visit a sick person this afternoon. He stopped me, and asked if he might walk with me a little way. It was so unusual, I was surprised as well as pleased; at last he said:

"You and Miss Merton are great friends I believe."

"I hope so," I replied.

"On whose side is the attraction?" he said with a smile.

I hardly understood his meaning, but replied "On hers of course."

"You think all she does is right, do you not?"

"Generally, I believe."

"And of course she thinks the same of you?"

"Oh no! she often tells me when I am wrong, and I hide nothing from her."

"And is she equally confiding towards you?" he asked.

"I don't know why she should be," I replied with hesitation. Now really there *could* be no good gained by her telling me *her* thoughts, while to me her advice and sympathy are invaluable. I did not

say this, but I wonder he did not think of it himself.

"I frequently hear her speak of you in most affectionate terms," he resumed, "and I thought she might have spoken to you about herself. We are all interested in her you know. It seems dreary for so young a person to live alone. She must feel her grandmother's loss greatly."

"I should think so," I replied; "but she had a great deal to bear, though she never said a word about it."

"She is an interesting person, and you do well to cultivate the friendship of one so amiable and intelligent.—She has told me about *you*."

"Has she?—how kind!"

"If there is anything I can do," he added, "in the way of help or counsel, I hope you will not hesitate to tell me.—I am not very quick always in knowing what is right to be done, but I will at all times give your wishes my best consideration. Mrs. Highgrave too I know would be glad to be of any service to you."

He did not wait to be thanked, but I *did* thank him from my very heart as he hastened up the village. I will ask him the next time I see him what I had better resolve about the offers I have received.

IX.

Mr. Vyvian preaches so very beautifully, I do not wonder Mildred admires him. Last Sunday he chose self-renunciation as the subject of his sermon, and the deep thought he suggested (almost deeper than I felt able to comprehend) remains still on my mind. Oh, if this be truth, how cold, languid, lifeless and lukewarm, I have been all my life! He spoke of being perfectly lost in the abysses of divine love; of self being annihilated in the essence of perfect truth, of works done *in*, but not *by* ourselves, of the will of God working in and through us, but of ourselves being so lost in transcendent infinite love as to be—I don't quite remember the conclusion, but I fancy it was—incapable of individual action! It was very beautiful, and he is so enthusiastic, he seems to carry our very wills away with him.—But I suppose I am not clever, or not good enough to understand it quite; how delightful it must be for Mildred, who seems so well to comprehend his reasoning, to know him so intimately, and for him to be acquainted with her; they must feel so much sympathy.

X.

Mr. Highgrave strongly recommends me to accept the situation at Clare House. He says that perhaps the Cross is heaviest there, as he knows a good deal of schools,—but he says that India is a long journey for me when the prospect is so uncertain,—and he thinks I am too young and inexperienced for the responsibility of the other. Both these reasons seem so good, that I shall certainly follow his advice. I must not think of the Cross, for however heavy it may be, there is One who will help me to bear it, and make it light in time; and perhaps I may learn at last to think it pleasant, for *His* sake.

XI.

I was at the Parsonage last evening, helping Mrs. Highgrave to arrange the accounts of the clothing club. She was called away for a little time, and Mr. Highgrave came and sat by me. He took up a book and asked me whether I liked reading.—I thought it a strange question, it was so indefinite. I replied that I was not sure; I did not feel interest in all kinds of

reading, but that I liked to be taught, whether by people or by books. He said he had imagined as much, because I was so attentive to the sermon last Sunday. I didn't know exactly what to say, for I *had* been very much struck with the subject of Mr. Vyvian's sermon,—and as I felt Mr. Highgrave must have thought me not so attentive before, I just said nothing at all.—He did not take any notice of my silence, but continued:

"Mr. Vyvian has a striking manner, do you not think so?"

"Yes indeed," I replied, more earnestly than I intended. He looked up quickly, and said:

"I thought you would say so; he is very good, very good indeed, very true and earnest. His style and manner are very peculiarly attractive, especially to the enthusiastic."

"But," I replied, feeling very nervous all the while, and afraid of being wrong,—"is it not all *true* and real? I certainly did not quite understand it, but I thought that was because I am not clever, —nor good enough"—I added.

Mr. Highgrave smiled. "Did you think so? I am not surprised—I expected as much; but I do not know that I ought to say anything to injure Mr. Vyvian in your estimation; he is very good, and as I said be-

fore, very real in his way, but I am not sure that it is a certain criterion of reality, when people dwell so much upon the mysteries of our faith. We may easily get into a way of using a language which appears to mean a great deal, and sounds very deep, but which is merely mystical and nothing more. The pure imagination becomes excited, and that is all. I do not mean," he resumed after a pause, "that there are not persons of such exalted piety and purity of heart, and through God's grace, so much raised above the world, as to have arrived at a sphere of thought, which, though familiar to them, is unattainable by common minds. I could mention one or two such, from whose lips the language of heaven seems to fall, as the language of their every-day life; but such are very rare. What I mean is this,—that it is not difficult to employ a mystical language, which from the lips of an earnest and more particularly an enthusiastic man, is captivating, but very misleading."

I was silent for a little time, and then said: "Do you think Mr. Vyvian is mistaken?"

"I do not mean that exactly," he replied; "I only wish to say, that there is a certain style, which, in enthusiastic hands, is not to be depended on. A calm, subdued, experienced mind can only approach some subjects with becoming reverence I think."

I almost felt sorry Mr. Highgrave told me this; I shall be afraid of hearing Mr. Vyvian. But I am glad he allowed him to be good and sincere.

XII.

I have had a long walk with Mildred to-day. I am afraid it has been too much for her, for she seemed exhausted when we returned. She looked so ill that I ventured to ask whether she was not weaker than she had been. She shook her head and smiled. I sat by her some time in silence, afraid of being impertinent if I said what I wished. At last however I could bear it no longer, and I said in a very low voice, "Mildred, I wish you would tell me something."

"Anything that I can," she replied.

"Yes you *can*, but you must not think me impertinent."

"The very last thing I should think of you Ada—what is it dearest?"

"Is there anything that makes you unhappy?" There was a long silence. "I am afraid I have annoyed you," I said; "dear Mildred, forgive me."

She looked at me so sadly as she replied: "I have nothing to forgive, Ada; but don't ask me that again."

"I will not if you don't wish it," I said: "but oh Mildred,—if I could,—if there were anything I could do for you, it would make me so *very* happy; only say it."

Mildred smiled as she drew me to her side. "Dear Ada," she replied, "when that time comes I shall be sure to tell you."

"But can't I *now*, Mildred?" I don't know how my courage ever came, but it *did* come just when I wanted it. "Can't I help to share your unhappiness now?"

"You have troubles enough of your own, Ada; I must not let your young heart bear mine too."

"Perhaps it might make my own feel light; I think it would, dear Mildred, indeed I do."

"There are some sorrows which we *can* share with others Ada,—there are some we cannot, which we must bear alone, even though they kill us!" She spoke so firmly, and yet her lips trembled as she said it, that I felt quite frightened. I don't know whether it was this, or that I was tired, but all my self-command seemed to give way, and I burst into tears. "Dear Ada," she said caressingly,—"dearest Ada,

this must not be; I did not know you cared so much for me; if it would do any good I would tell you, but it would only make you more unhappy."

"And you know best Mildred, but it couldn't have made me more sorrowful than I *am*."

XIII.

Is there then no such thing as consistency in the world! no such thing as believing and acting! I have always been seeking for it, but never found it except in dear Papa. *He* always was alike. I did not think about it then; I only knew for certain that whatever he said I ought to do he did himself, which I think no one else seems to do. Mr. Highgrave is very kind, but I don't think he is equal at all times. He said in his sermon last Sunday, "Men are too weak-minded to be consistent, that is the fact." Is it indeed so? Is it that we must *expect* to hear one thing professed and another practised? Is it not merely the fault of a wrong state of society, but the effect of the natural debility of every human mind? Are the pulpits to witness to us truths which cannot be practised in the round of daily life? "Men are too weak to be consistent!" but oh, what does not that weakness im-

ply? Can we wonder then at the mistrust of Christianity, or the practical infidelity that exists in the world? If Christian people did but know how their inconsistency proves the saddest stumbling-block to the anxious, earnest, trembling enquirer; how their conduct discourages, distresses, and throws him back upon an unformed, uncertain, struggling creed! or if they really felt the advantage they are giving to bad men, by their high profession and inconsistent practice, they surely would not admit it as a merely deplorable fact, but would not cease their endeavours till it no longer existed. Perhaps it is presumptuous in me to think all this, for I am not able to judge, only the task of our lives is such up-hill work, and requires so much encouragement! and most of all it is distressing, when sermons which seem to assist us in making good resolutions appear to be regarded as quite apart from the practice of daily life!

XIV.

"What mysteries may not lie hid in a single action! Like a seed cast upon the earth, it may enfold in its bosom the sources of things to which time knows no end, and which leave on the soul their impression for good or evil through eternity."

Mr. Highgrave said this in his sermon this morning. It reminded me so much of dear Papa, that the words seemed strangely familiar to me, and their awful meaning was all the more striking from the recollection of where *he now* is. He must realize the *reality* of those things he taught, and to which the Church is ever witnessing. Papa used to say there is no such thing as an individual isolated action. A mysterious chain, he said, runs through our lives, of which thoughts, words, and actions, are the links. To every act there must be a thing antecedent and a thing consequent, therefore upon the force of each hangs, it may be, the strength of the whole. A feeble link may effectually weaken the rest; and when one reflects that the well-being of eternity rests, so to speak, upon the preparation of time, it is a thought of dreadful moment, that our individual actions are to be weighed in such balances. I read lately that a holy man once remarked how each day is the conflux of two eternities, and I think in the same way every action may be looked upon as the meeting place of two lives. There is no such thing as isolation; for although, as was remarked in the sermon, we are each individually alone in respect of God, yet creation is all linked together by a mysterious relationship, though we with our feeble

senses can only obtain glimpses of it now and then. The same reasoning which proved a trinity in every act of thought may prove a trinity in other acts, and evidences of it might, I think, be multiplied indefinitely. But perhaps these thoughts are better unexpressed, only if any thing can impress our minds with the solemn responsibilities of action, it must be the untold and never-ending influence they individually exercise over our spiritual and moral being.

XV.

Edith has made me rather uncomfortable to-day. I half think she is jealous of Mildred. She began by saying she could not understand why I had taken such a violent fancy to her. I thought it was because she is so very good,—I could not give any other reason. I told her I fancied Mildred must be unhappy, and that I wished it were in one's power to make her less so.

"I do not think it is," replied Edith; "and," she added, "I do not mean to trouble my head about her. She is so mysterious and close,—and I am sure, if she does not care for *us*. . . ."

"Hush, Edith dear, there may be a reason for it;

and if she is unhappy we *ought* to be sorry, though we don't know why it is."

"Oh! what a goose you are," she replied; "Ada, you are indeed—you are making yourself miserable all for nothing.—People say—"

"What do people say?" I asked when Edith stopped,—"*do* tell me . . . . but I do not think I ought to care for what people say,—particularly if it is bad."—I continued, half to myself, "Papa used to tell me that we should not judge any body by what is *said* of them, but only by their actions."

"Well then," replied Edith, I will *not* tell you, —will that satisfy you?

"Yes," I answered, trying to laugh, "if it satisfies *you;*" but Edith did not reply, though I waited some time for her to speak. I said at last: "Have I vexed you, Edith? I am very *very* sorry if I have—I was only in joke, and I think, after all, I *should* like to know what people say about Mildred. I need not believe it if I don't like it."

Edith laughed and called me *la petite curieuse,* and would say no more, but went on talking of all sorts of things, and making me laugh 'till I had almost forgotten the beginning of the conversation. I thought I had only meant to make peace with Edith, when I asked her to tell me what she had

heard,—but I find I *am* "*la petite curieuse,*" for I have been imagining all sorts of things ever since. There must be *something* wrong, I am sure, for Mildred talks of joining her cousin when she goes to India; and she has left off going to see the poor people for the last month. She said to me once that she has no object in life now her Grandmother is dead, to keep her here, and that she may be useful to Marion. I wish I knew what is *really* the matter, though I could do no good.

XVI.

I know all now,—I went to see her yesterday, and found her writing. She seemed glad to see me I thought;—while she was gone to find a book which I had promised to take to the school for her, I happened to look on the table, when I saw a great many letters in Mr. Vyvian's handwriting, with some MS. sermons which she seemed to be reading and comparing; but I did not go near the table for fear of seeing any thing she might not wish me to see. When she returned I asked her if it were true that Mr. Vyvian had resigned the curacy. She looked at me so suddenly that I felt confused, and was vexed I had asked, but she re-

plied immediately that the report was at the least well founded, as Mr. Highgrave had originated it. I said I was sorry, for I liked Mr. Vyvian very much from his sermons.

"He has not preached lately I think," said Mildred.—

"No, I have often wondered why;—do you know, Mildred?"

"I have no more reason to know than you, Ada," she replied.

"Oh yes—you see Miss Vyvian so often—do you find her a pleasant companion?"

"Yes, Ada, I love her dearly."

"I wish you would let me come and see her some day, I should like so much to know her."

"You shall, darling, come to-morrow afternoon, and stay with me to tea, I expect her to spend the evening."

"It will be such a pleasure, Mildred—but tell me, is she very clever? shall I be afraid of her?"

"Oh no! not necessarily," she replied, smiling, "and clever is not the word; I cannot think of calling Mary clever, it is such a common-place expression."

"Oh Mildred, I am so delighted to find it possible for you to be bewitched,—now confess you are."

Mildred coloured. "I hope not," she answered, almost coldly.

I felt repulsed, and stood silent. Mildred sighed as she gathered up her papers.

"I am afraid there is a thorn somewhere, dearest," I said; "why do you sigh?"

"Oh Ada," she replied, "tell me where are we to be sure of any thing.—Is it not *all* feeling?"

I was startled by her vehemence. "Sure? yes, why should we not? Mildred, what do you mean? all feeling! what is all feeling?"

"Affection, sentiment, belief, hopes, fears, all—every thing! Ada, how are we to tell—what are we to trust?"

"Mildred, I don't know how we are to tell," I said, as I knelt by her side and took her hand, "but we may trust the feeling which God has put in us, and believe and hope because He lets us do so—don't you think so?"

"It is trusting to a broken reed. Ada, there is no reality any where!"

"Dear Mildred, I am not quick you know, and I do not quite understand your meaning. What is it that is not real? Have you been disappointed in any one?"

Mildred's face became crimson,—she covered it

with her hand. "Ada, pray do not speak of that, not *now*."—She paused, and as I did not know exactly what to say I remained silent; at last she said,—

"When I am gone, Ada, promise me you will forget it, and only remember me as . . . ."

"Since I know nothing, I can forget nothing," I said, interrupting her.

"That is well," she replied—"and do not allow what I have just said to distress you. Try and forget *it*."

I could not reply immediately, for I felt choking. "Never!" I exclaimed at length. "No, Mildred, you cannot expect that, you must not believe there is no reality in *me!*"

"If it is any where it is in you, darling—but you will have others to love, more worthy of your affection than I can ever be; and it will only be natural for you to think differently *then*."

"But, Mildred—if there is *any* reality in me—ever so little, there surely is reality in other things—*try* and believe it. I shall love many people I hope, for God has given me a loving heart—but why should that make me love you the less? No, no;—wherever you go, I shall love you and pray for you, and wish to be like you."

"Oh no, Ada, not *like* me! any thing but that! I did think *once*, we were all going the same way, —I did once hope that I was blessed, and guided, and strengthened, and, in my vain, foolish imagination, suppose I was the instrument of good to others. But that was a dream—a delusion. A phantom spirit misled me! my belief was built upon feelings, and when feelings change, belief is wrecked!"

"Oh what are you saying, Mildred! our feelings change of course, constantly, for they are influenced by so many little things, but our belief is quite independent of our feelings, and would be just the same if we had never been. We believe because we *ought* to believe—because the Bible says we must, and because there is something in our hearts which says so too. Do you not think so? I *know* you do, but you are unhappy now, dearest Mildred, and so perhaps that makes it all a little confused to you."

"No no, Ada, it is not because I am unhappy that these thoughts come,—I am unhappy because .... you shall know some day, darling—I cannot tell you now, indeed I cannot—yet stay,—can you keep a secret?" She took from the table a letter in her own hand-writing, "You may read this, Ada only don't speak to me of it." I pressed the hand

which placed it in mine, and she rose and left the room. I had hardly begun when she returned, came up to me, and kissed me, saying, "I shall not see you again to-day, you must not be angry with me," and went away like a vision. Oh Mildred! and now I know all!

XVII.

Edith is growing almost grave. I wonder what it is that is occupying her thoughts. Since her accession of fortune she has decidedly grown more thoughtful, and seems wishful to discharge the responsibilities of riches in a right manner. I suppose it is some idea of this sort floating in her mind that led to our conversation this morning. She asked me, as I met her coming up the shrubbery, if I remembered the castles we used to build when we were children. "I was always planning," said she, "to be a duchess, or a princess, or something grand, and live at court, and be the greatest person in the world—do you remember *yours*, Ada?"—

"I had so many," I replied; "but I never think of them now, because I fancy it is better not, at least Papa used to say they do no good."

"Well, but do call up your memory just to please

me;—you had a beautiful castle about a sisterhood of consolation, and I used to say you would be sure to want me, or you would all, for a certainty, go melancholy mad."

"Oh yes, I think that was the last I gave up. It stood ground for many years."

"Then you have it by heart, I dare say; I want to talk about it; *do*, there's a dear girl."

So in a few minutes we were as deeply interested in discussing the details of our vision as ever we had been in our early days. The sketch which our lively imagination pictured was that of an establishment, whose members should occupy themselves in visiting persons of all ranks—not only the sick, but those also who are sick at heart and unhappy. The sisterhood was to be bound together by the rules of real Christian charity, and devotion to a common occupation, rather than by arbitrary regulations, in order that every member might feel the responsibility of self-discipline, as much as if she lived in the world. I suggested that people who were in affliction, or other distressing circumstances, and who might feel glad to retire from the world for a short time, should find a home there, that thus the blessing of sorrow might in a measure be ensured to them, by leading them into the path and

discipline of a religious life, while the impressions of chastisement were yet vivid. I think we must have spent a whole hour in discussing the subject. Edith seemed to think there would be difficulty in getting admitted among the rich, and also that it would require a peculiar disposition and tact to adapt one's-self to people of rank. She imagined I should be able to do that, while she herself could not, but that she should be better adapted for staying at home, and attending to the people that came, "and keep up their spirits you know," she added; "somebody would be wanted for that if we had such an *omnium gatherum* of forlorn ladies. Then Mildred, oh she could manage the schools and sick people, for she would do it to perfection."

"But," I said, "if Mildred goes away?" quite forgetting we were only building a castle.

"Yes," she replied, "but if Mildred did *not* go away! Now Ada, you need not look so incredulous, I mean to tell her of our scheme, and if we can get *her* head,—we shall see,—who knows what may happen?"

XVIII.

From thy dewy bed of flowers,
Lulling the new-born hours,
Wake, Summer breeze!

Sultry the deep still sky,
The earth is parch'd and dry,
Oh Summer breeze!

As yet thy flow'ry way
Is fair as yesterday;
Come, Summer breeze!

But soon the gentle flowers
Shall wither in thy bowers,
Oh Summer breeze!

And sad and hot and dreary
Noon-tide is to the weary,
Oh Summer breeze!

When life's young joys are sweetest,
Oh then their wing is fleetest,
Oh Summer breeze!

Round where our hope low lieth,
No earthly accent sigheth,
Oh Summer breeze!

Then rest thee in thy bowers,
Heed not the fading flowers,
Oh Summer breeze!

'Tis best Life should not borrow
Earth's breath to lessen sorrow,
Go, Summer breeze!

XIX.

As I was going to see Mildred this morning, I met Miss Vyvian. I was almost sorry, for though she is not really concerned in Mildred's unhappiness, she is nevertheless Mr. Vyvian's sister. I hoped we should part very soon, as we were near the house, and was sorry therefore when she asked me to walk a little way further with her. I consented, of course, and waited for her to speak, for nothing came into my mind but the thought of Mildred's sorrow, and it would not do to speak of that. At last she said:

"Miss Grant, I have a particular request to make,

for although we are almost strangers, I am sure you have too much kindness of heart to refuse."

"If I can do anything for you," I replied, "I should be very glad." I am not sure I quite *felt* it, for I did not altogether like Miss Vyvian. I had been disappointed in her when Mildred first introduced her, but could hardly tell why.

"You are, I think, the only person whose wish can influence Miss Merton, and you know how inexpressibly dear she is to us."

I was silent at first, for I was taken by surprise, but as she waited for an answer, I replied at last, "I think you mistake my influence with her. I never possessed any;—the influence was the other way; but if I had, I should not think it right to employ it in inducing her to act against her conscience. She knows better than I do what is right."

"Your humility makes you think so Miss Grant, and perhaps on many occasions you would be right, for there are few equal to Mildred."

She spoke so warmly, and so truthfully, and just what I felt myself, that my prejudice began to give way; she continued: "But there are cases sometimes, where the most perfect are blinded by excitement, and unable to see so well as another what is best."

"Mildred is too unhappy just now," I replied, "to listen to argument, and I do not think she would be guided by me, even if I did take the liberty of speaking to her, which I cannot do."

"I do not wish you to speak to her about anything, my dear Miss Grant," she answered, in such a mild sweet voice that I was almost ashamed for having been so decided, "but if you are afraid of me, I will not say anything more."

"Oh, not afraid,—only Mildred has asked me not to allude to the subject, and I cannot."

"I did not mean that, it was merely upon the subject of her leaving England."

"That is not decided, is it?" I asked eagerly.

"Not so decided but that it may yet be given up."

"But what better plan is there for her," I said, "as she has no relations in England, nor any object to occupy her mind?"

"You *wish* her to go perhaps."

"Oh no," I replied quickly, "I would do anything to keep her, if I thought it was right."

"It *would* be right," said Miss Vyvian eagerly, "*believe* me it would. She *never* will be happy in India, and she *might* be happy in England. Arthur has resolved to leave Hexworth next week,

and if she could be induced to stay, he will very likely become more settled, and she may learn to think it not impossible that the difference between them is not incompatible with the greatest affection."

I did not feel called upon to offer an opinion, but I thought Miss Vyvian was mistaken. If he had not been a clergyman the case might have been different, but as it was, the thing was impossible. I suppose Miss Vyvian mistook my silence, for she said:

"My brother is very enthusiastic, and when a subject interests him he is apt to be carried away by it,—it is his fault, but he is always sincere, and that, you know, is everything."

I did not like the way Miss Vyvian spoke of it; she seemed to treat the matter too lightly, so I said nothing, and she continued:

"Arthur has a very excitable temperament, I know. His religious views are unsettled just now, but it does not follow that it will always be so. In all probability this fancy of his will pass, and then you know he is where he was, and this would be more likely to happen if Mildred were in England."

"What is it you wish *me* to do, Miss Vyvian?" I said, in as pleasant a voice as I could command,

for I felt she was mistaking Mildred all the while, and I was angry with her for it.

"Only persuade Mildred to stay," she replied eagerly. "I shall promise her that Arthur will not come near Hexworth while she is here; I shall, however, stay myself, and I am *sure*, if we can only gain time, she will see the matter as we do. She wavers already."

I felt this was a matter I had no right to interfere in, and if I had, I could not, so for politeness sake I said I would consider, but would make no promise, as I was not sure it would be right.

"I am certain you will not think it wrong,—Mildred cannot live in India,—her health is not strong enough, and with regard to my brother, he is indeed sincere and good hearted, *do* take my word for it."

"I do not doubt your word in the least," I replied, "I am sure you say what is true, but I am afraid I must beg you to excuse me leaving you, as I wish to call to see Mildred, and our dinner is punctually at six."

"Do not think me impertinent if I beg of you *one little* favour!" She looked at me so affectionately that I felt I did not deserve it. "Will you wear this little thing for my sake?" She took from

her neck a gold chain, to which hung a beautiful small carved ivory cross.

"Thank you," I said, "but, I have done nothing to—indeed I never wear such beautiful ornaments, I cannot give such presents."

"Oh do not think of that, dear Miss Grant. I want you to wear something for my sake, and it is of no value to me, I give it to you because you are Mildred's friend, and all who love her are dear to me,—do let me clasp it on your neck."

She did so, and was gone in an instant. I stood a moment to collect my thoughts, and then resolved to return home instead of going to see Mildred, for I felt perplexed.

XX.

The time is drawing very near now, I wish not to dread it, but I cannot help doing so. I have tried to talk it over with Mr. Highgrave, but I don't think he altogether feels for me. He seems really anxious to do every thing he can, but he is like a person who does all that is right, without finding anything exactly pleasant. I may however very likely be mistaken,—still I cannot help being fond of him, he has such a kind manner sometimes,

and at those moments I fancy I could tell him all that is in my heart; and if I might, I should go to my duties much happier, but he does not seem to understand me, and requires more explanation than I quite know how to give,—I wish people would always guess what one has to say! It is that which is so pleasant in Mildred. If I tell her half a word she guesses at the rest, and knows exactly what question to ask, which makes it so easy to tell her anything. Now though I don't *really* feel afraid of Mr. Highgrave, yet his abrupt manner makes me forget what I wish to say, and thus it happens frequently that I leave him without having asked the question I intended, just from this silly nervousness of mine,—however, as this can't be helped, I must do my best without.

To-morrow week! It *will* come over me like a cold heavy weight. I wish I could feel quite well, Mr. Highgrave has asked me to spend to-morrow evening at the parsonage. Mr. Trent, the missionary from New Zealand, is to be there,—how I used to wish to be a missionary! And that would be a harder life than the one which actually lies before me. How very little we know ourselves! And how different life appears through the kaleidoscope of childhood's imagination from its real *real* reality!

XXI.

I have been prevented from seeing Mildred for some days, and Edith has been with her more. All her feelings of jealousy passed when she found out what the matter was. She came to me with a face so full of concern yesterday to tell me what she had heard from Mrs. Highgrave. It was told her as a great secret, but she could not help adding with her mischievous smile,

"I suppose it is a secret which every body has already had confidentially imparted to them at the vicarage."

She has told me what I did not quite understand before, that Mr. Vyvian is one of those excitable enthusiasts who can do and think nothing calmly, —that at different periods of his life he has entertained the most opposite opinions, and has always carried his views to their very extreme. He is clever, that is, his temperament is quick, bright, and susceptible, but his judgment is not to be relied upon. He never sees more than one side of a question at once—which is the reason I suppose that he defends it so energetically while it rules

him, and also the cause that he does not abide faithfully by any. This is curious to think about. I wonder where the fault is,—whether it is in himself, or in the way he has happened to become acquainted with these subjects. Yet I think if we were to see very clearly all that is to be said on both sides of a question, we should be very much puzzled to know which is right; and if we *only* know one, and stick very closely to it, thinking it must be right just because we happen to believe it, it seems very like bigotry. Poor Mr. Vyvian! Yet I think Mildred has acted rightly,—she would not be happy if she were married to you —for it is not her place to keep you right—*you* ought on the contrary to guide and support *her*.

XXII.

Mr. Highgrave surprised me yesterday evening by asking me to explain to him the plan for our sisterhood. I enquired how he came to know we had one, and he told me, from Mildred. I said it was only a castle, and really not worth repeating, but he replied in his peculiar decided way, "I should like to know;" so I was obliged to explain

it as well as I could, though I don't think he would understand what I meant, for he sat listening so attentively, that I did nothing but hesitate, and make blunders; and when I had finished he only said, "Thank you," and went away. I felt so uncomfortable, that when Mr. Trent was introduced to me, I did not know what he said, and he had to repeat it twice before I could answer. He sat down by me and I soon forgot my troubles in the interest I felt in all he told me of their works in New Zealand. Really there seems so much to do in the world, I wonder how any body can be idle. My old fancy for being a missionary quite returned as he described the nature of their employment, and said with a pleasant smile, that the troubles and crosses were as nothing compared with the blessing which appeared to accompany them. I said I thought it proved how God's blessed presence is every where as well as Christ's holy cross; and that as we can go no where that we do not find the one, which it is our duty and our privilege to bear, so can we not possibly be out of the reach of the other, which makes all things sweet. I felt, as we talked on of these kind of things, that my own troubles grew lighter, and as if the cloud which lay between myself and the bright sunshine

of Christ's love, began to disperse. So I lay down to sleep with a peaceful heart,—not that I *did* sleep, for I could not; and I am only afraid that I thought too much of the happy lot of the missionary, whose every action is devoted to Christ. Papa used to speak of being a missionary wherever we can.—*He* might be one—but I can only be a missionary to myself, I am afraid!—

XXIII.

It has been sadder for Mildred than I imagined. Nothing was wanting to complete her engagement but that she should fix the day of the wedding, when the enthusiasm which, when exerted in the cause of the Church, won for him Mildred's admiration, and eventually her affection, suddenly took a new direction, and from the strictest orthodoxy, passed to the wildest strangest transcendentalism. I do not altogether understand it, but Mrs. Highgrave says that he will be obliged to give up duty for the present. I am very glad I have not had even the opportunity of speaking to Mildred, although I had resolved to say nothing after Miss Vyvian gave me the cross. Now all has settled

itself. The physician says Mildred's health will not bear the Indian climate, and for the present she is going to stay with Edith, and give up housekeeping. It is very pleasant to see how happy Edith is in the prospect, and I am in hopes it may be good for both.

XXIV.

Edith came this morning earlier than usual. She said it was to help me to pack, but by her bright sunny face, I saw there was something to tell me. Dear Edith! so *you* have resolved to found the sisterhood,—and you have really persuaded Mildred to join with you!—You say it will be necessary to sketch our plan and have it submitted to the judgment of persons who are more experienced than ourselves;—and you have asked me to make the sketch of it, as it was my thought originally, though in reality there is not much left of my rough idea, which we have revised, corrected, and discussed, till it looks rather real. When I get to Clare House it will be a pleasant thing to think about, and it is very kind in them both to let me have a share in their doings. No, dear

Edith, you must not make up your mind that I shall come and help you.—It is all very well to say "Yes, I will live in your house as soon as you want me," but I have a cross to bear at present, and what has been given me, I must not lay down. I will think of you, and pray for you, and that perhaps is the best help you can have after all.

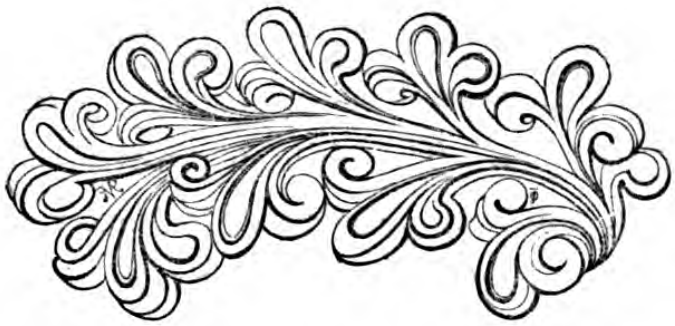
XXV.

This place has never been to me what home was, and yet I shall be very *very* sorry to go away. It is all real now, and my future life seems a dark blank. It would have been too great happiness to have been permitted to join Mildred and Edith,—I want trial, I know, to subdue my will, so I may not wish for any thing different. When I saw Mr. Trent cross the green this afternoon, his quiet expression reminded me of my resolution the other evening.—I had not forgotten one word of what had passed, but I think his countenance did more than his words in making me submissive. He too leaves Hexworth to-morrow, and in a month returns to New Zealand; but I have forbidden myself to think of missionaries, for thinking of them, I find, makes me discontented.—I don't know why!

All is packed and ready,—Yes,—and I ought to go to bed I know, for I am faint and weary, but I cannot help lingering at my window, to look at the cold, pale, passionless moon, so clear,—so calm,—so distant! There, hide yourself behind that cloud,—you do well, for what have *you* to do with sorrow and sadness!—but I have watched you often, and I half think I love you, for you used to come and play round my pillow when I was a child, and they told me you watched over Ella's grave,—and now! —There, there, I must weep,—I am not impatient, Lord,—I would not be, but let me weep!

Part the Fourth.

"AT LENGTH THE MAN PERCEIVES IT DIE AWAY,
AND FADE INTO THE LIGHT OF COMMON DAY."



"AT LENGTH THE MAN PERCEIVES IT DIE AWAY,
AND FADE INTO THE LIGHT OF COMMON DAY."

I.

It is all quite real, but I thank God that I have so much hard work to do as to have too little time to think about the full misery of my new life. I have not a moment alone, and except in the night, when the young ones are sleeping round me, I do not even have silence. I shall never forget my entrance into the school-room. I was introduced to the assistant teacher, who received me with a formal bow, and immediately assigned me my place. The hour for recreation followed shortly, when I was introduced to the young ladies who should form my class. They all hung back, and so did I, for I did not know how to speak to them; my duties are numerous and continual, but they are lightened by a degree of interest I feel in some of the young

girls. Poor little Virginie! I cannot think how any one can be so unkind as to treat a little child as they treat you. The child has already begun to cling to me, and it is pleasant to feel one's-self loved by any one. Her mother is a Swiss, a person of humble rank, and her father is dead. Another half-boarder told me that she is kept on at the school since her father's death, in expectation that some relations will come forward to assist in her education;—and in the mean time the mother is well contented to leave her as long as any one will look after her. Poor little thing! Her position is no fault of hers, and that it should bring so much misery upon her seems very hard. I am glad she has taken a fancy to me, for I may help her sometimes in her little difficulties.

II.

A letter from Edith. How glad I am that all is going on so well. Mildred is most energetic in using her influence among all her acquaintance, to get the necessary support for the new sisterhood. Our plans have been submitted to the Bishop. How strange it seems! Mildred has managed to interest

a sufficient number of her friends to form a committee (chiefly clergymen),—and these are giving grave consideration to the sketch, altering parts, and "suggesting possibilities in the place of impossibilities," as Edith says. They are going to take a house to begin with, near London, and manage as well as they can until their funds have sufficiently accumulated for building. I shall lay by as soon as I can earn sufficient; it will be an object to work for, and that will be pleasant. I don't know what I should do, if it were not for Edith and her scheme, for every thing here is depressing and chilling, and *such* a church! I am tempted to despair sometimes when I go into it. Next Sunday a missionary sermon is to be preached. I wish they would not have one so soon, for I shall not care for it here; but perhaps I may hear something about New Zealand, or perhaps—but that is forbidden ground.

III.

The missionary sermon was as beautiful as I could wish. How could it be otherwise when Mr. Trent preached it! I don't know what has come

over me,—something very foolish. Mr. Trent passed us as we were leaving the church, and when his eye fell on me I bowed, and he returned the bow so slightly and distantly, as if he did not know me. Of course it was natural, he *was* almost a stranger, and why should he act differently? I don't know, only I had thought so much of the comfort which our conversation that evening had afforded me, that I believe I had forgotten we were not intimate friends. Then perhaps it *might* be,—only I hardly think it *could*,—it could not surely make any difference with *him*, my position here. Yet it *does* make a difference, I know,—I wonder why;—it seems very hard!

IV.

How much more I have than I deserve! It is indeed a blessed thing to feel one's-self in the immediate care of God. He seems to send us what we want whenever we are most in need. All through this terrible illness, I have had such kind attention from all who have waited upon me. Dr. Horton, so kind-hearted and tender, so constant and attentive, and *he* was quite a stranger!—There was no reason for him to be so particularly kind to me.

And then the servants, they have never seemed to think it a trouble to sit up all night, or to do anything and everything, necessary and unnecessary, for me. And dear little Virginie! every moment that she dared run away from play, she has sat by my bed-side trying to amuse me in her little way, or when I was too ill, merely watching me. The girls in my room too seem to take care not to make any unnecessary noise now that I am moved back again; and enquire so affectionately when they come in on tip-toe to see me. Six months ago I should have thought all this impossible, but I am sure I have been remembered by Him, who when He gave the Cross, devised also this way of lightening it.

V.

I have had a great deal of time for thinking, time too to recollect myself, and have discovered the source of a great deal of my unhappiness and loneliness. I think perhaps after all it is in myself. It is the want of complete resignation. We are not meant to be happy here; if we were we should be in a dangerous state, for happiness to be real can

only belong to beings who are free from sin, and therefore earthly happiness must be a delusive thing when it lulls us into a false position; for while we remember what and where we are, as the "Christian Year" says:—

"A sinner in a life of care,"

how can we expect sunshine and flowers and music in our path. It is only the goodness of God which allows us to have these things while we are young, for if He gave them to us all our lives, how could we ever be prepared for Heaven! So when we cling too fondly to these, He in mercy takes them away, that we may learn to lean on Him and trust Him only; and in a manner feel what *is* that love which must be our all in life if we would have it to be our all in eternity. Oh what love it is when we see upon whom it has been bestowed! Who would not cling to it? Who would not trust it? Who would not long for it only, when weighed in the balance of time's fairest, brightest gifts? With it, we have all; without it, all else is less than nothing!

VI.

This is indeed charming to be sitting in Edith's room; I cannot do much yet, so she insisted upon my coming here. Next year, if I see her, it will be in the new house. They are all very busy about it, and Mildred is quite enthusiastic,—dear Mildred! I do not believe there is anything you cannot do.

It is very refreshing to be once more by the open window listening to the birds and to watch the sun glancing through the foliage. The sky looks more quiet and heavenly than ever, it seems to find a mirror within myself just now, so pleased, happy, and thankful, I feel for all. It was a kind thing of Dr. Horton to come all the way from town to see how I had borne the journey. He is a dear old man; not so old perhaps, as that his hair being sprinkled with grey, he appears old to *me;* his manner too is very kind, just like a father's! He is so good. He used to talk to me when I was ill of the love of God in sending us no more than He would help us to bear; and he told me to be patient and trustful. I wonder if he will come again!—but I must not hope for that, for he is busy, and it is a long way. His manner is very different

from Mr. Highgrave, and yet I don't believe he is a better man, (he is *quite* as good though). Mr. Highgrave came yesterday to see me, and I *know* he felt kind and meant to *be* so; but his very precise way of saying he was glad to see me, and all his enquiries, as if he had come prepared with them, made me just feel as chilly and nervous as I used to be formerly. It is very strange, but there are some people's characters which it seems quite impossible to understand.

VII.

The plan for the sisters' house has just arrived. It will be a very pretty building when complete. I am glad they have had a view to the picturesque and pleasing as well as the solid and useful. There is to be room for sixty inmates, sisters and others. It is to be erected in the centre of a garden, with a small chapel attached. The house they have taken for the mean time is very near, and they will commence their labours by visiting in the district, and making the acquaintance of the upper as well as the lower classes, through the clergyman, and all other introductions they can get, believing that

in time, work of all sorts will fall into their hands, quite as fast as they can accomplish it. Edith is grown so steady, it is quite curious to see the effect that her thoughts have had upon her lively disposition. That can never entirely alter, for even in arranging the most serious things, her natural light-heartedness and joyousness will often peep out.

It is pleasant to hear them consult and arrange their plans, but I do not *now* feel as if it were at all my vocation to join them. Something seems to tell me my sphere is to be *in* the world; and I don't think I shrink from it so much as I used to do. It would certainly be rather dreary to go on for a long time at Clare House, but then perhaps it may not be, and I need not make up my mind that it will, just because I don't happen to see my way out of it. And if it is to be,—Oh dear! but it is not pleasant thinking about exactly, so I won't. Little Virginie will be gone I am afraid next term. It appears she has no relations in the world besides this poor mother, who toils night and day to support herself and three younger children. I have promised to see her before I return to Clare House. It is not far out of my way, but it will be strange going into London alone for the first time.

VIII.

All things pleasant soon come to an end; and so this pleasant happy dream must end too. Dr. Horton *has* been to see me often; it is so very kind of him, and now he says I may return to Clare House without danger of being the worse for it; only he reminds me that I must bear things cheerfully, and be prepared to take my own part; just as if I could! I told him of my wish to go to Paddington to see Virginie's mother. He smiled very kindly, but told me it would not be proper for me to go alone, as I was not in the habit of visiting in London. He has promised to find her out and tell me all about her,—but that was not quite what I meant. I suppose I looked as if I thought so, for he added: "Don't be afraid my dear young lady, I will say and do what I can to be of use, and will tell her it was your wish." I felt very grateful and thanked him in my heart, though I could not say how much. I was watching the leaves fall from the trees, and thinking how soon they would all be gone, and leave the poor trees bleak and bare; and he was watching them too I thought, when he suddenly

said, "Do you suppose you could drive out sometimes if I were to consider it good for you?"

I did not know, I could not tell, I thought perhaps if *he* mentioned it less objection would be made, but I was not sure whether it would not be against the rule.

"Well, well," he replied, "we must see about that; I think with your cast of mind, incessant teaching in that school is bad for you."

I felt surprised, and asked how such a thing could have occurred to him.

"It is not the first time I have thought so," he replied, "and perhaps it does not signify why I have taken such an absurd idea into my head; but if *you* have no objection *yourself*, I will arrange that on every half-holiday my carriage shall call for you, and you can drive where you like and take a friend with you."

Oh how kind! too kind! What *was* it came over me? I cannot tell, only my eyes were swimming and I could not see. "Why should I object? if they would allow me—in short"

"In short it will do you good, and if I say it is indispensable, the old ladies after looking a little astonished will bow a cold consent, which is all we want; we may consider it arranged then, may we not?"

Yes, it is very kind of him, and I shall be able to take Virginie to see her mother sometimes,—if—that is, my little scheme can be managed, but that is quite another thing.

IX.

Virginie's story is all too true. Her poor mother lives in an attic in a crowded part of London, where she toils very hard at needlework for her children. Miss Torrington will keep Virginie no longer, as she finds she has no friends. Now it comes to the point. I wish Miss Torrington's manner were less freezing, and then I could speak; as it is, I must write a note. I wish I could have asked Dr. Horton's advice, but though he has often sent the carriage for me, with his old housekeeper to take care of us, I have never seen *him* again. What shall I say? Let me see. Must I begin, "Dear Madam?" No! that will be too familiar. It must only be "Madam," and I suppose I must sign myself, "Yours respectfully!" It is not easy, but I will do my best, and then it will be off my mind,—but if she should refuse! I don't think she *can*. Virginie's mother says that if she could return to

Switzerland, she can get her three little ones educated in the village where she was born, and might work for them there. Only Virginie, having been at a good school, is unfitted to go back to her mother's station. Poor child! But you have a heavenly Father, my darling, who will not let you be friendless!

X.

Miss Torrington has answered my note, saying she will consider my proposal, but she is afraid she will not be able to comply, as my services are not nearly worth as yet the charge of a child of Virginie's age.—If she declines, I am sure it is not impossible for me to earn sufficient to support the child, and as I think I have learnt a little the way to teach, and find I get on much better than I ever anticipated, I shall feel less afraid of undertaking private pupils. Of course I shall ask Dr. Horton before I do any thing, for I am sure he is my best adviser at present. I will leave a note for him, I think, with the housekeeper, next time she drives with us, just to ask whether I could not earn enough to support and educate the

child, and if I can, whether he would put me in the way of doing it. How different it is writing to *him* from Miss Torrington.—I wish my heart would keep quiet, it beats so *very* fast, sometimes!

XI.

I received a chatty letter from Mrs. Highgrave yesterday. It was very kind of her to think I should like to hear all the village news. She tells me that Miss Vyvian has at length quitted the neighbourhood, but it was not until she had left nothing untried in order to shake Mildred's resolution: and Mrs. Highgrave adds; "But my dear Ada, the fact is, between ourselves, she had her private reasons *I believe* for wishing it so much. Her brother has but narrow means, and she has no more. He is extremely kind and liberal to her I understand, and helps her to be what we *must* call, under such circumstances, extravagant. She had in view, I make no doubt, the acquisition of Mildred's handsome fortune, and the loss of her as a sister-in-law is not half the disappointment that the loss of her sister-in-law's purse has been. Mildred's attachment to her to the last seems to

have been quite an infatuation.—I don't suppose these considerations had any thing to do with Vyvian's regard for Mildred. He, I understand, is deeply grieved about the whole affair,—and has at least behaved conscientiously, in telling her the truth, although he did not anticipate her subsequent firmness. He is now, I hear, diligently promoting a scheme for the diffusion of rational and experimental religion in London, and proposes to form a missionary band, to travel into every corner of the United Kingdom, with the view of driving away the accumulated masses of ignorance and superstition, and planting the standard of universal truth in every hill and valley. Poor deluded young man!"

Yes indeed, this is a strange scheme; I wonder whether he will find many supporters; but I suppose this is, in fact, the way that sects spring up. Dear Mildred! you have had a happy escape.

XII.

They have moved into their house. May the blessing of God go with you, my dear *dear* friends; and may many many hearts owe consolation and

comfort to you. Sisters of St. Barnabas! Sisters of Consolation! I think I see you now, gliding through the world, holding out a helping hand to the weary, the faint, and the sorrowful. Go on! and may the love of Him whose children you are, and who did not disdain to call you friends,—may His love strengthen and settle you in your work of love; and may it help me, in my lesser office of ministering to one little lamb, forsaken in the wilderness, but watched over by Him, and by Him consigned to me. Oh may I prove not neglectful of my trust, or wholly unworthy of the task of love; and may it be blessed in, and to me, for His own dear sake!

XIII.

What can he mean?—He writes in answer to my letter, that he will come and give me his best advice—but that he wishes to make a little proposal first which would supersede the difficulty I anticipate if I will agree to it. He will come at half-past three to-morrow, and he says that under any circumstances, my wishes with regard to Virginie will be attainable. Well—that is the chief point. I wonder what scheme he *can* have. How

good it is of him to think it over so very carefully. Of course I shall agree to his plan, for it must be good;—at least it is certain he knows more than I do, and could only propose something which it would be right to do: I wish to-morrow were come!

XIV.

Am I dreaming, or is it really true? What made me say yes?—was it right—am I fit for it?—Oh my heart!—do not beat so violently! I *have* said it and I cannot change—but why should I! I do not *wish* to change! No—but is it right? Can I be *sure* it is right? I never thought he loved me, and I hardly knew how much I loved him till now. I don't know how he began, but I remember he said "Dear Ada!" and something about his being rather too old, but that he loved me dearly, and would try and make me happy, and that I should take care of Virginie if I liked. I could not answer, for every thing swam before my eyes, and when I came to myself he was bending over me with such a deep deep look of love. He waited a long time till he saw I was quite restored,

and then he said in a low earnest voice,—"Will you have me, Ada?—Do you think you can love me?"

I could not speak, but I put my hand in his.

"Dearest Ada," he said, "you will be the sunshine which I have waited for all these long years!" And he kissed my forehead and left me.

It does not—*cannot* seem real. I feel so happy! and yet I am not quite sure even of that.

XV.

The wedding-day is fixed, and Mildred and Edith are to be my bridesmaids.—We shall have a happy party, for my aunt has written a very kind letter to say she cannot think of my being married from the parsonage.—So Edith and Mildred are to stay there instead, as Edith's uncle has left the neighbourhood. All our little scholars are to be dressed in white, with wreaths and flowers; that is Edith's arrangement, and there is to be a school feast, which Mildred presides over. She says, she means every one of her old pets to have a comfortable dinner on that day.—My dear, dear friend! How strange it will feel, that the place which has seen all my reverses, should at last be brightened by the happiest of my days!

XVI.

Once more I am standing at the little casement window.—How all is changed since the last time! Then the moon looked cold and dreary, and hid her face from the sight of parting and suffering. Now—she looks so glad and bright, though calm and thoughtful, and her silver messengers play round me like loving blessed friends. Now, as then, it is a farewell which hangs on my lips,—a farewell, a long farewell to all that links me to what has been. Oh Papa! Mama! Ella! Rose! For you the links of time itself are broken, and can you look down from your sphere of rest and still share my sorrow and my joy? Future lies yet before me. —Unknown—unrevealed, pure as yet and bright! and to-morrow brings it. To-morrow!—Guardians of my childhood, first, fondest loved! bless your own Ada! and whilst day by day she gathers flowers on life's highway, help her to wreath them in garlands which may bloom for ever in the paradise of God!