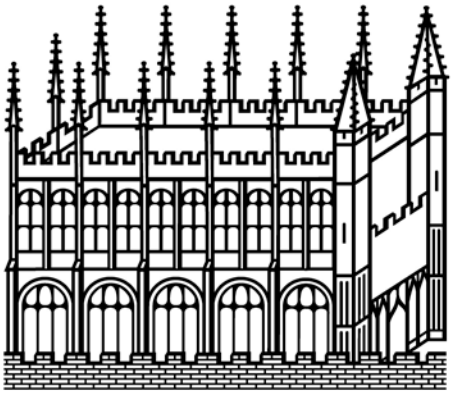
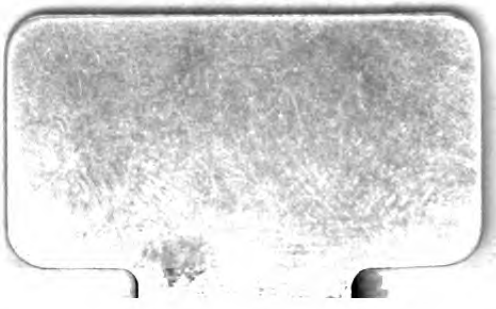



ADVENTURES OF KWEI



KWEI AND THE SAILOR ON HER WAY TO ENGLAND.

[*Page* 45.

LONDON:
GRIFFITH & FARRAN,
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

ADVENTURES OF KWEI,

THE CHINESE GIRL.

BY

MYRA,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE LIZETTE," "LOUIS MICHAUD," ETC.

". . . . It is better far,
To rule by love than fear."

With Illustrations.

London:
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CONTENTS.

The Adventures of Kwei.

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CHAPTER I.

ALL ALONE.

THE round yellow moon went up into the summer sky, looking very calm and cold, and supremely indifferent to all that was going on down here; yet one poor forlorn child turned to her an imploring glance, for she could find no one on this earth to help her. The moon looked down upon many sad sights that night, but on nothing sadder than that little Chinese girl, who was sitting all alone at the end of a miserable old junk, sobbing as though her heart would break.

But the moon had no comfort or beauty for poor Kwei. She could only think how miserable she was. There was a group of women huddled up at the end of the boat, chattering and laugh-

ing together. Now and then one of them would turn round to little Kwei, and in a rough voice tell her to be quiet; but the only notice the child took of their commands was to give a howl, and then begin crying again louder than ever.

There were numbers of boats crowded together on the river; for in China many of the poor have no other house. The people were busy over all sorts of occupations; it was a hot night, and very few had gone to sleep. Some were preparing the evening meal; some of the women were combing out their hair with long skewers, a very favourite employment; and here and there a man was to be seen rowing about in a very small boat, trying to dispose of a few lean cats.

On the shores glimmered thousands of lights. In one place a long procession was winding its way in honour of the full moon: it consisted of men carrying enormous lanterns made in all sorts of extraordinary shapes—of serpents, or dragons, or any other imaginary animal, and accompanied by very unmelodious music. But Kwei paid little heed to all the noise, and life, and fun. She was alone in the crowd—alone in the world—and her little heart was full of bitterness.

Kwei's father had a great many wives, but

Kwei's mother, Yue, was his favourite, and he wished her to be a lady, so all the others had to wait on her and be her servants. Yue lived in a house on the land, but the other wives had generally to stay in the old boat. Yue had such small feet that she could not walk, but only hobble along a very little way; so she could not be of much use, but she did not mind that, for it was the great sign of a *lady* to have small feet.

The other wives had large feet, and could run about, and fetch and carry; so they were all very jealous of Yue, though they were afraid to let Fang, their husband, see it, or he would have beaten them. But at last Yue caught a fever and died; and from that day her little daughter Kwei's sorrows began.

While her mother was alive Kwei had been petted and made much of. Her little feet had been bound up very tight that they might never grow any larger; for Yue intended her little girl to be a lady too, and marry a rich man when she grew up, and be his first wife.

When Yue died all Fang's other wives were very glad, but they soon began to quarrel about who should take her place. They need not have troubled, for Fang settled the matter himself, without consulting them.

It was not a very bright prospect for little Kwei. She was soon stripped of her fine clothes, and had instead one rough cloth skirt given her. Her feet were unbound, and she was turned into the boat and made to wait upon the rest of the family; and a hard enough time she had of it—slapped by one, pushed by another, and scolded by all. There was never a kind word spoken to her now, for all the pent-up jealousy about her mother was vented on Kwei's defenceless little head, and her father had so many children that he hardly seemed to remember her existence.

On this particular night he was enjoying himself on shore, and Kwei had been severely beaten, and turned out of the family circle in disgrace; and there she sat sobbing and crying and thinking of her poor mother, who had always been kind and loving to her.

The women were sitting together, eating their supper and discussing what they should do with the orphan child.

"Throw her overboard," suggested one. "She would never be missed."

But the rest objected to this plan; they thought they might either use her, or get something or her.

In the midst of the argument Fang rowed up in a little boat, and all his wives began to clamour at once, and to tell him what a tiresome naughty little wretch Kwei was.

He was in no very good humour himself that night, so he went to the child and gave her three or four sharp blows on the back of her head.

At that she set up a regular shriek or howl. This infuriated her father so that he struck her again, and she of course shrieked louder than before.

The noise attracted the notice of some people in an English merchant-ship near, and a man called out from the side to know what was the matter. Then all the women began talking at once; but as the man understood very little Chinese, all he could make out was that they wished to get rid of some obnoxious child.

Fang rowed off in his little boat. He had punished the girl, and that was enough for him; the women must settle the rest of the affair as they liked, he did not care how.

Now the man on the ship was a Dutchman, and it happened that that very day his wife had been saying she wanted a servant to wait on her, so the thought came into his head that this was

a good opportunity of getting a girl cheap, instead of having to hire one for wages. He asked the women if they were willing to part with the child.

"O yes," they shouted.

He offered them a sum equal to about five shillings * for her, with which they were quite contented; so without more ado they pulled their boat up close to the ship's side, and the Dutchman threw out a rope, which was tied round Kwei's body, and she was hauled up into the great ship.

The man chuckled to himself when he saw her, and thought he had made a very good bargain, for she looked a strong healthy girl of about twelve or thirteen.

He threw her a rug, and made her understand that she was to wrap herself up in it and go to sleep. As she was quite tired out by this time, she was not long in obeying his orders.

* A fact.

CHAPTER II.

SOLD INTO BONDAGE.

KWEI woke early the next morning. She started up in a fright, quite bewildered to find herself in such a strange place, and among such odd-looking people, for the sailors were men of all countries. They were busy, running about, and shouting in their different languages, for the *Seagull* was to sail that day.

For some time Kwei lay curled up in her corner, half frightened and half amused, and watching all the strange men, who were much too eager about their work to notice the little stranger.

Presently she was startled by a rough kick, and looking up she saw the man who had bought her the night before.

He spoke in a loud angry voice; she could not understand a word he said, but she saw

that he wished her to follow him. So she stood up and yawned, and then walked, or rather hobbled slowly after him, for she had not yet learned to use her feet easily, and it always hurt her to walk. The man led the way downstairs, and into a little close cabin, where a woman was lying, half dressed, in a berth. He said a few words to her, and went away.

This woman was Mrs. Vanstrump, the Dutchman's wife; she was English. Constant worry had made her sour and ill-tempered. She could speak a little Chinese, and soon made Kwei understand that she was to help her dress, and brush her hair. The child was awkward enough at first, but at last completed her task. Then her mistress leaned on her shoulder as she walked up the narrow stairs and went on deck. There they had some breakfast, of which Kwei was glad enough, for it was many hours since she had tasted food. After this she had to go down into the cabin and make it tidy, which she did after a fashion. But her mistress was not very particular in her ideas herself; and though she did scold a good deal, it was only wasting breath: Kwei did not understand a

word she said. The child was not stupid, but she felt very much bewildered, and hardly knew what she was about, so she made a good many blunders. Sometimes her master laughed at them, and sometimes swore, and gave her a blow, at which Kwei always screamed, and then some of the men cried shame; but Vanstrump was a brutal man, and did not heed them.

In a few hours the ship set sail; and, as there was a capital breeze, she flew along at a fine rate, and soon Kwei's home was far out of sight. The little girl quite enjoyed the quick motion, and the bounding of the ship over the waves, when they reached the open sea. But with Mrs. Vanstrump it was very different. No sooner did they leave calm water than she began to feel very ill, and her husband was soon obliged to carry her down into the cabin, and put her into her berth, and there she lay for many days, too ill to do anything but moan and groan.

Vanstrump was ship-steward, so he was too busy to look after little Kwei, and she was left to do pretty much as she liked. After she had waited on her mistress, she used to wander about the ship, and many of the sailors took

notice of her; for though they were a rough lot of men, they were generally kind-hearted. Some of them were Chinese, and were quite glad to have little Kwei to make a pet of, and she was equally glad to have some one to talk to, though she soon began to pick up words of other languages. But there was one person on board who attracted Kwei more than all the others put together. At first she thought it must be some beautiful spirit, and not a human being at all, for she was so unlike any one that the poor heathen girl had ever seen before. This person was an English lady, named Mrs. Lovelace; she and her baby and maid were the only passengers in the ship. Soon after her marriage, Mrs. Lovelace had left England with her husband, who had a very good appointment in China, and there for a time they lived very happily. But soon sorrow came to try them. A beautiful little boy was born, only to live for one short year, and then be laid in the cold grave, leaving a bright, sad remembrance behind him, and a sore, sore spot in his mother's heart. Then a little girl came to comfort her; but after a time she, too, faded and pined away, and her fair little body was laid beside that of her angel brother. After this

second sorrow, poor Mrs. Lovelace became very ill herself, and then another baby-boy came: a fragile little creature, that seemed only likely to follow quickly his brother and sister to heaven.

As months went on the child grew weaker and weaker, and every one told Mrs. Lovelace her only chance of saving its life was to take it to England for a few years. At last, though very unwillingly, she made up her mind to do so. Her husband could not leave China at that time, so he had to stay behind, and watch the good ship *Seagull* spread her white wings, and carry away all that he loved best on earth. For the first few days of the voyage Mrs. Lovelace was almost too much taken up with her own sorrows to notice any one else. The captain was a friend of her husband's, and that was why she travelled in a merchant ship. He was a kind man, and did everything in his power to make her comfortable; but she felt very, very lonely as every day carried her farther away from her home; for wherever her husband was, that was home to her, and, indeed, they had a pleasant and beautiful house in their adopted country.

Kwei was very much struck by this fair

English lady. Every day she used to choose some little corner, and there curl herself up and watch her for hours at a time, as she sat on deck, playing with her baby, or working, or reading; but, most often, quite still, with her eyes fixed on the far distance, and very full of sorrow. Often those sad eyes filled with tears, which sometimes overflowed and fell unheeded down the pale cheeks; and then little Kwei's cheeks would get quite wet too, for she knew what sorrow was. In everything else this lady appeared as some strange, beautiful being, far removed from the poor Chinese girl in her ignorance and her dirt; a being to gaze at and admire, but one she could not at all understand; but their tears formed a link—one point in which the two were alike—and the heathen girl felt a desire to comfort the Christian lady, as her own mother had comforted her in the days that were for ever gone, and were beginning to grow faint in the poor uncultivated memory.

One day Mrs. Lovelace was in her usual seat, under a little awning that some of the sailors had constructed for her. Mrs. Vanstrump was asleep in her berth, so Kwei was at liberty to do as she liked. She took up her favourite position on a coil of ropes, from which she had a good

view of her lady. For some time, Mrs. Lovelace sat reading; but presently she let her book fall into her lap, and her eyes took their sad dreamy expression, and soon the tears began to fall—thicker and faster than usual this day.

Poor little Kwei could stand it no longer. She forgot her own grievances that had been troubling her so much all the morning, for Vanstrump had given her some blows on her back which hurt her very much, and left great red marks that felt very sore; and Kwei had got into a passion, and struck him in the face; and then he had kicked her, and told her, with an oath, to go about her business; and the child had cried and roared till a sailor took compassion on her and sang her a funny song, and gave her his pipe to smoke, as the best consolation he could offer. She had learned to be very fond of smoking, so she ran off with the pipe quite delighted, and coiled herself up on her ropes, and puffed away with all her might, though she could not quite stop her sobs till she saw the English lady's tears. Then she rose from her seat, and crept round to the lady's side, and stared right into her face with a look of amazement, and pulled at her pipe more vigorously than ever. Presently she stretched out her hand

and touched the white cheek, for she did not yet feel quite sure that this was a human being, and not a god or a spirit. And when she saw how dirty and yellow her own hands looked against the fair skin of the English woman, she doubted more than ever. The lady started when she was touched, and said, "What is it?"

Kwei had often longed to be sure whether the lady could speak or not, for she had never before dared to come within sound of her voice; and now that she did hear that soft tone, she shrank back abashed with a strange new sense of humiliation. The lady lifted her large eyes, and looked at the queer little figure beside her. She had never noticed the child before, and felt puzzled.

"What do you want, my dear?" she asked, in a kind tone.

But Kwei only hung her head.

Then the lady repeated her question in Chinese.

At last, Kwei took her pipe out of her mouth, and said,—

"Don't cry. Why do you cry, beautiful creature?"

Mrs. Lovelace had lived long enough in China

to understand a good deal of the language, for she had tried to be a friend to the servants and people around her. She was touched by the poor girl's sympathy, and by the kind look in her ugly little face, so she took her hand, and said,—

"Thank you, my dear; I have many things to make me sorry that I cannot tell you. But I think you, too, have been crying; will you tell me why?"

After a few questions, the girl told her little history; and the lady soon became quite interested in her. It was the first time she had felt interested in anything since she had left China; so little Kwei had accomplished her desire,—she had done a good deal towards comforting the lady, and she had also gained a friend for herself; for when she bared her shoulders, and showed the great sores and bruises there, Mrs. Lovelace determined to stop such cruelty, if it were in her power, and began to think she must have been very selfish not to have found out this forlorn child before. She had a long talk with her, and found that she was almost as ignorant as it was possible to be.

They were interrupted by Vanstrump, who came along shouting for Kwei, the "lazy good-

for-nothing." When he saw who she was talking to, he looked rather ashamed, and desired her, in almost a civil tone, to go to her mistress, who was awake. Kwei ran off with a frightened look, and Vanstrump was going too; but Mrs. Lovelace called him back. She knew him very well by sight, and knew that he could speak English. He touched his cap, and asked her pleasure.

"I wish to speak to you about that poor little girl," she said. "Is she your servant?"

"Yes, she is," replied Vanstrump, in a surly tone; "I bought her, and paid a good price for her."

"But that does not give you the right of treating her with cruelty."

"If she say I am cruel, she lie. I treat her too well. She is a lazy, ill-tempered brat."

"But she has shown me the proofs of your cruelty,—great scars on her arms and shoulders."

"If you like to believe her first, you are welcome," replied the man. "I tell you she had those marks before she came to me."

"I shall most certainly speak to the captain if I find you ill-treating her again. It is shameful."

"I advise you, madam, to mind your own business," said Vanstrump, as he turned on his heels with a scowl. He was very angry at being interfered with, and swore to himself that Kwei should suffer for it; but as he felt that Mrs. Lovelace was watching him, he waited for another opportunity to take his revenge.

CHAPTER III.

KWEI FINDS A FRIEND.

MRS. LOVELACE could not help thinking a good deal about poor Kwei. Somehow the child attracted her, and reminded her of her dear home in China; it made her feel almost as though she was there again to see the funny little figure with her yellow skin and her long slits of eyes.

The next morning, as soon as Mrs. Lovelace went on deck, she looked about for the girl, but Kwei was nowhere to be seen. Late in the day she saw the little yellow face peering at her from between the sails; but directly Mrs. Lovelace recognised her, she ran away.

The next day it was the same; and it became evident to Mrs. Lovelace that the child avoided her.

The fact was that Vanstrump was so indignant that any one should interfere between him and his own property, as he considered Kwei,

that he had given her a sound beating, and dared her at her peril to speak to the English lady again. So poor Kwei was frightened out of her wits if Mrs. Lovelace did but look at her.

A few days after this Kwei was leaning over the side of the ship, watching the waves leaping and dancing in the sunlight, when she felt a hand on her shoulder. She started with fright, for she thought it was her master; but it proved to be the English lady.

"I have not seen you for many days. Where have you been hiding yourself?" she said. But to her surprise, Kwei only looked terribly alarmed at the sound of her voice, and ran away as fast as she could.

Mrs. Lovelace felt puzzled at this strange conduct, for she intended her manner to be kind to the child, and really meant to befriend her.

Later in the day she saw her again at a distance, evidently watching her. Mrs. Lovelace beckoned to her; but the child shook her head, and pointed towards her master, who was standing near. Just then Vanstrump looked up, and, not knowing that Mrs. Lovelace could see him, he gave Kwei a blow across the face with the end of a rope he held in his hand. For a

moment the child seemed frightened; but the feeling that she had a friend near gave her courage. She turned upon the man with eyes glaring like a young tigress, and, springing upon him with a great cry, she scratched his face till the blood came. He was so unprepared for this attack, that he lost his balance; at that moment the ship gave a great lurch, and he fell sprawling upon deck. Some of the men standing by gave a cheer, and called out, "Bravo, little one!" for no one liked the Dutchman. In an instant he scrambled on to his legs again, and tried to catch Kwei by the skirt; but she was too quick for him, and ran straight to Mrs. Lovelace and hid behind her. By this time Vanstrump was in such a rage that he did not care who was looking at him: he rushed after Kwei, and seized her by the arm, and before any one could stop him, gave her some tremendous blows with his fist, and then flung her upon deck almost insensible. He was about to give her a final kick, when he was stopped by the Englishwoman, who put herself before the child and desired him to desist. By this time, Kwei's screams had attracted quite a little crowd of sailors, and several of them fell upon Vanstrump and held him back; for he was so

mad with rage, that he seemed ready to kill Kwei. In the midst of the confusion the captain himself came up to inquire what was the matter. For some minutes the babel of voices was so great that he could understand nothing but that Vanstrump was the offender. So he commanded the men to be silent while Mrs. Lovelace gave her version of the story. In a few words she told him what had passed, and how she herself had witnessed Vanstrump's cruelty to the Chinese girl; and the men all corroborated her statement.

The captain was extremely indignant, and declared that he would not suffer such conduct on board his ship. Indeed he said that if any man should behave in such a way again, he would have him put in irons for the rest of the voyage.

The Dutchman insisted that he had only done what was right; the girl had been impudent to him, and he had punished her for it, that was all. But every one's voice was against him, and he knew that the captain's word was law, so he went off looking rather crest-fallen and muttering to himself.

But Kwei knew nothing of what passed ,for all this time she lay half unconscious on the

deck. As soon as the discussion was ended, Mrs. Lovelace went to find her maid, and together, they supported the child to their cabin, and there bathed her face and head, and gave her some tea, and then left her in a berth to rest and recover herself. After a long sleep, Kwei got up and seemed much better, though her head and arms still ached very much. Mrs. Lovelace made her sleep that night in her own cabin, and treated her with such tenderness as she had not met with since her mother died ; and the poor girl began to think that she had indeed fallen into the hands of some good spirit. But her troubles were not yet over, for she had to go back to her mistress the next day, and be greeted with harsh looks and rough words. Poor Mrs. Vanstrump was not a happy wife ; whenever her noble lord and master was put out in any way, *she* had to suffer for it. So it is easy to imagine that she had not passed a very pleasant time since the affair of the day before. Kwei, whom she looked upon as the cause of her husband's ill temper, was the only person on whom she could vent her feelings. So between the two the poor child had enough to bear. But her feelings were not very sensitive, and by this time she had become somewhat hardened. She

did her work in a sullen dogged way, shirking all she could when her mistress's eye was not on her. As long as she was not beaten she did not mind; hard words did not hurt her body, and that was all she troubled herself about now.

But Kwei had her pleasures as well as her hardships. She was very fond of running about with the sailors; and another thing she liked very much was to lean over the side of the ship, and feel how they were tossed about upon the sea, and watch the great waves rise and fall in the sunlight, and the sea-birds following the ship; and at night she could see a lovely bright kind of fire all round the ship, which was caused by myriads of insects, each bearing its own little light, which added to the general brightness. Mrs. Lovelace, too, was very fond of watching all this beautiful nature around her, and she would often come and lean beside Kwei and speak a few kind words to her, and try to tell her of the great God above, who made this lovely world and cares for every creature in it.

Kwei liked to hear the lady talk, the sound of her voice was so pleasant; but she took in very little of the meaning of the words. Her only idea of a god was some hideous idol, who

was worshipped now and then in a strange wild manner; or some mysterious person called the Emperor, whom she had heard spoken of as being divine, and the greatest being in the universe; but her notions about him were very vague. The moon, too, she looked up to with great reverence, for the feasts of the new moon had been her great treats when she was a little girl and lived with her mother; and somehow, in her own mind, she always connected the kind English lady with the moon, for she was sitting bathed in the moonlight when Kwei first saw her, and the girl had a half-fancy that it was a beautiful spirit come down from the goddess of night. But of a real God of love, who made her and cared for her, and was ever near her, Kwei had not the faintest conception: that was a notion she could not grasp at all as yet. Yet somehow, after she had been listening to Mrs. Lovelace, she generally felt more gentle and contented, though at the very next provocation all her evil passions rose up as strongly as ever.

CHAPTER IV.

A PIPE OF DISCORD.

THE *Seagull* flew on and on across the trackless waters, and as the weeks passed by little Kwei became more reconciled to her life. Now that Mrs. Vanstrump had got over her sea-sickness, and was strong again, and able to go about, she was not half so cross and irritable. She was a woman who could not bear to be dependent on others, for she was very active, and liked to be always bustling about and doing something. She soon taught Kwei to clean out the cabin properly, and to do many other useful things. The child could learn fast enough if she chose, and as long as she did her work well her mistress was not unkind; but Kwei was very much inclined to be idle, and this brought her many a scolding or a good hard slap.

Vanstrump, like most cruel people, was a

coward; and he had not given Kwei much more brutal treatment for the simple reason that he was afraid to do so, for he remembered the captain's threat to put him in irons if he were found illtreating her again. He had conceived quite a hatred of the child for having brought him into such ill repute with his captain, so he kept out of her way as much as possible, for he often found it difficult to keep his hands off her, and never lost an opportunity of giving her a sly kick or blow, sometimes pretending that it was done by accident; but Kwei knew better. She was terribly frightened of her tormentor; the very sound of his voice would often make her tremble, and she generally tried to hide herself when she heard him coming; so as each one avoided the other they were very little together. One thing Kwei was beginning to learn quite fast, and that was to speak English; of course, as she was so young she could pick up a new language much quicker than Mrs. Vanstrump, who was rather stupid. So many of the sailors, too, were English, that she was soon able to say a good many sentences, and could understand a great deal of what was said to her. It was quite a favourite amusement with some of the sailors to teach her, and laugh at her funny

mistakes; and then one of the men would give her his pipe to smoke, which was a great treat to her. Kwei was so fond of smoking that she would run many an errand for the sake of getting a few puffs. Vanstrump did not like it; but he was afraid to interfere, for it gave great fun to the men to see her, and they always stood up for the girl when there was any dispute between her and her master.

One evening Kwei's work was all done, and she was sauntering about the deck in search of some amusement, when she espied a pipe tucked carefully into a little corner. She took it up and looked at it, and seeing that it was nicely filled with tobacco, she put it to her mouth; but as it was not lighted of course no smoke came out. A little way off she saw one of her chief friends, an old sailor called Bill, so she ran to him and showed him that she wanted a light.

He laughed and said, "So you have set up a clay of your own have you, old girl?"

"Yes, Bill," answered Kwei, quite proud of her English; but she did not at all understand what Bill had said.

"And now you want a light I suppose," he went on, as he struck a match, and held it to the tobacco.

He never noticed that a name was scratched on the side of the pipe, for he could not read.

Kwei went off quite delighted with her new treasure, and smoked away very peacefully till the tobacco was all gone. She shook the ashes out of the bowl, and tucked the pipe down the neck of her dress, for she did not wish to lose it, then she coiled herself up and went fast to sleep. She generally slept on the deck now, for there was no other place for her except just outside the mistress's cabin door, and it was much cooler and pleasanter up in the open air.

Kwei slept soundly all night, quite unconscious of the crime she had committed, and the trouble that was coming. Now, most unfortunately, it happened that the name scratched on the pipe she had found was that of Vanstrump. He had promised himself a nice quiet smoke, and had just filled his favourite pipe with some of his choicest tobacco, when the captain called him: he was afraid the tobacco would fall out if he put the pipe in his pocket, so he hid it carefully, as he thought, between a coil of rope and the ship's side. The captain kept him longer than he had expected, and it was quite half an hour before he returned to the spot, and stooped

down to pick up his pipe; but lo! it was gone. He searched all round about, but it was nowhere to be found.

"Some vun has been playing me a dirty trick," he said, getting quite angry, for it was almost his last morsel of that precious tobacco, and it was his only pipe. He asked all the men near, but no one could tell him anything about it; and then Vanstrump began to rage and swear, and to declare that some one had been robbing him, and he ran after an innocent cabin boy, and gave him such a box on his ears that the poor little fellow went away crying. Bill had gone off to the other end of the ship, so he heard nothing of all the fuss.

Vanstrump quite believed that some one had been playing him a trick, but no one took much notice of him, as they were quite accustomed to his rages by this time; so he went down to his wife, who had gone to bed, and abused her. A dreadful night she had of it, poor thing. Vanstrump was so accustomed to have a smoke the last thing at night that he could not sleep without it; and you may be sure that lying awake did not improve his temper. Towards morning he fell asleep, and then his wife got up and dressed herself, and went on deck, glad to

escape from her tyrant; but he followed her only too soon and gave her but little peace, and she in her turn worried and scolded Kwei, who was particularly careless that day. The fact was, she was continually running away into some corner to have a sly look at her treasure. She was afraid to let Mrs. Vanstrump see it for fear she should take it away.

In the afternoon Vanstrump made more inquiries about his lost pipe, but in vain; he was blustering along in a worse temper than ever when he stumbled agaidst Kwei.

"Out of my vay, brat; do you hear?" he cried, as he laid hold of her shoulders, and gave her a rough shake.

Something fell from beneath her dress with a sharp noise; he looked down to see what it was, and behold, his beloved pipe!

"So you are de tief," he exclaimed, with an oath, and he glared at the girl like a wild beast.

His first impulse was to knock her down and thrash her, but he remembered his last experience of that treatment, and for once prudence got the better of him.

Kwei felt terribly frightened, and began to tremble, for she saw in an instant how it was,

that it was her master's pipe she had taken, though she did not understand what he said.

"Vhere did you get dis?" he asked, holding her so fast by the arm that she cried out with the pain. "Hold dat noise, and answer me dis instant, or—"

Kwei understood this sentence, and after a moment's hesitation, she said, "Bill gave me."

"Bill! vot Bill? tell me," with a shake.

"There!" said Kwei, pointing to her friend, who was busy drawing in a sail.

"Oh, he gave you; did he?" muttered Vanstrump between his teeth. "Ven did he give it you?"

"Last night," said Kwei, who began to think she was not going to be punished at all; but she was mistaken.

"Vell, I settle him presently," said her master. "Now, you come dis vay," and he dragged the child down the stairs, and into his cabin; there he got a thick cord, and tied her hands firmly together behind her back, and then he pushed her along a passage, and into a little closet, where his wife kept her brushes and dusters and such things.

"Solitary confinement is de best punishment for tieves," said Vanstrump, as he shut the door

and locked it, and put the key in his pocket. Then he went to find Bill and settle him, as he called it.

Bill was a most good-natured man, and a great favourite with all his shipmates, for he was always ready to lend a helping hand to any one. He was quietly sitting on the top of a barrel spinning a yarn to two friends, when he suddenly felt himself seized by the collar and violently shaken. He looked up in astonishment, and saw the evil red face of Vanstrump glowering at him.

"What's up now?" asked Bill, with a laugh.

"You may well ask vat is up, you rascal; you laugh in my very face. Vare's my pipe, sir?—tell me dat."

"You ought to know best yourself, sir. I don't keep your pipes! I've enough to do to smoke my own."

"None of your impudence, fellow. Confess."

"Bless the man! I've nothing to confess," answered Bill, and he turned round to go on with his story.

"You dare insult me, sir! You know vell as dat you give my pipe, vid de amber mout-piece, to dat precious Chinese beggar; deny dat if you can!" shouted Vanstrump.

"Well, I do deny it, for I never did anything of the kind," replied Bill.

"You did—you did—you did!" roared the Dutchman. "Take dat," and he struck Bill in the face with his clenched fist.

Now Bill's blood was really up, for very few men would stand such an insult as that. He started to his feet, and doubled up his fists, and prepared for a fight.

"Come on and prove your words, man," he cried, as he dealt the Dutchman a good hard blow. In another instant the two were locked in each other's arms, in not at all a loving embrace, pummelling away like anything But suddenly Bill stopped, and, with a trick he had learned when a boy at school, he twisted one leg round Vanstrump, and threw him down on his back. Bill held him there for a minute, and looked at him. "I could thrash you well if I chose," he said; and so he could, for he was far the more powerful man of the two; "but I should despise to do it," he added in a low tone. "So let us be friends; there's my hand," and he held out his great honest palm.

Vanstrump struggled on to his legs, but he would not take the proffered hand, and slunk

off like a beaten dog with his tail between his legs. All the men round cheered Bill. He looked after his foe for a minute, with an almost sad expression on his jolly face. "Poor fellow!" he said. "I would not change places with him for a good deal! Why I do not believe he has a friend in the world."

It was true enough. The Dutchman was much to be pitied, for he made himself far more miserable than he did any one else; nothing is more wretched than feeling cross and ill-tempered, and hating every one, as this unhappy man did. He had so long indulged his evil passions that he did not now know what it was to have a loving or kind feeling in his heart.

Mrs. Vanstrump was tired and miserable. So she went to bed early that night, hoping to get some peace and quiet, and she never missed her little servant. Mrs. Lovelace was occupied with her baby, who was not well, so she never thought about the poor Chinese girl either; and no one but himself knew what her master had done with her. He emptied his pockets at night, and hung the key on its usual hook, and chuckled to himself, as he thought, that the girl would be well punished

at last, and no one else be any the wiser. He slept well enough; the thought of any one else's discomfort never disturbed *his* night's repose. The next morning he rose hastily, for he had a good deal to do, and he was very busy all day, and really never gave a thought to his little prisoner.

When Mrs. Vanstrump was dressed she shouted as usual, "Kwei, Kwei!" but, of course, no Kwei came. "The girl is up to some mischief, I'll be bound," she said, as she went to look for her. "Lazy brat! she's more trouble than she's worth, any day."

She went about everywhere, calling, "Kwei, Kwei," and asking if any one had seen her servant, as she liked to call her, but no one had done so. At last Mrs. Vanstrump made a virtue of necessity, and got her own breakfast, and then took her sewing and sat on deck under the shade of a sail, and soon she fell into a doze.

And how had it fared with Kwei all this time? When she found Vanstrump had really locked the door upon her, she began to kick and scream with all her might, and bang herself against the door, and make every unearthly noise she could think of; but it was all no use.

She only hurt and tired herself, and did no good at all. So then she squatted herself on the floor, and tried to loosen her hands; but the more she struggled to do so, the tighter became the knot, and the rough cord cut her wrists, and made them very sore; and then poor Kwei began to cry. She looked round to see if there was anything that would cut the cord, for by this time her eyes had grown accustomed to the gloom, and she could just manage to distinguish the different objects; but there was nothing but a few cloths and some old brushes and boots and shoes.

Then Kwei began to kick at the door again, and to try to shake it down; but at last she grew so tired of this, that she was obliged to leave off; and by this time, what little glimmer of light there had been, had faded away, and it was quite dark.

Poor Kwei was always afraid of being alone in the dark, and she began to cry and scream for some one to come to her. She would have even been glad to see her cruel master, much as she feared him. But no one heard her cries, though they grew piercing at last; and presently she sank on the floor quite exhausted, and lay there sobbing and moaning and trembling with

fear. She had screamed so long that she had made her throat sore. How she longed for one drop of water!—for she was faint with hunger and thirst. The darkness grew thicker and thicker—a dense blackness of darkness that might be felt.

Kwei was almost afraid to move, and it was so suffocatingly hot that she could hardly breathe, scarcely any air penetrated into that close little cabin, and the heat was intense, for they were nearing the tropics.

Kwei was accustomed to be almost always in the open air, and this closeness was terrible suffering to her. There she lay in the thick darkness, gasping for breath, and trembling at every sound, all night. The strange noises never ceased. Really they were caused by the straining of the ship, the flapping of the sails, and the men moving about at their work; but to Kwei they seemed awful and unnatural. Then she began to fancy that all sorts of strange forms loomed out of the darkness, frightful faces grinning at her, or some hideous old idol seemed to dance about before her. Then it was the face of the English lady, which, in a minute, would turn into Vanstrump's; she tried to shriek or to run away, but was quite

powerless. She could not even hide her eyes in her hands, for they were tied behind her. She could only roll over and bury her face on the floor. She was in this agony, her senses almost gone, when a sudden change came over her. Was it a ministering angel sent down in pity to lay a cool hand on her throbbing brow? At any rate, the vision changed. She felt as though she were taken up and lulled to rest in some gentle arms, and a loving face seemed to look down upon her, a face she knew too—she just remembered it was her mother's, when everything gradually passed away, and she became insensible. She was not asleep, but fear and exhaustion had ended in a torpor.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH SHOWS HOW EVIL SOMETIMES BRINGS GOOD.

MRS. VANSTRUMP sat still for many hours, sometimes doing a little work, but generally dozing. She now and then wondered what could have become of Kwei; but it was too hot for any exertion—it was quite a trouble even to speak. All the men who had nothing they were obliged to do were lying about on the deck, in any bit of shade they could find, fast asleep.

At last the intense heat began to decline, and a little fresh breeze sprang up, and then Mrs. Vanstrump opened her eyes and yawned. After sitting for a little while, lazily watching the birds that were flying round the ship, some of them resting on the tops of the sails, the thought struck her that she felt rather hungry. "I wonder where every one is gone to," she said to herself. "It's too much bother to hunt

up that lazy girl. I think I'll go and get a biscuit."

She accordingly roused herself a little more, and went down to her cabin, She looked for the biscuits, and found they were all gone; it was so stifling down there that she was going upstairs again, when she remembered that there was a tin of biscuits in the dust closet, as she called it. So she took the key from the hook, and went down the passage, and opened the door. She went straight in to reach the biscuits from a little shelf, when her foot caught in something, and down she fell over a heap lying on the floor.

"What in the world is this?" she said, as he scrambled on to her feet again.

At first she could not make out what it was, so she opened the door quite wide to let in more light; and then what did she see but her little maid Kwei, lying all huddled up, and apparently fast asleep.

"Come, wake up, girl," she said, as she gave her a shake. "This is a queer place to choose on such a hot day."

Then she remembered that the door had been locked on the outside, and that Kwei could not have chosen the place at all, but that some one

must have put her there. After a moment's consideration, she came to the conclusion that no one could have done it but Vanstrump himself, for no one else ever went to that closet.

In the meantime Kwei did not wake; so Mrs. Vanstrump gave her another shake, but without any effect: the eyes half opened, and then closed again. Then Mrs. Vanstrump tried to lift her; but it was no use, the child sank heavily on to the floor again, and showed no signs of life.

Mrs. Vanstrump felt perplexed. "Perhaps the heat has made her faint," she thought. So she fetched some water, and threw it in Kwei's face; but it had no effect. She was wondering what she had better do next, when she heard a heavy step on the stairs, and for once she was glad to recognise her husband.

"Do come here, Van!" she cried. "What ever have you been doing to this girl? I hope you have not killed her."

"Doing to her? Why I only gave her a little punishment for stealing my pipe; not half so much as she deserve. But you don't mean to say you have left her dere ever since? I tought you had more sense."

"It's all very fine to throw the blame upon

me; I had nothing in the world to do with it. But come and help me lift her out, and let us see whether you have really killed her or not."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the man, as he sulkily followed his wife, and helped her to lift up the girl and carry her into the cabin. "She's only shamming, dat is plain enough."

But they soon found that it was no shamming, for with all their efforts they could not make Kwei come to herself; and then they grew frightened.

"O Van, what shall we do! You have indeed brought trouble upon us. We must not let any one know, if we can help it," said Mrs. Vanstrump; and they both rubbed the poor girl's hands and feet, not too gently, and forced a little brandy between her lips. After a time she moved a little, and opened her eyes; and then they gave her some water, which she drank eagerly. But when she saw Vanstrump, she screamed, and hid her face, and then began to talk very fast and thick; but they could not make out a word she said. They tried to make her eat, but she turned away from the food with disgust, though she drank as much water as they would give her. Then they tried to make her walk; but she had no power even to stand,

and sank to the floor directly; so Mrs. Vanstrump lifted her on to the berth, and then they left her for a time, hoping that sleep might revive her. But when they returned to her, she was no better, and by the next morning it was evident that she was in a raging fever; and as the day went on, she got worse and worse. Now Vanstrump was very nervous about his health, and he began to think about infection. He would not go near the cabin all day, and would only speak to his wife at a distance, for she was obliged to attend to Kwei. Towards evening she told her husband that she must speak to the surgeon, for she was afraid the girl's life was in danger; and she was not going to take the responsibility of nursing her without advice. After a good deal of argument, Vanstrump consented. He was afraid it would be found out how the girl's illness had been brought on; but he thought he might keep that a secret, as even his wife did not know how long Kwei had been confined in the closet; and he reflected that if she died, he would get into far worse trouble; so at last he went himself to fetch the ship's surgeon.

The surgeon asked a few questions of Mrs. Vanstrump, and then had Kwei carried to an-

other part of the ship, and put into a large airy cabin, which he called the infirmary, which was reserved for sick poople. He pronounced it to be a case of bad brain fever, but not at all infectious; but he said he believed it must have been brought on by some shock or a great fright; and he looked hard at Vanstrump, who shuffled about and tried to appear quite unconscious, but he could not meet the surgeon's eye frankly.

For many days Kwei lay quite insensible, either raving or in a heavy stupor. She was unconscious of the change from the rough handling of Mrs. Vanstrump to the gentle nursing of Mrs. Lovelace, for the only three women on board, Mrs. Lovelace, her maid, and Mrs. Vanstrump, shared the nursing between them; Mrs. Lovelace, taking much the largest portion. She was really glad of something to interest her, and take her out of herself, and force her to forget her own troubles; and besides that, she felt a strange drawing to the forlorn little Chinese, and was anxious to do what she could for her. Poor Mrs. Vanstrump's good qualities came out now. She was sorry to see the girl suffer, so she did her very best in the sick room, though she made but a poor clumsy nurse.

For a long time Kwei hung between life and death ; but after many weary nights of watching she took a turn, and after a long sleep, her little slits of eyes opened with a sensible calm expression in them, instead of the wild terrified look they had had for so long. Even after this she required the greatest care, but in time she grew decidedly better, and was able to sit up in bed, and after a few days she was lifted into a chair and brought on deck, and from that day she improved rapidly.

The sailors were glad to see their little pet back again among them, especially old Bill, who could not help feeling as though he had had something to do with bringing on her illness, for he knew well enough that Vanstrump must have punished the girl very severely for taking his pipe. The old man spent all his spare moments beside the little invalid's chair, and contrived all sorts of funny amusements for her. He could crow like a cock, and bark like a dog, and in fact imitate almost any animal, and make Kwei laugh till the tears ran down her cheeks. Then he had an old fiddle, out of which he could scrape a few tunes, and that delighted Kwei more than anything ; to her it appeared the most lovely music.

Upon the whole Kwei quite enjoyed herself; she had never been made so much fuss over before, and she grew more fond of Mrs. Lovelace than ever. She was only upset when she heard the voice of Vanstrump, or happened to see him in the distance, for he never came near her. Then she would turn pale and tremble, and it often made her feel quite ill again, and she would beg to be taken back to her cabin, and shut in, that he might not be able to get to her.

Mrs. Lovelace saw this, and determined that the child should never be in that man's power again. So one day she spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Vanstrump, and said she would like to take Kwei as her own servant, if they would give her up. At first Vanstrump positively refused, but after a great deal of blustering he came round, on condition that he should be well paid.

"I bought her, clothes and all," he said, "and I should have no vage to pay her, so it is not likely I would part with her for notding; dat would be a dead loss. I'm not quite such a fool."

"I am willing to give you whatever you paid for her," said Mrs. Lovelace, who could hardly keep her patience to speak to the man, "though you know perfectly well that you cannot *buy* a

person, and that as soon as we reach England she will be free."

Vanstrump did know this, so he thought he might as well make a good bargain while he could, and get rid of a very troublesome piece of goods.

"Vell, I paid five pounds for de girl," he said.

But that was a lie.

"But of course I cannot let her go for dat. Reckoning food and all de expense and trouble she have been to me, I'll say ten. Dat will be about a fair profit on my money. Vhat do you say to ten, mum?"

"So let it be then," replied Mrs. Lovelace. "I will pay you ten pounds, and from this moment you will have no more right over Kwei."

Then she sent for the captain to come and witness the agreement, which was written out and signed by Vanstrump, who pocketed the ten pounds, and went away chuckling to himself, for he had not expected to get half so much, and he thought Mrs. Lovelace must be extremely soft to be so easily taken in. But she was quite pleased with her bargain; she had expected to have much more difficulty in rescuing Kwei from the clutches of the detestable Dutchman.

As Kwei grew stronger and stronger she lived in constant dread of having to go back to her hated master, but she had never told any one so. She could not speak English well enough. She was sitting back in the invalid chair which Mrs. Lovelace had lent her, enjoying the fresh evening air, and feeling very comfortable, when the English lady came up to her looking very glad.

"Do not you think, my dear, that you will soon be strong enough to go back to Mrs. Vanstrump, and begin your work again?" asked Mrs. Lovelace.

For a minute Kwei did not answer, then she burst into a loud cry, and said, "No, no, I cannot."

"Not just yet, perhaps; but soon, in a few days."

"No, never, never!" cried Kwei, and she sprang up, and ran towards the side of the ship, but before she reached it she stumbled and fell, for she was not really strong yet, and she was never very firm on her feet, they were so weakened by having been bound up for so many years. Mrs. Lovelace helped her to rise, and said,—

"Why Kwei, what are you doing, running away from me like that?"

"Into the sea, into the sea," cried Kwei, as she tried to go forward. "I cannot go to that man; he will lock me in a black place again. I will die first."

"Well, my dear, you will never have to go back to him again. You are not his servant any longer but mine, if you like to be."

Kwei stared at Mrs. Lovelace as though she did not take it in.

"Do you not understand me, Kwei. You may stay with me now as long as you like. You are not Vanstrump's servant any longer."

"And may I stay with you always—always?"

"Till we reach England at any rate, and then we will see."

"Oh always, always," said Kwei, and her eyes filled with happy tears as she nestled down by the side of Mrs. Lovelace, in a state of perfect contentment, like a little wandering bird who had found a nest at last.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD ENGLAND.

AT last the voyage was over, and many eager eyes beheld again the land they loved. The men gave a shout of joy when they first caught sight of the shores of England, for they had been three long months at sea. But Mrs. Lovelace felt no joy. It was to her more like a banishment than a coming home, for she had left her home and her husband far, far away in that distant land where her little ones were peacefully sleeping. But the voyage had done her and her baby a great deal of good; they were both twice as strong and well as when they left China.

They landed at the London Docks, and Mrs. Lovelace went straight to her father's house, where she knew they would be expecting her. Kwei was rather frightened at all the bustle and confusion, but she managed to say

good-bye to most of the sailors, especially her good friend Bill, who was in high glee because he was going home to "his old woman" and his children.

Mrs. Vanstrump came up very nervously just as they were leaving the ship, and wished Mrs. Lovelace good-bye. The lady shook hands with her, and wished her well, and then the poor woman stooped over Kwei, and gave her a kiss.

"Let us part friends, child," she said, and she slipped something into the child's hand as she hurried off, for her husband was shouting to her not to keep him waiting.

It made little difference to her, poor woman, whether she was on land or sea. Wherever she was her home always went with her in the shape of her husband. Kwei opened her hand to see what was in it, and found a bright silver coin: it was half a crown, almost the only piece of money the poor woman had.

Mr. Lumley, Mrs. Lovelace's father, lived in a house in one of the suburbs of London. It stood in a large garden, and as it was summer time, it looked very pretty.

Her father and mother and sister and brother were very glad to see Ellen Lovelace once more;

and they all crowded round her to welcome her, and then turned to admire the baby, and hand it from one to another till the little creature was frightened and began to cry, and had to be given back to the nurse.

"And what queer specimen of humanity have you there?" cried Percy, a young man of eighteen or twenty, as he caught sight of Kwei who had been hiding herself behind the nurse. "Come out, and let us have a look at you, young one."

"Why a real native Chinese, I declare! Why, Nell, what do you intend to do with her, are you going to set up a show? Admission two-pence, children half price?"

Kwei looked round her in a terrified way, and saw that she was being made fun of; so she ran to Mrs. Lovelace and clung to her skirts, and began to cry, or rather howl, as she had a habit of doing when anything annoyed her.

"Seems to have a good pair of Chinese lungs, too, though rather more powerful than melodious," continued Percy.

"Don't tease her, Percy dear, she is frightened," said Mrs. Lovelace, and then she said a few words to Kwei, and pacified her, and desired her to follow the nurse upstairs.

"And now explain the mystery, Nell," said Percy, as he led the way into the dining-room. "Is it a slave, or a convert, or what?"

So Mrs. Lovelace told them how she had got hold of Kwei. "I could do nothing less than take the child," she said. "If I had not done so she would have been left entirely to the tender mercies of that dreadful Dutchman. And it is frightful to think of what her fate might have been."

"I see you are just the same as ever, dear Ellen; always ready to do a kind action without thinking of the consequences," said Mrs. Lumley.

"Yes, old Nell always was a brick," cried Percy, "and always ready to get a fellow out of a scrape, I know;" and he gave her another hearty kiss. Percy had always been her pet before she was married.

"I'm sure I do my best for you, you ungrateful boy," said his sister Fanny.

"O yes, dear, you are not bad; but you are not quite equal to dear old Nell. Perhaps it is because I don't get into so many scrapes now."

"Well," he went on, "I do not know the feeling of the meeting; but I, for one, am dying

of hunger. The luncheon is ready, so I vote we set to." Accordingly they all sat down to table.

Her family soon found that their favourite, Ellen, was very much changed. They could hardly believe that she was the same as the bright, merry girl who left England five years before, so full of spirits, and always up to any fun. Now she was so quiet and grave, and her merriment was quite gone. She seemed and felt years older than her sister Fanny, though there were only two years difference between them.

"If that is getting married," thought Fanny to herself, "I think I had better keep out of it."

But though Ellen Lovelace was so much quieter, there was a gentleness and sweetness about her that she had not had before; and in a short time her sister began to wonder if, after all she was not improved.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW IMPRESSIONS.

THE first Sunday after her arrival in England, Kwei was taken with the family to church. She looked round at the beautiful building with wonder and curiosity; but she sat very still till the organ struck up, and the white robed choristers came in. She stood up with the rest of the congregation, quite trembling with excitement, and then threw herself upon her knees and almost bowed her head to the ground. She seemed quite enrapt during the whole of the prayers, looking delighted at the singing, and every now and then trying to join in with a few wild notes. She followed all the movements of those around her most exactly; sitting, standing, and kneeling, just as though she had been accustomed to the service all her life; only she did all with a rather extra show of devotion.

Walking home, Mrs. Lovelace said to her, "Well, Kwei, how do you like our church?"

"Oh, so much," answered the Chinese girl. "What a beautiful place it is! and what a great idol! his voice frightened me, I never heard an idol speak before."

Of course Kwei did not speak in such good English; but as it would be rather difficult to give her Chinese jargon, it is better to translate all she said into real English.

"Idol, my dear," replied Mrs. Lovelace; "I do not know what you mean. We have no idols in our churches; we worship the God in heaven."

"But I saw the idol," persisted Kwei. "The great big one, with such a beautiful loud voice, and when he spoke all the people stood up and sang to him, or else knelt down to him; and all the priests in white stood round him and worshipped him."

"Why she means the organ I do believe!" cried Percy. "Behold the founder of a new religion."

"Yes, she really must mean the organ," said Mrs. Lovelace. "Do you mean that large high thing that made the music, Kwei, my dear?"

"Yes," said Kwei, quite delighted that they

understood her at last. "Is not that your great God that you told me about? I am sure He must be a very great God, He has such a loud voice."

"No, child; that is only an instrument of music. We use it to help us to praise God with; it makes our singing more beautiful, that is all. It is only made of wood and iron, and such things; I will take you into the church to-morrow, and show it you quite close. You may touch it if you like."

But Kwei was not convinced. She told the nursemaid in the afternoon, that she was quite sure it must be an idol.

The next day Mrs. Lovelace took Kwei to the church, and led her right up to the organ, but the child could hardly be induced to come near. She trembled and looked quite frightened, and when Mrs. Lovelace went close up and touched it, she cried out, "Oh, don't. It will kill you! I am sure it will."

When she was a little less frightened Percy blew the bellows, and Mrs. Lovelace played a few tunes, at first very softly and gently. Gradually Kwei gained courage and drew nearer and nearer; and at last she stood by Mrs. Lovelace's side, listening to the music, but

trembling and ready to turn away whenever there were any loud notes, for she was not yet convinced that the great instrument had not some mysterious power about it.

After she had played for some time, Mrs. Lovelace led Kwei round the church. First she took her to the altar.

"This is where we worship our God," she said. "You see there is no image or idol here. The great God is in heaven, and we cannot see Him here. But He is always near us to take care of us. Look," she went on, pointing to the coloured window of the crucifixion, "That is the picture of God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus, dying for us. He was punished for our sins, for mine and yours; so I hope you will love Him very much, and try to be a good girl to please Him, for He loves you more than I can tell you."

Kwei looked at the window for some time, and then said,—

"I know all about it. Bill used to tell me when I was ill in the ship."

Then Mrs. Lovelace walked round the church and showed Kwei all the side windows, which represented the life of our Lord from His birth up.

Kwei was very much interested, and asked many questions.

On one window He was a little child reading at His mother's knee.

"There He is reading a book, like you do. I should like to read too. May I?" said Kwei.

"Yes, my dear. I will teach you to read, and you shall read the very book that Jesus used to read when He was a child—God's holy word; and there you will learn all about Him and your Father in heaven."

The very next day Kwei began her reading lessons. She was very patient and painstaking, and learnt very fast. At the end of her lesson Mrs. Lovelace used to read or tell her some Scripture story. If it was out of the gospel, Kwei always wanted to go directly to the church, and find the picture about it; and this made her remember what she had heard better than anything else.

One day the story was about Christ forgiving His enemies, and praying for them on the cross; and Mrs. Lovelace was telling Kwei how she ought to follow His example, and love every one too, even people who were unkind to her.

Kwei looked very grave, and said nothing,

so Mrs. Lovelace thought she did not understand, and tried to put it into plainer language.

"Yes, I understand," said Kwei at last; "but I don't believe it."

"What do you mean, my dear? It is true."

"If it is true, then He loves Vanstrump. And I am sure no one can; I hate him."

"Yes, dear. Jesus loves people worse than that, and He died for Vanstrump as well as for us."

"But I can't love him, and I am sure you don't, so we shall never go to heaven. And I don't want to go to heaven if he is to go there too. I should be so frightened."

"But Vanstrump will be very much changed before he gets to heaven. And we must try to love him now, though he is so bad."

"But I'm quite sure I never can—never."

"You must ask God to help you, my dear, or you never will be able to do that or a great many other things."

"I don't like your religion; it is very pretty, but it is too hard," answered Kwei. "I don't think I will be a Christian at all."

"Yes, you will, my child. Christ will bring you into His fold," answered Mrs. Lovelace, taking the girl's hand, and looking at her queer

little face with eyes full of love and of tears too, for she had set her heart upon the poor forsaken child.

At the sight of her tears Kwei threw her arms round Mrs. Lovelace, and said,—

"Yes, I will. I will do whatever you tell me. I will try to be your religion; only don't cry."

Mrs. Lovelace stroked her head, and said, "There's my good Kwei; now run and play with baby in the garden."

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS LUMLEY.

AFTER Mrs. Lovelace had been home a few weeks, her aunt, Miss Lumley, came to pay a short visit. She was an old-fashioned middle-aged lady, with very philanthropic ideas, and a small income, which she prided herself on managing so well that her little house, and everything else about her, was quite a model of order and prosperity. She was really anxious to do some good in her day and generation, but she had so little toleration for the failings of those who were not blessed with such well-ordered minds as herself, that she was constantly worried with a feeling of dissatisfaction at the world in general, which gave her face an anxious sharp look, not at all prepossessing.

However, she had always been a kind friend to her brother's family, and they were all fond of her, though the young ones did sometimes

laugh at her eccentricities behind her back. For some reason or other, unknown even to herself, Ellen Lovelace had always been Miss Lumley's special favourite, and no sooner did she hear that Ellen was in England, than she found it necessary to go to London on "important business." Miss Lumley never went anywhere except on business, but she knew quite well that she always had a welcome at her brother's house, where there was a snug little room kept ready for her, called "aunt's room."

She arrived one hot afternoon, and found Nelly and Fanny sitting in the garden under the shade of the great chestnut-tree. Kwei was walking up and down with the baby; it was one of the girl's greatest treats to be allowed to have the baby. The sisters rose to welcome their aunt, who kissed Nelly with unusual warmth. She turned away to wipe the tears out of her eyes when she saw the baby, the only one saved out of such a fair little flock. Poor Ellen knew in a moment what her aunt was thinking of, and fairly broke down and began to sob; it was the first time she had given way before others since her return. Fanny was much distressed, and ran

into the house for a glass of wine. Miss Lumley, instead of pressing her lips together, and looking severe as she generally did at the sight of tears, said, "Let her cry, poor dear; it will do her good." And she took her niece's head on her shoulder, regardless of her new bonnet strings, and patted her, saying, "There, there," as she would have done to a little child.

After a few minutes Ellen recovered herself.

"Forgive me for being so weak and foolish," she said; "I am quite ashamed."

"Nothing to be ashamed of, my dear," replied her aunt. "So this is my godson, is it? Bless his little heart."

"Yes, aunt, this is your godson; and just look what fine, fat legs he has! He has been so well, the darling, since he came to England."

"Yes, he quite does you credit; and now my dear, I think I will go to my room."

So Fanny led they way. When she returned to the garden, she found Ellen looking quite cheerful and composed again.

"I see aunt intends to stay a fortnight, at least," said Fanny. "I always know by her luggage,—one square box, and one band-box; both done up in the cleanest, neatest cases

imaginable. When she comes for a week she conjures everything into the band-box in some wonderful manner; and if it is for the winter she brings a formidable looking trunk that belonged to grandmamma."

"She does not look a day older than when I left England," said Ellen.

"No; when people get to that age it is wonderful how they do keep!" replied Fanny with a sigh. "But there she comes, so I must not sit idle any longer," she went on, taking up her work.

Miss Lumley came with her prim cap and long apron, and sat down by her nieces, and immediately began to knit; for she was one of those who firmly believed that Satan *does* find some mischief still for idle hands to do.

"You seem to have a strange-looking nurse-girl," she said, looking at Kwei. "Did you bring her over with you?"

So they told her the story of the little Chinese. Upon the whole Miss Lumley approved of Ellen's conduct.

"I don't quite see what else you could have done—yes, I think I should have acted in the same way myself. Is she a reasonable sort of girl?"

"Yes; upon the whole she is a very good girl. She always minds me. She seems fond of me, I think," answered Ellen.

"Umph, I dare say," said her aunt. "Very ignorant, of course."

"Oh, yes; ignorant enough, poor child; but she is quick at learning anything."

"Can she speak English?"

"Yes, pretty well; she understands it quite, I think, by this time."

"Well, I hope she will repay you for your trouble; it will be an interesting work to train her," said the aunt.

"She has not been much trouble yet, poor girl; but I do feel interested in her, and she seems to bring my own home back to me. I don't feel so entirely cut off from it when I look at Kwei;" and again the tears gathered in Ellen's eyes.

Miss Lumley saw they were getting on dangerous ground, so she changed the subject.

The next morning, the aunt rose early and went into the garden for an airing; she made a practice of taking a walk before breakfast; she said it braced her up for the day and gave her an appetite. She went first to the kitchen and gave the gardener a little advice about

managing his fruit trees; he civilly touched his cap, but said to himself that he "knew his own business."

From the kitchen garden Miss Lumley walked round to the front of the house, and there she found Kwei sitting on the door-step, quite absorbed in a book.

"What are you doing, child?" asked Miss Lumley.

Her voice startled Kwei, who had no idea any one was coming. She jumped up, closed her book, and began to hobble off as fast as she could, looking quite alarmed. But Miss Lumley laid her hand on her shoulder, and stopped her.

"Show me what you are reading," she said.

Kwei handed her book, which was full of simple nursery rhymns, one of which she had to learn by heart.

"Umph," said the lady. "Not much good in that; better to put the child to something sensible. Do you like learning?"

"Yes," answered Kwei.

"Who teaches you?"

"My lady."

"Mrs. Lovelace, I suppose you mean. Do you like her?"

"I love her."

"Then, of course, you try to be a good girl."

"Yes," answered Kwei, again attempting to go.

This time, as the breakfast bell was ringing, Miss Lumley released her.

After breakfast the ladies were sitting with their books and work in the cool morning room, when Miss Lumley said,—

"Ellen, my dear, what do you intend to do with that Chinese girl of yours?"

"Why, take care of her to be sure, as well as I can, aunt."

"But do you mean to make her a servant, or lady, or what? She must be one thing or the other, you know."

"Well, I have really never thought about it yet; but I suppose I ought to."

"Certainly you ought; I thought by some nonsensical rubbish I found her reading this morning that perhaps you intended to bring her up as a lady; not that she looks much like one though."

"Oh no, aunt; I really have no serious intentions about her. I am trying to teach her a little every day, and I give her 'nonsensical rubbish' to learn, because I think it is more

amusing, and will teach her the language quicker. But she learns plenty of hymns and sensible things as well."

"Well, I have been thinking about her, and I have got a plan in my head which I am sure is a very good one, for she seems a well-meaning sort of girl; don't you think so?" said the aunt.

"Decidedly. I have never had any trouble with her. What is your plan?"

"To train her properly, and send her back to China as a missionary," said Miss Lumley, with an air of determination.

Fanny fairly burst out laughing.

"Oh aunt! what a funny idea. Fancy that poor queer little Kwei a missionary!"

Miss Lumley looked severe.

"There is excellent material to work upon, I feel sure."

"But, aunt, she is not even a Christian yet. Nothing but a poor ignorant heathen."

"Oh, I will soon make her a Christian."

"How will you do it?"

"Why, have her baptized to begin with. Of course, when once she knows she is a child of God the rest will come. Then always impress upon her mind the idea that she *is* to be a

missionary, and she is sure to fall into your plan."

"Submit to the inevitable, poor creature," said Fanny. "Fancy any one coming to me, and saying, 'Now it is no use to make the slightest resistance—a missionary you are to be whether you like it or not.' I wonder how I should feel?"

"My dear Fanny, I consider your remarks show a very unbecoming levity," said her aunt.

"Oh, no, they don't, aunty dear. But you are so funny. Do go on."

"I think your aunt's is a most excellent idea," said Mrs. Lumley from the depths of her easy chair, where they had all imagined her to be fast asleep.

"I like the idea, too, very much," said Mrs. Lovelace. "But we ought to consult Kwei's own inclinations. We have no right to take her destiny into our own hands; and besides, we cannot tell what she may turn out."

"Turn out! If people are properly trained, they will turn out properly," put in Miss Lumley impatiently. "I have often heard my dear father say that children come into the world like a sheet of blank paper, and we can write on them anything we will."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mrs. Lovelace. "Why, even my baby-boy begins to show a character of his own, though he is only a year old."

"Very likely; but have not you by over indulgence been writing *self-will* on that sheet of paper? Of course we are all prone to evil as the sparks fly upwards, but 'train up a child in the way that he should go'—we all know the rest," replied Miss Lumley, as she pressed her lips together and looked very decided, as much as to say, "the question is quite settled; let the subject be dropped."

How fond she was of quoting the Proverbs to be sure! After a pause, Mrs. Lovelace began again,—

"I have been thinking lately that I should like Kwei to be christened if she is willing; it would make her feel more one of us. I have talked to her a good deal about religion, and she seems to believe everything I say."

"You are quite right, my dear," replied the aunt. "By all means let it be done as quickly as possible. I am glad to see you have not lost your good sense, Ellen. If you like I will call on Mr. Wheeler this afternoon."

"Thank you, aunt; I think I would rather

call on Mr. Wheeler about it myself," replied Ellen.

"Well, as the child is under your care at present, perhaps that would be the more correct way. But you just hand her over to me for a few months afterwards, and let me see what I can make of her."

"I don't know whether I could make up my mind to part with her, dear aunt."

"Why, have not you your baby and all your family? Surely that is enough for one woman! And I have no one but my poor old self," answered Miss Lumley with a little sigh. "The child would be such an interest for me."

"Well, there is plenty of time to think about that before you go, aunt; and I am sure I do not want to keep all the good things to myself. At any rate, I will call on the vicar to-morrow, and speak to him about Kwei," said Ellen.

The next morning Mrs. Lovelace did call on Mr. Wheeler, the vicar. He was an old friend of her father's, and had known her from her earliest childhood, so he received her very kindly, and seemed much interested in her account of the Chinese girl. He quite agreed that the sooner the child was baptized the better, but said he would like first to give her a course of instruction

on the Christian religion, that she might be fully prepared for the rite.

So Kwei went once or twice a week to the Vicarage for some time. She was very frightened at first, but soon grew accustomed to the kind clergyman, who made his teaching as simple as possible, to suit her uncultivated mind, which gradually opened like a flower in the sunshine; and after a few weeks all agreed that Kwei was in a fit state to be christened.

All the family of the Lumleys went to church to witness the ceremony. It was a lovely morning, and Kwei was dressed in a plain white frock and cap. She was in a state of grave excitement, for she quite understood the solemnity of the occasion. She held fast by her lady's hand all through the service. Miss Lumley, Mrs. Lovelace, and Percy, were the godparents.

Percy had been very anxious to stand, for he said he had taken quite a fancy to the queer little girl.

"I shall leave her spiritual affairs alone," he said, "but I mean really to look after her worldly good, poor creature. She may need a man to protect her from the ways of this world some day or other. Really and truly I should like to do something for her; so do let me, Ellen,

there's a dear. Only you must not expect me to turn very sanctimonious all of a sudden, because I have taken the responsible situation of godfather to a Chinese heathen. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand, Percy dear, that you have a kinder heart than you care to let the world in general know," replied Ellen, as she stroked her brother's curly brown hair. "And you shall have your wish about poor Kwei."

CHAPTER IX.

PERCY TURNS MENTOR.

KWEI was wonderfully good and tractable for some time after her christening. They had given her the name of Kwei Ellen Lumley. She seemed to consider herself a person of much more importance now, and walked about with quite a dignified air. She sometimes even went so far as to get her needle-work without being told to do so, and would sit for an hour beside Miss Lumley, doing her very best to sew neatly; so that that lady was quite edified. But she would not have been quite so pleased had she known of all Kwei's doings.

The child had a good deal of time when she was allowed to amuse herself as she liked, and was generally supposed to be in the garden, playing with the baby. But instead of this, she very often slipped quietly into Percy's room when she knew he was out for the day, and enjoyed one of his pipes or cigars; for he was a

careless fellow, and left all his things lying about anywhere. Kwei was always very careful to leave everything exactly where she found it. There was one funny little pipe that very much took her fancy. The bowl of it was in the form of a monkey. One day, after having enjoyed a good long smoke undisturbed, she thought she would go into the garden, where she saw the nurse and baby. She had emptied the ashes out of her pipe, and was putting it back on the shelf, when the idea struck her how nice it would be to have another smoke in the evening. She looked at the pipe; "He can never miss such a little one," she thought to herself. "He has so many, and so much tobacco, too." She could not resist the temptation; she filled the little pipe and put it into her pocket. While she was about it, she thought she might as well have a good supply; so she took two cigars as well, and then hurried down stairs with rather a guilty feeling; for she had not forgotten what trouble Vanstrump's pipe had got her into; but it had ended in Mrs. Lovelace taking her, so it had turned out very well. All this passed in a sort of confused way through the child's mind. She knew nothing about stealing, she only intended to *borrow*.

KWEI DISCOVERED SMOKING. [*Page 77.*

The afternoon passed as usual. Kwei worked so nicely that she was praised by Miss Lumley, and also by Mrs. Lovelace, which she cared much more about. She had tea in the nursery, and then turned into the garden in time to see the ladies and Miss Lumley, all go out to spend the evening.

Kwei knew they would not be back till long after she was gone to bed; so she had the whole evening and the garden to herself, and now she could enjoy her treat without fear of discovery; for she knew by instinct that Mrs. Lovelace did not like to see her smoking.

She went some distance from the house, and stood under a large tree while she lighted her pipe. She was carefully shielding it from the wind with her hat while she did so; when she was startled by a low laugh, and looking up, she saw Percy sitting, swinging his legs, on the top of the wall, which divided the pleasure from the kitchen garden. He too, was enjoying his evening cigar. He jumped lightly down, and came to her side.

"Holloa! so I've discovered a boon companion in my adopted daughter," he cried.

Kwei began to run away; but as usual, whenever she tried to run, after a few steps she

stumbled and fell. Percy helped her up, and held her tight by the arm.

"Well, you are a cool hand, to be sure!" he said. "My pipe and my tobacco too, I suppose. Come, Kwei, confess. How did you get this?"

Kwei looked frightened, and tried to get off; but Percy held her tight.

"Tell me the truth," he said, "and I will not be angry. Come, did you take this pipe, or did any one give it you?"

"I took it," faltered Kwei.

"That's right, child; never be afraid to speak the truth. But another time when you want anything out of my room, ask me for it, and don't help yourself. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Kwei.

"And now I think I must give you a lecture," he went on; "so let us sit down and enjoy our smoke together, while I discourse."

Kwei did not understand much of what he said; but she sat down contentedly beside him, and puffed away.

"Now, Kwei, listen," he began. "Smoking is a bad, nasty habit for girls; and I advise you to give it up. I am sure Mrs. Lovelace would not like it.

"Secondly. Taking what does not belong to you, is not strictly keeping your fingers from picking and stealing, which you will learn in your catechism to be your duty to your neighbour. So there are two things for you to think about, though I'm afraid my eloquence is very much thrown away on deaf ears. But I must be off, so good-night; and here, you may keep the pipe, and when you want any baccy you know where to come to;" and with that, he sauntered off, leaving Kwei in a state of bewilderment; but sincerely congratulating herself on having got so well out of her scrape.

CHAPTER X.

KWEI LOSES HER WAY.

AS Miss Lumley was so urgent about the matter, Mrs. Lovelace at last consented to let Kwei return with her to Oldport for the winter. But somehow she felt very reluctant to part from the child. "I took her, and I feel as though I ought to keep her," she said.

"Surely you can trust your aunt to take as good care of her as you could," replied Mrs. Lumley.

"Oh, I am not afraid that aunt will not take the greatest care of her; it is not that. Perhaps I am growing selfish after all; for it has been quite a pleasure to teach her lately, she is getting on so nicely, and seems so grateful. The fact is, I have grown very fond of poor Kwei; she reminds me of my dear China. But she will come back to me in the spring; it will only be for a few months after all."

When Kwei was told that she was to go away with Miss Lumley, she cried a good deal at first, but became more resigned to her fate on being assured that she should return to Mrs. Lovelace in the spring.

She was a thorough Chinese in one respect. She showed very little curiosity about anything she saw, though she was very quick in imitating what other people did. She still had her clothes made after the pattern of those she wore when Mrs. Lovelace first knew her, so that she looked as peculiar as ever, and it caused quite a sensation among Miss Lumley's neighbours when they heard that she had returned home with a "Chinese maid," as the report said.

But they soon found that the little curiosity was not to be treated as a servant at all, for she always accompanied Miss Lumley on her walks, and sat with her in her parlour all day.

It was a very regular quiet life that Miss Lumley led. Most children would have found it very dull, but Kwei did not seem to. She had plenty to eat and drink, and was seldom scolded, so she was content to all appearances, and Miss Lumley wrote very good reports of her to her niece.

She had little idea how lonely the child often

felt, and how she fretted and longed after her dear lady, who was the only person in the world she really loved. She went through her day's tasks patiently, but without interest. She cared little whether Miss Lumley was pleased or angry. She had to do lessons all the morning, and a certain portion of sewing every afternoon. When that was done she was allowed to amuse herself as she liked, with her doll, or slate, or making little cardboard houses, which she was very clever at.

Miss Lumley used to talk to her a good deal about the duties of a missionary. Kwei appeared to listen very attentively, but half the time she did not take the trouble to understand what was said. She always brightened up when a letter came from Mrs. Lovelace, and would be quite lively the whole day. And she took a great deal of pains with her reading and writing that she might learn to send a letter herself to Mrs. Lovelace. One day Miss Lumley had been talking a long time about the trials and temptations of a missionary's life, when suddenly Kwei looked up from her work, and said,—

"Does my lady want me to be one?"

"To be a missionary do you mean?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Certainly she does. She told me so several times."

"Then I will try to like it too."

"That is not a proper motive, Kwei. You ought to wish for missionary work from a desire to help your poor heathen country more."

"My Chinese, you mean?"

"Yes, child; you know they are nothing but ignorant idolaters. Would not you like to teach the children to worship the true God, when you are a woman?"

"Yes, if my lady likes. I love her; she is kind and good. I don't love them; they were cruel and beat me—all but my mother, she is dead. I cannot help her, and I don't want to leave my lady."

So Kwei settled the matter; but from that time she did try to take more interest in Miss Lumley's talk. Great was her delight one morning when that lady asked her if she would like to try to write a letter herself to Mrs. Lovelace. Miss Lumley wrote down in pencil what Kwei wished to say, and then Kwei traced it over in ink herself; she felt very grand and proud as she put the letter in the post, on her afternoon walk.

Miss Lumley was going to visit a poor sick

woman, and Kwei carried a basket, with beef-tea and other things in it. The woman lived at the top of a dirty lodging-house in a back street. There were a great many poor families living in the house, and Miss Lumley desired Kwei to wait in the passage, or walk up and down outside, while she went upstairs, for she was afraid there might be fever in the house. "And besides, such people don't care to see strange children," she went on. "So you give me the basket, and wait till I come."

Kwei gave up the basket, and said,—

"Yes."

"If I don't come by the time the church clock strikes four, you can go home and tell Betty to get tea ready; perhaps I shall stay and read to the woman. You know your way home, don't you—you have been here so often?"

"Yes, I know it," answered Kwei.

"Well, good-bye; it only wants five minutes to four now, so you may as well go home at once. I daresay I shall stay some time," said Miss Lumley, as she disappeared up the dark, dirty staircase.

Kwei sauntered up and down for a few minutes after Miss Lumley had left her. Then the

church clock struck; and as it was getting cold, she thought she might as well go home, and started on her way.

Kwei had come to this street so often with Miss Lumley that she thought she knew the road quite well. It was not far, but she had never been out alone before since she had lived in Oldport; and the people stared a good deal at her odd little figure; but as it was a sea-port town, they were accustomed to see strange-looking people walking about. Kwei had not gone far when she stopped to look in at a shop window that had often attracted her attention, and she had longed to examine all the curious things in it. Miss Lumley never allowed her to linger in the streets, and this was an opportunity not to be lost, so she stood still for several minutes, and gazed her full at all the wonders, quite forgetting tea and everything else.

Presently she was startled by some rude boys shouting out, "Look! look! at the little Chinese. How do you do, mum?"

Kwei felt frightened, and began to run, then the boys laughed and ran after her, for they thought it fine fun. Kwei grew more and more frightened, and never noticed that she

was running away from home instead of towards it. The boys got nearer and nearer, and she thought they were just going to catch her, so she darted down a narrow turning; there she tumbled down, but she soon picked herself up again, and went on as fast as her legs would carry her, never thinking where she was going.

The boys did not wish to hurt her, they only wanted to amuse themselves; so when she turned down the lane, they did not care to follow her any farther, but gave up the chase with a final shout.

Kwei had gone so fast that at last she was obliged to stop, for she was quite out of breath. She looked round her, and found she was in a street she had never been in before. She felt puzzled, and went back a little way and down a turning, but it was all quite strange to her. After running down one or two more turnings, she felt sure she was lost. So she stood still and began to cry, for she was afraid to speak to any of the people about, they looked at her so strangely.

The street she was now in was much narrower and dirtier than the one where she had left Miss Lumley. It was in fact the very worst part of Oldport, and there were only a number

of dirty children playing in the gutters. So poor Kwei could do nothing but lean against the wall and cry.

Presently a woman, with a baby in her arms, came out of the door close by, and ran up against her.

"Bless the child! You nearly knocked me down," she exclaimed. "You're a queer one, anyhow. Where do you come from, and what's the matter?"

The woman had a kind face, so Kwei tried to explain that she had lost her way; but as she still spoke very funny English, the woman could not understand her.

"You just run in there," she said, pointing to the house she had come out of. "I'm in such a hurry I can't wait, but they'll take care of you, and tell you where to go," and she nodded her head and ran off, first opening the house door.

Kwei did not know what else to do, so she went into the house and peeped into the first room she came to, the door of which stood open. In one corner of the room there was a bed with a man lying on it, who was groaning very much. A woman was leaning over him, feeding him with a spoon. There was a little fire on the hearth, and a man in a pilot jacket and cloth

cap, was sitting by it, smoking a short pipe. At his feet crouched a savage-looking dog. The room was so dark that Kwei could not distinguish any of the faces, but she ventured to go in as she had been desired to do by her friend outside. Alas for her! she had made a mistake and come to the wrong room. It was the back room the poor woman had meant, where very different people lodged.

Kwei stood for a minute looking round her. Everything was squalid and wretched in the extreme. She had not seen such a place since she came to England.

Presently the woman said in a low voice, "I think he may linger some days yet, Van."

To which the man at the fire replied, "Vell, if he is not quick about it I shall go back to London to-morrow. I can't stay vasting my time here any longer. You can stay behind and see after de money-bags."

At this the woman turned round, and as she did so caught sight of the strange figure at the door. She started and stared, and Kwei started and stared too, for at the same moment they recognised each other. The woman was Mrs. Vanstrump!

"Kwei!" she exclaimed, in an astonished

voice, and then turned short and pointed towards her husband, and tried to make signs to the child to run off at once, but it was too late. Vanstrump had heard the word, and Kwei was so overcome by terror at finding herself in that hated presence again, that her legs trembled so she could not move.

The man turned round sharply to his wife. "Vat did you say?" he asked. "Kwei, de ill-conditioned wretch, vat about her?"

Then he saw the girl standing before him. He gave a low laugh and stretched out his hand towards her.

"Run, child, for your life!" cried poor Mrs. Vanstrump, in an agony.

By this time Kwei had sufficiently recovered herself to make the attempt, and rushed wildly out of the door and down the passage. Vanstrump did not move; but, seeing his prey about to escape him, muttered to his dog "Catch her." The dog pricked up his ears and darted after her, and seized her by the ankle, just as she had reached the street door and thought herself safe. The master followed more slowly, and grasping Kwei's arm, dragged her back into the room. The dog followed close at his heels, growling with satisfaction.

Vanstrump locked the door, and then turned to Kwei and gave her a shake. She began to howl in her old way.

"Stop dat noise, or it vill be de vorse for you," said the man savagely.

She managed to stop from sheer fright.

"Vell; so you've come back to your own rightful master at last, have you? Turned out of doors for some mischief or oder, I'll be bound. Now if this ain't an interposition of Providence I don't know vat is. Here's Providence been and brought me back my property just of her own free-vill, and nobody can't deny it. She came. I didn't try to get her, but I'll keep her for all dat, and I'll pay you out for de dirty trick you play me too. It was all along of you, miss, dat I got into trouble with my captain, and am reduced to dis wretched condition."

"Oh let the girl go, Van. Let her go," cried his wife. "You know you've no right to her, and she cannot do you any good."

"You just shut up, missus," he answered. "I'm not quite such a fool as to let her go, I can tell you; and I mean to make her do me a deal of good, yes, and you too. Why dis is the very ting ve vant for our place. Can't you

see dat she'll bring crowds? 'De Chinese Tea-Rooms. Tea served by a real native;' dat's de style of ting. Vhy she'll make our fortune if we manage properly," and he rubbed his hands with glee at the delightful prospect.

The poor woman turned back to the bed with a sigh. She saw it was useless to say more. She would only get herself into trouble.

It was true enough that Kwei had been the innocent cause of the Dutchman's losing his situation as steward on board the *Seagull.* The captain had dismissed him at the end of the voyage, saying he would not allow cruelty to be practised on his ship. He also refused to give the man a character, so that Vanstrump had not been able to get a place on any other ship, and he had set up a low eating and lodging-house, not far from the docks in London, where he expected to get a great many customers among the sailors. Just now he hoped that what he called "a good piece of luck" was about to befall him. His wife's father was dying, and as he was reported to be quite a miser and to have hoarded a great deal of money, Vanstrump would come to Oldport with his wife, who was anxious to see her poor father once more. He thought that if he were on the

spot himself he would be more sure of getting the money. He found there was some truth, at any rate in the report. The old man kept a stocking full of bank-notes under his pillow. This Vanstrump discovered the night of his arrival, while his wife was asleep. So he determined to secure this part of the booty, and be off with Kwei before any search was made for her.

Kwei was given a crust of bread, and desired to lie down in a corner and go to sleep, as she would have to be up early the next day. The poor girl felt too frightened and miserable to make any resistance, so she ate her crust, for she was hungry, and was glad to lie down and cry over her misfortunes. How she longed now for Miss Lumley's clean, cheerful house and her comfortable little bed! and Miss Lumley's grave face, which she had often felt inclined to dislike when comparing it with Mrs. Lovelace's. Now it would have appeared lovely as an angel's to the unhappy child. At last she fell asleep, thinking of the bright happy days that were gone she feared for ever.

CHAPTER XI.

"THE ORIGINAL CHINESE TEA-HOUSE."

AFTER a few hours' sleep, Kwei was aroused by a gentle touch on her cheek. She dreamt that Mrs. Lovelace was kissing her. Was it a kiss?

She rose up with a start and a shiver, and saw Mrs. Vanstrump standing over her, with a candle in one hand, for it was quite dark outside, and a cup of hot tea in the other.

"Here, child," she said in a whisper, "make haste and drink this up quick, it will warm you; and here's a nice piece of bread-and-butter. Eat it at once; he's gone out for a few minutes."

Kwei began to eat the bread and drink the tea in a bewildered sort of way. She was only half awake, and could not quite remember where she was.

While she was taking her meal, Mrs. Vanstrump went on: "You are going back with him to London in the train. Be sure to do all he tells you, and don't make him angry, and

then he will not be unkind to you. I shall be back in a few days, and I will be kind to you; so don't be frightened, there's a dear. But, oh child, how could you come back to us?"

"I lost my way," answered Kwei, who was by this time wide awake. "But I will run back now, before he comes back;" and she started up and made towards the door.

"No, no, child, you cannot do that; he has locked us in and taken the key. And, oh! I think he would kill me if he came back and found you gone! Not that that would matter much though; I think I would rather be dead. But, Kwei, he expects to make a great deal of money by you, so he will treat you well for his own sake."

Kwei had made quite a good breakfast before Vanstrump returned. He was muffled up in a great woollen comforter, and came in beating his hands together, and declared it was mortal cold.

"Now den, it's time ve vere off," he said. "Just wrap up the girl; ve don't vant to have her laid up. Haven't you got an old petticoat, or someting to put on over this gown of hers? I don't vant to have all de folks staring at us as ve go along."

Mrs. Vanstrump found a short skirt, which she put on over Kwei's other things; and she tied an old shawl round her over her own cloak, so that she did not present at all the same appearance she had done the day before. And that was Vanstrump's object. He did not care whether she took cold or not; he only wished to disguise the child. He completed her toilet himself by tying a thick veil round her hat.

"You keep dat veil down till I give you leave to lift it up. It will keep off toothache," he said with a chuckle. "And now, before we start, I may as well give you my instructions; so listen, vill you? You are not to dare to speak a word to me all day—not till we come to our journey's end. You are not to lift up your veil, and you are to keep close to my side. If you attempt to run avay, or any such nonsense as that, here's Growler close at your heels, and he knows his duty like any Christian. I've told him vhat to do, and he'll seize you by de leg, and bite it trough, sooner dan let you go; and, besides dat, I give you a good trashing at night. Do you understand? You behave properly, and I von't hurt you; and you shall have a good supper vhen ve get home at night. So mind."

Kwei understood only too well what the man meant; so she walked along by his side, meekly enough, through many dark streets, till they reached the railway station. The dog Growler followed closely, every now and then giving a snarl as though he longed to have a bite at Kwei's legs.

Vanstrump seemed in a fidget till they were safely in the train. He got into a dirty third class carriage, with only a few sleepy people huddled up in the different corners, doing their best to keep out the cold. He shook his finger threateningly at Kwei as he pushed her in, as much as to say, You speak, if you dare. It was an unnecessary caution; she was much too miserable to attempt to utter a word; but she cried quietly behind her veil, and no one noticed her. On and on went the train, hour after hour, stopping at every station, and sometimes being shunted on to a side line for ever so long to allow an express to pass, so that the short winter day was nearly over by the time they reached London, and the lamps were already lighted. Kwei had been asleep most of the afternoon, for she was thoroughly tired out. They got into an omnibus at the station, and went rumbling on for another hour through the noisy

streets. Then they had a short walk by some queer-looking, badly-lighted places, and Vanstrump stopped before a small shop with the door in the middle. He walked in with Kwei and the dog.

"Safe at last!" he muttered to himself, as he shut the shop door. Then he turned to an ill-looking boy behind the counter, and asked for a glass of brandy, which he swallowed at a draught.

"Now get us some supper—quick!" he said. "Supper for two, in the parlour: something warm and comfortable."

The boy began to run about with plates and dishes, glancing every now and then at Kwei with curiosity. She stood quite still, with her veil down. She did not dare to lift it up without Vanstrump's permission. He desired her to follow him into what was called the back parlour—a close little room, smelling strongly of stale smoke, with one flaring gas-light, without a shade.

The boy quickly spread a cloth on the table, with glasses and plates—all very dirty; but Kwei was not squeamish, and felt quite glad to see a dish of something hot, for she was half-starved by this time.

As soon as the meal was ready, Vanstrump told the boy to shut the door, and see that they were not interrupted. Then he desired Kwei to undress and sit down. He gave her a good plate of meat and a glass of ale, for he was in a wonderfully good humour, having had a more satisfactory journey than he expected. He was in such a jovial mood that, as he had no one else to talk to, he began to crack his rough jokes with Kwei, who did not appreciate them at all, but ate her supper with fear and trembling, expecting every moment that her hated master would turn upon her and do her some mortal injury. She felt now even more lonely and unprotected than she had done on the journey. She was thankful enough when Vanstrump, having satisfied his hunger, said he would go out for a little turn.

"You can sleep to-night on that sofa," he said to Kwei before he went out, pointing to an uncomfortable looking horsehair sofa against the wall. "When the missus comes back, I dare say she will find another place for you." Then he went out and turned the key upon her, and Kwei found herself once more a prisoner.

She sat by the fire for some time, and warmed her hands and feet, and tried to think over all

that had happened. But she was too bewildered to realize it yet. She could not cry over her troubles, but only felt a dull weight of misery pressing upon her. At last the fire and the fatigue she had gone through made her drowsy, and she curled herself up on the rug and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW EXPERIENCES.

IN the morning, Vanstrump woke Kwei, and told her to bestir herself, and clean up.

"I'm not going to keep you for noting, I can tell you," he said. "Folks who come here must vork for deir living."

Kwei ventured to ask in a timid voice, whether she might not wash and tidy herself. She felt so dirty, not having undressed for two nights, and she had lived quite long enough in England to feel how pleasant it is to be clean and wholesome.

"You can go and wash at de sink dere," answered Vanstrump. "If you imagine dat you are to be provided wid a dressing-room here, you are very much mistaken, madame!"

When Kwei had finished her task of cleaning out the rooms, and washing up a great many plates and dishes, her master called her to him to explain her duties to her.

"Now listen to me," he said. "Dis is a kind

of eating-house, as you may see, and your work will be to sarve out de tea to my customers, and mind you look bright and lively when dey speak to you, and answer dem back again. You knew well enough how to do dat aboard de *Seagull*, you lazy good-for-noting, and I shall expect you to do it now—do you hear?"

Kwei said "Yes;" though she did not feel much inclined to be bright and lively with any one just then.

"Now you must set your wits to work," went on Vanstrump. "I can't be bodered to teach you."

Kwei managed to get on pretty well that day. She did her best from fear, not from any desire to please; for she hated the Dutchman more than ever. He was too busy himself to take much notice of her, but he watched her from the other side of the shop, and the vicious Growler was always at the door, keeping guard; so that though Kwei was on the alert all day, there was never an opportunity for her to try to escape.

Two or three days passed in the same way, and then Mrs. Vanstrump returned. Her father was dead, and had left her all his savings, most of which were contained in the old stocking. She bought herself a black gown and went about looking rather sorrowful, for now she

had not a relation left in the world except her husband. Being with her old father had softened her, and made her feel some longing to lead a better life ; but, poor woman, she did not know how to begin. Her daily toil and worries were quite enough to occupy all her thoughts.

The first person Mrs. Vanstrump saw on her return home was Kwei.

"Well, here is one person in even a worse plight than myself," she thought. "At any rate I can try to be kind to her, and stand between her and Van sometimes."

The fact was, her conscience had reproached her about Kwei, and she had often wished for an opportunity of making up to the child for her past unkindness, and now it had come. She was thankful to find that her husband had not ill-used his little victim yet.

Kwei was very glad to see her mistress again, for she looked upon her now as her only friend. She always wore her parting gift, the new half-crown, hung round her neck by a blue ribbon. Percy had bored a hole in it for her. She had fastened the little pipe he had given her, to the ribbon since she had lived with Miss Lumley ; but she had never once used the pipe ; she had determined for Mrs. Lovelace's sake, to give up

the habit of smoking. These things,—the half-crown, the pipe, and, most precious of all, a portrait of Mrs. Lovelace in a little case,—were Kwei's treasures. She always kept them about her, and took them out every evening, and looked at them for a long time, and sometimes cried over them. Very bitter were the tears the poor child shed, for these were the only things she had to remind her that she had ever been happy.

It was now hard work from morning till night. Mrs. Vanstrump cleared her out a little closet under the stairs. Though it was very dark and dismal, Kwei was glad enough to have it, for it was the only place where she could get a little peace; and there, before she lay down on her miserable bed at night, she used to kneel and repeat the little prayer and hymn Mrs. Lovelace had taught her, and try to lift up her poor ignorant heart to the good God she had begun to believe in and to love; but deep hatred was fast quenching out the little spark of love that had been kindled; for how can love and hate dwell together?

The shopboy was soon dismissed by Vanstrump. Kwei was expected to do his work, and was a far more profitable servant; for she was paid no wages, and drew a great many more customers, as her master had predicted.

On one side of the shop were cooked hams and tongues, and sausages, and mysterious dishes that Mrs. Vanstrump concocted in her kitchen. The other side, Kwei's dominion, was sacred to tea, coffee, and tobacco, which Kwei had to serve out and hand to the customers, and she had to wait on any who had a meal in the little back parlour. They were a rough set of people, generally sailors. Kwei soon got accustomed to their coarse talking and joking; it was not new to her, for she had been used to it on board ship. She now learned to answer the men back, and often sent them into roars of laughter by her funny English.

Mrs. Vanstrump got an old dimity curtain, covered all over with gay-coloured parrots and Chinese pagodas. She made it up into a dress for Kwei, as much the shape of the real Chinese dresses as she could manage; it was loose from the shoulders, and had long hanging sleeves, which were very much in Kwei's way when she was at her work. Besides this dress, her mistress found a pair of old wooden shoes, which she made the girl tramp about in, so that altogether she looked like a caricature of the figures on the tea-chests; but Kwei was quite proud of her finery, which she thought very becoming.

CHAPTER XIII.

POOR MISS LUMLEY AGAIN.

WHEN Miss Lumley left Kwei in the street, on that memorable evening, she went straight up to the sick woman's room, which was at the top of the house. The woman was quite alone, and very ill; so Miss Lumley sat with her for some time, and read to her. It was at least an hour before she came away; so she did not even look for Kwei, but hurried home, expecting to find her there waiting for tea.

"I hope tea is all ready," Miss Lumley said to Betty, who opened the door to her. "Of course Kwei has been in a long time."

"Tea is ready ma'am," answered Betty; "but there ain't no Kwei come home yet."

"Kwei not come home! What do you mean, Betty?"

"Why that's just what I does mean. Kwei isn't never come back."

"What a naughty child, to be sure. Why

I desired her to come straight home. Where can she be?" said Miss Lumley.

"Run away, like enough," replied Betty. Who, being an old servant, was jealous of the new intruder, as she considered Kwei; "A'course she's a naughty girl—always looked like it to my mind."

"Well, Betty, it's no use to stand talking here; I must just go back to meet her. I'm afraid she may lose her way, for it is quite dark now."

"Lost her way! not a bit of it," answered Betty. "She's a deal too sharp for that. Them furriners always are. Now you just bide quiet, ma'am, and get a cup of hot tea, and depend upon it the girl will turn up right enough," said Betty; "and a good job if she didn't," she muttered to herself.

But Miss Lumley felt uneasy and was not to be overruled by her maid. She went back to the poor woman's house, peering into every hole and corner, and making constant inquiries as she went along; but as we know, her search was fruitless. No Kwei was to be seen or heard of, and Miss Lumley grew thoroughly frightened. At last she went to the police station, and gave a full description of the missing child. The men

there assured her that she might make her mind quite easy, they were sure to find the girl before morning. So Miss Lumley, very reluctantly, returned home; but she could not go to bed. She kept a good fire, and plenty of hot water, and sat up all night, waiting. She started at every sound, and many times ran to the door and opened it, fancying that she heard Kwei's voice calling to her.

But all her watching and waiting were in vain. The darkness passed away, and the daylight came, and still there was no sign of Kwei.

Betty came down very early in the morning, and found her mistress watching at the window, looking quite tired out.

"Lor, ma'am! I do believe you've never been to bed this blessed night!" exclaimed Betty.

"No, Betty; I could not go to bed, and I have made up my mind what to do. I am afraid the child has run away, as you say, and has gone back to Mrs. Lovelace; though where she got the money from I cannot imagine. At any rate, I shall go up to London by the next train; it starts in an hour. I dare say I shall be back again to night; but do not be frightened if I am not, and keep a good watch all day, and make every inquiry you can; but

do not leave the house. And if Kwei *does* come back while I am away, do be kind to her, Betty. Don't scold her, or say a cross word, please. Remember she is a poor friendless orphan. I am afraid I have been too harsh with her. I thought my niece went to the other extreme; but perhaps she was right after all."

Betty saw that her mistress was determined to go, so she did not argue with her, but made haste to get her a comfortable hot breakfast.

Miss Lumley was a sensible woman; so she made a good meal and felt all the better for it. She did not take the very first train, for that was such a slow one, and started before it was light, and it waited somewhere for the express to pass it which reached London many hours earlier. Had she done otherwise, her journey might have been more successful.

The afternoon of that day, Fanny Lumley was standing at the window, wishing something would happen for she felt so dull, when a cab drove up to the door, and there came a thundering knock and ring.

"Well, here is some one at last," cried Fanny. "Who in the world can it be? Why I do declare it is aunt; whatever can have brought her?"

"Your aunt!" exclaimed Mrs. Lumley. "I hope nothing is the matter; but I dare say it is only some law business."

In the meantime Fanny had run into the hall to meet her aunt.

"I am so glad to see you, aunt," she began. But her aunt hardly waited to kiss her.

She cried, "The child! is she here?"

"Child! What child, aunt? there is none here."

Upon that, Miss Lumley sat down on one of the hall chairs, and burst out crying—a weakness she had not been guilty of for years.

"What *is* the matter, aunt? What child do you mean?" exclaimed Fanny.

"Oh dear, dear; what in the world shall I do? Ellen will never, never forgive me. Old fool that I was to insist on having my own way, and this is the end of it all!"

Fanny felt thoroughly puzzled. She thought her aunt must have gone quite out of her mind; for she had never seen her behave in such a strange way before. She ran for a glass of port wine, her universal remedy when any one seemed out of sorts.

The wine did Miss Lumley good. The poor lady was tired out, and her disappointment

at not finding Kwei at her brother's house, as she had quite expected, was too much for her; so she had given way in a most unusual manner.

Now she recovered herself, and walked into the dining-room, where she was able to tell what had happened.

"And you are quite sure that Kwei has not been here at all?" she said.

"If she is here, we know nothing about it," replied Mrs. Lumley; "but I will send for Ellen."

Of course Ellen was as ignorant as the rest; and very much distressed she was to learn that her little favourite was lost.

"I am sure you will never forgive me, Ellen," said poor Miss Lumley. "It is all my fault for being so careless and thoughtless."

"Indeed, dear aunt, I do not blame you," replied her niece, with a kiss; "but we must be doing something. Percy will be in in a few minutes, and he will help us if any one can."

At that moment Percy's gay whistle was heard in the hall; so Fanny called him in.

His merry face became very grave as he heard the story. "Of course I must go at once

in search of the child," he said; "and there is no time to be lost. I shall give information to the police, and advertise in all the papers; then I think I had better go down to Oldport. Betty will make me very comfortable, I know. I always was a favourite with her. So good bye. Just pack up my bag, Fan."

"Thank you, thank you, dear boy," said his aunt, looking at him fondly. "You are very good."

"Not at all, aunt; it is only my duty. Thank me when I bring back the runaway; and in the meantime take my advice,—have a good dinner, and go to bed,—you look as though you needed a night's rest; and trust to Providence."

In ten minutes more Percy was rattling off in a Hansom, and the ladies felt satisfied that the best was being done. They had unbounded confidence in their boy's cleverness and energy, but it was rather hard to have to sit at home and wait, and feel that they could not help in any way.

CHAPTER XIV.

DARK DAYS.

PERCY left home feeling little doubt that he should easily find Kwei; but he was doomed to disappointment. Day after day went by, and no trace of her was to be met with. He took a week's holiday, during which he worked harder than he had ever done before in his life; for he was on his mettle, and was *determined* to succeed. He employed every means in his power, offered a large reward, and spent all the money he had intended for his summer excursion; but it was all no use. Kwei was safely hidden away from all discovery. Percy had to return to his work, and Miss Lumley and Ellen to their prayers, for that seemed all there was left for them to do.

Vanstrump soon found out that inquiries were being made about his little servant, so he was constantly on the watch to prevent discovery. He felt pretty safe though, for nearly

all the men who frequented his shop were sailors, mostly foreigners, who never even looked into an English paper.

At first he was almost tempted to deliver Kwei up himself, and claim the reward; but on reflection he thought he would make more by keeping her to serve in the shop, as she attracted a great many customers, and besides that, he would almost have preferred to lose by her than restore her to the happy life he knew she had led with Mrs. Lovelace, for he felt a personal hatred to the poor girl. He wished to make her miserable, and he succeeded only too well, for he injured her soul as well as her body.

As the months went by poor Kwei lost all hope, she sank deeper and deeper into the slough of despair into which she had fallen, and she did not much care what happened to her now, for one day was as wretched as another. Hard work, rough words, and often blows, from morning till night. Her spirit was completely broken, and her senses became so deadened that she was hardly conscious of Mrs. Vanstrump's kindness, for that poor woman was as kind as she knew how to be. Many a time she stood between Kwei and a violent

scolding or worse; and many a story she told to screen the girl. Sometimes she even locked her into her little closet when Vanstrump came home at night in one of his drunken rages, that he might not be able to get at the little Chinese, and do her some mortal injury. The only peaceful moments Kwei ever had, were when her master was away, or when she was busy waiting on a supper party, or something of that sort, in the little back parlour, and Vanstrump too much occupied in the shop to take any notice of her. She was quite a favourite with some of his customers, who pitied her too, for they knew from the Dutchman's character that she could not lead a very pleasant life in his house. They would often make her sit down and have a bit of supper with them, and get her to sing them some of her funny songs, while they smoked their pipes. Sometimes some one would try to make her take a few puffs, but she always refused in such a way that they fancied smoke was really very disagreeable to her. They did not know how hard it was to her to resist the temptation; but she used to clutch at the little pipe hanging round her neck, and think of her lady, and then she felt strong.

One night a man caught hold of her, and tried to force a pipe into her mouth; Kwei clenched her teeth firmly, and when the man would not desist, she burst out crying.

"You must be an ill-tempered thing not to understand a bit of fun," he exclaimed angrily. "There get along, do; I don't want to have anything more to do with you."

Kwei was very sorry to offend him, for he had always been kind to her, and she felt half tempted to give way, but he turned from her, and began to talk to his companion on some other subject, so she did not like to interrupt him.

One warm autumn evening Kwei was looking longingly out of the shop door; her master was fast asleep, and her mistress had gone out to do some shopping and have a gossip with a neighbour. Kwei was thinking how nice it would be to breathe the fresh air anywhere out of that narrow stifling street. It must have been quite a year and a half since she had first come there, though she herself kept no count of time, but she had been a prisoner ever since. Her jailor, Growler, was now, as always, at the door, ready to seize her if she attempted to cross the threshold. So she was afraid to

venture very near, even to enjoy what little air there was. Everything seemed drowsy and sleepy. In the distance could be heard the sound of some people singing hymns in a little chapel. It was not very beautiful music, but it sounded sweet to Kwei, and reminded her of the days that were past, when she used to go with Mrs. Lovelace to the pretty church, and hear the organ. And then she fell to thinking of the lessons that kind lady used to teach her, and presently she found herself unconsciously singing one of the hymns to herself in a low tone. She had not forgotten *one*, for it reminded her of Mrs. Lovelace more than anything else, to say these little hymns or rhymes over when she happened to be alone in the shop, or at night when she went to bed, though she was generally so tired then, that she fell fast asleep the moment she lay down.

CHAPTER XV.

KWEI LOSES HER ONLY FRIEND.

KWEI was in the midst of this pleasant little reverie when Mrs. Vanstrump came in, looking very tired. She put down her basket, and threw herself into a chair with a sigh.

"Get me a drop of something, Kwei child, do," she gasped. "I've quite knocked myself up carrying that great heavy basket, and my head aches to that degree I don't know what to do. I am sure there must be thunder in the air, or something worse. Oh dear, dear, what shall I do?" and to Kwei's dismay she turned quite white, or rather green, and fell off her chair.

Kwei had the sense to put some cold water to her lips and forehead, and presently she revived, but she still looked very pale and strange.

"Help me to my bed, child," she said faintly; "I feel very ill."

So Kwei helped her up stairs, and then got

her to bed with a good deal of difficulty. She sat by her till at last she fell into a restless sleep, but the next morning she was so ill that she could not rise from her bed; the consequence was that Vanstrump was even more cross than usual. But his ill temper did not cure his poor wife, who got worse and worse, and on the third day she was so bad that her husband felt obliged to send for a doctor, though he much begrudged the money it cost.

When the doctor did come, he shook his head, and said he ought to have been called in sooner, for the patient was very bad indeed. She heard him whispering to her husband outside the door, and insisted on knowing what he said.

"Am I going to die?" cried the poor woman.

Vanstrump pretended not to hear the question, and went down stairs to the shop.

"Go up and attend to your mistress," he said to Kwei. "She is very ill, and must not be left."

Mrs. Vanstrump was indeed in a sad state.

"Oh, Kwei," she said, "I do believe the doctor thinks I am going to die. *Do* tell me what he said."

"I do not know," answered Kwei. "I was in the shop."

"I am sure he does think so, and I know it

is true. I *feel* it. Oh dear what shall I do, what shall I do?"

"I don't believe it," said Kwei, as she sat down beside the bed. "You must not leave me. I wish I could die too. I cannot stay alone with him," and the girl began to cry, for now she saw that Mrs. Vanstrump was the only friend she had left in the world, and perhaps she was going to lose her too. It did seem a hard case.

Kwei's tears seemed to comfort the sick woman.

"Shall you really be sorry to lose me, Kwei?" she said.

"Oh yes, yes!" sobbed Kwei.

"Well, I have tried to be kind to you, but I did not think you knew it. I thought no one in the world cared for me," and the unaccustomed tears gathered in her eyes, and fell slowly down her cheeks. She lay silent for some time, with her eyes shut, and Kwei thought she was asleep.

Presently she looked up, and said,—

"I have been thinking about my poor mother. She taught me many good things when I was a little girl, but I have almost forgotten them. How sorry she would be to know what a bad woman I have been! And I have never taught

you anything good either, Kwei,—God forgive me! Poor child, it is too late now."

She spoke with a slow feeble voice, and the effort seemed to tire her: she fell into a little doze. When she woke up, she said,—

"I wish I had some one to pray with me—I have forgotten how."

"I can pray," whispered Kwei.

"*You?*" answered her mistress in surprise.

"Yes; my lady taught me. Shall I say my prayer?"

"Oh, yes; do, do," answered the woman eagerly.

So Kwei knelt down, and said the Lord's Prayer, and the other little prayer Mrs. Lovelace had taught her.

"Thank you, bless you!" said the sick woman. "I suppose you don't know any hymns. I used to be so fond of hymns when I was a little girl, and so was my poor mother."

"Yes I do know hymns," said Kwei, "I know a great many; shall I say them?"

"Yes, yes!"

So then the Chinese girl repeated one or two.

Mrs. Vanstrump lay and listened, and gradually a calm peaceful look came over her poor suffering face.

"Thank you, child, thank you," she murmured. "I like that one,—

"When Jesus was here among men,"

"Say that again—

"I shall see Him and hear Him above."

So Kwei said the hymn again:

"I think when I read the sweet story of old,
How Jesus was here among men,
And called little children like lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.

I wish that His hands had been placed on *my* head,
That His arms had been thrown around *me*,
And that *I* might have seen His kind looks, when He said,
'Let the little ones come unto Me.'

Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share of His love;
And if I thus earnestly seek Him below,
I shall see Him and hear Him above."

"See Him and hear Him above," repeated Mrs. Vanstrump after her. "Do you think it can be true, Kwei?"

"Yes; I am *sure* it is true, because my lady said so."

"My mother said so, too. I think it must be

true. Yes; see Him, and hear—only fancy! I think I will go to sleep now for a little while, dear, if you will draw down the blind."

She slept for an hour or two, and Kwei prepared some nice tea for her as soon as she woke, which her patient seemed to enjoy.

"I have had such a nice dream," she said. "I thought I saw my mother in a beautiful bright place; and I think I shall go there very soon. Can you say me another hymn, dear?"

When Kwei had finished, Mrs. Vanstrump said,—

"To think that a poor heathen girl like you should teach me, when I ought to have taught you! I have been very, very wicked. Can you ever forgive me for all my unkindness?"

"You have not been unkind," answered Kwei.

"Yes, I was very unkind to you at first; but I did not mean to be lately. If you could kiss me, and say you forgive me, I think I should feel more happy."

The tears rolled fast down Kwei's cheeks as she stooped and kissed the poor woman—the first kiss she had given any one for many a long day.

"It is not you I ought to forgive; it is him. I do hate him. I cannot help it; but my lady told me it was very wrong. She said I ought to try to forgive him. Jesus forgave every one when He was on the cross. But it is so hard, I cannot do it," said the poor Chinese.

"Try, dear, try. You will be happier if you can. Hating people only makes one feel bad; but it is hard to forgive, I know. I wish you would read to me, Kwei. Can you read?"

"Only just a little."

"Well, if you don't mind trying, you will find a book at the bottom of that old trunk; it was my mother's, but I have hardly ever opened it since she died, and now I am too ill to read myself; but I think I could find the place."

Kwei brought her the book. It was a large Testament, and evidently well read, for it was much thumbed and turned down in many places.

Mrs. Vanstrump looked at the book for a long time. The sight of it brought back other happier days to her mind. She sighed heavily, and turned to an account of the crucifixion, which she asked Kwei to read. Kwei read it as well as she could; it was a difficult task to her, but the words had once been very familiar

to her listener, and they now seemed to have fresh meaning. And many times she clasped her hands together, and lifted them up, as if in prayer.

When the reading was finished, Mrs. Vanstrump said she would like to speak to her husband, so Kwei went down to the shop and sent him up. The doctor had told him plainly that there was no hope of his wife's recovery, and he showed his sorrow by being even more surly than usual. He remained a long time in the sick-room; and when he came down there was a most unusual moisture in his eyes. He drank off a glass of brandy, and then desired Kwei to go to her mistress, and not leave her again till she was "better," for still he flattered himself that she would be better in a few days. And so she would, poor woman—more than better—*well*—well for evermore.

"Kwei, dear," she whispered as the girl entered the room; "he has promised never to be unkind to you any more."

Just to pacify his wife, Vanstrump had made this promise, which she insisted on his repeating in the child's presence.

During the rest of her illness, Mrs. Vanstrump could hardly bear Kwei out of her sight. They

clung to each other like mother and child, though there had never been much affection between them before.

When the poor sufferer was in a paroxysm of pain, nothing soothed her so much as to hear the Chinese girl repeat one of her childish hymns.

One evening, when she felt a little stronger than usual, she said, "Try to be good and patient with poor Van, Kwei dear. He will not have a friend left in the world when I am gone."

"He is not my friend; I cannot be his," answered Kwei. "I hate him so."

"Don't say that, poor child! But I cannot wonder; we have not been kind to you, and it *is* hard to be patient. But you remember what *He* said, 'Father, forgive them.'"

"But I cannot. If you do go I shall run away. I will not live here any longer. Some night he would come home and kill me."

Mrs. Vanstrump thought it only too likely that the man might attempt something of the sort, in one of his drunken fits, when there was no one near to protect the girl from his fury. She could not find it in her heart to persuade Kwei to remain in such danger. So she said,—

"Well, if you could manage to get away, Kwei;—but where would you go to?"

"I would try to find my lady."

"Yes—yes—if you could find her, that would be the best thing," she said, drowsily, and fell into a doze.

The next day Mrs. Vanstrump was worse. She wandered very much, and kept talking about her mother, and things that had happened when she was a child, and when "Van," as she called him, was courting her. She was very restless, and wanted to be moved every few minutes.

Towards evening she became quiet and sleepy. Her husband thought she had taken a favourable turn, and went downstairs; but she missed him directly, and called, "Van! Van! Where is he gone?"

She looked so distressed that Kwei called him back.

"Come here, and kiss me once more, Van dear," said the wife.

He came and stooped down to kiss her. She folded her thin white arms round his neck, and pressed him to her with all her little remaining strength. "Meet me in heaven, my dearest, my love," she whispered faintly. "Promise me you will."

He muttered something, but she looked only half satisfied, and murmured some words of prayer. Then she sank back, exhausted by the effort she had made. They almost thought her gone; but in a few moments she opened her eyes again, and whispered,—

"Give me one kiss, Kwei dear. Thank you for being so kind to me. God will bless you."

Kwei kissed the parched lips, and sat down by the bed, holding the cold hand, and weeping bitterly. There was silence in the room for some minutes; then the dying woman opened her eyes wide for one moment, and said,—

"See Him and hear Him! see Him and hear—" drew a deep breath, and all was still. The angel of death had gently laid his hand upon her.

CHAPTER XVI.

KWEI MAKES AN ATTEMPT.

VANSTRUMP did feel his wife's death as much as his selfish nature was capable of doing. She was the only real friend he had ever possessed, and he felt strange and lonely without her, and sometimes even his conscience would reproach him for his unkindness to her; but that he could not stand, and he used to go out and drown grief in beer or brandy. At last he came to the conclusion that this was the best thing he could do, for his house was anything but comfortable now that there was no one to look after him and attend to his wants. After drinking deeply at night, he was sure to sleep long and heavily in the morning, and to wake up half stupified at last. The very sight of Kwei irritated him now, for he could not quite forget the half promise he had made to his dying wife. As the business had been very

prosperous lately, Vanstrump engaged a man to look after the shop and sleep in the house, so that he could come in and out as he pleased himself.

Poor Kwei's life was more wretched and lonely than ever. She hardly ever had a kind word spoken to her now, except occasionally from some good-natured customer. The shopman made her do all her own work, and a great deal of his too; so that by the time night came, she was often too tired even to undress, but threw herself on her wretched bed just as she was, in all her clothes, and so woke up miserable and unrefreshed in the morning. She began to long more eagerly than ever for one more sight of her dear lady; but how to find her out she knew not. She did not even know that she and Mrs. Lovelace were living in London, though many, many miles apart, to be sure. Kwei imagined she would have to take a journey in the train to some place a long way off, the name of which she had no idea of, where her lady lived, always in a beautiful garden. She knew it would cost money to get there. She had lived long enough in England to find out that very little could be done without money. And how was she to get it?—that was her great difficulty. She had

never received a penny of wages since she had lived in the eating-house. She imagined that if she could only get possession of a good sum of money, the rest would come easy enough. She thought and thought, but could see no other way; and she had no friend to advise or help her.

One night she had been kept up unusually late by customers. When they were at last all gone, and she had helped shut up the shop, she was so tired out that she threw herself on the door-mat, and in another minute was fast asleep. She had been lying there for about an hour, when she was roused by a violent knock. She started up with a cry, not remembering where she was.

"Curse you!" said a gruff and too well known voice, that immediately recalled her to herself. "Vhat are you doing here, you young good-for-noting? Get out of my vay, vill you?—trying to keep me out of my own house!"

It was Vanstrump, who had come home half intoxicated, and more than usually savage. Kwei was terrified, and tried to run away to her own den; but he put out his arm and stopped her, and with his other hand he gave her a blow which threw her on to the floor.

"Don't, don't! or I will kill you! I will!" she cried, as she jumped again to her feet, and rushed upon him, her little eyes glaring with fury. Her old spirit, which seemed quite crushed out of her, had revived once more; and she was in too great a passion to know what she was doing. She sprang upon her master like a wild creature, as she was, and seized him by the throat, and dug her long nails into the skin till the blood came.

"Help! murder!" shouted the man; for he felt really frightened: he was half strangled.

Dick, the shopman, was disturbed by the cries, and came running down with a light.

"What's up now?" he asked.

"Dis young tigress has nearly killed me, dat's all," replied Vanstrump, who was sobered by this time, and had managed to loosen her hands from her throat.

"Is she gone mad?" asked the man.

"Possessed, I should say," answered Vanstrump; "at any rate, it's not safe to leave her loose. Fetch me a rope, and I'll tie her up for the night."

But they could not find a rope handy, so were obliged to satisfy themselves with locking the girl into her own little bed-place, for room it

could not be called, Vanstrump first giving her sundry blows and kicks, which half stunned her. She was quiet enough now, for she was frightened at what she had done, and trembled at the thought of the punishment in store for her; for she knew the Dutchman too well to imagine she would easily escape.

It was a relief to hear the two men tramp heavily upstairs, for she was free from them at least for a few hours, though alone and in darkness. She sank upon her bed miserable enough, but with one strong determination; and that was, that this should be the *very last* night she would pass under Vanstrump's roof. With or without money, she had made up her mind that she would escape the next day; and with that thought she fell asleep once more. In her dreams, all the events of her life seemed muddled up together; but her determination was as strong as ever when she was aroused by Dick shouting at her to get up; for he found he could not get on without her help. He looked frightened when she came into the shop, and was very careful not to come too near her, for he half believed that she really was mad.

All the morning Kwei was watching for an

opportunity to slip out unobserved; but she was so busy waiting on the numerous customers that it seemed as though the time would never, never come. She thought perhaps in the afternoon the shop would not be so full. She was determined that, at any rate, she would be off before night; though her heart sank at the thought of wandering about lonely and penniless in the unknown streets; but even that did not appear so terrible as living any longer with the dreadful Dutchman.

It was towards sunset,—not that the sun ever made his appearance in that dismal little street,—and Kwei was growing quite nervous with impatience, when a man turned into the shop and called for tea and shrimps, "and a brown loaf, and anything else you have. Something substantial," he added, "for I'm well-nigh starved."

Kwei led him to the little back room, and soon spread the table and lighted the gas. The man ate his food quite ravenously: he did indeed seem hungry. He took little notice of Kwei, except to ask her what part of the world she came from. When he had finished his tea, he said he would pay his bill, and then have a nap on the sofa; for he was awfully tired.

Dick came as usual to receive the money. Kwei was never trusted to do that; but she was clearing away the tea-things at the time, and she observed that the man brought out a purse quite full of gold and silver. The idea immediately came into her head that if she could only get possession of that purse, everything else would be easy enough, so she lingered in the room as long as she could, tidying up. After paying his bill, the man put his purse back into his coat-tail pocket, and threw himself on to the sofa, and in a few minutes he was snoring heavily. Kwei stood looking at him and wondering whether she could manage to get at the coveted treasure, when Dick called her to the shop. She started and ran to him, leaving the parlour door a little way open, so that she could peep in.

There were a good many people in the shop, so that for the next quarter of an hour she was busy. By that time they had all gone, and Dick stepped out into the street to have a chat with a neighbour. Growler had followed him. Kwei thought that now or never was her time. So she cautiously opened the parlour door and slipped in, without making any noise. She stood looking at the man for a few moments,

hardly daring to breathe lest she should rouse him. He was lying at full length on the sofa, with his head resting on his hands, apparently in a profound sleep. His coat hung loosely from his arm, so that it touched the floor, and Kwei could see right into the pocket, at the bottom of which lay the leather purse, all stuffed out with the quantity of money it contained.

With noiseless steps Kwei crossed the room. She knelt down beside the sleeper, breathless with excitement. She stared into his face, and still he slept on. So, slowly and cautiously she slipped her hand into the pocket and seized the treasure, and again hastily and noiselessly crossed the room. Now she thought her troubles were over. Only a few steps and she would be free! In her hurry she opened the door too hastily, and made it creak. The noise startled the man, who suddenly sat up and called out, "Who's there?"

Kwei was so terrified that she could not move, but stood for a moment like one petrified. There was something in her manner that aroused the man's suspicions. He put his hand into his pocket and found that his purse was gone?"

"Oh, oh, my lady! That's your little game,

is it?" he cried. "But you see you were not quite quick enough."

At the sound of his voice Kwei recovered herself, and began to run, but the man caught her in an instant, and there was the purse in her hand.

Dick had returned to the shop, and hearing a noise, came to see what was the matter.

"Just call a policeman, will you?" said the man, quite coolly. "There's this little thief been robbing me. Your house will get a bad name if you keep such servants. I never could abide the Chinese vagabonds. I've seen a good bit of the world, and never knew any good of them yet."

All the time he was speaking, he held Kwei firmly by the shoulder. She stood shivering and quaking with fear, and wondering what would happen next. Not that she much cared, she thought. Almost any change would be for the better.

In a few minutes Dick had found a policeman, who, after hearing the case, asked Kwei what she had to say for herself?

She looked very dogged, and answered, "I don't care. I wanted all that money, and I'm very sorry he caught me."

"Poor thing! So young and so shameless!" muttered the man to himself.

In a few minutes more, Kwei was being taken off to the prison. She went along quietly enough, for the walk in the bright busy streets was quite a treat to her. She had not yet realized her disappointment, but only felt angry with herself for not managing more cleverly.

Vanstrump had gone to bed so late, and drunk so deep the night before, that he slept heavily all day, and never woke at all till evening.

He was lying in a half-sleeping state when he heard unusually loud voices below, so he lazily turned out of bed and threw on his clothes, and came down stairs to see what was "up."

He found Dick talking vehemently to a little crowd that had collected at the door.

"Vhat's all dis about?" he asked. "Get off wid you, you idle vagabonds. Don't be stopping up my doorway like dis. Be off wid you, I tell you."

As usual he was not in a very amiable temper, and the people soon walked away in groups, for the Dutchman was no favourite. When he had dispersed the crowd, Vanstrump turned to Dick to know what had happened. On hearing the story he went of course into a violent

rage, swore frightfully, and abused every one and everything. He was especially angry with Dick for not having called him down, but the man had really been afraid to do so.

"Dat girl have brought me noting but trouble from first to last. I was a fool ever to have anyting to do wid her; but she'll get some of her deserts now, dat's some comfort. I hope dey'll transport her for life, wid hard labour, dat I do. It's not half so much as she deserve;" and with that he went out, slamming the door, and as usual, turned into the nearest public-house.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEWS AT LAST.

"WHAT can be keeping your papa so late?" said Miss Lumley to Fanny. "I really think, dear, we had better have dinner. We have waited more than an hour, and I am getting quite faint."

"I am very hungry too," replied Fanny, as she rang the bell with great alacrity. "I suppose that horrid jury is keeping papa. I think it's a great shame. Why cannot they make Percy a juryman instead of papa? He has not half so much to do, and would find it rather fun."

"Many thanks," answered Percy; "but I am afraid the public do not appreciate my talents for judgment and sobriety so much as you do, my dear Fanny. I must confess I am thankful for it. But, hurrah! There's dinner at last!"

They had not been long at the table when Mr. Lumley came in, looking very tired. He did not speak for some time, when Fanny said,—

"Has that nasty jury kept you again, papa?"

"You may well call it a nasty jury," said Mr. Lumley. "It is a frightful hindrance to business, for I am obliged to do all my work afterwards. But to-day I hope it has not been lost labour. In fact I have been thoroughly interested in one case. I do believe I have discovered the poor Chinese girl at last. Que, what was her name?"

"O papa, you don't say so! Do tell us all about it, please."

"Wait, wait, there's no such hurry."

"But I really feel in an awful hurry. I cannot wait," said Fanny.

"I wish you would leave using that *awful* word. You know my dislike to strong language in a lady."

"But papa— "

"Well, my dear, you must exercise your patience till I have satisfied my hunger, and the cloth is cleared, and then I will tell you all about it."

It was no use to say anything more; so Fanny had to sit by, and watch Mr. Lumley finish his dinner, with the greatest impatience. At last he had really done, but he would not

begin his story till he had poured out his glass of port, and the servant had left the room.

"Now, papa, I am sure you can begin, for you have really eaten like an alderman, and if you do not begin at once, you will go to sleep, and that would be too dreadful."

"Well, my dear, what I have to tell you is simply this: a number of small cases were tried to-day, petty larceny and such-like offences; among the rest a Chinese girl was brought up for stealing a man's purse in an eating-house. I thought the face was familiar to me as soon as she appeared; and when she spoke, I had little doubt about it. So I made inquiries afterwards, and find it is the very same girl Ellen took so much interest in a year or two ago."

"My poor godchild! Well, I am glad," exclaimed Percy.

"How delighted Nelly will be!" cried Fanny. "But where is she? Did not you bring her home with you?"

"Certainly not; she is in prison."

"In prison!" said Mrs. Lumley. "Surely, my dear, you could have prevented that."

"Indeed, I could have done no such thing; unfortunately there was no doubt of her guilt, and no one appeared to speak for her."

"But what did she say for herself? I did not think my child would turn out a thief; but such is life!" said Percy.

"She seemed too confused and indifferent to say anything; in fact, I question whether she understood half that passed."

"And is she really in prison now, poor child?"

"Yes; she was sentenced to six weeks."

"And did you find out where she has been all this time, papa?" asked Fanny.

"Yes, I did, my dear. It seems she has been serving as waitress in an eating-house kept by a Dutchman. I took down his name and address in my pocket-book. Let's see; here it is—Vanstrump."

"Vanstrump!" cried Percy. "Why, that is the very man Ellen got her from—the ship-steward. How in the world did he get hold of her, I wonder? Poor child! she must have led a terrible life; for according to Nell's account he is a perfect wretch."

"Well, I shall write and tell Nelly at once," said Fanny. "She will be so pleased; but I am very sorry poor Kwei has turned out a thief."

"I dare say her master put her up to it," said Percy.

"No, there was no reason to suppose that he did," said Mr. Lumley. "It was quite her own doing, and she was going to run away with the money; that was all we could get out of her."

"I dare say she was running away because she was so miserable," remarked Mrs. Lumley.

It was nearly two years since Kwei was lost; and her friends had for a long time given up all hope of ever finding her again, all except Mrs. Lovelace; *she* still clung to the belief that the little wanderer would be brought back some day, and nightly prayed that the Father of all would bless her and keep her wherever she might be. But it seemed quite useless to continue the search, as not a clue could be found anywhere.

It was such a painful subject to poor Miss Lumley, that Kwei's name was never mentioned in her presence now. She always declared that it was a judgment upon her for her self-conceit in fancying she could manage the girl better than Ellen did.

Ellen Lovelace with her boy had been staying at their aunt's for some time before the discovery of Kwei, but directly she heard the news, Mrs. Lovelace left Charley, and came

up to London. The very next morning Percy took her to the prison, for she was all impatience to see the poor wanderer again.

Mr. Lumley had obtained permission for his family to visit the prisoner as often as they liked; and Percy had already been to see Kwei once or twice. She seemed very surprised and pleased to see him, but she kept asking for "her lady," and only shook her head doubtingly when he said his sister would come very soon, as though she did not believe it. He could not make her understand that she would really leave the prison soon. She had become quite resigned to her life there.

Percy left his sister when he had seen her safely through the gates of the prison; he thought she had better see Kwei alone for the first time. Mrs. Lovelace felt a strange thrill when she heard those great gates close behind her with a heavy clang, As she followed the jailor along the cold dreary passages, she thought of all the wickedness and misery shut up in that great building, and how sad it was to find the child in such a place; but still she was very thankful to have found her at all. The jailer seemed to take it all as a matter of course. After leading the way through a

perfect labyrinth of passages, he stopped at a door exactly like a hundred others they had passed, and said,—

"Here you are, ma'am; number 345. Rather a queer customer; we can't get much out of her, one way or t'other. I'll come again in an hour, ma'am, when she takes her exercise. Obliged to be as punctual as clockwork here, ma'am," and he touched his cap, and opening the door with a big key, allowed Mrs. Lovelace to pass in, and locked it again after her.

What a dreary place it was; a small narrow cell, clean enough to be sure, but so bare and cold! A chair, a table, and a bed were all the furniture; the walls were painted a yellowish grey, and there was a small window so high up that only a little London smoke could be seen out of it. Mrs. Lovelace looked all round and sighed, and then her eyes rested on the figure before her.

On the chair sat poor Kwei, hanging her head in a listless desponding way, but her fingers were hard at work picking oakum. She was much grown since Mrs. Lovelace had last seen her, two years ago; she had quite lost her childish simple look, and she was very thin. Her cheeks were sunken and hollow, and

altogether she had an uncared-for wretched appearance; her very attitude showed despair. At the noise of the shutting of the door she looked up languidly, as though it were a matter of indifference to her who came or who went. But Mrs. Lovelace noticed that there was a nervous frightened look in her eyes, when she first raised them, which suddenly turned to one of wonder and joy.

Kwei stared for one moment in amazement, then she stretched out her arms and gave a little cry, and fell sobbing at her lady's feet. Ellen stooped down and gently raised the girl, and kissed her forehead. "I am so glad to find my Kwei again," she whispered; "so glad and so thankful."

But Kwei said nothing; she only sobbed.

"Are not you glad too, Kwei dear?"

"Oh yes, yes," said the girl at last, and then she began to talk thick and fast. "It was your good God brought you here. I asked Him to every day, but it seemed so long. I began to be very angry; but now I will love Him always, always," and she clung closer and closer to her new found friend.

"Yes, my child, I do hope so; but when you saw my brother, you must have known I would come too."

KWEI IN PRISON. [*Page* 146.

"Yes; he said so, but I did not believe. I thought you were gone away, like every one kind and good—like Mrs. Vanstrump and my own mother, so long ago. Don't go ever again, will you?"

"When you come out of this prison, I hope you will not leave *me* again. But you have other friends too. Is not Percy kind and good to you?"

"Oh yes; but he is not you! You are my own lady, that I love. Look here," and she pulled from the bosom of her dress the portrait she had always treasured, now quite stained and faded from constant fondling. She looked at it, and kissed it, and then put it back in its hiding-place with a bright smile, looking up at the original.

"Now tell me all about yourself, my child. How did you get lost, and where have you been all this time?" said Mrs. Lovelace, as she sat down and took the girl's hand between her own.

Kwei nestled up against her lady, and with the help of many questions, told the story of all her troubles and adventures. She had finished telling about Mrs. Vanstrump's death, and how unhappy she had been after it, when

she paused and hung her head. Somehow she felt ashamed to go on.

"Well, Kwei, go on," said Mrs. Lovelace. "What happened then?"

"Then—then," said Kwei after a pause, "they brought me here."

"But why did they bring you here, my child?"

Kwei looked down, and did not answer.

"Don't you know?" she said at last.

"You tell me, my dear. Do not be afraid to tell me everything—you know I shall judge you kindly. Come, why was it?" answered Mrs. Lovelace.

But it was some minutes before Kwei could find courage to go on. Now, for the first time, she felt ashamed of what she had done. She had been scolded and punished for her theft, but all that had only made her feel angry. Now that she was in the presence of one she knew to be pure and good, who yet still spoke to her in words of love, she felt that she had sinned, and she also began to be sorry for her sin, for Kwei had a wonderfully good memory. She had not forgotten anything that Mrs. Lovelace had once taught her, and she had understood its meaning too. So now, at Mrs. Lovelace's words, all the past flashed before her in a new,

true light. She could not bear to make her confession, but those searching eyes were upon her, and she felt there was no escape.

Kwei's yellow face grew almost red, as at last she went on in a whisper,—

"I took the man's money. I was so unhappy, and I wanted to run away and find you. I could not stay there any more, and she told me I might try to go; and then a man came and had tea, and I saw his purse all full of silver and gold; and I thought if I could get that I should find you quite well; and he went to sleep on the sofa, and I saw the purse in his pocket, and I took it."

"Well, what happened then?"

"I felt very frightened, and I just crept softly across the room with the purse in my hand; but the door made a noise, and he woke and ran at me and caught me."

"Well, my dear?"

"Then Dick came and a lot of people, and there was a great noise and talk; and a big man brought me away all through the streets; they looked so bright and pretty—shops with lamps in them and beautiful things, and lots of people talking and laughing. I looked for you, but you were not there, and the man brought me

to some great doors, and took me to a dark place, and locked me up. At first I was frightened, and thought Van would come and beat me; but he never came, so then I didn't mind. Then, after a long time, one day they took me to a great place, and a lot of people and Mr. Lumley sat there, but he did not see me. They made me stand up, and talked to me, but I could not understand. Every one looked at me so. I could not speak, for I could not remember. Then a funny man with a queer head, in a big chair said something, and Mr. Lumley spoke to me, and after that they brought me here; and then Mr. Percy and Miss Fanny came, and I felt very glad, but I wanted you."

Mrs. Lovelace was quite touched by poor Kwei's tale. She felt very indignant at the cruel treatment she had received—and could not then speak to her of her fault.

"I hope no one will ever be unkind and cruel to you again, my dear," she said. "As soon as you can leave this place you shall come and live with me again, and I will try to make you happy."

Kwei could hardly speak for joy.

"When shall I come—soon?"

"You know, dear, you must stay here some

weeks longer, but I will come to see you very often. I must leave you now, but I will come again very soon. Look at these beautiful flowers when I am gone, and try to think about the kind God in heaven, who has brought you back to your friends at last," and she gave Kwei a bunch of fresh primroses and violets.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RELEASE FROM BONDAGE.

DURING the rest of Kwei's imprisonment, Mrs. Lovelace visited her constantly, and took a great deal of pains to make her recover the ground she had lost in the last two years. It was rather a dispiriting task; for, as Kwei had begun to lose hope, she had also lost all care about herself, and she had learnt, too, a great deal of evil, though her ignorance of English and of the world had been a great protection to her. But now she was thoroughly roused from her apathy: for the sake of pleasing her dear lady she did her very best to improve, and by the time she had to leave her prison she had made considerable progress. She had repented of her sin, and she had been punished for it, and now Mrs. Lovelace wished to make her forget the past as much as possible, and to begin a new life.

It was a lovely spring morning at Eastertide

when Kwei was to be released from the gloomy prison. Mrs. Lovelace and Percy went to fetch her at the appointed hour. They brought with them a complete suit of new clothes, which Kwei put on in her cell; so that she came out of prison, both inside and out, a very different person from what she had gone in.

"Come, my dear," said Mrs. Lovelace; "now you must say good-bye for ever to this place. The bad, unhappy past is gone, and I hope you are going to begin a bright new life; but don't you think you might say your prayers here for the last time? You really have much to thank God for. If we had not found you here what would have become of you? You would have been worse off than ever."

So they knelt down side by side, and said the Lord's Prayer.

"I am glad you are coming out of prison at Easter," said Mrs. Lovelace; "for this is the time when our Lord rose from the prison of the grave; the time when we should strive to rise with Him from the power of old sins and bad habits, and lead a new, better life—the beginning of the life we hope to live above."

"Yes," said Kwei, in a low voice. "But what can I do? I can be no use to any one."

"You need only do your duty, your very best, wherever you are, my dear," said Mrs. Lovelace; and after a pause, she added, "But you might really be a great deal of use, Kwei—do you remember what Miss Lumley wanted you to be?"

"Yes; she wanted me to go back to China, and be a teacher."

"And do not you think that would be a *very* useful, noble life,—to go and teach poor children?"

"Oh yes; but I am not fit."

"Not yet, my dear, of course; but if you wished it we would try to make you. However, there is plenty of time to think about that."

Kwei did not speak again for some minutes, but she looked very grave. Just as she was ready to go she said, "Would *you* like me to go to China and teach, lady?"

"Yes, more than anything else. But I would not have you try only to please me; it must be a much higher motive, and you must feel some calling in yourself, or you would not be suitable."

"But if you wish it, I would like to try."

"Well, dear, we will talk about it again six months hence; then we shall all know better

what you are fit for. Now we must go. I hear the jailor coming with his bunch of keys."

So for the last time the doors of the prison were opened and closed upon the little Chinese.

Percy was waiting in the street in a nice open carriage, into which he handed his sister and Kwei, who looked quite fresh and smart in her new clothes.

"Welcome back to liberty, and to your old friends," said Percy, giving her hand a hearty shake.

Kwei's eyes filled with tears as she thanked him.

"I really am uncommonly glad to see you back again, child. I have felt such a sense of responsibility ever since I *stood* for you, as they say—but you are hardly to be called a *child* any longer; you are almost a young woman, I do declare." And so he chatted on, reminding Kwei of many things that had happened in the old days, all of which she remembered perfectly.

"And how about the smoking?" he asked. "Do you still retain that pernicious habit?"

"No. I have never smoked again; but I always keep this here," answered Kwei, and she took the little pipe Percy had given her from its hiding-place.

He laughed, and seemed pleased, "Quite a faithful creature," he said in an undertone. "But what made you leave off smoking? I should have thought that eating-house was the very place to encourage you in it?"

"Oh yes; they often tried to make me, but they did not know I could. I often felt I should like to; but then I thought about you and my lady, and I would not. You told me not to."

"Well, I only wish I had as much strength to resist temptation—but I am so weak," said Percy, looking at the Chinese girl with real admiration. "She has got the right stuff in her, depend upon it, and we shall make something of her before we have done," he went on, turning to his sister.

"Yes, I do hope we shall," answered Mrs. Lovelace. "You are my good brave Kwei."

This praise made the tears come again into Kwei's eyes. It had seemed to her a matter of course to make this little effort of self-denial to please her friends, and she did not think she deserved any praise at all for it; but she felt very happy—happier than she had ever thought to be again.

"Come, come, no water-butts are to be

tapped to-day," said Percy. "Just dry those eyes, and look about you. Don't all the shops look pretty?"

"Yes; and all the people and everything," answered Kwei.

"I think I must buy you a little present as a token of approbation. What would you like? a doll?"

"My dear Percy, how ridiculous you are," said his sister. "She is much too big for a doll."

"Well, what shall it be then? Dolls are the only things girls care for. Here, let us stop at this shop, and she shall choose for herself."

They went into the shop, and after a great deal of deliberation Kwei decided on a work-box, which Percy had fitted up with every-thing necessary. Kwei never parted with that workbox as long as she lived.

At last the long drive was over, and the Chinese girl was once more in Mr. Lumley's house. Every one welcomed her, for every one was glad to see her again. Even the servants had taken a great interest in her, and Mr. Lumley patted her head, and gave her half a crown. And again Kwei felt half inclined to cry. She was most anxious to see the baby, who as usual was playing in the garden. Kwei

was quite surprised to find what a great boy he had grown; he could run about and talk, and she had expected to find him still a baby. He was very amiable to her, and allowed her to take him up in her arms and kiss him. The very dog too jumped up to her as though he knew her, and licked her hands by way of welcome. That was indeed a happy day for the poor girl. She ran about, looking into every hole and corner, and hardly knew how to contain herself for delight. She almost felt as though she had never been away, and for the time forgot the dark gloomy past, with all its troubles. It was with a heart full of gratitude and high resolves that Kwei lay down on her little white bed that night, and fell into a deep and peaceful sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

PERCY MEETS WITH ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT.

THERE is not much to tell of the summer Kwei spent after she returned to her friends. It passed quietly and uneventfully, as happy times often do. Mrs. Lovelace taught her regularly for some hours every day, and Kwei got on very well; for though she was not clever, she was very persevering, and had such a good memory, that when she had once learnt a thing she never forgot it.

In the autumn, Mrs. Lovelace and her family, consisting of her little boy Charley, his nurse, and Kwei, went to Oldport, where she took a cottage close to the sea shore. There they saw a great deal of Miss Lumley: she used to call on her niece every day, and take long walks with her. Sometimes Kwei was allowed to accompany them on these walks.

Miss Lumley had lost all desire to interfere

in the girl's training, but she could not resist the temptation to give her an occasional lecture, which Kwei received humbly enough, but did not lay much to heart. One word from Mrs. Lovelace had more effect upon her than a dozen from Miss Lumley.

Kwei could not bear to go into the town of Oldport; it made her quite frightened, and always reminded her of the day when she wandered about so forlornly, and at last fell into the clutches of the Dutchman.

Somehow, she always expected to see his face peering at her from some dark archway. In vain her lady assured her that she was quite safe now; she could not but believe that some hidden danger was lurking near her. This fear seemed to have such an effect upon the poor girl, that Mrs. Lovelace wrote to her brother, and asked him to try to find out the man. She thought it would be better for Kwei to hear some certain news of him, than to imagine he might be always dogging her footsteps.

In a few days Percy wrote to say he had succeeded in finding "the original Chinese Tea-house," as it was called. Vanstrump was there; he appeared to be half intoxicated, and

was very insolent. He declared that Kwei had come back to him entirely of her own accord; that he considered it quite an interposition of Providence, to restore to him his own property; that he had always treated her with the greatest kindness, notwithstanding her ferocious ingratitude; that he had given her the best of everything, and his wife had made her a magnificent Chinese garment; that she had repaid all their kindness by constant ill-temper and neglect of her work; in fact, he believed she had worried his poor wife into her grave; and finally, she had attacked him like a wild beast, nearly killed him, and made them all afraid of their lives, so that they were obliged to lock her up for the night, or there would not have been a living being in the house by morning. "Let her deny it all if she can," he finished up by saying. "It is all true as true, and I wish you joy of your bargain; but I'll have my revenge yet. She's not seen the last of Vanstrump by a very great deal."

Percy said he listened quietly to all the man had to say, and then told him he had better be careful. He might be severely punished by retaining a person in his house against her will; for he could not deny that he had never allowed

Kwei to go out of doors, and had paid her no wages.

"But I bought her, and paid for her, years ago," replied the man. "She is my own property."

"And my sister bought her of you; she has the paper in which you signed away all right or claim over her."

The man seemed to have forgotten that little fact, and looked rather taken aback when it was mentioned.

"I then threatened to have him taken up for cruelty," continued Percy; "and then the wretch showed plainly enough what an arrant coward he is. They say in the copy books, 'Cowards are cruel,' and it is true enough. He really turned pale with fright, and began to cringe, and make all sorts of excuses. I told him I would have no mercy, and left him in a state of abject terror. I never felt so indignant in my life, and pity poor Kwei more than ever. But on consideration I am afraid we have no proofs of his cruelty, no witnesses—and that he is beyond the reach of the law, though it is a shame that it should be so; and as we do not want to make fools of ourselves, and give him cause to triumph over us, we must leave things

as they are, and do nothing, though it is rather a humiliating course. I shall do what I can to make his life a burden to him by constant threats of what I intend to do; but my opinion is that he will soon drink himself into fits, or his grave, or something horrible."

This letter was not very satisfactory to Mrs. Lovelace, but she told Kwei that she might feel herself quite safe in Oldport, as Vanstrump was still in his shop in the City. She wrote to her brother, and said she really thought it their duty to punish such a man by the law, if it were in their power, and begged him to make inquiries. She thought Percy's idea of punishing him by constant threats a very weak one, as of course he would soon see the threats meant nothing.

It was some time before Ellen received any answer to this letter. Then Percy wrote,—

"DEAR NELL,—I have been doing my very best to carry out your orders. I consulted a legal friend, and he went into the case thoroughly, and thought we might do something—though he reminded me that revenge is a very expensive luxury; but what is filthy lucre compared to the jewel justice? So I

determined, if needs be, to sell my studs and proceed. Well, everything seemed in a fair way; so one dark night we took a detective, and went to the back slums to catch our bird. I quite enjoyed the excitement of it, and felt awfully wicked,—like a burglar or something in that line. We went with vengeance burning in our manly breasts, and the result was—what do you think? I blush to tell it; but truth must come out—the bird had flown!

"He had sold the business, and had gone off a week before. Imagine my disgust! The present proprietor of the establishment can tell us nothing of him. We have put men on the scent, but can find no trace. I think he must have resumed his old trade, or gone off in some ship. So for the present, though it is a nasty word to have to write, I fear I must say *failure;* but I hope you will believe I have done my best. Believe me your affectionate though unworthy brother,

"PERCY LUMLEY.

"P.S.—Does not it say somewhere, '*vengeance is mine,*' etc., etc.?"

Mrs. Lovelace felt very much disappointed when she read this letter; but she saw there

was nothing more to be done—at present, at least—or perhaps Percy was right, and they had no business to think of vengeance. She did not tell Kwei what had happened, as she thought it might only revive her old terrors to think that her enemy was wandering about the world like a roaring lion. Miss Lumley said, no doubt it was all for the best; they had better think no more about the bad man.

CHAPTER XX.

KWEI BEGINS TO FULFIL HER DESTINY AFTER MISS LUMLEY'S OWN HEART.

ONE morning, Kwei took little Charley and her sewing, and went down to the sands. She told the child to play while she did her work. But Charley was soon tired of playing all by himself; so he came toddling up to Kwei, and said, "Come Ki, Ki; come and play with me; build me a beautiful bridge and a river, like mamma does."

"I don't know how to build a bridge," answered Kwei.

"Then you are not clever, like my mamma. But come, and I will teach you;" and he pulled her work out of her hands.

Kwei was rather tired of sewing, so she easily yielded to Charley's request; and soon the two were quite engrossed in constructing a canal from the sea, with numerous bridges over

it. It was a very exciting moment to both, when the water first began to flow in; which it did in a most satisfactory manner.

"Now we ought to have some boats," said Kwei.

"Yes, to be sure," replied Charley; "but how shall we make them? Mamma knows how with paper; but I suppose you don't, as you are not clever."

"Yes, I do; I have seen her make them for you," said Kwei.

Charley looked doubtful; but he produced a sheet of crumpled paper from the chaos in his pocket, and handed it to Kwei. The paper was all stickey, from having contained sweets; but that did not signify to Kwei, who soon made quite a little fleet of boats.

Charley was delighted as he launched one of his "ships" after another, and they sailed quite fast along the little stream. Kwei knelt by him, laughing too.

"I wish you could make one big enough for us to get into, Ki," said the child. "Do you think you could, if I bought a big piece of brown paper with my penny?"

"I wish I could, too," said Kwei, "but it would not be strong enough. If I could, we

would all get into it, and go all across the great sea, back to China."

"Yes. My papa is in China. He will come and fetch me and mamma some day, in a big ship; won't he, Ki?"

"Yes; and me, too, I hope. You know, Charley, I am Chinese. I used to live always in a big boat."

"Did you?" said Charley. "How nice! Shall I always live in a boat when I go to China?"

"I don't know; I don't think so."

"Who did you live with in the boat?"

"Oh, a great lot of people; women who were very cross, and beat me. But when I was very little there was one who was very good and beautiful, and never cross; but she went away, and died. I think she was my mamma. She could not walk; she had small, small feet, not so big as yours; and dear little eyes."

"What a funny mamma!" said Charley. "My mamma can walk, and has great big eyes. I don't like your mamma."

"But I do. I can only see her when I half shut my eyes, a very long way off; but I pray for her every night."

"But she is dead, and gone away like my little brother and sister," said Charley solemnly.

"Yes; but I want her to come to your English heaven with me, when I die. And as soon as I am good enough, I want to go with my lady, and teach the poor little girls in China about your good God; and then they will go to your nice heaven too."

"Is China pretty?" said Charley.

"Oh, yes; and nice and warm too; not cold like this; and all the people are very clever. I wish they all knew your good God."

"Have they another god?" said Charley, looking puzzled. "How funny! I thought we all had the same."

"They have nasty ugly gods made of stone," answered Kwei. "But when I am a woman I shall teach them better, if my lady will let me," and her eyes assumed a dreamy far-away look, as though she could see the distant country her little heart yearned for.

She was startled by a hand being laid gently on her shoulder, and a soft voice saying, "Yes, Kwei, your lady will let you; and she is very glad to hear you say you wish it."

Kwei flushed all over, and looking up, saw Mrs. Lovelace, who had been standing near them for some time, and so heard most of the conversation. She sat down beside Kwei, and

said, "You run and play with your boats, Charley, my man,—see, the wind is blowing them all away,—and let me talk to Kwei.

"So you really wish to go back to China, my dear," she went on, turning to the Chinese girl. "I did not think you could remember anything about it."

"Yes; I can remember it quite well, and ever since I came away from the prison I have thought about what you said there; and now I am quite sure I should like to go, if I can," answered Kwei.

"Why do you wish it, my dear? Is it to please me?"

"To please you a little bit, but most to do some good. I have been very bad all my life, and my people are very bad, and I want to tell them about the kind God who loves them, and His Son who died for them. I think they would believe more if I told them, because I am Chinese, and bad like them, and He has been so good to me."

"Well, you could not have a better motive, my child. We must begin to think seriously about it at once. You will be old enough to go in a few more years."

"Will you go too, lady? It would make me so unhappy to leave you."

"Yes, dear; I hope I shall go too, as soon as Charley is strong enough to leave England. You know my husband and my home are in China, so I must love it."

And now the wistful longing look came into Mrs. Lovelace's face as she thought of her treasures across the sea.

Mr. Lovelace was always saying he hoped to be able to come to England for a few months very soon; but somehow the time was always being put off, till his wife's heart grew sick with longing.

After a little more conversation, Mrs. Lovelace left Kwei, to go and consult with Miss Lumley; for she thought, as the girl's mind seemed really made up, the sooner she began some definite training the better.

Miss Lumley was much gratified to hear the good news. She had never abandoned her pet scheme of turning Kwei into a missionary, though she had hardly hoped the girl herself would prove so ready to enter into it. But she had made every necessary inquiry, and knew exactly the proper way to set to work. This was quite a relief to Mrs. Lovelace, for her own notions had been very vague.

"Of course, my dear," said Mrs. Lumley,

"the first thing will be to send her as a scholar to the training-school, in London. When she has been there a sufficient time she will become a monitor, and in due time a sort of pupil-teacher; that is, she herself will be taught to teach, always with a view to her future work. Here are all the papers about it," added the lady, as she went to her desk. "You see the term will commence in another fortnight. She had better begin then. There are houses near where they would take her in to board, and look after her a little; but I think we had better not lose sight of her again. I should be quite willing to take her with me into a small lodging, if you would trust her to me. I could find plenty to occupy myself with in town for the winter."

"Well, aunt, you certainly are a wonderful woman!" exclaimed Ellen. "You seem to know all about everything. It all looks so easy and straightforward now; it has quite taken a burden off my mind. But I would not think of such a thing as allowing you to give up a whole winter to Kwei, in that way. She has been trouble enough to you already. I *must* take lodgings somewhere, and it may as well be in town as anywhere else; if you will come up

and help me to find them, and stay with me in them, I shall think it very kind."

So after a little more discussion the affair was settled. By the end of the week the whole party had left Oldport and gone to Mr. Lumley's; and before the school-term began they were comfortably settled in lodgings near Russell Square. Kwei was quite delighted. She went to school the first day with a brave eager heart, determined to do her very utmost to get on, and repay all the kindness bestowed upon her.

CHAPTER XXI.

SIX YEARS AFTER.

IT was a cold night in November; Mrs. Lovelace was sitting by the fire, reading; but every now and then looking up fondly at her son Charley, who sat with both his elbows on the table, and his hands buried in his hair, quite absorbed in his lessons. He had been advanced for some time to the dignity of knickerbockers, and was a fine healthy-looking boy, one that any mother might have been proud of.

"Never say die. I've done it at last, and it all comes quite right," he said presently, with a yawn.

"What comes right, Charley?" asked his mother.

"Why, this horrid long sum. But I don't like to be conquered by such a thing as a sum. It's not like a man, Uncle Percy says."

"No; and I hope my Charley will grow up to be a very brave man,—worthy of his father."

"Yes, so do I," replied Charley. "Won't it be jolly when Pa comes home! If he sends me to a boarding-school, do you think he will buy me a pony?"

"I cannot tell, dear. You must wait till he comes."

"Well, I suppose that will be about three weeks longer. I do hope he will be here by Christmas-day. Do you think he will, Ma?"

"I hope so, dear. It will be a happy Christmas for us, if he is."

Just then, they were interrupted by a loud knock at the hall door.

"That's Kwei, I'm sure," cried Charley, jumping up. "I'll run down and let her in. I hope she's got on all right," and he ran down stairs.

In a few minutes he returned, followed by a neat, quiet-looking girl, or young woman she might now be called, for she must have been quite twenty by this time. In her dress there was nothing to show that she was not English; but her face was still unmistakably Chinese. It was very little altered, except in expression. It had gained a quiet happy look, which was a great improvement. She had grown too, both taller and stouter, but she was still a small person.

"Well, Kwei, my dear, how have you been getting on?" asked Mrs. Lovelace.

"First rate, I know," shouted Charley.

"So well," replied Kwei, with a bright smile. "So much better than I expected. Do look at my certificate." And she took a paper from a bag she was carrying, and handed it to Mrs. Lovelace. She spoke English perfectly now, except for a peculiar accent; but she had not been allowed to forget her Chinese.

Mrs. Lovelace read the paper, and then said,—

"This *is* good, Kwei. A first-class certificate, and a high recommendation besides! I am delighted, my dear, and I am quite sure you deserve it. No one could have worked harder and better."

By this time Kwei had knelt down on the rug before the fire. She could only answer by pressing her lady's hand. She cared more for praise from those dear lips than for anything else in the world.

Mrs. Lovelace stroked her head, and kissed her forehead.

"You must be tired," she said. "We will have tea, and then you shall tell me all about it. Charley, ring the bell."

"Yes; but I will take off my things, and make myself tidy first," said Kwei, as she left the room.

It had been an exciting day for the young Chinese. After six years' study, as pupil and teacher, at the training school, she had just passed her final examination, and had been declared fit to undertake the office of teacher in any mission schools, either in England or China. Mrs. Lovelace was naturally very much pleased, for many people had shaken their heads and declared she was only wasting time and money; for a girl who had shown such evil dispositions when she was young, and had actually been sent to prison for stealing, could never be expected to turn out well.

But Mrs. Lovelace had faith in Kwei's sincerity and repentance, and she felt sure she was doing right. Mr. Lovelace had been to England once, for a few months, during those six years, and *he* quite approved of what his wife was doing, and that was enough for her. Had it not been for that one happy summer together, Ellen could hardly have borne the long exile; but now it was nearly over, her husband was once more on his way to England, and this time she was to go back with him. But even in this cup

of joy there was one very bitter drop. Charley was to be left behind. Poor Ellen! it seemed as though her heart must always be rent in twain. But Charley had grown so strong and well, and would be in such good care, with his grandmamma and aunts to look after him, that even his mother had been persuaded that it was the wisest plan to let him remain in England, for he had no chance of getting a good education in China. She would not hear of sending him to a boarding-school till she left, but kept him with herself as much as possible.

The Lumleys were much the same as when we left them, but their home seemed likely to be soon broken up. For Fanny had promised to marry the curate, in spite of her sister's example; and Percy had determined to go out to China, and seek his fortune with his brother-in-law. He wanted to see the world, he said. He was tired of his humdrum English life. His poor old mother sighed, but she said it was only natural,—young birds could not stay for ever in the parent's nest, and she would not stand in her son's light.

As for Mr. Lumley he was quite pleased, and did everything he could to forward Percy's plans.

By the time Kwei had changed her dress, the cheerful tea was all ready, and she was quite prepared to enjoy it.

As they sat over the meal, she told Mrs. Lovelace all about this day; how nervous she had felt when she was shut up all alone with a grave examiner, but he was very kind and patient, and listened to all her answers attentively; and when it was all over, he said he had been very much gratified, and he should have great pleasure in helping her in any way. Then she had to wait an hour for her report and certificate. The two days before she had been through her written examination, but that had not been such nervous work; she had had a table all to herself, with nothing but pens, ink, and paper on it, and a long list of questions to answer.

After waiting anxiously for about an hour, one of the masters came to her with a very smiling face, and handed her a paper, saying, "I most sincerely congratulate you on your success, which I am sure you deserve; indeed we all agree in considering you one of our most satisfactory pupils."

Kwei thanked him for all his kindness, and

said she hoped she should prove herself worthy of it.

"I feel little doubt of that," he said, "with God's blessing. You have made your armour strong and sure, now you are going to prove it. The real battle is about to begin; for no doubt you will find it very hard work, and will meet with many discouragements. But do not be disheartened; remember whom you are working for. It is the most glorious warfare any one can be engaged in—the fight against sin and Satan. And now good-bye, my dear; and God bless you," he added, holding out his hand. So Kwei left her school with a sober but a glad heart.

Mrs. Lovelace listened with interest to all she had to tell, and then tea was cleared away, and after a little, Charley went to bed, and Kwei sat down on a low chair by the fire to have a cosy chat with her lady. She did not feel as though she could do anything else that evening.

They talked about many things—the past and the future. How Mrs. Lovelace had first noticed her, a forlorn ill-used child on board the *Seagull,* and all that had happened since; and how they hoped in a few months to set out again for China, and there establish a school

for poor girls and orphans. This was their plan: Mrs. Lovelace was to be the superintendent, and Kwei the teacher; so she would still be constantly with her dear lady.

They had been talking of all this, making little arrangements, and thinking of things they would want to take out with them, and then they had fallen into silence. Mrs. Lovelace's thoughts had wandered away to her husband, then on his road home; and Kwei was gazing into the fire, making pictures there.

Suddenly she gave a start, "Do look, lady," she said. She still called Mrs. Lovelace lady. "Is not that coal just like poor Mrs. Vanstrump in her old bonnet?"

Mrs. Lovelace roused herself from her reverie and looked. "Yes, it really is," she said laughing. "I wonder what has become of that poor wretched man."

"I often wonder too," answered Kwei. "I should so much like to see him again, before I go away, and tell him I have forgiven him everything; it would make me much happier."

"Have you really forgiven him from your heart, dear?" asked Mrs. Lovelace.

"Yes; quite, quite," replied Kwei eagerly. "It was very hard, but it is such a weight gone."

"How were you able to do it at last, my child? You always said you never could, so I gave up speaking to you about it; but I knew the time would come."

"Well, you know, lady, when I was confirmed, I thought a great deal about it, and it made me very unhappy. I tried to forgive him, but I could not. So I asked Mr. Percy, and he said he did not think that need hinder me."

"But why did not you speak to the clergyman, or to me?"

"I could not somehow. I think I was afraid of what you might say."

"Well; and so you were confirmed?"

"Yes; but that always felt like a load here," went on Kwei, pressing her heart. "And then do you remember, lady, after that you could not get me to go on?"

"To go on, dear? what do you mean?"

"Why, to go to the Altar again, when all the others did."

"To receive the blessed Sacrament, you mean. Yes; I remember quite well. You would not go for many weeks. Was that the reason?"

"Yes. I could not; for you know it says we must be in love and charity with our neighbour; and I knew I was not."

"And did you speak to any one about it again?"

"No; I longed to tell you, but I thought it would only make you unhappy, for you looked so sad then; it was just after Mr. Lovelace went away. I could not tell Mr. Percy, I thought he might not understand."

"Well, my dear, and what helped you at last?"

"I don't exactly know how it was; but it made me feel quite unhappy. And then came Good Friday; and I forgot all about myself all day, and then all of a sudden, when I was going to bed, I thought how wicked I was,—not at all like Him; and then it went away, the load I mean, and I knew that I forgave that poor man." Kwei said all this in a very low hesitating voice. It was a great effort for her to tell it, even to her dear lady.

Mrs. Lovelace gently stroked her head, and said, "Well, my Kwei, and did you feel happy then?"

"Oh yes, so happy! And you know I went with you on Easter morning."

"I remember; and what a lovely fresh morning it was."

"Yes; and how the birds sang as we walked

to church; and Mr. Percy got up and went with us. It was Easter, too, when I came out of prison. I think all my good things come then," said Kwei, as she nestled closer and closer to her lady's side.

CHAPTER XXII.

KWEI'S WISH IS FULFILLED.

MR. LOVELACE did reach England in time to eat his Christmas dinner with his wife and son. So it was a very joyful day for them all. They spent it at Mr. Lumley's. Every one tried to be happy, but they could not forget that it was the last Christmas they were likely to spend together for many a long year to come.

Mr. Lovelace wished to leave England as soon as the preparations were complete, and he had settled the business for which he had come over, for he was anxious to be back in China.

They were all sitting round the fire after dinner, cracking nuts and playing at games for the benefit of Master Charley, when they heard the sound of voices in the garden, and a loud knocking at the hall door.

Percy ran out to see what was the matter; Charley, of course, was close at his heels.

They opened the door, for the servants were enjoying themselves in the kitchen, and were not in a great hurry to answer knocks. It was a proper Christmas night; the ground was white with snow, and one bright star was shining in the sky.

"How jolly it looks; let's have a game at snow-balling," cried Charley.

"Who's there?" shouted Percy, for no one was to be seen.

Just then a man with a lantern emerged from the shadow of some thick shrubs. It was a policeman.

"Sorry to disturb you to-night, sir," he said, touching his hat, "but you see the public is a long way off, and this is the nearest house, and I didn't rightly know what else to do, sir. May we lay him in the tool-house, or the stable, or somewhere, sir?"

"Lay *him!* lay *who*, man?" asked Percy, quite perplexed.

"Well, sir, he was took very bad just at your gate, sir; a fit I should say, sir; he ain't a very old man neither; looks like a seafaring chap, sir."

By this time they had reached the gate, towards which the policeman had been leading the way while he talked; and Percy had begun to understand that some one had been taken ill.

There, just outside the gate (he had apparently intended to come into the garden) lay a rough-looking man. At first Percy thought he must be dead; but every now and then his limbs gave a convulsive twitch. The policeman lowered his lantern to the face, which presented a horrible appearance—it had turned to some strange unearthly colour; the eyes rolled wildly and blood was flowing from the mouth, which had defiled the pure snow on which the body lay.

Percy shuddered. "Run back to the house directly, Charley," he cried, hastily turning the bull's-eye of the lantern in an opposite direction, that the boy should not see the dreadful sight. "Send Bill, the gardener, quick; and tell your grandpapa a poor man has been taken ill, and we must have him carried in somewhere."

The child peered into the darkness to see what the man looked like, but he could distinguish nothing. So he ran off to do his Uncle's bidding; quite proud of being the

first one to carry the news. In a few minutes, Bill made his appearance.

"Here, Bill," said Percy, "you must lend a hand to help us carry this poor fellow into some shelter. Where do you think we had better put him?"

Bill looked at the man, and rubbed his head. "I don't think cook would care to have him in the kitchen, Master Percy."

"I don't suppose she would," replied Percy. "What do you think of the harness-room?"

"The very place, sir; it's got a stove and all. I'll soon make up a comfortable bed there." And Bill ran off to make preparations; while the policeman and one or two others, who had stopped to see what was the matter, lifted the man, and carried him slowly to his lodging. In the meantime, Percy had despatched a boy for the nearest doctor.

Bill quickly fetched mattresses and blankets from the house, and made up a bed on the floor of the harness-room; it was ready by the time the man arrived. Then he lighted a fire; and the place looked quite warm and comfortable before the doctor came. With the help of brandy and other restoratives, the man gradually revived; but he groaned continually,

and seemed very ill. Bill undertook to watch by him through the night. The doctor promised to look in again in the morning; he said he felt little doubt that the fit was brought on by drink; and it seemed likely enough from the man's appearance,—he had a most ill-looking countenance.

It was midnight by the time the confusion was over, and Percy had answered all the questions of his family. The younger ladies had come trooping out into the garden directly they heard any one was ill; but Percy had soon sent them back again, mildly suggesting that they were rather in the way than otherwise. The fact was, he did not wish them to see the man while he looked so dreadful.

For some days the poor creature lay there too ill to be moved; but he was well attended to by the gardener and the soft-hearted housemaid. He did not seem to notice where he was; and hardly spoke, except now and then to mutter to himself. On the fourth day, Percy, the autocrat, gave his gracious permission for those ladies who felt disposed to visit the patient, "though why they should be so anxious to see a very disagreeable object, he could not imagine."

Fanny said she would rather not go till she had heard her sister's report; so Mrs. Lovelace and Kwei went together to the stables.

Mrs. Lovelace went into the room first. The man seemed to be asleep; he was lying with his face to the wall, and she could only see that he had red hair.

"Come in, Kwei," she said. "You need not be frightened."

At the sound of Mrs. Lovelace's voice, the man opened his eyes and turned round.

"Kwei! Kwei!" he called out. "Von't I serve her out, vhen I catch her!" and then he laughed horribly.

Kwei started, and clung to her lady in terror, and began to tremble violently.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asked Mrs. Lovelace, in surprise, for she had not understood what the man said. His tones were only too familiar to poor Kwei.

"Look, look! it is himself; it is Vanstrump!" at last gasped out the girl. "Oh, lady, what shall I do?"

On looking again, Mrs. Lovelace, too, recognised the Dutchman.

"You need not be afraid now, my child," she said, quietly. "You know he can do you no

more harm; and you said a little while ago, that you wished to see him again. Won't you go and speak to him?"

"Yes, presently," said Kwei, faintly. But she seemed unable to move towards the bed, and Vanstrump had not seen her yet.

At last Mrs. Lovelace went to his side, and said gently,—

"I have brought you a little broth, as I heard you were very ill."

"I'm not ill," replied the man, in a surly tone. "I shall soon be all right again," and he tried to get up in bed to show his strength, but he only sank back helplessly.

"The doctor says it will be a long time before you are all right; you see you are too weak even to sit up," said Mrs. Lovelace.

"Don't tell me I'm going to die. I know dat's vhat you mean, and it's all humbug," answered the man, fiercely. "I tell you I never saw a stronger man on sea or shore;" but notwithstanding his boasted strength, he spoke the last few words in a very feeble voice.

"I sincerely hope you are not going to die, just yet," replied Mrs. Lovelace, gravely. "I trust God will spare your life a little longer, and give you time to repent of all your evil deeds."

"Who dares talk to me of evil deeds?" he cried. "Show me de party, and I'll knock him down."

Mrs. Lovelace looked at the man for a minute or two, and then said,—

"*I* dare to talk to you of your evil deeds. Vanstrump, though you do not remember me, I know you, and that your soul is blackened with many a sin."

On hearing his name, Vanstrump began to shake violently under the bed-clothes, and his voice trembled, as he said in quite a subdued tone,—

"You make some mistake, ma'am. My name is Dickson, a poor, unfortunate fellow."

All this time Kwei had stood in the corner of the room, listening. Her first terror had quite passed away, and now she could contain herself no longer, but came close to the bed, and cried out,—

"Oh, how can you be so wicked. You know you are Vanstrump, and I am Kwei, that you were so cruel to; and that is Mrs. Lovelace, my friend. She knows all about you on the ship, and everything."

Vanstrump shook more and more, and turned deathly pale, as though he had seen a ghost.

"Vat do you mean, girl?" he gasped out. "I never saw you before."

"No; you never bought me for your slave, and beat me, and ill-used me on the ship, till this kind angel had compassion on me and took me away. You never found me again at Oldport, and carried me away in the night, and kept me your prisoner for years; and used me so ill that I have the marks now; and you never ill-used your poor wife, that I nursed when she was dying; and you promised her not to be cruel to me any more, and broke your word again and again; and at last I was obliged to run away, I could bear it no longer. Oh, Vanstrump!" and she paused for breath; for, in her excitement, she spoke fast and loud, quite unlike her usual deliberate way; her cheeks burnt, and her little eyes flashed with indignation.

Mrs. Lovelace gazed at her in astonishment.

"Kwei—Kwei," she said, gently.

"Yes, lady; he knows it is all true; he is a wicked, wicked man!" again she paused, and looked down upon him, he was only staring helplessly at her, with an expression of abject terror, for he was as great a coward as ever.

As Kwei looked at him, her face softened; she knelt down by his side, and said presently,—

"Poor man, I am very sorry for you. I hope God will forgive you, as I do."

"Forgive, forgive," he muttered. "Vat do you mean? Yes, you are Kwei; and dat is—" and then he lost himself again; the gleam of sense died out of his face, and he resumed his feverish mutterings.

Mrs. Lovelace saw it was no use to say more then—the man was quite unconscious. So after making a few enquiries about his comforts, and setting down the basket of good things which she had brought, she took Kwei's hand and left the room.

They walked up the garden path in silence. Mrs. Lovelace was the first to speak.

"So your wish has been granted," she said.

"Yes; I hope I am very glad," answered Kwei, and her voice was choked in tears. "Was it very wicked of me to feel so angry again, just at first? I don't now; I am only sorry."

"I don't think it was wicked, dear; it was only natural. Why are you so sorry?"

"Oh, so sorry for him—poor man, poor man! I always thought when I saw him again, he would be different."

"We can only pray for him, dear."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAREWELL—A LONG FAREWELL.

AFTER discovering who their patient was, either Mrs. Lovelace or Kwei visited him every day; but they could not tell whether he was conscious of anything, for he generally lay in a sort of half-sleep—now and then opening his eyes, or staring at them in a bewildered way, as though he hardly saw them. He very seldom spoke; and when he did, it was to talk of his symptoms, or to ask when he should be able to get up. Sometimes they read to him; but they could not tell whether he understood at all. At the end of a fortnight, the doctor advised that Vanstrump should be taken to the workhouse. He said the lower part of his body was quite paralysed, and it was not at all likely he would ever recover; he would probably remain in the same condition for the rest of his life, which could not be very long, for his brain was paralysed also

Mr. Lumley would not hear of keeping the man on his premises. So in a few days he was removed to the workhouse.

No one ever knew what brought Vanstrump to Mr. Lumley's house that Christmas night. Some strange, unaccountable attraction it must have been, that we do not understand. Percy was right in his conjectures. The man had taken fright when he found that his whereabouts was discovered by Kwei's friends. So he sold his business, and after hiding for a little while in the back slums of London he went to sea again, under a feigned name, as a common sailor ; but before that he had lost a great deal of money in gambling and drink. And so he spent the rest of his life—going to sea, or leading a riotous life on shore till he had spent all and was obliged to go another voyage, thus sinking lower and lower, drinking his very senses away. Then that stroke came upon him in the very gates of his enemies, as he would have called them, who turned out after all to be friends indeed. Whether he ever knew and repented, no one could tell, for his mind never properly came back to him.

And now the time drew very near when the travellers were to start on their way. The winter

months were fully occupied in making preparations. By the time spring began, everything was ready, as far as the travellers themselves were concerned, though Mrs. Lumley and Fanny would still work on, adding little additional comforts to the already overflowing supply; but they would have found employment for another two or three months in making things "that really were most necessary," as Mrs. Lumley said. Again it was Easter, a lovely fresh morning, the dew resting on every blade of grass and on every twig just bursting into leaf. All around was the promise of a new and beautiful life. Quite a large party went from Mr. Lumley's house to the pretty countrified church; but it was a very silent party; their hearts were too full for words, for this was the last Sunday they were ever all to spend together.

First of all walked Mrs. Lumley, leaning on her son's arm. Next came Ellen Lovelace, walking between her father and her son. All sorts of recollections crowded upon her as she went along that familiar road. She remembered when she was a very little girl, how she used to walk along it on the bright Sunday mornings, holding fast by her papa's hand, and how provokingly bright and tempting the flowers would

look. On the way home she was generally allowed to run in the fields and gather some; and the consequence always was a long lecture from nurse for spoiling her clean white frock. Then she remembered going along the road with a strange feeling of awe, to see some tiny baby brother or sister christened; and once it was a very sad journey, to see one of those dear babies laid under the green grass in the churchyard. She had gone that way to be confirmed, and then, with a trembling heart, to kneel for the first time at God's Altar, as they were all going to do this morning, for the last time together.

Then Ellen's thoughts wandered on to the day of her marriage in the same little church; and from that glad day they passed quickly to the two little graves in a far-distant land; and she felt that her heart was divided—her home was there as well as here.

Behind Mr. Lumley and Ellen walked Fanny, Kwei, and Miss Lumley, who had come over to see the last of her nephew and niece. Kwei's heart was full too; she remembered the past with gratitude, but her thoughts dwelt more on the future; her head was full of bright dreams of all the good she was going to do in her own dear country, for she had never forgotten that

China was her native land, and she longed for the time to pass quickly for she was eager to begin her *work*.

Kwei's face was still a very plain one to English eyes, but it had gained a certain spiritual beauty of its own, the result of holy thoughts and high resolves, and of constant companionship with an elevated mind. Miss Lumley looked at the Chinese girl with satisfaction, for she felt that she had had her share in training and directing "the young missionary," as she delighted to call her; and the result, even in *her* critical eyes, was very satisfactory. Miss Lumley was to be the English manager of the school in China, and she would insist upon bearing a share of the necessary expenses. So she felt a comfortable sense of property when she thought of Kwei.

But now they have entered the church, and all thoughts but *one* are banished for the time, or laid at the feet of Him in whose presence they are.

In the afternoon Kwei went to take a last look at her old enemy, poor Vanstrump. It was a sight to sadden any heart; he was lying helplessly in his bed, now and then muttering some incoherent words and rolling his head

restlessly from side to side. Though he appeared almost unconscious, there was an expression of pain on his repulsive face. Kwei knelt by the bed a long time looking at him. At last the tears began to roll slowly down her cheeks, for she had quite forgiven all the past now, and felt only pity for the poor creature. Presently she wiped her eyes and read a few verses from her little Testament and repeated the childish hymn which had been such a comfort to his poor wife on her dying bed. Then she nailed up on the wall opposite, where he could easily see it from his pillow, a picture of the Crucifixion; this was her parting gift, and she hoped it might be a useful one. When this was done to her satisfaction, she turned again to the bed and, taking the sick man's hand, said,—

"Good-bye, Vanstrump, I shall never see you again."

He stared at her vacantly, as though the words did not penetrate his brain.

"Do say good-bye, and let us part friends," said Kwei eagerly.

But he only stared and muttered something which she flattered herself meant "good-bye." So she again shook his hand and left him.

KWEI'S LAST VISIT TO VANSTRUMP. [*Page* 200.

And now we are to have only one more look at our friends. They are all together on the Peninsular and Oriental steamer at Southampton, which is to carry so many of them away. The two mothers are clinging to their sons, saying last words of advice and love, and receiving last promises ; feeling that the time is too short to say a hundredth part of what is in their hearts.

"I will be a good boy, I promise you, mamma, I will indeed," says Charley, trying to choke down his sobs.

"Grow up a good, brave man, like your father, and then I shall be proud of you ; and never forget to say your prayers, my darling ; don't be ashamed if other boys laugh at you."

"No ; I won't, I promise you I will make you both proud of me."

Percy was saying much the same to his mother.

"I know I've often been a great trouble to you, mother dear ; but you forgive me, don't you ? You won't forget your poor boy ?"

"Forget you ! oh, my darling, no. You have been a good son always, Percy ; and you will be a good son now. I know you could not break your old mother's heart."

"God forbid," said Percy solemnly; "no, the thought of you would keep me straight, mother, if nothing else would; and besides, there's Ellen to look after me."

"Yes, yes. She is a dear good girl. You will write by every mail, Percy."

"Yes, mother. I shall soon be home again, you know, and bring you some lovely Chinese shawls and tea-cups," replied Percy, trying to speak gaily; but he looked very pale, and his lips quivered.

Clang, clang, clang, went a great bell, and a man shouted that all strangers were to go on shore. Mrs. Lumley threw her arms round her son, and felt as though she could not let him go.

"Come, come, my dear, we must make haste off the ship, unless we want to be carried away with them," cried Mr. Lumley, bustling up. "Good-bye, Percy, my boy, good-bye. God bless you."

Again the cruel bell sounded. For the next five minutes, there was a confusion of kissing and crying and lingering embraces; and then, they hardly knew how, Mr. and Mrs. Lumley, Fanny, and Charley found themselves standing alone on shore, and the others were waving their handkerchiefs and kissing their hands

from the side of the vessel, which was slowly steaming her way out of the dock. Charley ran along as far as he could, shouting "good-bye, good-bye," and waving his hat. He could see his father and mother clinging to each other and kissing their hands. Then his mother's head fell upon her husband's shoulder and he led her quietly away. But Percy and Kwei still lent over the balustrade and waved their handkerchiefs. Charley stood watching till the ship grew more and more indistinct. Then he ran to a place from which he could watch it on its way till it became a white speck; and at last sank beneath the horizon.

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