



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

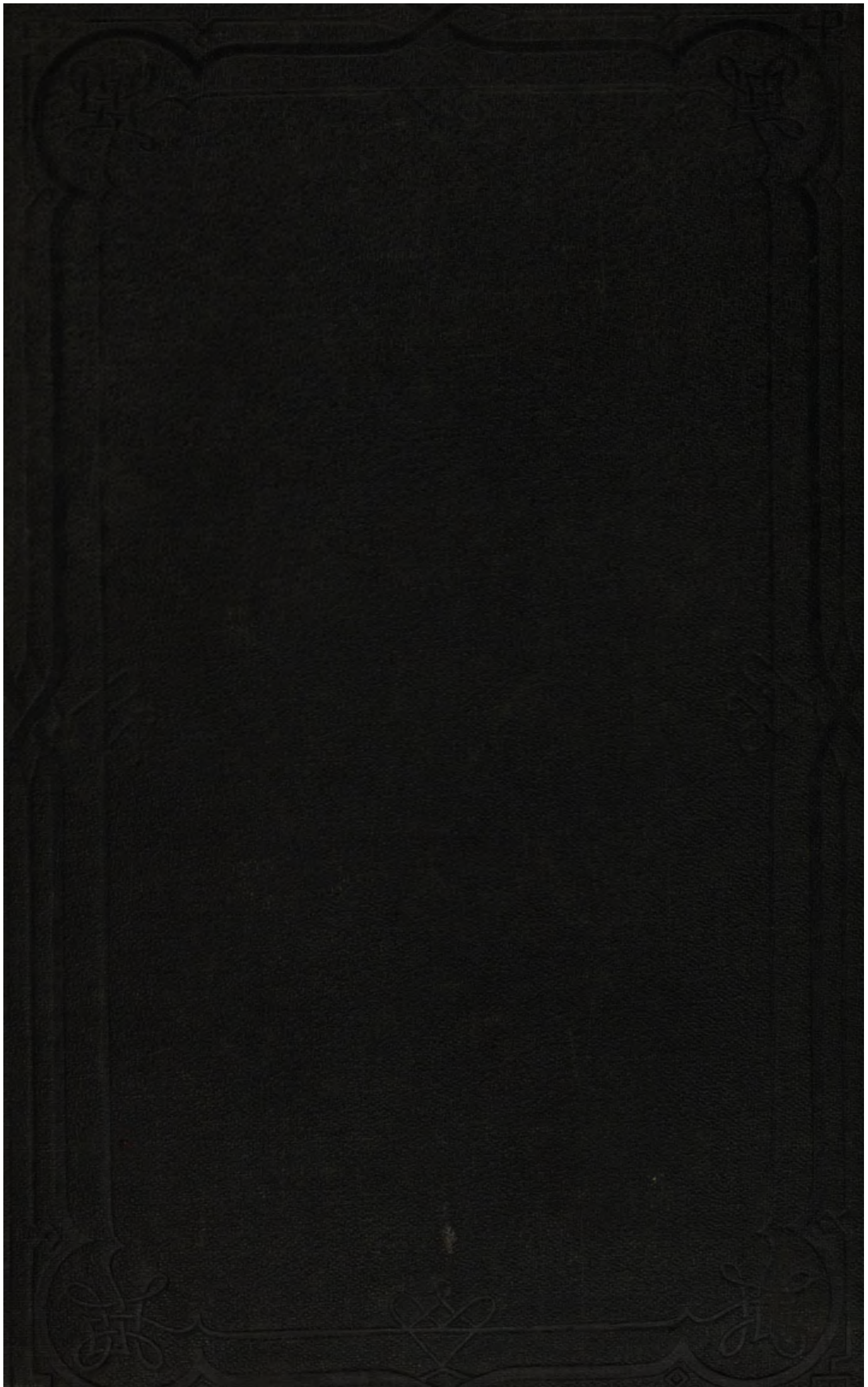
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

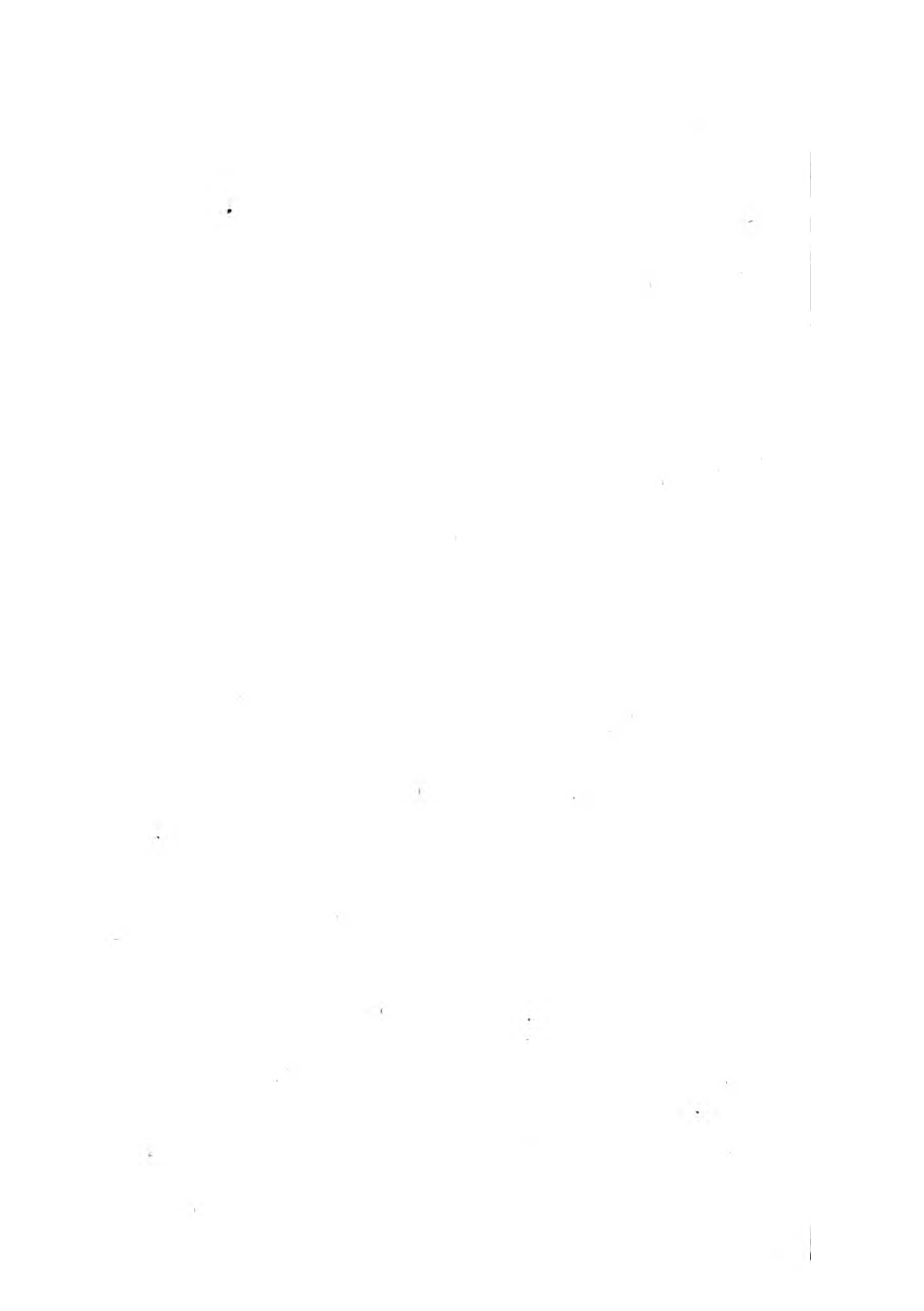




600071871U







NEW WORKS IN THE PRESS.

---

I.

In One Vol. Price 10s. 6d.

THE ADVENTURES OF A SERF WIFE  
AMONG THE MINES OF SIBERIA.

---

II.

In Three Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

A N O L D M A N ' S S E C R E T .

A Novel.

By FRANK TROLLOPE,  
Author of "A Right-Minded Woman."

---

III.

In Three Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

I T M A Y B E T R U E .

A Novel.

By MRS. WOOD.

---

IV.

In Three Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

T R E A S O N A T H O M E .

A Novel.

By MRS. GREENOUGH.

---

V.

In Three Vols. 31s. 6d.

T H E N A V A L L I E U T E N A N T .

By C. F. ARMSTRONG,

Author of "The Two Midshipmen," "The Lily of Devon,"  
"The Queen of the Seas," &c.

# FAMILY MOURNING.

---

MESSRS. JAY

Would respectfully announce that great saving may be  
made by purchasing Mourning at their Establishment,

THEIR STOCK OF

FAMILY MOURNING

BEING

THE LARGEST IN EUROPE.

---

MOURNING COSTUME

OF EVERY DESCRIPTION

KEPT READY-MADE,

And can be forwarded to Town or Country at a moment's  
notice.

---

The most reasonable Prices are charged, and the wear  
of every Article Guaranteed.

---

THE LONDON

GENERAL MOURNING WAREHOUSE,

247 & 248, REGENT STREET,

(NEXT THE CIRCUS.)

JAY'S.

# ALL ABOUT THE MARSDENS.

A CHRONICLE OF EVERY DAY LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



BY

MRS. WALLER,

Authoress of "Crosses of Childhood," etc.

VOL. I.

London:

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,

1865.

[THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

250. C. 198.





# ALL ABOUT THE MARSDENS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

ONE bright morning in June, the express train panted into the station of the large garrison town of Coburn, with the same amount of bell ringing and excitement, as usually attends the advent of these locomotive monsters in all parts of the world. There was not much time to be lost in this instance, as was evident by the haste with which a tall middle-aged gentleman settled his companions, two young girls, in vacant places in a first-class carriage.

“Take care of yourselves,” he said, as he shut the door, and stood leaning through the window to say his last few words. “Take care of your-

selves, my dears, and give my love to all at the Hall. They are sure to meet you, so you will have no trouble."

But the inexorable bell began ringing. A few loud door bangings, a shrill whistle, and with only time for a hasty "good bye," father and daughters were parted. Away rushed the train in its remorseless business-like fashion, and little heeding the joys and sorrows it bore with it, or those it left behind. Are not these engines the very personifications of hard, unimpressionable duty, as little influenced by the softer feelings, as the cold iron that enters so much into their composition. Off they go, on the beaten track laid down for them, spurning all minor obstacles in their impetuous course, neither looking to the right hand nor the left, with one apparent aim, how best to get over their appointed length of iron road within the allotted time. Cruel, cold-hearted giants, with all their ideas narrowed down to the few feet compassed by their own wheels.

And some such thoughts as these passed through the mind of Madeline Marsden, the elder of the two young girls from Coburn, as she felt herself



borne by the mighty power, further and further, from all that embodied her idea of home and happiness, her dear and loving father.

“Well, Flo,” she said with a half sigh, looking out of the window at the same time, for a last glimpse of the now distant town, “I wonder when we shall be coming back again to the dear old place. We have been so happy there, since we came from Canada. Papa has seemed so much better lately.”

“Do you think so?” said the younger sister. “I’m afraid he never will be what he was two years ago, before dear mamma died.”

“But don’t you think he is better?” asked Madeline, anxiously.

“He certainly was a month ago,” answered Flora. “But I am sure he is not so well now. It was just about the time we heard of the baby’s birth from Uncle Marsden, and were invited to pay this visit, that I perceived some change in him. I can’t think why I always connect the two things together.”

“Surely you are fanciful, Flora. That’s what you are always saying. Why, I can’t see that he

is worse than usual. You will make me quite regret having left him."

"Oh, but grandmamma will take good care of him, Madeline, and you know he comes to the Hall in a few weeks. Besides, he seemed quite glad to send us off. He spoke so much of our making a good impression, and trying to please them all."

"Yes, as he wishes it, I shall try to do my best," answered Madeline; "but from what I can remember of them all, six years ago, I must say I'm not prejudiced in their favour."

"But that was just after the death of the eldest boy, wasn't it, Made? That, of course, would make such a difference. He was their only one, then. How glad they must be to have another son now. How old is the baby by this time?"

"Only six weeks, I think, Flo; so he is hardly big enough for you to spoil. I wonder how you can care so much about babies. They don't interest me at all."

Flora laughed a joyous girlish laugh, as she replied, "Of course, we couldn't expect the sedate intellectual Miss Marsden to condescend so far, as

to notice such insignificant atoms as squalling babies. For certainly they do squall sometimes; and if the young Master Charles, or John, or whatever he is to be called, takes to such undignified practices, he will find even cousin Flora playing traitor to her baby allegiance, and delivering him over to the tender mercies of his nurse."

"Can a baby's crying be music, even to a mother's ear?" observed Madeline, quaintly. "I can't help thinking this is only a time-honoured saying, which no one has the courage to contradict."

"I hope, then, you may have the honour and glory some day, of proving it a fallacy," responded the other. "But I am sure if baby crying can be sweet to anyone, the young heir's must be so to our respected aunt, while it proves he has the strength and lungs to make himself heard at all."

"From what I remember of her, Flo," answered Madeline, "it will be hard to make her acknowledge that anything is sweet. You know she was a Quaker once, and I suppose has not yet forgotten all their enforced gravity. Imagine

a sober, quiet little person, who has more difficulty in smiling at anything than you have in being grave for five minutes,—imagine her, I say, talking baby talk, and dandling even that most perfect of babies, our young cousin.”

“But she needn’t dandle it if she loves it,” said Flora, laughing. “You do put things in such a ludicrous light, Made. It is none but young mammas, of course, that nurse their babies in an ostentatious way. Aunt Jane is getting quite old, isn’t she?”

“She is quite old enough to awe you, Miss Flora. I am sure if your gaiety survives the gloominess of Marsden Hall, it will be a wonder.”

“But, surely, it won’t be so dull now,” persisted the younger sister. “I am confident the baby’s birth will have changed everything. At least, if it hasn’t I shall turn the whole place topsy-turvy, eject all gravity and dulness, and establish in their stead the gaiety and sociability which will better become the dear old place.”

“Well, I hope you won’t have the trouble,” said Madeline, with a quiet smile. “I hope you will find everyone rejoicing in a new leaf in life.

But the old lady can hardly be changed ; so I shall depend upon her to convince you that I have only described things as they were in my time."

"Is she very formidable?" asked the younger sister, with apparent trepidation. "I am dreadfully afraid of serious old people. They always seem to think one so foolish, and so much to be pitied."

"I don't think you are an object for anyone's pity, Flo, with your light heart and contented spirit. If grandmamma were here, she would tell you 'a contented spirit is a continual feast.' I am sure you verify the wise man's words, for I think you'd be happy anywhere."

"Yes, with you and papa," was the ready answer ; "of course Solomon took into consideration that his example had all he wanted to make him contented. There must be something to be contented about. A person can't be contented with nothing."

"But they may be with anything, Flo, and that is what is meant, as you very well know. Solomon didn't take sisters and indulgent papas into consideration."



“Then Solomon won’t suit me,” answered Flora, with a light laugh; “I won’t promise to be happy without the necessary accessories.”

“You are dispensing with one already, Flo, for papa is left behind. If you learn to do without him, you’ll turn me off next.”

“No, I won’t,” said Flora, with mingled sauciness and affection of manner. “We’re going to be rare exceptions to the general rule, Madeline, and never separate.”

The elder sister turned her dark eyes to the bright young face beside her, with a loving, but, at the same time, a scrutinizing glance. “You are only sixteen, Flora,” she said, with an odd mixture of sentiment and patronage in her tone. “We shall see what you say a few years hence; you are still so very young,” and Madeline leant back in her seat, as if her additional eighteen months of life’s experiences, quite justified her in assuming this tone of elderly superiority towards her laughing sister.

“If I am so very young, Madeline,” observed Flora, after her mirth had subsided, “what will you say to our cousins? Julia is only fifteen, and

Rose and Helen ten and twelve. You will be badly off for companions of your own mature years."

"You forget Bessy at the Rectory," replied Madeline, "she is even older than I am, and, of course, will be my friend. The little girls at the Hall I shall leave to you."

"Who is talking now of throwing over old friends," said Flora, between jest and earnest. "I shan't allow you, Made, to be anyone's friend but mine, or, if Bessy is very nice, we'll go partners, and share her friendship."

"I am sure she is very nice," answered the other; "my hours with her are just the brightest recollections I have of that visit. She was often at the Hall, because old aunt Marsden was so fond of her. If she is still what she was then, I am sure I shall like her."

"Take care, Made," cried Flora, with a warning gesture, "I shall be jealous again, if you praise her too much. I am glad I am going with you. I didn't know Bessy was such a dangerous character."

"She won't be so now," rejoined the elder girl;

“you were not with me before, Flo, she only took your place for the time being. Don’t you see that my aching heart was obliged to fill up the void made by your absence. Your rival did not make a very deep impression. It would take a great deal to dethrone you.”

“I should hope so indeed,” she replied, drawing herself up with an assumed haughtiness, ridiculously incongruous with her bright open face, and laughter-loving hazel eyes. “When *I* stoop to conquer, Madeline, it is once and for ever.”

Madeline laughed. “You absurd little puss,” she said, “you needn’t try to look grand and dignified; you must leave all that to me. I will support the credit of the family so far, and you had better keep to your own province. If you can entice Aunt Jane into a good hearty laugh I shall accord you the palm in your own department.”

At this moment the engine, as in duty bound, gave a wild scream of warning, and plunged with its long train into the dreary depths of a tunnel, putting an end, for the time being, to the sister’s conversation. For rumbling along in the bowels

of the earth, in a darkness so dense as to be oppressive, and with that feeling of awe which such a situation develops in most people, is by no means conducive to an expression of our graver thoughts, or the more flippant ebullitions of ordinary small-talk.

## CHAPTER II.

“WELL, girls, here you are, I suppose,” said a hearty voice proceeding from a ruddy, cheerful countenance, which was projected into the carriage in which the sisters sat, as the train drew up, about two o’clock in the afternoon, at the Stonebridge Station. “I think you answer to the description your father gave me, by which I could identify you. You certainly possess the hazel eyes and hair, and rosy face which were to distinguish Flora (and he bent forward and kissed his smiling niece), and you, Madeline, are recognisable by your likeness to your father. Well, welcome to the Hall. But come, these trains won’t wait for anyone. Let’s see to your luggage and be off. We shall have plenty of time for sentimentalizing by and-bye.”

“If we can’t dispense with it altogether,” said

Madeline. "But I hope Aunt Jane and the baby are quite well, Uncle Edward?"

"Aye! that they are, thank God?" responded the Squire, with self-important satisfaction. "You'll hardly know the old place, Madeline. Ever since our poor boy died my wife has hardly known how to smile; but she is a different being now. In fact, it has made us all ten years younger."

Flora glanced slyly at her sister with an expression of triumph, and could not forbear whispering to her as they got into her uncle's carriage, "I told you so, Made. I am afraid I shan't have the pleasure of routing my sworn foes. The baby is the unconscious hero, and has fought all the battles before me."

"And you're quite disappointed that you will have nothing to do, but enjoy the advantages he has obtained for you."

Flora could only reply by a nod and smile, for the Squire was getting in, and in another moment they were off as fast as the two high stepping bays could bear them on their way to

the Hall, which Flora already began to look out for in the distance.

“We shall see it directly, Flora,” said her uncle surmising the cause of her eager glances from the window, and good-naturedly volunteering the information she was shy of asking. “When we come to the next turning we shall get our first view of my place.”

A few moments later they were descending a hill, down which the road wound picturesquely between green banks and hedgerows, bright and beautiful in their summer dress. Below them lay the little village of Marsden, with its tall steepled church half hidden amongst luxuriant trees. A pretty stream, widening into a miniature lake just above the village, was crossed by the one high arch of the old bridge, down to which the road came on either side, through pastures and fields of rich heavy crops of all kinds, testifying to the state of high cultivation in which the Squire and his neighbours delighted to see their lands. In the distance, amidst the smooth vistas and magnificent groups of trees which beautified

its park, stood the Squire's time honoured home, Marsden Hall.

"There it is," exclaimed the jovial owner of all the noble expanse of country over which Flora's eyes roved with undisguised admiration; "there is your home for the next few weeks, my dears, and where I hope there are many pleasant days in store for you. You can't see much of the house yet; we shall have a better point of view by-and-bye."

"It is beautiful," said Flora, with sparkling eyes, and in her delight forgetting the shyness this, her first, introduction to her uncle had occasioned. "You never told me, Madeline, the country was so pretty." And she looked reproachfully at her sister.

"I saw it last in winter, Flo," she answered, "and you know everything wears such a different aspect in those cold grey months. It is evident you are to see the Hall, and all about it, in the high-day and holiday dress of a sunny midsummer."

"I'm glad of it," observed Mr. Marsden. "Flora is just like a summer flower herself, and



will be in better keeping with all the *fêtes* and merrymakings, whereby my wife wants to celebrate our son's christening. You'll be ready enough, I'm sure, Flora, to foot down a country dance with your old uncle, under some of those ancient trees."

Flora laughed gaily, looking up shyly at her uncle. No fear but they would be good friends by-and-bye.

Madeline remarked sedately, how much they would enjoy any of these genuine English amusements, as it was so long since they had seen anything of the kind.

"You may well say so, my dear," replied her uncle. "I thought, at one time, your father intended to keep you in the colonies all your lives. I don't think he would ever have made up his mind to leave, if the regiment hadn't been ordered home."

"He was fond of Montreal for my mother's sake," said Madeline. "It was a great pang to have to leave her behind."

"To be sure, to be sure," answered the Squire, in his bluff, though kindly way. "Poor Fred.

It must have been a great loss to him. But I hope he is better, girls? He has mentioned his ill-health in more than one of his letters, lately. How is he?"

"I don't think papa is at all well," said Flora, positively. "He has never been well since mamma died; and now, I am sure he is worse, though Madeline won't see it."

"A few weeks here will set him up again, my dear," replied the Squire. "Depend upon it, he only wants rest and change of air. I shall write and urge him to come for the christening if he can. He need not wait for Alfred. That boy ought to be able now to find his own way about the world."

"And so he can, of course," said Flora laughing. "As if a Rugby boy wanted a papa to take care of him. It is business that detains papa, Uncle Edward, and Alfred has to wait for him."

"Why need there be any waiting at all on either side? Can't Alfred come as soon as his holydays begin, and your father follow when he is disengaged?"

"But papa thought Alfred had better not come

till he did," suggested Madeline. "He was afraid his school-boy manners might be too much for Aunt Jane, unless papa was here to look after him."

"I'll keep the boy in order, never fear, Madeline," was the reply. "Why Julia has been looking forward to his coming for weeks, and wasn't half pleased when she found he could not come at once. I must write to your father and tell him to let him come here, straight from school. The poor fellow must not lose any of his holidays in that dingy Coburn."

Madeline could not repress a smile at her uncle's ready condemnation of the home they had just left, particularly as she knew he had not even passed through the place. "You don't like living in a town, I suppose, Uncle Edward?" she remarked.

"Not I, indeed," he answered briskly. "I can't understand how people can exist in their stifling atmospheres. How your father can put up with it, I can't think. He was always so fond of the country."

"And is now, but——" and Flora stopped

short, as if conscious her words might have been better chosen.

“But, what, Flora? speak out. Don’t be afraid of me,” said her uncle kindly.

Thus encouraged, Flora continued, “I was going to say ‘beggars can’t be choosers;’ and though papa is not a beggar, he has to go where he is ordered.”

“Very true, my dear,” he answered, with a self-congratulatory laugh. “It is well I’m not under orders to anyone, for nothing could induce me to live in a town. But here we are at the gate, and the girls, I see, have come so far to meet you.”

The carriage stopped, and three young girls came crowding in at the opened door to welcome their cousins.

“Come, come,” said their father, putting them playfully back, “you will smother your cousins by way of welcome, at this rate. If they are not too tired perhaps they would like to get out and walk up to the Hall.”

Madeline and Flora were delighted with the proposal, for, as they remarked, a walk was

always pleasant after sitting for so long, and the whole party were soon on their way across the park.

“How you have grown,” said Madeline to Julia. “I had quite forgotten that time would tell on you, as it has done on us. Why, you are really taller than I am,” and she looked up with a smile at her young cousin, who, even at her fifteen years, had attained to more than the ordinary height of women.

Julia laughed. “Papa calls me his hop-pole,” she said, “and wonders whenever I shall have done growing. He says I have usurped all the growth of the family, for Rose and Helen have been at a stand still these last two years.”

Madeline glanced at the two little girls who were walking before them with their father and Flora, whose frank, cheerful face had already irresistibly attracted them.

Rose and Helen certainly looked small beside their overgrown sister, but they were bright, happy-looking children, and already chattering away unreservedly to their cousin.

“They’re making the most of their holiday,”

remarked Julia, laughing, as she listened to the merry little tongues. "I begged them off lessons this afternoon to come and meet you."

"Are you out of the school room now, then, Julia?" asked Madeline.

"I just do some lessons with Miss Parsons in the morning, that's all. I dine with papa and mamma, and do just as I like all day."

"Oh, indeed," said Madeline, too much surprised to say more. It was rather a shock to her preconceived ideas of these cousins, to find this very young lady, whose age seemed but that of a child in Madeline's estimation, already advanced to the immunities and privileges to which Madeline herself had only just been admitted.

But Julia was no friend to silence, and soon interrupted her cousin's meditation by asking why Alfred had not come with them.

"I shall be so glad when he comes," she said, when Madeline had explained the cause of his absence. "We shall have rare fun together, if he is what I hope and expect. I have lots of things to show him, and jobs to be done which only a boy can do, at least, so mamma says, and

won't let me do them. That's the worst of growing so tall and so old; it spoils one's fun. I can't climb trees and jump as I used to, now I'm grown up, though I do sometimes on the sly, or when only papa is by. Do you appreciate such amusements, Madeline?"

"We have never had the chance of participating in them," replied Madeline, evasively. "We have always lived in towns, where there are no opportunities of indulging in such pursuits."

"I pity you, indeed," rejoined the other. "You can't know half the pleasures of life, if you don't live in the country. I and papa agree so capitally on all these points. I am glad the baby is still so young, or I should fear him as a rival with papa. But he must wait a few years, till he is old enough to walk and ride, and I shall be married, of course, by that time."

Madeline looked up at her cousin with an undisguised expression of surprise. Here was quite a new specimen of the genus young lady, and one which Madeline could not comprehend. However, she was herself but young in the world's

ways, and had a long time before her to live and learn.

But the walking party were now close to the Hall, and Mr. Marsden was in his glory, expatiating on all its beauties, and calling Flora's attention to its manifold perfections. It certainly was a fine old pile, rich in quaint gables, and with deep mullioned bay windows in every conceivable position. At the first glance, it seemed to realise one's ideal of those good old English homes, from whence have been sent out in their many generations, scores of the brave-hearted sterling Englishmen, and the refined and elevated women, who have established and well sustained the credit of our dear old country for so many centuries. It was a home well worthy of the love and pride with which its owner viewed it, as he watched his young niece's eyes wandering over its picturesque outlines, and heard her expressions of genuine, unqualified admiration.

"Such dear old windows," she said; "just the places to sit in, and I'm sure the view must be lovely from them. Oh! I hope, Uncle Edward, that you have,"—and Flora stopped short, and



blushed violently, for again her spirits were betraying her into impropriety of expression.

“Have what, my dear?” he said, laughing, “have given you a pretty windowed room. Is that it?” Flora assented, and he continued, “Wait till you see it, my dear, and I’m sure you will be satisfied. Why, there is hardly a window about the place that wouldn’t satisfy the most exacting of sentimental young ladies.”

“Now that’s too bad of you, papa,” observed Julia. “You always will have it, that girls must necessarily be sentimental and romantic, and devoid of all that you call common sense; I am sure, by this time, you ought to know that some, at least, are made of heavier metal.”

“Of course, present company is always excepted, Julia,” replied the Squire, looking at his child with proud paternal affection. “Now, I am bound to express my conviction that there are at least three young ladies who are free from the sentimentalism and over-refinement, which distinguish so many of their fair compeers of the present day.”

“Don’t say that,” said a quiet voice behind him.

And turning, the Squire confronted his wife, who had hastened on to the lawn from the drawing-room, on seeing the approach of the party. "Do you already want to begin spoiling your nieces, Edward, as you have been trying to do your daughters?"

"They are past spoiling," put in Julia half aside, "at least, Madeline is. She has been opening her eyes wider at every one of my speeches."

"Hush! Julia," said her mother, with a glance of reproof. Then turning to her nieces she welcomed them to the Hall with a sweet and winning grace, which went straight to Flora's heart, and made her secretly wonder how Madeline could have spoken so disparagingly of Mrs. Marsden. Certainly Aunt Jane was older than she expected, and it seemed ridiculous to think of her and the young heir, in the relation of mother and son. She was so plainly dressed, too, with such prim quaint caps, and did really look as if a laugh and Aunt Jane ought never to be mentioned in the same breath. But still Flora settled it in her own mind that she was a very loveable person, and

opened wide the gates of her affectionate heart for the admission of the hall itself, and all its inmates with whom she had, as yet, made acquaintance. And thus prepared to be pleased, and consequently herself pleasing, Flora entered on this new stage of her, hitherto, uneventful life.

## CHAPTER III.

“So your cousins have come, Bessy,” said the Reverend Charles Marsden, the Rector of Marsden, as, late this same June afternoon, he entered the pretty drawing-room of his comfortable rectory, where sat his wife and daughter. “I was in the village as the carriage passed, and just got a glimpse of one bright face, and another graver one, that reminded me of your uncle Fred. We must go to-morrow and make their acquaintance.”

“I remember Madeline six years ago, papa,” replied his daughter. “We were great friends in those days, for she would not make a companion of Julia, and the others were in the nursery.”

“But six years is a long time at your ages, my dear,” remarked Mrs. Marsden. “Do not expect

to find Madeline what she was. If you could see yourself, Bessy, as you were then, you would be rather surprised."

"I am afraid so, mamma," said Bessy earnestly. "I ought to be better now than I was then, for few have had such privileges in every way."

"Many have them, I fear, my dear," was the reply, "but fail to make use of them. Can anyone in this our favoured Christian land, that is, of our rank, plead ignorance as an excuse for sin and folly?"

"They ought not, even if they do," said Mr. Marsden. "But none are so blind as those who will not see. Our Lord well knew the truth of this, with such striking examples before him as the Pharisees of His day."

"And you believe, I know, Charles, that we have plenty of the old Jewish leaven amongst us yet," observed his wife.

"And will have, while the Church is still militant against the social and moral evils and conventionalities of this world of ours. How hardly can a rich man enter into the kingdom of

Heaven. My dear Bessy, (turning to her) never wish to be what the world calls rich. It may be a great blessing, but it is an undoubted trial."

"There is not much chance of it, papa," she answered, with a cheerful smile, "so I won't waste my time in wishing for impossibilities. The only time I ever do think it must be nice to be really rich, is, when my funds are exhausted, and yet want and misery are staring me in the face on all sides, soliciting the succour I cannot give. Surely it is not wrong then, to sigh for a greater capability of doing good."

"Yes, then indeed it is hard to be contented, my child," he replied. "But it is at such times as these that we find ourselves making outlets for our overflowing hearts, which, perhaps, would never have been thought of without some such unusual pressure. If all our energies, Bessy, are spent in the comparatively easy practice of alms giving, which the well-disposed rich often use as a conscience-quieting-salve, we are apt to forget judgment and mercy, and all the sweet offerings of love which are so precious in our Saviour's sight."

“‘For though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing,’” said Mrs. Marsden, looking up.

“Ah! if we could only write that chapter in our very hearts,” exclaimed the rector. “When shall we ever live as if we believed that love to God is the one pure motive of Christian action. The love that with singleness of purpose goes on its appointed way, overcoming all obstacles, making each step of the daily life a stepping-stone towards heaven, and sanctifying by its influence our every action.”

“I’m afraid,” observed his wife, “that we are all constantly erring, by separating religion from our every day concerns.”

“Just so,” answered her husband. But before he could say more the Squire’s cheery voice was heard in the garden, and in another moment his jovial face looked in at the window with a hearty—

“Ah! there you all are. Come, ladies, put on you hats, or bonnets, and other necessary paraphernalia, and some up to the Hall. It’s too hot

for dinner to-day, so my wife's ordered tea by-and-bye, and the girls are at croquet, and want Bessy. And Bessy, of course, is anxious to see the new comers, and so is uncle Charles, so, come along all of you, there's no time to lose."

Bessy glanced at her father, who smilingly assented to the Squire's proposition, and then ran off to fetch her own and her mother's hats.

"You are coming, Charles?" said his brother, when the ladies were ready. "Jane must see you, she says, about this christening next week. You know we can't organise our village festivities without the parson's approval."

The rector bowed his acknowledgments, and the party started. It was only a few minutes' walk through the park from the rectory to the Hall. Marsden had long been a family living, where the younger sons of the squires were glad enough to settle down without passing through the trying ordeal of curacies, and the alternate hopes and fears respecting settlement and promotion, that were the lot of so many of their less favoured clerical brethren. And once or



twice, I fear, in days gone by, the young men had been guided not a little in their choice of a profession by the pleasing prospective of a comfortable home and income for life, which could be theirs, with only the *trifling* condition of taking orders. But not so was it with the present rector. The pure motive of love to God, and the all-absorbing desire to live for Him alone, had induced Charles Marsden, at an early age, to dedicate himself to His service. At that time there was no prospect of his ever succeeding to Marsden, for another clerical brother, the Squire's junior by only a year, was then installed in the living. But he died, and Charles, after his deaconate, found himself unexpectedly settled in his present happy home.

And the very beau-ideal of a country rectory was that of Marsden. The old squires had taken good care of their cadets, and, in fact, considered their own credit involved in keeping up appearances in the family living. The house had been built by a generous squire of the by-gone age, for some unusually favoured son, and was judiciously placed at an equally convenient dis-

tance from the Hall and the church. It stood just on the borders of the park, surrounded by its own trees and lawn, which, in the Reverend Charles's time, were kept up with scrupulous care and neatness. A five minutes' shady walk through fields and pastures, brought one to the church, of which a picturesque glimpse was to be had from the rectory drawing-room windows. Lower down again, and partly along the low river banks, lay the village itself, just near enough to church and rectory for the convenience of all parties.

Of course there was a well-kept walk, and a well-used one, too, between the rectory gardens and those of the Hall; therefore it was no great stretch of politeness on the part of the squire to leave his own party on the croquet lawn, at the request of his daughter, to go and summon the other Marsdens to this family re-union.

Madeline and Flora came forward from their game on the approach of the party from the rectory; and it was with eager, though covert curiosity, that the young cousins, Madeline and Bessy, met again. There must evidently have

been a strong friendship existing between them at one time; but girls at eleven and twelve are so different at seventeen and eighteen, that each had some difficulty in recognizing the quondam playmate in the self-possessed grown-up young lady, who so affectionately embraced her.

“And this is your sister?” said Bessy, turning at the same moment to greet Flora. “I remember, Madeline, how much you talked about her when you were here.”

“Yes,” answered Madeline, smiling; “and I nearly made Flo jealous to-day by talking about you. We must be on our good behaviour now, Bessy, or we shall get into her bad books.”

“Don’t be afraid, Flora,” said Bessy, gently, as she remarked the slight shade of annoyance that clouded her young cousin’s face; “I never played anything but second fiddle to the first of Madeline’s recollections of you. And if even the memory of you was enough to keep me in my proper place, you need not fear, when you are here in *propria persona*, to look after your own interests.”

“Madeline and I have already settled the matter between us,” said Flora, brightening up

as she perceived Bessy understood, and wished to re-assure her. "We always go shares in everything, so you will be called upon for a double allowance of affection, Bessy."

"She has plenty of spare corners in that little heart of hers," said the Squire, coming up. "Bessy has the most wonderful expansibility of affection, girls. She can concentrate it all on one person, or diffuse it over a dozen, without any apparent effort; and the best of it is, that the one person doesn't get an atom more than each of the dozen. She'll give you your due girls, and that's all."

"Well, I suppose, we oughtn't to want or expect more," remarked Julia, who was standing near them, resting on her croquet malet, and evidently impatient to begin the game. "Bessy has generally so many claims on her affections that it's no wonder she is sparing in the bestowal of them. But come, Bessy, I know croquet has a very small corner somewhere. It is almost a new game to Madeline and Flora, and they're no great hands at it yet. We two are pretty fairly matched, so let us each take one of

our cousins, you, Madeline, and I, Flora, and see which pupil and teacher win in the long run."

It was a pretty sight to see the four young girls in their light summer dresses and hats, flitting over the smooth lawn, gay and eager over the pleasant game. And so thought all the elder Marsdens, as they looked on approvingly from their comfortable garden seats.

"We must give them some amusement next week," said the Squire to his brother, indicating by a glance the croquet players. "We must try and combine our village festival with something of a higher order for them."

"Don't you think, if we concentrate all our energies on our own people, we shall have quite enough to do?" suggested the Rector.

"You must settle it with Jane," was the answer. "Of course, I only want to carry out her views on the subject."

There was a slight smile on Aunt Jane's lips as she looked up at her brother-in-law, and an answering expression of amusement in his eyes, as he asked, "Well, Jane, what is to be done?"

"We thought of having the christening quietly

in the morning," she replied, "with, of course, free admission to all who wish to be present. Then a dinner in the park for the villagers and tenantry."

"But you forget the best part of your programme, my dear," broke in the Squire, and overlooking the fact of his eager interruption of his quiet little wife's slow spoken words. Then, turning to his brother, he continued, "She proposes having all the farmers and such like to tea, in the evening, and to finish up with outdoor sports and amusements for the whole party. We'll have a band from Walford, and a good old-fashioned dance or two under the trees. I have promised as much to Flora, there."

"Then, I suppose, we must allow you to keep your promise," said the Rector, smiling. "It seems to me you and Jane have made excellent arrangements between you. But I don't see where you are to find room, or time, for the country folks. We can feel an interest in our own people which strangers could not; and, as far as my opinion goes, I think that either party on such an occasion would far rather have their

host's attentions all to themselves. After all, the christening and welfare of the young heir concerns our own people, much more than it does those of our social circle, to whom it is a matter of comparative indifference whether the heir apparent to the Hall is your son, or only a relative or a stranger."

"I don't know what to say to that," said the Squire, with comic seriousness. "Surely they ought to rejoice with me in this great and unexpected blessing. I am sure they have all congratulated me enough; and I'll be bound to say that some of the mammas are already speculating over the cradles of their infant daughters, and laying out plans for future operations. Nothing like being prepared, is there, Charles? But seriously, if you think it best, I dare say Jane will defer to your opinion so far, and give up a county party."

Aunt Jane gave an audible sigh of relief, as she turned again to the rector, and expressed her willingness to be guided entirely by him in the carrying out of *her* plans, laying a marked emphasis on the possessive pronoun.

The rector smiled as he answered, "Then Jane, you had better give all your energies to amusing our own people."

"Yes," said his wife, "and you may rely upon Bessy and myself doing all we can to assist you. But I hope you will not forget our school children?"

"There, Jane!" exclaimed the Squire; "there is an oversight! They must have a holiday and feast all to themselves. Poor little things, they will enjoy it as much or more than their elders."

"I did not forget them, Edward," said Mrs. Marsden quietly. "They are such a matter of course on these occasions, that I did not think it necessary to mention them."

"You see, she has it all at her fingers'-ends," remarked the Squire in an undertone to his brother. "I need not have been afraid of her forgetting anything. She wasn't educated among the Friends for nothing. Such order and method. Great thing to have such a head regulating my household."

The rector laughed his assent, and then he and



the ladies went at it "hammer and tongs," as the Squire said, about beef and bread, cakes and ale, and all the other indispensable concomitants for the christening feast. He left all these matters to them, he said, but he knew right well that his quiet Jane had not been kept for hours talking with him on these subjects without having formed a just estimate of his wishes in the matter, and that she would not propose anything he did not approve of. And so he leant back comfortably in his corner, with an expression of deep satisfaction and contentment on his ruddy Saxon countenance, while his bright blue eyes roved, now from the young croquet players in the distance, to the earnestly talking group beside him. Deep in his pockets were the Squire's broad brown hands, while an occasional clinking proceeded from them, evidencing that the purse was as full as the hand was ready, and the heart was generous.

And thus, in discussions of the ways and means how best to give their poor people an undoubted feast, the summer evening wore away. The sun went down in a blaze of glory in the west, shedding such a flood of crimson light over the

scene as attracted the young people from their game to look and admire, just as the grey-headed butler came out to announce that tea was ready.

## CHAPTER IV.

It was about noon the following day, when Julia knocked at her cousin's door for admission. She found Madeline and Flora busy writing letters to their father, one at either side of the table which stood in the deep window of their room. Certainly Flora could have no possible fault to find with their present quarters. The room was very large, and the window, where the sisters sat, occupied one end of it, being so broad and deep that it held all the furniture necessary to make it quite a comfortable little boudoir. The different points of view, from either side, were lovely. Having a westerly aspect, the bright sunshine did not as yet come in at the window, and therefore was all the more appreciated, as it lighted up everything outside with its mid-day beams. Flora had, more than once, raised her head from her

writing to look around her, not only at the beautiful scene without, but also into the long low room with two beds at the further end, and another smaller side window giving just enough light to the toilet table, fresh and fair as its users in its pink and white muslin. A few good pictures hung on the walls, and an old walnut-wood bookcase held a goodly supply of gaily bound volumes for quiet hours. The wardrobes and other articles of furniture were, like most of those in the hall, as old fashioned as itself, making the modern innovations of dressed toilet tables and the bright curtains and carpets look a little out of place. Flora was in the midst of a glowing description of everything when Julia came in.

“Will you come and see Aunt Marsden,” she said to the sisters. “Maxwell has just come to say she is quite ready now. She is pretty well again this morning, and most anxious to see you.”

In a few moments the sisters were ready, and followed Julia downstairs to their great-aunt's apartments.

It was not without considerable trepidation that Flora found herself on the point of being introduced to the "formidable old lady." She was not therefore quite prepared for the sweet peaceful scene that met her anxious gaze, as Julia ushered them into their aunt's sitting-room.

A lovely old lady sat quietly knitting in the sunny bow window, which opened out on a lawn bright with beds of many-coloured flowers, with tall trees around it, while more than one glimpse of the distant country was to be had through the shrubberies. The room itself was furnished in rich dark colours, looking still darker by contrast with the sunny window, from which a large folding screen partially shaded it. A fire threw its broad red light over this part of the room, where stood the chair and footstool in readiness for the evening hour or the wet day, when old age finds comfort and the needful warmth, only by the fireside, even in midsummer.

But this morning Miss Marsden was enjoying the bright sunshine and the soft sweet air from the open window, as she sat with a warm shawl around her in what she called her "fine weather

chair." For the poor old lady was dependent upon others for her powers of locomotion, having been deprived of the use of her lower limbs for many years.

Her life had but the monotonous variety of the window seat, the fire seat, or the Bath-chair, to which she had ready access through the French window. How well must she have known the sad, changeless routine, and expected, to a moment, all the cares and attentions of her devoted Maxwell. In this, and the adjoining sleeping room, had Miss Marsden passed the last fifteen years of her life; for she was only sixty when paralysis struck her down, and here, as she knew full well, might another ten or more years be passed, ere the summons came to release the active spirit from the enfeebled frame. And yet Miss Marsden could tell of her special mercies and blessings, and of these, not the least in her own and her friend's estimation, was the perfect possession of her faculties of speech and hearing. But her sight was failing fast, and the coarse knitting, done as much by feeling as by the eyes, was almost the only occupation left to beguile the long hours.

“ You are like your father, my child,” she said, as Madeline stooped to kiss her. “ More so now than you were six years ago.”

Flora was about to follow her sister's example when the old lady held her back by look and gesture.

“ Not much like either father or mother,” she said, as her eyes rested on the young girl's blushing face; “ but a thorough Marsden, nevertheless. And if I read aright, as much one in heart as in face. Kiss me, my dear, and now sit down, both of you, and let me hear what you have to say for yourselves.”

The sisters obeyed. Flora's shyness had taken alarm at the old lady's earnest scrutiny, but still her gentle voice, and the tale of patient suffering which could be read in everything about her, had touched the young girl's heart, and yielding to her affectionate impulses, she nestled down on a footstool at her aunt's feet and looked up at her with modest sympathy, as the old lady caressingly stroked her glossy hair. But Madeline seated herself sedately, and prepared to answer all her aunt's questions with unemotional self-possession.

“The true Marsden hair,” said the old lady, musingly, with her hand still on Flora’s head. “It is strange how some such peculiarity will recur in widely separated generations. Your grandfather’s was just this colour, my child.”

“That is very strange, Aunt Marsden,” said Madeline, with a perceptible deepening of colour, “Flora has always been thought so like mamma, and particularly in the colour of her hair.”

“But I have heard papa say it was like grand-papa’s,” put in Flora, quickly. “It is only strange that dear mamma’s should have been like his.”

“You must miss her sadly, my dears,” said Miss Marsden. “Just, too, when you most need a mother’s care. I have known the same grief myself, children, and even this long lapse of years has not worn out my sympathy in, and appreciation of your feelings. I knew but little of your dear mother, but I am sure she was one to be an irreparable loss both to husband and children.”

“I don’t think papa will ever get over it,” answered Flora, in a low voice. “We do all we



can to comfort him, but we can never supply her place."

"Frederick is not one of those on whom grief and care sits lightly," observed the old lady. "He was ever of a reserved, self-contained disposition like his own mother, and with less of the Marsden life and spirits than his three brothers. I am afraid, my dear, it will indeed be years before he lives down his grief."

"We were so happy before she died," said Flora, impulsively. "It was so different afterwards, when we had to go to school."

"But we were to have gone in any case," put in Madeline; "you know, Flora, mamma often said we were getting beyond her. For my part, I rather liked the novelty of the school."

"And was it a good school?" asked Miss Marsden, in surprise.

"Much too good a one for me, Aunt," said Flora, merrily; "I never could enter into all the ologies and sciences they thought it necessary to teach us. You have no idea, Aunt Marsden, how learned some of the girls were; we could not hold a candle to them."

“Don’t exaggerate so, Flo,” expostulated Madeline; “you will make our aunt think us worse than we are. You must not quite believe all Flora may say,” she continued, turning to the old lady. “She is fond of indulging in figures of speech, which you will soon know how to interpret rightly. I can speak for her, at least, and know that she could hold her own with all our school-fellows.”

“Oh! yes,” answered Flora, “in the usual feminine accomplishments of reading, work, writing, music, drawing, and a fair average knowledge of one or two living languages; but you know, Made, the dead ones beat me altogether, and as to the mathematics and logic, and all the long named sciences you were so fond of poring over, I never attempted them.”

“So you have become a learned young lady, Madeline, by your sister’s account,” said the old lady, with a quiet smile. “I am old fashioned in my ideas, and don’t quite see the necessity for over much education in women. You know our grandmothers were of opinion that to read, write, and work well were the essential feminine

accomplishments, nor did they wear out minds and bodies studying these abstruse matters. No wonder you were getting beyond your dear mother, my child, for she was one of those sweet simple ones whose chief object in life is to live for those they love.

“Mamma wished me to learn everything I had a taste for,” said Madeline, with a touch of pride and resentment in her tone. “Papa only carried out her wishes in our education. I am sure we ought to cultivate all the tastes and talents given to us.”

“Certainly, my dear,” was the calm reply, “but we ought to remember the giver of them, and learn to use them only to His honour and glory.”

“Do you mean God, Aunt?” asked Flora, with hesitation. “Of course, He endows us with our natural powers; but what can that have to do with Madeline’s learning mathematics and ologies?”

“I don’t know enough yet of either of you to draw any conclusion, my child,” answered the old lady, mildly. “You must make allowances,

children, for a poor helpless old woman, whose chief occupation is her own thoughts. Many is the strange web, my dears, that spins itself out in this old brain, as I sit here all day long, and watch the young flitting about in the busy world outside. How little health and youth is appreciated while enjoyed; but there comes a day, I fear, to most people, when the solemn question sounds startlingly in their ears, of what, in that heyday of life and health, they have done for their God."

Madeline looked round at her aunt with an expression of surprise and attention.

"Is that a new thought to you, my dear?" continued the old lady, answering her look. "Well, carry it away with you. It is an awful thing to look back, from a useless old age when we are powerless to do the things we would, on all the working time lost to us in our young days."

At this moment, a shadow darkened the sunny lawn outside, and a middle-aged female, with a healthy rosy infant of about six weeks old in her arms, came up to the window. It was Mrs. Jones,

the nurse, bringing the young heir to pay his usual morning visit to his great-aunt.

Flora sprang up with an exclamation of pleasure, and asked Mrs. Jones to let her carry the baby to Miss Marsden. He was fast asleep, as fat and rosy as any heart could wish. Flora laid him on the old lady's lap.

"God bless thee," said the old lady, after a few moments' silence, gently kissing the child's broad forehead, and giving him again into Flora's outstretched arms. "God bless thee, little one, hope of the Marsdens. Mayst thou live to know and love Him, and spend all the best of thy days in His service."

A tear glistened in the old lady's bright dark eye, and both the young girls kissed their baby cousin with an undefined feeling of solemnity, as if her fervent blessing had dedicated him to a holy future which already cast its shadow over him. Poor girls; they did not know that the unconscious baby was as a thorn in the side of their dear father, and that his existence had thrown a blight over their own future. Before this baby was born, their brother Alfred was the sole hope and heir of all the Marsdens.

## CHAPTER V.

“How happy they all seem,” said Flora, as she stood with her sister and cousins in the park one bright afternoon, about a fortnight later. It was the day of the christening *fête*, which had dawned as fair and beautiful as was desired, and promised to end as favourably. The young heir, Charles Frederick, had been duly presented to the assembled tenantry, after their dinner, and the people had then dispersed in different directions, some to rest contentedly under the trees, and others to games and pastimes, which the young Marsdens were watching with interest and amusement.

“They ought to enjoy themselves,” replied Julia, answering her cousin. “I am sure we are doing our best for them. But hark! I

hear crying. We must not allow anything of the kind. Let us see what is amiss."

It was from a group of school children that the sounds of grief proceeded, and the young cousins soon elicited the cause, for, as they approached, a very respectably-dressed young woman came forward, endeavouring to still the cries of a sweet little girl of about three years old, who clung to her, frightened with the unusual sights and sounds around her.

"What ails little Mary, Anne?" asked Julia, somewhat peremptorily.

"It's all so new to her, Miss," said the young woman, dropping a curtsey. "She seldom sees anyone but me, and now is scared like. I wanted her to go to Tom, here, while I take grandmother her bit of dinner, but the little thing don't seem inclined to, so I suppose Tom must go with it."

"Is your grandmother ill then?" asked Bessy.

"She was took bad two nights agone," was the reply. "It's only years, Miss, that ails her, the doctor says, but he fears she'll not leave her bed again. I wanted to bide with her to-day, but she wouldn't hear of it. I promised to take her down

a bit and sup, and the housekeeper has it all ready for me. But I can't take it and the child, and she won't stay with her brother now she's scared."

"Oh! but Tom must not go," exclaimed Julia. "The boys are just going to get up a game of cricket, and Tom, I know, is one of our best cricketers. We can't do without him. Can't you get that child to be quiet with anyone, Anne?"

The young mother coloured up as she answered, "She is very young, miss; she won't be so shy by and bye. But I won't take the boy from his play, Miss, if you want him. I must try and manage with the child and the basket. But Mary's heavy to carry, and not strong enough to walk far," and with a sigh of resignation the poor woman was turning away.

"Stop, Anne," cried Bessy. "You must not lose all your holiday in this way. Stay here with your child and enjoy yourself, and I will take granny her dinner. I was going to pay her a visit, and shall be glad of this opportunity."

Anne Fielding turned gratefully to the young



lady, thanking her for her kindness, but objecting to avail herself of it.

“ Oh ! nonsense,” she answered kindly. “ You know, Anne, I always have my own way in these things. There, run away to your gossips under the trees, and leave granny’s dinner to me. You know she will be quite safe in my hands.”

The young woman obeyed, and then turning to her cousins, Bessy asked them if they would come with her to the old dame’s cottage.

“ Not I, for one,” said Julia, with a contemptuous toss of her head. “ You know, Bessy, I don’t approve of your philanthropic notions. Take Madeline or Flora there. It will be a pleasing novelty to them, I daresay, to see you in your favourite character of Lady Bountiful,” and with a light laugh Julia ran off in search of the cricketers.

Bessy’s cheek flushed painfully at her cousin’s speech ; but she made no comment on it, only asking in her usual quiet voice if the others would go with her.

“ Don’t you think we may be wanted here ?”

said Madeline, evasively, for in truth the young lady had no fancy for cottage visiting.

“It will not take half-an-hour,” was the reply; “but I can go alone, Madeline, if you do not wish to come. Granny Fielding is a dear old soul, and I often pay her a visit. It was a pity she could not get out to-day. She will be glad to see some of us to tell her all about the grand doings!”

“Her grand-daughter could do that as well as you could,” said Madeline. “Surely she might have managed to go herself.”

“Yes, and be kept for two or three hours, and lose all the afternoon,” answered Bessy, warmly. “I know if Anne once went down she would not come back again. She is a delicate hard-working creature, and the rest will do her good. It is nothing new to me to carry a basket, and give up a few minutes to a helpless fellow-creature. But I must not delay, if I’m going at all. Will you come?”

Madeline held back and shook her head. She could not make up her mind to do violence to her own feelings, by going with Bessy.

“Ah! well,” said the latter, turning away with a sigh. “I suppose I must make up my mind to go on my way alone. I had hoped to find companionship in at least one of my cousins.”

“I will go with you, Bessy,” said Flora, springing to her side. “I daresay she’s a very nice old woman; at any rate, I’ll go and see, and take my turn of the basket this warm afternoon.”

“Thank you, Flora,” said Bessy. “I hope Granny Fielding will win your heart, and give you such a good opinion of our poor people, that you will be induced to make the acquaintance of more of them.”

Madeline looked after the pair as they went towards the tent for the dame’s basket. She was sorry now she had declined to go. Bessy was evidently hurt at her refusal. But if these kind of concessions were to be the price of a friendship with Bessy, could Madeline make them? Everything in her nature rebelled against these, as Julia called them, “Lady Bountiful ideas.” It was distasteful to her in every way to visit amongst the poor, and she could not interest herself in the schools Bessy thought so much of.

Even this feast was a trial to Madeline's reserve. It was painful to have to do the agreeable to everyone. Nothing could possibly occur to make these duties necessary to her, and consequently Madeline settled it in her own mind that she was not called upon to perform them for the mere personal gratification of her cousin Bessy, or any other member of the family. For mere love is not strong enough to conquer prejudices, and ride triumphantly over the natural indolence and selfish inclinations of our hearts.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE week after the christening feast, Colonel Marsden arrived at the Hall. The brothers had not met for upwards of six years, and in many things were strikingly contrasted. The jovial Squire, who owned no master but his own warm-hearted impulses, and the self-possessed soldier, trained in that school of discipline, the army, where all must learn obedience to fit them for command, had not much in common between them, beyond the mere fraternal affection which since their boyhood had never known the rude shock of any serious disagreement. They had gone each on his way, and though starting from the same point, it was on diverging lines, separating them more and more as years went by.

It was on the morning after the Colonel's advent, that the brothers sat together in the library, each intent upon his newspaper.

"Can this be true, Fred?" said the Squire, looking up; and he read out—

"We understand that Colonel Frederick Marsden is about to relinquish the command of the — regiment. His health is unfortunately the plea for this unexpected step, which will deprive the country of a worthy and efficient officer, and one who will carry with him into the retirement he seems to need, the respect and affection of the regiment in which so many years of his life have been passed. The gallant Colonel has just left Coburn to visit his brother, Edward Marsden, Esq., of Marsden Hall, and it is not expected that he will resume his military duties."

"Ah, they soon know as much of one's affairs as one does oneself," said the Colonel, laying aside his paper and leaning back in his chair, evidently prepared for a "talk." "But I ought to be

grateful to them in this instance, for they have broken the ice for me. I have a good deal to say to you on the subject, Edward, and the sooner it's over the better."

"Are you really going to give up the regiment?" asked the Squire, as he folded the paper on his knee, and plunged his hands into his pockets, their usual place whenever he was deep in thought or conversation.

"Yes," was the short reply. "It is the only thing left for me to do."

"Why? how? what do you mean?" said the elder brother. "I thought you were fond of your profession, Fred. You won't know what to do with yourself, with no occupation for the rest of your life."

"That is not a long look out," replied Colonel Marsden. "My health is not a mere excuse this time, Edward. Within the last month, they have told me my lease of life is well nigh run out."

"God bless my soul, Fred," said the Squire, starting up and pacing the room energetically. "You don't mean that you're going to die. Why

you look well enough, and are younger than I am. Cheer up, Fred, things can't be so bad. You'll pick up again with a little rest and quiet," and the Squire stopped before his brother, and laying his broad hands on his shoulders, looked down on him with a would-be reassuring expression.

But there was something in the soft blue eyes that met his, and an expression about the whole thin and careworn face of his brother that carried conviction with it, and turning away with a half groan, the Squire resumed his walk full of earnest thought.

"It is worse than folly," observed the colonel, after overcoming the emotion his good brother's scrutiny had occasioned, "to blind oneself to the truth, in these cases. I must look upon myself henceforth as a dying man, and, as such, I must set my house in order, and make the best arrangements I can for those left behind."

"True, very true," said the Squire. "You were always so calm and reasonable, Fred, and ready to divert things of illusive and sentimental wrappings. Of course you are quite right; but



there are not many men who could talk about it in such a matter-of-fact manner. There is not much fear of any of the ordinary considerations, which influence most men, alluring you from the path of duty."

"Don't say that, Edward," replied the other, while an expression of pain passed over his face. "I have failed in my duty and that signally. For the sake of a vain shadow, I have lost sight of the substance, and now those I love best must suffer for it."

"Ah!" said the Squire, again stopping beside his brother, "and I helped, too, to raise hopes that are now disappointed. Well, it can't be helped, Fred. This is a provoking world, for what benefits one person is almost sure to be injurious to another. My boy's birth, of course, annuls Alfred's chance. It was only natural you should have taken it into consideration, when there was no baby in the case."

"But I ought not to have built so much on it, or allowed myself in improvident extravagances, because of his prospects. This I have done, Edward,

and consequently my children will be left in comparative poverty. I must sell my commission, to leave them anything at all."

"Are things so bad as that, Fred," said Mr. Marsden gravely ; "I should never have thought it possible. With your pay and allowances to help out your private means, you ought always to have been well off."

The Colonel smiled. "You comfortable stay-at-homes," he replied, "never make any allowance for us military people. You would be astonished to hear how fast money goes in our unsettled homeless life. But let by-gones alone, Edward, we can't recall the past. I own to having acted against my better judgment in many things, and now have to pay for it in the anxiety I must feel about the future of my children."

"Then set all such anxieties aside, Fred," exclaimed the Squire, heartily, and taking both his brother's hands in his. "While I have a home to offer them, your children will never need a protector. As my own I shall look upon them, from this day forth." And a tear dimmed his bright blue eye, as the brothers silently sealed

the compact by a warm pressure of each other's hands.

“We shall understand each other in future,” said Colonel Marsden, as the Squire again commenced his perambulations, and with one or two vigorous “haw, haws,” and an audible use of his handkerchief, dissipated his emotion. “Your kindness, my brother, is a great relief to my mind, for you have only anticipated what I was about to propose. Of course these children will only be comparatively poor, and will be able to pay their way wherever they might be,—”

“That’s all nothing to me, you know, Fred,” interrupted Mr. Marsden, bluntly. “What you can leave them will be exclusively their own. Consider it a settled thing that Marsden is to be their future home.”

“I do, Edward, I do; but still I wish you to understand that other arrangements might have been made for them; though none that would please me as well. Their grandmother and aunts would willingly receive them; but I have one unconquerable objection to their household, namely, the absence of any male element in it.

My girls have been much with me, and have, I hope, but little of the exclusive feminine failings, which make many women unreasonable and petty-minded. I do not think that grandmamma's rule would be conducive to the strengthening of the qualities I would see them possess, self reliance, and enlarged views on all subjects."

"We agree thoroughly on that point, Fred," was the reply. "Of course, it is not to be thought of. You may trust me to take care of them all. Alfred shall continue his school, and choose his own profession, and the girls shall marry their own hearts' choice. But really it seems absurd, Fred, to be making all these arrangements, while you sit there in your chair apparently as well as myself," and again the Squire's eyes twinkled suspiciously.

"Heart disease is so deceptive in its symptoms," replied his brother calmly. "It is indeed a solemn thing, Fred, thus to stand face to face with death. We soldiers are perpared to face him in the battle field, but shrink from his insidious approach through disease. But I have long suspected that something was amiss. One can't have the hap-

piness of one's life so rudely snatched away as mine was, without feeling it. But I am glad I have known it in time to settle these matters. I have no fears for myself, Fred. With such a Saviour as ours, we may rest in hope. It is only trying when we think of those to be left behind."

The Squire gave several hems and haws before he spoke again. Then coming behind his brother, he laid his hand on his shoulder, and asked in a tone which, in spite of himself, was subdued and solemn, "Will it be sudden, Fred?"

"No," said the other quietly, and putting up his hand to press his brother's. "They say not. We shall have time before us, Ted; and the dark valley will be cheered by your affection and sympathy."

## CHAPTER VII.

“READ that, Edward,” said Colonel Marsden, a few mornings later, as he handed his brother an official letter across the breakfast table. “I am a free man now, and must make the most of my independence.”

But in spite of his light tone, the Colonel felt deeply this severance of the last link with his profession, of which he had just received an intimation from the military authorities. Another now occupied his place at the head of his old Regiment, and soon his name even would be forgotten in the military world.

Very calm and grave was Colonel Marsden's face, as he summoned his three children to a family conversation, in the course of the morning. It was resting under some old trees in the park,

where they could talk without fear of interruption in the summer sunshine, with sweet country sights and sounds all around them, that he tenderly revealed to them the future that lay before them.

“Do you like this old place, Flo?” he said to his youngest daughter, who had established herself in her usual corner close beside him. “Do you think you could always be happy in such a home, or have you still the love for a wandering soldier’s life?”

“It is very pleasant to move about, papa,” she replied. “I like the variety of a constant change of quarters. But still I am comfortable here, and don’t mind staying a little longer,” and she looked up at him with a saucy smile.

But the glance that met hers was so tenderly sad though smiling, that Flora was frightened, and eagerly asked, “what was the matter?”

“See, here, my children,” he answered, and taking the letter from his pocket, he laid it before them. “I am no longer commanding the — Regiment, but a poor retired invalid,” and he emphasised the last word.

“But you will soon be better, papa,” cried the

young people simultaneously. "Of course as you are not well, it was better to leave the Regiment and get some real rest; Uncle Edward has often said it was all you wanted."

"But rest cannot restore me, my dears," he replied. "It is very hard, children, to have to tell you that I can never be well again."

"Never, papa," exclaimed Madeline; "will you be an invalid all your life? Well, never mind, we will take good care of you."

"I am sure you will, my child, but I shall not trouble you long. A year, or two at the most, and I shall be beyond your care."

The children looked at him in speechless surprise. They scarcely realized the meaning of his words.

"Must I be more explicit," he said affectionately. "Though I sit here in apparent health, children, there is an enemy within, slowly, but surely, doing his work. It is out of human power now to conquer him; it only remains to be seen how long it will take him to conquer me, and how much time he will still give me with my poor motherless children."



These words were not spoken without the evidence of deep but restrained emotion, which found a ready answer in the tears filling his daughters' eyes, as they met their father's glance so full of love and sorrow. It had taken them all by surprise. They were stunned by the blow, even while not making an effort to realize it.

It was Madeline who first recovered herself sufficiently to speak.

"What is to become of us all?" she murmured.

"Poor children," answered her father, "that is the very subject I want to talk to you about. You know I have always encouraged you to face duties, however disagreeable, and not allow your feelings to make you shrink from anything, if good sense and reason require it of you."

"But it cannot be necessary yet, papa," said Flora, looking up at him with a frightened expression. "Surely it is time enough to talk of all these dreadful things. You will not leave us yet?" and she clung to him with a fresh burst of tears.

"I hope not yet awhile, my child," he replied,

as he put his arm round her and kissed her. "But when the worst is inevitable, Flora, we ought to be prepared for it. It will not hasten the end by an hour, our pre-arranging everything. Now I have still energy enough left to talk with you explicitly on the subject, and while it is still so far off, you can better enter into and discuss my projects for you, than if it was nearer. Is it not so, children?"

And Colonel Marsden was right. It was easier for these young people to command their feelings, so deeply stirred by this sudden announcement of what was before them, while their dear father still sat there amongst them, as of old, than it would have been if he had thus spoken to them on a sick bed, surrounded with all its melancholy adjuncts, which in themselves tell a tale of present suffering and future sorrow.

It is no kindness to the sick one, or ourselves, to put off all these unavoidable and saddening details till they are weakened with the approach of death, and ourselves heart-broken with the prospect of their loss. If the chances of life have once been mooted, the sooner our worldly business

is disposed of the better, and the soul left at liberty to turn to the one hope, the only comfort in death, the glorious future in store for God's children, where this world's partings and pains will be for ever lost sight of, in His presence.

And therefore it was, that Colonel Marsden had, thus prematurely as some may think, made known to his children the hopelessness of his condition. From the very difficulty they would have in realizing the truth of it, they could listen calmly to all he had to say; though from the fact of their knowing it, his words would be precious, and have all the weight that he desired.

Already Flora's light heart was flinging off the burden laid on it by her father's words. It seemed impossible to think of him as dying, while they sat there together, and it was with tolerable composure that she asked if they were going to stay long at the hall?

"For a month or two, I daresay," said Colonel Marsden, "then I must look out for some place for ourselves, as long as we are together. But I want you all to look upon the hall as your future

home. You most particularly, girls, because Alfred will continue at school I hope, and then make his own way in the world. It will not be of such consequence to him as to you, who may have many years to spend here. Is it not a pleasant prospect for you, my dears?" and he smiled tenderly as he looked down on his daughters.

"Nothing can be pleasant without you, papa," said Flora, turning away to hide the rising tears. But Madeline said "Marsden Hall could never be a happy home to her, under any circumstances."

"So much the worse for you then, my dear," replied her father quietly; "we have but small chances for happiness if we begin any new era in life with dislike and prejudice. There are always plenty of sources of annoyance and causes for fault finding in anything, if we are looking out for them. But for my sake, Madeline, you must try to like Marsden, and its inhabitants. It will grieve me if I have to leave you with the knowledge that you will make your future an unhappy one, both to yourself and others."

"But we can't help our natural tastes and

feelings, papa," she replied; "I don't think I shall ever like this country life. I don't care about all the riding and scrambling that Julia thinks so much of. I can't bring myself to take an interest in the poor and the schools, as Bessy does. And if one does'nt do either the one or the other, what else is left for us to do in a place like this, where a stranger is not seen for days together."

"You make out a good case for yourself, child," said Colonel Marsden; "if all the interests and duties of life are to be found outside our homes, there are but few of us, I fear, that could get what we wanted. But it is in our homes, Madeline, that all of us, and women particularly, are to find their chief pleasures and occupations. We must not seek extraordinary opportunities either of pleasure or duty. If we are craving for what we can't get, the chances are we miss much that might be ours, if we only choose to take an interest in things about us."

"I don't know where the interest can be in anything when you are gone," said Madeline

passionately; "there will be no one then to care whether we do right or wrong."

"And is the praise of man all you look for, Madeline?" replied the Colonel, "is there no better motive of action than this? Be sure, my child, that you will never know what true happiness is, or be able to make it for yourself out of everything about you, till you get beyond this."

Madeline held down her head, and coloured up.

"I spoke thoughtlessly," she said; "of course I did not mean that exactly; I know we ought only to try and please God, but still it is hard to have none to sympathise with, or understand us."

"That will not be your case, Madeline, as you will find out by-and-bye. Only love God, and try to please Him, and you cannot go astray. I have not been in the habit, children, of talking much to you on these subjects, I left all that to your dear mother; but you have always had my prayers. The good seed, I know, has been sown abundantly in your hearts, and I am sure, in His own good

time, God will give the increase, even if it should not please Him to let me realize it now. Till the last hour of my life I shall pray for you all."

The girls coloured up, and did not reply. They were conscious that, as concerned themselves, their father's prayers were unanswered, and were too truthful to express what they did not feel. As he said, they knew the truth, even if they were uninfluenced by it, and in quiet faith and hope he was prepared to leave them in God's hands, confident in His promise to befriend the fatherless; though regretting, in a worldly point of view, the dependence in which he must leave them.

And it was not without some presentiment of the feelings he would arouse in his elder daughter's mind that Colonel Marsden went on to tell his children of the arrangements he had made for them; and gave them to understand that if they were to enjoy the comforts and luxuries to which they had been accustomed they must find a home with their uncle Edward.

"What! be dependent upon others?" cried Madeline, warmly. "Oh! papa, surely you don't

mean that. I cannot, I will not submit to such an arrangement. However small our means, let us only be independent."

"Hush, Madeline," said her father; "such expressions are unbecoming. I shall ask nothing from you, or form any plans, that are at variance with any legitimate feelings on your part. But when we have relatives willing and able to assist us, it would be wrong of us to refuse their kindness at the bidding of a false pride. When it pleases God to take me, you two and your brother will be left in such a position as will render the home and protection offered you by your uncle an absolute necessity. There are still three years and more, before you, Madeline, will be legally competent to act independently, and for that time, at least, you must submit. But who knows what will happen between this and then? I shall not be here to control you; but you will be older, know more of the value of money, and be better able to act for yourself. I can but do what I think best for you, and leave the future in God's hands." And Colonel Marsden leant back against the tree beneath which they sat, looking paler



and more exhausted than the children had as yet seen him.

What could they all do then, but assure him that whatever satisfied him they would endeavour to make the best and happiest for themselves? but that they trusted it would be many years yet before the necessity came.

With a kiss, and a sad smile, at the hopes these last words expressed, and which his own growing weakness belied, Colonel Marsden dismissed them all, as he desired a little quiet communion with himself after this harassing conversation. And the young people walked slowly away with the shadow of the sorrowful future cast over everything about them; but taking a diverse form and colouring from each individual temperament.

In Madeline, her approaching orphanhood was chiefly connected with the dreary prospect of some years at Marsden, where her vivid imagination was already conjuring up for herself a life of humiliating dependence. The pleasant hours over her books, and the attainment of fresh knowledge, would be all at an end, and all freedom

of speech and action out of the question. The comforts and luxuries would be valueless in her estimation, at such a price. But she would be free some day, and then they should see how nobly she would seek for independence.

But Flora's heart was full of the coming grief. She had no room for another thought. They must make him as happy as they could while he was left to them. It mattered little what became of them all afterwards.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE summer was nearly over, and Colonel Marsden and his family were still at the Hall. Every attempt on his part to look out for a house for himself had been evaded by Mrs. Marsden. And now, it became so evident that Colonel Marsden was getting daily weaker, that the subject was tacitly dropped, and the whole family settled down into that state of unquiet expectancy which usually precedes a dreaded but inevitable event. The change for the worse had indeed been very rapid. It would seem as if the "setting his house in order," and the relinquishment of all worldly occupations and cares, had relaxed the springs of life, which a strong will had, till then, kept up to their work. It was no question of years now, but rather of months, or weeks; and

so thought Charles Marsden, as, after an absence of a week or two, he returned to the rectory, and a few hours later went to see his brother.

It was towards evening. The day had been unusually warm and fine even for September, and the sun was thinking of his rest, and gathering about him many attendant clouds, crimson, and gold, and purple, the colours he loves to array himself in when bidding us farewell. The birds were twittering out their last lays, as they saw him preparing to depart, and collected in the trees, whose foliage glowed in the sun beams, anticipating the autumn tints, which had as yet, only appeared here and there amongst their leaves. The harvest was nearly housed, but in the distant fields an odd waggon or two, could be seen wending its way homewards, and the cheery shout of the harvest men and the gleaners, trooping home with their well-earned loads, sounded through the still evening air.

The rector found some of the Hall party on the lawn, their usual resort during the warm summer months. The squire was away at his farm, for he was one who liked to exercise his rights and

privileges as master, and was not in the habit of deputing others to do his work. Julia and Flora and the two little girls were amusing themselves with croquet ; but Madeline sat by her father on a low garden seat, and both were looking silently at the beautiful country, each intent on their own thoughts, when they were interrupted by the rector's arrival.

“Is that you, Charles,” said the Colonel looking up with a bright smile. “I am so glad you have come back.”

Charles Marsden pressed his brother's hand without speaking. The change was too great not to be startling, and the rector could not conceal his painful emotion.

“You find me much worse, Charles?” continued the Colonel, rightly interpreting his brother's silence as he sat down beside him. “It cannot be otherwise, and why should we wish it.”

“The love of life is a natural instinct,” replied the rector. “It is hard to leave those we love, and to be called from our allotted place and work, prematurely, as we may call it in your case.”

“Yes, that is the pang, Charles,” was the answer. “You may well call it prematurely. When we look back on all the duties omitted, or ill-performed, during the past years, and for the first time feel all their importance; it seems as if we were summoned too soon. Ah! that irreparable past. Who could rise above such a load of sin and indifference, if Christ had not died.”

“Died that we might live,” said the rector. “What hope have we in anything without Him. The more we realise His perfection, the less we think of ourselves. We have sinned and come short of His glory; but his promise is sure. Faith triumphs over fear, and believing, we can rejoice in his salvation.”

“Yes, in a time like this we gladly take hold of the promise. But how hard it is, Charles, while we are enjoying health and happiness? Why is it that the months and years roll on, and we live on as if the time stood still, and God and eternity were only the dream of enthusiasts?”

“You may well ask why, Fred. The indifference of mankind generally, is always a subject of surprise to the believer. And yet the best

amongst us have always the old leaven hidden away somewhere in our hearts, and startling us occasionally by its appearance."

"What do you mean by the old leaven, Uncle Charles?" asked Madeline. She had been overcome by his startled, pained expression on seeing her father, and had been quietly crying at a little distance. But she had recovered herself, and come forward, in time to hear the rector's last remark.

"Come and sit down," he said kindly and making room for her beside him. But Madeline dropped into her old place by her father, and repeated her question.

"Everything in us," he replied, "that is at variance with God's law. In fact; just the things which make us sinners in His sight."

"You ought to know that, Madeline," observed her father. "As far as the head goes, you cannot be ignorant of these things."

"But I can't say as much for the heart!" you ought to add, papa," she said moodily. "I know I ought not to be what I am, but I can't help it. How can I believe in God's love when He takes

away what I love. How can I believe in His goodness and mercy, when He compels me to sacrifice all that makes my life's happiness."

"Poor child," said her father tenderly, "you think yourself hardly used, I know. What can I say to her, Charles, of comfort and resignation?"

"Little, I fear, as yet," replied the rector, looking with affectionate pity on the young girl who had relapsed into her usual attitude of unemotional stoicism. "We can but pray for her, my brother. She may yet learn to come for comfort, where all may find it, even in the heaviest trials."

"Could there be one heavier than mine?" she asked almost fiercely.

"Yes," said her uncle decidedly. "God gives you many drops of sweetness in your bitter cup. What would you say to the bitterness of bereavement, without a gleam of hope for the future. Imagine to yourself the agony of such a time. You have all of worldly consolation that can be had, everything to make life comfortable to your father, and the prospect of the same for yourself



all your life-long. Think what it would be if you were poor and friendless, Madeline. Take the sweet with the bitter, my child, and bow in submission to His omnipotent will."

"I must submit to it, I know," she answered, struggling with the feelings her uncle's words had aroused. "But to say it is well, oh, that I cannot," and she turned her face away to hide her tears.

"None of us can, without His help, Madeline," said Mr. Marsden. "Unaided human nature is powerless to do good, much less to submit to its own chastenings and purifyings, to lose the offending eye, or hand, and acknowledge that it is needful and beneficial. But our God asks no impossibilities of us, my dear. What He requires of us, He will help us to perform. You feel His hand heavy upon you. The burden seems too great to bear. Oh, take all your griefs to the Saviour, Madeline; at His feet only can you find the comfort and support you need in this time of trial."

Madeline did not reply. She had silently nursed her grief and troubles in her own wilful

heart, till she had appeared to herself the most unfortunate and hopelessly miserable of young girls.

She would take comfort to herself from no suggestion of her better sense, or her more light hearted sister Flora. But her uncle's words had put their mercies plainly before her, and, while allowing for the wilfulness and weakness of the natural heart, pointed out the one comfort of the afflicted, and the rest of the heavy laden.

And the recollection flashed across her mind, that never yet, had she brought all her griefs to God. She had prayed, but only a few formal words, or if it had been a true outpouring of her heart's thoughts in more excited moments, it was only for the impossibility of her father's recovery. Could He help her to resign herself to his loss? She had been struggling vainly, kicking madly against the pricks, and was well nigh spent with her efforts. She had been too well taught not to have suffered in such a fight. The hour was come for her to resign herself into God's hands.

The tears which burst forth so uncontrollably and which she walked away to conceal, were not

only the outpouring of her pent up sorrow, but the first evidences of the dawning of a new life in her grief-stricken soul.

But Madeline's father and uncle, left in sorrowing silence on the garden-seat, could not rightly interpret her tears.

"It is painful, Charles," said Colonel Marsden to his brother with a deep sigh, "to see my child in such a state of passionate wilful grief. Some might be gratified by it, as an evidence of her affection, which, of course, is its apparent cause. But I go deeper, and see her natural selfishness and pride at the bottom of it all. You have been spared the trial, Charles, of seeing no fruit of your labour, as regards your children. I know that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. But still it embitters the present, when I look back on the past. I fear we must have failed in our duty to those girls, when I see them what they are now."

"Don't say that, Fred," replied his brother. "I know it must be a bitter grief to you, but be not faithless even to the end. God's ways are not

our ways. He may be leading them by paths that we know not of. They are His, dedicated to Him by holy baptism, and the children of many prayers. Trust them in His hands still, my brother, and believe me, that as His minister and steward I will watch over, teach and pray for them, to the last hour of my life."

The colonel pressed his brother's hand and smiled the thanks he could not express. His heart was too full. For his own part, he was ready for the summons, whenever it came. He had been Christ's faithful soldier and servant all his life long. There were dear ones waiting for him there, whom he longed to see; the faithful wife, and sweet little ones who had died ere he had learned to be anxious for their spiritual welfare. With quiet faith and hope he could resign himself into the Saviour's hands. For himself the promise was sure and certain, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from sin," and holding fast by that, he knew no fear or doubt. But for these, his children, just entering into life, and giving no evidence in their lives that the seed was fruitful in their hearts. God help him! for

it was a bitter thought. Still, his brother's earnest promise for them was some comfort. God was good to him, even to the last. He left his children well provided with kind protectors, one brother to care for their temporal needs, and the other to watch and pray for their souls' welfare. Dare he doubt that their Father in Heaven would withhold His own watchful care for them.

Thus thought Colonel Marsden, as he sat in silence, watching the sun going down in his glory in the far west. He always loved to look on such a scene. It recalled to him the days when his wife used to sit beside him, and share his thoughts, as they saw the sun set in that still farther west. Towards that West his thoughts often wandered, and climbed the mountain side, where, mid flowers and trees, he had laid his loved one to rest in her quiet grave. They would not be long separated now. If never again they thus could look together on an earthly sun, they would soon be rejoicing together in the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and walking in the eternal glory of His presence.

## CHAPTER IX.

OCTOBER set in very cold and wet, and the deprivation of the pleasant out-of-door life soon affected Col. Marsden. The sudden and unexpected appearance of some alarming symptoms, necessitated immediate medical aid, and in the emergency the Squire had sent for the village doctor, of whom, till then, they had known little or nothing.

Mr. Gerald, if a diamond, was one decidedly in the rough. He had professionally the brusque ungracious manners of one living in a continual state of absence of mind, and recalled back unwillingly to everyday life by his duties, to which, however, he gave much attention, when once engaged in them. At times, too, a glimpse of the inner man flashed out through the rough coating which he appeared rather to have adopted.

as a disguise than because natural to him, and his friends recognised his good breeding and kindness, and the strict sense of duty which always seemed to influence him.

In appearance, the doctor was tall and gaunt, and utterly careless in all those little niceties of the toilette which distinguish some men from their fellows, without in any way detracting from their good qualities. Whatever Mr. Gerald might have been in his youth, he certainly was not beholden to externals in middle life, and seemed determined not to owe good opinions or impressions, to the mere outward signs of a taking manner or attractive appearance.

He and his sister, a lady about his own age, lived in the White House on the Hill, the doctor's house from time immemorial in Marsden. They had come as strangers to the village some twenty years before, and as strangers they lived there still. They had studiously withdrawn from all society, but on what plea, except disinclination, the gossips could not determine. It could not be poverty, for the doctor was lavish of gratuitous services, and their establishment, though modest and

on a par with their station, was perfect in all its details. Their advent at Marsden had been a great event in its day; but we get accustomed to most things in time, and the busybodies had got tired at last of the Gerald's concerns, and had allowed them to settle down quietly into the insignificant position they seemed to covet.

The rector and his family were the only people with whom Mr. Gerald and his sister had latterly relaxed into friendliness, and a good understanding was established between them, which this unexpected introduction at the Hall was likely to strengthen. Mr. Gerald evidenced great skill in his treatment of the colonel, and the physician called in later from Walford, complimented him on his knowledge, and approved of all his opinions. Their united efforts staved off the evil for that time, and Colonel Marsden partially recovered. But a change for the winter to some warmer climate was recommended. No persuasions, however, could induce the colonel to leave his native land. A few months more or less, he said, were of little consequence to him, when perfect recovery was hopeless.



“Would the Devonshire coast suit him, Mr. Gerald?” said Aunt Jane one day, as they discussed the matter together. “It is hard to send a poor invalid away from all his friends just at the time when he seems most to need their care. Can’t we compromise the matter and let him go to Rockpoint? It has the great desirability of a warmer climate, and Mrs. Neville and her daughters would be at hand to help to nurse him.”

“What name did you say, Mrs. Marsden?” asked Mr. Gerald eagerly, while his face worked with a sudden emotion.

“Rockpoint,” she repeated, thinking he alluded to the place, and not observing how some new-born interest had sharpened his tones. “It is a pretty little sheltered spot, famous, I believe, for its mild and salubrious climate. Mrs. Neville has lived there for many years. I think it was on some daughter’s account she left the north, for they lived in Edinburgh when Colonel Marsden first met them. I suppose you know, Mr. Gerald, that his wife was a Neville.”

“One of many, I suppose,” remarked the

doctor, as carelessly as he could. "You spoke of Mrs. Neville's daughters, Mrs. Marsden, and I am afraid our patient is likely to need plenty of care and attention from his sisters-in-law."

"He will have three of them to look after him," she replied. "I think Mrs. Neville had five daughters. Mrs. Marsden was the youngest, and I believe the other married one is also dead. I never hear the girls speak of more than those at Rockpoint. I hope, Mr. Gerald, that it will suit Colonel Marsden to go there. It will be such a comfort to know he is amongst friends."

"Aye, aye," he answered briefly. "A man had best keep with his friends when he has them. I'll think it over, Mrs. Marsden," and hurriedly excusing himself on the plea of duty, Mr. Gerald departed.

But little recked he of other patients as he strode down the avenue. Mrs. Marsden's casual remarks had roused long dormant recollections of the past, and revealed a startling and unexpected fact. The doctor could have no peace till he shared the news with his tried friend and companion, his sister Elinor. Through the park

gate, along the high road, past the rectory gate, and on to his own comfortless looking home, with the formal carriage drive, and the oval grass plot trim and neat, only in too perfect keeping with the unpicturesque staring white wall of the house, went Mr. Gerald, with ever increasing speed; and bursting impetuously into the house, he startled Miss Gerald out of her ordinary composure into an exclamation of dismayed surprise, by the unusual hour and manner of his arrival.

“Good heavens! what ails you, Gerald?” she ejaculated, as he flung himself into a chair, too much excited at the moment to gratify her curiosity. She only feared he was ill, but mastering her agitation, she stood patiently before him, till word or look of his should put her on the right scent as to what must be said or done.

“Sit down, Elinor,” at length he articulated, “I am not ill, only flurried. I have heard of them, at last,” and he hid his face in his hands to conceal his emotion.

“Who, Gerald, of whom have you heard?” she asked, while her countenance betokened anxiety and apprehension, as she waited for his answer.

“The Nevilles,” he replied, without raising his head. “And she is dead.” Neither spoke again for some moments. Whatever *she* might have been to either of them, this sudden knowledge that she was gone, gone out of reach of either reconciliation or reparation, was alike sad and startling.

“After all, it makes no difference to us,” she said at last, timidly, and as if not quite sure how he would take it.

“I suppose I ought to think so,” he answered, but without looking up; “but while there is life there is hope, and I must have hoped far more from the future than I acknowledged even to myself. It is hard only to hear of them, to have one’s worst fears confirmed, and the future left a dead blank on one’s hands.”

“But how did you hear it?” she asked again, curiosity evidently having more to do with her surprise than any deeper feeling.

“At the Hall,” he said. “Colonel Marsden’s wife was her sister. I wonder we did not hear it before.”

“It was not very likely, Gerald,” she answered.

“ We have seen so little of them till lately. I do remember now, his bringing her here soon after the son died, but it was only for a short time, and you were away. You know I do not gossip, brother,” she continued, with a faint attempt at a smile. “ People do not often volunteer family information, though there are few who are not amenable to a little skilful manœuvring, and will then innocently enlighten us on the interesting point.”

“ As Mrs. Marsden did to-day,” he remarked, rousing himself out of his despondency. “ She little guessed the importance of her remarks to me, at least I hope she did not. We must keep our secret, Elinor. There is no reason why things should not go on as of old. I am too old to make a fresh start in life, and couldn't exist without some work. I must be of use as long as I can. It seems the only thing left me to do. Besides, if those young girls come back here after their father's death, they will be a sort of link with the past, I would fain retain.”

“ I thought Colonel Marsden was better, Gerald,” she observed.

“But won’t be for long,” he replied, relapsing unconsciously into his abrupt professional manner. “He won’t see another summer, whether he goes to Rockpoint or otherwise. He is right not to go abroad, only we must recommend it in such cases. What matters a month or two when a man is prepared. But that eldest girl will break her heart about it, when he does go, Elinor. She is strangely like her aunt in some things, as far as I can judge. I hope she won’t run foul of the same troubles on her way through the world. Perhaps the mixture of the Marsden blood will have a counteracting influence; but they’ll have a sore time of it with her, I’m thinking, whoever gets the charge of her. I must have an eye to her myself, Elinor, for *her* sake. You won’t object to a little more society, will you, Elinor? We must keep on our present footing at the Hall. They seem disposed to be friendly, and we will meet them half way.”

And thus the matter came to an end. Whatever *she* might have been to the brother and sister, they had reckoned her as dead; therefore, the knowledge of it as a fact could make no difference,

after the first shock of the announcement had passed away. The only remaining trace of it was in the interest with which Colonel Marsden's children were henceforth regarded by Mr. Gerald.

"Poor young things," as he often said to Mrs. Marsden. "So young to be deprived of both their parents."

And after Colonel Marsden went to Rockpoint in November, Mr. Gerald often made the inquiry after his health an excuse for a visit to the Hall, either alone or accompanied by his sister, and the mutual interest and sympathy unconsciously drew the White House and the Hall together, in spite of their natural and social discrepancies.

Christmas came and went, bringing with it, as Mr. Gerald expected, worse and worse accounts from Rockpoint, and therefore but little of its usual joyfulness to any of the Marsdens. And the fears of all were reduced to a tangible form, ere the new year dawned, by the arrival of a telegraphic message summoning the Squire to his brother's death-bed.

For the end had come. The end at which all arrive some day, however chequered and opposite

their paths. It is wonderful how little this fact, of ever approaching and inevitable death awaiting all, enters into the everyday concerns of life. But it cannot be otherwise. The fact is universally acknowledged, but the sensations and feelings accompanying it, are known but once and for ever by each individual. None come back to give their experiences to the world, each in his turn enters that period, where we have no former observations to guide us, no comforting companionship to reassure us. Alone, in the truest comprehension of the word, isolated on all points from our fellow mortals, we must feel the coming of our deadly foe, powerless to resist, unable to disobey. Well for us is it, if He is there, who dying, conquered death that we might live. The one Friend, whose experience can assist, and whose power can uphold us, in that last dark hour of our life in time, and unfold for us the first bright page of that which endureth, through Him, to all Eternity.



## CHAPTER X.

It was a very grave party that sat round the rectory breakfast-table, a few mornings after the Squire's summons. A letter had just been received from him, with the expected, but not the less melancholy, announcement of Colonel Marsden's death.

“Poor fellow,” said the rector, as after a second perusal of the Squire's letter, he handed it to his wife, “or rather, happy fellow,” he added, correcting himself with a smile, which could not be otherwise than sad. “That is one of the conventionalisms of which it is hard to break oneself. Why should we speak of Christ's sleeping saints, those rich in the fruition of their hopes, and in the enjoyment of His presence, as if they were losers in their passage from this dying life?”

Those left behind are well worthy of our sympathy and commiseration. Poor things! fatherless and motherless, as regards this world, and left alone on the threshold of life's most important epoch, when the last link with the comparatively irresponsible childhood is broken, and the future welding of the chain that will lead them either heavenward or otherwise, is left in their own undisciplined hands."

"We must do what we can for them all," said Mrs. Marsden, "when they return to the Hall, which, I see by Edward's letter, will be the end of next week. It will be a grievous coming back for them; and poor Madeline will have greater reason than ever, for disliking Marsden. Undisciplined is a most comprehensive description of your niece, Charles. It is just what she is, and truly, the next few years will determine what her future is to be. Characters like hers, with hidden depths of strength and intellectual powers beneath the surface, are oftenest late in their developments. She has the makings of great good, or evil, in her composition."

"We think much the same of her, I see,"

replied the rector, "and must mutually do our best, to bring out the good, and overpower the evil. Doubtless this bitter trial will work effectually either in one direction, or the other. She could not pass scatheless through such an ordeal. God grant, it may have been a softening, and not a hardening, process."

"Could a great grief harden any one, papa?" asked Bessy in surprise.

"Assuredly, my dear," he replied. "Proud and selfish characters uninfluenced by the grace of God, rise in angry resentment, under affliction. They think themselves hardly used, when deprived of what is essential to their happiness and comfort. They are impatient of correction, which, in their own eyes, is unnecessary. The germs of such dispositions were developed in your cousin, ere she left us in the autumn, and I shall be deeply anxious about her, till observation has enabled me to judge whether they are still flourishing in her heart, and depriving her of all the comforts which God's many mercies to her are intended to bestow."

"How much more difficult it must be, for

people like her, to submit," observed Mrs. Marsden. "Pride seems an almost insurmountable barrier between God and man. And how wonderful is His grace, which can bring down these great ones of the earth, to the teachable humility of little children."

"May it be so in Madeline's case," said the rector. "I feel sure she will be an anxious charge to me; and Flora, too, needs watching."

"What the bright, happy tempered Flora, papa?" exclaimed Bessy. "Surely there could not be a sweeter, or more amiable character."

"Yes, naturally, my child," he replied with a smile. "Flora has everything in her favour as regards this world. She loves to help and serve every one to the best of her ability. The happiness of her life consists in helping others to be happy; but if this is only done, Bessy, to please herself, is it not valueless?"

"Oh! Papa, what a severe judge you are making yourself out this morning. So even, sweet Flora, turns out to be selfish. Isn't he too bad, mamma?" and Bessy turned appealingly to her mother.

“ You know your father is right, my dear,” was the reply, “ although your affection for Flora has taken sudden alarm at his apparent harshness. We must not let your cousin’s pleasing temper and amiability, blind us to the truth. Do not forget the words of our xiii. article. ‘ Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ.’ ”

“ I know what you mean, dear mamma,” answered Bessy, but with a touch of sadness in her tone, “ and I believe you are right ; I cannot hope that Flora is so kind and obliging, from the one right motive. I am afraid it is a subject that she never thinks of. And yet can the fountain head be bitter, when the waters are, to all appearance, so sweet and pure ? ”

“ Ah, Bessy, that is a matter we had best let alone,” said her father. “ It is one of the deep things of God, and we must leave it in His hands. Weeds and flowers often closely resemble each other, and none but the initiated can discover their differences. The tares and wheat

must grow together till harvest time, for so strangely are they intermingled in this world, that we cannot uproot the one without destruction to the other. There is a wonderful similarity to the mere superficial observer, in the morality of the present day and religion; but, as in the case of the weeds and flowers, there is a difference to be detected, though oftentimes our eyes are blind to it. The appearance may deceive for many a day; it is only special occasions or trials that reveal its shallowness, and the want of the one true principle within. But with reference to Flora, her present sorrow may have a vivifying influence. I cannot but believe that the children of such parents as your dear uncle and his wife, will eventually be, with them, partakers of their spiritual inheritance."

"And how is it with their earthly inheritance?" asked Mrs. Marsden. "Will they be altogether dependent on your brother, my dear?"

"I should hope not," he replied. "That would indeed be a discipline for Madeline. But I understood from dear Frederick that they would be tolerably independent, though not in a

position to dispense with Edward's kind offers of protection and assistance. You will see by his letter that this is just how the case stands. The one hundred pounds a year which will be the utmost that can be secured to each of them, is not, of course, sufficient for the boy's education, or more than enough for the girls' pin money."

"Ah, I see," said Mrs. Marsden, again taking up the Squire's letter. "I read it hastily, and he has, woman like, reserved that information for his postscript ; but not, I suppose, for the reason that would be imputed to us, its great importance, but rather from its insignificance, and the fact of its being the last thing to be thought of with reference to the orphans."

"You only do him justice, Mabel," answered the rector. "Whatever may be Edward's faults, he does not want for the truest and most magnanimous generosity."

"You are his brother, Charles," replied his wife, with a quiet smile, beneath which dwelt a depth of hidden meaning. "We women are privileged to differ from you in our opinions on everything, and especially as regards your own most lordly

sex. We see things, of this kind particularly, from a different point of view, and, if I mistake not, your nieces will not be allowed to forget their position in Edward's family."

The rector laughed. "Don't abuse your privileges, Mabel," he said, with an expression, however, that belied the severity of his words. "You know I allow no trifling with my position. I hope my brother will vindicate his own character, and prove that, in this instance, a man's judgment of a man has the best of it."



## CHAPTER XI.

It is once more summer time at Marsden. Some months have elapsed since Colonel Marsden died, and his daughters have long been established in their old room—theirs now in a fuller sense of the word—and have settled down, each into her place, in what may be to them, for many years to come, their only home. The first bitterness of grief has evaporated. How it had individually affected the sisters, and what came of the new life, we shall leave future events to determine.

\* \* \* \* \*

“How cross Madeline is growing,” said Julia Marsden to her cousin Flora, as they looked out their croquet mallets and balls in the hall, one fine afternoon in June. “I don’t know what’s coming to her, but she grows more disagreeable

every day. It can't be the recollection of the past, unless she intends to subvert everyone's experience, and perversely make more of it every day, because she ought to think less of it."

"Come, Julia," said Flora, "don't be too hard on her, because I won't stand it. I thought it was to be an understood thing between us that she was not to be discussed. Be she ever so cross and queer, I don't choose to hear her blamed. She is my sister, and I have nothing to do with her faults."

"Hoiny-toity, Flo," exclaimed Julia, "I declare I've made you quite angry. I really didn't think such a thing was possible. But, seriously, I can't help being vexed, when Madeline is so selfish about everything, and will go her own way, no matter how it inconveniences other people. You allow she has faults, and in this case, I'm sure you'll agree with me, she's going a little too far."

"Well, what is your particular grievance to-day, Julia?" asked the other, more quietly.

"I only asked her to come and play croquet this afternoon. You know Di Weston is coming

on purpose to have a good four game, because I quite counted on Madeline's obliging us. Can you wonder I am angry, when she positively refused, without rhyme or reason that I can see, if it isn't to be disagreeable."

"I am sure she couldn't have understood you, Julia," said Flora, unwilling to believe the other's accusation. "Where is Madeline now? I'll run and explain to her why she is wanted. I'm certain she will oblige us directly."

"You will only have your trouble for nothing, Flora," replied Julia. "See, there she is under the trees (for they were on the lawn by this time) with that everlasting book in her hands, of which I'm sure she doesn't read a word. Go, if you like; perhaps she will think better of it. But wait," Julia cried again just as Flora was hastening away, "I see Bessy and her uncle Howard coming up through the park. If she will do it for anyone, Flo, it will be for Bessy. Let's come and meet her, and tell her the story. I'm sure she will exert her powers of persuasion on our side, and secure us our fourth. It will be a bore if it isn't settled before Di comes."

The young girls hastened towards Bessy and her uncle. The latter was Mrs. Charles Marsden's youngest and only surviving brother, and, as such, doubly dear to his sister. He was in the early prime of manhood, not more than ten years his niece's senior, and the affection between them partook more of the confiding unrestrained nature of that accompanying the fraternal relation, than of the more reserved and respectful sentiments which usually exist between uncles and nieces. Henry Howard often made long visits to the rectory, being always a welcome and beloved guest at his brother-in-law's. In fact, since the death of his parents, some ten years before, Marsden Rectory was the only place Henry had looked upon as home, and thither he had resorted during his university vacations, and thither he still came, whenever he could spare some holiday time, from his arduous and wearing duties as a curate, in one of the most trying London parishes. He was a zealous and hard-working young man, and had already been favourably noticed for his earnestness and ability, by more than one of his clerical superiors, and also by many of the rich

and great ones, to whom his ministry had been peculiarly beneficial.

But the clerical profession is a trying one, both to the minds and bodies of those whose hearts are in their work. The ardent soul, continually urged onwards by the indisputable calls of duty, often overworks the body, which, however desirous of keeping pace with the mind, shows its mortal origin, by its inability to labour beyond a certain point, even in God's service. And thus was it with Henry Howard. His health had partially given way, and he was now seeking a renewal of it in a long visit to the rectory.

"Oh, Bessy," cried Julia, as they joined company with this young uncle and his niece in the park, "do come and talk to that incorrigible Madeline."

"Why, what is the matter, Julia?" said the graver Bessy, as they mutually shook hands, a ceremony that Julia often forgot when engrossed with other things. "What is this new trouble that has made you overlook the fact that Flora and my uncle have not, as yet, made each other's acquaintance?"

“As if a formal introduction was necessary,” cried Julia, impatiently. “But I suppose I must satisfy you, or I’ll not hear the end of it for a week,” and turning to the pair, she went through the form of introduction between them with the most technical particularity. Catching some of her spirit, Flora swept the ground with her skirts in a most elaborate curtsey, while Henry’s bow was not less extravagant in its respectfulness; but their eyes met, and a hearty laugh ended the scene, putting them at once on the same easy terms of familiarity with which Henry was met by all the Marsden family.

Meanwhile, Julia detailed to Bessy her grievance against Madeline, and her cousin willingly agreed to do what she could to induce her to be more sociable. They were close to the delinquent herself by the time Julia had brought Bessy to this point, and she, seeing that escape was impossible, and expecting to find an ally in Bessy, if, as she thought probable, Julia again proposed the croquet playing, came forward at once to meet them. Henry Howard, with natural good taste, kept in the background, for he had heard enough to know

some disagreement was on the tapis, and thought his presence would not be desirable.

But Julia was uninfluenced by such feelings, and called out to Madeline in her clear ringing voice, that Bessy thought her most disagreeable not to play croquet, and had come to persuade her to amend her ways.

“Hush, Julia,” said Bessy, reproachfully. “Do let me speak for myself. I only want to know why Madeline objects to join you;” and she turned inquiringly towards her.

“I am in no mood for frivolous amusements,” said Madeline, in a low melancholy tone. “And I am sure, Bessy, you will be the last person to urge me to do anything against my better judgment.”

“Your judgment!” exclaimed Julia, angrily; “and what right have you to be judging at all in the matter and calling croquet a frivolous amusement? I am sure it benefits mind and body far more than sulking about under the trees, filling oneself with ideas of one’s own sanctity, and the consequent degeneracy of every one else. I will speak,” continued the young girl, shaking off

Bessy's hand stretched out appealingly to stop her.

"There's no reason or justice in Madeline's conduct ; it's just getting past bearing, and the sooner she knows it the better."

These were cruel words, and that Madeline felt them as such was evident by the flushing of her cheeks, and the restrained angry sparkle in her dark blue eyes. But she had no need to vindicate herself, for Bessy spoke up warmly for her before she could reply.

"For shame, Julia," she exclaimed. "You should not let temper get the better of courtesy and politeness. You must not forget Madeline's circumstances. If she is still disinclined to join in our amusements, we must be patient and considerate, and wait a little longer before urging them on her."

"But it's not that," cried Julia indignantly. "Of course I would bear with her, then. Didn't you hear her call it frivolous, and speak of her better judgment? Why is she to set herself up in opposition to us all?"

"Come with me a moment, Bessy, dear?" said Madeline to her elder cousin, drawing her aside.



“There’s no use in speaking before Julia, she neither heeds nor understands.”

“But do you really object to play on such serious grounds?” asked Bessy in surprise.

Madeline coloured up as she replied “Please don’t say anything more on the subject, Bessy; I can’t do what I don’t think right.”

“Absurd,” said Julia, who, in spite of Madeline’s hint, had again come up to them. “Of course, you just put it that way to get Bessy on your side. You know very well it is just her weak point, and have taken this way to get an ally.”

Then raising her voice Julia called out to Flora, “Bessy has deserted to the enemy, Flora, so we must e’en do without our fourth.”

“How tiresome,” cried the young girl, as she and Mr. Howard came up. “But won’t Bessy play herself?”

“I would if I could,” she answered cheerfully, “but I have come up to read with Aunt Marsden for an hour, and after that I must go back to mamma.”

“Oh, if you have pre-arrangements, Bessy,”

sneered Julia, "there is no use in saying another word. You never alter your plans to oblige anyone. Madeline has a staunch ally in that respect. Between you there's no fear but you'll go your own ways in spite of everyone. That 'doing right' seems to me to be a nice excuse for doing wrong."

"That 'doing right' is a favourite watchword of mine, Julia," observed Mr. Howard with a smile. "These two little words used conscientiously; may, perhaps, cause errors in judgment, but are not likely to mislead irreparably. For their sake I must come to the rescue of my niece and her friend. Prithee let them go in peace, Julia, and accept me as their substitute in your game."

Julia looked a little abashed, and muttered something about his inexperience.

"Yes, I know I am but an indifferent performer, fair lady," he replied, with imperturbable good humour. "But I count upon your kindly overlooking my defects, and making the best of the bad, when you can't get a better. Am I to consider myself as duly installed as your fourth, and

may we dismiss these young ladies to their vocations?"

"Don't tease so, Henry," said Julia, moving away petulantly. "You know how I hate being talked to in that sarcastically polite strain. I suppose you'll be better than nobody, as these girls won't come."

"Can't come, Julia, if you please," replied Mr. Howard, gravely. "There is a decided want of accuracy in your method of expressing yourself, which it is only a kindness to point out to you. Can't and won't give a very different meaning to your expression, my dear child. Can't implies the existence of a preventing cause, and therefore exonerates your cousins from the charge of wilfulness, of which won't, on the contrary, is the most positive expression."

"It is all the same to me," answered Julia. "They won't do as I want, and I don't care whether there is a cause or not. But here comes Di, at last," she continued, as a four-wheeled dog cart made its appearance in the avenue. It approached rapidly, in fact, as fast as was compatible with the preservation of the long swinging

trot of the dark brown horses attached to it. The charioteer, a tall and very fair young girl, seemed thoroughly enjoying her position. She guided them with a light firm hand, and keeping up the pace to the very last moment, brought them to a standstill at the Hall door with consummate skill, and a no small amount of self-satisfaction.

Julia had hastened forward to meet her friend and expressed her pleasure at her arrival. "I did not expect George," she continued, as she turned to shake hands with Di's brother, who accompanied her. "But he knows he is always welcome."

"I didn't come to see you though, Julia," replied the young man with a smile. "I want to speak to your father on business, is he at home?"

"Not now, but we expect him at dinner-time. He is gone to Walford, of course you will wait till they arrive. Come and play croquet to while away the time?"

"I don't mind if I do, Julia," was the reply. "I must see your father to-day, so have no help

for myself, but to wait. But have you room for me?"

"Oh yes," she said quickly, "we wanted a fourth, when Henry Howard volunteered his services, but he's such a muff, that he shall give up to you. I am sure he will be glad of an excuse to do it. He only promised to play to oblige us."

And so it was arranged. Henry Howard was glad to get off his self-imposed task, and carry out his original intention of a chat with Aunt Jane. He knew she was generally to be found in the drawing room, or conservatory, about this time of the day. The quiet little woman liked to sit at her work in the cool shady room, or amongst her favourite flowers, with the open windows giving her the full benefit of the fresh air, and sweet summer scents outside. She could both hear and see her young people on the lawn, and, at present, did not consider any closer surveillance necessary. The Westons were old friends of the family. Their father had been the Squire's tried neighbour and companion for many

years, and on his death bed, three years before, had left him guardian of his only son and daughter. George was legally out of his hands now, but not too proud to come frequently for counsel and direction, and Diana had ever been the Squire's *beau-ideal* of what a modern young lady ought to be. Her mother had never had much control over this high-spirited clever girl, and constant association with her father had developed many masculine tastes and ideas. Diana was two years older than Julia, and, till the arrival of her cousins, almost the only young girl with whom she had been on terms of intimacy.

Now the education and management of their girls, was the one subject on which the Squire and his wife could never agree. He would fain have supplied the want of a son to share his interests and pursuits, by assimilating his daughters' tastes, as much as possible, to those of the rougher sex. But such assimilation is dangerous at all times. Generally speaking, it is only girls already quite sufficiently disposed to masculine employments, who respond at all to such en-

couragement; and in them these dispositions require regulating and moderating, rather than promiscuous indiscriminating development. But now that there was a son again, to be the hope and future companion of his father, Aunt Jane trusted things would be different, and that the two lively well-disposed little girls in the school-room, would be allowed to grow up without the over indulgence and injudicious freedom, which would doubtless be as injurious to them as it was beginning to be to Julia. The intimacy with Di Weston, a girl brought up on the same principles, but older, with more cleverness, and therefore with greater influence, was, also, by no means agreeable to Julia's mother, but at present there was a difficulty in putting an end to it, owing to her position as the Squire's ward. Aunt Jane could only hope that the counteracting influence of such quiet and differently disposed girls, as Madeline and Flora, would have some weight, and keep matters more evenly balanced for the future in their little domestic world.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE Westons stayed to dinner, for the Squire did not arrive till a few minutes before the hour, and George was consequently obliged to leave the discussion of his business till his ex-guardian had somewhat refreshed the inner man, after a long fatiguing day at the county town of Walford, where his engagements were generally many and trying.

Di was delighted at an excuse to prolong her visit, and intended to make a good use of it, as she told Julia, by an evening at the billiard table. It was an often regretted want at her own home of Thornton; but, of course, she had found plenty of opportunities of practising and becoming tolerably proficient in the delightful amusement, and was an ardent and untiring player.



“Where are you all off to?” cried the Squire, as after a whispered word to her mother, Julia rose from the table soon after the dessert made its appearance, and was immediately followed by Di and Flora. “Why are we to be deprived of our fairest flowers just when we most need their refreshing presence to give zest to the flow of wit and wine, eh, George?” turning to him. “Come, put in your protest, man; we must not let them desert us yet. I shan’t be game for business for another hour.”

“Then let George come with us, Papa Marsden,” said Diana, coaxingly. “We are all off to the billiard table. We don’t want to sit still like you old folks, after dinner. It’s an age since I have had a good game. Mayn’t we go?”

“You don’t want my leave, Di,” he answered. “It’s little authority you allow me over you, you rogue. You know you do just as you like with me.”

“Then I shall only leave you Mamma Marsden to keep you company, sir, for the next two hours,” she replied, with a saucy smile. “She will be quite enough to watch over your slumbers for

that time, and I dare say is pretty well accustomed to it, too."

"Slumbers, indeed," said the Squire, indignantly. "I'm not going to sleep, child, I can tell you. I never was more wide awake in my life."

"Oh, nonsense," she answered. "Why you're already half asleep, my good sir. I can see your eyelids drooping already. Who ever heard of an old gentleman that was out in the air all day, and didn't take a nap after his dinner in the evening? Come, girls, let's leave him to his sweet repose. I dare say Mrs. Marsden will adjust the handkerchief to keep his old head from the cold, as soon as it is necessary."

"You saucy girl," he said, laughing. "But I'm afraid I must spoil your party after all, Di, for one of you girls must do something for me, before I can give you leave to amuse yourselves."

"What's your pleasure, sir?" replied Diana, folding her hands and dropping a demure little curtsey.

"Nothing you're likely to do, anyway," was the answer. "A newspaper lies on the hall table,

which I want one of you to take to Aunt Marsden. There's a long article in it, which I know she will like to hear, as it gives a new view on the subject treated, and which is one she has always been interested in."

"Then the long and the short of it is," cried Julia, with evident vexation, "that one of us is to give up the next half hour to the delectable task of reading out to Aunt Marsden. That's too bad of you, papa; Bessy was reading to her all the afternoon. Can't she wait till to-morrow?"

"Hush, Julia," said her mother. "The little we can do for your poor great-aunt we ought to do cheerfully. But this is no compulsory service. It will be hard on her, poor old lady, if none of you young people will give her a few minutes of your spare time," and Aunt Jane looked at them inquiringly.

"No great readiness to volunteer, however," said Diana, quizzically, as she looked from one to the other of the young cousins, who each seemed hoping some other would sacrifice herself for the public good, and consequently deferred coming forward. "I think the matter may rest with the

old lady's grandnieces, Mrs. Marsden. Surely one of them has sufficient niece-like feeling to obviate the necessity of *my* coming forward in the matter. Really, delicacy and every other good feeling forbid the thought; but lest I should be tempted to err, and rob my fair friends of their legitimate laurels, you must permit me to retire," and with a light laugh, and graceful inclination of her head, Diana disappeared, carrying off her brother in her train, for the purpose of getting a quiet game together, while the nieces settled who was to be sacrificed for the benefit of the old lady.

"Why must it be read to-night, papa?" asked Julia, as she looked after the retreating pair. "I'll do it the first thing in the morning; but I must go to Diana now. She wants to play pool, and we must begin together."

"The paper goes away by the early post," replied her father, in a disappointed tone. "I did not think you would make such a fuss about it, Julia. However, never mind; I dare say she will be satisfied with my account of it," and

he turned away, as if he had quite done with the matter.

“I will go, Uncle Edward,” said Flora, cheerfully. “It would be a pity if Aunt Marsden doesn’t hear the whole article. I’ll soon be back, Julia,” she continued to her, as she went towards the door. “I dare say I can come in for the second game.”

But Julia caught her hand as she passed, and held her fast. “You shan’t go, Flo,” she exclaimed. “Of course Madeline isn’t going to do anything so frivolous as play billiards, and will be glad of this opportunity of exercising the self-denying do-right principle she talks so much of. Let her go and read to Aunt Marsden, and you come with us.”

Madeline coloured up violently. She had not risen at first with the other young people, having no intention of joining them; but still less had she of immuring herself in her Aunt Marsden’s warm room, and losing all the cool evening hours so conducive to profitable meditation. But now she was so directly appealed to, she hesitated,

and finally expressed a fear that her services as reader out did not give Aunt Marsden satisfaction, and therefore were unavailable.

Julia looked at her keenly. "A mere excuse," she muttered, while Mrs. Marsden asked why Madeline had such an impression.

"I am never asked to read out for her," she replied in a low tone.

"I dare say not," said her aunt quietly. "Your great aunt is accustomed to so many offers of good service from Bessy and Flora, that she never needs to ask the same from you. In this case, Madeline, you might surely be Flora's substitute."

Madeline rose immediately from her chair, but with such evident unwillingness and dissatisfaction, that Flora broke away hastily from her cousin's grasp, and exclaiming that none should be coerced on her account, caught up the paper from the hall table, and was off and away down the long passage leading to the old lady's rooms, before Madeline had even reached the dining-room door.

"Not too late to take her place yet, Madeline," sneered Julia, as she followed her out of the

room. "It is a grievous disappointment, isn't it, to be thus defrauded of such a fine occasion for self-sacrifice. Move a little quicker, and be a more willing victim next time, Madeline, or Flora will always get the start of you. I shouldn't wonder if she turns out the greater saint of the two after all. She certainly acts more like one now."

Thus giving free expression to her no very complimentary opinion of her elder cousin, who was daily rendering herself more distasteful to this thoughtless pleasure-seeking girl, Julia ran off to her friends in the billiard room, from whence proceeded those pleasant sounds to a lover of the noble game, the clicking of the balls, and the thud of the cues, as Diana and her companion sent them flying hither and thither over the smooth table in a well contested game, which only terminated just as Flora joined them, with all the keener zest for her play, after a quarter of an hour spent in ministering to the pleasure of her old grand aunt.

## CHAPTER XIII.

“WILFUL girls, both of them,” said the Squire to his wife, as the door closed on the young people. “We shall have our hands full enough I’m thinking, Jane, for the next few years. Although I should do just the same again, yet still it was a great charge taking over these children of poor Fred’s. Yet what could have become of them otherwise. I shouldn’t have liked those Nevilles to get hold of them.”

“It wasn’t to be thought of, my dear,” replied Mrs. Marsden. “After all it is very pleasant for Julia to have some companions of her own age, and we have no cause for complaint in the manners or appearance of your nieces. They are as thoroughly ladylike and well educated as we could wish. I am sure Julia cannot fail to be the better for their company.”



“I don’t know what to say to that, my dear,” replied the Squire, as he turned his chair more towards the open window, and re-filling his glass, and crossing one leg complacently over the other, settled himself comfortably for a chat, or a sleep, as the case might be. “Flora and Julia seem very good friends, but the looks and words between Madeline and our girl, didn’t strike me as particularly friendly this evening. What’s coming over that girl, Madeline, my dear? I never was much taken with her at any time. She’s one of your intellectual sort that dosen’t suit me; but it is something more than that lately. Are you in her secrets, Jane?”

Mrs. Marsden smiled, the nearest approach to a laugh she ever attempted.

“I should think I was the last person she would confide in, Edward,” she said. “I am as much puzzled as you are to make her out. Her grief ought to be moderating by this time; but still she is less sociable, and graver, and more abstracted now than she was six months ago. Julia seemed to know more of the matter; she mentioned something of principle just now, and

judging by Madeline's face it was near the mark, even if only one of her random shots."

"I dare say that's it," cried the Squire; "she is just the girl to get extravagant fancies on such subjects. If that's all it will soon right itself, Jane. We must persevere in amusing her, and rousing her out of this morbid mood. I might have guessed as much with a moment's thought. Poor Fred was always a little inclined that way himself. It is only natural that she should take up these notions, just after his loss, too. I'm glad, Jane, it's only that. I was afraid we might have some love affair on our hands."

"That will come quite soon enough, I dare say," said Mrs. Marsden. "I hope they will both marry happily some day; but they are very young yet. There is much to be done still in forming their characters, and I would willingly, if I could, supply their mother's place. But Madeline repels confidence, and Flora shrinks into her shell of shyness at the first heart touch. They are too old to give it, except voluntarily, and neither seem inclined to give me any such chance of influencing them. All we can try must be from without,

and I suppose if we go the right way to work we may do a good deal."

The Squire listened attentively to his wife's remarks.

"Ah," he said, when she paused, "it's a great responsibility, and these girls I look upon as my special charge, because poor Fred confided them to my care, as he feared too much feminine influence over them. He quite agreed with me, Jane, that men were women's best teachers."

"And yet no girls could be more unlike than Julia and her cousins," said Mrs. Marsden, with a smile.

"Of course, my dear, you must make allowance for differences of temperament," replied the Squire, hastily. "The same treatment acts differently on each individual according to their peculiar idiosyncrasies."

"From whence it follows," put in his wife, "that the different tempers must be differently treated, if the same result is to be obtained."

"Exactly—very true; just what I would have said myself, Jane," observed Mr. Marsden, failing to see that his quiet little wife had just re-

versed his own argument. "And so we'll take care and manage these girls properly. The one wants coaxing and handling to bring her up to the mark, and —" but he stopped short, and looked at his wife to go on.

"And the other ought to want keeping well in hand, only she dosen't," she continued. "I can't allow that dear Flora wants anything but to be allowed to follow her own good impulses; she cannot go astray."

"But you said just now, Jane, that her character wanted forming," said the Squire, looking up.

"So it may do, in some points, my dear; for instance, I should think it a mistake to let either of them have too great a command of money. It would give them extravagant habits, which in after life they might not be able to indulge."

"Poor things," he replied, "it's little enough of this world's goods they have at the best, and it seems hard not to let them have their own. But I have thought the matter over, Jane, since you mentioned it before, and I believe you are right. They can have no right to complain if

they get the same as Julia. It can't do them any harm to learn the value of money. If you say £50 is enough for their yearly pin money, they must make it do. I won't be a very inexorable guardian if they overdraw."

"And will take the first opportunity of telling them so, won't you, Edward?" was the smiling reply. "Your discipline won't do much good if there is no penalty attached to it. At least, let them have the wholesome dread of your righteous anger hanging over them, if their accounts won't balance every quarter."

"Leave the money matters to me, little woman," returned the Squire, with playful dignity. "I suspect you would be the very first to make up the deficit yourself, if you could do it unbeknown to us all."

"I hope there will be no such necessity, my dear," said Mrs. Marsden. "I shall do my part of adviser to the best of my ability. But I must say I think we have an anxious time of it before us, with four girls, verging on a marriageable age, about us; for, of course, you are responsible for Diana to a certain degree?"

“She’s well able to take care of herself any way,” answered Mr. Marsden. “What a fine creature she has grown up, another specimen, my dear, of what we can do with women. There’s not a better rider, with a quick eye, light hand, and cool judgment in all the country round. And even you, I fancy, can’t find fault with her intellectual qualities. She’s a ready perception of, and keen interest in, all matters, agricultural, political, or anything else put before her; and there’s few have quicker wit or more winning manners.”

“You consider her, I know, little short of perfection, Edward,” said his wife, quietly. “But you forget much in your category that is essential to a true woman, and whatever you may say to the contrary, my dear, no one has a greater appreciation of such qualities than yourself. A woman may be all that you describe Diana, and yet, without the more feminine virtues of unselfishness, endurance, delicacy, and tact—or what might be better called sound common sense—she is partially unfitted to fill her proper place in this world’s economy, as a worthy wife and

mother. Not that these qualities are incompatible by any means with those possessed by Diana, only I would prefer the latter to the former, if it is impossible to develop them equally in the same character."

"Ah, I know you don't agree with me, my dear," was the reply. "Men and women think so differently on many points, and on none more so than our estimate of women. We naturally wish to make you most like ourselves, and you, on the contrary, have your own ideas of your duties and position, and try to bring up your daughters by that standard. I suppose we are both partially right; at any rate, if we each exercise an equal influence on our young people, we ought to turn them out perfection between us. We had best give each other leave to do what we can. You yourself allow that a judicious combination is possible and nearest perfection; though, if a choice is necessary, you prefer your own views. I think the same, my dear, with reference to mine, but we'll aim high, combine our forces, and make the Marsden young ladies patterns for everyone;" and, with a complacent

laugh, the Squire emptied his wine-glass, and, leaning back in his chair, composed himself, after his long speech, while an unbroken silence settled down over the room.

By-and-bye, a light form flitted over the grass outside, and Diana's smiling face peeped in at the window. She had left the billiard room, at her brother's request, to see if his guardian was ready for business. But Diana had been a true prophet. Mrs. Marsden held up a warning finger as the laughing girl was about to speak, and she perceived that the Squire was indeed enjoying a comfortable nap.

"But where is the handkerchief, mamma Marsden," she whispered. "He'll certainly get a cold in his dear old head, with this draught from the window;" and, in spite of Mrs. Marsden's smiling objections, she sprang in lightly over the low window cell, and approaching on tiptoe, adjusted her own delicate little handkerchief on her guardian's head, with, as she said, the most scrupulous attention to a sufficiently picturesque effect. Then whispering to Mrs. Marsden, that now she could enjoy herself with



an easy conscience, she slipped away noiselessly to the billiard room, to amuse them all with a description of papa Marsden in his novel *bonnet-de-nuit*.

## CHAPTER XIV.

MADLINE looked after her retreating sister, but did not, as Julia suggested, hasten after her. It was with a feeling of relief that she found this irksome duty taken out of her hands, as she tried to persuade herself, by her amiable sister. She was sure it would be useless to follow her. Flora could be determined enough when she chose. After all, she was well accustomed to the task, and would soon get through it. How unkind Julia was to make such a fuss about it. No one liked to be driven to do such things. Had it been forced in that way on anyone, they would have objected.

Full of such thoughts as these Madeline took up her hat, and throwing a light cloak over her shoulders sauntered out into the shrubberies.

But she carried with her an undefinable sense of wrong, though whether in herself or those about her she could not determine. She was thoroughly sick at heart, weary of everything, neither seeking nor finding pleasure in anything, except in objectless solitary wanderings through the park and grounds, her whole being rebelling against the life she seemed doomed to lead, and her heart full of aimless aspirations after higher duties, and more worthy objects and opportunities for exercising the new and untried powers she felt within her. If only she could hide herself in some inaccessible solitude, where, without cares or distractions, she could serve God acceptably. And then with the strange instability which seemed her chief characteristic, she would long for a wider sphere of action, where, by mortifying her sensitiveness and love of ease, she might, like holy women of old, devote her whole life to the tending of the poor and sick. Nothing seemed too great or too difficult to the young girl's ardent mind at such times, for her heart was really filled with a deep enduring love to God, and her one hope and desire was to live to

His glory. The spring of life indeed was there. But, be the stream never so small and pure, if pent up in some narrow limits and denied an outlet for its superfluous waters, whereby the income may escape, after vivifying and giving action to the whole, it will grow and gather strength and power from day to day, till it breaks out, in some unexpected quarter, perhaps carrying death and destruction with it, where it would have been welcomed as a refreshing and beneficial friend, had it come in its legitimate channel and natural proportions. We must always thus adjust the outlet to the income in everything, or we shall be in danger of unnatural and injurious outbreaks.

And this Madeline had yet to learn. Roused by her father's death to a first and full perception of immortal things, the realities and earthly-ism of her every day life were galling and distasteful. Would she could fling them all away and begin a new life better worth the aspirations of an undying soul. Day by day, these thoughts were gaining strength. It was no new

thing for Madeline to wander thus in deep meditation, and as often as not tears would stream from her eyes as she longed for these impossibilities, which like the rainbow are ever before us, but vanish when we approach.

It was in such a tearful reverie that she was surprised by her aunt and uncle from the rectory, followed by Bessy and Mr. Howard. Madeline had unconsciously wandered into the rectory walk, and confronted them at a sudden turn.

“How now, Madeline?” cried her uncle cheerfully; “all alone again. Solitude is desirable enough at times, but man is a gregarious animal. He won’t doom himself unduly to his own thoughts and company, unless an instinct impels him to it like that which leads the lower animals to retreat, in times of sickness or misfortune, from the society of their abler and hard judging companions. I’m only speaking generally, my dear,” he added, as Madeline attempted some sort of apology. “Pray do not imagine my allusions were personal. It would be preposterous to think of anyone amongst the Marsdens finding

himself in the position of an ill-treated animal. At any rate, if they did it would only be their own fault. Don't you think so, Madeline?"

Thus directly appealed to, Madeline gave a reluctant assent, but her cheeks flushed painfully, and the more so when she observed that Henry Howard was looking at her curiously, as if both puzzled by and interested in her.

But the rector skilfully covered her embarrassment. He had not been quite prepared for the effect of his casual remark; but it was not lost upon him. It was put aside carefully in a corner of his memory, where unexpected and chance shots and remarks were stowed away for future use. May be, it was a cue to much that had hitherto puzzled him in his niece's conduct. Any way, the subject was a sore one, and had better not be pursued any further just then. So he asked her carelessly where the rest of the party were. They had been tempted out, he said, by the beauty of the evening, and expected to find the hall party on the lawn.

"I left Uncle Edward and Aunt Jane in the dining room," said Madeline, grateful for the

change of conversation. "He was tired after the hot day at Walford, and I dare say is asleep by this time. All the rest were playing billiards. The Westons stayed to dinner, and Di is always ready for anything in the shape of amusement."

"Don't let us disturb them, papa," said Bessy. "It is too lovely to go indoors yet. Let us all take a walk down to the lake. Madeline will come with us, I am sure."

"But won't it be too far for mamma, Bessy?" suggested her father. "She has been busy all day, and does not want any additional exercise."

"Never mind me," said Mrs. Marsden. "I'll find my way in to Jane, and you can call for me on your way back," and she departed.

The path into which the rest of the party turned led them through the most picturesque part of the park. Although from the Hall the ground seemed to fall in a gradual slope down to the water's edge, only broken here and there by fine clumps of old trees and masses of smaller underwood, there was in reality a deep glen about half way down; but so wooded and irregular, as to be lost sight of till you found yourself descend-

ing the winding path into it, and were surprised by the cooler atmosphere and the refreshing ripple of the brook at the bottom, bubbling and murmuring for ever over its rocky bed. The natural beauty of the spot had been left intact, artificial aid being only made use of to improve and render its loveliness accessible. It was a delicious retreat in the hot days of summer ; but as Bessy and Madeline stood leaning over the parapet of the old ivy-grown bridge which crossed the little stream, and listened to its bubbling, and watched the western sunbeams glancing aslant its tiny waves, and tipping them with golden light for a moment, ere they danced on into the deep cool shadows beyond, they pronounced the glen too chilly for even a June evening, and hastened on into the more genial sunshine outside.

The little lake lower down lay calm and quiet under the evening sky. The rising ground on either side bore east and west, so that the village and the lake always came in for the last rays of sunshine, and were at times strangely metamorphosed under the influence of its varying



effects and colours. Lately, the park had been thrown open to the water's edge, but a right of way was still left along its banks for the convenience of the neighbourhood. It was close beside this path that the young girls finally seated themselves, and, as Bessy said, they intended to have a long confidential talk, the rector and his brother-in-law laughingly continued their walk along the margin of the lake, within sight but safely out of ear-shot of the young ladies.

But it was long before the two girls availed themselves of their liberty of speech. Madeline was deep in one of her ordinary meditations, and for some time Bessy sat watching her, with an odd mixture of concern and amusement playing over her face. We can hardly describe Bessy as a pretty girl, at least not in the conventional sense of the word. She was not remarkable for the beauty of her complexion or features, but there was nothing strikingly disagreeable in either the one or the other. She looked happy and healthy, with dark grey eyes, full of thought and feeling. The only thing which distinguished her from scores of other lady-like nice-looking English

girls, was a wonderful mobility of expression. If her life depended on it, I don't think Bessy could have prevented some evidence of what passed in her heart from writing itself by involuntary, yet unmistakeable signs, on her speaking countenance. She could not be a hypocrite or deceiver if she wished it ever so much. If she was untrue to her inward being, her face would always belie her words. So now, if she had assured us ever so emphatically that she was full of sorrowing sympathy for her self-afflicted friend, her face would betray an undercurrent of other less sentimental feelings. Bessy was gifted with strong good sense, and more than the womanly average of reasoning powers ; or rather, I should say, they had been strengthened and taught to exercise themselves, till Bessy had learnt to use them steadily and advantageously. She never failed to see things from their truest point of view, that is, she divested them of all false sentimentalities. She had no sympathy with extravagant feelings and sensibilities. Perhaps some will call her dry and matter-of-fact. Certainly she was eminently practical, but not the

less on that account, a warm friend and a judicious counsellor for Madeline's present mood.

"What are you thinking about, Made?" she asked at last. Her cousin was not ready with a reply, and Bessy continued, "You seem to me to spend your whole time in thinking, Madeline. It ought to be some weighty matter you are evolving in your mind. It is to be hoped we shall all have the benefit of your cogitations some day."

"Are you going to turn against me too?" cried Madeline, reproachfully. "I had hoped to find at least one friend who could sympathise with me. Life is hard enough as it is, what will it be if you desert me."

"I am not going to desert you," answered Bessy, her light tone changing to one of earnestness, now that she had roused Madeline to begin a conversation. "I cannot bear to see you leading this unhappy life; what can I do for you?"

"No one can do anything for me, I fear," said Madeline, dejectedly, as she sat with her face half hidden by her supporting hand, and an air of touching spiritlessness about her whole appear-

ance. "I hardly know what I wish or want. If I could only get away from this hateful life. I cannot bear all their thoughtless carelessness, and the eagerness with which one and all of them enter into the miserable little pleasures and details of every day life. Is the spirit of the ancient church quite dead amongst us, that none are found ready to devote themselves to God's service, and unite in an effort to restore some of its pristine power and beauty?"

Bessy's cheeks crimsoned as her cousin spoke, and a shade of resentment flashed across her face. Did Madeline forget her father was a clergyman, were the words which rose to her lips. But Madeline's eyes were fixed dreamily on the lake. She only gave utterance to her own thoughts without an intention to wound, and Bessy's good sense soon perceived this.

"You surely would not have back the old times of monks and monasteries with all their attendant evils?" she said briefly.

"I would fain have back some system in which those who were so disposed, could renounce all the wordly vanities they despise, and have the

means of satisfactorily devoting themselves to a more congenial life.”

“But every man is free to choose the life he likes best,” answered Bessy, earnestly. “There is nothing in our present ecclesiastical or executive constitution, to prevent people dedicating themselves to God’s service in any way they like. We need not immure ourselves in solitude, or in convent walls, to find favour in His sight. If we disapprove of, or find anything distasteful, we can generally find means to avoid it quietly.”

“You won’t understand me, Bessy,” said Madeline, passionately, while her face flushed and quivered with suppressed emotion. “I cannot be satisfied with mere common-place religion, the ordinary jog-trot into which every one seems settling down now-a-days. Is all one’s fervour and enthusiasm to be evaporated in the mere conventional religious forms and services, in which nine-tenths of the world participate, from the force of habit, or for the sake of appearances? When one’s whole being is burning with a desire to prove oneself a good servant and soldier, are the difficulties and dangers to be those only, which mere morality

conquers and surmounts? When the loss of everything, even life itself, seems an offering all too small, is some petty duty or deprivation the only sacrifice which conventionality leaves us the power to make?"

Bessy was almost startled out of her usual self-possession by this burst of eloquence, and the tears that followed as its natural consequence. "Madeline," she said, gravely, and laying her hand on her cousin's arm, "does a little child learn anything all at once? Can it read before the letters are mastered? must it not go on by progressive steps in everything? We are but grown-up children in God's hands, and must be satisfied to learn like them what the Father pleases. I often think the little things of life are our A B C, without which we shall never read or understand the deep things of God. If, like wilful children, we attempt too much, and meddle with matters to which we have not progressively attained, like them we shall undoubtedly bring on ourselves the punishment our presumption deserves. We often think these greater things the easiest, but if undisciplined by

the trifles you despise, can we expect to prosper in them? Months and years may slip away, while we wait our own time, and, meanwhile, we are heedlessly neglecting God's seasons and opportunities. Oh, Madeline, ought we not to live so far in the present as to learn from each passing event, the letter or the word of God's great lesson of truth, which it is doubtless intended to teach us?"

"I cannot think as you do, Bessy," replied Madeline, sadly. "Surely the whole lifetime given up to Him, must be more precious than the odd moments and seasons snatched from the daily avocations, to which we give the better part of our thoughts and interests?"

Before Bessy could reply, they were interrupted by the merry voices of a band of village children. The young girls were partly hidden by a clump of trees, so that the youngsters came running and shouting along the path in unrestrained freedom. Three or four boys and girls passed rapidly in an evident race, and a moment afterwards came pattering the little feet of Mary Fielding, in a vain effort to keep pace with her brother, who was

one of the foremost boys. Just as the little creature came opposite the cousins, she tripped and came violently to the ground. Bessy instinctively started up to raise the child, and prepared herself for the loud cry which she naturally expected. But no such sound disturbed the still air, and Bessy felt herself growing chill with apprehension as she lifted up the little form. The child had struck her head against a sharp stone in the path, and a large bleeding gash testified to the severity of the blow. She lay pale and senseless in Bessy's arms. The young girl called eagerly to Madeline to come to her assistance, and was glad to see that Tom had missed his little sister, and was coming back in search of her. He uttered a cry of anguish as he perceived the poor little one's condition, but Bessy gave him no time for useless lamentations. She bid him run for the gentlemen who were visible in the distance; meanwhile, she sat down with the child on her lap, staunching the wound with her handkerchief, and Madeline looked on with the uncomfortable feeling that something was expected of her, that she neither could nor would



give. Presently, little Mary opened her eyes and sat up, but before she had realized her position, she turned whiter than before, and became violently sick. But Bessy did not flinch from her labour of love. She led the little one amongst the trees, and did what she could to support her in the paroxysm; and when she began to recover, took her again on her lap, begging Madeline to dip her handkerchief in the water that she might refresh the child's face with it. Little Mary seemed again relapsing into unconsciousness, and Bessy was inexpressibly relieved when her father and uncle came up with Tom, for she had exhausted her own resources, and was glad to be saved further responsibility.

“We must get her home at once, Bessy,” said the rector, as he looked at the fainting child. “The blow has doubtless caused concussion of the brain. Tom had better run for her mother.”

The boy was off like an arrow; but Bessy objected to their awaiting her arrival. “Can't we take her home amongst us? She is not very heavy. Madeline and I can manage her.”

“But she may be sick again,” suggested Madeline, shrinking back.

“The nuns of old were not afraid of sick children,” whispered Bessy, while her dark eyes flashed for a moment on Madeline full of righteous indignation. She coloured up, but made no advance; and Henry Howard settled the matter by lifting the little one in his arms, and taking the road to the village, followed by Mr. Marsden and the cousins.

## CHAPTER XV.

ANNE FIELDING was one of those worthy self-supporting young women, who never fail to make staunch friends and protectors for themselves amongst the good and great around them. Her husband was the only grandson of the old Dame, Bessy's pet old woman, who, fifty years before, had been a servant at the Hall, and in whom, consequently, the present generations of Marsdens felt a warm interest. But this link with the past was broken now, for the old woman had gone to her rest soon after the christening feast. She had lived to see again a direct heir in the elder branch of house, and his grandfather's nursemaid had laid her hand of blessing on the young Charles Frederick's head in almost the last act of her life. Her grand-daughter Anne had ever been a dutiful

child to her, and though after her husband's death from fever, soon after little Mary's birth, she had been at liberty to return to her own kith and kin she had stayed at Marsden principally on the old woman's account, that she might not be left to a solitary old age. And now Anne had found for herself new interests and ties in her husband's old home, and, considering it best to leave well alone and that she was comfortable and happy, had settled herself permanently in the familiar homestead, a cottage on the banks of the river, and possessing every advantage, except that of situation. This, unfortunately, was at times decidedly unhealthy; for in certain unpropitious seasons the river bank emanated deadly miasma, and the village records could tell many a tale of sickness and death traceable to their fatal influence. But when the danger passed away the villagers forgot it, and clung tenaciously to their old homes, hoping and believing the evil would not re-appear in their time.

And foremost amongst these conservatives were the Fieldings, grandfather, father; and son, and even little Tom, sole male representative of the

family, was often heard to say that his one ambition was to live and die in the home of his ancestors. He would not object to see something of the world in his youth and manhood, but in old age he looked for shelter under its roof.

No wonder then that Anne had clung to the old place. She loved every stone of it, and cherished every flower and shrub in the little garden, for each was some living memory of those gone before. Her modest object in life was to keep the whole intact about her, to educate her boy well and virtuously, then when old age came upon her, she doubted not he would do his part, and well sustain the stainless reputation of this poor but honest family.

Anne Fielding was plain worker in ordinary to the whole of the Marsdens, and the proceeds of her labour provided them all comfortably with the necessaries of life to which she had hitherto been accustomed. But she had no time to devote to the instruction or recreation of her children. Tom attended the parish school, but when at home was expected to look after his sister Mary. He was a good hearted steady boy, and well

worthy of the trust, and the little one loved him with an undivided heart, and was the willing sharer of his play-time.

Tom was proud of his charge, and carefully guarded her from every chance of mishap in their long rambles with his older friends. And now, in spite of all, this accident had happened, and poor Tom must be the messenger of evil to his good mother. As he flew along the path homewards the boy's sobs and tears came thick and fast. He knew not the extent of the mischief, only this, that little Mary lay to all appearance lifeless "in Miss Bessy's arms."

And this was the substance of his words to his mother. She was sitting at her cottage door, making the most of the dying daylight, to finish some fine work, when the boy came up. He came alone, and in tears, therefore she scarcely needed words to tell her something was amiss.

She was up and away in the direction from whence he had come, almost before she comprehended the matter. But it was not long before her little one was safe in her arms, with enough consciousness about her to recognize and

cling to her mother, though still sufficiently ill to make further advice desirable.

Mr. Marsden was not satisfied that the worst was over after such insensibility and sickness; so poor Tom's willing though weary feet had to go on another errand up to the White House.

Mr. Gerald came quickly. As he never let anything delay him when summoned professionally, he only gave the Marsden party a hasty 'good-e'en,' as he strode past them in the cottage garden, where they were waiting for his opinion of the little patient.

A moment afterwards he put his head out of the door, and called Bessy to give her evidence. She briefly stated the accident and its after consequences.

"Good;" he said, "it's a satisfaction to hear what one wants, without a woman's usual preamble. I'll take good care of the child. We can't tell till the morning whether the worst is past. Good-night," And summarily dismissing her by shutting the door, Bessy had no help for it but to return to her father, and propose that they should go home.

“For once Mr. Gerald has made himself answerable for a patient,” she observed, “and has shut the door ; we may safely leave the matter in his hands. Mamma will wonder what has become of us. It is nearly dark.”

And so they went back. Bessy and her father stopped at their own door, while Henry went on with Madeline by way of escort for her, and the same for his sister on her return home.

Meanwhile the Westons were preparing to depart.

“Do let me drive you home, Mrs. Marsden,” said Di persuasively, as they all stood on the steps. “I’ll take the greatest possible care of you. You know I’m an experienced whip,” and she appealed to her brother to vouch for her capabilities.

“These are the new pair, ar’nt they, George,” said the Squire, coming up at the same moment from an inspection of the horses, who stood at the door full of life and impatient for a start. “They are handsome clean-limbed animals, but I hope they are steady. I don’t like uncertain



horses for driving. Wheels are awkward things behind them.”

“Oh, they go beautifully, papa Marsden,” cried Diana eagerly. “Please don’t set George against them. There is no fun in driving old slow coaches. I like to know I have something to control, and to feel I’ve the power to do it.”

“I daresay you do, my dear,” he replied. “But for my part I prefer safety to show in such cases. Riding is quite another thing. You’ve only yourself and your horse to answer for, and can do as you like.”

“Well, will you come, Mrs. Marsden?” said Di, as she prepared to get in.

“Could you except it after your guardian’s insinuations,” she replied. “I prefer the lesser responsibility of having only myself to answer for; and here comes Henry to fetch me,” for at that moment Madeline and Mr. Howard appeared in the distance.

“Then good bye to you all,” exclaimed Diana as she took her place. “Don’t forget, Julia, to

ride up in a day or two. We can't arrange for our picnic without your co-operation. It must be something quite out of the common," and with a graceful flourish of her whip by way of parting salutation, the Westons departed as rapidly as they had arrived.

"You are glad you're not with them, I'm sure," said the Squire to his sister-in-law. "But Di's to be trusted, whatever you may think. It's all open and above board with her. No secrets underneath to be stumbling over unexpectedly, like somebody else that I know," and he lowered his voice, as he designated Madeline with a significant glance. "Plenty of shoals and quicksands there. I only hope she won't wreck her own happiness, or anyone else's either, on them, that's all. Where has she been to now, I wonder, coming home in this way with your brother?"

Mrs. Marsden smiled as she perceived the drift of his thoughts. "Don't condemn her unheard," she said gently. "Sometimes those we are inclined to misconstrue at first, confound us later with their hidden virtues. Deal tenderly with Madeline, Edward. She won't bear rough hand-

ling just now ; you surely do not hope to make her like Di Weston."

"I should think not indeed," said Flora, with a merry laugh. She had overheard Aunt Mabel's last words, and she repeated the supposition to Madeline herself as she came up.

"That's a breach of confidence, Flo," said Aunt Mary, with a warning gesture; "you had no right to betray our little opinions."

But Madeline took no notice of this by-play, and the darkness concealed the rising colour which the consciousness that she had been the subject of conversation had occasioned. She quietly explained to Aunt Jane why she had been detained so late, and, under cover of the confusion attending Aunt Mabel's departure, retreated to her own room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“WHY, here’s another letter from grandmamma,” exclaimed Flora, as her uncle tossed over a letter to her, after examining the contents of the bag, as they sat at breakfast the following morning. “What can she be writing about? I have not answered her last.”

“You had better open it and find out, my dear,” said Aunt Jane, with a smile; and Flora availed herself of the permission.

“How strange, how nice,” she observed at last, her whole countenance bright with a pleased surprise. “Grandmamma writes to say, Uncle Edward, that her nephew and our cousin, young Douglas Cameron, is coming to Walford with his troop next week. She is so glad we shall have an opportunity of making his acquaintance, that is, if you will allow him to call.”

“Ah, that I will, child, if it will give you pleasure,” replied the Squire heartily. “But who in the name of patience is he, my dear? I don’t think I ever heard his name before.”

“He is grandmamma’s nephew,” she answered, “and therefore is ——”

“Her brother’s adopted son,” put in Madeline, with a stress on the adjective.

“Whew!” cried the Squire significantly. “I see, adopted. That makes it all plain enough. I was puzzled before, because I knew your grandmamma’s brother, Sir Norman Cameron, was an old bachelor. So this young fellow is his son, eh? Do you know where your great uncle picked him up, Madeline?”

“I don’t know, Uncle Edward,” she answered, “but they talked a great deal about him at Rockpoint. It was Aunt Griselda that took care of him when he first came to Sir Norman’s; he was only a few weeks’ old, I believe, when he was adopted. Of course Aunt Griselda is very fond of him.”

“And grandmamma says in her letter how anxious they will all be to hear about him now,

as it is several years since they saw him," said Flora.

"And how old may the youngster be?" asked the Squire.

Flora looked puzzled, but Madeline said he was quite young, about three-and-twenty she believed; she remembered he was preparing to enter the service when they went abroad.

"Of course you will let him call?" remarked Julia, who had listened with interest to Flora's announcement.

"Well, I suppose I can't object," he said, rather dubiously, "though after all he is only your cousin's adopted cousin, and can scarcely be placed on the same category as a *bonâ fide* connection. Eh! Jane?" turning to his wife.

"That is one view of it, certainly," she replied, "but as he holds the position of their cousin in the eyes of the world, I hardly see how his acquaintance can be avoided."

"Just what I think," he rejoined. "I dare say he is an inoffensive young fellow, so we'll let him call."

"Then I may tell grandmamma he has your

permission to make himself agreeable, Uncle Edward," cried Flora joyously. "I am so glad. My curiosity was quite excited by all I heard of his childish sayings and doings from Aunt Griselda."

"What nonsense you do talk, Flora," said Madeline, rather contemptuously. "I don't remember her telling anything remarkable about him. I suppose he will be just like any other very young man."

"Madeline despises men under thirty, papa," remarked Julia, glad of any opportunity of hitting at her cousin. "She is so very old and wise herself, that she can only find companionship with the mature of either sex. Was your conversation with Henry Howard very interesting last night. Madeline?" she asked, abruptly turning to her.

Madeline coloured up, but replied quietly that she was with Bessy all the evening.

"Helping her, of course, to nurse the sick little child," continued her tormentor pointedly. "I know all about it, Madeline. No wonder you disdain our frivolous pursuits, when you have the arduous duties of attending to poor blind old

women, and sick little children, thrown on your hands."

"What are you two always at?" cried the Squire impatiently. "I won't have you always quarrelling in this stupid manner. If you have any fault to find with your cousin, Julia, speak out and have done with it. You women have such tongues when they're once set agoing. You seem to have no other way of settling your grievances, but by this eternal nagging. Come, what is the matter with you both that you can't agree?"

"Only Madeline is cross and disagreeable, papa," said Julia, looking down rather abashed by her father's rebuke. "If there is any difference between us, it's her doing—"

"There, there," he said, interrupting her, "don't prove yourself such a thorough woman, Julia, by going into all these little details. I can neither understand nor be interested in them. If you don't suit each other you needn't quarrel about it. Thank Heaven the house is large enough for you all. But I must say, that I think Madeline might exert herself more for the general



benefit. She cannot justify it to herself on any principle, I should think, this running counter to all our wishes, and sowing dissension and fomenting strife amongst those with whom she has found a home when she most needed it."

The Squire spoke these words as he felt them, with much offended impatience of manner. He had forgotten his own remarks to his wife the evening before, and his sister-in-law's admonition to gentleness, and more than all he forgot the womanish ungenerosity of such remarks to one in his niece's position. But Madeline's conduct was daily becoming more irritating to him. The continual silent provocation her presence ever seemed to Julia, was developing in that favourite child such a satirical bitterness of speech as had even attracted his attention, and was particularly distasteful to the Squire, because so essentially womanlike. And being angry, he grew unjust, and visited on Madeline the iniquities of them all.

He would have been sorry if he had known the storm of pride and passion his words had roused in his niece's breast, as with a muttered apology

to Aunt Jane, she rose from the table, and with burning cheeks and flashing eyes left the room.

Flora looked after her anxiously.

“Uncle Edward,” she said in low pleading tones, “pray do not be angry with Madeline; I am sure she is only trying to do right, and doesn’t quite know how to set about it; wouldn’t you think it very hard, in such a case, if you got ‘pitched into?’” and she looked up at him with a saucy smile, at this appropriation of one of his own expressions.

“Ah, you puss,” he said, with a kindly glance; “you ought to teach your sister some of your insinuating ways, Flora. There’s not much fear of my pitching into you. If the heart’s in the right place, the head won’t go astray; I can’t help judging by appearances, and whatever your sister may be trying to do, she doesn’t show herself, at present, in the most agreeable light. However, we’ll say no more about it, I hope she’ll be better by-and-bye.”

Meanwhile Madeline found her way out of doors, for at that hour she knew her room would be in

possession of those promoters of dust and disorder, the conscientious housemaids, and that no quiet could be found there. What a tumult those few words had created. It had come to this at last. To be so cruelly twited with her dependant position. It only wanted this drop to overflow the cup of her troubles, and the young girl actually shivered with concentrated pride and resentment as she counted up her grievances in her heart, and pronounced herself the most miserable of mortals. And yet she was blind to the fact that pride and selfishness were the medium through which she viewed everything, the one persuading her that there was nothing to be done, because the other assured her there was nothing worth putting herself out to do. Much must be endured and suffered before this undisciplined, though earnest minded girl, will have learnt God's first lesson to His children, to give up her will to His, and begin to do her duty in that station of life to which it had pleased Him to call her.

Far, very far indeed, was poor Madeline from such a state of mind, as she impatiently paced the road between the Hall and the Rectory. It was

always towards Bessy that her thoughts first turned when unusually excited.

She could not, dare not, doubt her earnestness, though she wondered much how she could find such satisfaction in, as Madeline considered them, such uncongenial sublunary pursuits. And in the very trifling one of tending her flowers Bessy was engaged when her cousin came up.

“You are early this morning, Made,” she cried. “We have only just done breakfast. But you are anxious to know how little Mary is, I suppose. I was going down myself.”

“I had not thought of her, Bessy,” said Madeline, too honest to allow herself the credit of such a motive without foundation. “I came to talk to you, but have no objection to go with you presently.”

“It must be at once, if I go at all, fair coz,” replied Bessy, gaily. “I am very busy this morning, and have only half an hour to spare for you, my flowers, and Mary Fielding.”

“And I suppose one is as valuable in your eyes as the other, Bessy,” said the other, bitterly. “You certainly do take care that

nothing, or no one, gets more than their share of your affections."

"Ah, Madeline," said her Uncle Charles, coming suddenly round a corner, with a smile and an outstretched hand. "So you want more than your share, do you? I must put my veto on your getting it, though, because if it's plus to you it will be minus to someone else."

"Or something else, Uncle Charles," rejoined Madeline, with considerable irritation of manner. "I don't like being put in the same list with things. I can't understand how Bessy can care so much about all these trifles," and she contemptuously designated the flowers as she spoke.

"The nuns of old had flower-gardens, Madeline," said Bessy, looking up with an amused smile. "Wouldn't you like to beat me now if only you were a little younger?" and she put herself merrily on the defensive. "But really, Madeline, I can't help it. We must be doing something, and surely a garden is an innocent recreation."

"So you want to be a nun, do you, my dear?" said the rector to Madeline, who certainly did

look uncommonly un-nunlike at that moment, with her glowing cheeks, bright eyes, and rich brown hair, shining out in the sunlight beneath her becoming black hat.

“No, I don’t,” she said, petulantly. “I only want to do what’s right; but everyone seems bent on making me do what’s wrong.”

“Forgive me, Madeline,” said Bessy, caressingly, “I ought not to have teased you. Dear papa,” she continued, turning to him, “please don’t say anything more about it. It was only some talk we had last night. Madeline will be a pattern to everyone by-and-bye, and as a beginning, we’re going to see Anne Fielding.”

So away they both went, and Henry Howard with them. They found the little child doing well, as far as they could judge; but Mr. Gerald had not yet seen her. Anne was poring eagerly over a letter when they came in, and was too full of the news it contained to keep it long to herself.

“Tom’s a made man, I hope, miss,” she said to Bessy, after they were satisfied about the little

one. "He'll be agoing to London, I trust, before Michaelmas."

"Why, what should bring him there, Anne?" asked Bessy, in surprise.

"I've a brother there, miss, a grocer. The letter's from him, miss, and he bids me have the boy ready with decent clothes, and a few shillings in his pocket, by the first of August. Any time between then and Michaelmas, he'll send for him and make a man of him; but he must be ready to go sharp when he's wanted, or he'll lose the place. 'Tis a great chance for the boy, miss, and I hope I shan't miss it for him."

"A great chance indeed, Anne," said Bessy, "and you're not the one to miss it, I'm sure. You know where to come to for help, if you need it at the last, and I hope you have plenty of work to do."

"I haven't anything just now, miss," answered Anne, rather sadly, "and it's been a trouble to me all the morning, because if the work don't come in the money can't come in neither. Not that I'm not comfortable enough, miss, thank

you," she added hastily, as she saw Bessy looking benevolently anxious to assist. "I always try to keep well before the world, Miss Bessy, only this is an extra thing like, and it will take all I can get together to make the boy smart for his start."

"I can give you some work, Anne," said Madeline, coming forward. "I have a great many things I want you to do for me," and then, after looking round, and seeing that Mr. Howard was in the garden, she detailed them, giving Anne *carte blanche* as to trimmings, &c., only specifying that they were to be good and elaborate, for Madeline was delicately refined in all matters relating to her toilet, and liked to have everything about her the best of its kind. She concluded her orders by producing her purse, and giving Anne what she considered a sufficient sum for the first outlay.

"Hadn't you better get the things yourself, at Stonebridge, Madeline?" suggested Bessy, rather surprised at her off-hand way of settling the business.

"Anne will do it far better than I could," she replied. "I hate shopping; it is such a waste of



time. It has just been the fear of it that has made me put off these things so long. I know Anne is accustomed to get things in this way for Aunt Jane, arn't you, Anne?"

"I have done it sometimes, miss," she said; "but I think it will be better if you get these yourself. I might not please you, Miss Madeline."

"Do the best you can, Anne. I can't take the trouble to go myself, and let me have the things as soon as you can. They will keep you in work till Tom goes."

"That they will, miss, and thank you kindly," replied Anne. "It will be a great help towards making Tom decent for the grand new life."

Just then Mr. Gerald came in. He looked pleased as he shook hands with the young girls.

"Come to see after your little friend," he said. "You are early astir, young ladies; but there's nothing like early rising and plenty of healthy occupation to keep the roses bright in the cheeks," and he playfully pinched Bessy's; for by this time they were on the most intimate terms with each other, and his age gave him the privilege of an old friend.

“You hear what he says, Madeline?” said Bessy, turning to her cousin, while the doctor went to inspect his patient. “You see the garden is really a matter of principle. If you don’t take care you’ll be getting into Mr. Gerald’s hands some day, and I only hope he’ll revenge me by prescribing you one continual round of small amusements.”

Madeline did not look very amicably inclined, but said nothing, and Bessy wisely dropped the subject, and they joined Mr. Howard in the garden. He certainly was taking life very easily just then; he had made up his mind to no half measures this time. Entire rest and relaxation of both mind and body had been prescribed, as the only means of restoring him to his pristine health and strength, and Henry had given himself up to his fate, and had determined that it should be no fault of his if he did not recover. It was not without an effort, and a strong one, too, that he gave up his charge, and resigned himself for the next few months to this life of quiet indolence and amusement, sauntering about with Bessy the greater part of the day, in a state

of compulsory indifference to things of greater moment around him, and obliging himself to be satisfied with the small interests in and about the rectory.

When the girls joined him, he was amusing himself with switching off the heads of some luxuriant weeds growing outside the garden palings against which he leant; and he had positively got up a small degree of excitement in an onslaught on one, stronger and more obstinate than its fellows in succumbing to its fate of decapitation by his persevering walking-stick.

“I must conquer that fellow,” he said, as they came up. “For one blow the others required this takes ten. I wonder if the difference exists in the plant itself, or some defectiveness in my strokes. There it is at last,” as he gave another vigorous flourish, “and I believe I cut it off in a new place after all,” he continued, as he picked up the mangled mass of leaves for examination. “So it was my fault, after all. I didn’t hit in the right place. A lesson to be learnt from that you see, Bessy. There’s a right place for hitting home in everything, if we only look for it.”

“Or, to put it in other words, uncle,” she said, “different things want different treatment.”

“I shall appropriate that remark, Bessy,” observed Madeline, with a flush of pleasure brightening her cheeks. “I shall keep it in store to use against you on some future occasion. You have acknowledged now, remember, that people want to be treated according to their peculiarities.”

“Is that fair of her, uncle Howard?” said Bessy, with a laughing appeal to him. “Isn’t that wresting one’s words most shamefully? We were talking of things, and Madeline applies it to persons.”

“I am afraid it must go against you, though, my dear,” he replied. “There can be but one opinion as to the justice of Miss Marsden’s inference. We must manage everyone their own way, if we want to manage them at all.”

“Quite true, my dear sir,” remarked Mr. Gerald, as he overtook them, for they were sauntering homewards as they talked. “Surely neither of your companions are denying such an indisputable fact?”

“Not denying it, Mr. Gerald,” said Bessy,

“only discussing the point. But we could never come to a clear understanding on the matter when we are all arguing from different premises. My uncle was speaking generally, my thoughts were on a particular case, and my cousin would fain apply the general rule to my individual instance. If there are general rules embracing everyone, there are within these other principles which can only be applied in one way, because only referring to one thing, which must be treated similarly in every case.”

“Ah, I understand you, Miss Bessy,” said the doctor, who had listened to her with interest. “You allude, as one may say, to a single symptom, some peculiarity which shows itself in but one light, whatever may be its surroundings, and which must be treated individually by its own general rule, without reference to the peculiar idiosyncrasies of the patient.”

“I protest against this method of handling the subject,” said Madeline; “there is no use in trying to argue out a particular case on general principles.”

“But what is the case in hand, Miss Marsden?”

said Mr. Howard. "I must own to being curious as to the subject you and Bessy have so much to say upon."

Madeline coloured up, and Henry Howard perceived he had made a mistake, and was thinking of apologizing, when Bessy said simply—

"I see no reason why the matter need be made a mystery of, Madeline." Then turning to her uncle she continued—"We only differ as to our method of carrying out right principles. It is a subject on which there have always been differences of opinion, Uncle Henry; so we are no worse than our neighbours, because we cannot exactly coincide."

Bessy spoke thus lightly to spare Madeline's feelings, and hoped the matter would be dropped. But Mr. Howard was too much interested to give it up, and continued the conversation by observing that he thought there was but one way of illustrating right principles, namely, by right actions.

"Yes; but there we come to the very open question, what are right actions?" said Mr. Gerald. "What is to be the standard and test to prove and try them?"

## CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Madeline joined the rest of the party at luncheon, she found her sister and Julia discussing their promised visit to Di Westou.

“Let us go this afternoon,” said Julia; “it is beautiful weather for a ride; we can go round by the common and have a good gallop.”

“Will you come, Madeline?” asked Flora, timidly.

“I think not, thank you, Flo; you know I don’t like your good gallops.”

“Better take one, Madeline,” said the Squire, coming in at that moment, and patting his niece on the shoulder as he passed to his seat, with a good-natured, clumsy kind of attempt at a reconciliation after the morning’s uncomfortableness; “nothing like a good gallop, with the fresh breezes

blowing all about one, to clear away the vapours. Depend upon it, Madeline, you don't take exercise enough."

Uncle Edward certainly was determined to put his foot in it to-day. Could anything be more mortifying to Madeline than to have her seriousness ascribed to mere vapouring, and to be recommended exercise as likely to be beneficial? It was with difficulty she could command herself sufficiently to make the necessary reply, that she did not wish to ride, as she had been walking all the morning.

"Ah, running about all alone, I suppose," continued the Squire, failing to perceive how completely he was compromising himself with his niece, and taking his own way to advise her with the utmost recklessness of consequences. "You really mustn't carry on this game any longer, my dear. Do try and be more sociable. Depend upon it all this solitary walking and thinking can do you no good. For my part I'd rather see you the wildest of girls than pining and moping as you do now. Come, put on your habit and go, and see if you won't be the better for it afterwards."



This was not the way to manage Miss Madeline, as Aunt Jane very well knew. Therefore, she was by no means surprised at her positive refusal to do as her uncle wished. Nothing more was said on the subject; and presently the two younger girls went off to prepare for their ride, shortly followed by Madeline, who found her sister in the middle of her toilet when she reached their room. The elder girl threw herself weariedly on the couch, without taking any notice of her sister, and began reading.

“Will you answer grandmamma’s letter for me, Madeline?” asked Flora, at last, as she took it up from the dressing-table. “I was busy all the morning, and put it off till this afternoon, thinking I should have plenty of time. This ride has put me out, but it will be all right if you can do it.”

“Well, really, Flora,” replied the elder sister, looking up languidly from her book, “I don’t see how I can manage it. I have engagements as well as yourself. It’s a bad plan to put off things. Why couldn’t you do it the first thing after breakfast?”

“ You know, Madeline, I always read to Aunt Marsden then, and afterwards the children wanted some croquet before lesson time, and then Aunt Jane called me into the conservatory to help in some new arrangements, and then ——”

“ Oh, you needn't go on, Flora,” cried Madeline ; “ I know well enough how you pass your time, but I think you should have made it your business to answer grandmamma's letter. I don't think I can do it ; you know I dislike writing, besides I have this book to finish before dinner, the box goes to the library to-night. Then I must see Bessy to tell her our cousin is coming. I forgot it this morning.”

“ What, forgot that bit of news, Made,” cried Flora, in surprise. “ What can you and Bessy find to talk about, that put such an event out of your head ?”

“ Oh, we find plenty to say, Flora,” said her sister. “ I don't know how I should get on without her. As it was before, so it is now. Bessy is just my one drop of comfort in this miserable life,” and Madeline looked up sadly at

her young sister, who now stood before her in readiness for her ride. What a sweet, bright creature she looked, in the dark habit and small round hat. It did one's heart good to see her, with her fair fresh face, dimpling all over into smiles at almost every word, and the soft hazel eyes glistening with fun and laughter whenever she looked at you.

But now Flora's face betrayed deeper feelings, love, jealousy, and wonder playing rapidly over it, as she gazed at her sister and took in the full meaning of her words.

Madeline did seem so unhappy that sweet Flora yearned to comfort her, and bring back the old expression of bygone days. It could be no imaginary grief that was stamping its impress on her sister's face. But whatever she might feel, she was losing her place in her sister's heart. Madeline sought another comforter, and could Flora see this without a jealous pang? And was it really possible that Madeline was miserable, that this life, so joyous, so full of new interests and pleasures to Flora, had no charms for her; or was

Flora herself growing cold, and heartless, and frivolous, and too soon forgetting the joys and affections of old times gone never to return.

Such thoughts as these flashed through the younger girl's mind as she looked down on her sister, her eyes liquid with the tears they called up.

"Ah, Madeline," she said, after a long pause, "are the old days never to come back again when we were all in all to each other? Indeed it grieves me to see you so unhappy, and I would comfort you if I could."

"You couldn't, Flo," said the other, gloomily, "you do not share my present feelings. We should only cross each other continually. We must be content to go each on our own way. You don't understand me, and I cannot but despise the frivolities which are engrossing you."

"But surely we might meet half way, Madeline?" pleaded the other. "I would do a great deal to bring back the old days of loving confidence. I can't bear this growing estrangement. What can I give up and sacrifice to make you believe me, Made?"

"It must be everything, or nothing, Flora,"

replied the elder girl, not a little moved by her sister's appeal, but making it a matter of principle not to give in an inch ; " this is not a matter, Flora, in which we can compromise and bargain. There can be no reciprocity of confidence without similarity of feelings, or at least of aims. You know this can't be the case with us. But I am the chief sufferer : I am but one amongst so many of you all who mutually encourage and help each other."

At this moment they heard Julia calling her cousin downstairs.

" What about the letter, Made ?" asked Flora, as she prepared to depart.

" You had better not depend on me, Flo," replied the other, " I could'nt manage it, I'm sure. I daresay you'll have time when you come home."

No wonder there was a slight shade of bitterness on Flora's sweet face as she turned away, and, snatching up the letter from the table, ran downstairs. There was an unusual sparkle in her eye as she mounted and rode away with her cousin, and they had not gone far before she

asked Julia if she thought she might write a note at the Westons'.

"It is the answer to Grandmamma's letter about our cousin," she said. "I had not time to do it this morning, and could not keep you waiting just now. I want him to call before Di's picnic; it will be so nice if he can come to it, and if I don't write to Rockpoint to-day it may be too late."

"And your amiable sister wouldn't do that much for you, Flo?" said Julia, with a dry laugh. The young girl coloured, but would not speak, and Julia continued, "Well, never mind, Flo, you shall write your note at the Weston's. I'll manage it; Di will only be too glad to have your cousin at her party."

And so Douglas Cameron's permit was duly written and despatched from Thornton, and the young people had a long and to them most satisfactory talk about the picnic which Di intended shortly to give her friends. And one thing was definitely arranged, that whenever it did come off Douglas Cameron's presence would be considered indispensable; and Di promised herself the

pleasure of taking the young man under her protection, and introducing him to all the social and natural celebrities of the neighbourhood, whenever he made his appearance.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

It was one day about a week later that the birthday of little Helen Marsden was made the occasion for a family gathering at the Hall. The child was made happy by permission to invite all her friends to an early tea at the hermitage in the glen, and there was a general acceptance of her invitations, which had included the Rectory party and Di and George Weston, the latter being a great favourite with the little girls.

And when the day came, many anxious looks were cast towards the sky, at least by the school-room party, when the family assembled for prayers; but nothing could be more favourable than the weather, which was so hot and oppressive as to render a few hours in the cool glen a most desirable prospect for everyone. Birthdays



were always made much of at Marsden, and Helen was quite overpowered by the number and variety of her presents, which came to her from all sides, her cousin Madeline being the only member of the family who had forgotten to enhance the child's happiness by some token of affection.

But in the delight of acknowledging so much kindness, Madeline's neglect was overlooked, and the climax of Helen's joy was the presentation of her father's gift, a charming little pony for herself, and another in the background for her sister Rose. Of course everything accompanied them to make them at once available, and the two little girls spent their holiday morning, in making the acquaintance of their new acquisitions, and taking their first riding lesson from the Squire and a trusty old coachman.

But after dinner, the evening's entertainment became their first object, and the children were impatient to start away on the pleasant expedition to the Hermitage. It was near five o'clock, however, before the whole party were assembled on the lawn, and just about to move off, when a horseman was observed leisurely riding up the avenue.

“Who comes here?” cried the Squire, who was the first to perceive him. “Man and beast are strangers to me. Who can it be?”

“How tiresome if we are delayed now, mamma,” said Rose and Helen, simultaneously. “Can’t we all hide, and say you are out?”

“Too late for that, little ones,” replied their papa. “Of course he can see us, as we can him. You must e’en take your chance of a delay, children, and wait till he arrives; unless you like to go on by yourselves.”

But the children were too curious to see the stranger to avail themselves of the permission; and Julia suggested the possibility of its being Mr. Cameron, adding, “If it is, papa, do ask him to stay. You can’t be so inhospitable as to send him away?”

“I don’t know what to say to that, child,” he replied, with an amused laugh. “I suppose you’ll soon be like the rest of your sex, Julia, and think pleasures incomplete without a due proportion of the coated bipeds?”

“You would not wish us to eschew your society, would you, papa Marsden?” asked Di, insinua-

tingly. "Of course, we have far to just an appreciation of your nobler sex to be happy without your co-operation and presence in everything."

"Ah, it's all very well to say so to an old fellow like me, Miss Di," he replied. "You wouldn't be so warm in your eulogiums if I were twenty years younger. It would be all the other way then, and I might think myself happy if I was tolerated. Isn't that the way of it, Jane? (turning to his wife). You kept me in excellent order, didn't you, little woman? Whatever real power and influence we have over your sex, Di, you take good care we shan't know it when we are young, that is, not if you can help it. You defer prettily enough to old men, but you're very tyrants to the young ones. Don't you agree with me?" he added, turning to Henry Howard and George, who were standing together.

"You mustn't appeal to me, Mr. Marsden," said Henry, laughing. "I can't speak from personal experience as you can, and therefore, perhaps, I have no right to differ with you; but I don't think any one would tyrannise over me,"

and he said these last words with a deep concentrated tone of feeling, as if firmly settling it in his own mind that such a contingency was impossible. Accidentally, he glanced at the same moment at Madeline, and surprised her in the act of looking at him with an expression of interest. "I have an ally in you, I see, Miss Marsden," he added, with emphasis. "You do not think so slightingly of us, as to endeavour to make or desire to see us in the position of your abject slaves."

"At any rate, I have no wish to claim my feminine privileges, if such they are," she said, quietly, though her colour deepened. "We should all be masters of ourselves and our hearts, I think. There is but one legitimate object worthy of our highest devotion. Everything should be subservient to it, and those weak enough to allow other purposes to interfere with it are only deserving of contemptuous pity."

"Alas, for us," said the Squire, with an amused smile, as he glanced again at the young men. "It is well all young ladies have not Madeline's austerity; though, I declare, if I was

young, I should be rather inclined to try the strength of my lady's defences, even on chance of meriting her contempt. There's a challenge for either of you," he added, in a lower tone; "for all her talking, I believe, she only wants a little encouragement to play the tyrant as well as anyone."

But by this time the horseman had dismounted at the Hall door, and, preceded by the grey-headed butler, a card in his hand, made his appearance on the lawn. He was a quiet, gentlemanly looking young fellow, tall, and well made, with very fair complexion and hair, and the unusual accompaniment of dark eyes and eyebrows, which struck strangely on the eye at a first introduction. The assembled Marsdens had plenty of time for their inspection of him as he came forward. In fact, it was rather a trial for anyone's self-possession to be thus suddenly introduced into a large and perfectly strange family party, and that the young man felt it so was evident by the deepening of the colour on his sunburnt cheek as he followed his conductor, who, putting the card into his master's hand, at the

same moment announced him pompously for the benefit of the public as, "Mr. Douglas Cameron."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Cameron," said the Squire, advancing, and shaking him heartily by the hand. "You have come at an auspicious moment to make our acquaintance, for you find the family here in full force. Rather a formidable party, arn't we? and you hardly know where to look for your cousins. But come and let me introduce you all round;" and, after allowing the young cousins to shake hands, the Squire made his guest acquainted with the rest of the party by a few well-timed remarks, which put every one at their ease, and made the young stranger feel quite at home.

Of course, an explanation as to their gathering in such force was naturally necessary, and consequent upon it came the invitation to take his place amongst them as a family scion, and make one of the party. "That is," said the Squire, "if you can refresh yourself sufficiently after your long ride with the rural feast my little daughter has prepared for us."

The young man gracefully assented, and Rose and Helen at last succeeded in getting the party under weigh, a really arduous undertaking considering the heterogeneous nature of the individuals composing it.

Old Aunt Marsden had to be wheeled in her chair, for Helen had made a point of her presence, and the day being so warm she did not disappoint her. Even the young heir was not forgotten, but was laughing and chattering in his nurse's arms, a fine chubby healthy child now, just learning to run alone, and dear to every one as the apple of their eye.

The Hermitage, to which they at first all turned their steps, was situated at the upper end of the glen, and not far from the Hall itself, for the glen wound upwards from the park till it was lost in a small wooded hill which rose immediately behind the house.

Everything had been done to render this spot as attractive as possible. Wild flowers were scattered broadcast over the ground, and rich ferns and mosses luxuriated in the cool damp shade amongst the rocky banks of the little stream.

The Hermitage itself was a rustic little building, standing deep in the wood, but commanding a view over the park and distant country from a gap in the trees through which the sunlight gleamed cheerfully, just relieving the spot by its bright beams from the shade of gloominess with which too sunless a forest scene is often tinged. Into this sunshine the gentlemen wheeled the old lady's chair, and Aunts Jane and Mabel settled themselves beside her, while many of the younger people scattered up and down the glen, to pass away the time each in their own fashion, till Helen's banquet was prepared. It was on the smooth green sward in front of the Hermitage that the tables were being spread, and the little girls and their governess were soon busy about them, arranging to their liking the good things Mrs. Marsden's forethought had sent there before them.

Meanwhile Douglas Cameron was not allowed to feel himself a stranger amongst this family party. He had scarcely been prepared for such a warm reception. Hitherto the pleasures of domestic life had been a sealed book to him. He



had but looked on as a stranger, while others enjoyed them.

In his highland home, the old man his adopted father was the only one bound to him by a stronger tie than friendship, and lately he had seen but little even of him. His aunt and cousins at Rockpoint were also comparative strangers, though Cameron's childhood had been watched over by Griselda. But lately there had been nothing very interesting to a spirited enterprising boy, in the dull routine of the daily life of an old lady and her three elderly daughters. What a change then was this introduction to young men and maidens of his own age, and with whom he at once found himself on the easy familiar terms to which his connection with some of them entitled him. He had ridden from Walford that day a friendless stranger with no claim on anyone's kindness or consideration, to find himself suddenly the member of a numerous, warm-hearted family, and for their sake enjoying even the attention of their friends. For Diana did not fail to redeem her promise of befriending the stranger, and her ready wit and fascinating manners

made her an admirable cicerone of the Marsden Lions. How skilfully she managed to tell him all he need know of everyone, and how graceful were the little touches of sentiment here and there, testifying to the warmth of her affection for them all. Nor was she satisfied with this. She caught the shy Flora, as they walked through the glen, and handled her so cleverly that the young girl was put quite at ease with her cousin, and found herself wishing he was her brother. Di would have done as much for Madeline had she dared, but after the exchange of a few commonplaces with her new cousin, that young lady had taken refuge with the elderly party, perhaps, as Julia insinuated in an aside to Diana, because Henry Howard was there. Be that as it may though, it was beside him she was seated when tea time came, and however silent she might be at other times Henry certainly found some means of engaging her attention that evening, and keeping up the ball with untiring zeal, even after the meal was over and the others were dispersing. Mischievous Diana must needs

steal behind them to find out what subject had excited Madeline out of her apathy.

“You may say what you like to the contrary, Mr. Howard,” were the first words Diana heard; “but I cannot help thinking the old times were better than these. Surely the glory has departed from the Church with the loss of the mighty power for good it wielded, when kings and countries were its servants, and its inspired voice the terror of millions.”

“If the power for good was great the power also for evil was equally great, Miss Marsden,” replied Henry. “If the voice of the Church was inspired ——”

But Diana’s merriment interrupted him and betrayed her, while she expressed her amusement at their earnest conversation.

“We shall know another time how to get Madeline to talk,” she said, as she turned away towards Julia, adding in a loud aside to her, “It is very evident, my dear, Madeline has a fancy for the Church. She can talk on no other subject,” and the light-hearted merry girl began scrambling

up the steepest part of the hill, followed by most of the young people.

But the elderly good folks remained lounging around the old lady's chair. It was many months since Aunt Marsden had found herself surrounded by the whole family, or enjoyed so comfortably the sweet summer air, and all the pleasant sights and sounds. She was loth to curtail her chastened pleasure of seeing these children of the second and third generation gathered about her, rich in the possession of so much health and happiness, particularly as the thought would cross her mind, that perhaps this was the last time she might have such an opportunity. So Maxwell's reminder that it was getting late and chilly was disregarded, for, as the old lady said to her with a quiet smile, "You must not grudge me this small pleasure, Maxwell."

"Dear knows I don't, ma'am," she replied heartily, the tears filling her honest old eyes. "It's little enough you have at the best. If only you won't stay out after sundown."

"But that's a long look out, Maxwell," said Aunt Jane. "Never fear but we'll bring her safely home before then."

And so they all sat together, mostly in silence, enjoying the calm beauty of the scene. The sunbeams still glanced through the trees, which bent gently to the evening breeze, their broken shadows flickering hither and thither over everything in an ever-flowing stream of light and shade. The little brook murmured over its rocky bed, babbling to each listener some pleasant tale, varying according to their various moods. The birds talked to each other in their own sweet notes, as they made the most of the day's last hour; and occasionally the clear ringing voices of some of the young people would come reverberating through the wood, but toned down by the distance till they harmonised with the stiller natural sounds around.

“What a glorious, beautiful world this is,” said the rector musingly. “Even Eden could not have rejoiced in sweeter sights or sounds than these. It would be a cold hard heart indeed that would deny us this quiet heaven-born enjoyment of God's good gifts.”

“Ah,” remarked the Squire approvingly, “there's nothing like it, Charles! God made the

country, but man made the town! If a man is to live in remembrance that this is God's world, he must needs keep in the country. All that is fresh and good in a man is called out by such scenes as these. With the living evidence of His love and power constantly about us, we must be brutes to forget Him. But you, Henry, know something of town life. Is there anything in it to remind men that God made them?"

"It is harder to draw the inference, certainly," replied Mr. Howard. "But God's presence and power is equally visible in the town as in the country, if we seek for it; though not in the same way. Man's intellectual and physical power is brought more prominently before us, and through it we obtain a better conception of the might of his Maker. The wonderful resources of nature are also more strikingly developed, and lead to the same result."

"Yes; if people all look so deeply into things as you do," said the Squire; "but human sin and degradation hold an equal place with its greatness on the face of a town life. Physically and intellectually great, perhaps, but morally

sinful. That's the first broad impression a day in town gives me, and if the thought of man's Maker finds a place at all, it is only a kind of doubtful wondering how good and evil can so strangely intermingle in any work of His."

"But the evil is an interloper, Edward," said the old lady.

"Then the town is one, too," he replied, quickly. "It is man's infirmities and frailties, the result of his sinfulness, that necessitate the congregation of the species for their mutual welfare and support. There's a new theory for you all," he added, with a laugh; but, seriously, "I have sometimes wondered if towns would have been necessary in our primitive state."

"Unfortunately, we've no means of judging," said the rector, with a smile. "Certainly, our present position is a tolerably near approach to our ideas of it, as far as nature is concerned."

"By no means so as regards ourselves, though," put in his wife; "and, moreover, here comes the doctor to remind us more forcibly of the fact, for most certainly such personages would not have been required in Edward's primitive state."

They all laughed, and when Mr. Gerald came up, the Squire greeted him with the enquiry of what evil tidings respecting human infirmities he was the bearer of, to dissipate the illusions they were indulging in under the influence of the paradise about them.

“I’m a very serpent in your Eden, then, I fear,” said Mr. Gerald, as they all mutually exchanged salutations, “as far as the knowledge of evil is concerned, for I’ve a heavy budget to communicate. I guessed you could not have heard of the Stonebridge catastrophe?”

There was a general exclamation of inquiry, and Mr. Gerald went on to explain how on riding through the little town that afternoon he had found it in a violent state of excitement. Four or five houses in the principal street were in flames; and the townsfolk, after several ineffectual attempts to smother the fire, had to leave the doomed houses to their fate, and turn their attention to preserving the neighbouring buildings from the conflagration. It had indeed been a memorable afternoon for the little town, and unfortunately some of the sufferers were unin-



sured, and of these, one was a most respectable tradesman, largely patronised by the neighbourhood in general, and the Marsdens in particular. The afternoon's work had reduced this poor man, with his wife and half-a-dozen children, from a position of comfortable independence to a state of comparative destitution ; and his case was doubly hard, as the fire did not originate on his premises, but had spread so rapidly that little or nothing had been saved.

“A victim to a town life, then, is this poor Smith,” remarked the Squire, when Mr. Gerald paused. “No man can suffer for another's carelessness in the free open country. However, I suppose we must all do our best for the poor things. No doubt they will start a subscription for them, and in that case, I don't think they'll find Marsden Hall hanging back.”

“We'll open a private list for them this very night,” said the rector, “and I shall leave it to you, Edward, to start the thing handsomely,” and taking out his pocket-book he prepared to write.

“That's taking the bull by the horns very un-

ceremoniously," said the Squire, laughing. "I won't be taken by storm in this way, Charles ; but we'll settle it to-morrow."

And the matter rested there, everyone understanding they could thus have an opportunity of giving as they were disposed in their hearts, "not grudgingly or of necessity," as might otherwise have been the case.

By-and-bye, the young people began coming in by twos and threes. Flora, Diana, and young Cameron together. They had been to the hill-top, where a wider view was to be had, and came back full of the clouds of smoke they had seen hanging over Stonebridge, and eager for any explanation of its cause.

They were referred to the doctor, and an introduction between him and Douglas naturally followed, and they fell into conversation, and both seemed struck and pleased with each other. For latterly a visible change had crept over Mr. Gerald. He seemed to have warmed and expanded under the genial sunshine of his intercourse with the Marsdens, and depths of knowledge and intelligence were coming to the

surface, which had only lain too long dormant in the cold unsocial life which had preceded it. He was insensibly taking his place amongst them all as a worthy friend. Aunts Jane and Mabel would lay their heads together and wonder how he had managed so long to conceal his good qualities. The rector found in him an able coadjutor in his efforts to better the moral and physical condition of his poorer parishioners, and even the Squire had entertained some respect for his opinion, since he had accidentally dropped one or two remarks on agricultural chemistry, which showed his interest in, and knowledge of the subject.

But all pleasures must have an end, the sun was setting, and Aunt Marsden must go home, and a general break up of the party followed. As Douglas Cameron was taking leave he expressed his gratitude for the privileges he had enjoyed, and spoke so feelingly of his happiness at being admitted at last in some sort to the modest pleasures of a domestic circle, that the good Squire and his wife were quite touched with his warmth, and gave him a cordial general invitation to visit them whenever he liked.

And as the young man rode back to Walford in the cool twilight, he blessed the chance that had been the means of introducing him to such a new page in life, and promised himself it should be no fault of his if it was not made the most of.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ABOUT the same time Mr. Gerald and the rectory party were leisurely returning to their homes, and as they lay in the same direction, they bore each other company, discussing as they walked the fire at Stonebridge. Such a subject cannot fail to interest everyone. The element is so mighty, so destructive in its power when once it gets the upper hand. Who would not be momentarily paralysed by an alarm of fire. 'Tis a slave that bears no trifling with when once broken lose, for he generally manages to take signal vengeance on his master ere he relapses into insignificance, and acknowledges his supremacy.

Mr. Gerald had stayed long enough at Stonebridge to be sure the worst was over. Lives are seldom sacrificed when fires break out by day, so

there was no such melancholy contingency to deplore. But next to life is the means of sustaining it, and of this precious commodity more than enough was devoured by the flames. Poor Smith dealt in everything, like most country shopkeepers, and his heterogeneous goods were nice food for the fire; and by the time it had done its worst, the few outstanding bills, and the clothes on their back, and the charred blackened remnants of their stock in trade, was all that was left to the poor man of his late comfortable home. Words of sympathy and condolence avail a man little in such circumstances, and, though Mr. Gerald did not forget these, he did Smith far better service by interesting the Marsdens in his favour, and securing him the substantial benefits of pecuniary aid. For, as he told the rector on their way home, he had taken care that the good folks of Stonebridge should not forget their duty of coming forward to assist the sufferers, and had judiciously hinted to them, that Smith had a legitimate claim on his late customers which they would doubtless unanimously respond to, if called upon.

“And who are the other sufferers?” asked Mrs. Marsden; “they should get their share of our benefits.”

“And none will deserve it more than some of them, from all I can hear,” replied Mr. Gerald, “though they have no such claim on us as Smith. But there are two girls, who have supported themselves and an aged grand parent since their parent’s death, by untiring exertions in the teaching of a little school for the children of the better class of mechanics and small tradesmen. This fire has swept away their little belongings, and without some assistance I don’t know how they will make their way in the world again.”

“What, those respectable Miss Johnsons, Mr. Gerald?” exclaimed Bessy; “poor things, we know them very well. How did I forget they lived close to Smith. We must surely do something for them, mamma?”

“Ay, that we will,” said her father warmly; “we’ll give them a separate page in our list, Bessy, and our subscribers can choose their own objects. I’ll get the whole thing into working order to-morrow. Such a call on our benevolence

will do us all good, and I hope the matter will be warmly taken up in the neighbourhood."

"It would be a great pity if those poor girls are not put in a position to maintain themselves in honourable independence," remarked Mrs. Marsden; "perhaps you do not know, Mr. Gerald, that they have seen better days. But their father was unfortunate and left them penniless, and care broke the poor mother's heart in less than a year afterwards. And these girls have struggled on ever since, and managed to keep themselves from sinking into a lower class of life."

"I have lived so secluded," said the doctor, with a smile, "that I know but little of our neighbours except professionally."

"But you are coming to a better state of mind now," she said; "we must take care not to let you relapse again into your old habits. We must show you how indispensable you are to the happiness and well-being of your neighbours, and then I know you will be too generous to deprive us of your society."



Mr. Gerald laughed, but nevertheless there was a touch of sadness in his tone as he replied—

“ We must live for something or somebody, Mrs. Marsden. We grow selfish and morose if we lose interest in our fellow beings; I am beginning to believe the wider we extend the circle of our benevolence, by so much we enlarge our sources of happiness, and God gives us new and unexpected interests in place of those buried in the past.”

“ Plenty of bodily and mental occupation is the best cure for a diseased mind,” remarked the rector, with a tone speaking volumes for his own practical demonstration of the principle; “ by diseased I mean a mind excited into feverishness, or morbidly depressed from an undue amount of sorrow or anxiety. Don’t you think so, Gerald?”

“ Yes, if you can get the patient to acknowledge it,” he answered. “ But the difficulty is to excite the new interests. Mere drudgery won’t avail. In fact it just comes to this, they must forget themselves.”

“ A lesson we must all be learning every hour of our lives,” continued the rector; “ it is curious

how selfishness insinuates itself into everything. Why, even the pleasure of doing good is frequently impregnated with it. It's a personal gratification to feel ourselves of use."

"Oh, papa," cried Bessy, "you really are too bad. You would make us fear even to indulge our best impulses."

"Ah, Bessy," he added, gravely, "we must needs fear everything that emanates from ourselves. But we have wandered a long way from those poor Johnsons," he added, more briskly. "Our disquisition will do them but little good if we don't follow it up by wholesome action."

"We all intend to, I hope," said Mr. Gerald, and shortly afterwards they separated at the rectory gate; and he hastened on to his own house, where his sister sat waiting for him in the deepening twilight.

The few months that have elapsed since we were first introduced to Elinor Gerald have made but little difference in her appearance. She is as neat and as prim as ever, and the same expression of placid contentment characterises her countenance as she bends over her knitting. Per-

haps she looks even more satisfied than formerly, as who would not be, if some sort of rival, however vague and indefinite our conception of it, was suddenly and for ever removed from our path? Such a rival must *she* have been whose death had been confirmed to her by her brother with such emotion, eight months before. Now, Elinor had no doubtful future to look forward to, and she settled herself more securely into the quiet comfortable home-life, to which the late pleasant intercourse with all the Marsdens had just given enough external interest and zest. None rejoiced more than his sister at the gradual change in the doctor's habits. It was pleasant to be reminded again of the good old days when neither of them knew aught of this world but its smiles and sunshine.

“It was a pity you did not come with me, Elinor,” were Mr. Gerald's first words as he came in. “It is Helen's birthday, and they had a family gathering at the Hermitage. I could not have had a better opportunity for interesting them about the poor Stonebridge folks.”

“I am glad they will do something for them,”

she replied. "We can give our mite, Gerald, as I hope others will, too. But is it all to go to Smith?"

"The Johnsons I was telling you of are to get some," he replied. "They are even more deserving than the casual remarks to-day led me to suppose. Mrs. Marsden knows them. They have seen better days;" then continuing in a more earnest tone, he remarked, "I fear we have been short comers all these years, Elinor. We ought to have known more of our neighbours, rich as well as poor. It was barren labour that mere professional work. I am surprised to find what a different aspect things have, now I act not merely to kill time, but really to be of use to others. I have been mistaking the mechanical love of occupation, which induced me to choose this life instead of an inactive one, for the higher feeling of a desire to do my duty."

"But, surely, Gerald, you have done your duty?" exclaimed his sister, indignant at such a supposition.

"As a doctor, perhaps, but not as a man," he said. "It all came clearly before me, Elinor, as

we talked to-night. We must love even as we are loved if we want to do right. If we love God we must love our neighbours, and show it by being interested in their concerns. And we have our reward even here, as I had to-night, when they told me I was becoming indispensable amongst them."

"You only require to be known to be appreciated, Gerald," remarked his sister, affectionately. "The choice of our past life was your own doing; but I am not sorry your opinions are altering, brother. We like others to know the value of those dear to us."

"Don't begin your old flatteries, Elinor," he said, smiling; "the past ought, at least, to have made us wiser in that respect. But we are a long time learning God's lessons. How hard they do seem to some of us. That poor child Madeline is fighting hard against Him. They little know the interest I take in those children, Elinor; and I often feel inclined to say or do something which might betray me. If only Madeline would learn to look her duties in the face, and not waste her energies, and her health even, as she is doing,

in wild schemes and extravagant longings for impossibilities.”

“She will become reasonable by and bye, Gerald, I dare say.”

“But not before she suffers for her mistaken ideas,” he replied. “She requires a great deal of management, and is not likely to get it at the Hall. That forcing her into society, so distasteful to her, is injudicious, and so is the impatient sarcasm of Julia and her father. I know as well as if I was always there how they go on, for she’s not the girl to conceal her opinions. Our rectory friends are to be trusted ; if she was always with them she would soon recover.”

“Well, I hope you exaggerate the evil, Gerald,” said his sister, as if rather tired of the subject, which evidently did not interest her as it did her brother. “They are certainly very nice children ; and I hope sincerely they will turn out well.”

He looked a little disappointed at this termination of the subject, and did not speak again till his sister abruptly asked him who was the young man that rode up to the Hall that after-

noon, and only returned a few minutes before he came home.

“Young Cameron, I suppose,” he replied, carelessly. “He is some cousin of our Marsdens, Elinor; but that’s all I know. He seems a nice young fellow, and was on excellent terms with them all.”

“A Scotch cousin?” said Elinor, interrogatively.

“From the name it must be, and a distant one, too. The Squire had better keep his eye on them all, I’m thinking. It’s no joke to let a young fellow be on familiar terms with such a bevy of fair girls as he has in his charge. But he seems to have no fear. I heard him give Cameron a general invitation.”

“Well, they must marry some day, I suppose,” said his sister, quietly. “The sooner the better, say I, if it’s only the right person;” and she left the room.

“Ah, that’s the question—the right person,” muttered the doctor to himself, as he, too, betook himself to his sanctum.

## CHAPTER XX.

“MAY we walk to Stonebridge this afternoon, mamma?” asked little Helen, at luncheon, the day after the fire. “We should so much like to see where the fire was, if you will let us go.”

“Well, I don’t know what to say about it, my dear,” said Mrs. Marsden. “I am afraid it would not do for you and Miss Parsons to go quite alone.”

“They can come with us, Aunt Jane,” cried a voice from the window, and Aunt Jane turned round with a little start and exclamation, to see Bessy and her uncle looking in at them. “We are going to Stonebridge,” continued Bessy, “both to gratify our idle curiosity as to the ruins, and also with the more laudable object of seeing



the Miss Johnsons. Did you know, Aunt Jane, how they had suffered?"

"Yes, my dear," she replied, "your father told us when he left the subscription list this morning. But isn't Stonebridge too far for you, Henry?"

"I think not," he said, with a smile. "I have been reserving myself for it all the morning, and I came to secure the little people just out of mere selfishness, Mrs. Marsden; because they will moderate Bessy's energetic pace, and keep her within reasonable bounds."

"That's not his real reason, Aunt Jane," said Bessy, laughing. "He was sure the children would like to go. You won't disappoint him?"

"By no means," she replied. "They will soon be ready."

"And are there any more curious children who have never seen a fire, and would like to come with us," asked Henry, looking down the table.

But Madeline, Julia, and Flora, sat mute. The former, of course, did not wish to go; Julia was bent on a ride; and Flora was afraid of being laughed at by both of them, if she expressed such a childish desire.

“Won’t you come, Miss Marsden?” reiterated Henry. “It is a lovely afternoon, not at all hot? I’m sure you will enjoy the walk.”

Madeline hesitated, and Bessy added her entreaties to his and finally prevailed.

Julia looked on with an expression of sly amusement on her face. Nothing delighted her so much as to see Madeline brought down to the level of ordinary mortals, nor was she likely to let her forget any such shortcoming. It would be great fun to chaff her about having gone when Henry asked her; but Julia had no idea of losing Flora’s society in her ride, and so made haste to secure her company.

But no one protested against this, as she expected. Henry Howard had got what he wanted it was evident, and cared for no more additions to the walking party, so poor Flora resigned herself to her fate in her usual amiable manner.

“Do you really wish to come to Stonebridge?” said Bessy to Miss Parsons, who was just rising from her seat to go and prepare for her walk. “Aunt Jane will trust the little girls with us, I am sure, if you would rather stay at home.”

The young governess looked at Mrs. Marsden, who kindly told her to please herself; and she gratefully acknowledged Bessy's attention, and retired to hasten her pupils.

"Miss Parsons looks ill, Aunt Jane," said Bessy, when she was gone.

"She's not ill, only anxious, I believe," replied Mrs. Marsden. "The children told me she heard her mother was worse this morning."

"Poor thing," said Henry Howard. "No wonder she looks sad. How anxious she must be to be with her."

"Oh, she will soon be better, I dare say," remarked Mrs. Marsden. "She has always been an invalid, and Miss Parsons is often needlessly alarmed about her. This is nothing unusual."

"You will have to give her a holiday some day, mamma, I am sure," observed Julia. "If she doesn't get better accounts to-morrow we shan't be much the better for her instructions. She made no end of mistakes this morning."

"Nonsense, Julia," said her mother a little sharply; "I'm sure Miss Parsons does not think of such a thing. How could she be spared to go

so far? The children would run wild with no one to look after them.”

“It’s no concern of mine,” replied Julia with nonchalance. “But there’s not much use in a governess who does nothing but cry,” and the young lady got up and went away, bidding Flora make haste and not keep her waiting.

A few minutes afterwards Madeline and the children made their appearance, and the walking party started. They were not obliged to go round by the road, but took the far pleasanter path down the park, crossing the river above the lake by means of a plank and hand rail, and then on through the fields, to the village, or little town as it considered itself, of Stonebridge.

What a change those few hours had made in the usually neat, orderly, main street. The children looked quite subdued and awe-struck, as they walked down the further side of it, and stopped opposite the long range of black and smouldering ruins. How melancholy the tall beams and rafters looked standing out, like grim skeletons, against the bright sky. And here and there, where the fire had not done its work so

effectually, were the scorched remnants of walls and ceilings just enough to show what they had once been. How the eyes of the poor ousted ones must have ached, as they caught sight of those remnants of old familiar and beloved objects, and were reminded by them of many happy times, which this fire had, perhaps, swallowed up along with their cherished associations.

And such lookers on were Margaret and Emma Johnson, as they sat disconsolately at a window of one of the opposite houses, where they and their grandmother had taken refuge the day before. How mighty in their eyes looked the ruin of their late comfortable home. There was the outline of the schoolroom where they had laboured so cheerfully and worthily for their daily bread, marked out by the charred stumps of the uprights. And behind, the old dame's room, from which she had with difficulty been carried, when the upper rooms were in flames. Of these not a vestige remained except the black beams and a few broken rafters of the roof. The Stonebridge houses were built chiefly of framework filled in with lath and plaster, and consequently highly inflammable.

It was well for them that one brick house had stopped the fire on one side, and a small interval on the other side had been the means of saving the lower portion of the street.

But the Johnsons were not left long to their melancholy meditations over their ruined house that afternoon; for Bessy soon found them out, and taking Madeline with her, while her uncle was laughingly cautioned to take good care of the children, she went in to condole with the afflicted girls.

Her father had given her authority to promise them certain definite aid, and the chance of more if people were more benevolently disposed than he expected. Therefore Bessy had it in her power to give them substantial consolation; and very touching was their gratitude and thankfulness for such an unexpected blessing.

“Oh, Miss Bessy,” cried Emma, “if we can only get a roof over our heads again, and something to start with, we shall be satisfied. The neighbours will not desert us, and we shall be where we were before. As long as God gives us health and strength to work, I do not doubt we

shall prosper. We had just got straight with the world when this comes. But He has raised us up friends in our need. We must not grumble if it is a put off; something tells me we shall have our wish yet."

"I hope you may whatever it is," said Bessy, "We generally find God helps those who help themselves, and I am sure you will get on again as well as ever when once this trouble is past. Fortunately your little scholars are not burnt up, so we havn't to provide you with a new set."

The girls laughed, and said that would have been a difficulty; and, promising to see them again soon, Bessy took her leave.

"I wonder if they will ever realize their modest ambition?" said Bessy to Madeline, as they walked down the street in search of uncle Henry and the children, who were nowhere to be seen. "I can pretty well guess what it is from their remarks at other times."

"I should like to know if it is a laudable one," remarked Madeline. "Those girls do seem to have some ideas in them beyond those common to their class."

“Yes, and their ambition is an evidence of it. They cherish some scheme of starting a thoroughly well-conducted boarding-school for girls of their own class—the better kind of tradesmen and farmers. Their recollections of their own experience in the Walford schools was such as to make them fear for all young girls subjected to such influences. Education is becoming of so much importance now-a-days, that I am confident that if they get an opening, and could make a fair start, they would be sure to succeed. I suppose they were beginning to save money with this object, but of course this misfortune will throw them out.”

“Poor things, what a pity,” exclaimed Madeline, who had listened eagerly to Bessy’s words, and was evidently roused to unusual interest in their case. “But have they themselves education enough to teach what would be thought requisite?”

“Ah, that is another of their difficulties, I believe,” replied Bessy. “They knew they would want some one to help in the higher branches, and it is difficult to find any one suffi-



ciently well educated, and yet who would consent to be secondary in the establishment. Margaret and Emma wish to be the principals and manage the thing on their own philanthropic plan, combining a useful with an ornamental education. They think there is such a great deficiency of practical every-day knowledge amongst the young girls of that class, that is, if they leave home and go to these second-rate schools for education. Their object would be to teach them all things necessary for their duties and station, without much of the useless superficialities they get elsewhere."

"We must do what we can to help them on their way," said Madeline, warmly. "I am glad they are to have a subscription made for them. I hope they will get a great deal."

"I wish every one knew as much as we do about them," replied Bessy. "It would be delightful if they got more than they expected, and were able to make a beginning. Then, this fire would prove a real benefit in the end."

"If I could accomplish it, it should," observed Madeline, decidedly. "It is worth while to help

people who know how to make a good use of it as these girls will. The advantages of a good education cannot be overrated, and I see no reason why it should interfere with a proper performance of one's duty to God and man."

"No reason whatever," said Bessy, but looking archly at her cousin; "only there does seem a little difficulty about it somehow. None know this better than yourself, Madeline."

The young girl coloured up. "I don't quite understand you, Bessy," she said; "I am sure my education does not interfere with my duties. I would sacrifice all I know, if necessary, to do God service, but it seems to me it is better to make a good use of one's talents for Him than to bury them."

"Yes, if we use them in the right way," replied Bessy, quietly; "but duties come first."

"Ah, Bessy," said Madeline, sadly, and brought back to the recollection of herself by these remarks. "You are not in my place, and don't know all I suffer."

"But one thing I do know, Madeline," answered Bessy, with her own peculiar earnest

straightforwardness, "that where God has placed people there they ought to stay, and do the work He sets them carefully and conscientiously."

Madeline was saved the necessity of reply, by Henry Howard's cheery call to them from the door of the pastry-cook's round the corner, where, by way of worthily fulfilling his duties as guardian, he had conducted the little girls when they were left in his charge. And she did not regret the interruption. Bessy's remark was a home thrust, for the talk about the Johnsons had started a new, and what Madeline considered, a feasible and worthy scheme for freeing herself from the imaginary bondage and fatal influences of her present life. How could Bessy have surmised it? And yet what else could she have meant by such insinuations? Was she, too, going to turn against her, and condemn her to a useless life. A very little more of all this; her uncle's ungenerous inuendoes, Julia's sarcasm, and everyone's misappreciation, and she would have to break bounds, and serve God her own way in spite of them all.

And yet Bessy spoke innocently, and little imagining how her words burnt.

Madeline was beginning to try even her cousin's patience. She saw her living in comfort, and in a position to be envied by most people, with ample opportunities for the exercise of every Christian virtue ; full of high aspirations, yet miserable and repining, and making her desire to please God the plea for neglecting everything, but a morbid inactive life of aimless devotion, Madeline was becoming an anomaly to our practical Bessy. She must talk with her father about her, and see what was to be done.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THAT evening the subscription lists for the sufferers by the Stonebridge fire were to be made up. The rector and his family were to spend the evening at the Hall, and he was to take them away with him when he left, that they might be sent elsewhere the following day. The lists were left on the library table; and the Squire duly announced at the dinner table that those who wished to contribute could leave their donations there, specifying to which sufferer's use they were to be applied. The Squire was never backward in any circumstances of this kind, none knew better than himself the duties and responsibilities of his position, or was more keenly alive to his own importance as one of the leading men of his county. He was ever ready to use his

name and influence, and to disburse the contents of his well-filled purse in the cause of philanthropy, or any other project, social or moral, which he considered his high position entailed upon him. It was pleasant to feel he was somebody; that no society or committee was complete without the name and co-operation of Edward Marsden, Esq. His dislike to a town life had prevented him coming forward to represent the county; and as he declined this responsibility, he thought himself doubly bound to make his name known and respected, as the promoter of every local scheme for the bettering or aggrandizement of the people and neighbourhood.

And what he desired for himself must be shared by his family. His children must learn to follow in his footsteps and sustain the credit and honour of his name; and when the lists were thus formally thrown open by his announcement, all the young people knew they were both at liberty and expected to contribute; and the more so as, but a few days before, the young ladies had received their quarterly allowance, and, therefore, could not be excused on the plea of want of funds.

And so after dinner their first visit was to the library, where they left behind them, each in their own fashion, some donation either for Smith or the Johnsons. By-and-bye Aunt Jane came in to collect them together in readiness for her brother-in-law, and knowing as she did the resources of the whole family, it required but little discrimination to appropriate to their donors the nameless little parcels before her. The first she opened were half-crowns, for Smith, doubtless from the two little girls, to whom they owed many a substantial and dainty addition to their daily fare. Then came sovereigns and half-sovereigns for either sufferer indiscriminately; these, of course, came from the other young people who were better provided with the means of giving; and in their youth and gladness little recked who was the better for their gifts. Then came the young governess's precious mite, costly price of some self denial known only to God and herself, and which was devoted to the Johnsons, to whom her sympathy went out from the fulness of a heart schooled by the same trials and difficulties. But the last offering made even Aunt Jane exclaim in

surprise. It was a £10 note, 'From a sincere well wisher for the Miss Johnsons.' She hastily turned to the lists on the table, and scanned the names of the family heads, who of course had given their subscriptions in the ordinary way. Yes, aunt Marsden's name was there, for at first Aunt Jane had imagined the note must be from her. Who else could be so prodigal of their bounty ; and for the elucidation of the mystery she again took up the few written words to see if they could enlighten her. But the hand might be anyone's, being evidently purposely disguised. As she sat pondering the matter the door opened, and Bessy came in. They had just come, and she wished to deposit her donation unostentatiously with the rest of the young people's. She blushed ingenuously as she saw her aunt, but came forward unaffectedly, and gave what she had brought.

"Someone has rather astonished me by their munificence," said Mrs. Marsden. "If you had not opportunely arrived, Bessy, I should have taxed you with being unduly generous."

"I am sorry I havn't the chance of being so,"



answered Bessy, gaily, "but we have so many little local claims, our own people must not suffer that we may relieve others."

"Certainly not, my dear, we must be just, before we're generous. But I really should like to know who gave this," and she again turned to the scrap of writing.

Bessy would have dearly liked to know all about it, but it seemed a matter in which she ought not to ask questions, if her aunt did not volunteer the information. There had been a certain little air of not unbecoming mystery about this subscription. It was not for her to pry into other's secrets. So she stood quietly beside her aunt awaiting her further commands.

"I think I have made it out, Bessy," she said at last, and after having in her own mind run over everyone in the house, and fixed upon Madeline as the person most likely to be carried away by excitement into such extravagance. "But I must ask you one question, my dear—did Madeline betray any unusual interest in the Johnsons?"

Bessy had always a straightforward answer ready for a straightforward question, and unhesitatingly told her what had passed at Stonebridge.

“Then no doubt she is the giver of this £10,” observed Aunt Jane, when Bessy stopped speaking. “We must speak to her about it. It is nearly her quarter’s allowance. Is your father in the drawing room, Bessy? Just ask him to come to me.”

The young girl hastened in search of him, and he soon joined his sister-in-law in the library, and she laid the case before him.

“Just like her,” he said, as she concluded. “Warm hearted and impulsive, and aiming high, but acting without judgment, and therefore foolishly. When will she sober down to take a calmer, juster view of life than she does now. It is really hard to know how to set to work with her. I suppose you ought to suggest some curtailment of this unreasonable generosity but I don’t think it will avail. There are so many natural faults to contend against that she is hardly amenable to ordinary arguments.”

“But I must try their effect, Charles,” said Mrs. Marsden. “I have promised myself to act a mother’s part by poor Frederick’s children, and this is a case in which a mother would interfere, at least by expostulation,” and she rang the bell, and bade the servant tell Miss Madeline she was wanted in the library.

The young lady was reading, or rather appearing to read, alone in the drawing-room when summoned to go to her aunt. The rest of the young party were on the lawn, and Aunt Mabel and Henry Howard had gone to pay the old lady a visit. Henry knew she would like to hear about the fire, and how it had changed the aspect of the neat little town from what her recollections of it could be. It was always a privilege and pleasure to him to have it in his power to please anyone, and many a weary half hour had he beguiled with his cheerful conversation, either as a friend or a pastor.

But neither in innocent amusement nor more sober talk was Madeline inclined to participate that evening. She was enjoying, for the first time for many days, the sweet sense of having

done something well ; and, without stopping to analyse her motives, she gave herself up to the satisfactory feeling. The abnegation of self, or the benefiting others by our actions brings with it its own reward in the elation of spirits and contentment, which but few do not experience when conscious they have done right. This feeling need not be tempered by egotism or self-sufficiency. It seems more the honest rejoicing of our better nature in its victory over an evil inclination ; but though thus harmless in itself, it lays us open to our enemy's treacherous assaults, and exposes us, as it were, to self exaltation, and the humiliating downfall which must ultimately follow it. None are oftener tempted or more likely to succumb, than those just fresh from the completion of some sacrifice, or full of the pleasant consciousness of a duty well performed. In such a time our own strength sufficeth not ; and yet, strangely enough, though God's grace may have worked in us to will and to do what occasions our satisfaction, we often need the reminder of an unexpected stumble to make us turn again to Him for a continuance of His

preventing grace. Therefore Madeline was little prepared for the trial awaiting her in the library.

“My dear child,” said Aunt Jane, as her niece came in with a serene complacency of manner to which she had long been a stranger, “your uncle and I think it better to speak to you about this little matter, though I cannot but feel it is rather a delicate subject to touch upon.” And Aunt Jane fidgeted nervously with the papers before her, and looked towards her brother for support in what did indeed seem a most difficult task, particularly when Madeline, all unconscious of what she alluded to, seated herself quietly, and begged her to proceed.

“I hope, Madeline,” continued Mrs. Marsden, “that you believe I feel the warmest interest in your wellbeing and welfare, and am actuated by nothing but the sincere desire to benefit you in reasoning with you, as I am sure your dear mother would have done, on the undue extravagance you have just been guilty of.”

“To what do you allude, Aunt Jane?” asked Madeline, coldly. “I am conscious of no such offence.”

“Are you not the owner of this, then?” said her aunt, holding up the £10 note.

“I was, but am not now,” she replied, “it is the Miss Johnsons’, to whom I dedicated it from the first moment I heard their sad story. But you cannot allude to that as extravagance, Aunt Jane?”

“But I do,” she replied, beginning to feel provoked with her niece’s calm composure, where she had hoped for some appearance of embarrassment and confusion; “it is nonsense to pretend you do not understand me, Madeline. You know you cannot justify this lavishness even in doing good. Why, how do you intend to get on without money for the next three months?”

“It is as well to learn how to do without it,” answered Madeline. “I have plenty left for all I want; you have so often impressed on us the importance of economy in such matters, Aunt Jane, that you cannot object to my giving myself a practical lesson in it.”

“But not to this extent, child,” said the elder lady, with more asperity, at this ready using of her own arguments against herself. “I know

better than you do, Madeline, the value of money, and what are likely to be your requirements in the coming months. You really must listen to reason, and be satisfied with giving a moderate donation, and one more in accordance with your means, to the Miss Johnsons."

"If my means are small," cried Madeline, drawing herself up defiantly, with a flushing cheek and quivering lip, "I don't see why I am to be reminded of it, or compelled to measure my gifts to others by its paltry standard. Surely it is in my own power to deny myself how and when I like. I did not think I was to be coerced in such matters."

"Madeline, Madeline," said the rector, gravely, "why will you persevere in taking such a wrong-headed view of things? Your aunt has no wish to coerce you in anything. She only desires most kindly to set before you the troubles and privations you may entail on yourself by this ill-timed generosity."

"And do you even think it necessary to measure one's gifts more by one's means than one's feelings, Uncle Charles?" exclaimed Madeline, turning on

him with indignant enthusiasm ; “ are you one of the cold-hearted ones, who weigh and consider every possible want and inclination of their own, and calculate to a fraction what can be spared for God ?”

“ It is what He would have us do,” replied Mr. Marsden, coolly. “ He places us each in a station with its own special wants and requirements. We have no right to defraud this position of its legitimate rights, for the gratification of our own personal feelings. There may be as great a self-denial in refraining to give, as in a lavish bestowal of that which costs us nothing at the time, but rather makes us feel a dangerous, deluding self-satisfaction. Are you prepared, my dear child, to meet the petty trials and self-denials this gift will render necessary ?”

“ All and everything, for the sake of helping others,” said Madeline, warmly.

“ And even the inability to come forward when others need your aid, Madeline ?” continued the rector inquiringly, “ Remember, three months is a long time, and you can hardly fail to have other



opportunities of doing good, if you are more moderate now?"

"A specious argument, indeed," answered the young girl, haughtily. "I do not see why I am to be lectured in this way as if I was some wilful, wayward child, ignorant of my own wants and wishes. I have made up my mind to do without this money, and it is not at all likely I should have done so without sufficient deliberation. I think nothing more need be said on the subject."

"But I do not agree with you," said Aunt Jane, quietly, but firmly, this attack on her brother-in-law having roused her to a sense of her dignity, and the relative positions of herself and her niece; "you are quite forgetting yourself, Madeline, and doing signal injustice to us all. I cannot allow you to speak to your uncle so disrespectfully. Whatever you may say to the contrary, your conduct is not what it ought to be, either in this preposterous generosity or your reception of our well-intended remonstrances. I cannot permit you to follow your own will in this matter, for I know perfectly well you must repent

of it ere long if you do. Give any sum you like within £5, but beyond that I cannot accept it," and she held out the note to her niece, who had risen, and was standing before her.

Madeline stood for a moment irresolute, her chest heaving and her eyes flashing with the tumultuous passions within.

"If I may not give what I choose," she said, rapidly, "I shall give nothing, and as to this money (taking the note from her aunt) if it cannot benefit those for whom it was intended, no one else shall profit by it;" and she deliberately tore the note into small pieces, and then casting them from her with a mixture of scorn and defiance, she walked from the room.

Aunt Jane and Mr. Marsden looked at each other in mute astonishment at this scene.

"We have roused the devil within her, I fear," he said, sadly. "I expected opposition, but not such a burst of wild, unreasonable passion. Silly child, to think she could awe us into acquiescence by such a display."

"And a bootless one, too, after all," said Aunt Jane, quietly, and stooping to collect the

scattered remnants of the note; "I shall take the trouble of putting these together again, and speeding them on their way to the Johnsons. Some day it may give her a wholesome satisfaction to know that what can be of such use to them was not wantonly wasted by her in a fit of temper."

"Poor girl," added the rector, "she will not easily forget to-night. I am afraid, Jane, you and I will stand but a poor chance with her after this. It will be a grievous humiliation to her pride by-and-bye, when she recollects how she has lowered herself in our estimation by this outburst. Not that she really has, only she will fancy it must be so. I am more saddened than vexed by the scene."

"As I am," said Mrs. Marsden. "I often thought she had an ungovernable temper, though she has hitherto restrained it."

"You must not be too hard on her, Jane," interrupted Mr. Marsden, earnestly. "She does seem a strange contradiction just now, with her high aims and imperfect actions. But recollect always, the aims are high. She is like a high mettled steed, eager for the race, feeling the life

and power within, but startled and fretted by everything about him, and uncertain in what direction he should turn. Use him gently, give him his head, with a moderate and therefore scarcely perceptible control, and he regains his confidence in you and himself. But check him violently, and use him harshly, and ten chances to one he breaks away from you in fright and fury, and carries you and himself to danger or destruction. We have used the curb overmuch to-night, and she has thown up her head, and missed her mark. It is not an irreparable evil, but should make us careful in future."

"You would manage her better than I can, Charles," said Aunt Jane, with a wearied sigh. "However, she has given us trouble enough for once. Let us join the others."

But deep in the rector's heart was laid up the recollection of this scene. It was high time he took his niece in hand; a little more, and she might be past management.

## CHAPTER XXII.

MRS. MARSDEN was crossing the hall the following morning, on her way from her matutinal visit to the domestic regions, when she met her husband coming in search of her. He was going to Walford, and had she "any commands?"

"Yes," she replied; "I will come to the library in a moment."

And thither she repaired soon afterwards, with the torn note in her hand.

"I cannot repair this mischief," she said, showing it to her husband. "It is on a Walford bank. Will you take it, Edward, and get it exchanged?"

The Squire looked curiously at the fragments. "How did it happen?" he asked, taking out his pocket-book to enter the commission. "Why,

it is the note I gave Madeline last week," he continued. "I have the number here. What brought it into your hands, Jane?"

"Perhaps I had better not tell," she said, smilingly, "You are already sufficiently prejudiced against her, Edward. But there will be no harm done if you can get it changed."

"Oh, that is easily managed," he answered; "but I suppose the girl tore it up in a pet. I did not think she could be so foolish."

"Charles says we were too hard on her," remarked Mrs. Marsden. "At any rate, it is the last time I shall attempt to control her. I really don't know what is to be done with her, and as to the high aims Charles seems to think she has, I don't see what use they are if they can't teach her sense."

"Ah, well, little woman, we must make the best of her," put in the Squire, good-humouredly, and instinctively taking up the defensive for the absent one. "She *must* have been obstreperous, to take a rise out of you, Jane. It's well it wasn't winter, or this (holding up the note) would have been in the fire, and ten good

pounds lost to us all for ever. I must give her a piece of my mind about it. I shan't leave you to fight all the battles with our Katherine, little woman. We must find a Petruchio for her by-and-bye. Nothing like matrimony to bring her to her senses."

"You will only make matters worse, I fear," said his wife, "if you speak to her. I am inclined to try the plan of leaving her altogether to herself."

"Well, settle it your own way, Jane," he cried as he turned to depart. "I must be off now. Good bye, little woman," and he hastened away, Aunt Jane following him with her eyes as long as he was in sight. His comings and goings were still matters of importance to this four-and-twenty years wife. He was still necessary to her happiness, and all the vicissitudes of their married life had but drawn the husband and wife closer together. For they had been tried like other folks. Eight years of disappointed longings had passed over them before Julia was born. And then her sex was a drawback to their happiness. But the hoped-for heir came afterwards, succeeded

by the two little girls, and all went well till the young Edward died, when his youngest sister was four years old, and any additions to the nursery could not reasonably be expected. What a blight to the parents' hopes, and particularly to the poor wife. She had too fully shared her husband's hopes and fears in the first years of their marriage, when the prospect of issue seemed doubtful, not to feel deeply now, when the blessing was given only to be reclaimed. Through those six long dreary years, the bereaved mother had drooped and pined over the grave of her boy, and had scarcely revived to hope when the unexpected addition to the family was in prospect. No wonder the boy came as a herald of joy to them all, and to knit together closer than ever the hearts of his parents. Very sweet was it to see the Squire's playful devotion to his tried wife, and not less touching was her quiet, undemonstrative affection towards him. And so she followed him out of sight with her fond, loving eyes, and then went about her accustomed occupations, with the consciousness that



she had attended him to the last moment, and was therefore at liberty to think of other things for a time.

Presently, while she was busy about her flowers in the conservatory, Julia came seeking her with a note in her hand.

“It is from Diana, mamma,” she said, “about the picnic. It is settled for Wednesday, at four o’clock, in the wood on Apsley Common. How I hope the day will be fine.”

“You can answer the note, my dear,” replied her mother. “Weather permitting, we shall be happy to go. But where are your sisters? They are usually glad enough to avail themselves of their Saturday privileges.”

“Miss Parsons is late with their reading this morning, mamma. She was only beginning just now.”

“But why so? She should not curtail the children’s holiday,” and there was the old touch of sharpness in Mrs. Marsden’s tones.

“Ah, I suspect it will be the same story for many a day,” cried Julia. “She won’t be good for much, mamma, while her mother is ill.”

“Hadn’t she better accounts this morning then?” asked Mrs. Marsden.

“She never heard at all, and is fretting herself to death, by imagining the worst.”

“But that is nonsense,” was the reply. “I must really speak to her,” and Mrs. Marsden hurried away to the schoolroom.

They had just finished the morning Bible reading, which was never omitted, as she came in, and the little girls sprang joyfully to meet their mother, while the young governess stopped in her occupation of putting away the books, to wish Mrs. Marsden good morning. But her voice was weak and trembling, and her eyes red and heavy with weeping, and a deep despairing rather than resigned grief had settled on her countenance; otherwise it was a soft pleasing face, but prematurely harassed and careworn. But it lighted up with a momentary gleam of expectation as Mrs. Marsden bade the children run away. She had come to propose the long-desired holiday, was the first thing that suggested itself to the home-sick aching heart. But she only hoped to be disappointed.

“I am sorry to hear, my dear,” began Mrs. Marsden, kindly, “that you have any especial cause for anxiety about your mother.”

“Yesterday’s accounts were very bad,” she replied, with an effort for composure ; the mention of her mother having re-aroused her anxiety. “There was no letter this morning, and I fear——” Tears emphatically completed the sentence.

“Come, come,” said Mrs. Marsden, soothingly. “It is foolish thus to anticipate evil. Don’t forget the old saying, ‘No news is good news.’ I am sure it will prove so in your case. You know, my dear Miss Parsons, it has turned out so before. Do be a little braver. Your mother is always delicate, and you should not needlessly alarm yourself about these trifling changes. Invalids are always liable to them. Indeed you must not let unreasonable fears interfere with your proper occupations and duties. This giving way is injurious to yourself, and most prejudicial to your pupils. Accustom yourself to look at the bright side of things, my dear, or you can hardly hope for any happiness on earth. I hope the next post

will prove me a true prophet, and that your mother is better; and at any rate I trust you will show yourself a sensible girl, and give up fretting. Your mother is well cared for where she is, and I am sure she is the last person who would wish you to neglect your duties for the sake of indulging morbid affections and feelings."

As Mrs. Marsden spoke the look of expectation faded from the governess's face, leaving the old spiritless expression behind. She forced herself to utter a few words of common place acquiescence and politeness, as Mrs. Marsden left the room. But as the door closed upon her the poor young thing sank down on the floor, and burst into a heart-rending torrent of tears and ejaculations; love for her mother, the longing to see her, the desire to do her duty, and resignation to God's will, all mingling together in wild confusion within her, and bursting involuntarily from her lips between her sobs.

In the midst of this pathetic outpouring, she was startled into a sudden composure by the touch of a light hand on her shoulder, and looking up she beheld Flora Marsden.

“Don’t grieve so, Miss Parsons,” she said, gently. “I came in for a book, and could not help venturing to offer you my sympathy. How you must long to be with her. Wouldn’t Aunt Marsden let you go if you asked her?”

The governess shook her head. “I could not ask Mrs. Marsden,” she replied. “I have not been here a year yet. I have no right to a holiday at present, and could not bear to be refused. I am to have a month at Christmas,” and she tried to speak more cheerfully.

“But that is such a long time,” said Flora. “Surely in a case like this it would make a difference?”

“Perhaps, if things were at the worst it might,” answered Miss Parsons, with a sob; “but I cannot ask. I know Mrs. Marsden has such objections to rules being broken, or every-day arrangements interfered with. The reason is all on her side, the feeling on mine.”

“Ah! I recollect she said the children would run wild,” said Flora, musingly, and then remembering she should not have repeated her aunt’s remarks, she blushed scarlet, and began looking

for the book she wanted. But in truth she was pursuing the train of thought which had originated her inadvertent observation, and presently turning again to the young governess with a beaming smile and outstretched hand, she exclaimed—

“ Well, keep a good heart, Miss Parsons, and if you don't get better accounts to-morrow will you please let me know. I should like to be able to help you if I can, and perhaps may manage it,” and Flora disappeared, her words and kindly action falling like oil on troubled waters. The hearty sympathy and well-wishing of the bright loving girl braced the poor governess's shaken nerves, and everything about her wore a new aspect. Doubtless it would be as she expected. Good news must come to-morrow, and composing herself on the strength of that thought, she began quietly to pursue her ordinary avocations.

Meanwhile Mrs. Marsden returned to the drawing-room, not at all satisfied with her visit to the schoolroom. The young governess's deep submissive grief had touched a tender place in Aunt Jane's heart. She had found a difficulty in saying what she wished to her, for her kindly

nature was urging her to let the poor girl visit her mother without delay, whereas her love of routine and a dislike to break through rules unless very hard pressed, disinclined her to give her the liberty which would throw the charge of the little girls on her own or their sisters' hands. But Julia would be little or no use, being too fond of her own way. And then the thought flashed across her mind that her nieces might make themselves useful in such a case; but the recollection of the scene in the library the preceding evening came to check the supposition. It would be impossible to propose such a thing to Madeline, for in her position and with such over-excited feelings she would surely consider it an insult. And as all these pros and cons alternately prevailed, poor Aunt Jane found herself getting more fretted and irritated and undecided, and finally turned with disgust from the unpleasant subject; secretly hoping that the matter would be settled without her interference by better accounts of Mrs. Parsons in a day or two. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," was certainly the wisest motto in such a difficulty.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

AND what were Madeline's feelings as she left the library the preceding evening. Such an outburst of passion could not but bring a fearful reaction to one, like her, full of rightful aspirations, though betrayed by an unlooked-for temptation into a sudden sin. Madeline fled to her own room frightened by herself, as she stood wilful and defiant before her aunt. She cowered down in her room, in the deepening twilight, and would fain have shut out the recollection of that quarter of an hour from her heart, as she did the sight of external objects about her by hiding her face in her hands.

How had she fallen? Was this to be the end of it all. She had forfeited all claim now to consideration and respect. What would Uncle



Charles think of the would-be nun? or Aunt Jane of all her good intuitions? But it was not her own sin Madeline thought most of. It was more of the opinions of others. The penitence was too much tinctured with pride. Not yet is it the "the godly sorrow that worketh repentance." Alone, battling the demon unassisted, he must prove the conqueror. She had fallen, she had fallen, and he gloated over his prey, and shouted the words remorselessly in her ear, and revelled in her agony as he pictured to her mind how they would triumph over her. And then he shifted his ground skilfully, and suggested angry thoughts against those whose mistimed worldly-wise advice had goaded her into such a display of temper as must have well nigh lost her cause, and which necessitated greater firmness in future on her part, in going her own way. If she humbled herself, and gave in to them now, she might bid farewell to all her exalted ideas, and settle down to be the slave of socialisms and dogmas. Round in a circle thus argued the subtle tempter, skilfully wielding the mighty lever her own indomitable pride, till he

wrought her up to the pitch of self-sufficient defiance, which, in spite of her fall, persuaded her she was more sinned against than sinning, and prepared her to meet them all, as if nothing had happened to lower her in their estimation. Yes, uncle Charles, truly the devil *was* raised in her. Is there no one to compete for the prize with the arch enemy? Is he to have it all his own way without opposition?

Already Madeline's hand was on the door handle, and she herself quite prepared to obey the dictates of her pride, and appear amongst them down stairs with a calm unruffled brow, when some one knocked timidly at the door.

It was Bessy. At a whispered hint from her father she had come in search of her cousin, expecting a very different reception from the easy nonchalance with which Madeline met her, as she opened the door, and smiling, asked what she wanted.

“ I came to see what you were doing, Madeline,” replied Bessy, truthfully, and feeling herself altogether in the wrong box. “ Papa thought you were not very well.”

“Much obliged to him, I’m sure,” she said, haughtily, “for his excessive regard for me. Surely I may come to my own room without asking anyone’s permission.”

Bessy looked up suddenly at her cousin, her face full of sorrowful surprise and reproach. But Madeline heeded it not; and after a momentary hesitation, while she debated in her own mind whether she should continue the subject then, Bessy negatived the suggestion by proposing to go to the drawing-room, where the remainder of the evening was passed in the usual small amusements, from which, of course, Madeline absented herself, with only a little more contempt and hauteur of manner than was common to her on such occasions.

It was not till the next morning that Bessy had any opportunity of communicating to her father the result of her visit to Madeline. But he scarcely needed words to tell him. His niece’s appearance amongst them with that proud imperturbable face was quite enough; and his heart smote him that he had neglected her so long. For by no more lenient term could he think of

his quiet standing aloof, while the tide of time and circumstances rolled over her, moulding the character for which he had made himself responsible to his dead brother. And yet his position had its difficulties. Temporalities and spiritualities were, as usual, opposed to each other. As far as this world was concerned she was Edward's charge; he might only look to the soul, and in Madeline's present mood interference was a service requiring delicacy and caution. If he favoured the young enthusiast's eccentricities, they would be "down on him" at the Hall; and if, on the contrary, he counselled her to more reasonable demonstrations of her views, she turned round and charged him with lukewarmness and worldliness. Truly Uncle Charles was in a great strait.

Neutral ground is generally untenable. It is hard, almost impossible, to please all parties, though the wish to do so is noble and praiseworthy. But it is a brave heart indeed that dares to stand between the opposing hosts, and cry "Peace." The lovers of this sweet world of ours, with its manifold beauties and enjoyments; the stern ascetic sworn to a life of self-affliction; the

man who extracts sweetness from God's good gifts, wherever he meets them; and he who instils bitterness into his holiest joys; those who live only in the present, and have no hope or care beyond it; and those who make earth a stepping-stone to Heaven, and as such, use, but not abuse it; all and each fight for the maintenance of their dogmas and opinions, and see but enemies in those who differ with them. And the would-be peacemaker gets jostled in the crowd, and more abuse than thanks in his efforts at a compromise. And so, downwards from parties to individuals, the go-between finds himself continually nonplussed. His reason and moderation are stigmatised as time-serving cowardice, when he ventures an effort at assimilation, or suggests mutual concessions as the basis of operations. Such hot-headed, one-sided creatures as we all are, ever forgetting the thousand streams that mingle in the sea, which never coalesced before; and more than all, the many members under the one Great Head, differing alike in form, in use, and power. Why cannot we be satisfied to differ; and bridge over the intervals between us with

forbearing consideration, and thus linked together, float quietly and calmly to the ocean of eternity; there to lose all our earthly individual party spirit, and be united for ever in an everlasting love.

But we have wandered a long way from the rector and his troublesome niece, between whom and his brother he felt himself awkwardly placed. A great many thoughts were given to them both that Saturday morning, as he paced up and down a shrubbery walk, with his head bent down and hands clasped behind him.

At last he seemed to come to some sudden conclusion, and turning his steps towards the house met Bessy and her mother coming in search of him.

“Ah,” he said, “I was seeking you, did you want me?”

“I wanted to tell you about Madeline, papa,” answered Bessy. “What made her so strange last night?”

“The Devil, my dear,” was the quick reply. “He got the upper hand then; we must try and not let him keep it.”

“What do you mean, papa?” asked Bessy, in consternation.

“Just what I say, Bessy,” he answered. “All your cousin’s good inclinations flew to the winds last night. Your Aunt pulled her up a little too short, and she resisted, broke away, and went to the devil her own way.”

“Oh, papa, are you not too severe,” said Bessy, appealingly, her practical moderation taking alarm at this strong language. “We all have our faults. Madeline is sorry by this time.”

“Was she sorry last night, when you went to her, Bessy?” he said. “Pride was written on every feature of her face, and swelled out in every movement of her figure, when she came down with you. The enemy has her in his toils, through the agency of her own failing. It may be in our power to save her, if we go the right way to work.”

“And that way?” asked Mrs. Marsden.

“To ask her to come to us,” was the answer, “and when with us, to leave her at perfect liberty, avoid all discussions, and hope and pray the best for her, from the influence of sensible examples.”

“But what would they say at the Hall?” remarked Mrs. Marsden, meditatively.

“Be glad enough to consent, I’m sure,” he continued. “I think they’re all just about tired of her, and won’t be sorry to be rid of her for a time.”

“And what will she say herself, papa?” asked Bessy, anxiously.

“Ah! that’s another question,” said her father. “If she had been asked this time yesterday, ten chances to one she would have gladly come; but after last night the case is altered. She will imagine we are plotting against her, and I fear much will refuse.”

“We ought to have thought of it sooner, Charles,” said his wife.

“Yes, that’s just where we have failed. But we must try the experiment now, and hope we may be allowed to redeem the past.”

“And how are we to manage it?” she asked.

“That I shall leave to you, Mabel, the invitation must come from you, and you will speak to Jane



first. But take my advice thus far, let whatever you do, be straightforward and above-board. We have a subtle enemy to deal with, and must meet him face to face."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE day for Diana's picnic arrived at last, and the most captious could not find a fault in any of its details ; weather, company, and arrangements were as perfect as is compatible with the mediocre conditions of this imperfect world of ours.

And the moral atmosphere was nearly as cloudless as the aërial one. Miss Parsons had better accounts of her mother, and so Aunt Jane was relieved for the present from the uncomfortable necessity of doing violence to her tenderness or her methodicality ; the Squire was rejoicing in the splendid prospects for the forthcoming harvest, and the unusual glories of the gathered-in hay crop ; and the young people generally responded heartily to the glad voices of nature, and were overflowing with good temper and hilarity.

Bessy and her mother had laid their heads together about the invitation to Madeline, after Mr. Marsden had decided on it, and they had come to the judicious conclusion that if they wished for her consent, they must wait a few days before making the proposal. If she connected it with the library scene, her pride would take alarm and she would refuse. So these wise ladies determined they would make the thing come up naturally, and without giving her a chance to take offence; and with such dire intent and purpose they calmly laid and arranged the necessary trains, which were to be fired in the most accidental manner by either one or the other of them, at Diana Weston's picnic.

And the shadow of this little mystery was about the only detraction from the universal gaiety, when all met, according to appointment, at four o'clock in the wood on Apsley common.

And in all the country round a more charming spot could hardly have been selected. The common was a large tract of unenclosed ground, some miles in extent, and broken into every variety of scenery compatible with its existence in our highly

cultivated and un-mountainous country. There were deep gorse-clad gorges, topped by noble oaks and elms, and with murmuring streamlets rippling in their bottoms; there were broad smooth acres of turf irresistible to the horseman, with just enough irregularity about them to make a gallop something more than mere cutting through the air at a ten miles an hour speed; and on its southern side the common merged into a really genuine bit of forest, with its noble trees and occasional thick underwood, and hills and valleys, rocks and streams; in fact a place in which one might actually lose one's way, and find oneself walking helplessly in the legitimate circle, that is if one was very stupid, and didn't make a proper use of one's senses, or was concentrating one's energies on some other *mal à propos* subject.

It was on the borders of this wood, just where its avant-guard of giant oaks overshadowed the common turf, unencumbered by the motley crowd of saplings that filled up the ranks behind, that Diana Weston had pitched her tent and, to make the resemblance to a gipsy encampment more per-

fect, she had set up the orthodox trio of poles, with a huge black cauldron, suspended from their apex, and a lively fire burning beneath it. And she herself, in straw hat, and tucked up gown, stood stirring the witch-like cauldron with a tremendous spoon, when the first of her guests arrived. And this was none other than that fair haired, dark eyed youth, Douglas Cameron.

And certainly the cauldron, the spoon, and the bewitching concocter of its contents, wrought a potent spell between them for the capture of the young man's heart. Never before had those dark eyes looked down on womankind as they did on her, as she gracefully advanced to welcome her guest, and then hastened to present him to her mother, who lounged languidly in the tent. Mrs. Weston was one of those women of selfishness and affectation, with scores of imaginary ailments and misfortunes, who only think of themselves ever and always. No one could exchange six words with her without stumbling against some of these peculiarities, and the superficial observer was likely to confound the fictitious with the real, and come away with the impression Mrs. Weston

was a monument of patient endurance, and a victim to everyone, from her daughter down to the very person she was addressing. No wonder Diana had little in common with a mother. She treated her with the kind of good humoured patience and pity we extend to the rationally irresponsible. She humoured her whims and caprices if they were within reasonable bounds, but quietly over-ruled them when too extravagant. Diana was too much behind the scenes to be deceived now, she was sensible of her mother's failings, and while screening her as much as possible in public, could hardly respect her in private. As a matter of form, Diana had requested her mother to countenance the picnic, and at first she declined. But in the end she surprised them by making one of the party, though full of garrulous complaints as to the heat or the cold, or some draught, or the damp, or some such frivolous and imaginary ill.

But to her son George, sterling honest youth, though perhaps not gifted with very quick perception, Mrs. Weston was still the delicate loving mother, who had doted on him in childhood, and proudly looked up to him now, in the flush of his

young manhood. He saw less of the real and therefore sympathised more with the fictitious life, and naturally took the one for the other, and wondered at his sister's indifference when her mother dilated on her many aches and ills. And more than ever since his father's death, did the young man make allowance for his mother. She looked to him now; and he must realise her expectations, and prove himself the worthy son of the worthy parent whose loss he fully believed had reduced his mother to the "shattered wreck" she loved to call herself.

And George was with his mother in the tent, making every arrangement for her comfort and convenience. No Eastern princess could have been more luxuriously accommodated with shawls and cushions; but for all that she was dissatisfied.

"So you are an admirer of discomfort in the disguise of pleasure, Mr. Cameron," she said, languidly, after the first introduction. "I suppose we must make allowance for you young people, who have health and spirits to carry you through anything."

“Such a day and scene must put life and liveliness into anyone,” replied the young man, with a smile. “Surely there is nothing wanted to complete our happiness, Mrs. Weston,” and he looked covertly at Diana.

“Ah,” said the elder lady, languishingly. “Bright skies and sunshine are enough for you now. You have not yet known so many wintry blasts, as to feel their chilling influences permeant even now,” and Mrs. Weston shivered, while George obsequiously threw another shawl across her shoulders.

“I am afraid I did wrong to come,” she said to her son, confidingly, as he leaned over to adjust it comfortably. “I shall spoil your pleasure and my own too. I cannot divest myself of the idea that we are surrounded by damp and draught.”

“I am sure you are well protected from both at any rate, mother,” he said good humouredly, while Cameron innocently remarked that it could scarcely be damp, as it had not rained for a fortnight, and that there wasn't a breath of air to make a draught.

Mrs. Weston looked at him superciliously. It



was an unpardonable offence in her eyes to bring facts to controvert her fallacies, and the young man's cheek flushed as her expression and Diana's sudden changing of the conversation made him sensible of his *faux pas*; and very grateful was he for the diversion made by the arrival of the Marsdens a few moments afterwards.

It was a very exclusive party. Diana considered the familiarity accompanying these alfresco entertainments, as only agreeable when participated in amongst intimates. And no doubt she was right. At any rate there were no prying eyes of so-called friends to watch and good-naturedly comment on the trite sayings, and doings of the favoured clique of which they would fain have been members, and no innocently malicious tongues to babble afterwards of "Miss Weston's new beau," or "Miss Madeline's eccentricities!"

And so it came to pass that the second time Douglas Cameron found himself in Diana's society it was with all the unceremoniousness and easy freedom which distinguish a well-bred family party. For his part he was ready enough to take

his place amongst them, and his spirits rose to the highest pitch, and he laughed and chatted with all these young people, as he had never done in his life before. But she who had first opened out this new page to him was still the one oftenest sought out by those wonderful eyes of his ; and by the hundred and one manœuvres which comeso naturally to young lovers, Douglas and Diana found themselves continually in a thrilling, intoxicating proximity. The wood was a delightful place to wander in that calm summer afternoon, and many a flower and fern were ferreted out by the adventurous young people, which would have lived out their summer lifetime unmolested, except for the chance of Di's picnic bringing so many bright eyes and fair fingers to despoil the woods of their treasures.

But even under the most favourable circumstances, we can't live on air, however sweet and delicious it may be ; so by-and-bye Diana said it was time for her to look after the contents of the formidable cauldron, which was found on inspection to contain nothing less potent than boiling hot water, and, as if by magic, a sumptuous feast

was found laid out in true sylvan fashion, beneath a spreading oak tree. Diana expressed her regret to the elders of the party, that she was unfortunately obliged to come down to the sublunary beverages of hot tea and coffee, seeing that the recipe for the more ambrosial and appropriate nectar was not forthcoming; and forthwith she proceeded in an artistic manner to concoct the said beverages, laughingly assisted by Douglas Cameron and other friends.

She was intently watching over the fate of an enormous automaton coffee pot, which—like all its name sakes from time immemorial—while so watched, obstinately refused to boil. At last she stooped to give the fire a vicious little poke, by way of reminder as to its duties, to which it indignantly responded by bursting into an unexpected tongue of flame, which a passing wind in alliance with the fire drove straight against Diana. She was on her knees, and could not elude her enemy with sufficient agility. It caught the loose sleeve of her muslin dress, which was blazing in a moment. But quick as lightning her arm was grasped by two strong hands, and the fire crushed out

ere it had time to do more than slightly scorch her.

Diana looked up quickly to see to whom she owed this unlooked-for service, and a few light words of playful thankfulness were on her lips. But she met the deep earnest gaze of Cameron's dark eyes, full of a light and fire, which had never met hers before. The words died on her lips, a smile and blush, far more precious and expressive to the young man took their place, with one low whispered "thank you," which spoke volumes to him. Little recked he it was others that asked him if he was hurt, but he pooh-poohed the idea, for the pleasure of serving her had quite overbalanced the pain in his blistered hands, and it was not till some minutes afterwards that he discovered that such was their condition. Of course he bore it like a man—or rather I should say like a woman—with exemplary reticent patience; and it was left to Diana to find it out, on observing the flushing of his cheek and involuntary drawing back as he handed her the coffee-pot she had asked for. And of course it was very sweet then, to allow her to attend to

them, as efficiently as circumstances permitted; nor was Diana herself sorry to have such a plausible excuse for making much of him. Altogether they were both as foolishly happy as two young people could be in the first unconscious throes of a life-long love.

But, according to tradition, the course of true love never does run smooth, and in this instance, and even at this early stage, an incipient disturber of their peace lurked in the depths of two light blue eyes, which watched the lovers from under the shadow of the tent. Mrs. Weston saw and marked all that passed, while she talked languidly with her friends, the two Mrs. Marsdens, and detailed with painful particularity the symptoms and consequences of some one or other of her manifold ailments. Their patience, however, was at last exhausted, and when the conclusion of the meal gave them an opportunity, Aunts Jane and Mabel were glad to be excused doing the agreeable any longer, and walked away for a quiet chat by themselves. And then the opportunity was made and improved upon by Mrs. Charles, and Madeline's visit to the rectory suggested.

Aunt Jane caught at it eagerly, and only hoped the young lady herself would make no objections. For her part she would be glad if anything could be done to make her happier and more agreeable. Madeline had always been so fond of Bessy, that continual association with her for a time might be beneficial.

So presently Mrs. Marsden gave Bessy the preconcerted signal that she was at liberty to fire off her train as soon as she liked; for the mother and daughter had come to the conclusion, that Bessy could perhaps manage the business of the invitation better than anyone else, so it was to be left in her hands.

And Bessy was equal to the occasion. She had taken her cousin's defection so much to heart, that she had consented to all this innocent manœuvering in hopes of eventually being of use to her. She knew Madeline's weak point was learning, and was to make her approaches skilfully on that side. An unexpected turn in the young people's conversation, as they all lounged together under the trees, gave her the wished-for opening.

They were speaking of the light literature of the day, when Douglas began expatiating upon the beauties of some German work he was reading, and recommending it to them.

“But translations are always so poor,” said Diana, “compared to the originals. Ten chances to one we should all be disappointed with it in English, and I don’t know German enough to read it with pleasure.”

“You could soon master enough for that,” said Madeline. “German is my favourite study, cousin Douglas, so will you give me the name of your book?”

She wrote in her pocket book as he dictated, and Henry Howard made some remark about the power and comprehensibility of the language.

“So you know it, too, do you, Uncle Henry,” said Bessy, seizing her opportunity. “I wish you would spend some of your holiday time in teaching it to me.”

“Not if I know it, young lady,” he answered, languidly, and leaning back against the stem of the tree behind him with an assumption of cool indifference. “This sweet summer time

wasn't meant for teaching in. Prithee excuse me."

"I should have put my veto on it, in any case," said his sister, who was within ear-shot. "I have no idea of letting you lose your holiday time driving German into your niece's matter-of-fact crown. No, no; if you want to learn German, you must find someone else to teach you, Miss Bessy."

"Will you, Madeline?" cried Bessy, turning suddenly on her cousin. "I have set my heart on reading Mr. Cameron's book in the original."

"I don't know what to say to it," replied Madeline with hesitation. "Do you know nothing about it?"

"Not a letter," she said, laughing; "but you will teach me won't you, Made?"

"I can be a party to no half measures," said her mother. "You know, Bessy, what you begin must be persevered in."

"And so it shall be as far as I am concerned," she replied; "but Madeline has not spoken yet."

"If you really want to learn, Bessy," she said, "I have no objection to help you; but when will



you find time for it, with your many engagements," and there was a touch of bitterness in her tone.

"Oh! I'll find time for it, Madeline," she answered; "but it would greatly facilitate matters if you'd come and stay with us, then we could take advantage of every spare moment."

"Yes, do," put in Henry Howard, eagerly. "We shall be mutually able to aid and assist each other, in imparting our knowledge of the noble language to Miss Bessy."

"I thought you declined to teach just now, Henry," said Julia, quickly, and looking very knowing.

"Invalids are entitled to privileges, Julia," he said nonchalantly, though a slight shade of embarrassment reddened his cheek. "Division of labour lightens difficulties. What might be hard work for one, will be but play to two."

"Pleasant enough play, I dare say, to you," thought Julia, but she did not say it, only remarking that of course Madeline could not resist such a pressing invitation so ably seconded.

"Don't settle it now, Madeline," said Bessy,

eagerly, and fearing her plan would be subverted by this untoward remark. "We'll talk it all over to-morrow and make our arrangements," and the matter dropped for that time. But Julia's words had pointed Henry's remark about the German lessons, and put Madeline altogether on a new scent. It was time for her to sift and thoroughly analyse her feelings, and know why his least word was so precious to her, and the expression of his wishes equivalent to commands. She had foresworn all earthly love; she must take care lest it came suddenly upon her in the guise of friendship. Of herself she might feel sure, for of course if she had suffered any tender feelings to connect themselves with Henry in her mind, the task was easy enough to destroy them. But she must take care *he* was not encouraged in false hopes. It must be made plain to him by some means, that she had dedicated herself to a single life. She never could consent to entail upon herself all the domestic, and perhaps maternal, cares of matrimony. Henry Howard must at least be convinced of this before she could go to the Rectory.

## CHAPTER XXV.

BUT while Madeline meditated on this momentous question, as she sat apart from the others, they rattled on together, about a hundred different subjects.

“Are you fond of riding, Mr. Cameron,” said Diana, “because if you are, I’m sure this won’t be your last visit to Apsley Common. There is such splendid galloping ground out there,” and she pointed to a lower level of the common, where there was a long stretch of green turf to be seen.

“It is a great matter having such a place to ride in,” he answered. “I do like riding, Miss Weston, that is, amongst green trees and fields and with a soft turf under my horse’s feet. But I cannot appreciate galloping along the hard

dusty road, where the rattle of horse's hoofs is continually dinning into one's ears the fact of one's cruelty, in so abusing the poor beasts."

"Ah, you are a real horseman, I see," cried Julia, enthusiastically. "Papa has always told us our first consideration should be for our horses' legs. My heart always smites me if I have to put my chestnut out of a walk along the roads."

"Then I suppose, you often come here, Miss Marsden?" he remarked.

"Whenever I can. It is just a convenient distance from the Hall, and from Thornton. Diana often meets us here, and we ride together."

"Capital place for them, isn't it, Mr. Cameron?" said the Squire, coming up that moment with his brother. "They can't well hurt themselves, or their horses."

"I don't know about that, Uncle Edward," remarked Flora. "I know Julia often tries my nerves with her jumps, and sometimes I have to follow her in spite of myself, because Brown Bess won't be kept back."

The Squire laughed at the idea of poor Flora

being at the mercy of Brown Bess, and comforted her with the assurance that she was the safest horse in the country, only she must give her her head.

“Just what she doesn’t do, papa,” said Julia. “I’m afraid Flora is a great coward on horseback.”

“She has not had your advantages, my dear,” he answered. “She’ll soon get more nerve, and master Brown Bess. But seriously, Julia, you must be careful, and not get your cousin into mischief.”

“No fear of that, papa,” she said, laughing. “I know as well as anyone what the horse can do. She’s only to hold on, and let her go.”

“Flora rides well, papa Marsden,” interposed Diana. “There is nothing to be afraid of about her. Whatever she may say to the contrary, she likes a few jumps as well as I do. I won’t be surprised if she takes to hunting next season.”

“Do you hunt, Miss Weston?” asked Douglas, in surprise.

“Ay! surely, that she does,” said the Squire, answering for her. “There’s not a better head

or hand in the country round, Cameron. I can assure you it will require good riding to keep up with her."

"She always leaves poor me far behind," said Julia disconsolately. "I must have a better horse this season, papa. Jacob is not fast enough."

"But you would not part with him, surely," said Flora. "Why, Julia, you are always trumpeting his good qualities."

"Not more than he deserves," replied her uncle. "I suppose you are a good judge of horseflesh, Cameron; I think you will pronounce him the very pattern of a lady's horse. And he's a tried, trusty animal. I daren't put that mad-cap on anything else. You mustn't follow her lead unless you are sure of your horse and yourself."

"I only hope I may have the chance, Mr. Marsden," he answered, politely. "May I have the privilege of riding here sometimes, or is it private ground?"

"The road is public through it," was the reply, "though the gates are the owner's. I never

heard yet of anyone being refused admission. You will be glad enough to get a gallop here sometimes, living in that hot Walford."

"I'm afraid it is time to be going back to it now, though," he said, regretfully, and rising at the same moment. "The moon is up, it must be quite late."

"So it is indeed," cried the Squire, consulting his watch, and half-an-hour afterwards the common was deserted.

"Who is that young Cameron, George?" asked Mrs. Weston, as she was resting in the drawing-room after her return home, and refreshing her 'shattered' frame, with a comfortable little supper after the long fatiguing evening. George was assisting both her and himself; but Diana preferred a solitary feast of moonlight in the garden, where she had her own private meditations on the person they were discussing in-doors.

"Who is the young man?" then asked Mrs. Weston, as she paused over her devilled chicken.

"Some cousin of the new Marsdens, mother," he answered, "He seems a nice young fellow."

"Well, I don't quite know about that, George,

but you have only half answered my question. I knew he was their cousin, but how?"

"Their great uncle's son, I believe," was the careless reply.

"That can't be, George, Sir Norman is a bachelor."

"I remember, now, it was adopted son Mr. Marsden said," and George continued his supper. It mattered little or nothing to him which way it was. Cameron was a nice fellow, and he liked him.

But not so his mother. "Adopted," she exclaimed, "otherwise illegitimate; I thought so, just what I should have expected of such a forward young puppy."

"Who's in disgrace now, mamma," asked Diana, coming in at the window. (The moonlight was not very satisfying, and she thought better of the supper).

"That young Cameron, my dear," she said. "He is his father's adopted son, Diana; you must not forget that."

"And what has that to do with it, mamma," she answered, abruptly. "He is a gentleman, and a very agreeable one."



“You don’t understand, I daresay, my dear,” continued her mother, mysteriously. “But I do not consider it right to be intimate with him, and shall expect you to abide by my decision.”

“So the sins of the father’s are to be visited on the innocent children, mother,” said Diana, indignantly. “I understand what you insinuate, but if papa Marsden thinks him a proper person to introduce to us, I’m sure you might be satisfied.”

“However you may choose to be guided by Mr. Marsden’s opinions, Diana,” said Mrs. Weston, with unusual energy. “I shall not submit my own judgment to his. It is hard enough to see him occupying the place in my children’s affections which once belonged to another,” and she pushed away her plate, and took up her vinaigrette.

“Of course he does stand second to dear papa in our affections,” said Diana, warmly; “he gave him control over us, and I shall not throw a slur on his judgment in making Mr. Marsden our guardian by refusing to be guided by him.”

“I am sure Mr. Marsden would be the last

person to encourage you in disrespect to our mother, Diana," said her brother, decidedly, Mrs. Weston's silent appeal to the vinaigrette being a conclusive argument in his eyes. "It is not worth while to quarrel about young Cameron; he is no cousin of ours. We can be civil when we meet, but need not go further."

"You can do as you like, George," said Diana, coldly; "but I shall not give him the cold shoulder. You seem to forget he saved me from burning this afternoon."

"He'd have done as much for anyone else, Di," was the curt reply.

"So he might; but that doesn't release one from the obligations of gratitude. I am grateful, and shall take care to show it," and Diana swept from the room, leaving her mother in a state of hysterical nervousness which excited George's compassion, together with indignation against his cold hearted sister, for running counter to her wishes so cruelly, and leaving him the task of soothing and comforting her.

But this was all Mrs. Weston wanted, and she soon recovered her composure, bestowing many

endearing epithets on her attentive son, which he received with half smiles of satisfaction and little disapproving grunts. At last, in self defence, he persuaded her to try a second edition of the chicken, and thus diverted her thoughts from himself.

But Mrs. Weston had not yet had her say about young Cameron, and soon reverted back to the subject.

“I saw and observed all that passed this evening, George,” she said. “It was a most unfortunate thing his burning his hands for Diana. My wretched health will prevent me keeping due watch and ward over your sister, George, so I must leave it to you to check this intimacy. Your guardian can hardly refuse him hospitality, but there is no reason why we should give him an entrée here. I am sorry I allowed him to be asked to the picnic. He has not prepossessed me favourably. His position and prospects do not warrant me in encouraging his attentions.”

“He holds the position of Sir Norman’s son, mother,” said George, apologetically, “and I believe stands well with his regiment. A man

can't live in the cavalry on nothing, and he seems unusually well off."

"To be left penniless when Sir Norman dies," said Mrs. Weston. "How obtuse you men are, to be sure. I would not give a halfpenny for his present prospects unless I saw it all in black and white. Some heir-at-law may come in, and carry it all off under his nose at the last. No, George, no; Mr. Cameron must keep his distance, and I make you responsible for your sister. There are plenty of far better matches to be had for her, and I won't have this young stranger interfering."

There was a want of delicacy about this speech which jarred painfully on George's feelings. He did not care to be made a party to his mother's worldly, calculating views with reference to his sister. But, poor thing, she had no one else to talk to, now his father was gone. She naturally wished Diana to marry well. It was a small matter to oblige her in, and of course his sister had no real interest in young Cameron. So George sent his mother to bed

with a lightened heart by promising to discountenance any intimacy with him, and hoped it was the last he would hear of a distasteful and awkward subject.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

It was at breakfast the next morning that Madeline's visit to the Rectory was again mooted. Aunt Jane had wit enough to perceive that the German lessons were a mere blind, to divert her niece's attention from their real object, and, of course, kept the secret. But others were not so judicious. Mr. Marsden expressed his surprise at Bessy's sudden inclination to learn, when Julia exclaimed at his dulness in not perceiving it was only a good natured excuse on her part, to give Madeline something to do. "If you won't ride, or play, or amuse yourself, Madeline, like other people," she concluded, turning to her, "of course you had better try teaching. It is just like Bessy, to sacrifice herself for the good of others. It would be a long time before I consented to learn German or

anything else, for the sake of diverting a morbid, unsociable cousin."

Mrs. Marsden looked reproachfully at her daughter during this speech. She was seriously annoyed by Julia's candour, and fearful how it might influence Madeline; and her husband made matters worse by his hearty approval of Bessy's plan. "Healthy mental occupation being second only to plenty of physical exercise, it was very kind of his niece to assist Madeline to some such beneficial occupation."

But this was just putting the case the wrong way. Madeline should have been allowed to consider herself the obliging party, and not the obliged; so Aunt Jane was quite prepared for her remark that nothing was yet settled, she had by no means made up her mind either to the teaching or the visit.

"I know who to get to persuade you to it," said Julia, shrewdly. "It is pleasant being asked, isn't it, Madeline? I must give Bessy a hint as to whose influence will be most effectual in inducing you to allow yourself to be made a sensible member of society."

“Do stop this nonsense, Julia,” said her mother impatiently. “Why speak in riddles that no one cares to understand.”

“Someone does, mamma,” answered Julia, with a saucy laugh. “Only just look at Madeline’s cheeks. But it really is a shame to laugh at her. Why shouldn’t she go and try life in a country parsonage, before committing herself. It is only natural she should wish for a few lessons in the necessary qualifications, and she couldn’t have a better instructress than Bessy.”

Madeline’s cheeks were indeed flaming, and her voice quivered with suppressed anger, as she replied that “if such motives were to be imputed to her she had better give up the visit.”

“You won’t be so foolish, I hope,” said her uncle. “Why throw away a chance of improving yourself, and perhaps establishing your happiness for life, in a moment of pique. You are so determinately setting yourself against all our efforts to please you, Madeline, that I shall not be sorry when you change your course of life; and I think this visit to the Rectory an opportunity that must not be thrown away. It won’t do for



you to scatter your future prospects to the winds like the torn fragments of £10 notes, my dear. A time may come when you will be glad enough to pick up the pieces. It is our business to see you don't irrecoverably make away with them ; so far as our opinion goes, we advise the visit."

"Madeline can do just as she likes in the matter, Edward," said his wife, trying to make the best of it ; but already resigning herself to what she thought was inevitable. "If she really wishes to undertake the German lessons with Bessy, we shall be happy to spare her for a few weeks."

But Aunt Jane's endeavour to put things on their old footing was a dead failure. When Bessy and her mother so nicely arranged their plans, they forgot to take into consideration Julia's shrewdness, or the Squire's plain speaking. They had failed in the straightforwardness Mr. Marsden had recommended, and the pride they had been warned against was up in arms.

Madeline paused a moment to collect herself before she spoke. "Thank you, Aunt Jane," she said, at last, "for your permission to please my-

self. You will not be surprised at my decision : after what has passed, I have no alternative but to decline the invitation ; it is the only way I can falsify the unkind insinuations of my uncle and his daughter," and, swelling with pride and indignation, she quitted the room, shortly followed by the other young people.

"Have I put my foot in it again, Jane?" said the Squire, looking at his wife, in dismay, as soon as they were alone. "What on earth has the girl taken offence at now?"

"I am afraid she misinterpreted your remarks, my dear," she replied, with a smile at her good husband's bewilderment. "She coupled your words with Julia's, and thus understanding them, was naturally annoyed. It is very unfortunate. Julia really must learn to be more cautious. I have a great dislike to that foolish 'chaffing' about lovers and attentions to which she only seems too much inclined."

"Whew!" cried the Squire, a look of amused intelligence lighting up his face. "So there's a Petruchio in the wind after all, Jane. Depend upon it, then, it will all come right in the end.

I'm sorry I've spoilt their little game ; but, never fear, something else will turn up by-and-bye."

"And meanwhile, Madeline will make herself or someone else ill with her follies," said Aunt Jane, irritably. "However, I shall turn over a new leaf with her, and as she won't go to the rectory, I shall insist upon her accommodating herself to the customs of the house. We shall have all the world down on us soon, for neglecting our nieces, and not bringing them properly forward. Madeline is the oldest of the party, and shall be no longer permitted to keep in the back ground."

"But I thought you intended to let her alone, Jane," he remarked, good humouredly. "At least you said so the other day."

"Well, I don't know what to do with her either way, Edward," replied the poor little woman. "I must say, I begin to wish she had never come to bring trouble and dissention amongst us with her vagaries. I never had much sympathy with ultra-religionists. If none of them can apply their principles more practically

than Madeline, it's no wonder they are in such universal disrepute."

But a knock at the door interrupted her, and the rector came in. They were early birds at the rectory, and, being anxious to know if Madeline was coming to them, he was glad of some trifling business with his brother, as an excuse for an early visit.

"What does Madeline say to our plan?" he asked, at the first opportunity. "We are all so anxious for her consent."

"You won't get it, then, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Marsden. "She has taken offence at some casual remarks, and makes a point of refusing, to revenge herself on us all."

"She's a strange girl, Charles," added the Squire. "I wish you had taken her in charge from the first. She only seems fit for a nun, or some such extravagance, with her sensibilities and peculiarities."

"She is only what any girl of her disposition would and must be, when roused by great grief to her first perceptions of spiritual things," said the rector, warmly. "Of course, there are but few,

comparatively speaking, who would feel as intensely as she does on the subject. But it is just this susceptibility that should make us tender in dealing with her. Still, there is no reason why she should not settle down some day to be a useful member of society."

"A good wife and mother, Charles," said the Squire, slyly, with a glance at his wife.

"I hope so," he answered; "but she is not fit for it yet. There is such a thing in religion, Edward, as an unhealthy rapid growth, developed like that in plants by the unnatural heat of the forcing frame. Exposed suddenly to the continual variations of the external world, such young plants are prematurely blighted. We must harden them gradually, and accustom them to the rude shocks they must encounter. Then they can accommodate themselves to the change, and bloom in beauty and vigour; but owing much of their richness and perfection to the first forcing process, which can only be fatal to them when badly managed."

"I see," said the Squire, running his fingers through his hair, meditatively. "So some one is

still in the forcing frame, and we want to take her out too soon. But, Charles, must everyone go through this unnatural process. I confess it would make me think twice before becoming religious."

"There are plenty of pleasant plants and flowers that need no hotbed, as Jane can very well tell you," replied the rector. "They thrive from the very first in the healthy out-of-door atmosphere, and cold, rain, and sunshine seem alike beneficial in promoting their growth. Thank God, it is not necessary for everyone to be forced suddenly into a new phase of life. Thousands live from the cradle to the grave, and never know the pangs of an uprooting from the old life, and the difficulties of conforming themselves to the new. They may lose some joys, but they are spared much anguish, and are undoubtedly the happiest."

"But to whom do you refer, Charles?" asked Mrs. Marsden, in surprise. "Not to the so-called irreligious, surely?"

"God forbid, Jane; I allude to people who from infancy are under the influence of religion,

who cannot recollect a time when God was forgotten, or some kind of desire to please Him did not actuate them. Their feelings develop and strengthen with their age, and are subject to many vicissitudes ; but they have always existed, and are so indubitably woven into their every day life, that they could not disconnect them if they would. It is very different when some crisis comes in a lifetime, and gives new aims and desires for the future, which seem irreconcilable with the old life. It is no wonder such struggles sent scores of men and women to the monasteries and nunneries of the middle ages, where seemed the panacea they needed ; and we must be charitable to the sufferers in our own day, who, having no such option given them, try to lay down certain rules and regulations for themselves, often to the subversion of the comfort and harmony of their neighbours."

"And can none be assimilated gradually to the right standard, Charles?" asked Aunt Jane, thoughtfully. "If they have not always been religious, is the fiery trial indispensable?"

"I think not," he said quietly. "They are

the exceptions, I believe, or but few of us could hope.”

“Well, that is consolatory,” observed the Squire. “It is some satisfaction to find you take things so reasonably, Charles; and do not expect us all to follow in Miss Madeline’s train. I wish, though, she had been satisfied with the development hypothesis.”

“It is not her own doing, remember, Edward,” said the rector, gravely. “We are all in God’s hands, and must be satisfied with what He does for us. It is not in our power to choose the time or manner of His visitation; we can only be thankful if He visits us at all.”

“I hope He won’t visit any more of us in this way then,” replied the Squire, jocosely, his humour betraying him into irreverence, in spite of his brother’s presence. “I don’t at all wish my house to be turned into a hot-bed for religionists. Their management requires far more skill and attention than I am inclined to give. I can’t understand why people aren’t content to serve God like their neighbours. Vanity and selfishness are at the bottom of it all; I wash my hands



of the forcing process, Charles. When you can transplant our niece into the ordinary business of life, and present her to me as a sensible woman or still better, a wife, I shall acknowledge you have judged her rightly; so good morning to you," and, laughing at his own wit, the jolly Squire went about his business.

"Who put him on that scent, Jane," said Mr. Marsden, turning to his sister-in-law. "Edward is not generally quick to perceive incipient flirtations."

"But Julia is," she answered. "I don't know what foundation she has to go on; but she is always chaffing Madeline about Henry."

The rector looked amused.

"Stranger things have happened," he said, dryly; "at any rate they won't have the opposition of relatives to contend against. But our plant won't bear the change just yet, Jane. I suppose it was some insinuations on this score that have set her on her high horse again. I am sorry she won't come. Even the German lessons would have done us good service, and helped to bring her out of herself."

“We can’t attempt coercion in this case, Charles,” said his sister, with a smile. “I felt too uncomfortable when she tore the note to wish to see her performing again. We must just leave her to time and circumstance.”

“And to God,” he added, earnestly, as he took his departure, with a heavy heart for the failure of his scheme, and a fervent appeal to Him whose power only could effect the change so necessary and desirable in his unhappy niece.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

It is necessary for us again to intrude on the privacy of Madeline's thoughts, as, after writing a short decided refusal to Aunt Mabel's invitation to stay with them, and declining to undertake the German lessons, except at the Hall, she took up a book, and wandered into the shadiest and most secluded part of the glen, with the praiseworthy determination of coming to some understanding with her own heart as to its interest in Henry Howard.

It is not often that young ladies sit down to analyse their feelings with such strong-minded, and, had they been reasonable, such sensible intentions as influenced Madeline in her search after the truth. There was no ostensible reason why Henry Howard should not woo her for his

wife. His means, though modest, were ample; he stood well in his profession, and was likely to be a prosperous man so far; his health was certainly a little delicate, but he was daily improving, and there was nothing to prevent him taking to himself the wife of his choice whenever it suited his convenience. All this Madeline knew and understood, and calmly turned over in her own mind as she sat by the brook side, in the pleasant shade, with her chin resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed dreamingly on the rippling water at her feet. Their acquaintance was certainly of no long standing, but we all know that sometimes a day or week counts for years in these cases. They had unusual time and opportunities for love making which are not generally enjoyed; and though we have not taken the trouble to follow them through its various phases, they had arrived at that stage in its development when each was conscious of the other's interest, and when a chance word might at any moment betray the true state state of their feelings.

As is right and proper in such situations, it was only the gentleman's feeling that had, as yet,

deepened into what is called love, and Madeline did not pretend to ignore the fact that Henry loved her. She accepted this as the premises of her self-analyzation, whether from pride or a kind of straightforward unaffectedness, we shall not stop to inquire. The question to be debated was just this, ought she to allow him an opportunity of declaring himself, when she had decided on giving him a positive refusal? Many girls would not have been so considerate in their conduct, but would have made an affected ignorance of their lover's feelings an excuse for drawing out an expression of them, to be either laughed at or pooh-poohed, as the case might be. But Madeline did not desire to see him sighing at her feet, her feelings were just sufficiently implicated to make her fear to be exposed to such a trial, or, as she termed it, temptation. With her present views of life, and its duties and responsibilities, marriage, with its duties and responsibilities, and after consequences, which no false delicacy had prevented her from considering, seemed utterly incompatible. Was she, then, to allow feeling the chance of over-ruling principle?

Certainly not. She must keep out of the way of temptation, and in some indirect manner notify to Henry her determination in favour of a life of celibacy.

Of course the visit to the Rectory was out of the question, particularly after all her uncle's cruel insinuations. Madeline had, as Aunt Jane surmised, taken his remarks in the same sense as Julia's badinage. It really was too bad to be told that the sooner she married the better, that such an opportunity must not be thrown away, and that lovers were not to be found as easily as bank notes, and that these said bank notes would not always be as plentiful as they were now. Such observations were enough to fire anyone's pride, so it was no wonder Madeline was full of indignation, when, after having dismissed Henry Howard from her mind, her thoughts reverted back to her present life. If she had only some one to consult with and advise her as to her proper course. How was it they were one and all so cold and indifferent, and contented with the conventional treadmill of everyday life. Was there no way of emancipating

herself from this drudgery, and finding a more exciting and congenial sphere of action. And then she remembered the Miss Johnsons, and the possibility of connecting herself with them which had crossed her mind when she visited them with Bessy the day after the fire. It would not only ensure her own independence, but be of the greatest benefit to them, as her own little means would enable her to assist them gratuitously. Thus, while pleasing herself, and finding worthy employment, she would appear to them and the world as their benefactor, and as such the eccentricity of the arrangement would be overlooked or excused. For Madeline was too sensible not to know the scheme was without precedent, and would most likely encounter much opposition from her uncles and their families. But she hoped to overrule their objections, or if it came to the worst, she must act independently. She began to feel her present position so galling and injurious as to be unendurable much longer. She could walk over to Stonebridge that very day, and open negotiations with the Miss Johnsons.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN the rector reached his own home, he found Bessy and her mother lamenting Madeline's decision, which her note had made known to them.

"Do you know why she won't come, papa?" asked Bessy, when she found he had been up to the Hall. "I don't understand her refusal; she seemed quite willing last night."

"She is afraid to come, my dear," said her father, dryly.

"Afraid! and pray of whom, papa?" she exclaimed.

"She is afraid of a physician, in a new and attractive, and therefore most dangerous form, Bessy. She has no mind to be cured at present, and is therefore unwilling to trust herself in his neighbourhood."



Bessy looked bewildered; but her mother laughed, and said she expected as much.

“Ay, you women have quick enough perception for these things,” he replied. “Well, we have done all we can for the present. Perhaps the physician may work the cure in spite of her.”

Bessy looked thoughtfully after her father as he went away, and then asked her mother what was the mystery.

But Mrs. Marsden would give her no satisfaction, except an admonition to keep her eyes open in future, and Bessy had to go about her usual occupations unenlightened, and hoping a meeting with Madeline would give her the right clue.

It was late in the afternoon, however, before they met. On her way from a visit to the school house, Bessy called to see Anne Fielding, and inquire after little Mary. The child had recovered quickly, in the first instance, from the effects of her violent fall, but latterly she began drooping again, and the hot weather seemed trying to her. It was a great trouble to poor Anne, for the little one required constant nursing and amusement, and consequently Anne's work was almost

at a standstill, and her preparations in Tom's behalf made but little progress.

"Well, you must not fret about it, Anne," said Bessy, kindly, when the poor woman had expatiated on her troubles. "You know my cousin is in no hurry for her things, and it wants a week or two yet to the time Tom must be ready."

"I'll do my best, Miss Bessy," was the reply "and none of us can do more. But Miss Madeline's things do take such a time, with all those trimmings and fine work. She's a mighty particular young lady, and has called in once or twice, to see I didn't go astray."

"And here she comes again, Anne," said Bessy, who stood at the door, for Madeline just then appeared at the garden gate, and came up to the cottage. She looked a little disconcerted when she saw Bessy, but shook hands, and then asked Anne about her work. The young woman told her the state of the case, and hoped it would not inconvenience her to wait a few weeks for it.

"I am sorry you can't get on faster, Anne," answered Madeline. "I came to-day to hasten

you with it. I am afraid I must have it in a fortnight. I shall have more to give you when this is done, so I hope you won't disappoint me."

"If the child was only well, miss, I should have no difficulty," said Anne; "but if you must have your things, miss, I will do what I can."

"Is the child ill again, then?" she said, carelessly, and looking for a moment at the pale little creature, who stood quietly leaning against her mother with a finger in her mouth, listless and fretful. "Can't you get help, Anne, if she won't let you work?"

"Certainly, if you wish it, Miss," was the reply, and reiterating her desire for the work within a fortnight, Madeline quitted the cottage, leaving the poor mother's heart heavy behind her, and the little one wailing to be nursed, and begging mammy to put away "that nasty work, and play with Mary."

But if the work was not done, the money would not be forthcoming for the modest household wants, so mammy must needs steel her heart against the little one's cries, and, with eyes dim with tears, sew on remorselessly, while try-

ing to beguile the child into quietness with songs and tales. And by-and-bye, the little one's head drooped as she nestled at her mother's feet, and she slept soundly. Poor mother, and poor child, accommodating themselves, each in their way, to the inevitable in their lives.

Meanwhile, Bessy and Madeline were walking home together. Madeline had carried out her intention of going to Stonebridge that afternoon; but whatever might have been the result of her conference with the Misses Johnson Bessy was evidently not going to be informed of it, for Madeline was unusually taciturn, and in a state of semi-hostility with her cousin for which she was at a loss to account

Naturally, the visit to the rectory was soon on the *tapis*, and Bessy expressed her sincere regret that her cousin would not come to them.

"I wonder you ever expected it," said Madeline, shortly. "You all seem determined to make me go your ways in spite of myself; but I am equally determined to be guided only by right principle."

"Coming to us, or not, can hardly involve

principles," said Bessy, her speaking countenance betraying a slight amount of amusement. "It is a mere matter of opinion or inclination."

"Neither the one nor the other can be trusted to guide us in anything," said Madeline, warmly. "Both emanate from ourselves, and therefore must always be looked upon with suspicion."

"Can we never have a good opinion or desire, then?" asked Bessy, quietly.

Madeline had no answer ready for this straightforward question, and her cousin continued, with a smile, "It's not fair to puzzle you, is it, Made? particularly when I know what you really meant. Of course we must be careful in following our own wishes, because they are so often wrong; but there is nothing to prevent our indulging our lawful desires, and I can't see why you refuse to come to us on this ground."

"If it is inexplicable to you, Bessy," said the other, colouring, "I neither can, nor will, explain it," and she changed the conversation by observing the lowness of the water in the river, and the difference it made in the appearance of the village.

“Yes,” said Bessy, “and in its atmosphere also. I heard papa speaking about it yesterday to Mr. Gerald. He said if this dry season continues much longer, they will be having fever again; but I hope it won’t be so. I can remember the time of the last bad fever, and the terror of the poor villagers when it came amongst them.”

“Is it quite safe on the hill at such times?” asked Madeline.

“To a certain degree. We are not exposed to the same deadly exhalations from the river; but we must run some risk from infection, though none of us have ever been ill.”

“I hope it will keep away in our time,” said Madeline again. “It cannot be pleasant to have such a neighbour, and, of course, little can be done for the villagers, when the evil depends on the situation of their houses, and the state of the river. Plenty of rain to keep it clean must be indispensable to them, when they’re so careless in taking proper precautions to keep it so. This dry season is very bad for them.”

“It is strange how difficult it is to satisfy everyone’s wants,” said Bessy, thoughtfully. “This

is splendid weather for the crops, and we should hardly wish for rain just at the beginning of harvest time, and yet, if the river is not cleansed, ten chances to one our villagers will suffer. How good and evil are interwoven in this world of ours. It is well none of us are left to choose our own state, but are only expected to do our duty in that to which we are called."

"I cannot agree with you in that, Bessy," said Madeline. "You would nullify all ambition and progress, and keep the world at a standstill by your doctrine. Must we never wish to be other than we are?"

"No; unless we can arrive at our own goal by progression arising naturally out of a right use of our present duties and opportunities."

"But what limit do you put to those chances, Bessy?" asked Madeline, always ready for any discussion which might help to justify her in her own eyes. "What sphere of action will you allow individuals?"

"Circumstances limit it for them, generally speaking. They mustn't go out of their way, or neglect a plain duty for an imaginary one."

“But may we not relinquish certain duties for the sake of devoting ourselves to others, Bessy?” asked Madeline.

“I can't quite understand you,” said her cousin. “We have no choice in the matter, that I can see, Madeline. I shou'd like to know what you mean.”

“Well, come and take a turn in the park, and we'll talk it over,” said the other, for they had reached the park gate by this time. So the young girls turned into the walk which skirted the lake, and Bessy begged her cousin to explain her last remark.

She was much surprised at Madeline's heightened colour and excitement of manner as she replied to her question by another, viz., “Did she remember their last talk by the water side, the evening Mary Fielding got hurt?”

“Yes; I remember it, Made,” she replied. “You were wishing you could turn nun, or do something equally uncommon.”

“And every day strengthens my determination to live above this miserable conventionalism,” exclaimed Madeline, warmly. “I wish to release myself from all the ordinary ties and obligations



of society, and as fully devote myself to some labour of love for God's sake, as ever did the nuns of old. I can take no vows in the sight of men, thanks to the degeneracy of the age, but not the less binding do I consider my resolution, and not the less strenuously shall I carry it out."

"What, celibacy and all?" asked Bessy, naively.

Madeline coloured up again, but answered firmly, "Certainly, for that is the keystone of the structure, and the point which I wish you particularly to bear in mind. I think it would be utterly impossible to combine a proper performance of my duty to God, with what my small experience has shown me to be the duties of matrimony. Now I ask you again, if in such a case one may not give up to others, less scrupulous, these sublunary occupations, and concentrate one's energies and thoughts on other objects?"

Bessy look very thoughtful, but she involuntarily shook her head as she walked along in silence beside her cousin. There was something specious in Madeline's reasoning, high sounding as it might otherwise be, to which Bessy's good sense objected. Besides, she was rather at a

loss to conceive why Madeline should be making up her mind to a single life, when there seemed to her to be no choice left her at present, and she very ingenuously suggested this to her.

“That is neither kind, nor to the purpose, Bessy,” was the indignant answer, “you might say the same of all the nuns of old ; they did not wait for proposals before vowing themselves to God. They voluntarily put it out of their power to be tempted.”

“And many of them lived bitterly to regret it, I’m sure,” returned Bessy, “those were just the most likely ones to do so. It was different when they retired from a world that had disappointed their expectations and swallowed up their joys. We all have a curiosity and hankering after the unknown, and are very loth to purchase our experience at other people’s expense. We like to try and taste for ourselves, even at the cost of some sorrow. Your using the expression tempted just now, shows you yourself look upon it in this light. It would be a temptation to try that new phase of life, and a natural and justifiable one.”

“Well, at any rate, I do not wish to expose myself to the temptation,” answered Madeline, with a slight touch of temper in her tone, “you look upon it by the light of your own views of life, and I suppose one domestic sphere might be as good as another. To me it seems a temptation to sin, and as such, you must allow I am right to withdraw from it.”

Bessy looked rather amused and puzzled with her cousin's opinions, but seeing that further argument would only confirm her in them, she wisely held her tongue. They parted soon afterwards, Bessy secretly hoping some reaction would come to her cousin shortly, or she would certainly show herself to the world in some new and unexpected light. As yet the evil confined itself to words, which, though big and high flown, were, after all, but empty sound. But assuredly they would develope into actions, if something did not turn up, to occupy and divert Madeline's mind from herself and her strange ideas.

END OF VOL. I.



**TEETH WITHOUT PAIN AND WITHOUT SPRINGS.**

**OSTEO EIDON FOR ARTIFICIAL TEETH,  
EQUAL TO NATURE.**

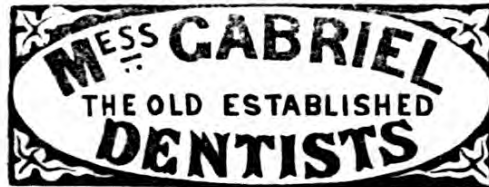
---

**Complete Sets £4 4s., £7 7s., £10 10s., £15 15s., and £21.**

**SINGLE TEETH AND PARTIAL SETS AT PROPORTIONATELY  
MODERATE CHARGES.**

---

**A PERFECT FIT GUARANTEED.**



**London:**

**27, HARLEY STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.**

**134, DUKE STREET, LIVERPOOL.**

**65, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM.**

---

**CITY ADDRESS :**

**64, LUDGATE HILL, 64.**

**(4 doors from the Railway Bridge).**

---

**ONLY ONE VISIT REQUIRED FROM COUNTRY PATIENTS.**

---

Gabriel's Treatise on the Teeth, explaining their patented mode of supplying Teeth without Springs or Wires, may be had gratis on application, or free by post.

## FAMILY MOURNING.

---

MESSRS. JAY

Would respectfully announce that great saving may be  
made by purchasing Mourning at their Establishment,

THEIR STOCK OF

FAMILY MOURNING

BEING

THE LARGEST IN EUROPE.

---

MOURNING COSTUME

OF EVERY DESCRIPTION

KEPT READY-MADE,

And can be forwarded to Town or Country at a moment's  
notice.

---

The most reasonable Prices are charged, and the wear  
of every Article Guaranteed.

---

THE LONDON

GENERAL MOURNING WAREHOUSE,

247 & 248, REGENT STREET,

(NEXT THE CIRCUS.)

JAY'S.

# A Catalogue of Books,

PUBLISHED BY

MR. NEWBY,

30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

---

In 1 Vol. Price 12s.

## ON CHANGE OF CLIMATE,

A GUIDE FOR TRAVELLERS IN PURSUIT OF HEALTH.

BY THOMAS MORE MADDEN, M.D., M.R.C.S. ENG.

Illustrative of the Advantages of the various localities resorted to by Invalids, for the cure or alleviation of chronic diseases, especially consumption. With Observations on Climate, and its Influence on Health and Disease, the result of extensive personal experience of many Southern Climes.

SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ALGERIA, MOROCCO, FRANCE, ITALY,  
THE MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS, EGYPT, &c.

“Dr. Madden’s book deserves confidence—a most accurate and excellent work.”—*Dublin Medical Review*.

“It cannot but be of much service to such persons as purpose leaving home in search of recreation, or a more benign atmosphere. The Doctor’s observations relate to the favourite haunts of English invalids. He criticises each place *seriatim* in every point of view.”—*Reader*.

“A well-written and agreeable Volume, containing much valuable information respecting various favourite places of resort, evidently the work of a well-informed Physician.”—*Lancet*.

“It will be found a useful addition to the Library of the Physician, and a good hand-book for those who are inclined to travel in search of health. Medical literature is not overdone with works on climate, and we gladly welcome this as a valuable contribution to our knowledge of this subject.”—*Medical Mirror*.

“To all who are in search of health resorts, and to all who have to advise in the selection of one—to patients, to their friends, to medical men—to all we recommend Dr. Madden’s book, containing sound and good advice.”—*Medical Times*.

In 1 Vol. Price 3s. 6d.

## HOURS OF QUIET THOUGHT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

By Rev. G. GILFILLAN, Dundee.

“The work of a thoughtful, accomplished, well-read, pious, and earnest man. The book contains much valuable and suggestive matter, very carefully gathered and very excellently expressed.”—*Weekly Review*.

“To those who seek truths in a solemn but attractive form, this little book will prove most welcome.”—*Court Circular*.

“The quiet thoughts here provided in the form of essays on religious topics are the work of an earnest mind, sufficient to assure the reader he is listening to an accomplished and pious author—one who has read much and thought deeply—the charms of whose pen are exceedingly pleasing. Hours of Quiet Thought will afford matter for serious and healthy reflection.”—*Public Opinion*, April 8.

---

In 2 Vols., Post 8vo., Price 21s.

## ANECDOTAL MEMOIRS OF ENGLISH PRINCES.

By W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

Author of “Memorable Battles in English History,” “The Sea Kings of England,” &c.

“Mr. Adams has here opened an almost inexhaustible mine of anecdotal wealth. Scattered over the pages of our history anecdotes of the doings of English Princes have hitherto been interesting only, or chiefly, in connection with the era in which the incidents occurred. Mr. Adams has shown that the anecdotes have an interest of their own, apart from their historical connection; and we hope that he will not give up the idea of working his treasure deeper.”—*Morning Herald*.

“There can be very little doubt of these memoirs being favourably received by the public.”—*Observer*.

“Mr. Adams manifests the same tact and discretion which has made his former publications so highly interesting.”—*Bell's Messenger*.

“The author has drawn his materials from many sources; and, without seeking to usurp the province of the historian, or to disturb or affirm the verdict pronounced upon the events to which he refers, or the personages who figure on the busy stage, he has given connected accounts of their general character and career, of the stirring scenes in which they each acted a prominent part, and of the times in which they lived, which will interest the general reader, and furnish landmarks for the guidance of the student.”—*Morning Post* January 13.

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

ENGLISH AMERICA,  
OR PICTURES OF CANADIAN PLACES AND PEOPLE,

By S. PHILLIPS DAY,

Author of "Down South."

"Mr. Day's pictures of Canadian places and people are graphic, and bear the impress of being faithful and impartial delineations. As a book of travel it possesses merit which will secure for it a ready acceptance with the reading public."—*Morning Post*.

"It embraces every point of interest in regard to the political, social, and commercial condition of Canada."—*Canadian News*.

"Nothing seems to have escaped Mr. Day's notice, whether in respect of the social and political condition of the colonists, or of the aspect and physical capabilities of the country. His volumes are very opportune, and others besides the mere emigrant will gain largely by a perusal of their pages."—*The Reader*.

---

In 1 Vol., Price 7s. 6d. With numerous plates.

A NARRATIVE OF ADVENTURES AND ESCAPE,  
IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS,

DURING THE LATE WAR.

By CAPTAIN BOYS, R.N.,

"Many of the events recorded have long since become matters of history; they are, however, so mixed up with personal adventures, simple truth conveyed in a simple form, that we read on with unflagging attention."—*Morning Advertiser*

"Every youth in Her Majesty's dominions should read these adventures."—*Daily Post*.

"Readers will like this curious narrative, which has all the charm of truthfulness, which few writers, excepting De Foe, could have written half so graphically; Captain Boys' interesting and patriotic story is all truth in itself."—*Illustrated Times*.

---

In 2 vols. Price 10s. 6d.

THE ROSICRUCIAN.

By HARGRAVE JENNINGS.

B 2



In 1 Vol. Price 10s. 6d.

## HEROIC IDYLS,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

"His works, stamped as they are with the impress of high and original intellect, will ensure for him a proud position among the master-minds of the period."—*Bell's Messenger*.

"The same classical feeling which has given a harmony even to the most fanciful of his 'Imaginary Conversations,' and moulded the thoughts of our English poet in the lines of Greek simplicity and beauty, is to be found here, as delicately marked as ever. Few artists of modern times have taken a larger range, or have carried out a clearly conceived purpose with a steadier hand. When Mr. Landor is gone, we shall have lost at once the founder, and almost the only follower, of a peculiar and grand school."—*Saturday Review*.

"Here we recognise the dignified pathos and tranquil beauty characteristic of the best of his 'Hellenics.'"—*Reader*.

"A book of rare merit, containing many passages of singular power, grace, and freshness of style, which it would be hard to match in any modern versifiers."—*Morning Herald*.

"For simplicity, classical purity, and keen sarcasm of thought and expression, Landor almost stands alone. The book is full of his wonted vigour, skill, and grace."—*Oriental Budget*.

"These Idyls may take their place with those heretofore given us by Mr. Landor. Judged of simply by their merits, they compel that rare admiration which we yield only to noble ideals made palpable by true art. As recent works, they claim the tribute of our wonder no less than our delight."—*Athenæum*.

---

In 1 vol., price 7s. 6d.,

## TAORMINA AND OTHER POEMS.

"Written with a rare mixture of spirit and grace, and bears the marks of a highly cultivated mind, enriched by travel and by classic lore."—*Scotsman*.

"In Cephalus and Procris, the author has shown considerable powers of poetical conception, sustained thought, graceful imagery, and tender feeling, simply and appropriately expressed." "Other poems give evidence, not only of deep emotion, but of the power of skilfully portraying and harmoniously expressing its changing phases."—*London Review*.

In 3 Vols. 31s. 6d.

## YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY,

By CYRUS REDDING.

“For half a century and upwards Cyrus Redding has occupied a prominent place amongst men of letters, and been on terms of personal intercourse with our most celebrated literateurs and politicians. He was intimately acquainted and in correspondence with Lewis, Wolcot, Topham, Sheridau, Lockhart, Canning, Lamb, Scott, Wilson, Hogg, Moore, Campbell, Rogers, Lady Morgan, Leigh Hunt, &c.; and with Cuvier, Langles, Suchet, Du Roure, Schlegel, De Stael, Montemont, Humboldt, and other distinguished foreigners. A portion of his experience and his chit-chat were given in his ‘Fifty Years’ Recollections,’ but he reserves, like a skilful general, for the present sequel to that work (which is appropriately entitled ‘Yesterday and To-day,’) his principal observations and most racy anecdotes.”—*Globe*.

Cyrus Redding has produced one of the most valuable works which could interest the present generation, forming as it does, a sort of medium between the living and departed celebrities of the last half century.—*Express*.

“The whole tone of the work is as creditable to the orthodoxy as it is to the elasticity of our septuagenarian author’s mind. The attraction of the work will be its chatty reminiscences of the *littéraires célèbres* of the last half century.—*Morning Advertiser*.

---

In 1 Vol. Price 7s. 6d.

## PRINCE HASSAN’S CARPET,

By HOPE LUTTRELL.

“This carpet has been picked up by Hope Luttrell, and on it she carries the reader with her to many a pleasant scene.”—*Reader*.

“There is evidence of good descriptive powers throughout the work which convey vivid impressions to the reader.”—*Public Opinion*.

---

In 1 vol. Price 10s. 6d.

## SKETCHES FROM NATURE,

By W. C. NATION.

“Readers will derive amusement from Mr. Nation’s sketches, for they are vigorous and polished, and contain wisdom as well as mirth.”—*Public Opinion*.

In 1 Vol., price 2s. 6d.

## OLD SAWS, NEWLY SET,

Being Fables in Verse,

By GEORGE LINLEY, the Younger.

“A number of old fables, known and thoroughly appreciated for generations past, appear in this small volume, in a neat and humble garb of verse, well suited for the instruction and amusement of the younger portion of the community. This volume of fables in verse bears a dedication to the Earl Granville, the President of the Committee of Council on Education.”—*Observer*.

“The efficacy and attractiveness of allegory as a means of illustrating great moral truths have been acknowledged in all ages, and Mr. George Linley, jun., has done good service in publishing this ‘new version of old fables.’ This new setting of old saws is well timed and appropriate. Mr. Linley’s verse is graceful and melodious, and, while he tells his familiar stories in a gay and easy manner, he takes care to point their moral with a piquancy and precision not to be misunderstood.”—*Morning Post*.

“Earl Granville’s recognition of this little book is a certain guarantee of its usefulness and ability. It will cause delight to thousands of young hearts, as well as give a moral tone to thousands of young minds. As a book for schools, and for families educated at home, we can affirm there have been few books published of equal value.”—*Daily Post*.

“May be safely recommended as a fit book for the first learners of poetry; the subjects being judiciously selected, and the version pithy and pointed.”—*London Review*.

---

In 2 Vols., post 8vo, price 21s.

## TWO JOURNEYS TO JAPAN,

By KINAHAN CORNWALLIS.

“The mystery of Japan melts away as we follow Mr. Cornwallis. He enjoyed most marvellous good fortune, for he carried a spell with him which dissipated Japanese suspicion and procured him all sorts of privileges. His knowledge of Japan is considerable. It is an amusing book.”—*Athenæum*.

“This is an amusing book, pleasantly written, and evidencing generous feeling.”—*Literary Gazette*.

“We can honestly recommend Mr. Cornwallis’s book to our readers.”—*Morning Herald*.

“The country under his pencil comes out fresh, dewy, and picturesque before the eye. The volumes are full of amusement, lively and graphic.”—*Chambers’s Journal*.

In 2 Vols., price 21s.

## A PILGRIMAGE OVER THE PRAIRIES,

By the Author of "The Fortunes of a Colonist."

"We have scarcely ever read a more interesting book. Fenimore Cooper gave us a taste of, and this author has immensely increased our desire for Prairie life."—*Express*.

---

In 2 Vols., price 21s.

## THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF A DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE,

By EDWARD FITZBALL, Esq.

"We scarcely remember any biography so replete with anecdotes of the most agreeable description. Everybody in the theatrical world and a great many out of it, figure in these pleasing volumes."—*Globe*.

"One of the most curious collections of histrionic incidents ever put together. Fitzball numbers his admirers not by hundreds and thousands, but by millions."—*Liverpool Albion*.

"A most wonderful book about all sorts of persons."—*Birmingham Journal*.

---

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., plates, price 10s. 6d.

## DEAFNESS AND DISEASES OF THE EAR,

The Fallacies of present treatment exposed and Remedies suggested,  
from the experience of half-a-century,

By W. WRIGHT, Esq.,

Surgeon Aurist (by Royal Sign Manual), to Her Majesty, the late  
Queen Charlotte, &c.

---

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., with map, price 7s. 6d.

## AN EMIGRANT'S FIVE YEARS IN THE FREE STATES OF AMERICA,

By WILLIAM HANCOCK.

In 1 Vol. post 8vo., price 10s. 6d.

**FROM MORN TILL EVE IN EUROPE,**

By MRS. AGAR,

Author of "The Knights of the Cross," &c.

---

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., price 5s.

**SPIRITUALISM AND THE AGE WE LIVE IN,**

By MRS. CROWE,

Author of "The Night Side of Nature," "Ghost Stories," &c.

---

In 2 Vols., post 8vo., price 21s.

**AN OLD ROAD AND AN OLD RIVER,**

By WILLIAM A. ROSS,

Author of "A Yacht-Voyage to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark."

---

In 1 Vol., price 7s. 6d.

**THE BIBLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES,**

With remarks on the Libraries, Schools, and Social, and Religious  
Aspects of Mediæval Europe,

By L. A. BUCKINGHAM.

"To all persons interested in Biblical Literature, this little book  
will be invaluable."—*Times*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 5s.

**RECOLLECTIONS OF A FIVE YEARS'  
RESIDENCE IN NORWAY,**

By H. T. A. CHESHYRE, R.N.

"A more interesting or a better guide to Norway does not exist."  
—*Morning Chronicle*.

In 1 Vol., 5s. Second Edition.

## THE ROCK OF ROME,

By the late J. SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

Author of "Virgilius," &c.

"Mr. Knowles appears to be a firm believer in his Bible, and he comes forward in this work with an earnestness which all true-hearted men will appreciate."—*Examiner*.

"It is a vivid and eloquent exposure of the lofty pretensions of the Church of Rome."—*Morning Herald*.

"It should be in the libraries of all Protestants."—*Morning Post*.

---

In 2 Vols. £1 1s. cloth.

## THE LIFE OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,

By CAPTAIN MEDWIN,

Author of "Conversations with Lord Byron."

"This book must be read by every one interested in literature."—*Morning Post*.

"A complete life of Shelley was a desideratum in literature, and there was no man so competent as Captain Medwin to supply it."—*Inquirer*.

"The book is sure of exciting much discussion."—*Literary Gazette*.

---

In 2 Vols., demy 8vo., £1 10s., cloth,

With numerous plates.

## THE SHRINES AND SEPULCHRES OF THE OLD AND NEW WORLD,

By R. R. MADDEN, M.R.J.A.

"Mr. Madden's work displays both extensive reading and extensive travel. He has been a pilgrim in many lands, and seems to have made use of his eyes and ears."—*Athenæum*.

"To the antiquarian and moralist, the archæologist and student of the sacred volume, these volumes must prove a treasury of most recondite erudition."—*Telegraph*.

"Dr. Madden evinces the research of a true *helluo librorum*."—*Freeman's Journal*.

"These are erudite, curious, and most agreeable volumes."—*Warder*

"The historical student will find it of rare interest."—*The Nation*.

In 1 Vol., 4to., £1 1s. Second Edition.

ILLUSTRATED WITH FIFTY-FOUR SUBJECTS BY GEORGE  
SCHARF, JUNR.

## THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE GREEKS,

By THEODORE PANOFKA, of Berlin.

The *Times* says : " This new publication may be added to a series of works which honourably characterize the present age, infusing a knowledge of things into a branch of learning which too often consisted of a knowledge of mere words, and furnishing the general student with information which was once exclusively confined to the professed archæologist. As a last commendation to this elegant book, let us add that it touches on no point that can exclude it from the hands of youth."

" It will excellently prepare the student for the uses of the vases in the British Museum."—*Spectator*.

" Great pains, fine taste, and large expense are evident. It does infinite credit to the enterprising publisher."—*Literary Gazette*.

---

n Vols., demy 8vo., £2 2s.

## THE HISTORY OF THE PAPAL STATES,

By JOHN MILEY, D.D.,

Author of " Rome Under Paganism and the Popes."

" Dr. Miley supports his positions with a plenitude and profundity of learning, a force and massive power of reasoning, a perspicuity of logical prowess, and a felicity of illustration rarely met in combined existence amongst historians of any age."—*Morning Post*.

" Illustrated by profound learning, deep thought, refined taste, and great sagacity."—*Dublin Review*.

" We have no hesitation in recommending these volumes as characterized by learning, eloquence, and original research."—*Daily News*.

---

In 1 Vol., 14s.

## THE AGE OF PITT AND FOX,

By the Author of " Ireland and its Rulers."

The *Times* says : " We may safely pronounce it to be the best textbook that we have yet seen of the age which it professes to describe."

" It is a noble work."—*Quarterly Review*.

" It is a powerful piece of writing."—*Spectator*.

In 1 Vol., 8vo., price 12s.

A HISTORY OF THE MODERN MUSIC OF  
WESTERN EUROPE,

FROM THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO  
THE PRESENT DAY,

WITH EXAMPLES AND AN APPENDIX EXPLANATORY OF THE THEORY  
OF THE ANCIENT GREEK MUSIC.

By G. R. KIESWITTER.

With Notes by R. MULLER.

"Herr Kieswitter writes clearly because he sees clearly."—*Athenæum*.

---

In 1 Vol., with Map, 7s. 6d.

PANSLAVISM AND GERMANISM,

By COUNT VALERIAN KRASINSKI.

---

In 1 Vol., 10s. 6d.

THE NEW ZEALAND QUESTION AND THE  
RIGHTS OF THE ABORIGINES,

By L. CHAMEROZOW.

---

Tenth Edition, 4s.

THE BEE-KEEPER'S GUIDE.

By J. H. PAYNE, Esq.

"The best and most concise treatise on the management of bees."—*Quarterly Review*.

---

In 1 Vol., 10s. 6d.

A HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH,

By LADY CHATTERTON.

"No Protestant family should be without this excellent work."—*New Quarterly Review*.



In 1 Vol. 7s. 6d.

## ON SEX IN THE WORLD TO COME,

By the Rev. G. HAUGHTON, A.M.

"A peculiar subject; but a subject of great interest; and in this volume is treated in a masterly style. The language is surpassingly good, showing the author to be a learned and a thoughtful man."—*New Quarterly Review*.

---

5s.

## THE EVENINGS OF A WORKING MAN.

Edited by CHARLES DICKENS, Esq.,

Author of "Pickwick," &c., &c.

---

In 3 Vols., Price 42s.

## A CATHOLIC HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

By W. B. MAC CABE, Esq.

"This work is of great literary value."—*Times*.

"A better book, or more valuable contribution to historical literature, has never been presented to the reading public."—*Observer*.

"A valuable and extraordinary work."—*Quarterly Review*.

---

Price 5s.

## HYACINTHE,

By MRS. GREY,

Author of "The Gambler's Wife."

"We can safely recommend the teachers of youth to give this charming little volume to their pupils."—*Morning Post*.

---

5s.

## ALICE SEYMOUR,

By MRS. GREY,

Author of "The Gambler's Wife."

"A valuable present from a mother to her children."—*Morning Chronicle*.

Price 5s.

LETTERS ON THE RECENT POLITICS OF  
SWITZERLAND,

By GEORGE GROTE, Esq.,

Author of "A History of Greece."

---

In 2 Vols., 16s.

SIXTEEN YEARS IN THE WEST INDIES,

By Lieut.-Colonel CAPPADOSE.

---

In 1 Vol., 5s.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM,

By EDMUND PEEL, Esq.

---

In 1 Vol., 2s. 6d.

THE CONQUERORS OF LAHORE,

An Ode, by EDMUND PEEL, Esq.

"The relatives and friends of the conquerors of Lahore will be grateful for this little work."—*Morning Post*.

---

Price 2s. 6d.

JOHN SAVILLE OF HAYSTED,

A Play, by REV. JAMES WHITE.

---

Price 2s. 6d.

THE KING OF THE COMMONS,

A Play, by REV. JAMES WHITE.

---

Price 5s.

THE EARL OF GOWRIE,

A Play, by REV. JAMES WHITE.

Price 2s. 6d.

J U S T I T I A ,  
A Tragedy, by GEORGE BENNETT, Esq.

---

In 1 Vol., 7s. 6d.

THE BEAUTIES OF ISAAC BARROW.

---

In 1 Vol., 7s. 6d.

THE BEAUTIES OF JEREMY TAYLOR.

---

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., price 10s. 6d.

HISTORICAL GLEANINGS AT HOME AND  
ABROAD,

By MRS. JAMIESON.

“This work is characterized by forcible and correct descriptions of men and manners in bygone years. It is replete with passages of the deepest interest.”—*Review*.

---

In 1 Vol., demy 8vo., price 12s.

SPORTING FACTS AND SPORTING FANCIES,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

Author of “Stable Talk and Table Talk,” “The Pocket and the Stud,”  
“The Hunting Field,” &c.

“This work will make a valuable and interesting addition to the sportsman’s library.”—*Bell’s Life*.

“In addition to the immense mass of practical and useful information with which this work abounds, there is a refreshing buoyancy and dash about the style, which makes it as attractive and fascinating as the pages of the renowned Nimrod himself.”—*Dispatch*.

“It contains graphic sketches of celebrated young sporting characters.”—*Sunday Times*.

Price 2s. 6d., beautifully illustrated.

## THE HAPPY COTTAGE,

A TALE FOR SUMMER'S SUNSHINE,

By the Author of "Kate Vernon," "Agnes Waring."

---

In 1 Vol. Price 1s. 6d.

## THE FIRST LATIN COURSE,

By REV. J. ARNOLD.

"For beginners, this Latin Grammar is unequalled."—*Scholastic*.

---

Price 7s. 6d.

## INDIAN RELIGIONS,

By a MISSIONARY.

---

## NEW FRENCH GRAMMAR.

Price 3s. 6d.

LE TRESOR DE LA LANGUE FRANCAISE,

Comprising French and English Exercises, a recueil of Sentences, Proverbs, Dialogues, and Anecdotes, forming a Reading book, terminated by a French and English Dictionary.

By C. A. DE G. LIANCOURT, M.A.,

Professor of Compared Languages.

"This Grammar will be used in every school in England. It is an invaluable assistant to masters, and facilitates the acquisition of the language to the pupil without fatiguing with a multiplicity of rules."  
—*The Scholastic*.

In 1 Vol., price 10s. 6d.

## GHOST STORIES,

By CATHERINE CROWE,

Author of "Night Side of Nature."

"Mrs. Crowe's volume will delight the lovers of the supernatural, and their name is legion."—*Morning Post*.

"These Tales are calculated to excite all the feelings of awe, and we may say of terror, with which Ghost Stories have ever been read."—*Morning Advertiser*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 10s. 6d.

## NIL DESPERANDUM,

BEING AN ESCAPE FROM ITALIAN DUNGEONS.

"We find the volume entertaining and really Italian in spirit."—*Athenæum*.

"There is much fervour in this romantic narrative of suffering."—*Examiner*.

---

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

## SHELLEY AND HIS WRITINGS,

By C. S. MIDDLETON, Esq.

"Never was there a more perfect specimen of biography."—*Walter Savage Landor, Esq.*

"Mr. Middleton has done good service. He has carefully sifted the sources of information we have mentioned, has made some slight addition, and arranged his materials in proper order and in graceful language. It is the first time the mass of scattered information has been collected, and the ground is therefore cleared for the new generation of readers."—*Athenæum*.

"The life of the Poet which has just appeared, and which was much required, is written with much beauty of expression and clearness of purpose. Mr. Middleton's book is a masterly performance."—*Somerset Gazette*.

"Mr. Middleton has displayed great ability in following the poet through all the mazes of his life and thoughts. We recommend the work as lively, animated, and interesting. It contains many curious disclosures."—*Sunday Times*.

In 1 Vol., 8vo., price 7s. 6d.

## LIFE OF ALEXANDER THE FIRST.

By IVAN GOLOVIN.

“It is a welcome contribution to Russian imperial biography.”—*Leader*.

“Mr. Golovin possesses fresher information, a fresher mind and manner applied to Russian affairs, than foreigners are likely to possess.”—*Spectator*.

---

In 2 vols., price 21s.

## AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS.

By the MISSES TURNBULL.

“It is exceedingly amusing, and marked by energy and power.”—*Globe*.

“Twenty-six thousand miles of travel by two young ladies, in search of the new, the beautiful, and the instructive! We do not know that a reader could desire more amusing *campagnons de voyage* than these two sprightly, intelligent, well-educated, and observant young Englishwomen.”—*Morning Advertiser*.

“A number of amusing anecdotes give life and interest to the narrative.”—*Brighton Examiner*.

“Very pleasant gossiping volumes.”—*Critic*.

“These volumes are replete with lively, entertaining sketches of American manners and customs, sayings and doings.”—*Naval and Military*.

“Contains much information respecting the manners and habits of our transatlantic cousins.”—*Sun*.

“The narrative is evidently truthful, as it is clear and intelligible.”—*Herald*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 6s. 6d.

## SUNDAY, THE REST OF LABOUR,

Dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“This important subject is discussed ably and temperately; and though many differences may arise in the minds of some of our clergy, as well as some pious laymen, it should be added to every library.”—*Herald*.

“Written by a churchman, who is evidently a man with deep and sincere religious feelings. His book is temperately written, and will have a wholesome tendency, if wisely received.”—*Examiner*.

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., price 10s. 6d.

## OUR PLAGUE SPOT,

In connection with our Polity and Usages as regards Women.

“A book full of the most interesting statistics, given with good sense, good feeling, and keenness of observation.”—*Express*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 2s. 6d.

## DRAWING-ROOM CHARADES FOR ACTING,

By C. WARREN ADAMS, Esq.

“A valuable addition to Christmas diversions. It consists of a number of well-constructed scenes for charades.”—*Guardian*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 12s.

## MERRIE ENGLAND,

By LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

“It overflows with racy, piquant anecdotes of a generation just passed away. The book is destined to lie upon the tables of many a country mansion.”—*Leader*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 5s.

## KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS,

By MRS. AGAR.

“Nothing can be more appropriate than this little volume, from which the young will learn how their forefathers venerated and fought to preserve those places hallowed by the presence of the Saviour.”—*Guardian*.

“Mrs. Agar has written a book which young and old may read with profit and pleasure.”—*Sunday Times*.

“It is a work of care and research, which parents may well wish to see in the hands of their children.”—*Leader*.

“A well-written history of the Crusades, pleasant to read, and good to look upon.”—*Critic*.

Second Edition, now ready, in 3 Vols., price 42s.

THE LITERARY LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE  
OF THE  
COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON,  
BY R. MADDEN, Esq., F.R.C.S.-ENG.

Author of "Travels in the East," "Life of Savonarola," &c.

"We may, with perfect truth, affirm that during the last fifty years, there has been no book of such peculiar interest to the literary and political world. It has contributions from every person of literary reputation—Byron, Sir E. Bulwer, who contributes an original Poem, James, D'Israeli, Marryatt, Savage Landor, Campbell, L. E. L., the Smiths, Shelley, Jenkyn, Sir W. Gell, Jekyll, &c., &c.; as well as letters from the most eminent Statesmen and Foreigners of distinction, the Duke of Wellington, Marquis Wellesley, Marquis Douro, Lords Lyndhurst, Brougham, Durham, Abinger, &c."—*Morning Post*.

---

In 1 Vol., 6s.

UGOLINO AND OTHER POEMS,  
By SYBIL,  
Author of "Hope Deferred."

---

In 1 Vol., post 8vo., price 10s. 6d.

ZEAL IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY,  
By L'ABBE DUBOIS.

"There is a tone of piety and reality in the work of l'Abbe Dubois, and a unity of aim, which is to fix the priest's mind on the duties and responsibilities of his whole position, and which we admire. The writer is occupied supremely with one thought of contributing to the salvation of souls and to the glory of God."—*Literary Churchman*.

"It abounds in sound and discriminating reflections and valuable hints. No portion of a Clergyman's duties is overlooked."—*The Ecclesiastic*.

"This volume enters so charmingly into the minutiae of clerical life, that we know none so calculated to assist the young priest, and direct him in his duties. It is a precious legacy of wisdom to all the priesthood."—*Union*.



In 1 Vol., price 10s. 6d.

## THE NEW ELDORADO; OR BRITISH COLUMBIA.

By KINAHAN CORNWALLIS.

“The book is full of information as to the best modes existing in or of reaching these enviable countries.”—*Morning Chronicle*.

“The book gives all the information which it is possible to obtain respecting the new colony called British Columbia. The book is altogether one of a most interesting and instructive character.”—*The Star*.

“The work is very spiritedly written, and will amuse and instruct.”—*Observer*.

---

## STEPS ON THE MOUNTAINS.

“This is a step in the right way, and ought to be in the hands of the youth of both sexes.”—*Review*.

“The moral of this graceful and well-constructed little tale is, that Christian influence and good example may have a better effect in doing the good work of reformation than the prison, the treadmill, or the reformatory.”—*Critic*.

“The Steps on the Mountains are traced in a loving spirit. They are earnest exhortations to the sober and religious-minded to undertake the spiritual and temporal improvement of the condition of the destitute of our lanes and alleys. The moral of the tale is well carried out; and the bread which was cast upon the waters is found after many days, to the saving and happiness of all therein concerned.”—*Athenæum*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 5s.

## FISHES AND FISHING,

By W. WRIGHT, Esq.

“Anglers will find it worth their while to profit by the author's experience.”—*Athenæum*.

“The pages abound in a variety of interesting anecdotes connected with the rod and the line. The work will be found both useful and entertaining to the lovers of the piscatory art.”—*Morning Post*.

In 1 Vol., demy 8vo., price 12s.

## THE SPORTSMAN'S FRIEND IN A FROST,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

"Harry Hieover's practical knowledge and long experience in field sports render his writings ever amusing and instructive. He relates most pleasing anecdotes of flood and field, and is well worthy of study."—*The Field*.

"No Sportsman's library should be without it."—*Sporting Magazine*.

"There is amusement as well as intelligence in Harry Hieover's book."—*Athenæum*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 5s.

## THE SPORTING WORLD,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

"Reading Harry Hieover's book is like listening lazily and luxuriously after dinner to a quiet, gentlemanlike, clever talker."—*Athenæum*.

"It will be perused with pleasure by all who take an interest in the manly game of our fatherland. It ought to be added to every sportsman's library."—*Sporting Review*.

---

Fourth Edition. Price 2s. 6d.

## THE PROPER CONDITION OF ALL HORSES,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

"It should be in the hands of all owners of horses."—*Bell's Life*.

"A work which every owner of a horse will do well to consult."—*Morning Herald*.

"Every man who is about purchasing a horse, whether it be hunter, riding-horse, lady's palfrey, or cart-horse, will do well to make himself acquainted with the contents of this book."—*Sporting Magazine*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 4s.

## BIPEDS AND QUADRUPEDS,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

"We recommend this little volume for the humanity towards quadrupeds it advocates, and the proper treatment of them that it inculcates."—*Bell's Life*.

Sixth Edition, in 1 Vol., price 2s. 6d.

## HOW TO MAKE MONEY BY HORSES,

By HARRY HIEOVER.

“When Harry Hieover gives hints to Horsemen, he does not mean by that term riders exclusively, but owners, breeders, buyers, sellers, and admirers of horses. To teach such men how to make money is to impart no valueless instruction to a large class of mankind. The advice is frankly given, and if no benefit result, it will not be for the want of good counsel.”—*Athenæum*.

“It is by far the most useful and practical book that Harry Hieover has written.”—*Express*.

---

In 1 Vol., price 5s.

## THE WORLD, AND HOW TO SQUARE IT.

By HARRY HIEOVER.

---

In 2 Vols., post 8vo., price 21s.

## N A P L E S , POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS,

By LORD B\*\*\*\*\*

“The pictures are as lively and bright as the colours and climate they reflect.”—*Spectator*.

“It is a rapid, clear historical sketch.”—*Advertiser*.

“The author has done good service to society.”—*Court Circular*.

---

Price 1s. 6d.

## PRINCE LIFE,

By G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.,

Author of “The Gipsy,” “Richelieu,” &c.

“It is worth its weight in gold.”—*The Globe*.

“Most valuable to the rising generation; an invaluable little book.”—*Guardian*.

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

## THE VISCOUNT'S DAUGHTER.

"It must be a popular novel."—*Sporting Review*.

---

In 2 Vols. 21s.

## AFTER LONG YEARS.

"After Long Years is a very interesting story."—*Athenæum*.

"Mrs. Daniels has irreproachable taste, and the tendencies of her works are more than blameless. She has drawn beautiful and true pictures of women. The story of the heroine's sorrow is deeply pathetic, and her final triumph almost sublime."—*Morning Post*.

---

In 2 Vols. 21s.

## "SKATING ON THIN ICE."

"We select for honorable mention," says the *Times*, "'Skating on Thin Ice.' It is with a safe conscience that we turn to praise 'Skating on Thin Ice.'"

---

In 2 vols., 21s.

## FATHER STIRLING,

By J. Mc'GRIGOR ALLAN;

Author of "The Cost of a Coronet," &c.

"Father Stirling has a moral and social rather than theological purpose. The author's aim being to show by the attractive machinery of a well-told story, the evils of celibacy, which are forcibly illustrated in the type of the amiable Clement Stirling."—*Liverpool Albion*.

"Mr. Allan has depicted, with a dry literal power that is very effective, the mental and spiritual struggles of the poor priest. The work throughout is interesting and valuable."—*London Review*.

"A novel resembling a good drama. It is very interesting."—*Public Opinion*.

"We unhesitatingly pronounce this to be one of the most interesting and certainly the best written novels of the present year."—*Daily Post*.

"Readers who are fond of books written 'with a purpose,' should try 'Father Stirling.'"—*Illustrated Times*.

To be had in all Libraries : A New Novel.

## RAISED TO THE WOOLSACK

By LANGTON LOCKHART.

“To all who are in search of a fascinating novel we recommend ‘Raised to the Woolsack.’ It will please its thousands.”—*Sporting Magazine*.

“Passages of life and character which no one can read without deep interest and advantage.”—*Weekly Register*.

“Mr. Lockhart tells his story pleasantly, and with all the penmanship of a ready writer.”—*Morning Post*.

“One of the best novels we have read for some time. Mr. Lockhart has made his *debut* in the arena of letters in a way which at once entitles him to, and we doubt not will speedily win for him, a large circle of readers.”—*Brighton Gazette*.

“The incidents of the book are natural and exceedingly interesting, and the characters are drawn with a force and skill rarely found in a young author.”—*Brighton Gazette*.

---

In 2 Vols. 21s.

## A HEART TWICE WON,

By H. L. STEVENSON.

Dedicated (by permission of his daughter) to her cousin the late  
W. M. Thackeray.

“A simple story pleasantly told.”—*Bell's Messenger*.

“It will be read with the liveliest interest.”—*Public Opinion*.

---

In 2 vols. Price 21s.

## PHASES OF LIFE.

By MRS. SMITH.

“It will find many interested and admiring readers.”—*Observer*

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

## MIRIAM'S SORROW,

BY MRS. MACKENZIE DANIEL.

"A very interesting story, told with great delicacy and skill."—*Athenæum*.

"It will be a decided favourite."—*Observer*.

---

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

## "THE BELLE OF THE BALL."

"There is much that is good and clever in its execution."—*Bells Messenger*.

"The author takes what lies on the surface of society; he seizes the vanities and vices as he has himself experienced them, and skilfully uses them for the purpose of his pleasing story."—*North of England Advertiser*.

---

In 3 Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

## "ANNE CAVE,"

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "The Dull Stone House," "The Schoolmaster of Alton," &c.

"If 'Anne Cave' be a specimen of what the press of 1864 will produce in works of fiction, the Circulating Libraries will have no reason to complain. It is a charming novel, combining intense interest with fine pictures of rural life in England, life like sketches of French manners, and a heroine whose spirit and determination, united to a loving gentleness, that will fascinate all readers."—*Globe*.

"No one can peruse 'Anne Cave' without deriving a good influence from it; its brilliant touches and life-like portraits impart lustre to its pages."—*Sporting Review*.

---

In 2 vols. Price 21s.

## CROSSING THE BORDER.

"The author sets before us a very fair array of carefully drawn characters, and constantly delights us by the contrasts he establishes

"Crossing the Border is very clever."—*Morning Post*.

In 2 vols., 21s

## NO RELATIONS.

By JULIA CORNER;

Author of "Culverley Rise," "History of Spain," &c.

"A very clever and interesting work conceived in a high spirit and written with great ability."—*Sporting Review*.

---

In 3 Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

## LITTLE FLAGGS, THE ALMSHOUSE FOUNDLING.

By the author of "Myself and my Relatives."

"It is a well told story."—*John Bull*.

"The story is cleverly built up, and crowded with interesting and exciting incidents."—*London Review*.

"The style is clear, nervous, and decided, to a degree which very few novelists take the trouble to attain, or could reach if they would. The story is one of well sustained and ever powerful interest."—*Morning Post*.

---

In 2 vols. 21s.

## A PAGE FROM THE PEERAGE.

"The author gives proof of possessing considerable powers of observation."—*Reader*.

"We close this book in a hurry of pleasurable surprise and approbation, as to warrant a feeling of special gratitude to the author."—*Globe*.

"The book abounds in interesting scenes and situations."—*Morning Post*.

"This novel is unquestionably of a superior character."—*Bell's Messenger*.

In 2 Vols. 21s.

## SIR TIMOTHY GRACELESS.

“There is considerable vivacity and animation, and a constant bustle throughout, which keeps the reader interested to the end.”—*Morning Post*.

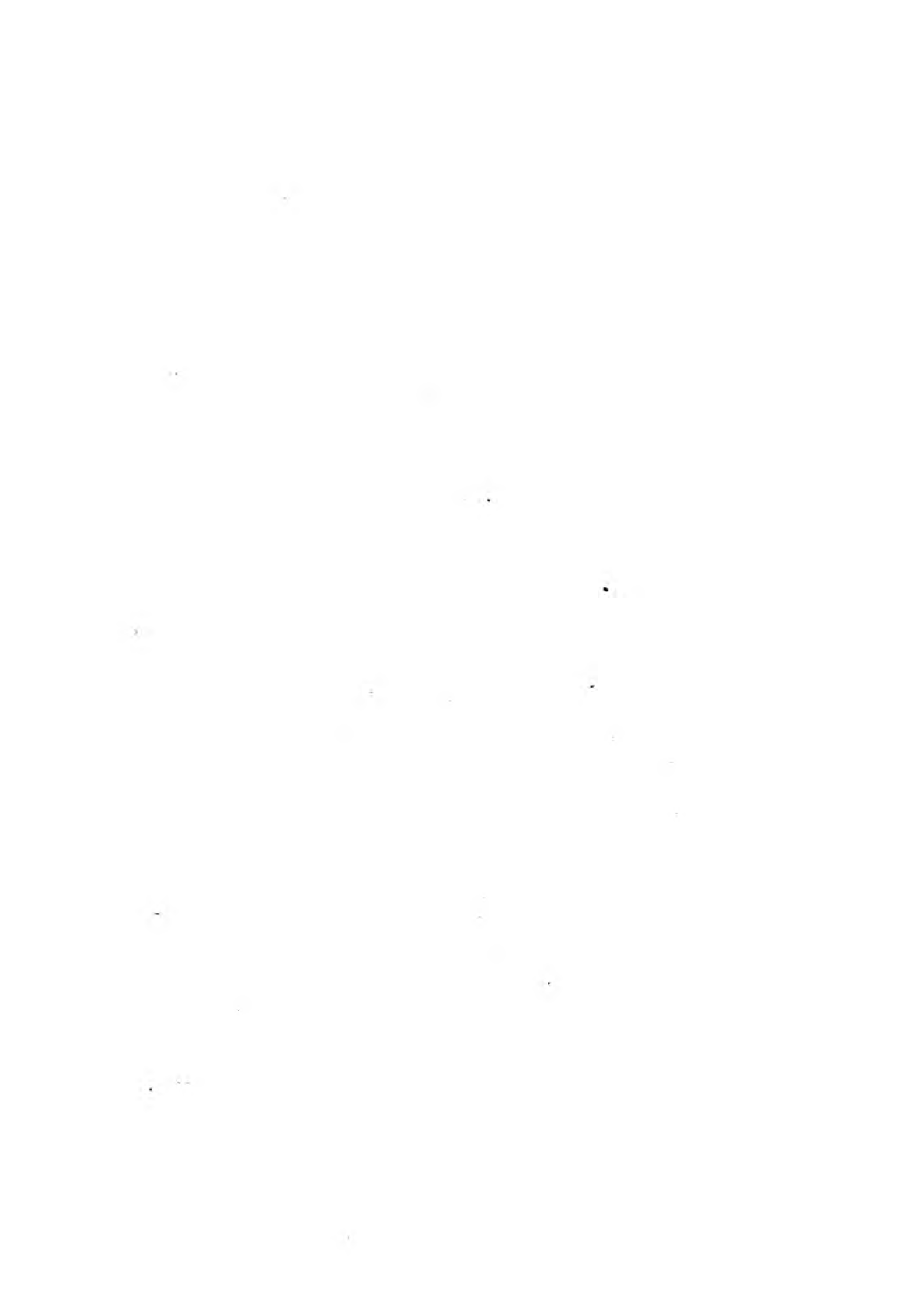
---

## JOAN CAREW.

A NOVEL. BY E. M. O.

“The author had no need to write anonymously, for many who have paraded their names upon the title pages of their literary creations certainly have not had the pretensions which E. M. O. manifests. The plot is cleverly constructed, and the purpose unexceptionable.”—*Bell's Messenger*.





# Popular New Novels.

---

In 3 Vols. 31s. 6d.

## “ELSIE’S MARRIED LIFE,”

BY MRS. MACKENZIE DANIEL,

Author of “My Sister Minnie,” “After Long Years,” &c.

“A prettily told tale, full of life and character.”—*Literary Gazette*.

“Mrs. Daniel has a very varied and fruitful imagination. Her present work possesses much originality in plot, and the reader will derive considerable pleasure and even profit by its lessons.”—*Observer*.

“Mrs. Daniel possesses the art of invariably interesting and pleasing her readers, and in the novel before us she has been more than usually successful. She has mingled with considerable skill the details of domestic life, in which she is so much at home, with a story and plot that cannot fail to attract and fix their attention.”—*Court Circular*.

---

In 3 Vols., 21s.

## WORTH OR BIRTH?

By MRS. ARMITAGE.

“This novel of domestic life will be, as it deserves, one of the most popular works of fiction of the year. There is no pretence about it, and consequently it is natural and truthful, and as interesting as a novel well can be.”—*Daily Examiner*.

In 3 Vols., price 31s. 6d.

W H O D I D I T ?

By W. W. WALPOLE.

“The author displays considerable humour as well as fluency of style. The reader will find the tale amusing.”—*Weekly Dispatch*.

“The book is readable and amusing.”—*Court Circular*.

---

In 3 Vols., price 31s. 6d.

ALL ABOUT THE MARSDENS,

A Chronicle of Every Day Life,

By MRS. WALLER,

Author of “The Crosses of Childhood,” &c.

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

A L I C E F E R A R ,

By E. J. KELLY.

“There are marks of thought and care in this novel, and a good deal of interest.”—*Athenæum*.

---

In 2 Vols., 21s.

BLANCHE OF MONTACUTE,

By MRS. GEORGE HALY.

“Mrs. Haly has a delicate perception of the true and beautiful and the characters are drawn with a skill which give reality to the scenes. Mrs Haly has no difficulty in gaining the sympathies of the public.”—*Public Opinion*.

“It will reward the reader’s pains, and lead to the appreciation of the best and brightest qualities in Mankind.”—*Court Circular*.

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## THE WRONG LETTER.

“Sensation in its feverish symptoms is entirely ignored; but its place is well supplied by an interest in the narrative, which never flags, while it is frequently more than usually thrilling. The language is rich and varied. Every lady who reads this story will imagine that she has at length discovered the novelist *par excellence*.”—*Public Opinion*.

“Full of incidents and character; the story is very interesting.”—*Court Circular*.

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## THE ANGLE HOUSE,

BY HARRY VERNON.

“It is a good novel; the mystery that pervades the book is ingeniously contrived and carried out.”—*Court Circular*.

“A domestic novel full of delineation of character, and deeply interesting. The work exhibits the highest respect and reverence for womanhood in all the relations of life.”—*Oxford Times*.

“No one can complain of lack of talent in this novel, which is really one of the very best we have for a considerable time met with both as regards incident and description.”—*Bell's Messenger*.

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## FLORENCE MANVERS,

By SELINA BUNBURY,

Author of “Life in Sweden,” &c.

---

In 2 Vols. Price 21s.

## BEATRICE LEIGH,

By L. J. CURLING,

Author of “Mary Graham,” &c.

In 1 Vol., 10s. 6d.

## N E L L Y M I L E S .

“This is a pleasant story, with a natural and interesting narrative.”—*Athenæum*.

“It is has a great air of truthfulness about it. The author gives us some spirited descriptions of sea life.”—*Reader*.

“A very pretty and very agreeable story, told with much good feeling. The diction is chaste and pretty. What Rae Rae has written is strongly indicative of a refined taste, and a mind guided by high moral religious tone”—*Public Opinion*.

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d. Second Edition.

## A R I G H T - M I N D E D W O M A N ,

By FRANK TROLLOPE.

“Mr. F. Trollope’s intention is to instruct as well as divert. Persons ignorant of the history of the times will find in the volumes solid information.”—*London Review*.

“The incidents are cleverly worked up, and the interest is unflagging.”—*Observer*.

“This book may be read as a historical panorama, the moving figures being true to the period in which they live, conceived, placed, and moved by a skilful hand, and with excellent judgment. To many readers this book will recall Mr. G. P. R. James’s ‘John Marston Hall’ and other of that writer’s best works, with the graphic ease he displayed, without his exaggerated tendencies.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

“Pure in principle, graceful in diction, pandering to no false taste, yet, as a story full of incident and interest, the ‘Right-Minded Woman’ will we doubt not achieve the position her merit deserves, and establish the reputation of the author.”—*Court Circular*.

“A Right-minded Woman” is a novel which, for development of character, ingenuity of construction, beauty of language, and absorbing interest, is approached by very few. The characters are drawn with consummate skill; and to say that it is interesting, would be to express inadequately the absorbing power it exercises over the attention, and the excitement with which it fills the mind.”—*The Albion*.

In 2 Vols., 21s.

## CECIL FORRESTER,

By F. SHERIDAN.

"It is in developing and describing the tender instincts common to all classes that the author of 'Cecil Forrester' shows his power, and in portraying the eternal weaknesses, passions, and aspirations of our nature that we recognize his mastery."—*Reader*.

---

In 2 Vols., Price 21s.

## KATE KENNEDY,

By the Author of "Wondrous Strange."

"The readers of 'Wondrous Strange' will be prepared for a good novel from the same author, and they will not be disappointed, for 'Kate Kennedy' is the most brilliant, lively, and admirably-sustained story that we have read for a long time."—*Daily Post*.

"Kate Kennedy fulfils all our ideas of what a genuine novel should be, full of lightness and brightness, a book to read as we sit over the winter fire; a story whose interest never fails from the first page to the last; and from whose perusal we rise happier and better."—*Court Circular*.

"It is eminently readable, no small merit; a very pleasant and well-written novel, which we can confidently recommend to our readers."—*Reader*.

"We have read it with a sensation of genuine enjoyment, of quiet heartfelt pleasure. The rarest of emotions, real pleasure, is raised by a perusal of Kate Kennedy."—*Spectator*.

"It will delight the hearts of young lady readers."—*Observer*.

"The plot of this novel is so singular as to command attention. We congratulate the author on having attempted a novel of real life, and succeeded in producing surprising effects."—*Athenæum*.

---

In 4 Vols., £2 2s.

## FORTUNE'S FOOTBALL,

By MRS. MECKIN.

"The interest of the narrative is never allowed to flag. Animated style, bold outline, rich, almost gorgeous colouring. We cordially recommend the work to our readers."—*Dublin Review*.

"The book contains good pictures of historical events, and places of deep interest to every Englishman."—*Observer*.

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## YAXLEY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD,

[By the Author of "Myself and my Relatives."

"The author possesses powers of accurate perception and of vividly presenting sharp, well-defined pictures to her readers, which do no discredit to the pen of Mrs. Gaskell."—*Warder*

"It is an interesting story."—*Illustrated London News*.

"Yaxley and its Neighbourhood is good."—*Stranders' News Letter*.

"Clever, well-constructed, and interesting, without extravagance."

"There is as minute, truthful painting of common things in this novel, as in one of Miss Austen's."—*Warder*.

"The reader feels an immediate attraction towards the poor teacher and his pretty little daughter, while the fine generous nature of Dillon Crosbie is shown by small unobtrusive touches, which are very effective and artistic."—*Morning Post*

"The character of Lizette Stutzer is attractive; and the sketch of her eccentric aunt and Mr. Peggs, shows considerable humour."—*Reader, Feb. 4.*

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## THE QUEEN OF THE SEAS,

By C. F. ARMSTRONG,

Author of "The Two Midshipmen," "The Medora," "The Lily of Devon," &c.

"Crowded with incidents of the most astounding description."—*Reader*.

"The reader goes on with lively impatience and with unflagging interest to the end."—*Bell's Messenger*.

"This novel is extra sensational, and is by far the best of Captain Armstrong's sea tales. Since Captain Marryatt's death this author has surpassed all competitors."—*Express*.

"A large amount of talent exhibited."—*Bell's Messenger*.

"A story of wild and romantic adventure in the centre of Africa, which are very interesting. It is an amusing and spirited book."—*Athenæum*.

"Extraordinary and never-to-be-surpassed adventures. A story of extraordinary merit."—*Public Opinion*.

"Mr. Armstrong's latest book is quite worthy to stand alongside the works of Marryatt, Howard, Glascock, and Chaumier. The book is one that can only fail to amuse dull readers."—*London Review*.

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d.

## REAPING THE WHIRLWIND,

By Mrs. MACKENZIE DANIEL.

"It is well written, full of good principles, and an interesting story  
It is a novel worth reading."—*Athenæum*.

"The most interesting and life-like of all her novels."—*Morning Post*.

---

In 3 Vols., 31s. 6d. Second Edition.

## WONDROUS STRANGE,

By the Author of "Kate Kennedy."

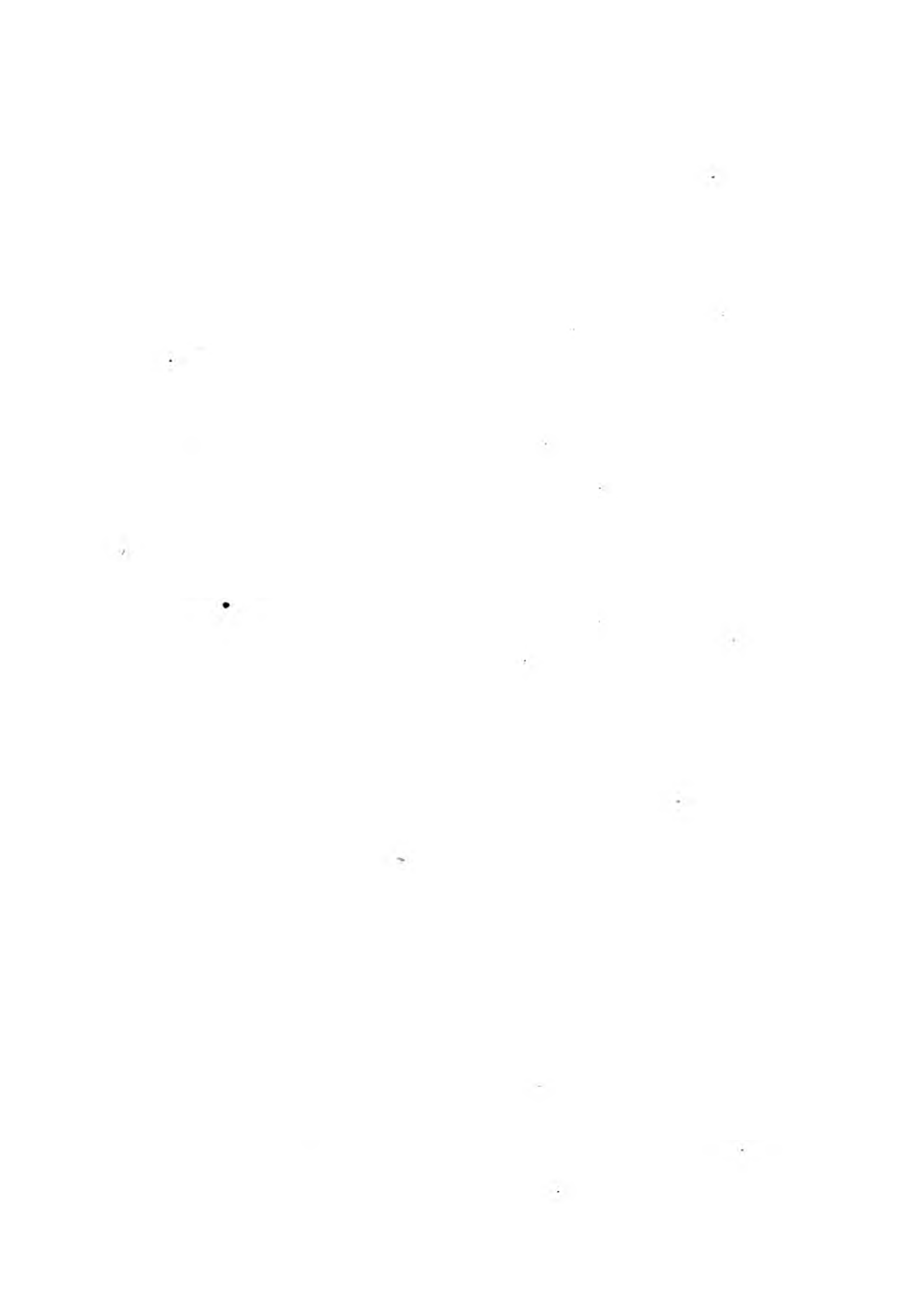
"We emphatically note the high tone of pure principle which pervades whatever the author writes."—*Saturday Review*.

"It may justly claim rank amongst the most powerful tales of its kind. It is the most exciting, the least repulsive, and the best written sensation novel that has been submitted to our notice."  
—*Athenæum*.

---

T. C. NEWBY, 30, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London.





# BEDSTEADS, BEDDING, AND BED ROOM FURNITURE.

---

## HEAL & SON'S

Show Rooms contain a large assortment of Brass Bedsteads, suitable both for home use and for Tropical Climates.

Handsome Iron Bedsteads, with Brass Mountings, and elegantly Japanned.

Plain Iron Bedsteads for Servants.

Every description of Woodstead, in Mahogany, Birch, and Walnut Tree Woods, Polished Deal and Japanned, all fitted with Bedding and Furnitures complete.

Also, every description of Bed Room Furniture, consisting of Wardrobes, Chests of Drawers, Washstands, Tables, Chairs, Sofas, Couches, and every article for the complete furnishing of a Bed Room.

AN

## ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE,

Containing Designs and Prices of 150 articles of Bed Room Furniture, as well as of 100 Bedsteads, and Prices of every description of Bedding

Sent Free by Post.

---

HEAL & SON,  
BEDSTEAD, BEDDING,  
AND  
BED ROOM FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS  
196, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD,  
LONDON. W.

# J. W. BENSON,

WATCH AND CLOCK MAKER, BY WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT, TO  
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES,  
Maker of the Great Clock for the Exhibition, 1862, and of the Chronograph Dial, by  
which was timed "The Derby" of 1862, 1863, and 1864, Prize Medallist, Class  
XXXIII., and Honourable Mention, Class XV, begs respectfully to invite the atten-  
tion of the nobility, gentry, and public to his establishment at  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL,

Which, having recently been increased in size by the incorporation of the two  
houses in the rear, is now the most extensive and richly stocked in London. In

## THE WATCH DEPARTMENT

Will be found every description of Pocket Horological Machine, from the most  
expensive instruments of precision to the working man's substantial time-keeper.  
The stock comprises Watches, with every kind of case, gold and silver, plain,  
engine-turned, engraved, enamelled, chased, and jewelled, and with dials of enamel,  
silver, or gold, either neatly ornamented or richly embellished.

### BENSON'S WATCHES.

"The movements are of the finest  
quality which the art of horology is at  
present capable of producing."—*Il-  
lustrated London News* 8th Nov., 1862.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S WATCHES.

Adapted for every class, climate, and  
country. Wholesale and retail from  
20<sup>0</sup> guineas to 2½ guineas each.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London

### BENSON'S WATCHES.

Chronometer, duplex, lever, horizon-  
tal, repeating, centre seconds, keyless,  
astronomical, reversible, chronograph,  
blind men's, Indian, presentation, and  
railway, to suit all classes.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S WATCHES.

London-made levers, gold from £10  
10s., silver from £5 5s.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S WATCHES.

Swiss watches of guaranteed quality,  
gold from £5 5s ; silver from £2 12s. 6d.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### Benson's Exact Watch.

Gold from £30 ; silver from £24.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### Benson's Indian Watch.

Gold, £23 ; silver, £11 11s.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

## THE HOUSE-CLOCK DEPARTMENT,

For whose more convenient accommodation J. W. BENSON has opened spacious show  
rooms at Ludgate Hill, will be found to contain the largest and most varied stock of  
Clocks of every description, in gilt, bronze, marbles, porcelain, and woods of the  
choicest kinds.

In this department is also included a very fine collection of  
BRONZES D'ART,

BENSON'S ILLUSTRATED PAMPHLET, free by post for three stamps, contains  
a short history of Horology, with prices and patterns of every description of watch  
and clock, and enables those who live in any part of the world to select a watch,  
and have it sent safe by post.

33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

### BENSON'S CLOCKS.

"The clocks and watches were objects  
of great attraction, and well repaid the  
trouble of an inspection."—*Illustrated  
London News*, 8th November, 1862.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S CLOCKS.

Suitable for the dining and drawing  
rooms, library, bedroom, hall, staircase,  
bracket, carriage, skeleton, chime, musi-  
cal, night, astronomical, regulator, shop,  
warehouse, office, counting house, &c.,  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S CLOCKS.

Drawing room clocks, richly gilt, and  
ornamented with fine enamels from the  
imperial manufactories of Sèvres, from  
£200 to £2 2s.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S CLOCKS,

For the dining room, in every shape,  
style, and variety of bronze—red, green,  
copper, Florentine, &c. A thousand  
can be selected from, from 100 guineas  
to 2 guineas.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

### BENSON'S CLOCKS,

In the following marbles:—Black,  
rouge antique, Sienne, d'Egypte, rouge  
vert, malachite, white, rosée, serpen-  
tine, Brocatelle, porphyry, green,  
griotte, d'Ecosse, alabaster, lapis lazuli  
Algerian onyx, Californian.  
33 & 34, LUDGATE HILL, London.

**WILSON'S**  
**PATENT DRAWING-ROOM**  
**BAGATELLE AND BILLIARD TABLES,**  
 WITH REVERSIBLE TOPS.  
 Circular, Oblong, Oval, and other Shapes, in various Sizes,  
 FORMING A HANDSOME TABLE.



Patent Bagatelle Table—Open.



Patent Bagatelle Table—Closed.

Prices from 5 to 25 Guineas. Prospectus Free by post.

**WILSON AND CO., PATENTEES,**  
 Cabinet Makers, Upholsterers, House Agents, Undertakers, &c.,  
 18, WIGMORE STREET (Corner of Welbeck Street), LONDON, W.; also at the  
 MANUFACTURING COURT, CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM.

In 1 Vol. Price 12s.

**ON CHANGE OF CLIMATE,**

A GUIDE FOR TRAVELLERS IN PURSUIT OF HEALTH.

BY THOMAS MORE MADDEN, M.D., M.R.C.S. ENG.

Illustrative of the Advantages of the various localities resorted to by Invalids, for the cure or alleviation of chronic diseases, especially consumption. With Observations on Climate, and its Influences on Health and Disease, the result of extensive personal experience of many Southern Climes.

SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ALGERIA, MOROCCO, FRANCE, ITALY,  
 THE MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS, EGYPT, &c.

“ Dr. Madden has been to most of the places he describes, and his book contains the advantage of a guide, with the personal experience of a traveller. To persons who have determined that they ought to have change of climate, we can recommend Dr. Madden as a guide.”  
 —*Athenæum*.

“ It contains much valuable information respecting various favorite places of resort, and is evidently the work of a well-informed physician.”—*Lancet*.

“ Dr. Madden's book deserves confidence—a most accurate and excellent work.”—*Dublin Medical Review*.

THE  
GENERAL FURNISHING  
AND  
UPHOLSTERY COMPANY

(LIMITED),

F. J. ACRES, MANAGER,

24 and 25, Baker Street, W.

---

The Company are now Exhibiting all the most approved Novelties  
of the Season in

CARPETS, CHINTZES,  
MUSLIN CURTAINS,

And every variety of textile fabric for Upholstery purposes  
constituting the most recherché selection in the trade.

IN THE PRESS.

---

I.

In Three Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

A N O L D M A N ' S S E C R E T .

A Novel.

By FRANK TROLLOPE,

Author of "A Right-Minded Woman."

---

II.

In Three Vols. Price 31s. 6d.

T H E N A V A L L I E U T E N A N T .

A Novel.

By C. F. ARMSTRONG,

Author of "The Two Midshipmen," "The Lily of Devon,"  
"The Medora," "The Queen of the Seas," &c., &c.

**THE TOILET.**—A due attention to the gifts and graces of the person, and a becoming preservation of the advantages of nature, are of more value and importance with reference to our health and well-being, than many parties are inclined to suppose. Several of the most attractive portions of the human frame are delicate and fragile, in proportion as they are graceful and pleasing; and the due conservation of them is intimately associated with our health and comfort. The hair, for example, from the delicacy of its growth and texture, and its evident sympathy with the emotions of the mind; the skin, with its intimate relation to the most vital of our organs, as those of respiration, circulation and digestion, together with the delicacy and susceptibility of its own texture; and the teeth, also, from their peculiar structure, formed as they are, of bone or dentine, and cased with a fibrous investment of enamel; these admirable and highly essential portions of our frames, are all to be regarded not merely as objects of external beauty and display, but as having an intimate relation to our health, and the due discharge of the vital functions. The care of them ought never to be entrusted to ignorant or unskilful hands; and it is highly satisfactory to point out as protectors of these vital portions of our frame the preparations which have emanated from the laboratories of the Messrs. Rowlands, their unrivalled Macassar for the hair, their Kalydor for improving and beautifying the complexion, and their Odonto for the teeth and gums.

---

NEW NOVELS IN THE PRESS.

---

In Three Vols.

IT MAY BE TRUE.

By MRS. WOOD.

---

In Three Vols.

TREASON AT HOME.

By MRS. GREENOUGH.





