

Church," cried Hepzibah, "and a righteous and God-fearing man."

"I pity them all," said Carmelita, "but we must not talk about religion. Only, I do wish I could warm a little this cold house and this cold village."

With which enigmatical words, Carmelita went down to the brick courtyard, where she had had a little seat put up for herself in the sunniest corner, which was, however, shaded by the great tree, just overhead. There she sat, while the rooks cawed so loudly and the robins twittered so mirthfully that the little Spanish canzonetta she was singing, was almost drowned.

Here she was first seen by three persons, who were simultaneously approaching the house: Minister Jenkins, whose fame had already reached her by Hepzibah; the Catholic Priest, Father Brady, pastor of a very poor and scattered flock, and Andrew Rutherford, the rich and handsome son of a neighboring property-holder and who had but lately returned from abroad.

Of these three, who observed her keenly and closely, the priest was the only one who passed through the gate and addressed her. Minister Jenkins was eyeing her, with the instinctive feeling of the war horse scenting the battle from afar, for despite Hepzibah's caution in the many interviews which she had had with curious neighbors, and despite her desire to keep the disgraceful truth a secret, rumors concerning Carmelita's religion had already got abroad. Andrew Rutherford took up his station in the shadow of a tree. He was not ashamed to stand thus concealed and observe the most delightful picture which, he said to himself, had ever met his eyes in this grim New England village. And thus he saw and heard Carmelita's interview with the priest. Minister Jenkins had likewise observed it from another vantage corner. Carmelita had arisen a little surprised, a little doubtful. After a quick glance, a strange little cry of delight escaped her.

"Oh, *Padre mio*, forgive me, sir, but you are a priest?"

"Yes, my child," said Father Brady, "and you are the young Spanish lady of whom I have heard."

"Oh, the joy of seeing a priest once more. Oh, *Padre*, you cannot guess what it has been. And the church, is it near?"

"A good two miles," said the priest.

"I shall go there to-day."

"You must not attempt to go alone," said Father Brady. "It is far and some factories to be passed, where there are plenty of rough characters."

"Hepzibah, perhaps, will go with me."

"Not unless you have brought a talisman from the south to charm her," said the priest, smiling, as a remembrance of certain passages between him and the old woman came to his recollection. "I go away from home to-morrow for a month, that is I have to visit outlying districts under my charge. When I come back I shall see what can be done."

"Can I not drive there?" asked Carmelita.

The priest shook his head.

"It is not customary here to take out any vehicle on the Sunday."

"Not even to go to church," said Carmelita, wonderinglly.

"Not even to go to church," repeated the priest, with a twinkle in his eye, "so rigidly do our Puritan fellow townsmen keep, not their Sabbath of the Bible, but our Sunday of the christian church. But I must leave you now, my child."

"So soon," said Carmelita, regretfully.

"I am on my way home from a sick call. But we shall be better acquainted soon, I hope."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]