

to rest and refresh themselves, that they might ride on more cheerily to Oxford in the afternoon. Dorothy assented, and they turned down the stony path, past the green duck-pond, and on to the house door, from which a little old woman came out to receive them. Jasper knew her well, or he would not have trusted her.

"Any Roundheads about, mother?" was his first question.

"I've seen none," said the old woman. "Bless us! and who be ye?"

"You know me. I've been this way before, and eaten of your bread, too," answered Jasper. "This lady's in trouble; she's fleeing from her enemies, and going to her friends in Oxford. Will you give us an hour's rest, and a morsel of food?"

"That I will. Come in, my pretty lamb: this rough work shouldn't be for the likes of you;" and the old woman led the way into her kitchen.

Dorothy was almost too tired to answer her questions, or to do anything but sit still. Jasper soon came in, after fastening the horses into a shed, and giving them such hay as he could find.

"The crop-ears don't come this way, then?" said he to the old woman, as he sat down to his bread and cheese, which Dorothy begged him to eat without thinking of her; she was not hungry, she said.

"Nay, they don't shew their faces among honest folk hereabouts. We have some ranting fellows here sometimes, though. There be King's men that have nought good about them but their cause."

"Ay," said Jasper. "Wild sparks, many of 'em."

"Marry! they'll have what they want, or burn the house about your ears. And if my old ears tell true, there be hoofs clattering e'en now down the lane. We shall have 'em here, sure enow, and they'll drink every drop o' cider in the house."

"Royalists as they are, my lady will be safer out of the way," said Jasper, anxiously. "Is there no place where you can hide her, dame?"

"Come up hither with me, my lamb," said the old woman to Dorothy, who rose and followed her up a kind of ladder, which led to a little room under the thatch. "They'll ne'er find you here," said their hostess, and without stopping to be thanked, she closed the door and descended, just as a number of clattering hoofs were coming down the dell.

Dorothy sat still in her shelter, and listened to the sounds below. From the little window in the roof she could see nothing but the waving tops of trees: downstairs there seemed to be a frightful confusion going on: such a stamping and thumping, and shouting of rough voices, and now and then loud bursts of laughter; but no one came to molest her in her hiding-place. Presently the noises all mingled together, like the sound of a rowing sea, and Dorothy, worn out with fatigue and excitement, fell asleep on the foot of the old woman's low straw bed.

(To be continued.)

"EXCELSIOR."

If thy life seems dull and dreary,
And thy path beset with care,
Raise thine eyes above to heaven,
All is bright and peaceful there.

If the sun has hid his splendour,
Far beneath his western home,
Firmly fix thy gaze the higher,
One by one the stars will come.

For as darker grows the landscape,
Brighter still the stars will shine;
And as earthly pleasures fail thee,
Thou wilt taste of joys divine.

When life's little constant trials
Press upon thee day by day,
And a weary sense of failure
Tempts thee almost to give way;

Do not let thy fears unnerve thee;
Do not let thy courage fail;
Look beyond each cloud of trouble,
And thou surely shalt prevail.

Though our work on earth is given us,
Our reward is held above,
Purchased not with worldly motives,
But by faith and heavenly love.

Earthly hopes will disappoint us—
Not for earthly hopes we live—
We must take a higher standard
Than the World will ever give.

Onward! onward! ever onward!
Is the aim it would impart:
Upward! upward! ever upward!
Is the language of the heart.

NINA.