

AT THE CHURCH DOOR.

The bell now rings for evensong,
Full toned and sweet;
And seems with angel voice to say,
"Come, come, ye sons of men, and pay
Your worship meet."

Here let me leave the world behind,
With all its care;
Lay down a while my weary load,
E'en at the gates of this abode
Of peace and prayer.

Here let me keep my foot aright,
And pure my heart;
Put on humility—for near
Is One who reads my soul most clear
In every part.

Here let me ask of Him who said,
"I am the Door,"
That I through Him may entrance find,
And e'er dispose my heart and mind
To love Him more.

OUR NELL.

CHAPTER VIII.

The friendly relation thus set on foot between Nell and Derwent had, within the next few weeks, considerable opportunity of becoming fairly established. Very few days elapsed on which either chance or design did not bring to pass a meeting. Derwent kept his promise of calling upon Mr Masters, and his first visit led to many others. His intercourse with the Masters' household was a source of amusement and refreshment to him, relieving to some extent the sober monotony of life at the Vicarage. The first sketch was not the only work for his pencil that the picturesque old farm afforded, and he gratified Mrs. Masters' motherly pride by making a picture of Nell with Bobby on her shoulder, as he had first seen her in the hayfield.

He had, in a rare degree, the faculty for being "all things to all men." Instinctively he presented to each person that side of himself which could best win their regard. Mr Masters enjoyed a talk with him, and said he had a deal of sense, in spite of his book-learning. Mrs. Masters, who was not indifferent to gentle flattery, repeatedly declared that for affability he was beyond anything. To the boys he was as much a boy as they, and with the prestige of age and superiority to make his comradeship irresistible. Nell, her suspicion once disarmed and her liking gained, became his staunch ally. It is not easy to discriminate character in one who is far above us in station and culture. Her nature, remarkably unsusceptible to the influence of minds outside the narrow circle of her sympathies, within that limit was quick to apprehend and to learn. Hitherto, the glorious shows of earth and sky had daily unfolded themselves, unheeded, before her indifferent eyes. But now she learnt from Derwent to watch the pageantry of the sunset sky, to mark the shadows flying over the sunny fields of wheat, to stop to listen to the murmurs of the brook, to love the little birdseye for its dainty blue, and the poppy for its glowing scarlet. Nell would have pined in a town—the sights and sounds of the fields and woods were part of her very life, but such feelings had been latent, waiting an awakening touch to spring forth into consciousness.

Perhaps Derwent had at first imagined that a flirtation with this girl would be a pleasant and natural consequence of their acquaintanceship; but if so, he discovered speedily that flirtation was out of the question. Nell was destitute of the coquettish instinct. Derwent found that the slightest approach to familiarity disturbed the friendliness of their relation to each other.

One sunny afternoon, Derwent lay on his back by the side of the brook that divided Mr. Masters' fields from those of the neighbouring farm. Meadow-sweet and willow-herb mingled their odours in the soft air, and the murmur

and the splash of the water sounded in his ears. A volume of poems had fallen from his hand, and he lay in a luxurious dreaminess, in which identity was lost, and he seemed but a part of the summer life which nature was carrying on in that quiet nook.

Quick footsteps roused him; he pushed back his hat from his eyes and looked up. Nell was crossing the little wooden bridge with a basket on her arm. He called to her—

"Nell, come over here and say good-day to me."

Nell turned round, and answered, laughing, "I can say that from here, sir. I mustn't wait; I'm very busy to-day."

"Oh, come, I'm sure you can spare a minute or two. I haven't had a soul to speak to all the afternoon," and Derwent leaned on his elbow and looked beseechingly. "Come here, I've something I want to read to you."

Nell's curiosity was roused. She did not pursue her journey, and finally, as Derwent picked up his book, she came towards him, though with reluctant steps. He hastily turned over the leaves, but finding nothing suitable, he chose at random, and began to read.

"How do you like it?" he inquired, when he had read two verses.

"Not much; but that about the eyes makes me think of Carry."

"The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen."

repeated he. "Yes, that's rather pretty. And who is Carry?"

"Eh, sir! didn't you know? I thought you must have heard us talk of Carry! Why she's my sister!"

"Your sister! I didn't know you had one."

"She's not often at home, you see. She lives mostly with my grandmother Harrison in Grayfield. She's been there since quite a little thing, and she likes it a great deal better than the country."

"Is she older, or younger than you?"

"Oh, she's two years older, and not a bit like me. She's soft-like, and small, and afraid of hurting herself, and you're afraid of hurting her, too. She's just a caud lamb. Maybe you'll see for yourself, sir, for there's a talk of her coming home next week. But I must not stay another minute."

Nell turned to go, but Derwent cried—
"Stop a minute. There's something I really want you to hear. I only read the other to prevent your going off, but I'm sure you'll like this," and he began to repeat, in very spirited fashion—

"Half a league, half a league, half a league onward!"

Nell's attention was riveted from the first words. She sat herself down on the grass, and there remained motionless, her large eyes dilated. Derwent liked an attentive listener, and he was pleased with the success of his experiment. He had expected the martial music of the piece would take her fancy. When it was over she gave a sigh, and said—

"Eh, sir! I didn't know there were things like that in poetry-books. They seem mostly sing-song, to me, without any meaning in them. But there's plenty of meaning in this one, if only I knew all about it."

Derwent told her the world-renowned history. Nell listened rapt, and had no thought of going. When he finished, she said good-bye hastily, and passed quickly on her way.

A few days afterwards, Derwent called at the farm in the evening, and, hearing Nell's voice through the open window, he paused to listen. She was telling Jack and Bob the story of the heroes of Balaclava. Derwent waited till the end, with a pleased amused expression on his handsome face. When he greeted Nell, she came up to him eagerly, with a flush on her face, and said—"Oh, sir, I wanted to see you. I have been thinking there is something for you to do. You could go and be a soldier."

Derwent felt oddly disconcerted. He turned away, and played with Bobby.

(To be continued)

SPEAKING A KIND WORD.

On a Sixth avenue street-car, going down town, the conductor stopped for two little children to get off. They were nicely dressed, and evidently of a family that ought not to let children so small go on the cars unattended. If parents are unable to send some one with their little ones, they should keep them at home.

The conductor took them in charge, stepped off the car with them, and placed them safely on the sidewalk. His careful attention to the children struck me so pleasantly that, when he returned to his place and the car was again in motion, I said to him:

"It was very kind in you to take such good care of those children."

He did not know just how to take the remark, fearing that I was making light of it, and asked what I meant. I repeated it, and added that it was very pleasant to see him so considerate of children that were for a moment in his care. He was touched, and the tears actually moistened his eyes as he answered:

"Well, sir, I've been on these cars ten years, and that's the first kind word that was ever spoken to me."

I did not tell him it was rare for any one to have the chance. Yet it was very true that they, and all men in similar employments, are brought into collision daily with all sorts of people, and especially unreasonable men and women; their tempers are tried, and, being men of little culture, they easily give way to ill temper, and say and do what they ought not. They speak hastily, and get the reputation of being morose and brutal.

Yet there is not a set of men in the world who need more to be treated with forbearance, charity and kindness, than these men on the car, omnibus and stage-lines. Exposed to all weathers, worked early and late, with scant time to eat and sleep, separated largely from social and domestic relations, tempted to indulge in strong drink, and rarely receiving religious instruction, it is not strange if they become worse than any other laboring men. But some of them are sober, intelligent, Christian men, industrious, frugal and saving, with families well cared for, and for whom they have all the affection of the best of fathers. To speak roughly to such men is fearfully wrong.

But there are few men in any responsible business on whom a word of kindness is lost. It cost nothing to be not only civil, but polite. There is a difference in the meaning of *civil* and *polite*, although at the root they are nearly the same word. And the thought that the more cultured a man is, the more unwilling he should be to let any other man excel him in politeness, will impel every thoughtful person to be kind, gentle and charitable to his equals and inferiors as well as to those whom he knows to be his superiors.

The conductor on whom I dropped a word of praise for well-doing was encouraged to do the same and more in the future. Probably he told his wife of it when he went home, after his long day of work was over. And they had a secret joy in the thought that a "well done" had been earned, and said by a stranger: indeed a stranger, but one who had sympathy with a humble servant trying to be faithful in the "few things" given him to do. And if he and his wife read the Bible, as I suppose they do, they will remember that kindness to the least, even to children and to strangers, is seen of the Great Master, and will not lose its reward in the day when he sits on his throne of judgment.

The more we do, the more we can do; the more busy we are, the more leisure we have.

Calumny would soon starve and die of itself if nobody took it in and gave it lodging.

Children's Department.

DOLLY'S CHRISTENING.

"I'll be the goodest little girl
That ever you did see,
If you'll let me take my dolly
To church with you and me,
It's too drefful bad to leave her,
When we's all gone away;
Oh! Cosette will be so lonesome
To stay at home all day."

'Twas such a pleading pair of eyes,
And winsome little face,
That mamma couldn't well refuse,
Though the church was not the place
For dolls or playthings, she knew well
Still, mamma's little maid
Was always so obedient,
She didn't feel afraid.

No mouse was ever half so still
As this sweet little lass,
Until the sermon was quite through,
Then this did come to pass:
A dozen babies (more or less),
Dressed in long robes of white,
Were brought before the chancel rail—
A flash of heaven's own light.

Then Mable stood upon the seat,
With dolly held out straight,
And this is what the darling said;
"Oh! minister please to wait,
And wash my dolly up like that—
Her name is Cosette"
The "minister" smiled and bowed his
head,
But mamma blushes yet.

THE LITTLE SONGSTRESS.

A little girl is singing in a small school-room in a large street of Stockholm. She is brushing and dusting and singing, for mother is the mistress, and she helps to keep the school-room in order; and she warbles as she works, like a happy bird in spring-time. A lady one day happened to ride by in her carriage; the little girl's song reached her ear, and the ease, and the grace and sweetness of her voice touched her heart. The lady stopped her carriage and went to hunt the little songstress. Small she indeed was, and shy, and not pretty, but of a pleasing look.

"I must take your daughter to Craelius," said the lady to her mother—Craelius was a famous music master—she has a voice that will make her fortune."

Make her fortune! ah, what a great make that must be, I suppose the child thought, and wondered very much. The lady took her to the music master, who was delighted with her voice, and said:

"I must take her to Count Puche," a great judge in such matters.

Count Puche looked coldly at her, and gruffly asked what the music master expected him to do with such a child as that.

"Only hear her sing," said Craelius. Count Puche consented to do that; and the instant she finished, he cried out, well pleased. "She shall have all the advantages of Stockholm academy."

So the little girl found favor, and her sweet voice charmed all the city. She sang and studied and studied and sang. She was not yet twelve, and was she not in danger of being spoiled? I suppose her young heart often beat with a proud delight as praises fell like showers upon her. But God took care of her.

One evening she was announced to sing a higher part than she had ever had, and one which had long been her ambition to reach. The house was full, and everybody was looking out for the little favorite. Her time came, but she was mute. She tried but her silvery notes were gone; her master was angry, her friends were filled with surprise and regret, and the poor little songstress, how she dropped her head! Did her voice come back the next day? No, nor the next, or next, or next. No singing voice, and so her beautiful dream of fame and fortune suddenly faded away.