

she told all that was in her heart, and sought sympathy from a fellow-woman.

"I had a dear mother once; she died when I was very young, but I remember her as if she were with me now. I loved her so, and she understood me—no one else ever did. All my life I have gone on loving her and yearning after her. I used to pray God to let her come and kiss me and tuck me up just once more and then I lay awake waiting for her. I was so sure she would come, for had not God, the great loving God, said that whatsoever we should ask in prayer believing, we should receive.

"I used to watch far into the night, getting up now and then to keep myself awake and finally crying myself to sleep. I was such a lonely child, there wasn't anyone I could talk to about it; and after a time, young as I was, I grew rebellious. I remember saying one day, that I did not think God could be very good, or He would keep His promises, and I was punished for daring to utter such blasphemy. But I said I did not care, but should still think the same, and began to distrust and hate my step-mother. I wanted my own mother so, and I could not see why God should have taken her away from me. So I began, when quite a child, to ask deep questions which were never answered for me, and I have been asking them ever since.

"I was tired with the wrestling and trying to force myself into a state of acquiescence to the inevitable when Jack died. I can't tell you what I felt then, but I do not think anything in the world could ever make up for such anguish. Oh, Miss Merton!" and she turned her eyes, dim and strained, to her companion's face. "Life is fearfully hard, and it is, as it were, thrust upon us unasked; if only those who wished might give it up and be nothingness. It seems such a little thing to ask; just to be no more." She paused and turned her eyes to the window, fixing them on a solitary star in the deepening sky.

Elsie was silent a few minutes, then she asked, in a low voice, "Has it ever occurred to you, Mrs. Fawcett, to think

why we don't give up our lives, when we so much want to? Why don't you give yours up?"

"Yes, I have thought about it; for some reason or other I think it would be cowardly. It is so like turning back and running away in the fight. Also, there is always the probability that a life given up in this world may have to be taken again in another, though how, or when, or where, I have not the faintest idea. Miss Merton," and she turned suddenly to her with a wistful, yearning look in her eyes, like a little child asking to be taught, "tell me what you think about it all? You are good and true; I believe in you, perhaps you could help me. I am not really so bad and heartless as I seem. I would be better if I could, but everything is so confusing."

"There is one thing that I cling to with desperation," said Elsie slowly, "and when everything seems slipping away beneath my feet, I have found it an anchor that has never failed me. It is just that God is love. That if we look into our own hearts, and read the deep passionate love we human beings are capable of, then place it beside God's love—it is as a grain of sand to the sea-shore."

"Yes," exclaimed Madge, with a sudden return of bitterness and scepticism, "they tell us that in the pulpit, and many other things with it of their own imagination.

"Oh, Miss Merton!" she continued, and her voice again grew plaintive. "Only to think of the sadness and helplessness and sorrow of this strange life of ours. We see the innocent trodden under foot and the wicked triumphant; we see our dear ones struck down in the prime of life, making our world a wilderness; we see terrible diseases eating all the pleasure out of life and leaving the sufferers to drag on, longing for death, while Death passes them by and takes the strong and ardent, who long to live.

"We see our cherished hopes die silently, one by one, and our ambitions fade into nothingness. We meant to be so good and noble. We meant to do such great things and be everywhere

beloved for them. But as the years came, they only brought struggle on struggle and sorrow on sorrow, until worn with conflict we lost heart and went with the throng.

"We learn to know that it is folly to say of any sorrow, 'It is too hard, I cannot bear it,' for there is no known limit to the capability of suffering in the human heart. We can bear all things, even a life without sunshine and a blackness in the heavens and a silence, when we raise our hands in passionate prayer to God. Oh, Miss Merton," and her voice trembled, "they think I don't care. They call me heartless. When I have heard people talking together over someone's sorrow, I have always been silent and they taxed me with indifference. They thought I was silent because I did not care, but it was because I cared so much; I could not trust myself to speak.

"When I see anyone in trouble, I long to fold the sufferer in my arms and comfort him. But it is impossible, no one can help him; everyone must bear his sorrow for himself; there is no escape and little relief, unless it is enforced indifference. Oh! to know why these things are! Just to know why they are good if they are good! Just to know if there really is a God who sees all and cares."

She covered her face with her hands and bent her head. The girl's strong heart had burst its bounds at last. For years she had been schooling it into indifference; with a relentless hand she had done her best to crush feeling from it; little by little she had built an icy barrier of reserve about it, and now, a few words of true sympathy, a large-hearted tenderness and her labour of years is all undone. The old striving and struggling; the old yearning for some One to worship and something to reverence, reasserts itself and will not be silenced.

Far from being crushed, it had strengthened and increased like wheat, hidden away in the hard ground, and now that God's sunshine, in the form of a true woman's tenderness has found it out, it leaps into new life.

(To be continued.)

## VARIETIES.

"THE CROWN AND FLOWER OF CREATION."—We have no wish whatever to say a word against the education of women. By all means let it be thorough and the best possible for the purpose of making woman what God intends her to be—the crown and flower of creation. He would not have given women brains if he had not intended them to be developed. Faculties are so many talents strictly to be accounted for. The knowledge of Latin and Greek, mathematics and science, are most valuable not only as serving to develop brain-power, but also as antidotes against the undue development of the senses; but the nurture of little children, the opening of the infant understanding and affections, the training of the will, and the guidance of the early steps, physical, mental, and moral—who is to do it except women? If women are

working away from home, whether in professions or in handicrafts, what becomes of the children and future workers of the world? By all means let women work, and work hard. Let them work for money or for fame, as suits them best; but first and foremost comes mother's work if women are married, and mother's work and influence is both the glory and the prize of women's vocation.—From *The Spectator*.

ENGLISH GOVERNESSES IN SPAIN: A WARNING.—The British Consul in Bilbao, in his latest report, mentions that it has happened more than once during the past year that an English lady has gone to him in an almost destitute condition, having been discharged without warning from a situation as governess in a Spanish family. No miscon-

duct was alleged in any case; but the governess was regarded by her employers as a servant, and had been treated in accordance with Spanish custom, by which either master or servant can terminate the engagement without notice. It seems that it is not illegal to suddenly order a young girl, a foreigner, who may be without money or friends, and unable to speak the language, out of the house, however unseemly it may be. Accordingly, the Consul advises English governesses not to enter Spanish families without a written agreement defining the terms of the engagement and stipulating for notice. They would do well, also, to register themselves at the nearest British Consulate. The Consul also hopes that this warning may be widely circulated in the United Kingdom, and especially in Ireland.—From *The Times*.