

The House of Egremont

voices in the choir and congregation. It breathed of hope, of gladness, of peace, of a willingness to suffer, of joy in doing rightly, of all that the human soul should feel which lives not for itself, but for something higher. No one need pity Bess Lukens, a woman so strong, so tender, so truly humble in heart, who, beginning with all the burdens that could drag a woman downward, had yet contrived to uplift herself,—soul, mind, heart,—and would go on, becoming better herself and making others better. So thought Roger Egremont when the music died away, the priest left the altar, every human being but himself went out of the church, and he remained to think reverently and tenderly of her who had been a friend when he most needed one, and whom he had once reckoned so far beneath him that he was ashamed to own that he knew her, and now he justly counted so far, so far above him!

Next morning, at sunrise, Roger Egremont and Michelle were married in the old chapel. There was but a handful of persons present; the King and Queen, as became the master and mistress of faithful servants, Berwick, the Duchess de Beaumanoir, and François, — not a dozen in all. When the benediction had been pronounced, and Roger Egremont and his wife walked out of the chapel, the sun was just blazing over the tree tops in the forest; the gorgeous pennons of the day were advancing over all the earth. A delicate silver haze lay over the low-lying meadows through which the river flowed mysteriously, sometimes showing itself, and then veiling itself in misty splendor. The shrill, sweet song of birds rang softly from those fair meadows; it was far away, and the echoes were faint, as if they came from elfland. One happy bird, cutting the blue