

cheerful activity which makes exertion of energy and ingenuity a delight. Their mother used no evasion with them. She told them plainly that business was bad, that there had been misfortune and loss, and might be more.

She felt there was a lesson for her and their father, in the courage with which the younger ones received the news. They had no sad knowledge of the world to forewarn them concerning those subtle bitternesses of defeat and loss which lie apart from plainer food, coarser raiment, and less money to spend. She felt that such cheerfulness if safely kept through knowledge acquired and experience gained, would be indeed that spirit of eternal youth of which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mrs. Bristo could not quite understand Gilbert's feelings. She realised that though he was the only independent member of the family, yet he was likely to suffer first and most by any change in its position. For one thing, support might be claimed where he had hitherto received furtherance and countenance. Besides, the mother's love, like all true love, was not blind to the weakness of her eldest son. He had not that "high thinking" which makes "plain living" easy. She had observed the little pleasures of his own choice had been of the dainty sort, such as elaboration of personal appointments. Yet Gilbert did not at first manifest the discontent she had dreaded; indeed, she could have fancied that he felt a little secret satisfaction. Something in his manner troubled her. He was certainly very kind; he resumed many little filial ministrations in which he had latterly slackened. Yet the gulf which had opened between them did not close, and the mother felt sure that her son's innermost life was shut against her, and the old simple affection was held in abeyance to some secret thought which her heart could hear, though her mind could not.

She felt as if she must once more welcome the dear Aunt Mary to the old home and the familiar ways. She wrote to her, telling briefly of the gathering trouble, and summing up, "Come and be with us." Next day Aunt Mary was there.

When she saw the old lady, Mrs. Bristo broke down, as she had never yet once broken.

"What changes there will be!" she sobed. "Child," said Aunt Mary to the woman with fast whitening hair, "changes are good—changes are wholesome. We have to make changes for ourselves—shall we not take them gladly when God gives them to us?"

"See how bright the children are," she went on. "A new way of life may be made as good for them as going to a new country. There is nothing makes such fine men and women as roughing it. It brings out all the resources in the brain, and all the strength in the muscles. I have heard a millionaire say that fortunes might be made as readily in England as abroad, if people would do the same things here that they do there."

"The children are very good, I know," said Mrs. Bristo; "but that only makes me feel so sorry for them. There are some things which fret me which they don't know as yet. The thought of harder fare and harder work for them does not trouble me. But how will they take it when they find that old acquaintances forget them, and that the world in general meets them with a different face from that which has smiled upon them hitherto? Lizzie is going to take some of her drawings to a dealer's. Pretty as they are, she will hear very plain truths about them there. That would not matter if it were not that friendly praises will grow silent about the same time."

"Ah, I see the case you are trying to state," said Aunt Mary. "You wonder how your children will feel when they find out the hollowness of the world! Each of us have to do it, sooner or later. Nobody can be said to be equipped for the business of life till he has thoroughly learned two lessons—first, that the less we expect from most people the less we shall be disappointed—that many of the pretty phrases and professions of polite acquaintanceship are like paper notes upon a bank without funds. And second, that there are a few people from whose fidelity one cannot expect too much, since they will always rise beyond our expectations. In truth, Emma, sternest reality and sweetest romance ever lie side by side, so that who escapes the one loses the other."

"I know that what one must call 'hard lives' are the most interesting to read about," said Mrs. Bristo; "but, then, I think I have heard a phrase to the effect that 'Blessed is the man or the nation that has no history.'"

"You might as well say, 'Blessed is the savage above the philosopher,' ay, and 'Thrice blessed is the pig beyond the poet,'" said Aunt Mary. "Why, Emma, the best part in life is not our voluntary sacrifices, often as cheap as they are showy. It is rather our cheerfulness and zeal in our involuntary obedience to the great wheel of circumstance—the visible hand of God. Therefore he for whom it revolves most swiftly and sternly has the true post of honour. Horace Bushnell declared that 'necessity is a good mother,' and that he desired no other to be

the nurse of his children. Ah, Emma, just now you owned that the flattery is kept for amateur art, and so the loudest praises are generally given to amateur virtue. But it is the art or the virtue which is set to practical uses and called out by stress of hard facts, which win the true prizes at last."

She went on, "I never like to hear one form which approbation of any good work often assumes. You constantly hear it said, 'He or she undertakes such a task out of pure love. They do not need money. Well and good, so far; but they might do the work quite as well—possibly better—if they did need money. The necessity for earning money might have been part of God's call to that particular work. People are not made mercenary by requiring to earn money, but by doing for money what they would not do for love, or by doing that which earns most money, instead of that which they can do best, and which is best to be done. To have to earn our bread is a clear call to work, and to earn it is one clear good accomplished by work; and no work can be the less worthy for starting from such sound ground."

"And remember, for everything which your children seem to lose there is something to be gained. Are they set to hard physical labour instead of gymnastic exercises and deportment lessons? Then think what Raskin says—I believe an immense gain in the bodily health and happiness in the upper classes would follow on their daily endeavouring, however clumsily, to make the physical exertions they now necessarily exert in amusement, definitely serviceable. It would be far better, for instance, that a gentleman should mow his own field than ride over other people's. Will they have to hear plain truths carelessly said, or unjust blame wantonly said? Never mind. Gold may be trampled in the mud, but the sun will leave it high and dry by-and-by, and then somebody will pick it up. An author once told me that the highest honour his work had ever received had come to him through a bitterly adverse review. The critic opened the vials of his contempt, and quoted our author that he might hold up his very words to obloquy. That quotation caught the eye of a leader in literature. The great man admired the small one had ridiculed, and sought out the obscure writer. We never know how things will end."

"Many bright paths are entered by dark doors. As Bishop Taylor says, 'If a man could have opened one of the pages of the Divine Counsel, and could have seen the event of Joseph's being sold to the merchants of Amalek, he might with much reason have dried up the young man's tears.' He says, again, 'virtues and discourses are like friends, necessary in all fortunes; but those are the best which are friends in our sadness and support us in our sorrows and sad accidents.'"

"We leave this house as soon as possible," said Mr. Bristo, "and we go to the smallest we can find. It does not matter much to us," he added, rather bitterly.

"What does that remark mean?" inquired Aunt Mary.

"It was said to me to-day," he answered. "Somebody said, 'You have not far down to go. It is so different with the poor Dumens, who have had to give up carriages and horses and go to live in a little poky villa.' And the Dumens have not paid a shilling in the pound, and the house they have retired to now is better than this which we have got to leave, and Damien was a shop-boy, speculating with borrowed money, when my father started me in business with solid capital. Yet he is to be pitied for having to give up what he should never have had!"

"And do you covet the pity?" asked Aunt Mary. "Dear me, Alec, are you really sorry that your own wisdom and moderation have saved you from a sensational ruin?"

Mr. Bristo smiled reluctantly. "No," he said; "but one gets so stung at times, that one strikes out wildly. Some old acquaintances have been giving me hints as to purchases they would like to make, as they hear there is to be a sale of my furniture."

"How strange it will be to see the familiar things in other people's houses!" said Mrs. Bristo.

"You will be spared that, my dear," said Mr. Bristo; "they will soon forget our address, and drop us."

"Which will save you the painful necessity of dropping them," observed Aunt Mary; "for, of course, even mere acquaintances, like the smallest coins, cannot be retained when we have proved them base."

"And yet," returned Mr. Bristo, "I would rather have the plain unfeelingness of these than the mock friendliness of others. There is one man who has said to me so often how much he wished he had some spare money to lend me, that I felt almost as much obliged to him as if he had lent it. But to-day he had a large and unexpected payment made to him in my presence. He looked awkward—and then explained that he had a good investment hanging on which he would like to complete, and the money would not be a very real help to me, after all."

"Let all false things go," said Aunt Mary, gently, quoting from some obscure volume among her favourite books. "We may regret their business, but not their detection."

"And you have come to stay with us," said her nephew. "You don't think we can't afford to have a visitor yet, then? One of my old business colleagues refused an invitation to tea last week with the air of being unwilling to take the bread out of the mouths of my children."

"Now, Alec!" exclaimed Aunt Mary. "You shall presently get a sound scolding. It is not what you say, but how you say it, that grieves me. These blunders of our fellow-creatures ought only to make us smile. They will make you smile in time, I am quite sure."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Bristo, half laughing; "and till that happy time comes, let us turn our attention to practical subjects. What furniture ought we to keep, auntie?"

"The oldest," answered Aunt Mary, "whether age makes it valueless or valuable, in a money point of view. Keep those things whose histories you know. None of your pictures are costly; keep them all. Pictures carry with them more of the old home-look than does anything else. Let silver salvers and cake-baskets go, and suits of chairs, and grand things such as everybody has."

"The next house won't hold much furniture nor many friends," remarked Mr. Bristo.

"That is all you know yet," said Aunt Mary; "you have not found out that houses are elastic. I have known very big houses which had no room in them, and very little cottages where there was always a snug corner. Now," she went on, "I'm not going to tell you to forget the carved oak mantel-shelf in your drawing-room here, and to make believe that you did not love, and were never proud of it; but if your new-sitting room faces the west, and gets a glimpse of the sunset, I want you to observe that, and be thankful. We have nothing to do with the blessings and duties of yesterday, except to remember them with thanksgiving. The blessings and duties of to-day are to-day's business, and we have to make the most of them before they, too, lapse into the past. At different times in our lives we enjoy blessings which could not exist together—such as the resources of wealth, and humour and helpfulness of poverty; so if, in turn, we make the most of both conditions, their very life enters into us, and we become, in a spiritual sense, like those who have travelled in many lands and brought home treasures from all."

"And, after all, we have nothing to do with our way through life, only we can walk briskly and cheerily and observantly, or dully and drowsily. My favourite divine, Dr. Bushnell, used to say that he was very tenderly touched when he came across the fact that Paul was in prison, with the chains upon his hands, when he wrote his beautiful appeal—'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!' only he was wont to add—'Nothing is really hard when once we are in it. I shall never forget when, riding homeward in my college vacation, I looked from the top of my stage-coach upon the mowers in the hayfield, how hot and tired they looked, and how hard and uninviting their work. But the next morning when I went into the hayfield among them, and fell to with a good will, how sweet the grass smelled, how fresh was the dew, the breeze, how bright the sun, how pleasant the work! So changed are all things when we look at them from within instead of without.'"

"Do you remember that prayer of his, which you once read to me, aunt?" asked Mrs. Bristo.

"Yes," said the old lady; "I think I shall give it to Lizzie to illuminate for your new house. I don't think Alec has ever heard it, and I know it by heart. It is this—"

"O Father, be with us in our smallest concerns, for we are persuaded that it is the skill of life to find Thee in the ordinary, to reach unto things spiritual through things temporal, and we know that anything done well gives great satisfaction to us and to Thee."

"Therefore," said Aunt Mary, "let us accept every change as a fresh chance for deepening and widening that 'skill of life.' Let us be glad, as children are over new lesson-books, though they will involve new struggles and new tears."

So they braced themselves till the very last day in the old home was lived through.

We moisten roots when we transplant them. And so pain always softens our souls in times of change, be they sunshiny with change for the better or cloudy with change for the worse.

FURY.—He submits himself through a microscope, who suffers himself to be caught in a passion.

LANGUAGES.—Latin is the language of religion, Greek of philosophy, French of conversation, Italian of music, Spanish of literature, German of science, Persian of poetry, Arabic of speculation, and English of control.