

pain which it conceivably gave to her stepmother for devotional reasons she felt sure was altogether outweighed by the pleasure she would feel in doing her duty when she told her husband and pained him. Eleanor did not consider this a failure in amiability on the part of Mrs. Ramsden; she confined herself to the undoubted fact that it was this performance of a duty (which might or might not be painful) that would give her pleasure. She would in the same spirit (and did) give much of her goods to feed the poor, and had once cheerfully burned, if not her body, both her hands very severely in putting out the clothes of a child who had set fire to himself at a Christmas-tree. The effect was that the child was not hurt at all, so prompt was her aid, but he was hurt afterwards when Mrs. Ramsden repeated the occurrence to his mother, adding that she had repeatedly warned the children not to touch the candles. But in no reasonable mind could there be any doubt as to the overwhelming weight that duty occupied in the spiritual economy of Mrs. Ramsden. She "put out" the small male infant, with risk to herself, as cheerfully and ungrudgingly as she repeated his misconduct afterwards to his mother.

All September mellowed, and dozed, and melted on this windless Saturday evening when Eleanor left the church with Tommie Lake panting behind her. There was trouble to come, since her stepmother was going to report the Verdi incident to her husband; but to Eleanor there was already balm for that prospective hurt in the infinitesimal fact that Tommie Lake said to her as she locked the church-door: "That was a narse tune you played last, miss!" For she liked pleasure, whether her own or somebody else's, with greater keenness than she disliked pain. She would, so to speak, choose to be caned on both hands if by the double hurt somebody else felt pleasure in one hand. Also this September evening, the mellow dozing of it, the melting sense of summer that still lingered in it, the suggestion of something infinite that lurked in the long shadows and hazy brightness, filled her, as Tommie Lake scuttled off towards the cricket-field below the Rectory, with a feeling that was only to be expressed by a long-drawn breath and an unconscious smile. Sensitive from the light down on her cheek to the inmost beating of her heart, she could not but be lost in the richness of this golden evening.

The Church of St. Peter, out of which she had just come, lay to the west of Bracebridge, but lower than it by a mile of