

to be Richard's wife on the anniversary of that season so mingled in memory with joy and sorrow.

It came once more—that eventful eve—and Ellen stood a bride among the tears and blessings of her friends. Only the good old Rector, their friend the Doctor, with the Murrays and Frank and Mary Stewart, were present. It was a solemn bridal: memory brought back the scene of the preceding year, but not with awe, for the spirit of her departed father seemed lingering near to bless his child. But as the image of poor Henry rose up before them, bitter indeed was the anguish that thrilled their hearts, and Helen Murray was with difficulty able to bear it. She of all who mourned him, had loved him best, not even excepting his mother, and now as a year had passed away with nothing to keep hope alive, the spirit of the faithful girl sank within her, and for the first time despair triumphed.

Again Christmas day shone upon the little village, and now Charlie had another last request, that he might once more be taken to the old Church, and join in the worship of Him 'who made the blind to see and the lame to walk.' It was complied with, and for the last time the tiny form was seen in its wonted corner, and the gentle voice heard to join in the responses. But they carried him home exhausted and fainting, and laid him upon the bed from which he never rose again.

Richard and Ellen departed for their own home, and once more the little household was bereft. Agnes and Mrs. Leslie were continually occupied in attending to the sick child, and but for Helen Murray's unfailing sympathy and kindness, the Winter would have been desolate indeed. It wore on, however, in its sad monotony, till once more the long days came, and the atmosphere grew softer with the change. But while all young fresh things were about to bud and bloom upon the reviving earth, on one bright sunny day in April, when the sunset clouds were gleaming on the loosened lake, and the home voice of the robin warbled amid the budding branches of the household trees, little Charlie's spirit passed away from the fading beauty of earth, to the immortal light of 'the winterless land.' His death had been long expected; and as Agnes bent over him, and closed the gentle eyes that had given her their last look of love, though the hot tears fell thick and fast as she did so, still she could not mourn that the child was at rest. The storms of life had been sharp and deep to his tender soul, and they could not grieve that he was at last 'by the living waters' of those 'green pastures' he had so longed to see.

Mrs. Leslie and Agnes could not meet with cheerfulness even the glowing beauty of the Summer time. Their small farming operations were attended to, but with a listlessness and gloom that told of hearts far away. Their cup of sorrow had been hard to drink at any time, but it seemed more bitter when they alone were left to share it.