

feel—considering what Lurline is—that he has had a most fortunate escape.”

“I am afraid it will darken all his life,” said Mary.

A smile passed over Pemberton's lips. “I think, on the contrary, that it will open the way for him to far purer and more lasting joy than he could ever have known with Lurline. I know, Miss Trevelyan, that to one of your character, it seems impossible that the heart can ever change its allegiance, but I think, in Mr. Lisle's case, it was a sort of spell which Lurline threw over him, a passing frenzy which seized him, rather than a true deep-seated affection, and it will vanish as speedily as it came, when he hears that even while engaged to himself, she has become the wife of another man. I only wish I could see any prospect of being able to tell him the news.”

“You have still no clue to him then,” said Mary, wistfully.

“Alas, none!” he answered; “but I do not give up the search, Miss Trevelyan, nor will I to the end.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It was now the month of December; and those who remember what the weather of that period of 1870 was in England, may form some idea of the additional suffering caused by the intense cold in Paris, where both food and fuel were almost beyond the reach of all but the most wealthy, and still the siege went on, with all its horrors, and the state of matters generally was enough to make even the bravest hearts quail and lose their courage.

It was about six o'clock, on one of those bitter evenings of hard frost, when the stars were glittering in the steel-blue sky, and the glare of the incessant firing lit up the frozen snow on every housetop. Mary Trevelyan was seated at one end of a long wooden shed, which had been erected in the garden of the hospital for the accommodation of the wounded, and which was filled with a long row of beds, each one of which contained a suffering tenant. She had been dressing the wounds of an old soldier, whose foot had been carried off by a cannon-ball, and, soothed by her tender handling, he had dropped off to sleep, with his rough fingers holding tight by a fold of her dress, so that she was afraid to move for fear of disturbing him. She had become absorbed in her own thoughts, when she was aroused by a disturbance of some kind, which seemed to be going on at the entrance to the shed. Looking up she saw Marthe with her long black veil thrown back, and her arms stretching out of her wide sleeves, engaged in what seemed to be a pitched battle with one of the little street Arabs, who were amongst the most active of the population in fomenting excitement during that disastrous time in Paris. The stout old woman was trying to prevent his entrance, which she had summarily concluded must be for some nefarious purpose, and he was obstinately determined to make his way past her; as Mary rose and came towards the combatants, knowing that poor Marthe's sharp temper was apt to beguile her into actions which she afterwards deeply repented, the keen black eyes of the little boy caught sight of her, and he exclaimed, with a triumphant shout, “There she is, the English lady; I know her; I have seen her with my Englishman in the streets, and I will go to her, I have something to give her!”

“Pray let him pass, Marthe,” said Mary, eagerly, “he may have a message for me;” and at her request the woman reluctantly withdrew the strong arms with which she was barricading the boy's en-

trance, and let him pass. He flew up to Mary, and gave her a piece of paper, which seemed to be a leaf torn out of a note book, and she saw these words written on it in pencil—

Come at once to the Church of the Trinity. Bertrand Lisle lies there very ill. Take my little messenger with you to show you the way; he is an ally of mine, and can be trusted.—In haste.

JOHN PEMBERTON.

For a moment Mary's long-tryed strength almost gave way, under the sudden revulsion from the feeling, akin to despair, with which she had begun to think of Bertrand's fate, to the certainty that in another half hour she should see him. She staggered, and would have fallen, had not kind Marthe caught her. “There!” said the voluble Frenchwoman, as she held some water to her lips, “did I not tell you, Mademoiselle Marie, that you would wear yourself out completely? Now, you must go to bed, and stay there till morning, and I will attend to your patients for the night.”

But Mary was making a great effort to control her weakness, and soon she raised herself from the supporting arm of the kind woman. “Dear Marthe,” she said, “I shall indeed be grateful to you if you will do what is required for my patients to-night; but not that I may sleep—I am going out: the friend I have lost so long is found.”

“You are no more fit to go out than your old soldier there, who has only one foot left, and that one damaged; wait till the morning, my child.”

“Wait, after all these weary months!” exclaimed Mary. “Oh, my dear friend, you do not know what you are asking!” and she rose at once to her feet, and, after looking in her pocket-book, to be sure that she had Laura's letter with her, she went out, followed by the boy.

“They call me Pierron,” said the waif, as he ran along by her side; “and I can tell you, Mademoiselle, that I should have been Pierron dead and buried long ago but for my good Englishman with the hard name which I cannot say. My mother died last year, and my father was shot on the ramparts, and I have no one; but this kind man has fed me every day, and I follow him wherever he goes. I shall never leave him.”

“You must try and be of use to him, then, Pierron, for he works very hard.”

“Ah, he does indeed! but am I not of use? Did I not run all the way to Notre Dame de Pitie with the note? am I not conducting you to him?”

“Mr. Pemberton is in the church ambulance, then?”

“Yes, surely; it is crammed with sick people, and wounded, some dead, some dying, all heaped together: it is a spectacle! I jumped over two or three dead men to come to you.”

Pierron was a specimen of what the little Parisian boy of the streets became in those dark days—utterly indifferent to the sight of pain and death, and heartily enjoying the excitement. Mary tried to rouse him to some gentler thoughts as they walked along, but in vain; he persisted in entertaining her with an account of the terrible sights he had seen, till they reached the door of the great church which had been converted into a hospital, and which, at this day, bears an inscription on one of its pillars commemorating the fact.

It was indeed a strange scene which presented itself to Mary Trevelyan as she walked in through the principal door. The church was large and lofty, and the ceiling was richly painted with figures of saints and angels, which looked down with their serene beauty on the terrible spectacle below. The chancel, and the space immediately in front of it, had been left un-

touched; all was confusion and pain: the chairs and wooden barriers had been removed, and the stone pavement was strewn from end to end with rude couches made of straw, having pieces of old sacking for coverlets, on which men, young and old, in every stage of physical suffering, were laid, while surgeons moved about from one to another, and a few kind ladies flitted to and fro doing what little they could amid an amount of misery which baffled human help, and administering to such as could take it small quantities of soup, made from ingredients of which it was best not to enquire the nature. And, through the misty air that overhung all, there went a low murmur, the many mingling voices of weariness and pain, which made the whole place seem like one of the visions in Dante's terrible description of the realms of woe beyond the grave.

Where, amid these hundreds of prostrate forms, was Bertrand Lisle? Pierron had darted away from Mary's side so soon as they entered the church, and was already plucking at the sleeve of a tall man who was bending over one of the miserable couches in a corner of the vast church. At the peremptory summons of the quick-witted little boy, John Pemberton turned round and saw Mary Trevelyan standing motionless under the lamp which overhung the doorway, her dark eyes luminous in its light, and her pale young face seeming in its sweetness and purity almost like that of a pitying angel come to bring comfort and succour to the dying. He could not help watching her for a moment in her stillness and patience—her little hands clasped close on her breast, her dark mantle flung back from her shoulders, and her long grey dress falling in statuesque folds round her to the ground; and he remembered how Lurline used to call her a block of marble. “How little she could understand her,” he thought, “and how miserably Bertrand has failed to appreciate her. There is the imperishable love of a most noble heart beneath that calm exterior, and happy had it been for her if it had been altogether fixed on imperishable treasures; but she is a true and blessed child of God, and He will protect His own, even if she have to pass through a fiery furnace of affliction.” He was advancing to her as he said this to himself, and in a moment she had seen him and was at his side, breathing quick, in her silent agitation. “Yes, he is here,” he said, answering her unspoken question; but come aside with me one moment, much as I know you long to go to him, that I may describe his state to you before you see him.”

He drew her into the shadow of a pillar, and she leant against it to support herself while he spoke to her.

“I found him here,” he said, “where apparently he has been for some time, but unfortunately my duties never led me to the spot until this evening. He has been suffering from violent intermittent fever, like many others who have been exposed on the ramparts; now raving in delirium, now completely exhausted and unable to speak; he was conscious, but very feverish, when I first found him this afternoon, and he knew me at once. Instantly, before I had time almost to say a word to him, he overwhelmed me with a series of anxious questions about Laura. He was certain I could give him tidings of her, he said, and you may think how strange it seemed to me to notice the jealousy of myself in his look and tone as he spoke. I asked him what it was he wished to know, hoping to find he was in a measure prepared for her faithlessness, but it proved to be quite otherwise. It seems he was so impressed with the belief