

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

RACHEL MORISSON.

It was a clear, sunny September morning—bright and cheerful Autumn was stealing, not striding over the landscape, and Rachel Morisson looked out upon a joyous picture as she sat within the window of her father's house.

Her two younger sisters had crept a richly fringed carpet beneath a verandah that was curtained by clustering vines; the elder of them had filled a basket with the rich clusters of the purple grape, and held it up, a double temptation to little Miriam and a bounding, beautiful greyhound, the pet and torment of the family. Kate Morisson, the tempter, would not, however suffer either of them to touch a single grape until she had first presented the basket to Rachel; indeed, her youthful sisters loved Rachel dearly,—and loved her the more, for that the rose was fading from her cheek, and her lips seldom smiled as was their custom in former times. I have often observed that the love of children increases with the illness of a friend or companion,—a beautiful illustration of the disinterested nature of true love.

'There is a bunch, Rachel,—a bunch fit for a queen! The doctor said you might eat grapes.'

'Thank you, dear Kate; they are very fine indeed; but you should not have tempted Miriam and Nica with them.'

Oh! replied Kate, laughing, 'I love to tempt them—to tease them a little; it does them good.'

'No, I do not think so,' said Rachel. 'I am not fond of quoring from the Holy Scriptures on trivial occasions, but you must remember we pray not to be led into temptation; and, Kate, looking on the temptation with which you tempted your little sister and the pretty hound, made me think——'

'What, sister?'

'Upon mine own!'

'Yours, Rachel! I did not tempt you with grapes?'

'Grapes?' repeated Rachel Morisson, smiling, though there was sadness in the smile.

'No, not with grapes;—yet I have had my temptation.'

'What was it, sister?'

'I will tell you when you are old enough to understand its nature.'

'But I am old enough, Rachel. I shall be seven next month. Perhaps, sister, you were tempted to tell a story?'

'No.'

'To wear tight shoes at the dancing lesson?'

'No!'

'To go into the garden and gather cherries without leave?'

'No.'

'To ride the kicking pony?'

'Indeed, my Kate, you need not attempt to find out. Listen to me; if it pleases God that I live until you have completed your seventeenth year, I will relate to you my temptation; if—listen to me, Katharine—I am taken from you into the world of spirits before you attain the beauty and incur the danger of womanhood I will leave a written testimony that may warn you how to avoid the sorrows which have planted and watered the willows that are already growing over my early grave.'

Kate did not quite understand what her sister meant, but she saw that her eyes were filled with tears, and so she crept silently to her side, and looked up into her face and felt her heart sad within her. A little time, and the sharp winds of an unusually cold evening sent (the physician said) poor Rachel Morisson to an early grave. There was one who knew otherwise,—who knew that the iron had entered her soul, and festered in its core, and that her body was too delicate to withstand the struggles of her mind. Her mother closed her eyes, and sorrowed even over her, but not as one having no hope, for her last blessed words were, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth?' There was much mourning in the hereaved dwelling. Kate was able to feel and to tell how truly she missed—

The glancing of her sisters' eyes,

The waving of her hair,

The footsteps lightly guiding by,

The hand so small and fair.

But little Miriam soon forgot her troubles in the excitement of black frocks and a crape bonnet.

Years pass, as well as months; and when we review them, we think they pass as quickly. The retrospect of ho-h is nearly the same; but the prospect, how different! Katharine Morisson had completed her seventeenth year, and was already arrived at the dangerous dis-