

"I don't like to let you go, child. I enjoy having you."

"I shall not be ten minutes, madame."

Génie ran downstairs. As she passed the door of the *salon*, which was a-jar, she looked in. It was a very peaceful picture on which her eyes fell.

Madame Féraudy had drawn a little table in front of her tall-backed arm-chair, on which was placed a large illustrated Bible. She had a soft white Indian shawl round her shoulders, and her fine old face looked calm and sweet as if the Sunday peace had settled on her heart as well as her home. She looked up as Génie passed, and called to her. She went in to make her explanation.

"In old days," said Madame Féraudy, "my parents would have made no exceptions for invalids; no cooking would have been allowed; but there, my child, André has taught me better."

"André always knows," murmured Génie.

Madame Féraudy looked after her a little anxiously and murmured to herself, "How will it all end? He will not allow himself to be happy, and she—God shield her, and save her from the bitter pang of unrequited love. I must take care of this child—this most dear child. At present it is all right. He is an ideal—a hero only. We must keep it so."

When she was ready Génie went upstairs again carrying a prettily arranged little supper, the omelet beautifully made, thin toast, honey and butter.

Monsieur Jean had come in when Génie returned to his mother's *salon*. He received her with rapturous gratitude.

"You are too good—too kind. This little impromptu supper is charming."

Madame Canière sat up, allowed her son to put a cushion behind her, and rewarded Génie by thoroughly enjoying the food she had prepared with so much care.

They would not let her leave them, but entreated her to remain at least until nine o'clock. The evening was delicious; Monsieur Canière set the casement wide open, the scent of the *noisette* roses floated in, a nightingale began to sing loudly in a neighbouring ilex tree. On the air came softly the sound of the plash of the waves as they fell on the beach, and drew away with a whispering sigh.

Downstairs Madame Féraudy gathered her little household together to sing the evening hymn.

Génie clasped her hands and sang it also very softly, almost under her breath, as the slow, solemn sound came through the open window.

Jean Canière sat looking at her delicate, clear profile, at the soft waves of her golden hair, at the tender light in her true grey eyes, and he knew that he loved this fair girl and would fain have her for his wife.

(To be continued.)

THE SORROWS OF GIRLHOOD.

BY LILY WATSON.

PART V. DISAPPOINTMENTS IN LIFE.



THE earliest form in which trouble intelligibly reveals itself, is usually that of disappointment. The griefs of childhood—and poignant griefs they are—clothe themselves in this garb. A pleasure has been eagerly anticipated, filling up all the little horizon, and lo, it vanishes, under the spell of bad weather,

a trifling ailment, or some other adverse circumstance. For the moment—but fortunately only for the moment—life seems blank. A promised gift, perhaps through the forgetfulness of the would-be donor, is not forthcoming. A prize at school has been worked for and is not obtained. One smiles to think of the tears shed, the keen suffering endured, for reasons such as these.

The etymology of "disappoint" is simple—*dis* and *appoint*—properly speaking, to unfix, or unsettle, hence, to frustrate.

A warning may be uttered here to those who have the care of children, not lightly to allow their little plans to be demolished, their hopes crushed. Respect the innocent anticipations of a child! There is a passage in Miss Alcott's *Little Men*—a wise and tender book—which well expresses this. Space forbids quotation, but my readers may consult it for themselves, and observe how the same spirit runs through the story.

A very different view of things prevailed a generation or two ago. I can well remember in my childhood hearing with horror of a good man who, whenever he perceived his children were enjoying toy, or fruit, or picture-book, with special relish, came stealthily behind them and took it away. His aim was that of sound moral training, but the method was needlessly cruel. Life will do all that is necessary in such discipline, and even the life of a child must naturally furnish many such tests.

Of course, foolish and indiscriminate indulgence is also cruel. The child should be encouraged to meet inevitable disappointment cheerfully; but disappointments should not be lightly and carelessly caused or invented, as a feeling of injustice is then added to the sorrow.

My object in this paper, however, is not to deliver a lecture even to elder sisters on the training of children. I have to try and help my girl-readers, who by this time have probably found out for themselves that disappointment is a necessary part of life, in bearing their own troubles, rather than performing their duty towards the younger members of their family.

Among the disappointments of girlhood, those connected with friendship assume a prominent place. I do not of course imply that it is a common or a usual thing for friends to prove treacherous or unkind. But girl-friendships are very keen and eager, and, in schooldays especially, make up a great part of the joy of life. It is a proportionately bitter grief, then, to find one has been deceived in a friend who was adored; the shock of disappointment is so great it is very hard to bear. After schooldays are done, girls are also dependent on one another for love and sympathy, and how dreadful it is to own: "I have been disappointed in So-and-so; I could not have believed it of her!" Some confidence has been betrayed (and experience leads me to believe this is rather a frequent blow to girl-friendship), or some unkind thing has been said by the supposed dear friend, and is repeated by another "friend" to the

subject of the remark; then there is indignant expostulation and recrimination, or else a haughty silence, and all is over. The charming precious flower of friendship is trampled in the dust and is dead. The light that was so cheering and helpful is put out for ever.

"When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed."

Some girls seem rather to enjoy dealing death and destruction to their cherished friendships. They forget, in the dread enjoyment of the excitement of "a scene," how beautiful and choice a thing they may be ruining by their silly proneness to take offence.

This ruthless behaviour is by all means to be avoided. We must not expect absolute perfection even from our friend; neither must we expect they will always speak *about* us exactly in the same way as they would speak *to* us. Sternly close your ears against any officious acquaintance, who is eager to inform you what So-and-so has said about you.

But, if it is obvious beyond all doubt that you have been mistaken in a girl who was like your second self, do not let the "disappointment," terrible though it is, sour you against other affections; make all the excuses for her you can in your own mind, and resolve to bestow your confidence more worthily next time. Perhaps you were too impulsive and rash in your choice, and prepared the way for your own disappointment by expecting what a shallow nature could not offer you; or perhaps in some other way you may have been to blame in the matter. At any rate, it is not a usual thing for a friendship that is born of mutual attraction and real congeniality of tastes, principles and dispositions, to come utterly to grief.

There is another form in which disappointment may stab with special keenness on the threshold of womanhood—that of baffled ambition, frustrated hopes of a career.

A girl wishes to be trained for the medical profession; she feels her powers qualify her for such work, and her heart is set upon it;