

he had some good news to tell me. I met him in a quiet spot by the river side. How well I remember it all! for it was the descent of my earthly happiness—the cloudless, the sparkling river, the mossy banks all decked with flowers, and my Rupert so bright, so wing, and glowing with the rapture he thought was to share with him. I can hear his dear voice now, all trembling with delight as he told me he could claim me at last; he had been determined, he said, to wait no longer, and he had taken a bold step, whereby he had secured sufficient funds to enable him to carry out our marriage, and take me abroad for a year or two, which he was sure I should like better than settling down in England. To that I only answered, that if I were with him it would matter nothing where we went, for home to me was by his side there alone; but I begged him anxiously to tell me how it was he had so suddenly become rich. He answered hurriedly that he made a cleve-roke of business, and instantly changing the conversation, began to enter into all sorts of details of the arrangements for our wedding, which said must take place immediately, for there was urgent need of haste; his manner was altogether so strange that a terrible uneasiness took possession of me, and I felt there was something wrong under it all. I put my hands in his and look into his eyes, and asked him to tell me truly and plainly how he had obtained the money which enabled him to marry. He refused, trying to jest about it, and said I had no knowledge of business, and must trust all to him.

“Ah! that I could have trusted him! but I could not. I told him that I was to be his wife he must give me his confidence, and he answered that when we were married should know it all, for he would not be able to conceal it from others beside myself. ‘Why not tell me now then?’ I said. He replied, that it is because I was so terribly conscientious; I should be sure to have scruples on the subject, and I could not make allowances for the weakness of ordinary mortals. Una, I cannot go on telling you all the conversation, for it makes me sick at heart even to remember it, but this was the end—I came to see distinctly that it had been by using his father’s name in a fraudulent manner he had obtained this large sum of money, and although he knew that in the course of a few months it must become known to Mr. Northcote he felt so certain that his father, for the honour of his own name, would take no steps in the matter, but seek only to conceal the fault of his son, that Rupert had no fear whatever of the result; that he had done, however, was nothing less than a crime, although he tried to justify it to himself, by the false plea, that as at his father’s death he must succeed to his possessions, the money was virtually his own already. Oh, Una! how can I tell you the horror that fell upon me when I came to understand it all, and to see that his desire was to hurry on our marriage before the fraud became known, in order to escape with me to the Continent out of reach of his parents’ reproaches! Instantly, with my first impulse, not pausing to think what my words involved, I told him I could never consent to be a party to a fraud or join in the smallest deceit towards his father. His eyes blazed with passion, and he grasped my arm, exclaiming, ‘Do you know what you are saying, Lilith? if you do not agree to my plan, and keep my secret, you can never be my wife.’ ‘Never?’ I asked faintly, for it seemed like my death-knell. ‘No, never,’ he answered; ‘I have done this thing solely that I might win you to myself; but I know how it will be looked upon by my family, and by all who hear of it. I will not stay here to be reproached and disgraced; with you or without you I must leave the country. If we were married, and they knew that for your sake I had done it, in time they would forgive me, and all would be condoned and forgotten; but if I have to exile myself from England, knowing I have lost you, I shall have nothing left to make existence tolerable, but that miserable money, and I shall spend it in any pleasures that will make me forget you; then judge if I could ever return home to look my father in the face, without a shadow of excuse for my conduct, or if I should have room to hope that your pious brother would ever trust you in my hands! No, Lilith, do not deceive yourself; come to me now—you for whom I have sinned,

or take your last look of my face, and bid me farewell for ever.’ At these terrible words I gave a shriek and almost fell to the earth. He caught me in his firm grasp, and exclaimed, ‘My own Lilith! my darling! you cannot forsake me—you will come to me I know; but you must make your choice—it is now or never.’ Yes! he said truly, I had to make my choice—there, leaning on his arm, with my hand in his, and his dear eyes looking down on me with such a pleading, yearning love, and my own sinking heart knowing too well the truth, that to part from him would be to give myself to death, and worse than death while yet I lived. Oh, Una, may you never know the anguish of such a struggle as I underwent that hour!”

Lilith paused, while her agitation mastered for a moment the factitious strength that sustained her—and it was with trembling hands and quivering lips that Una applied the necessary restoratives, for she began to see with mingled terror and remorse what the lesson was which the dying girl was appointed to teach her; but Lilith spoke again, as soon as she could still her panting breath, for she felt that her time was growing very short.

“Una, you will feel as I did, that there was really no question what my choice must be, when there was the Divine Lord and the pure service I owed Him on the one side, and earthly love on the other. I thought of His words, ‘What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’ and I turned to my Rupert and said, ‘Darling, even for your sake I cannot connive at evil; if at this price only I may be your wife, I must give up the hope, though it is my very life.’

‘Lilith,’ he said ‘have you well weighed what you are saying? do you mean that you decide against me? Take care, for our whole future hangs upon your answer. Do you give me up?’ I lifted my eyes to the pure calm sky, and asked the One Great Sufferer to give me strength to suffer, and then I gasped out, ‘Rupert, I must.’ It was the end. He flung me from him so that I staggered against a tree and caught hold of it to support myself, while he thundered out, ‘Go! never let me look upon your face again, for I must forget you as swiftly, as surely as I can. I will tear your image from my heart by every means in my power, and from this hour you are dead to me!’ and then, without another word or look, he dashed away past me out of my sight, and I have never seen him since; but oh! how thankful I am now on my deathbed that I acted as I did that day, for soon I shall behold my Lord in glory!”

A sort of ecstasy seemed to transfigure Lilith’s face while she thus spoke. She raised herself up in bed, stretched out her arms to heaven as if she saw some one ready to grasp her hands and draw her upward from the earth, but the effort was too great, her lips became suddenly dyed by the crimson stream that burst from them, bearing her life away. Her mission was ended; her order of release was come; she sank back, while a veil seemed to fall on the shining eyes, and the sobbing breath sighed itself out; then a light broke over her face like morning on the slumbering hills, and the fair young life passed away from earth, to revive once more in the pure air of paradise.

(To be continued.)

THANKFULNESS AND MURMURING

Some murmur when their sky is clear,  
And wholly bright to view,  
If one small speck of dark appear  
In their great heaven of blue;  
And some with thankful love are filled  
If but one streak of light,  
One ray of God’s good mercy, gild  
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,  
In discontent and pride,  
Why life is such a dreary task,  
And all good things denied?  
And hearts in poorest huts admire  
How Love has in their aid  
(Love that not ever seems to tire)  
Such rich provision made.

—Archbishop Trench.

THE RAINBOW AND THE SUN.—A very beautiful rainbow was lighting up the clouds; every one who saw admired it, and so much praise made it vain. “I am much handsomer than the sun,” it exclaimed, “for bright as he is, he has only one color, and I have so many.” The sun heard this, and, without entering into a dispute with the conceited rainbow, he quietly smiled. Then, hiding his beams in the clouds, he concealed himself for an instant, and the rainbow also disappeared. Persons who are vain and ungrateful forget whose hand it is that made them prosperous. Is it not just that He in His turn should dry up the sources of their prosperity?

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

Christian parents, are your children found by your side in the house of God? Can you say as you present them each Sunday “Behold I and the children Thou hast given me?” If not, where are they during these consecrated hours? A few years more and they must go forth into the world. Will it not be without the settled principles and habits which can guard them in the welfare of life? A little while longer and you must leave them, and without your guiding hand they must go forward “sounding on their dim and perilous way.” Your influence then will be confined to the chain of memory which runs back to the past. Will their recollections then recur to hallowed hours when you sat together in God’s temple, so that they feel they cannot abandon the habit which you have inculcated, or turn coldly away from the worship of their father’s God?

Our Lord lays down as a proof of our love for him, “Feed by lambs!” The children are the hope of the Church; but with the fearful influences now abroad—coldness at home, and skepticism without—what will the next generation become? We believe the day is not far distant when the Church in sorrow and penitence will awake to an acknowledgement of the truth that the “old paths are the best”—that the divinely constituted institutions of the Church and the home can alone truly train the young for Christian life—and that if for them are substituted the novelties and excitements in this age of experiments, all will prove but a delusion and a snare.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH PRAYER.

Every day should be commenced with God. The busiest and best man in Jerusalem was wont to say, “In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.” “I will sing aloud of Thy mercy, in the morning.” Daniel, too, saluted his God with prayer and praise at early dawn. We begin the day unwisely and at great risk to ourselves if we leave our chamber without a secret conference with our Almighty Friend. Every Christian, when he puts on his clothes should also put on his spiritual armor. Before the day’s march begins he should gather up a portion of heavenly manna to feed the inner man. As the oriental traveller sets out for the sultry journey over the burning sands by leading up his camel under the palm-tree’s shade, and fills his water-flasks from the crystal fountain which sparkles at its roots, so doth Christ’s pilgrim draw his morning supplies from the exhaustless spring. Morning is the golden hour for prayer and praise. The mind is fresh. The mercies of the night and the new resurrection of the dawn both prompt a devout soul to thankfulness. The buoyant heart takes its earliest flight—like the lark—toward the gates of heaven. One of the finest touches in Bunyan’s immortal allegory is his description of Christian in the Chamber of Peace, who “awoke and sang,” while his window looked out toward the sun-rising. If even the stony statue of old heathen Memnon made music when the first rays of the dawn kindled on its flinty brow, surely no Christian heart should be dumb when God causes the outgoings of the morning to rejoice.

The New Testament has been recently translated into Hebrew by Prof. Delitsch, of Leipsic, for the benefit of the Jews of Germany, Russia, and Poland.