

lonely sometimes; and deep within her, deeper than anyone suspected, was the need to be loved, the instinct of every true woman to spend herself on one, and to find her happiness in home and the joys of home.

"Pamela," said the old woman, when the girl knelt by her side, "it is about the time for Rosamond's holiday. Will you write and ask her if she can come here for a week? You look pale, and a little society will do you good. I'm rather a burden to you, my dear."

"No, no," said Pamela, quickly. But her heart smote her.

The grandmother patted her cheek.

"Yes," she said to herself, "she must try and make some arrangement with Rosamond, or make up her mind to take a girl from the village, and pretty Pamela must have a home of her own."

Rosamond was written to, and wrote speedily in return. Her mistress was going abroad, she had a month's holiday, and where should she spend it so gladly as at home?

She came, prettier than ever, merrier, more affectionate. All her old village friends welcomed her delightedly, for she had always been popular. Before her arrival, and partly that she might enjoy the privilege of his society, Pamela "made it up" with Martin; but she forbade him to speak to her again on the subject of marriage yet awhile. "And don't say anything to Rosamond," she added.

But before the month had gone by, poor Pamela might have spoken, like "Bertha in the Lane"—and Bertha is but one of many—

"Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim?
That was wrong perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will again.
Women cannot judge for men."

"Had he seen thee when he swore
He would love but me alone.
When he saw thee who art best—
Past compare, and loveliest,
He but judged thee as the rest."

The old grandmother saw it all, and her heart was grieved for Pamela, for the girl was dearer to her than the little sister "rose-lined from the cold."

"And meant verily to hold
Life's pure pleasures manifold."

But she could do nothing to avert the end, and Rosamond never guessed that she was gaining her happiness by robbing her sister, for no one but Pamela and Martin knew that marriage had been spoken of between them.

The grandmother was silent still, but she knew the meaning of the look in the girl's serious eyes, and why her voice had the sound of one in pain. The poor soul never imagined that but for her Pamela would have been happy. She had no conception that the girl had already made for her the sacrifice she desired to avert, and she blamed Martin in her heart for being tickle. Pamela did not blame him. She had advised him to marry someone else, and he had taken her at her word.

"Pamela," Martin said awkwardly one day, about three weeks after Rosamond's arrival, "they say there's many a heart caught in the rebound. It has been so with me. Your sister is so sweet and sympathetic. Above all, she is your sister. Will you think badly of me if—"

"No, Martin," Pamela said very gravely, and she held out her hands steadily as though her heart were not breaking. "It is best as it is."

And Martin went away thinking, "She does not care very much, after all."

"My God," Pamela wept in her own room, "be all to me. I cannot live here. Send me away to work for Him, how hard I care not—only send me away."

How many a woman, defamed of love,

gives to God thus a broken heart, and prays to labour in the vineyard; and yet how often such prayers are unanswered, and she who called is left amid the old surroundings, and to the old drudgery. The reason is not far to seek. The one who prays does not seek the glory of God, else would His will be hers; but she seeks alleviation from sorrow, and the prayer is a selfish one.

Sometimes Pamela doubted if God were love that He should leave her there, though she was burning to go away and do great deeds, and sacrifice herself daily and hourly.

Instead, He left her to see Rosamond married, and to witness her happiness, and to continue her work at the cottage, waiting on the old granny, and, as it seemed, wasting her life.

But the old woman saw the pain in the young face, and prayed that she might find a way to comfort the girl, and to show her how to bring her will into accordance with His, for, having been young herself, she knew what it was to be deprived of one's heart's desire, and how one burned to lead an active life. And she found a way.

One afternoon Pamela went for some errand into the village. It was now nearly a year after her sister had supplanted her in Martin's affections, and the wound had healed a little. Only this special day old memories seemed borne on the very breeze; this time last year she had been full of hope, and life had seemed to smile upon her; now it was unutterably dreary and monotonous, the more so by contrast. She had, for her sister's sake, striven to conquer the feeling she had once had for Martin, and not altogether unsuccessfully; but still her heart ached, and she preferred to go to the house when he was not there.

This afternoon she thought she would look in on Rosamond, and ask for a cup of tea. It was too early for Martin to be home from work. She went softly up the garden path. The window of the kitchen was open, and voices reached her. She peeped in. Martin was home, after all. He was seated by the table, looking very happy and handsome, and gazing up at Rosamond with an expression of adoration, while the little wife, smiling, stood at his side, one hand resting on his shoulder, as she poured out the tea. They were so absorbed in each other that they had not heard her footstep, and now she turned away sadly and crept back into the lane, and went her way wearily. They did not want her. They were enough for each other. With the blind injustice of those who are lonely, she underrated the affection those who are happy feel for them.

But the worst feeling she had to endure was that God had deserted her. She had tried to please Him, and this was the result. She was unreasonable, this cottage girl, as even wiser people are, in expecting to have the spiritual blessing without the temporal loss, in looking for a crown of thorns that shall not wound, and a cross that shall not hurt the body.

The old woman noted the weary, dejected look.

"Pamela, girl," she said gently, "I'm glad to see you back, for I've been longing to say something to you."

"What is that, granny?" asked the girl, listlessly, as she laid down her bonnet.

"Come here, childie."

Pamela came to her side.

"I've been thinking, dearie, that it will be good for you when God calls me away."

"Hush!"

"No, I must speak. I've found it hard to hold my peace sometimes, knowing that you suffered. You see I'm not blind, my girl, and I know how it is when one loves. Yes, yes, I saw how it was. Martin gave you cause to think he meant you to be his wife, and then, when Rosamond came, just because she is the sort of pink-and-white lassie that men admire,

he put her in your place. You were too proud to tell your old granny, but she knew—bless you."

Pamela was silent. She saw no good in un-deceiving the kind old woman.

"And now," went on the latter, "you'll give anything to be up and away, working at something. I know. I've been through it, years ago. And yet you are kept here. And, my dearie, I fretted to think I was the cause of it."

"Oh, don't, grandmother dear," Pamela cried. She was filled with self-reproach. It was as if she had grudged to the old woman the duty she had so well earned, and it grieved her that it might have seemed so.

"I love you," went on the grandmother, "and I couldn't bear to see you suffer, and I prayed to God to show you that it was His will, and this afternoon it came upon me clearly. It is because He loves you, lassie. You're His beloved disciple—you and all who are called, when they are willing to labour, just to look after some lone woman or helpless man. It seems like a waste of life and energy at times, but He knows what He does. See here."

Her crippled fingers turned over the leaves of her Bible with difficulty, but she would not let Pamela help her. At last she found the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, and she ran her finger down the verses. Then she read:—"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

"There, girl, think of that! He was the one our Lord loved best, and yet he doesn't tell him to go out and work just then; and I remember hearing somewhere that he didn't go about doing near as much as the others at first. Why? Because he was kept at home, to be gentle and kind to an adopted mother, the mother of his friend, who needed love because she had had to endure so much suffering. There, then; doesn't it seem natural, that whenever He loves anyone He shall give him or her some one to look after, even if it does stand in the way of work they would like better. Then I said to myself, 'Why should I fret because I prevent Pamela going out to forget her trouble? God has given me to her, just as He has given her to me. We have both suffered loss through loving, but we can always love each other. There—there child, don't cry!'"

But the tears were running down her own cheeks.

"Oh, granny," Pamela said, and she put her arms round the old woman, and rejoiced—rejoiced for the sacrifice she had made, "I have not loved you half enough. I am content to be with you and serve you, and I don't want anybody else—not even Martin. I see it all too now, and I am happy."

She certainly must have been, for when, a few hours later, she ran down to the cottage to give her sister a message, and Martin asked her what had happened to make her eyes so bright, she answered him truthfully, that it was sheer contentment.

"Pamela," her brother-in-law said, "you are a good girl. He will be a lucky man who marries you."

Once she would have winced at these words, now she did not. She took her sister's hand, and all the morbid thoughts had died out of her mind when she said, looking into the girl's clear eyes—

"If we are as happy as you two looked this afternoon, we shall do."

"Did you see us? When? Where?"

Rosamond asked. Pamela pinched her cheek, but did not answer.

