VOL. XVII.

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No. 24.

EUSTACE;

SELF-DEVOTION.

CHAPTER II. - Continued.

mas morning. The servant is not greater than the master. Let us meditate not on our own

sufferings, but on the Babe of Bethelem, who

when joy was offered unto Him, yet chose this

Cross; remember that if we are this night in

cold and suffering, He on this the anniversary of

the nativity, trod that painful way to teach us,

he, with clapsed hands, his mild grey eyes raised

to heaven, while tears of devotion and love

gathered thick and fast on their lashes, 'give to

us patience and resignation in this the hour of

our bitterest need, that so these our sufferings

and crosses may be received by us as tokens of

Thy love, that so we may be more worthy of

Ah, yes! poor father, thou wert then indeed a

pattern of patience to us thy children. But oh !

in many and many an hour of after life, were

and the week which followed it, be ever present to my mind. There are things and scenes pre-

sent to the memory of some which a whole life,

miraculcusty lengthened, would never suffice to

efface, - circumstances which so shock the perves

so paralyze, as it were, our mental faculties, that

we cannot forget them, even if we would. And

often, in the still hour of eve, in the dewy morn,

er at the noontide hour, when all is bustle and

life around me, when I have enjoyed the calm

solitude of nature, and have raised my thoughts

to God through His own bright works, gazing

with rapture on the pale moon, with its attendant

stars, in the still quiet of the summer night, when

the soft air has scarce sufficed to disturb the

leaves of the trees; or, did I listen to the sigh-

ing of the wind, or the sullen plashing of the

distant waves, dashing sullenly on the lar sea

shore, over which the white sea-gull careered in

rapid flight; or watched I in the early morn the

rays of the rising sun kissing away the dew-

drops sparkling on each herb and flower; or,

amid the hum and bustle of life, when the smile

was on my lip, my heart was light, and plenty

was around me; when the board has been well

spread, the fire bright, and the chamber well

of the departed are before me-then, in ghastly

paleness, I see the wan aspect of my dear old

father. I see again that wasted, attenuated

form; I see his white locks falling over his thin

pale face; I bear that low moan-on God! the

subdued moan of tamished nature. 'I have

nothing to give!' The very sun seems to smile

upon our woe, mocking, as it were, our misery.

Ah! happy, happy rich, whose sweet sad lux-

ury it is to be able to indulge your grief by lav-

ishing on the dying all those many comforts

which wealth enables you to procure. At least,

it is your enviable lot to smoothe the passage to

eternity-to pluck away a few of the thorns

But let me return from my digression. Not

even the few trifling aids Maud could afford us

might we look for now. She, with her husband

and children, were braving the perils of the deep,

Mr. Lindsey having procured an eligible post under our government in India. And, as if all

things conspired for our utter ruic, our good

friend, Mrs. Melmoth, was absent on a continen-

tal tour, and we were left utterly frienoless and

alone. Oh! those sad days, each one bringing

with it starration to the body, and exquisite tor-

tures to the mind. My poor father, in that

Christmas week, was deprived, by the myrmidons

of a harsh landlord, even of the bed whereon he

lay. Oh God, shall I ever, ever forget the hor-

rors of that scene? No; it is all present to my

mind's eye. There are the satellites of the law,

turning over with their rude grasp our little prop-

erty, with hideous jest, and mocking laugh and

taunting sneer, those sordid articles-sordid in-

deed, for the gently born are all beneath their

ters, thrown heedlessly on the floor; our desks,

simple though they were, are gone. And, ah?

woe of woes, there crouched together, on a

mattress of wool which the pity of man hath

lett, with the big tears stealing through those

thin hands, which bide his aged face, sits my poor

father. No word escapes his lips, but dreadful

But see, the December shadows fall. All is

now quiet. The rough, harsh men have done

their barsher master's bidding, and gone their

indeed it is to witness the tears of man.

which beset their path.

the eternity of happiness which yet await us.'

is servants, how to suffer. O God,' continued

Murmur not, my beloved ones, this is Christ-

be; and heavy indeed was the load which press ed upon our sad hearts as we walked over that desolate house, the sight of which did indeed

ATHOLIC

make the word home a mockery to us. Yet no repining word escaped my father -no murmur of impatience. Ah, angels of mercy, a little, yet a little longer, and that worn, tried, but faithful spirit shall be carried by thee to the footstool of the Eternal.

'I cannot bear this,' I murmured, as I noticed a deadly pallor steal over his face; 'reliet must still be sought. Nay, see you not, Maggie, this may be death even now approaching.-The inroads of disease, the want of proper nourishment, this fearful shock-all may basten the

end which I feel assured is near.' · Shall I leave you, Minnie, in this desolate house, or will you go to St. Mary's?' asked Maggie, who well knew that it was the aid of a priest I sought.

'I will remain with my father,' I answered; we may not beed the shame we feel. Margaret. For his dear sake we must stoop also to beg the aid of charity. If you can meet with Faeven my own weak thread of existence prolonged ther - tell him how sore is the plight we are for a hundred years , would that Christmas eve, now in.

A long, long time seemed to intervene after the departure of Margaret until her return. I had no light save that which the remains of a rush-candle bestowed, and which was almost consumed, and my eyes often wandered uneasily around the dim obscurity beyond, for I could not help fancying that once or twice I heard a slight noise, and then-was it fancy, or do I really see the shadow as of a man on the opposite wall, gliding, as it were, across the passage beyond, for the door stood partially open?

A thousand indeous and superstitious fears thronged thick and fast upon my mind, my heart too truly told me that I was in the presence of the dying. A silence almost appalling reigned throughout the house, and on the hard mattress beside me lay my father, his ashen countenance already wearing the hue of death; buried in a sort of stupor, I only knew he yet preathed by the faintest perceptible motion in the clothes which covered him.

form, and with body strained forward, and eyes ear; it aroused my father, who in faint accents wall, I listened and watched for a return of the the mind was wandering in delirium, whispered curtained-then, ah! then it is, that the faces sight or sound which had annoyed me, inwardly me to bar and bolt the doors well, and bring the praying that Margaret might soon return. Yet plate upstairs, lest it should be stolen, then again again my heart beat thick and fast, my longue his mind evidently wandered to the distressing clove to the root of my mouth, and my hands scenes of the day, as in piteous accents he returned cold as ice, as that shadow again moved peated the words I had heard him utter, across the opposite wall.

No time was to be lost, the rushlight was about to expire. I felt I had indeed not nerve, take all away.' alone and in darkness, to brave the horrors of such a scene as this, and scarcely conscious of what I did, I moved stealthily from the place I hand, I crept across the room. Yes, I was not wrong, there, in the landing beyond, surely stood the form of a man. A cry rose, to my lips, but I thought of my father, remembering that in our desolate and ruined home there was no incentive to plunder. And though my teeth chattered, and my limbs shook from cold as well as fear, I conquered the impulse to shriek, and left the room, resolving to know the worst. Quick as thought, the form of this nocturnal visitant glided to the expiring light, suddenly it paused, I heard my name pronounced, though in a whisper: I was beckoned onwards, and now, losing every thought of fear in a sense of curiosity, I rushed boldly down the stairs, exclaiming, when within a few paces of the passage,

In the name of heaven, who are you, and what seek you in this abode of sorrow?'

'Minnie, Minnie, don't be frightened-it is I, it is Arthur,' exclaimed my wretched brother. grasping me round the waist with one hand, for he saw I was about to fall, while he snatched the light from my trembling hand with the

hands. There lay our writing materials and let- other. Doubtless many of my readers have, in some time or other during their lives, known what it was under the impulse of fear or other emotion. be it what it may, to act as I did, careless of fear for the present, rush on to know the worst, and then either relapsed into insensibility as I had nearly done, or found relief in a copious lowed with voracious eagerness; while Mur- lodging. flood of tears. To my inquiries, as soon as I could speak, as to how he had entered the house without my knowledge, or for what reason be frequently, his mind dwelling on the past, would had occasioned me so terrible an alarm, he gave he ramble in this way :- 'Change of ministry,me the following account -

It happened that in the morning his wife had passed along the street, had noticed the muffled hopes, even at the eleventh hour, to raise the door and the confusion that prevailed, and had [ sum required from a friend of Mrs. Melmoth's. afterwards ascertained in the neighborhood that an execution was about to take place, wherethe long winter day, and, with a beating heart upon he added, 'I thought I would get some talent.' and trembling lip, had urged her suit, and been wine and a few good things for the poor governor, by abstaining somewhat from drink, with. were describing on the bedclothes a mathemati- should come on the following morning with the ther's late attendant, who had often assured me

My poor Maggie! she guessed how it would same time inquiring if we are and heavy indeed was the load which press know how badly you all think of me, he said, times speaking in a low measured tone, so low had no medical attendant.

This was, however, the case, and but little the very moment when Margaret had for a few moments re-entered the house, leaving the door ajar. I entered, and stowing away what I brought with me into the kitchen, crept softly up stairs to see if could get hold of you without the knowledge of father. I can't much wonder,' he continued, 'if he does not wish to see me, and as I can't hear reproaches, for I don't suppose I can unmake myself, I just watched my opportunity till I could attract your attention, though I was mortally afraid lest you should utter a shriek, and think a thief had got in the

'A thief here!' repeated, looking around on the bare walls of our wretched home; 'but gire me what you have,' I added. 'Ah, how welcome it will be,'

For a moment a touch of his old boyish tenderness rushed over the ruder nature of the man, for he drew me to him, kissed me, and replied with tears in his eves-

'Why, Minnie, my poor girl, you are indeed sadly altered, so pale and thin, and so is Maggie too; she is no longer bonny Maggie,' he murmured, as if to himself; adding, 'Ah, well, we were all sad scamps, no doubt,—the girls should not have been left to do all;' then recovering from his reverie, he continued, 'Matilda is a rough hard woman, you know, she's been roughly bred, and so forth; her parents of the servant class, she herself one too, poor thing, when I married her - but enough of that, she is not a bad woman, and she came home and told me with tears how hard things fared with you all; and we had a little money, and I have got a basket of good nourishing food here; and when poor father comes to himself see if he will let me come up, won't you, Munie ?'

'Yes, I will,' I replied; 'but see, what shall I do, the light is just out.'

'Grope your way up as well as you can,' he replied, 'I will be back in a few moments with candles.'

I did as he requested, and entering the sick room again, took my seat by my father, in whom With every sense painfully on the alert, I still no change was yet visible. The next moment, kept the temporary seat I had endeavored to however, Alargaret's low knock sounded on my painfully fixed, spite of myself, on the opposite asked who knocked so late, and betraying that

> Leave one bed for my daughter, sir, leave one bed for my daughter; do not, I pray you,

Hastily I left the room, and admitted Margaret, who had waited, and vanily, for the priest of whom she was in quest; and who at length, occurred, and seizing the light with a trembling fearing I should be alarmed at her long absence, had determined on returning home, and satisfied herself with leaving a message, requesting the is sorry that he has behaved ill to you, father,speedy attendance of the priest.

In a few hasty words I spoke to my sister of the opportune return of our misguided brother, who on his entrance, placing a few things in my hand, begged me, with a dash even then of the fatal carelessness of manner which had always formed a prominent feature in his character, to ask poor governor to see him, and look over his staircase, I followed, shading with my hand the fast faults, adding, 'I may be a better man yet, Minnie, and sow my wild oats still, so try and make my peace with father; for I should little you this; did Arthur bring it you? Ah, like the poor old gentleman to die whilst we are poor boy, why is he not always affectionate and at variance. And now,' he added, 'good-bye good?' for a few minutes; I am going back to Matilda, and will get a few things more which may be of use to you all: so go up, girls, and say all you can for me, so that I may see my father on my returu.

'Ah, Arthur,' said Margaret with a sigh, as the door closed upon him, there is no hope of reform whilst you yield yourself up a slave to the love of drink.'

'Alas, alas! an affectionate heart depraved,' 'I wonder may we yet hope for reform.' Occasionally my father's mind still wandered, yet he was sufficiently himself to receive the soft bread dipped in wine, which from time to time I gave to him, and which the poor old man swalgaret, warming flannels by the newly-kindled what then,-all alike to me; whether Whigs or nobility, some vulger 'parvenu;'-any one, any of the moment. one, girls, save people of learning and of

uttered, and then again rising it unnaturally loud, continuing with rapidity of utterance, counting on his fingers as he spoke: ' Correggio, Mozart, Dante, Beethoven, Chat-

HRONICLE.

terton, Otway, Dryden. Ah, ah, ah!' he repeated in a low, unearthly laugh, which chilled us while we listened ;- 'Hardon, too, poor Hayden, whose beautiful painting you will remember, girls, hung in the Egyptain Hall, which none cared to behold, while hundreds poured in, beneath the same roof, to see General Tom Thumb the poor little dwarf Tom Thumb; and so, because Tom Thumb was a libel on our nature and our manhood, the mob poured in to see him, and he got the white silver and red gold, girls, and Haydon, Haydon,-ah, let me see what was his end - wry, Haydor lost his senses through trouble and hunger, and committed suicide, and then the Queen gave a pension to his widow .--Ab, ah ! the man was left to starre, and the nation left him to the poverty of a beggar and the grave of a suicide.'

Then came a pause, and Margaret and myself knew that Arthur was on the landing,-we had heard him let himself in by means of the key which I had given him; but Margaret motioned him below for a while, till consciousness fully returned; for we feared the effect his presence might have at present; yet we were, I need hardly add, rejoiced that he was in the house at this trying moment.

Then again he partook voraciously of the food we offered him, still continuing his mouraful colloguy with himself.

'They held out to me hopes of a consulate, of an appointment in India; but it has all ended in nothing. Seven, eight, nine languages,-yes, I know all these; but, go to man of letters, ours is a money-making country, a land in which trade and commerce thrive-we will have none of you; we prefer the cotton lord, though, albeit, his knowledge of his mother tongue sometimes fails him; but, never mind rulgarity, you know they have the money, and so, sir, the rough uneducated hind of to-day may be, and often is, the ford of a fair domain to-morrow; and we, you see, with all our stock of learned lore, are rot ting in obscurity and want,-hut soft, sir, 'there is another and a better world.'

My father paused; the glassy eyes, so preternaturally bright, filled with tears. We left that, unconsciously to himself, he had struck on a right chord, and we blessed God for the change which we foresaw was about to take place.

'Father, dear father,' we exclaimed, 'do you

'Yes, a little better,' he replied: but his voice was very low: he was much exhausted by the effort he had just made,—the long wild delicium into which he had fallen.

'Margaret has seen Arthur lately, father,' I gently urged; ' he has expressed a great wish to see you; -you will see him, will you not?-he may I tell aim he may come?

'Certainly,' he replied; 'Arthur is more his own enemy than ours; for he is ruining both soul and body.'

'He is below stairs, father; may he come up?' said Margaret.

'In the house now?' he replied, seemingly musing as he spoke. 'Ah, now I mind me, it seems like a long dream; but we had no fire, no food; and this is wine, girls, wine, -where got

The next moment Arthur knelt beside the old man's bed; and down the rough face of mankood stole the tears, and promises of amendment were made. And, alas! that I should have to say that, for some time, they were unstable as would be letters written on the sand; for rare indeed is the reformation of the drunkard.

And as we sat and talked, our spirits grew more composed; we beaped fresh fuel on the fire, covered up my father with the warm I answered as we returned to my father's room; blankets Arthur had brought, and when again my poor father sank into that stupor which occasioned us so much uneasiness, we in low whispers conferred together as to the possibility of our raising a little money, so as to have my father removed on the morrow to a furnished

Suddenly we heard a low knock at the door; fire, ever and anon applied them to his feet : and Arthur retired immediately into another room. and the priest, of whom Margaret had been in quest eutered.

With the deepest sympathy the good clerev-Tories are in power, girls, I tell you it is all the man looked round the wretched room, affordsame. If I had interest—ah, then indeed it ing us the means at the same time of providing observed two gentlemen meet from opposite diwould be another thing, -some hanger-on of the what was necessary for the greatest emergencies

While my poor father prepared to make his confession, Margaret and myself withdrew, and them in that chamber of sorrow. Whilst thus he rambled, his attenuated fingers on our return, the priest informed us that he

could now be done. My tather had long suffered from disease of the heart, accelerated, doubtless, by the mental anxieties be bud undergone; the priest however resolved to send a medical friend of his own to see if there was any hope, or if my poor father was in a fit state to bear re-

What our feelings were may be better imagined than described on receiving any gentleman, leave alone a stranger, in our dismantled comfortless home; but there was no help-the trying ordeal had to be gone through with as much composure as possible, Margaret hastening with the first dawn of the following day to order a bedstead and other little necessaries from the nearest shop the neighborhood afforded.

It was still early-about eight o'clock, and we had by this time done our best to give an appearance of something like decency to our invalid's room, who had again fallen into that death like stupor which to me appeared as the harbinger of speedy dissolution.

CHAPTER IV. - ANOTHER MEETING - LIFE'S STUGGLES CLOSE, AND ETERNITY DAWNS.

The sharp wind of one of our coldest January mornings whistled in many a mouraful gust through the empty uncarpeted rooms of our desolate house, while a heavy snow-storm raged without. With the aid of Arthur, excessive activity on our own parts, and above all, the gold which the good priest put into my hand, the chamber in which my father lay presented a more comfortable appearance; and new, with everything prepared, as far as our poor means would permit, we sat with anxious fear depicted on our countenances, awaiting the arrival of our friends. I in vain strove to shake off that feeling of gloom which hung over me, in which my brother and sister participated: my eyes were swollen with the tears I had shad on the preceding day, both on account of my dear father, as well as the scene we had passed through, and a thrill of horror would creep through my veins whenever I thought of his death taking place in that wretched acode. While thus I mused, my eyes fixed on that pale face, over which the grey shadow of death seemed to pass, the loud knock of the postman-loud, though the knocker was muffled -sounded at the door, and the noise arcused the invalid, who uttered a deep sigh, as though he surmised that the letter would bring more ill tidiogs, should fate have future woes in store for us. Margaret the next moment placed a letter in my hands, directed to my father, to which was affixed a coroneted seal; he opened his eyes, over which a dull glassy film seemed already to pass, and in low, faint tones motioned me to open the letter. I did so, and read aloud a few lines, written by the Earl of ----, one of the ministry, to whose good offices my father had formerly been indebted. The note was briet; but each word occasioned me a sting of most acute anguish; for relief had come indeed too late.

The purport of the letter was to say that Her Majesty had been pleased, in consideration of the literary services of Mr. Arthur Herbert, to order that a pension of £200 a year should be paid to him during the remainder of his life; and the announcement was couched in terms at once courteous and kind.

'Father, dear Father!' i exclaimed, 'we may all be happy yet. Heard you not what I read? I added; for he seemed to take no notice of the announcement. His lips moved, and I placed my ear to them to catch the sound which already seemed like the last effort of expiring na-

He appeared as though he were holding a collogur with another, and I caught the words-

Will your lordship bear my petition to the Queen, and pray Her Majesty to bestow some little mark of her royal favor on my daughter Minnie? I am going on a long jouraey, and cannot profit by Her Majesty's kindness now.'

Oh! dreadful tale-my dear, dear father's mental faculties had been so shaken by the trials through which we had passed, that if not entire, there was at least a mental aberration of his once vigorous intellect. I clasped my hands together in the bitterness of the deepest despair, and we all turned to the window, partly to conceal our tears and partly to watch for the priest, for whose arrival we now felt anxious, as well as for that of the doctor.

We were not many minutes in suspense; for, with a heavy snow-storm beating relentlessly down from a sky of leaden bue, and drifted full in their faces, by a cutting north-east wind, we rections, speak a few words together, and then crossing the street, advance in the direction of our house; and with lightened hearts we received

I had felt full confidence in the skill of my fa-

way. We, my father and myself, have been some time alone. Margaret, in the fever of despeir, had sallied forth early that morning, in Vain, vain hope! She had walked the whole of