



THE Banner of Faith.

OCTOBER 1886.

Hope: the Story of a Loving Heart.

CHAPTER X.

SUCH a bright vision as greeted Hope's eyes when she opened that door into Mr. Furniss's house!

He was one of those early settlers in the colony, who by perseverance and industry had steadily grown rich, year by year. Much cattle had he, many acres of cleared land, smiling fields, a gay garden, but only one child, a motherless girl of eighteen. She stood before Hope now, a little startled at the strange visitor, but, after the first moment, ready to tender hospitality.

'A stranger, just out from England. Oh, please sit down; we do like English visitors. Take this chair, it is the most comfortable. Aunt, aunt,' she called, 'can you come here?' Then, as no one answered to the summons, she made a pretty excuse, and slipped away for a moment.

Then Hope's strained eyes took in the well-furnished room, the pictures, the books, the soft mats and easy chairs, the nameless small luxuries that are so rare in the colonies, and that recall England so strongly to one belonging to the old country. It looked like 'home,' yet a brighter, prettier home than lone Hope had been used to. A sort of content at the mere sight of such a nest crept over Hope; she was almost sorry when doors opened and voices came nearer, and

'aunt,' Mr. Furniss's sister, who acted a mother's part to her pretty niece, came in. A kindly, large-hearted lady, full of apology that their house was so full. The sale down at the Bay of Plenty, going on just now, had brought all their friends upon them, but luckily two of the gentlemen were spending the night away, so Hope could have one of their rooms: on the morrow better arrangements should be made. 'You would like some warm water now,' she ended, looking at Hope's tired face. 'Let Flora show you upstairs. Mrs. Westall, did you say?'

The pretty girl took Hope's bag and drew her out of the room. 'You are very tired,' she said sympathetically. 'Come with me—Mr. Wentworth's room, didn't you say, auntie?'

'Yes, dear, Mr. Wentworth's.'

Hope followed her guide into a comfortable bedroom, looking out over a stretch of cleared land towards the sea. Flora glanced out of the window for a second, a pleased smile stealing over her face. 'It is pretty, isn't it?' She turned to Hope. 'Mr. Wentworth says it beats England. I've never been to England, but I like Englishmen better than our people.'

'Is Mr. Wentworth English?' asked Hope languidly.

The girl nodded. 'Yes, he's been here a week, he's so clever and amusing. I