

THE FLOWER'S PETITION.

We flowers and shrubs in cottage past,
From fields and country places rest,
(Without our own or friends consent,
In desperate rebellion,
Yet on no wild outrage bent,
Do humbly here petition
Whomse Against our silent wills,
With loss of sun and purpling rills,
Cooped up in pots, on window sills,
In rich and old house
The city breath our beauty kills,
And makes us grieve as foes
Condemned in walls of brick and lime,
In narrow beds of clay and stone,
To sprout our heads and shed our prime—
We need some kind defender
We pray, oh, let us live our time,
And we are very tender:
Oh, cheat us not of heaven's dew,
Nor set flowers in vain refuse,
But do not shut us up in rooms,
No slight care will we requite,
Nor for the little we can use,
We'll breathe you delicate perfumes,
We'll glad your eyes and glad your nose,
But do not shut us up in rooms,
Or stifling crowded places—
The sky is almost light as mine—
To us far lovelier face
Our seats and beddled fate,
Our evergreen turn chocolate,
Do we ascribe the spite or hate,
No, we are sure you love us,
Yet, half ashamed we beg to state,
We love the sun above us
Then treat us in your gentler ways,
And rest unto the sun's own rays,
With beauties homage, increase please,
We ever will careen you
And to the ending of our days,
In grateful silence bless you

The Eve of a Journey.

A RESPECTABLE dressed middle-aged woman sat in the window-seat in the fine old hall of Chedbury Castle. There was nothing remarkable in her appearance, except a look of settled yet patient anxiety, which deepened as the short October's day drew near to its close, and broad, slanting sunset gleams and shadows stole across the quiet little shrubbery and grass-plot upon which she looked out fixedly. The servants, after having made her the offer of refreshment which she declined—came and went upon their various errands, without any apparent consciousness of her presence. And this was an occasion upon which a personage of higher note might very easily have been overlooked—one of those times of general bustle, preparation and delightful confusion, when everybody seems to be busy helping somebody else; and the bonds of discipline undergo a not unpleasing relaxation. The family were going abroad. Two or three men servants, under the direction of an elderly duenna—with respectability imprinted on every wrinkle of her countenance and rustling out of every fold of her black silk dress—were busily carrying trunks and portmanteaus. She stood over them, proud, pleased and important; for she was one of the travelling party—my young lady's own woman, who had waited upon her from her childhood. She looked upon her own trunk complacently, for it carried her fortune; and, had she ever heard of Caesar, she could have made a very stately chat with a man who wore, like herself, the aspect of an old, privileged retainer. "Well, Mrs. Jenkyn," he remarked, "I cannot but say that I wish you were all across the seas and back again, to tell us well that you have met with among the mounseers—for I reckon you will come back to Chedbury, and so perhaps will my lord, and so will Mrs. Moreton; but, as to our young lady, we shall have seen the last of her when she leaves the Park gates behind her to-morrow. There are not so many like her, from all I've heard of foreign parts—so good and so pretty; with so many acres at her back that they'll let her away from among them so easily. Take my word for it, some prince of the blood, or duke at the very least—for where you're going they're as thick as blackberries at Martinmas—will take and marry her, whether she likes it or not. Besides," he added, sinking his voice into a confidential whisper, "old stories'll be left on this side of the salt water. They won't cross it after her." The stranger in the window-seat started with a quick, uneasy movement. "This side or the other side," returned Mrs. Jenkyn, "it's not for them that eat the family's bread to be raking up what's past and gone and out of people's minds. And before strangers too," she added with a side glance in the direction of the window-seat. "You're always so touchy, Mrs. Jenkyn," returned the old man, speaking, however, in a submissive tone, "just as if nobody cared about the family but yourself. And what's the use of minding the woman who's sat there four mortal hours, and never stirred or spoken? She's either dead or stupid." "I'm not so sure of that," replied the discreet Mrs. Jenkyn; and at this moment the woman, as if to justify the old lady's observation, roused herself from her deep preoccupation, and said abruptly: "Will any one take a second message from me to Mrs. Moreton? It is now getting late, and I want to be upon my way home."

Mrs. Jenkyn answered her very civilly: "I will go and carry your message. It is very seldom that Mrs. Moreton keeps any one waiting; but I suppose," she added, smiling, "nothing goes quite straight at a time like this." At that moment a bell rang. It was Mrs. Moreton's bell; she wished to see the person who had been waiting so long. "Here, William," said Mrs. Jenkyn, "show this good woman into the stone parlor. Mrs. Moreton will speak to her there; and, ma'am," she added, good-naturally, "you can take a look at the pictures on the grand staircase as you pass the foot of it." The gossiping old man, as they went along, had many things to point out to his silent, steadfast-looking companion. He left her, however, at the turning of one of the long passages to run back to the servants' hall with a bound which had stealthily strayed into forbidden precincts. Between this spot and the stone parlor there were several intricate windings, and he expected to find the woman standing exactly where he left her. Without his guidance, however, she had preceded him to the door of the stone parlor; and waited for him, with a look of abstraction as fixed as if her feet had brought her to that threshold of their own accord. "So, Mistress," exclaimed the old man, "you are not quite so much of a stranger in this house as I thought." He bent on her a look of keen scrutiny. She was too little conscious to be embarrassed by it, and replied quietly, "I have been here before." While this little scene was being acted below stairs, Mrs. Moreton—half governess, half friend to the heiress—was seated with her young pupil in the great drawing-room. They, too, had been very busy. This splendid apartment showed marks of disarrangement. The elder lady was immersed in accounts; the younger one had placed a little table within the embrasure of the deep, old-fashioned window, so as to give her drawing—upon which she was very intent the full benefit of the already declining daylight. She was about fifteen; fair, and ingenious-looking; of slender figure, with mild, almost melancholy, brown eyes. "I think I shall have time to finish this," she said musingly; "it will please papa when he comes home this evening, will it not, dear Mrs. Moreton?" "My lord will think that you have made great progress," replied that lady, without lifting her eyes from a very long line of figures. "I do think it is like old Chedbury—like enough, at any rate, to remind us of the place when we are away. Although, after all, there is nothing here that I shall much miss. You and papa and good old Jenkyn are all going with me; and who else is there in the world whom I care about? Yet," she went on, thinking aloud, "if I had some one to leave behind; some young, companion who would miss me and talk about me when I am far away, I think I should be happier. I sometimes think it very strange"—she looked up at Mrs. Moreton—"that my father has never allowed me to make any friends of my own age. But, of course," she added, after a pause, "he cannot be expected to enter into all that a girl feels. How different everything would have been if my mother had lived!" Without making her pupil any answer, Mrs. Moreton started up with a sudden exclamation, and ran to the bell. "Is it possible," she said, self-reproachfully, "that all this time I have forgotten the poor woman who asked to speak to me four hours ago?" Mrs. Moreton entered the stone parlor with some kind words of apology; and seated herself in her accustomed chair, prepared to lend her best attention to the visitor. But the woman—his she the same who sat out those four hours so patiently in the window-seat; who followed the old servant through the long passage with such a face of blank unquestioning apathy? Her look of settled pre-occupation had dropped from her face like a mask; yet her facial features, now revealed, wore a scarcely less fixed expression. Every line quivered with agitation; yet her eyes, through it all, were never removed from Mrs. Moreton's face. She held to the table for support. She trembled in every limb—not from timidity, but from anxiety, eagerness. Her soul was gathered up into her face. Mrs. Moreton did not particularly observe her. Her thoughts were still at work with the business of to-day and to-morrow. "Well, my good woman," she said mechanically, by way of opening the case, as she opened all cases that came before her in that stone parlor, as the delegated Lady Bountiful of Chedbury, "what can I do for you?" There was no rejoinder. "My time, to-day," she went on, in the same gentle, yet rather magisterial tone, "has been given, yet rather valuable." "I am sorry," replied the stranger, "to have to trespass upon it." Mrs. Moreton, struck by something peculiar in the woman's voice,

looked up; for the first time became conscious of those eyes—earnest, imploring, and with an unspoken history that were fastened upon her own, and said, with much less of state and more of gentleness than she had yet shown, "You seem to be in some trouble. Can I do anything to help you?" "You can—you, and no one else in the world can." "I'm surely we have never met before," replied Mrs. Moreton, feeling by the woman's manner that hers was no case of every-day appeal for charity. "Pray tell me your name." The woman was silent, and her lips seemed to be slightly convulsed. At length, with a violent effort to conceal a strong emotion, she answered, "It is one that you have heard of, it is, or was, for I now hear it no longer, Elizabeth Barton." Mrs. Moreton's face had been lighted up with a kindly interest; but as shade, like the sudden falling of a curtain, now dropped across it, and shut out the sympathy she had begun to manifest. She rose, and said coldly, "In that case I am not aware of any matter in which I am likely to be able to serve you. I must refer you to Mr. Andrews, my lord's agent; he being the person with whom it will probably be most fitting for you to communicate." She then moved toward the door; but her effort to leave the room was vain. The visitor, like the old mariner in the weird story, held her with her eye. Before she could reach the door she tried to pass this strange, sad woman, and could not. "Listen to me, madam," exclaimed the visitor, "and then you will not mistake my errand. It is not Lord Chedbury; not his agent; not anything either of them could give me, if it were this great house itself, that I want. It is you—you only, that can help me, and it will help me—you *must*." She spoke these words almost authoritatively; yet, checking herself, went on in a tone of deep and touching submission. "You are a good lady, Mrs. Moreton; you have every one's good word. You will not make yourself hard against the supplication of a broken heart. God himself has promised to listen to it." Mrs. Moreton trembled. She was indeed a woman of this world, but with much tenderness and large sympathies. "I do not feel harshly toward you—forgive me if I appeared harsh—but your coming here took me by surprise. Lord Chedbury's orders are exceedingly strict respecting you; and I understood that you were settled comfortably in your own station in life, far above any kind of want." "I am settled comfortably," returned the woman; "above want above my hopes. I have a kind husband, a home and children. Every one is good to me. No one casts up my fault to me. No one, I think, remembers it now, except myself, when, upon my knees, I ask God to forgive me that, and all my other sins. That I had ever known Chedbury, or seen Lord Robert—he was Lord Robert then—would have sunk into the past long before this, like a dream—except for one thing—oh! Mrs. Moreton, my daughter! Her, too, I had put from me, as much as a mother can forget her child; but since I heard you were all going beyond seas—perhaps forever—something that will that has come over me—it is a fire in my heart. Have pity upon me. I do not ask to speak to her—not to say nor to hear one word. She need not know that it is her mother—need not know that there is such a person in the whole world. All I ask is to see her—only to see her—my daughter, only to see my daughter." Mrs. Moreton was deeply agitated. "It's impossible, and it is cruel in you," she said, "to ask it—cruel to yourself, cruel to me, trusted as I am by Lord Chedbury; cruel, most of all, to her. You know under what strict conditions his lordship brought home his daughter, so soon as the death of the old lord, his father, made this house his own. As you know, too, that these conditions, hard as they might seem, were dictated by no personal or unkindness toward yourself; but grew out of your daughter's altered position, and a sense of what is due to the station she will one day occupy. She has been trained carefully in all the ideas that befit a young gentlewoman of rank. She has as yet seen little of the world, and knows nothing of its evils. She left you at three years old, not more innocent than she still is now." Mrs. Moreton paused a moment and went on with emotion: "That opening life, that young unsullied mind, who should I—what would you have to answer for if we darkened it by a shadow of bygone misery and evil in which she had no share? She has been taught to believe her mother dead. My poor woman," she went on solemnly, "you must be dead to her. A day will come, not in this world, when you may claim her for your own."

first-born child am talking about? Did you ever feel a child's arms clinging round your neck, and find the little being growing to you day by day as nothing else can grow; loving you—whether you are the best woman in the world or the worst—as nothing else will ever love you; not even itself when it grows older, and other things come between its little heart and yours?" Mrs. Moreton returned to her chair, sank into it, and wept. The stranger saw her advantage. She flung herself on her knees before Mrs. Moreton. She kissed the hands in which she believed the balance of her fate to be trembling. She kissed her very gown, and covered it with tears. Mrs. Moreton, withdrawn within in severe colloquy with herself, was scarcely conscious of these passionate demonstrations. It was her heart she communed with; bearing on it, although a little dimmed by constant attention with the world, a higher image than that with which a somewhat rigid traditional convention had impressed her outward aspect. There was a pause of a few moments. "Even if I am doing right in this,"—so she reasoned with herself—"the world will blame me. Yet, if I am doing wrong, God will forgive me." She rose from her chair. "Get up," she said, "my poor woman. You shall see your daughter. But you must first make me one solemn promise. I am trusting you very deeply; can you trust yourself?" The woman made a gesture of passionate avowal; for at that moment she could not speak. "Swear, then," said Mrs. Moreton, "swear that you will be true to yourself and to me; that you will pass through the room in which she is sitting without either word or look that can betray you." She rang the bell. "Send Mrs. Jenkyn to me." "Jenkyn," she said, when the confidential servant appeared, "this good woman's business with me is over; but as she comes from a distance, I should like her to see something of the house before she leaves. You can show her over the principal rooms; as much as there is time for before dark." "And the great drawing-room, ma'am?" inquired Mrs. Jenkyn. "Certainly; it will not disturb your young lady in the least." It was rather an extensive orbit that the two had to traverse; and the old housekeeper, who had resolved in it so many years, moved so slowly—at least, so it seemed to her companion—from point to point, from picture to picture, that, by the time they reached the great drawing-room, the sunlight had almost faded from it. Almost; for there was still a strong slanting golden beam that played and flickered about the picture-frames, and glanced to and fro upon the white and gold of the heavy, carved arm-chairs—a few moments, and it would be gone. The girl, who, sitting in the window, rejoiced in this after-thought of the sun, which gave her a little more time to finish her drawing—did not know how lovely it made her; kissing her innocent young forehead, and resting, like a benediction, upon her smooth, shining hair. She went on quietly with her sketch; Mrs. Moreton, who had returned to see that faith was kept, preserved over her accounts. Mrs. Jenkyn and the woman walked round the room very slowly. When they reached the door that led into an inner apartment, Mrs. Jenkyn, with her hand upon the lock, said, "And this used to be the favorite sitting-room of my lady, my lord's mother." She held the door open; but her companion still lingered. Mrs. Moreton looked up from her accounts and said impressively, "I think you have now seen all in this room, and Mrs. Jenkyn has more to show you in the others." "But why," said the young lady, speaking for the first time, "but without looking up from her occupation, "should the good woman be hurried away until she has seen as much as she wishes? Pray stay," she said, with a sort of careless sweetness, still without looking up, "as long as you can find anything to amuse you. You do not disturb us in the least." Almost while she spoke, she suddenly rose and flitted about the room from table to table, in search of something needed for her drawing. She soon found it; but once, before she returned to her seat, she passed close to the woman—so close that her silk dress rustled against the homely duffle cloak; mother and daughter really so near—conventionally so distant—with a world between them. Mrs. Jenkyn's fingers were again upon the door handle, and the concluding part of her often-told narrative was upon her lips. They had still the state bedroom to see, and they passed into the bondoir. "And this," she went on, "was my lady's favorite apartment. It used in her day to be called the blue drawing-room, because—But you are tired," she said, remarking that her companion's attention wandered. "Yes—no," said the visitor, incoherently. "I must go back. I have forgotten something in the next room."