

"BEACON LIGHTS."

BY EMILIE SPENCER.

A GOLDEN NEW YEAR.

"The fall of the leaf is a whisper to the living."

IT was springtime, and the sun was setting. Marjorie stood on the common, which rose to the west into quite a hill, all covered over with gorse and heather. The former was in bloom, the latter was not; but over all came the

glorious rays of the setting sun. The bees were humming joyously, as though glad that their day's work was well-nigh over, and above every other sound came the murmur of the sea, with the dull plashing of the waves upon the shore. Marjorie knew how it was looking, though to catch a glimpse of the restless waters would have been to climb to the top of the hill and look down on the other side. She loved the sea—the wild, happy sea—and was only waiting now for somebody to bear her company up the height and down to the rocky shore below. Marjorie's home was just on the borders of the common, the village lay off some distance to the right and nearer to the sea; Ralph Belcher lived in the village, and the common had been their trysting-place ever since the drawing together of their glad young hearts had begun.

There was a slight stirring of the heather, and turning Marjorie stood face to face with the one who all unconsciously occupied her thoughts.

"I am come, Marjorie."

"Yes, I see," and her hand met his shyly, while the rich colour mantled her young cheek.

"Marjorie, dear, I am come to say good-by."

"Good-by!" It seemed that she could do no other than re-echo his own words.

"Yes," and he held her to him in his strong embrace; "but, Marjorie, you will trust me, darling, and you will wait for me."

"Wait? Oh, Ralph, I will wait all my life!"

"Not so long as that, dearest"; and he smiled in spite of his dejected gravity of a moment before. "Not so long as that, Marjorie; but if you hear wrong of me, dear, you must turn a deaf ear, and believe and wait. I shall come back for

you, and dear, I will always think of you, even though I may not return for long years."

"You will write, Ralph?"

"I may by-and-by, dear—not till after I have cleared my name and can offer you a home—then dear, I will come, and never fear, Marjorie, but that it will be as soon as I can arrange matters comfortably for you." He kissed her again and again, and put her from him once, twice, aye, and even the third time, yet still he waited as though for some other words from her.

"Ralph, I love you, and will wait." Marjorie's voice was very low, and her cheek very, very pale; yet, woman-like, she restrained her grief for the sake of him who was going away, and whom, unless God willed it otherwise, she might never see again.

But the last adieu had to be spoken, and with a fervent "God bless

you, darling, now and always," Ralph Belcher tore himself away; then the evening glory died out for Marjorie, and slowly, sadly she turned towards her cottage home.

Even the sweet, shifting rays of morning brought no hope, and Marjorie, sick as from a fear of coming woe, stole out to the garden gate—a sight of the dear old common would perhaps whisper of old times and bring her strength.

"My child, you know it all, don't you?" and the girl's mother stood close by her side.



"Greater love hath no man than this—it is Marjorie who reads the words."