

## THE TRACK OF HER FEET.

BY EROL GERVASE.

The weary, suffering feet of one who walked up and down, seeking peace and finding it not, for long, long years. When Mary's heart began to be very heavy, she first began that ceaseless walk. Let it remain there now—the bare, unpainted track,—a memorial of her. I will never cover it over, never make it fresh and bright and new. Her feet have worn it as it is.

I need not detail here the steps by which I was brought at last, reluctantly, oh, how reluctantly, to yield again, in opposition to my fixed resolve and wishes, to the pressure brought to bear upon me, and to consent to Mary's renewing her engagement to Mr. Monteith.

The consent was wrung from me, or perhaps, if I say, drained from me, as one's heart's blood is sometimes drained by a slow, exhausting process, it will better convey what I mean to express.

I saw that my child was dying by inches, and I could not hold out against the spectacle of her wasting form, her pallid face, her mute distress; and constantly Mr. Monteith renewed his entreaties. So once again, with a sore heart, I weakly yielded.

The time was fixed for their marriage. It wanted but three weeks of the wedding day; Mary's cheek had recovered its youthful bloom, her eye its brightness, her lip its smiles. She went about the house, singing softly to herself in the gladness of her heart, or sat and worked at her wedding clothes in happy reverie, when she was not conversing with me. No doubt for the future seemed to trouble her; she was trusting

fully in the man she had promised to marry.

Mr. Monteith had taken a house in St. Hilaire, and was furnishing it. I had been anxious that my daughter should continue to live with me after her marriage, and I had made a proposal to Mr. Monteith to this effect, offering to give up a certain portion of the house to his and Mary's exclusive use. I was aware that, in most cases, it is wiser and better for young people to begin their married life alone, but I thought that here there was a reason why a contrary course should be expedient. Not to speak of my own loneliness, for I put that out of the question, I thought that as Mr. Monteith, from the nature of some business transactions into which he had entered, was likely to be often from home during the summer, it would be lonely for Mary in his absence. True, she might come to me from her own house, but that would involve the temporary shutting up of the latter, or the expensive alternative of keeping a servant there in her absence. But the strongest reason of all was that my confidence in Mr. Monteith's complete reformation was not firmly established. Terrible doubts and fears on this point still assailed me, and I longed to keep my child with me, to watch over her still, and to be with her if trouble should come.

I thought also, that for him it would be a preventive measure; that he would be less likely to yield to temptation, if it should assail him, under my roof than under his own, and away from the restraints of my presence.

But I could not obtain his consent to