

straight. I can't bide to look at her when she's walking or running ; made all right, there'd have been nought to match her—no ! not all round the country-side."

"'Tis sad, dear," Mrs. May would say, "passin' sad," and the kindest look would steal into her soft grey eyes ; "but, rest ye certain, there's love in it. The old Book says, 'Our Heavenly Father does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men'; such trouble would never have been sent to you or the little lambkin without some thought of love wrapped up in it."

"Thought of love in it !" and Susan Winter would toss her head scornfully. "What thought of love can there be in the making of my child a cripple ? 'Tis just the ruin of her whole life !" and a defiant look would steal into Susan's eyes, and her lips would curl in a manner that Mrs. May was sorry to see.

"It needn't be, dearie. Beauty, 'tis a sore temptation to a girl sometimes. God, in His love, may be making the way Heavenwards easier for your little May's feet."

With a petulant gesture Susan Winter drew her needle in and out of the smart gown she was making. Heaven ! why, it was such a far-away place, and so dim and shadowy that she scarcely ever thought of it. It was on this world that her affections were set.

CHAPTER II.

"THE NEW PARSON."

SOME quarter of a mile from the church, nestling lower down the hill, lay the Vicarage. A square, low building, with sturdy stone walls, it seemed built with an eye to the terrible storms that occasionally swept with such disastrous havoc over the little fishing village. Plain outside almost to ugliness, it was comfortable enough within ; and on a winter's night, when cosy fires roared up the old-fashioned chimneys, and warm tongues of red flame leaped and darted from the tar-pitched logs, lighting up the wainscoted walls, it seemed a pleasant refuge.

It requires something more than warm fires and cosy rooms to make a home, though : love must dwell within its walls ; and that requisite the Vicarage possessed, for its inmates were bound first to God and then to each other by the tenderest ties.

"God is love" and "Love one another" were the texts learned by the Vicarage children almost as soon as they could lispen.

It was with the deepest regret that Mr. Gwyn had given up his work in East London ; but dire necessity compelled it. Twelve years of incessant labour in a densely populated parish had broken down his strong constitution, and he had to seek change of scene and work of a less exhausting character.

It was hard for Mr. Gwyn to turn his back on a people and a parish that had grown very dear to his



"I BEG YOUR PARDON."

heart, and for whom he had fondly hoped to labour for yet many a year ; but in this, as in every matter, he sought to accept God's will, and to follow where His Providential Hand seemed to beckon.

A smaller charge had one recommendation—Mr. Gwyn hoped that he would become acquainted with, and be a friend to, every soul committed to his care. In his former parish, with its teeming thousands and constant change of faces, this had been impossible.

Mr. Gwyn's sorrow, then, may be imagined when, at Scard, he found cottage doors securely latched, and, worse still, hearts more securely fastened, determined seemingly to give neither himself nor his words an entrance. Disappointed as he was, he was resolved not to be disheartened ; and as lovingly as ever he went from cottage to cottage, one sweet promise making music in his heart : "In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

It was not long before Mr. Gwyn found out Mrs. May.

"Who lives in that neat little house ?" he asked one day of a neighbour, and he pointed down the street to the whitewashed cottage, with its tidy muslin blinds.

"Widow May, sir ; all her married life she's lived there, and, let me see—why, that must be a matter of more than fifty years."