

what you think. I can bear it—I can bear anything now,” and I told him the news of the morning.

“I will, my child, if you wish it,” and then he told me that he had not the least hope of her recovery, though she might linger for a couple of weeks. “Hush! my good girl,” he said to Mattie, whose sobs now became audible, “or I cannot allow you to sit with her. You had better take some rest, and let the servant watch,” he said to me when I had gone with him to the door; “and God bless you, my poor child, you are a brave girl.”

CHAPTER II.

When Mother called me, as I said at the beginning of my story, it was two days after the event spoken of in the former chapter. We had watched her that night, but she slept very calmly, and in the morning awoke at her usual hour. She was quite herself again, though very weak, and lay quiet all that day, seemingly lost in thought. But she said not a word of the news of the day before, and when the doctor came she seemed to take his visit as a matter of course. The strangest part of all was that she never asked for Stewart, for he was her favorite; but I was thankful that she did not, for he, poor boy, had spent the day in crying, and the sight of him would have brought all back to her.

I wonder how I got through that day. I did not want to cry—I felt too despairing for that. I believe Mattie, whose tears were unceasing, thought that I had a heart of stone, and I felt myself as if I had. But my days of weeping came afterwards, and the heartaches which I experienced soon made me cease to fear I had no heart.

When I went to Mother she told me to sit down by her, for she had something to say to me, and then she told me that she knew she was going to

leave us. There was no need to restrain my feelings now, and I knelt down beside her and clung to her.

“Mother,” I cried, “do not leave us. Oh, you must not. What can I, a poor, weak girl, with so many faults, do without you? How can I be a mother to Stewart? Oh, Mother, Mother! my heart will break. I cannot bear so much. God has ceased to be good, and if he takes you as He has taken Father from us, I’ll never pray to Him again.”

She did not speak, but just stroked my hair for some time, while her tears mingled with mine. And then she prayed for me, prayed that God would subdue my rebellious heart, and teach me that whatever He did was right, and that He could and would be more than father and mother to me, and then came the Lord’s Prayer, but I could not join in. After some time she said, “I think, Robbie, that God has been very good to us. If He had taken Father before he was prepared for death, we would indeed have cause for sorrow, and would feel as if our bereavement would be nothing could we but think that he was safe. And now, dear, when we know that he had so recently given his heart to God, let us be thankful, and acknowledge that He has been very good—so good that I do not fear to leave my darlings in His hands.”

She talked to me until my hard heart was thoroughly melted, and I promised that I would cast all my care upon Him, and seek His guidance in all my troubles through life. And then we talked of our worldly prospects, which were certainly not very bright. We had always been very comfortable, but Father had never saved anything, and now Mother said she feared that we would have nothing but what was due to Father from the owners of his vessel.

“But you will not want, Robbie, for you must write to Uncle Stewart, and I know that he will care for you.”