

Bristol, I fell upon her face, and she permitted me to trickle down her cheek. She did not wipe me off, though she must have noticed me because I am such a big drop."

"I was once one of her tears," said a sweet little voice gravely.

"Then, little friend, you will like to hear me," said the Flanders drop, who had crossed that morning in the tendrils of cirrus. "There is plenty of time for my story. We shall not return into the atmosphere until the sun rises."

"I have no love for these human beings. They know nothing, and are always fighting," muttered a drop who had just fallen.

"For my part I like to observe the poor creatures," remarked the late dewdrop.

"I have been some time in Flanders, but long before then I became interested in the young man Ernest," the narrator began. "He was forced to enlist by a clergyman named Barnabas. This young man was a coward, who had spent the best years of his life in lonely places. He wanted to get back to the solitude and hide himself; but Barnabas would not let him go. Upon a Canadian farm this clergyman had saved the young man's body; now he was resolved to save his soul."

"Surely this Ernest was a pitiful creature," said the drop upon the altar.

"Not at all," declared the chief speaker. "The coward who fights against his weakness, and conquers, is one of the noblest of all men. There are three kinds of work, Barnabas pointed out, when Ernest still hung back: one is the business by which we earn our daily bread; the second is the duty we owe to heaven; the third and highest is the deed through which we obtain salvation."

"Gilda was far the stronger of the two. I am anxious to hear about her, and I fancy she would like to see me again, because I am such a remarkably large raindrop," remarked an impatient voice from the roof of heather.

"It is by no choice of ours we are mixed up with the horrible affairs of these fighting animals," the narrator proceeded. "We prefer calm seas, waving wheat, and sheltered gardens. It is shocking to think some of us were a few days ago blood-drops. I had the taint myself, and was very glad to ascend into the atmosphere, and to be condensed once more into a pure silvery drop."