

edly they are persons of distinguished rank' quoth 'she, and how much finer voices they must have than those vulgar fowls whose eternal twittering used to make me so nervous. Just then the whole flock set up such a gabbling and screeching as they passed close by, that the little Brook well nigh leap out of her reservoir with horror and amazement; and to complete her consternation one fat old dowager goose straggled awkwardly out of the line of march, plump right down into the middle of the pool, flouncing and floundering about at a terrible rate, filling its whole circumference with her ungainly person, and scrambling out again with an unfeeling precipitation, which cruelly disordered the victim of her barbarous outrage. Hardly were they out of sight when a huge ox goaded by the intolerable stinging of a gad fly, broke away from the herd, and came galloping down in his blind agony to the woods, just beyond the new cleared spot, when the little Brook lying in his way he splashed into it and out of it without ceremony, heedless of the helpless object subjected to his ruffian treatment. That one splash nearly annihilated the miserable little Brook. The huge fore hoofs fixed themselves into its mossy bank; the hind ones with a single extricating plunge, bounded bank and brook together into a muddy hole, and the tail with one insolent whisk spattered half the conglomerated mass of black defilement over the surrounding herbage. And now what was wanting to complete the ruin and degradation of the unhappy little Brook? A black puddle was all that remained of the once pellucid pool, from which in its altered state, not the meanest creature that crawled or flew, would have condescended to quench its thirst, which defiled instead of refreshing the adjacent verdure, and was become utterly incapable of reflecting any earthly or heavenly object.

Night came again! how beautiful is night! but darkness was on the face of the little Brook, and well for it that it was total darkness.—for in that state of conscious degradation how could it have sustained the searching gaze of its pure forsaken Star? Long, dark and companionless was that first night of misery, and when morning dawned, though the turbid water had regained a degree of transparency, it had shrunk away to a tenth part of its former fair proportion. So much had it lost by evaporation in that fierce solar alembic,—so much from absorption in the loosened and choking soil of its once firm and beautiful margin,—and so much from dispersion, from the wasteful havoc of its destructive invaders. Again the great sun looked down upon it, again the vertical beams drank fiercely of its shrunken water; and when evening came, no more remained of the poor little Brook, than just so many drops as filled the hollow of one of those large pebbles which had paved its unsullied bosom, in the day of its brightness and beauty.

But never in its season of brightest plentitude, was the water of the little Brook so clear—so perfectly clear and pure as that last portion, which lay like a liquid gem in the small concave of the polished stone. It had been filtered from every grosser particle,—refined by rough discipline—purified by adversity, even from those lees of vanity and light-mindedness, which had adulterated

its sparkling waters, even in the days of its loveliness and beauty.

Just as the last sunbeam was withdrawing its amber light from that small pool, the old familiar robin hopped on the edge of the hollow pebble, and dipping his beak once and again in the diminished fount, which had slaked his thirst so often and so long, dropped his russet wings with a slight quivering motion, and broke forth into a short sweet gush of parting song, before he winged his way forever from his expiring benefactor.

Twilight had melted into night—dark night—for neither moon nor stars were visible through the thick clouds that canopied the night. In darkness and silence lay the little Brook, forgotten, it almost seemed, by its benignant Star, as though its last drop were exhaled into nothingness—its languishing existence already struck out of the list of created things. Time *had* been, when such apparent neglect would have excited its highest indignation—but time *now* was, that it submitted humbly and resignedly to the deserved infliction—and after a little while looking fixedly upwards, it almost fancied that the form, if not the radiance of the beloved Star, was faintly perceptible through the intervening darkness. The little Brook was not deceived. Cloud after cloud rolled away from the Central Heaven till at last the unchanging Star was plainly discernible through the fleecy vapour, which yet obscured its perfect lustre. But through that silvery veil the beautiful Star looked down intently, yet mournfully, on its repentant love. And there was more of pity, of tenderness and reconciliation in that dim, trembling gaze, than if the pure heavenly dweller had shone out in perfect brightness on the frail humble creature below. Just then a few large drops fell heavily from the departing cloud, and one trembling for a moment, with starry light, fell like a forgiving tear into the bosom of the little wasting, sorrowful Brook.

Long, long and undisturbed, was the last mysterious communion of the reconciled friends. No doubt that voiceless intercourse was yet eloquent of hope and futurity. For all that remained of the poor little Brook, was soon to be exhausted by the next day's fiery trial, and it would but change its visible form to become an imperishable essence. And who can tell whether the elementary nature, so purged from earthly impurities, may not have been received up into the sphere of its heavenly loved one, and indissolubly united with its celestial substance.

Love.—The soul that is once truly touched with the magnetic force of Divine love, can never relish anything here so pleasingly as that entirely she can rest upon it. Though the pleasures profits and honours of this life may sometimes shuffle him out of his ~~usual~~ course, yet he wavers up and down in trouble, runs to and fro like quicksilver, and is never quiet within till he returns to his wonted joy and inward happiness. There it is his centre points, and there his circle is bounded, which, though unseen and unperceived by others, are sought to him as nothing can buy from him.—*Feltham.*