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MILDRED ROSIER.*

A TALE OF THE RUINED CITY.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

CHAPTER VII.

The deepest ice that ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows and cannot cease to flow.

BYRON.

How that visit to B—Lodge saddened the young heart of Mildred Rosier! She returned to her solitary old fashioned home, deeply impressed with all she had seen and heard. Secretly wondering who the interesting young stranger was, whose sudden appearance had so violently affected the calm, pale girl, who, judging from her statue like immovability of countenance, Mildred had supposed to be beyond the control of human hopes and fears; was it love, despairing of the attainment of its cherished idol, that had wrought such a change in one so fair and young? or was it the fanatical belief in a stern and rigorous creed, which led her to imagine that she had committed the unforgivable sin, which had for ever closed the doors of mercy against her? Mildred knew not. She only knew that her poor young friend was unhappy, and that was enough to ensure for her all the sympathies of her generous and unsophisticated heart.

"I must—I will know the cause of her grief, that I may share it with her," she said. "But I hate to go to that dull house. That cold, proud, old man; that clever, lady-like, but pragmatical woman. How patronizing she is; what scornful pity she shows for my ignorance; how small and insignificant I appear; I believe that she considers me as a perfect alien from the commonwealth of Israel. I think I could love religion and religious people, but not her nor her religion. Yet

I heard some things last night which made me feel sad—feel that the world, beautiful as it is, ought not to engross all my attention. I thought I should be amused by their solemn foolery; but no, their tragic acting has left a pang behind,—a cloud has passed over my summer sky, which has chilled my heart with its portentous shadow. When will the sun burst forth and dissipate this gloomy vapour?"

Mildred presented herself at the breakfast table, pale and out of spirits. This gay, happy child, was not used to look thus. Mrs. Rosier missed the blithe lively tones of her gladsome mirth, and she returned Mildred's serious salutation with—"Are you ill, my darling?—what ails my child?"

"I am well, dear mamma; but —"

"But what?"

"I feel as if a good fit of crying would be of more service to me than my breakfast," and suiting the action to the words, Mildred sank down in her chair, and for a few minutes wept very heartily.

"God bless the child! what ails her?" cried old Abigail, dropping the plate of toast in her fright, and bustling up to her young lady. "Why, Miss Mille! Miss Mille! I have not seen you go on in that way since master Sydney left us to go to sea."

"I am very silly to let my feelings get the better of me in this manner," said Mildred, wiping her eyes, and hastily rising to kiss her mother and the faithful old servant, and dissipate their fears.

"That prayer meeting has robbed me of all my happy thoughts. I wish I had stayed at home."

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