

subject passed away: but no one ever thought, not even either of the Misses Sloane who were also present, that perhaps Mary herself might object to going to her husband a portionless bride.

Yet so it was. He had wished the marriage to be hurried instead of delayed; but Mary had refused, knowing well that he could not afford to begin housekeeping in the way he would wish to, unless assisted by her father,—and, besides, was she not wanted at home just then?

“Let us wait quietly, Charles, till we see how matters turn out with father; he may perhaps recover his money, and then things will go on as usual; but indeed, dearest, I cannot consent to do you such an injury as marry upon the small means you have of your own.”

“My means are not small, Mary; I have \$1,200 a year. Could we not live on that?”

“And your mother and sisters? Oh, Charles, dearly as I love you, don’t ask me to live with them now.”

“I was selfish, dear; I had forgotten my mother and sisters. No, I won’t ask you to live with them; but so soon as I can make a separate home for you, will you come then?”

What need to give her answer? It was what any woman who loved would have given, and it satisfied Charles, who went away radiant with happiness and picturing to himself a cosy little nest, where he could safely stow away his matrimonial prize where sorrow should never come.

Six months passed from the time we first made Mary Barton’s acquaintance, and brought great changes. The failure had taken place and was so complete that nothing whatever was left for the family. Mr. Barton had procured a small situation, and for a time it seemed as though they would be as happy as ever they were before their loss; but by degrees Mr. Barton’s health gave way, and now as May approached they found themselves seeking for still cheaper lodgings than those they already occupied. A few weeks longer and Edward Barton was at rest, and the main support of the family depending upon Mary. No use now for Charles Dakers to tell her that the home he was making would soon be ready for her; no use to ask her to leave all and

“cleave” to him; he saw as well as she did that her duty lay with her family, and he was not the one to tempt her to foreswear it.

Spring passed on to summer, summer again gave way to autumn, and once more affairs were looking brighter for the Bartons. Henry and James, aged respectively sixteen and fourteen, had obtained employment: whilst Maude, who was just entering her thirteenth year, had been adopted by an old friend of her father’s. Mary herself had her time fully occupied in teaching, and Mrs. Barton attended to the home duties and the care of the two younger boys.

Charles Dakers was a constant visitor, and evening after evening he and Mary would talk over their future prospects. He was doing well in his profession, though by no means wealthy, and was anxious that their marriage should take place. “I have waited so long, Mary,” he urged, and her own heart echoed back the words “so long,” but it was her duty to remain a little longer with her mother.

Another year passed and then came Mary’s real troubles; all that had come before were as though only preparing her for what was to come. She had grieved deeply when her dear father was taken away, but now when all that was mortal of her mother lay stiff and cold before her, her grief knew no bounds. Once and once only did she rebel against the hand that chastened her; it was now, when she felt her burden to be greater than she could bear. For days she refused to be comforted, cherishing her sorrow, and hugging it close to her aching heart; but the bitter feeling gave way at last, and once more she took up her daily burden.

“What am I to do with my little brothers when I am away from home?” was her constant thought, until one day it was proposed that she should take a larger house and open a school. Arrangements were soon completed, and before many months were over, she had quite a number of pupils.

“Doing so well,” was the verdict of outsiders, but how little they knew that the whole proceeds went for rent and expenses, leaving her with nothing but her brothers’ meagre salaries for housekeeping.

Ah, it is a sad thing when a woman has