

with a little Testament open in her hand; but she was rather musing on what she had been reading than continuing her occupation.

"Christine!"

"James!"

"May I come in?"

"Yes, surely."

"I hear your father has gone to a town-meeting."

"Yes."

"And he is to be made a bailie."

"Yes."

"I am very glad. It will greatly please him, and there is no citizen more worthy of the honour."

"I think so also."

"Shall I disturb you if I wait to see him?"

"No, James; sit down."

Then Christine laid aside her book and took her sewing, and James sat thinking how he could best introduce the subject ever near his heart. He felt that there was much to say on his own behalf, if he only knew how to begin. Christine opened the subject for him. She laid down her work and went and stood before the fire at his side. The faintest shadow of colour was in her face, and her eyes were unspeakably sad and anxious. He could not bear their eager, searching gaze, and dropped his own.

"James, have you destroyed yonder paper?"

"Nay, Christine; I am too poor a man to throw away so much hard-won gold. I am keeping it until I can see Mr. McFarlane and quietly collect my own."

"You will never use it in any way against him?"

"Will you ever marry him? Tell me that."

"O sir!" she cried indignantly, "you want to make a bargain with my poor heart. Hear, then. If Donald wants me to marry him I'll never cast him off. Do you think God will cast him off for one fault? You dare not say it."

"I do not say but what God will pardon. But we are human beings; we are not near to God yet."

"But we ought to be ~~trying~~ trying to get near Him; and oh, James, you never had so grand a chance. See the pitiful face of Christ looking down on you from the cross. If that face should turn away from you, James—if it should!"

"You ask a hard thing from me, Christine."

"Yes, I do."

"But if you will only try and love me—"

"Stop, James! I will make no bargain in a matter of right and wrong. If for Christ's sake, who has forgiven you so much, you can forgive Donald, for Christ's dear sake do it. If not, I will set no earthly love before it. Do your worst. God can find out a way. I'll trust Him."

"Christine! dear Christine!"

"Hush! I am Donald's promised wife. May God speak to you for me. I am very sad and weary. Good-night."