

alized the child was free and in Tubby's arms, and they were all three scrambling towards the deck. The tilt of the ship made progress difficult, but Tubby helped her with his one free arm, while with the other he clasped little Eve, who clung tightly to his neck.

Along the slippery deck, in the grey mist, shadowy forms moved in the distance like huge ghosts. The roaring and hissing of escaping steam, in their ears, mingled with the dash and swirl of the sweeping Atlantic waves, as the "Lausanne" dipped her face lower and lower, in her dying anguish.

Then Fen found herself staring down into what seemed an interminable abyss, with a faint outline of mere ghosts, far, far below them.

"You must drop," a sailor told her, and took her by the arm to help her swing over the side.

She and Tubby looked into each other's eyes, with a mutual farewell, then she was falling, falling, and was scarcely conscious of the blow which left her senseless as she came in contact with the boat. Nor was she aware that Tubby, with little Eve in his arms, had followed her safely in the dangerous descent.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Chosen according to the Twenty-third Article of religion—sent as a Minister in the Lord's Vineyard.

JOHN HASSALL stood in the drawing-room of Spinney Chase, looking out on to the blaze of colour that the garden beds made under the summer sun, reflecting on the chances and changes that Time brings.

His preoccupation and a touch of sadness in his face were not unnoticed by Agnes when she came in to see him, with an apology for her mother, who was in the sick-room upstairs.

"I came," said Hassall, "to say good-bye to you all, for some months. I am going to Bristol this week."

His honest eyes, avowing sentiments which he had no intention of expressing in words, told her that this farewell was a distress and an effort to him; and for the first time, Agnes dimly realized that this steadfast, unaffected nature was ready to lay a tribute of unselfish devotion at her feet.

The thought stirred her a little, for though her saintliness was absolutely genuine, she had a tender, gracious temperament that disliked causing pain to others.

"Is it some new work you are taking up?" she asked gently. "If so, I suppose we must not grudge you to it. But everyone here will miss you, Mr. Hassall."

"I shall be glad to be missed," he said; "one's life need not be too lonely, if one has friends who think of one sometimes. I have exchanged with the rector of St. Ethelwulf's, Mr. Butler, for a time. He needs a rest and I shall be glad of some strenuous work."

He did not say what his reason was for wishing this; yet instinctively Agnes guessed. Never before had the idea of any special friendship existing between Hassall and herself occurred to her. But there are moments when the strength of a concentrated and sincere emotion conveys itself, with telepathic ease and clearness, and such a moment had come to them both now.

Under the words and manner that convention demanded, there was the vibration of deep feeling, and though there was renunciation with it, on Hassall's side, and no thought of surrender on Agnes', they felt strangely and sympathetically drawn to each other.

With both of them, however, the Creator came first in their hearts, and they were willing to sacrifice any appeal to their senses by the created.

"I rather envy you your hard work," said Agnes. "I seem so useless here now. If Laurie could only recover, I should take up something away from home. But I feel I cannot leave until he is better."

"Naturally." He paused, then, after a moment's reflection, resumed, "Miss Pridham, before I go, I want to take

you into my confidence on a certain point connected with this recent tragedy."

"Yes?" She looked at him with surprise and some anxiety.

"I have been trying to decide whether I should mention it at all and, if so, to which member of your family. I do not wish to add to your parents' grief, and it seems to me that you are the best person to confide in. You have such strong faith, and that is one's only bulwark in times of stress."

"Please tell me," Agnes said simply.

"I had occasion some weeks ago, to walk along the canal path, to visit a cottage about two miles off. About half a mile from here, I came upon a girl who was lying on the grass, sobbing. She seemed almost distraught with grief. I spoke to her and, after refusing at first to answer any of my questions, she told me that she was Lisbeth Bainton—therefore one of my parishioners, though, as she never came to church and had been out each time I called on her grandmother, I had never yet seen her.

"I tried to gain her confidence and to offer her some consolation, telling her that if she took her trouble to God, He could help her. But though she dried her tears, she seemed impatient of being spoken to, and finally, when I was leaving her, she exclaimed: 'There's no cure for Love except Love. God should have made us all equal, if he wanted us to be happy.'

"I BEGGED her not to doubt the Divine power to make us happy, if we would yield our wills to Him, but she retorted that the only way to give her happiness would be to make her a lady and that could never be. And then she turned and walked quickly away from me, back towards Fleet. Now, it seems to me that this poor girl must have been in love with someone in a higher rank of life, and there are rumours that this was so. Obviously the man did not return her affection, and it is possible that someone who loved her was jealous of him. If your brother should regain his memory and you could persuade him to speak, the mystery might be cleared up, and his share in it, if he had any, exonerated from blame."

"You think," asked Agnes, "that it might have been Laurie for whom she cared?"

"I think it might. And some other man who was jealous may have attacked them both. That is my theory. I have spoken to no one on the subject, as you may be sure."

It was another slight link in the long chain that connected the dead girl with Laurie's illness.

"I leave it to you," concluded Hassall, "to tell your father if and when you think best. I should like to see Mr. Pridham, to say good-bye. Would that be possible?"

Agnes said she would go and see if her father was in his library and, returning in a moment, brought the message he would be pleased to see Mr. Hassall there.

"Then this is good-bye," the vicar said, taking her hand. "I shall be away some months and, if your brother recovers and you keep to your project of taking work elsewhere, we may not meet for a very long time. May I say just this—that if it had been God's will to let us work together, you and I—if we had been of one Church and one persuasion, I should have had no dearer hope on earth than that of your companionship in our life pilgrimage."

She lifted her eyes to his, crystal-clear, their steadfastness quite unchanged, though the stir of feeling roused by his eloquent words had sent the colour into her pale cheeks, and said gently, "My dearest hope is to be accepted by God, for His special service. I do not seek happiness in any other way."

"I know," he rejoined; "I wish it could have been otherwise. I shall remember you in my prayers always. Good-bye—Agnes." He was still holding her hand in his firm, close grasp, and as he read her eyes and

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