

last few weeks, and when almost before we had come to the end of it, Jack came in, I went away and left them alone together.

Jack told me afterwards that Hugh's warm welcome, and his honest and faithful counsel, were better than a fortune to him. "It is such a wonderful help," he said, "to feel you are trusted by one everybody can trust like Hugh."

Hugh has set it all right for Jack. Hugh thinks the old life at home would not be good for Jack; he thinks Jack and father naturally fret each other a little, and if they control themselves so as not to fret each other, they will fret themselves all the more by the effort. It was therefore arranged that Jack should go to America and take charge of a tobacco plantation.

So we were once more at the dear old home. Our own old party—father, and mother, and Jack, and Hugh, and I; for Hugh always was one of us, although now he is one of us in a nearer way.

How nearly we have all been severed in the storms of this "troublesome world!" and how sweet the past dangers make the present calm!

There is much indeed still to remind us that we are at sea, on the open sea, with no promise of exemption from storms in time to come. But we are not without a pilot! And we have proved Him, which is something to gain from any storm.

Mother is much more willing to part with Jack for America than we dared to hope she would be. She says she feels it easier to part with him now than when he went to the army in Flanders. She feels he is not going alone. And by that we know well she does not only mean that Hugh is going with him to settle him in the new country.

For Hugh is going, but with a hope that makes his going easier for us both than when he left us last.

For a few days after our return, we had a visit from Cousin Evelyn's great-uncle, our new vicar.

He looked more aged and thinner than when we saw him last, and he was more nervous than ever.

He said he believed it was too late to transplant an old man like him from the centre of civilized and learned life at Oxford to what he hoped he might term, without offence, a region rather on the outskirts of civilization.

He said, between wrecking and poaching, aversion to paying tithes, their Cornish dialect, and what he could not help calling remnants of native barbarism on the one hand and Methodism on the other, he could make nothing whatever of the people, and if any one else could he was sure they were welcome to try.

He had therefore come to propose that Hugh should take the curacy, with a liberal salary. He himself would settle in London. He had spoken to the patron, who, considering

the circumstances, said perhaps it was the best thing that could be done. So all is settled.

Hugh and Jack are gone. They sailed from Falmouth.

I feel more anxious now they are actually gone than when it was first proposed. From not having much imagination I never can measure the pain of things beforehand, which sometimes makes it worse afterwards.

The ship they sailed in is an old one. I heard some sailors talking disparagingly of her as we left the quay. And the evening after they left was stormy. Heavy masses of thunder-cloud gathered in the west as I looked from the cliffs, just where I thought the ship must be.

It is now two months since Hugh and Jack left us. We have had letters full of hope and promise; and all the weight of foreboding, which settled down on me during the long days of silence between their leaving and our hearing, seems melting away. Every breath of this soft spring air, every smile of this life-giving spring sunshine, seems to blow or shine my cares away.

Those American forests, with their depths of pillared shade, and all the rich traceries of their brilliant creepers, would be only a picture to me—a glorious picture indeed, painted by the Master's hand, but wanting the sweet fragrance of time and home which breathes to me from every blossom of the hawthorn under my chamber window.

And now there is another new light on all the dear familiar old places, for Hugh is coming back so soon—so soon; and we are to work together, he and I, all our lives long, for the good and happiness of the old parish and the old friends; to bring new eternal hope and life, I trust, into many a heart and home.

There has been a letter from Hugh. Jack's affairs will take longer settling than we thought. And meantime Hugh finds plenty of missionary work among the poor blacks, so that I must try not to wish him back before the autumn, to which time his return has been delayed; and not to let the intervening days be merely a kind of waste border-land between two regions of life, but to fill them with their own work, which, no doubt, if I ask God, He will give me.

One piece of work has come already. Toby Tressly, when mother and I went to visit him to-day, asked me, as a great favour, if I would let him come to our house for an hour now and then and help him on a little with his reading, which, with all his pains, he still finds to be a very slow and not very certain mode of gaining information or edification.

This evening he came for the first time, and, with some hesitation, made known the chief reason for his coming. He has contrived to collect a few of

the idle boys of the parish on Sunday afternoons to teach them. And the attempt to teach others has made him feel his own deficiencies.

This accounts for the sounds father and I heard issuing from Toby's cottage as we were walking through the fields last Sunday.

The singing was hearty enough, at all events. From time to time the voices seemed to grow uncertain and scanty, and to wander up and down without knowing where they were going. But after such intervals Toby's voice was heard again, like a captain's collecting his scattered forces after a chase, and the whole body came in together at the close with a shout which father and I concluded was the chorus.

I suggested to Betty that a little elementary instruction in singing, such as I could give, might not be useless to Toby, if he is to be choirmaster as well as schoolmaster.

"More than that too, Mrs. Kitty," said Betty. "Toby is appointed local-preacher in our district."

This announcement was made as Betty was taking away the supper, and the demand on mother's faith in Methodist arrangements was more than it could stand.

"Toby a preacher, when he can scarcely read!" she said.

"It's my belief, missis," said Betty, "folks can learn to read a deal easier than they can learn what the Almighty's learned Toby's poor soul. There be things seen in the depths Toby's been brought through never written in any lesson-book I ever see."

"But whatever the profit may be to others," said mother, "it must certainly be dangerous to Toby himself to set himself up to teach when he has still so much to learn."

"Well, missis," said Betty, very respectfully but very determinedly, "seems to me if folks weren't to teach till they've no more to learn, they may wait till doomsday, and beyond that, for that aught I know by. And more than that, the folks that do set up to teach because they've done learning be most times mortal dull teachers. Nothing comes so home, it's my belief, as a lesson the teacher has just learned himself from the Almighty, whether from His word or His hand. However, Toby's not to set himself up to preach, anyway. Folks felt the better for what he'd got to say, and they would make him preach, and that's the end of it."

"A congregation who will listen is a good beginning for any parson certainly," said father. "And I suppose Toby's salary is not very high."

"The pay of them local-preachers," replied Betty drily, "is most times the wrong way as far as the world goes. Toby often walks ten or twenty miles to his preaching, and when it rains he's got to preach in his wet clothes, and it's in them till they dry; so that his pay is like to be weary bones now and rheumatics in old age. But he's content enough."

But when afterwards I questioned Toby about his self-denying labours, he coloured and stammered, very little like a man accustomed to public speaking, and at last he said,—

"They've only taken me on trial for a year. And as to the pay, the times I have alone on my walks, thinking over the Lord and His goodness, and all I've got to tell them, is pay enough for a prince, let alone the joy of seeing the poor souls comforted and cheered up a bit, while I talk to them, and the hope of meeting them all and thanking the Lord together by-and-bye."

(To be continued.)

Content as a King.

ONCE upon a time—so runs the story, and a pleasant story it is—when Louis XII. of France was at the royal castle of Plessisles-Tours, he went one evening into the kitchen, where he found a small boy engaged in turning a spit for the roasting of a loin of beef. The lad had a peculiarly bright-looking face—keen, bright eyes, and features, really fine; and his appearance greatly prepossessed the King in his favour. Laying his hand upon his head, he asked the little fellow who he was. The boy, looking up and seeing a plain-looking man in a hunting garb, supposed he might be speaking with one of the grooms or, perhaps, chief rider of the royal stables. He answered, very modestly, that his name was Simon. He said he came from La Roche, and that his parents were both dead.

"Are you content with this sort of work?" Louis asked.

"Why not?" answered the boy, with a twinkle in his eye and a suggestive nod. "I am as well off as the best of them. The King himself is no better."

"Indeed! How do you make that out?"

"Well, fair sir, the King lives; and so do I. He can do no more than live. Further, I am content. Is the King that?"

Louis walked away in a fit of thought deep and searching; and the image of that boy remained in his mind even after he had sought his pillow. On the next day, the astonishment of the turnspit may be imagined upon being summoned to follow a page, and finding himself in the presence of the King, and the King his visitor of the previous evening. On the present occasion, Louis conversed further with the lad, when he found him to be as intelligent and naturally keen-witted as he had at first appeared. He had sent for him with the intention of making him a page; but, instead the cof, he established him in his chamber as a page in waiting—really the position of a gentleman. And Louis had not been deceived in his estimate of the boy's abilities. The youth served Louis faithfully; and, in the last years of the reign of Francis I. he was known and honoured as General Sir Simon de la Roche.—*Standard*.