

ways laid on his couch in the sheltered corner near the elm trees; but though he was very happy there, and would often talk gayly of the time when he should be well again, he never got strong any more.

Day by day Gabrielle watched him, knowing that the end was coming very near; but, with her strong mother's love, hiding her sorrow from him. She never told him that he was dying; but sometimes they spoke together of death, and often—for he liked to hear her—she would sing sweet hymns to him, that told of the heaven he was so soon going to.

For two or three weeks it went on thus, and then the last day came. He had been suffering very much with the terrible cough, each paroxysm of which shook the wasted frame with a pain that pierced to Gabrielle's heart: and all day he had had no rest. It was a day in May—a soft warm day. But the couch beneath the trees was empty. He was too weak even to be carried there, but lay restlessly turning on his little bed, through the long hours, showing by his burning cheek, and bright but heavy eye, how ill and full of pain he was. And by his side, as ever, Gabrielle knelt, soothing him with tender words; bathing the little hands, and moistening the lips; bending over him and gazing on him with all her passionate love beaming in her tearful eyes. But she was wonderfully calm—watching like a gentle angel over him.

Through, the long day, and far into the night, and still no rest or ease. Gabrielle never moved from beside him: she could feel no fatigue: her sorrow seemed to bear her up with a strange strength. At last, he was so weak that he could not raise his head from the pillow.

He lay very still, with his mother's hand in his; the flush gradually passing away from his cheek, until it became quite pale, like marble; the weary eye half closed.

"You are not suffering much, my child?"

"Oh no, mother, not now. I am so much better!"

So much better! How deep the words went down into her heart!

"I am so sleepy," said the little plaintive voice again. "If I go to sleep, wouldn't you sleep too? You must be so tired, mother."

"See, my darling, I will lie down here by you; let me raise your head a moment—there—lay it upon me. Can you sleep so?"

"Ah, yes, mother; that is very good."

He was closing his eyes, when a strong impulse that Gabrielle could not resist, made her rouse him for a moment, for she knew that he was dying.

"Willie, before you sleep, have you strength to say your evening prayer?"

"Yes, mother."

Meekly folding the little thin, white hands, he offered up his simple thanksgiving; then said, "Our Father." The little voice, toward the end, was very faint and weak; and as he finished, his head, which he had feebly tried to bend forward, fell back more heavily on Gabrielle's bosom.

"Good night, mother dear. Go to sleep."