

puzzled—"you can't do that with your eyes, can you, granny?"

Then granny laughed, yes, actually laughed; and little Meg laughed in her pretty, blithe way, after which granny felt her heart grow warm within her, and then she explained to the child, in her homely fashion, all about the resurrection, and the glorious body which she, granny, should put on when the old worn-out shell of this present time should be thrown away for ever. But while Meg wooed granny into such sweet, blissful joy, another tale was being told at the open window of which she knew nothing. Young Rachel, the grandchild whom Ben, her eldest son, had spared her ever since the girl had grown old enough to be of use to his aged mother, was standing there, while the golden sands of her young life fell all bright and shining in the balance. She loved Will Darrell, honest, faithful Will, and he loved her; and so the tissue of her young life was woven. But the girl was a coquette, with her bright smiles and winsome ways, and others among the village lads, hung about as she passed to and fro on granny's errands, and right proud were they if only Rachel favoured them with a glance from her merry eyes. Still she encouraged none but Will, for she was true to her own heart, if he had but known; although in her childish foolishness she loved to "plague him," as she deemed her simple teasing. So summer passed, with its rich store of beauty; and autumn, richer still in its fruits and gorgeous colouring, came gliding on apace. Little Meg had gone away to her own home, and granny and Rachel were left again to themselves. But one thing was sure and certain—granny was altered. Granny, who had used at times to complain discontentedly of her increasing infirmities, and to be just a little bit selfish with regard to other folks' cares and anxieties, was growing more and more gentle and peaceful each day, more and more observant of what was going on around.

It often made Rachel wonder to hear her talk, as she sometimes would of an evening when the door was shut and the candle lighted, of the time when she, granny, should have put off this life, with its carking associations and weakened powers—to listen to her, one would have thought that the new life was spread out before her very sight, and that even here on earth was vouchsafed to her a foretaste of the quickened sense and the eternal youth awaiting her beyond. But if granny grew more and more happy, such was not the case with Rachel; she seemed, on the contrary, to become spiritless and weak as the days went on. Granny observed it as she would not have done a year ago, and back to her faded remembrance came the griefs and trials of her own early youth. But when she questioned the girl upon the matter, the only answer she received was a loving caress and an assurance that all was right; if it was not, why of course she, Rachel, would tell at once.

And so October came, with its golden showers of autumn leaves, its clear, sweet days and starlit nights; but one evening, when the girl had been absent for a long time to procure bread and groceries for their little household, she returned at length, and having deposited her purchases in the proper place, came and sat down on a stool at granny's feet and wept as though her very heart would break.

"What is it? What is it?" and granny stroked the young head tenderly.

"Oh, granny, granny! I have been wicked and foolish, and Will has gone away, nobody knows where, and I have done it all! Oh dear, oh dear! what shall I do?"

"Hist, darling; softly, poor dear," and still the withered hand touched lovingly the bright brown hair, which somehow never would stay smooth. "Tell granny all about it, dearie; mayhap she can help you."

For awhile nothing was heard but the girl's sobs and the ticking of the old clock; but by-and-by the whole story came, and a pitiful tale it was. Lately Rachel had talked a good deal to Will's cousin, Arthur Darrell, who was a sort of handsome, witty "ne'er do well," and of whom it was said that he flirted with all the pretty girls in the country-side. She had meant no harm, so she said, and to Arthur's credit be it affirmed that he had had no intention of angering Will, till the latter met him one day and openly accused him of stealing away Rachel from him just for the fun of casting her off, as he had so many sweethearts before. Then Arthur, being very angry, denounced Will's words as lies; and said, moreover, that he should walk with Rachel if he chose; for that he liked the girl better than any he had ever seen, and that he meant to make her like him, in spite of Will or anybody else.

Poor Rachel! and she knew no word of this, till—but

there, we must wait awhile. Will, however, told her plainly that she must give up either the one or the other of them; but she had only smiled one of her rare, bright smiles, and called him "silly," and when next Arthur came in her way she strolled by his side the same as usual. Indeed, only the evening before, she had walked with him so far as the pond on the common; and when she had come back home, Will had been waiting for her at the gate. To be sure she had thought him looking white and strange, she who was miserable at time herself, for the very same reason, and he had said that if she did not promise to speak no more to Arthur, he (Will) would go away and never seek her again. Rachel looked off into the distance to where Arthur's figure was yet visible in the misty shadow, and—well, then she made reply that she should please herself in the matter, for that it was all as nothing to Will. But she did not mean it; for oh, it was something to them both. But she had believed so in Will's love for her, and now she should never, never see him again. She had run indoors, and left him, too, without a "good-night" or anything, and it all came before her, making her misery more intense than granny, or you, or I, can fully understand.

This was what Rachel told to granny, amid choking sobs and blinding tears, granny, whose early love was so misty and subdued as to be quite a thing of the past. Yet even she could sympathise with the girl, for Meg's words had unlocked granny's faith, hope, and love, in a wonderful way. She had learnt that there remains ever an interest in life, even for the old—for are they not hoping for and getting ready for the life to come? "And who told you," she asked, "that Will was gone, and that he had quarrelled with Arthur, dearie?"

"Will's sister, Grace, and she says that I mustn't go there again, now that I've behaved so shamefully, and brought this trouble upon them—not that I shall ever want to, granny, now that Will isn't there."

"Dearie, you love him, don't you? Will, I mean."

"Yes, granny—oh, yes!"

"And you don't care for the other at all?"

"No, not like I do for Will. Oh, granny, granny!"

"Then, my darling, you must wait awhile, and say naught to the other one. You must trust in God as well, for He can bring it all right, if He sees that our poor way is right."

So they waited and waited, for granny was interested in the affair, and it was sweet to watch the two sitting and talking, as the young and the old seldom do, or can, when left to themselves. But when stern winter came, and the cold winds whistled across the plain, granny felt that she should never more see the sunshine in all its spring gladness, never see her darling's hopes realised if Will did not soon come. Very gently death came to her; little by little she was weaned from earth—the earth which even the aged cling to, so dear has it grown to them through the years of their sojourning. But during the days when she lay waiting for her summons hence she talked over Rachel's grief, and it seemed to the girl as a voice from the borderland of the Invisible. "My dearie, if Will never comes, and you've got to give him up, and give up hoping as well, you must try to be as though it had never been. If you marry him by-and-by it will soon seem calm and quiet to you, for married life seems a sort of settlement, and not like courting at all, as young folks think; so you see there isn't much difference really between the two, losing or winning. Quiet comes after both—quiet and rest. Only, dearie, there's always a something to live for, remember that; life can be loving, free, and happy for you, even when you have put Will and his love aside. You can hope still—hope for light and happiness in the days to come—and even if love never comes to you again, you will be perfectly satisfied with even that, when you are near the great end, as I am now."

Dear granny! she was but putting into simple prose the words of the poet who said—

"For granny, she says that when all is lost, it's the same as if all were won;

For we sit down and know that the end is come, and there's nothing else to be done."

But one evening, just before Christmas tide, as Rachel stood at the gate for a few minutes thinking sadly of Will, herself, and dear, dying granny, Arthur Darrell came along and stopped a moment to speak. It was the first time since Will had left, and now he asked, in a somewhat injured tone, why Rachel had avoided him. She told him of granny's illness, and then her tears began to flow for more reasons than one. Arthur spoke kindly, for he was touched at the sight