

would serve her night and day as if they had been old-adherents of the family, if she would only let them have her "sweet company," as they expressed it to cheer their solitary old age.

Estelle answered that she would ask for nothing better than to remain with them if they had lived elsewhere, but that she could not reside where she might be discovered by those from whom she wished to hide herself. Then, with great glee, they told her that they themselves were about to leave the spot. A nephew had come home from America, who had bought the inn from them at a sum sufficient to make them comfortable for the rest of their lives, and they had not quite decided where to go in search of a permanent home. If Miss Lingard would stay with them, they would settle in any place she liked; but they had been thinking of Jersey, because they had a little property there, and it had a warm climate, which would suit the old man, whose health was growing very feeble.

When Estelle thought the matter over, it seemed to her that although Jersey was not a place that would naturally have occurred to her, she could hardly choose one better adapted for her purpose of concealment. No one would dream of looking for her there. So the whole affair was very soon arranged; and the three strangely assorted friends, with the faithful Bruin, who never left Estelle's side, were, in less than a fortnight, settled in the Villa Fountain, on the fair little island, where they had lived ever since. Outwardly it had been like a fairy-land of ever-smiling skies and blooming flowers; but, truth to tell, these sunny summer months had been a very dreary time to poor Estelle Lingard.

She did try hard to perform all such duties as she could find or make for herself in her new strange life—tending the poor, nursing the sick, consoling the sorrowful—but in the midst of all her care for others her own heart ached ever in its loneliness and would not be comforted.

Estelle was looking sad and weary, as she laboured at the drawing, on which she had been working since the early morning, and Mrs. Wood had glanced at her anxiously two or three times. At last she put down her knitting, rose up, and laid her hand affectionately on Estelle's shoulder.

"My dear sweet young lady," she said; "it is very good of you to work so hard to get these drawings ready for the lame man to sell, and no doubt they are all he has to depend on for a living, but I do not think you ought to injure your health by toiling so long at one time. Do leave it now, and go for a walk in the fresh air."

"I have just finished it, and he is waiting for it in the kitchen, as the English steamer must have come by this time, and he hopes to get it and the others sold among the strangers that may land from it. I will take it to him, and then go out, if you like."

"Ah! do, my dear. Go down by the shore, and let me find that the sea breeze has brought some color to your pretty cheeks when you come back. I don't like to see them so white," said the good woman, kissing her affectionately.

"I do not think it matters much how I look, dear," said Estelle, with a sad smile; "but I will go to the shore if you wish it."

And she went out when she had given her poor protegee the bundle of graceful drawings she had prepared for him to sell for his support. Slowly she went, walking away down to the sea-shore, with one hand lightly laid on Bruin's head as he stalked soberly by her side; and when she reached the water's edge, where the little silver-crested waves came rippling up all bright with sunshine, she stood for a long time, looking out over the bright water, while the fresh breeze, which Mrs. Wood had bid her court, swept back the dark hair from her pure sweet face.

Bruin stood like a sentinel by her side; but presently he turned his huge head at the sound of a step coming towards them, and averted it again, with an air of supreme indifference, when he saw it was only the little French maid from the villa tripping along with a letter in her hand.

"Mademoiselle," she said breathlessly, running up to Estelle; "this letter came for you—not by the post—and madame thought it might be of importance, so she bade me bring it to you as quickly as I could."

"Thank you, Nanette," said Estelle, taking it rather anxiously from her hand; "tell madame I

am much obliged to her, and that I shall be at home presently."

The little maid nodded, and tripped away again, leaving Estelle to read the pages which were to change the entire tenor of her life. Eagerly, with beating heart and flushing cheeks, she read the whole of Hugh Carlton's frank and complete confession from beginning to end; and when at last she had concluded it, her first impulse was to join her hands and raise up to heaven an intense thanksgiving in passionate gratitude for the joy that overwhelmed her with the certainty that Raymond loved her as deeply and truly as she had long loved him, when he sent her the little illegible note, written by his maimed hand, which had been so cruelly misrepresented. It almost seemed to her, in the rapturous revulsion of feeling, as if she were already re-united to him again; but the next moment she remembered where she was, alone on the sea-shore, in Jersey; and Raymond, where was he? Did he even know this letter had been written? Did he himself endorse the strong assurances it contained of his love to her? Trembling, she opened the sheets again, and read them through once more.

As Hugh had intended to see her himself immediately after Estelle had read his letter, he had done no more than to write in it the complete avowal of his fault, but he said not a word of Raymond, beyond an explanation of what his true feelings had been when Hugh so falsely misrepresented them; and when Estelle saw that he spoke only of what had happened so many months before, she let the letter fall on the sand, and buried her face in her hands with a low, piteous cry of distress. Surely Hugh's confession came too late, she thought; he had no power now doubtless to repair the evil he had done, however much he might wish it. Had she not herself for ever cut off her life from Raymond's, and made a final and fatal separation between them, which she might never be able to bridge over in all the years to come? Probably, as Hugh did not mention him, he was married to some one else, or gone away to Jamaica, or too angry at her rash, unkind conduct, ever to care about her again; for suddenly, Estelle's eyes were opened to her own error, and she saw that she had been wrong in her hasty, impulsive flight, out of reach of all her friends. There had been too much pride, too much anger, in the motives which drove her away from Highrock House. It would have been easy to show Raymond, gently and calmly, that she would not accept what she believed to be his unwilling compassion, while she might have still continued to be his friend. Besides, she would have discovered Hugh's deception, if she had seen Raymond but once, and they would have been long ago—oh, how happy! But it was too late! And as she thought how she had thus wrecked his happiness and her own, she moaned and wept in her bitter sorrow.

Suddenly, however, she was startled by hearing her faithful Bruin give a wild howl of delight, as he bounded away from her side over the sands. Surprised, she dropped her hands from her eyes, and looked up. The dog was leaping in ecstatic recognition around a tall figure that was advancing quickly towards her. Did she see aright? She grew giddy as her glance fell on the noble face she had never hoped to see again. She tottered, and would have fallen, as the blessed revulsion of feeling swept over her, but in an instant Raymond sprang to her side, and she felt herself clasped, thankful and safe, in the strong, tender arms of her own true love.

(To be Continued.)

UNDER AN AVALANCHE.

To be caught and swept down by an avalanche, and survive the shock of it, must be a thrilling experience to remember, to say nothing of the victim's feelings while actually inside the cataract of snow. Some years ago, several Alpine travellers were overtaken by a tremendous snowslide, and one of the party was smothered, besides the guide, who was carried down over a frightful precipice. The rest were buried in the part of the slide that did not go over the brink. One of them tells his story as follows:

Around me I heard the horrid hissing of the snow, and far before me the thundering of the

foremost part of the avalanche. To prevent myself sinking I made use of my arms, much in the same way as when swimming in a standing position.

At last I noticed that I was moving slower; then I saw the pieces of snow in front of me stop at some yards distance; then the snow straight before me stopped, and I heard on a large scale the same creaking sound that is produced when a heavy cart passes over hard frozen snow in winter.

I felt that I also had stopped, and instantly threw up both arms to protect my head in case I should again be covered up. I had stopped, but the snow behind me was still in motion; its pressure on my body was so strong that I thought I should be crushed to death. This tremendous pressure lasted but a short time, and ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

I was then covered up with snow coming from behind me. My first impulse was to try and recover my head, but this I could not do. The avalanche had frozen by pressure the moment it stopped, and I was frozen in.

Whilst trying vainly to move my arms, I suddenly became aware that the hands as far as the wrists had the faculty of motion. The conclusion was easy; they must be above the snow. I set to work as well as I could; it was time, for I could not have held out much longer.

At last I saw a faint glimmer of light. The crust above my head was getting thinner, and it let a little air pass, but I could not reach it any more with my hands; the thought struck me that I might pierce it with my breath. After several efforts I succeeded in doing so, and felt suddenly a rush of air towards my mouth; I saw the sky again through a little round hole.

A dead silence reigned around me. I was so surprised to be still alive, and so persuaded at the first moment that none of my fellow-sufferers had survived, that I did not think of even shouting for them. I then made vain efforts to extricate my arms, but found it impossible; the most I could do was to join the ends of my fingers, but they could not reach the snow any longer. After a few minutes I heard a man shouting. It was one of my friends who had dug himself out, and come to my rescue.

THE LITANY.

The word litany comes from the Greek, and was originally used in the general sense of prayer, whether public or private. At a very early period in the history of the Church, it was restricted to certain prayers that were said in processions of the clergy and people. We find in the Apostolic Constitutions, some parts of which cannot have been written later than the second century, and the most modern parts of which cannot be later than the middle of the fourth century, a form of supplication closely resembling in structure the litanies with which we are familiar. A deacon named the various subjects of petition and the people completed the prayer with the words, "Lord, have mercy." In the Eastern Church kindred forms of prayer were used under various names, and from the retention of the Greek words *Kyrie Eleison* in the Latin litanies, it seems probable that the earliest of such litanies were derived from Eastern sources; but litanies, in our sense of the word, are characteristic of the West rather than the East.

It is for God alone, who permits the temptation, to appoint the period of its termination; and it is for man, who is proved and purified by it, to endure it with patience, nay, with joy. Let us not shrink, then, from such trials, remembering that in them Jesus Christ fights with us, and for us. . . . God permits them to exercise our faith, and resolution; He commands them as combats in order that we may triumph over them. Nor have we a right, if we fail, to blame the temptation itself, but our own neglect only in not foreseeing, or our weakness in not resisting it with greater vigor.