

parcelled out the land-scape; and a clump of trees, with a distant mist of rocks circling above, stood out against the pale, dim hills. Roses, all of their own building, looked confidentially in at the low window: and bees, their own bees, now that the lime harvest was over, clustered in dusty eagerness on the broad bed of mignonette beneath.

The busy winds of anxiety could not but rock the mind more gently, and almost let it subside into

"A weary, bowing rest," in presence of the quiet room, and cheery wife, and peaceful scene. And accordingly Arthur—(prosaic, but to his wife satisfactory effect of all this)—finished the wing and leg of a chicken,—having, when he sat down, felt as though he could touch nothing:

"I have been thinking, little wife," he began, reverting to the thoughts from which his mind plainly could not be absent long, "I have been thinking in what things I may have been extravagant, and in what it is possible to save. For we cannot claim the promise of provision for our wants, unless we take care to do our part."

Miss Alice grew grave and meditative in a moment, and serious as became a housekeeper, especially one taken into a council of war with the commander of their little garrison.

"I am sure, dear, I've been puzzling about the very same thing, and I can't quite see what to do. We don't always have a pudding, and chickens are only 1s. 6d. each now, though they look extravagant, because they're nice. Then they always serve for breakfast too, and are really quite as cheap as beef or mutton. To be sure" (penitently, after a moment's reflection), "the bread sauce isn't absolutely necessary,—only we're both so fond of it."

This was too much for Arthur. He burst into a roar of laughter, and the little wife, pleased at all events to see him laugh, laughed too, with eyes that twinkled with some penitent damp still.

"No," he said, "I didn't quite mean that. You are the most perfect little housekeeper, and the very model of what the head of the commissariat department ought to be. By all means let the item 'bread sauce' remain untouched: and do not scruple to put a sufficiency of cayenne in it too. No," growing grave again, "I was thinking of such things as books, etc. I am afraid I ought not to have bought that Waterland last year, nor those two volumes of sermons, nor that Septuagint, and several other books, here and there; and that picture of Raffaele's,—I ought not to have been tempted by that at the sale. I can do without prints, if not without books. Still, I did not know at that time about the many occasions of expense that have arisen since: and I can hardly feel justified in selling them at only about half price."

"Come, come, dear, we needn't talk of them any more just now." (She knew how proud he had been of these treasured acquisitions, and how the very sight of them on the shelves was a delight to his heart.)

"I have thought at least of one pound thoughtlessly, if not wrongly spent, and which I may perhaps be able to recover. Not much towards the sum wanted, certainly," he said, with downcast look; "but it is our duty to leave no stone unturned."

"What pound, Arthur, dear?"

"The pound I gave for that stupid lottery ticket. You remember how I picked one up in Elliott's shop, and how he bothered me to take it,—it was for the great Milton Picture Gallery, with all the pictures; the sale was necessary, and this was thought the best way of getting the money; and we laughed, and said how bright we would make our rooms look with some of them, and that we would sell the rest and set up our pony carriage. But I can't imagine what I can have been thinking of. Twenty thousand pounds, forsooth!—only that one prize, and all the rest blanks. Why, I must have been mad,—with nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine chances against me, to throw away a pound on such a venture! Besides, I did it without much thought: and now I should not, as a clergyman, like to get money in that way. It might be thought a kind of gambling, and I should not feel comfortable; though I am certainly in small danger of being tried."

"Well, what will you do?" said Alice.

"Why, the long and the short of it is, that I have determined to ask old Mr. Leslie to take it off my hands. With him, in this case, it would not be speculation, but charity; and if this is not a very agreeable way of putting it: as regards myself,—why, I must bear the penalty of having done foolishly. I dare say I shall get a scolding, and get called a few names: but, under a somewhat rough exterior, the old man has a true, warm heart, and I must not mind what he says."

Mr. Leslie was a retired merchant, a distant relation of Arthur Stanhopes's, rich, old, and a bachelor. He had made his money with care and thoughtful industry, and was not apt to make many excuses for either extravagance or thoughtlessness. Generous to a degree never known to any but his Master and himself, he was yet somewhat rough and stern in manner.—a man whom you rather dreaded at first, but whom you soon learned to love. He lived about half a mile from the Stanhopes' little house, and after tea they set off to walk over the fields towards it, Arthur proceeding to the interview, and his wife sitting on a stile between two corn-fields to await his return.

He had been absent about an hour, and Alice began to feel a little strange and dull. The dusk had gathered over the sky, so that she had closed her book, and sat looking towards the gate at which she knew her husband's form would first appear as he emerged from the copse. Two or three stars came out to keep her company; a fern-owl kept up that low peculiar noise, like the winding of a fishing-reel, not very far off; and the woolly flitting bats passed and repassed noiselessly above and about her. A sort of depression seemed stealing over her, and a nameless dread was gathering upon her, and she felt quite relieved when the tall, familiar figure appeared at the gate of the copse.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come," she said. "I was getting so nervous about you."

"What, did you think old Leslie would eat me up? He didn't quite do that, though he bit me rather."

(To be continued.)