

preach the love that endures truth; preach with living voice and clear-eyed looks, scorn for oppression and for the mean surrender of the strong; preach help and wisdom for the weak; preach forbearance to the impatient; preach sacred endeavor; men, standing on the high step of a mighty altar, whose voices we of the great congregation listen to, day by day, as their noble words

"touch enough  
The verge of vastness to inform our soul."

This friend has walked five miles from his village "best loved of sea-coast nook—full Normandy" to welcome us. There is a little gooseberry and pear-tree orchard at the back of the house, where the vines are tangling green. Albinia and her husband have been sitting there for hours past on Madame Valentin's green bench. Kind H. carries off our friend to see her new-come children, who have travelled so many Indian miles to hold her hand once more, and our visitor has surely earned a broken chair and a cup of Angele's good coffee, after his hot and tiring walk. He must rest for an hour in the shade, while the day is burning on and ripening among the mossy things; the golden flames are in the pears hanging overhead, in the great dahlias blazing in gloomy splendor; the birds seem on fire as they flash past us; the clouds in heaven are tinted; the children come up in unwearied procession—they are fairies now, they say—except Francis, who is tired, and wants always to be an ogre. Then the bell begins to swing from the Norman tower.

Angele comes out and brings cups of milk and hunches of bread, and pinafores to match, and immediately the fairies become little children again, and quite ready for their tea. And meanwhile we elders sit in this apple-tree bower, talking over one thing and another. As we talk on, of Angele with her wooden shoes and flapping cap, of the flat country, of the evening light, the quiet seaside place, that we like we know not why, the people living near; the poet puts a meaning into homely words, and touches us with his wings, as poets do, and out of common talk and of discordant things his genius strikes the key-note dominating all.

## II.

Long after our guest had taken leave and walked home by the sands, we sat on in our garden. Madame Valentin came mysteriously through the twilight, carrying a lettuce for her supper; she also had a letter in her hand, which she was scanning in the moonlight.

"That gentleman who had been here; did he expect a letter?" she asked. "Was his name Hug, Gourlay?" The postman, knowing we were English, had sent the letter by the miller's wife. Madame Valentin explained he was gone home, his aunt was ill; and then she showed a letter, addressed in a commercial hand to "Mr. Hugh Gourlay, Château de Latouche, Joyeux, Calvados."

"But why do you not send it to the Château?" said H.; "it is not for us." Madame Valentin thought this a good suggestion; she had forgotten for the moment that they had English relations at the Château. Mademoiselle Blanche's mamma was an English Protestant; Mademoiselle was a good Catholic, notwithstanding. She was to make her profession next month. "Next month?" asked H.

Certainly, it was true, said Madame Valentin. There were those who, with Madame, think it a pity, but she was not one of them. Mademoiselle de Latouche the elder was a saintly woman, and would never force her niece's inclinations. H. had heard a different version.

The crimes that people commit are not all done in a minute; they seem to come into existence, little by little—one by one—small selfish considerations, jars, vanities, indolences they do not even come to a climax always. It is not a consoling reflection that the sum of the evil done by a respectable and easy-going life may be greater in the end perhaps than that of many a disastrous career. Notwithstanding Madame Valentin's opinion, it seemed to me that old Mademoiselle de Latouche put all her vanities, her selfishness, love of domination, into her religion. No wonder it was fervent. She kept herself from the world because she was lazy, and loved her own comfort better than anything else. She let the widows and orphans come and see her, or wait at her door till it was convenient to her to admit them; it rather amused her to dole out her small benevolences, and to hear their unreserved thanks. She certainly denied herself, to but not for others.

She had made up her mind that Blanche was to edify the religious world of Joyeux and St. Rambert. The sturdy Châtelaine did not feel that her health was equal to the rigid rule of a conventual life; but Blanche was younger, and of a less nervous temperament.

When any one spoke of a different fate for the little thing, Mademoiselle replied placidly that Blanche herself had decided upon entering the cloister, and that it was a subject she did not care to discuss. It was her hour for repose or meditation, and she must beg leave to retire.

There were few people more difficult of access than Mademoiselle de Latouche, who, between her excessive pieties and vanities and long hours of slumber and refreshment, found life well filled, and scarcely sufficing to its enjoyments; above all, to its necessary repose. Woe betide the household if Mademoiselle was awakened suddenly! It is possible that there may have been a little sameness in Mademoiselle's life which was so entirely devoted to one person, and that person so disagreeable a one, as H. once said. But I think H. scarcely did the Châtelaine justice. Many people had thought her

charming in her youth. She had a curious power of influencing people, of impressing her own opinions upon them, and leading them her own way. So few people have a will, that it does not require any great amount to make a great effect. She was handsome still. Little Blanche thought her perfectly beautiful. She could talk agreeably when she liked, be generous on occasions; Mr. le Curé de St. Rambert seemed as if he had scarcely words to utter the benediction which flowed from his heart as he left her room the day we did ourselves the honor of calling upon the Châtelaine. "You will not receive him, most dear, most generous friend," I heard the Curé saying as we came into the room. "You must control your too generous impulses; promise that you will not receive him." He was a tall, lean man, standing in an attitude, over the old lady, who accepted his homage very placidly; but he rather overdid his warnings.

"It must depend upon my state of health," murmured Mademoiselle de Latouche. "I suffer greatly; do I not, Mathilde?"

"A martyrdom," murmured the Curé.

"Yes; Mademoiselle has great courage," said Mathilde. (She was the companion; a little lean, delicate woman, a great contrast to Mademoiselle, who was stout and flushed, with curly red hair, scarcely streaked with grey.) "She is scarcely strong enough to receive a visitor. Perhaps these ladies may know the name—Mr. Gourlay—out of the Yorkshire."

H., who always remembers names, said she had once known a Mr. Gourlay, a manufacturer: "an elderly respectable man," said H.

M. le Curé de St. Rambert all this time was standing in the window, blankly benevolent, with his hands meekly slipped into his sleeves. Little Mathilde had subsided into a chair near the door of an inner room. What a comfortable interior it was, rich and warm, with the prosperous lady, tucked up in her satin dressing-gown, by the fire, with clocks of every century ticking and pointing to the hour! "This is Mademoiselle's hour for receiving, they seemed to say—there o'clock, three o'clock." They seemed to be as obnoxious as the rest of the household. Mademoiselle went on to explain—

"This gentleman, not knowing of my poor brother's death, has written to him on the subject of a machine, that I confess we had put away without much idea of future use. I have invited him to come over and examine it for himself. He makes me an offer for it which I consider sufficient, for my dear brother had initiated me into his affairs. A large offer. So much the better for your poor, M. le Curé," she said, archly, speaking in the sing-song voice which is so much used by the extra good in common conversation. (At one time of my life I was inclined to respect this tacit profession of superiority, but I now doubt whether anything which is not in itself superiority is of much use, either to the impressor or to the impressed.)

"My poor will pray for you, day and night," said the Curé. "Chère Mademoiselle, I have not yet seen our dear child!"

"She is in the next room, M. le Curé; Mathilde will call her, if you wish to see her. You will find her very happy, very firm in her determination. It is very beautiful," she said, turning to us; "I have two sisters in convents, and this dear child, orphan daughter of my brother, is now about to profess. She has come home to bid us farewell—a sweet farewell for her—but for me the sacrifice is terrible—is it not, Mathilde?"

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle! I tell her it is too much," said Mathilde, nervously; and, appealing to the Curé: "Monsieur, persuade them to defer this beautiful sacrifice. Mademoiselle needs the society of her niece. She often tells me that it is a new life to her."

The Curé, I thought, looked slightly puzzled; he was about to speak, when the door from the inner room opened, and the "Blanche" of whom they had been speaking came in. She was dressed in a white dress of some loose and soft material; she wore a big white apron, and her long sleeves fell over her hand, so that nothing showed but five little pink finger-tips. She came gently into the room, looked round, and then, seeing the Curé, deliberately turned away again, passed back into the room from which she had just come, and softly closed the door. It was all so gentle, so sudden, that we none of us knew what to say, until the Curé suggested "timidity" after her long seclusion. Mademoiselle laughed, showing a row of white dazzling teeth. H. flushed up, and said it was time to go.

"I hope," she said, as she took leave, "that you may be able to make up your mind to keep your niece with you. I quite understand your feelings; a child with the gift of life and with years of happiness and usefulness before her—it is a fearful responsibility that you take when you put her away from it all." H. stood looking into the old lady's face, with kind, constraining eyes.

"Oh, yes, indeed, madame!" said Mademoiselle, solemnly—and indeed she spoke with some emotion. "But who would dare to go against a true vocation? Blanche is not the first in our family to give herself up to this holy service of love; and I, who am the last of the Latouches, must not shrink from my share of the sacrifice."

H. could not trust herself to speak; she was almost crying, and quite overcome, and I was glad to get her away. There were all sorts of stories about the family at the Château. Madame Valentin, our landlady, worshipped "the grande Mademoiselle," as some of the people in the place used to call her. She was one of the

privileged admitted to her presence. The castle was left jointly to Made-moiselle and to Blanche—so she told us. "At Mademoiselle's death everything would go to Blanche. Some people thought it strange that the father should have made such a will; but he knew with what a saint he had to deal," said Madame Valentin. "Look at this dress. It was hers, and she gave it to me."

"A saint! Why does she not go into a convent herself?" said H., still trembling. "That poor child is to be robbed of her life—of God's life—which is her right; she is told that it will please Him that she should spend her strength and youth in valueless dreams and prayers and repetitions. It makes my heart ache to think of it. . . . I have had sorrows enough, but oh! would I give up one of them, one parting, one pang of love, to have loved less—"

My dearest H.! I comforted her as well as I could, and then Frank came in, and we told him of our interview. "I shall go up and call when this Gourlay is there," said the sociable Major; "Perhaps we may find out some way of rescuing your nun, mother. You shall give me an introduction to him. I have always heard he was a very respectable man."

## III.

What is a respectable man? Joseph Gourlay, of Gill Mills and Gilwick Manor, was a respectable man, very much looked up to in his own neighborhood, of which indeed many acres belonged to him. Acres enclosing the handsome stone-fronted house in which he lived, in which his wife had died, in which his three sons had been born. All his life and his fortune seemed to be enclosed in the Yorkshire valley which you might see from the dining-room window, flooded with green, while sudden smoke-volleys burst from the tall chimneys of the mill. The valley is crossed again and again by the stream that comes dashing from its source in the distant hills, straight to the mills at the foot of the great crag. Wick Gill sparkles with the fortunes of the Gourlays, dashing over rocks and ridges a limpid and rainbow-tinted torrent, well fit, as Mr. Gourlay had foreseen long ago, to turn the creaking cogs of his water-wheels, to boil up his steam-engines, to wash and purify his cotton in many waters, while the threads of his fortune spun on their thousand bobbins, glistening as they whirled, drawing wealth with every turn of the quivering line. Hugh, the youngest son, as he sat in the little counting-house, could hear the family fortunes beating time overhead as they passed from the mountain gill and the raw cotton heaps to the Gilwick wharfs and bank in family credit, and in the close packed bales of which his two brothers were so proud. Bathurst and Ben were soon to be admitted partners in the business. Hugh's turn was yet to come, but meanwhile he had perhaps found for himself another more absorbing interest undreamt of by Joseph and his elder sons. It was not one that Hugh could share with any one. The habit of the house, the steady reserve, the north country mistrust of fine speaking and flimsy sentiment, had influenced the younger as well as his elders.

More than once old Gourlay had found Hugh leaning back, absorbed and forgetful, with a pile of unanswered letters on the desk beside him. The old man would tap him on the shoulder, point significantly at the heap, frown and stump off to his own well-worn desk in the inner room. What was there breeding in Hugh's mind? Often of late he had seemed scarcely himself, and answered vaguely. Was he getting impatient? Was he like other young men? Did he want to grasp more power in his hands? Old Gourlay had a morbid horror of giving up one shred of his hard-earned rule. He would suspect others of doing that which he himself would have done unto them. He was both true and unjust in many of his dealings. He remembered his own early impatience of all authority. He had labored hard to earn his own living and his children's. Now, he thought uneasily, the day was come when they were children no longer, but young men nearly as capable as he had been at their age. Sometimes old Gourlay would throw out gloomy hints of giving up work altogether, and look sharply into the young men's faces to catch their expression. Ben never had any expression at all in his round pink cheeks: Bathurst, who knew his father, and was not afraid of him, would burst out laughing: "Yes, father, that would just suit you," he would say. "You might walk about with your hands in your pockets all day long; or you might take to croquet. Ben would give you some lessons." Hugh sometimes flushed up, and a curious questioning look would come into his eyes, when his father talked of a change. It was this look his father could not understand. "Well, Hugh," he would cry impatiently, "can't ye speak?" But Hugh would walk on in stolid silence; he was not so much at ease with his father as Bathurst, and he shut himself more and more away from him. Ben, who had nothing to shut up, might keep the talk going if he chose. Poor Hugh had reached one of the flat stages of existence. Life is scarcely to be compared to the inclined plane that people describe it, but to something in the shape of a pyramid, with intervals of steps between each effort. Hugh had made a great effort of late. He was not without the family good sense and determination, and he could see as plainly as his father or his brothers the advantage of a definite career and occupation. What he had within him might as well be expressed in the intervals of business as of leisure, but at the same time this strange feeling was swelling within him. An impatience and distaste for all he had been used to, a long-

ing for fresh air, for expression, for better things than money-making. It is in vain some people lead monotonous lives. Events without form or sound, mental catastrophes, great sweeps of feeling and opinion, who is to guard against those silent, irresistible powers? He had tried to make friends with the mill hands, but he had tried wrongly, perhaps; anyhow, some discontent was set to his interference, and Mr. Gourlay had angrily forbidden anything of the sort in future.

There had been some words at the time. Hugh had walked over Gill Crag, feeling as if he could bear this slavery no longer. He envied the very birds their freedom as they flew across the path. He forgot that to be condemned to freedom from all care, restraint, internal effort, is, perhaps, the greatest bondage of all. But as yet I have said it was not for nothing that Hugh Gourlay had been born a Yorkshireman; he was sensible and clear-headed for all his impressionable poet's nature. He had begun a book which he finished in after-years, and published at his own expense; a sort of story embodying a system of practical philosophy.

Mr. Gourlay might have been relieved if he could have read his younger son's mind as clearly as the debit and credit figures in the books in his counting-house. It was not his father's power that Hugh envied and would have grasped. It was something very far distant from old Gourlay's horizon, a voice coming he traced not whence that haunted him as an evil spirit, "You are wasting your life, it is wasting, wasting, wasting." The turning wheels had seemed to say so, the torrent had seemed to say so, every event of the day and every dream of the night had only seemed to repeat it. Minor poets, people born with a certain fervor and sensibility which does not amount to genius, are often haunted by this vague want. They require the domination of the unforeseen, the touch of greater minds to raise them from themselves. They have the gift of imposing their own personality upon the things around them, upon the inanimate sights they see, upon the people they live with; and then they weary of it—common life only repeats their own moods to them, instead of carrying them away from themselves. Great poets are different; they are like Nature herself—supreme, indifferent. Their moods may be storms or mighty calms, or the broad stream of day-light falling upon common things, but they are masters all the while, not servants; and yet even servants faithfully working need not be ashamed, either of their work or of the impulse which urges them on and tells them they are unprofitable at best.

After church on Sundays (Mr. Gourlay was very particular about attendance in the church) it was the family habit to walk straight to the back yard and let the dogs out of their kennels, and to march round and round the grounds until the dinner bell rang. Family discussions often take place on Sundays. This family usually walked in silence with the dogs yelping and leaping at its heels. The garden was very green and very black, as these north country places are. Tall chimneys showed above the golden birch trees; iron hurdles fenced off the green clipped lawn; the beds were bordered with some patent zinc ornament; geraniums were blooming in leaden pots. In one place there was an iron fountain with a statue, in another a tin pavilion. A grass-cutting machine stood in one corner of the lawn, with a hose for watering the plants; double-locked green-houses were built along the western walls, with alternate domes and weathercocks for ornament. There was a croquet lawn planned by Ben, who was the social member of the party; and beyond the garden and the mill and the sheds lay the valley, wide and romantic as Yorkshire valleys are, with rocks enclosing, with rising turf crags, leading to widening moors, and the sound of water and the cry of birds coming clear in the Sunday silence. Ben was whistling as he walked along. Hugh was trying to get up his courage to make a certain request he had at heart. Bathurst was leaping the iron fence, followed by two of the dogs. "Hi, Ju! well leaped," cried Mr. Gourlay, who was always very fond of his dogs. "First the mill, then the dogs. I don't know where we come in," Bathurst used to say to his brothers. Mr. Gourlay was not so absorbed in Ju's performance as to forget his sons entirely. He looked round uneasily—

"Where is Hugh? Look up, Hugh. What is the matter with him, Ben? he seems always moping."

Hugh had stopped short, and was looking at the gravel path in a dreamy, dazed sort of fashion. Henriug himself called, he looked up. "Father," he said, suddenly, "I—I have been wishing to speak to you for some time; I may as well speak now. I want a change. I—Will you let me go to college for a couple of years? You said yesterday that you would make me an allowance. Will you give me two years at college?"

There was a dead silence. Ben, as usual, began to whistle; Bathurst came back with a leap over the hurdle. Then the old man spoke—"No, that I will not do," said Mr. Gourlay, growing very red and looking Hugh full in the face, and striking one of the iron fences sharply with his stick. "College! what has put such d—stuff into your head, Hugh? Who wants college here? I am a plain man of business. Have I been to College? But I have made my own fortune and yours by my own brains; d'ye think they will teach you brains at those places? What the devil is it ye want? Is it to fine-gentleman-it over your brothers and father?" Old Mr. Gourlay was working himself up as he went on more and