

of the goldening trees. Park, and meadow, and moorland stretched out widely under the sunny sky, with cloud-shadows dappled upon them, and breaks of intense sunlight, making islands of glory in the broad landscape.

The south wind, fresh and gentle, was like the very breath of the sunshine, Mr. Farquhar declared, while he turned his head to meet it, his face glowing with fulness of satisfaction. "To-day I can understand what has so often seemed an enigma to me—the joy of living—the absolute pleasure of existence. Simply *to be* is a good thing, after all."

"Did you ever doubt it?" Caroline asked.

"I never doubted—I disbelieved," he answered; "a much more satisfactory process," he added, with a half-bitter smile. "It saves much wear and tear of spirit. To temporize between the two points of belief and unbelief, strikes me as a dangerous waste of time and expenditure of energy. What we know—we know. It is quite enough for us, very likely."

Caroline did not reply, partly because she was not quite clear of his meaning. Had she thoroughly comprehended, she might have found rejoinder equally difficult.

"Come," Vaughan impatiently interrupted, "you may as well put metaphysics aside for once. My poor little cousin isn't used to be deluged with moral philosophy in this way, on week-days at least. You're interfering with Mr. Turnbull's prerogative."

"Who is Mr. Turnbull, may I ask?"

"Our vicar. He lives in that beautiful place we passed yesterday; he is a 'pluralist,' and has about £3000 a-year. You needn't ask any more about him. He'll speak for himself next Sunday. He always preaches at morning service."

"Exemplary man! It is not every wealthy divine would condescend to a village congregation. Such humility is quite apostolic."

"O, he is an excellent person, gives the best dinner-parties in the neighbourhood. An enviable career, I always thought. A few years ago I greatly inclined to the church myself, and sometimes I regret heartily enough that I did not take to it."

"You regret?" echoed Mr. Farquhar, with an involuntary glance.

"Yes. It's better than the bar, I should imagine. Not a quarter the labour, brings four times the result, in most cases. O, I know what you mean; of course there is less fame, less glitter obtainable. But then look at the solid advantages of a capital benefice. Say £1200 a-year; deduct £80 for your curate, and there you are!"