

THE VILLAGE ANGEL, Or, Agatha's Recompense.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"I WILL GIVE YOU CAUSE TO REMEMBER ME." "Ask her to come up here at once," he cried; and the bewildered waiter looked at him in frightened wonder.

"A lady!" he repeated; "an English lady, tall and fair, with golden hair? Make haste; do not keep her waiting. Good heavens! I shall go mad with delight. I will ask her on my knees to marry me, and to help me, Heaven!—I will be a good man; I will, indeed."

He never thought of Valerie. She was far from his mind. The whole world to him was Agatha—no one but Agatha. The frightened waiter answered: "I do not know, monsieur; I cannot tell. The lady is veiled."

"It is my Agatha. Good heavens! how grateful I am. It is to me as though she were given back to me."

He was blind and dazed; it seemed to him a miracle that Agatha should come back. He staggered rather than walked to the door, hungering, thirsting for one look at her. Up the wide staircase, with its crimson carpets, its marble balustrades, its wealth of green plants, came a tall, slender figure. He could not see distinctly, for his eyes were dimmed with tears. Ah, thank Heaven she was not lying under the dark waters of the lake.

"He tried to speak to her, but his lips were stiff, and could articulate no sound; a blood-red mist seemed to hang over him. He caught her arm, and drew her into the room. He clasped her in his arms, he covered her face and hands with passionate kisses, he murmured the wildest words of love and welcome to her; he was quite mad and beside himself with joy."

"My darling, my love! Thank Heaven you have come back to me! my love, my wife!"

She was strangely still. She trembled in the strong grasp of those strong arms; a gleam of light from the lamp fell on her face and head. Surely the hair falling in a rippling mass down her shoulders was black. He gave a little cry.

It was Valerie—not Agatha! He had thought to gather Agatha to his heart, and to atone to her by his passionate love, and instead, it was the woman who had been his murderer who was lying in his arms. "She knew there was no hope for her when she heard that cry; it froze her very heart."

"You!" he cried, with a great oath, flinging her from him—"you! What brings you here?"

She stood for a few minutes, a silent, beautiful embodiment of despair.

"What brings you here?" he cried.

"My love for you, and your promise to me," she replied.

"You said that if you had met me first you should have married me; you promised that if ever you met me and were free you would marry me. I am here to claim your love and remind you of your promise."

He muttered something between his teeth—hard words she knew; but as this was her last card, she decided to play it well. She would keep her patience and courage while they were of any use to her, and then it would be war to the knife.

"You do not call that kind of finding a promise," he said. "It was your seeking. Any man would have said the same thing when a woman urged him. You know, and I know, it was only sentimental nonsense. We laughed at each other."

"I know this one thing," she said. "I loved you with all my heart then, as I do now."

"That is not my fault," he retorted. "Great Heaven, what pain you have given me. Why did you come here? I thought it was Agatha."

"Listen to me," she said, impressively, laying her hand on his arm—"may, be patient and listen. I love you a thousand times better than that baby girl was capable of loving," she went on, in a tone of deep emotion, the tears standing like pearls on her beautiful cheeks. "I would go through fire for you, I am not a foolish schoolgirl; I am a woman of talent and power. I could make a worthy helpmate to a man like you; I could help you to be famous—think of it; above all, I love you so dearly and so well that I would give my life for you. Do you hear, Sir Vane?" she said passionately—"my very life I would give for you, and think it but little."

There was pathos in the ring of her voice, pathos to love in the expression of her face. He felt that it was truth, and not feigned. "This is hardly the time for talking nonsense," he replied. "I do not wish to seem inhospitable, but I should be greatly relieved if you would go. I—I thought it was Agatha, and I am not myself."

The passion deepened in her face, but something of anger mingled with her emotion. "I might," she said, "have expected this kind of language from you, yet strange to say, I did not. I will know my fate. Were all the words you said to me false. Did you not mean what you said?"

"No," she said, "I mean what I say. You are a man of honor, and you know that it is not merely passion. You cared nothing for me, nor I for you."

When she looked up at him her dark eyes were swimming in tears. "I do not know how it began," she said. "I only know how it ended; and that is, in my deepest love and devotion to you."

"Of course I am grateful," he said, impatiently; "but I do not want it. It is quite useless to me."

"You said you loved me, Sir Vane."

"Now, be reasonable, Valerie; you can when you choose. What can a man do when a beautiful woman follows him, as you did me? You will own that you did; and it was never I who sought you. What did you do? You followed me in my walks; you sought me when I was alone; you threw yourself in my way; you made the most of your beautiful face and your glorious voice. You may have charmed my senses, but you have never touched my heart, and never will."

For one moment the tall, graceful figure swayed to and fro, and the brilliant proud face grew white as death.

"You should spare me," she said, "because I love you. You, of all people in the world, should be kind to me."

"I am not unkind," he replied; "but I protest against this sentimental nonsense. I will have no mention of love, because it does not exist. It was all a piece of acting, Valerie, and I played second to your first. You—even you—cannot be so absurd as to think the few sentimental scenes that were enacted in that garden had any meaning?"

"They had none to me," she said, faintly. "They had none to me. To tell you the real truth," he added, with brutal frankness, "I always laughed at them, even the most tender points, they were so ridiculous—so got up and down, and I am sure that I always went back to Agatha loving her doubly for her fair, sweet innocence."

"A red flush covered that beautiful face. This was more than she could bear. "You laughed at me," she said, fiercely.

"Of course I did. You must have laughed at yourself, Valerie." "Unfortunately, I did not. But I will answer for one thing—you shall never laugh at me again. I will give you such cause to remember myself and my name—that though you may curse me you will never laugh at me."

"Now do not be tragic, Valerie, and let us end this unpleasant interview. I will tell you the exact truth about yourself. I admire your beauty—every one must do that. I admire your talent, although I think you are an intriguer, and not to be trusted. Still—truth is best—you are one of the last women in the world I should ever love. I knew your type years ago, and tired of such women as you. Listen one moment longer. If I had admired, esteemed, loved you, I should hate you more, because of what you have done to Agatha—for that alone—although I forgive you, because you say you meant no harm—for that I shall always like you less than any person I know."

"That is your real meaning and decision?" she said, calmly.

"Yes," he replied, "and I should like to enforce it—to make it as emphatic as I can. I think you—I quite understand—there is no need. I shall waste no time in abuse. But I will tell you this to your face, Sir Vane—you are the most disloyal, dishonest, unprincipled man who ever went by the name of gentleman. Perhaps from this you may learn a lesson not to trifle with women. You have trifled with me. You saw that I was inclined to admire and like you, and you enjoyed the income offered to your vanity. I grant that I was greatly to blame in letting you know that I loved you. You were still more to blame in accepting that love and homage. Why were you true to one thing for once in your life? Why did you not say plainly that you loved Agatha, and Agatha only, and that no other woman had any interest for you?"

"It would have been better, I admit," he said. "You see what it has led to. You led me on until I cared enough for you to do anything which would win you to myself."

"What did you do?" he asked, curiously. "She knew now that her game was lost; that never would her hopes and dreams be fulfilled. Sir Vane was dead to her; but she should never laugh at her again; he should take his punishment with him."

"You shall never laugh at me again," she said, "never. I will tell you what I did. I wrote that letter and addressed it to myself. She had expected him to grow half-mad with anger and indignation; but, to her surprise, he merely shrugged his shoulders contemptuously."

"To tell you the truth, mademoiselle," he said, "I more than suspected it. It was so entirely like you, and so worthy of you. Well, you have done your worst with an anonymous letter. It was a good shot; and it took effect—right through your rival's heart. Oh, gentle, womanly hands, that could do such a deed! Oh, rare and womanly heart that could plan it!"

His lips worked nervously, and his face grew livid.

"I said that if ever I found out the writer of that letter I would slay him. You are not even worth my anger; but you have my contempt, as one who stabs in the dark."

"It seems to me that your contempt is better and less dangerous than your love," she said, curtly.

"So you wrote the letter? You are a clever woman, Valerie, and the idea is worthy of a French play. Would you mind telling me how you secured your information, which I admit to be perfectly correct? I should really like to know."

She told him in a few words. His look of anger softened into contemptuous admiration.

"You are a clever woman, Valerie, wonderfully clever. I admire your talents, I admire your courage; but I would not advise you to exercise them in this fashion again."

"I have wounded you; I have hurt you; I have reached you at last," she said.

By a very clumsy weapon—an anonymous letter," he said, "the fittest instrument for such a deed."

And for several minutes there was silence between them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A WOMAN SCORNED.

And Valerie and Sir Vane seemed to measure each other's strength in that one long, silent glance. "The tug of war" had come.

"I think," said Valerie, "that however greatly you may be tempted, you will never laugh at me again. I have more to tell you."

"You had better be careful," said Sir Vane; "I feel something almost like murder rising in my heart."

"I wish it were murder, and you would kill me," she said; "I should welcome death from your hands."

"I would not kill you," he said; "I think the heaviest punishment for you will be to live. What more have you to tell me?"

"Only this: That I took my letter to your fair-faced Agatha, and I read it to her, word by word, slowly and impressively, so that she might understand it; and when I had finished, she read it word for word to herself. It may make you more pitiful to women to know how it affected her—it killed her! If ever a smile comes to her face again, it will be more wonderful than the standing still of the sun. She fell at my feet, and she lay there a crushed, heart-broken woman. She told me that she would go away from you, and never look at your face again. She told me, also, that if you would let her to marry you, she would not now; so that even should you find her, you will have no chance."

"You can leave that part of the business with me," he said. "If, or, rather, when I find her, that will be all right."

He spoke calmly, but his face was as pale as that of a corpse.

If she had been a man her life would not have been worth a moment's purchase.

"I do not think any woman ever suffered so much. Her face became ghastly white, and she looked like one who had sword rights in her heart. I was sorry for her, but it was highly necessary that she should understand her position."

How he restrained himself he never knew; afterward, when he recalled this interview, his one great wonder was that he had not killed her; it seemed to him a miracle.

He made no answer to her taunts, but they made him feel as he had never felt before. "Let this be ended now," he said. "You have done your worst, now go."

"spoil it. You remember, perhaps, certain words of Congreve, the poet:— "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned." Keep them in your mind."

"Why should you take vengeance on me?" he said. "It is I who am wronged."

"You have spoiled my life, and I hate you for it," she cried in a fury of passion. "My love has turned to hate—I am all hate, and I bid you beware of my vengeance."

"I am not in the least degree afraid of it," he replied; "and your manner of announcing it is worthy of the stage. And now, mademoiselle, you have confessed your intrigues, you have accused yourself, you have denounced me, you have sworn vengeance, all after the kind of a true tragedy queen; add to these favors one more—leave me in peace."

"I will, she said; "but, remember, the time shall come when you shall feel my vengeance and fear me. Until then, farewell."

She was gone—there was no time for another word. He saw the tall figure vanish down the broad staircase, and he went back to his room.

He was more unnerved, more unsettled than ever. He had partly suspected that she was a woman who had something to do with the Countess; but he thought, and now he felt, that Agatha was dead; she would be in despair; she would go down to the lake and throw herself in. No one had seen her since the servants saw her at the lake-side.

"Poor, pretty Agatha," he sighed, deeply. "It was the saddest ending I ever saw. Still it was of no more mourning over a dead woman; if she could have found her, all would be good."

He was never constant for very long together; this had been by far the longest love of his life; now it was over there was an end of it, and it was of no use repining. He knew, he had always known, that if ever this knowledge reached her she would die of it.

It was a most unfortunate business, and he would have been more content to have laid her in some green English churchyard, than in the depths of the lake waters.

He was very depressed and unhappy for two or three weeks, so much so that he considered himself a model of constancy; and then he began to cheer up a little.

He met some English friends in Paris, and they spent some pleasant evenings together. Once more the love of fast life took hold of him; and he could not believe that he had spent so many months in the solitude of Bell-fleur. He resolved on leaving Paris, and going home to England. There, in the midst of the whirl of life he had lived, he should forget all the agonies. He was dreadfully grieved and sorry; but he did not feel at all as though his life was finished or marred, far from it. He had to live it.

So, after a few weeks, he returned to Groswood, and was soon plunged into the midst of business, politics, and gaiety. He was even more handsome and attractive than ever; quite as eagerly welcomed; quite as much sought after. To the mistress of Groswood was still the desire of many a fair maiden's heart. There was only one thing which he could not do. He would not go to the Abbey when Lord Court invited him.

He never ceased to love Agatha, and he never ceased to grieve over her; but, as time passed, the impression grew less. It had only been one of many episodes in his life—it had been the whole of hers.

The same evening that Agatha found her way to the porch of the hospital of St. John—one of the finest institutions in Paris—a sad accident happened to the young Countess de Tiernay. He was returning with his mother, the beautiful and wealthy Countess de Tiernay, from a ball, when their carriage came in collision with a fiacre that was rapidly driven by a man not quite sober. He could never answer for the consequences, for he was killed at once.

The collision was of terrible force; the horses were so seriously injured that they had to be shot. The two belonging to the countess were thrown, but escaped unharmed. The countess was flung with violence against the curb-stone, and lay there like one dead.

A crowd collected at once, and two gentlemen came to the scene. She was a curious sight to see that beautiful lady in her mourning and magnificent dress kneeling on the pavement crying out that her son was killed. She would let no one raise the injured head but herself. She laid it on the soft satin folds of her dress.

"Find a doctor," she cried, in most heart-rending tones. "For Heaven's sake find a doctor!"

A gentleman in the crowd went forward, and said: "Madame, it might be half an hour before a doctor could be found and brought here; the hospital of St. John is just around the corner; the best plan will be to carry him there."

"Do you think he is dead?" asked the lady.

The stranger placed his hand on the countess's breast.

"He is not dead, madame; his heart is beating, though faintly. He may rally if he has immediate aid, but not if he waits here until the doctor comes—in that case he must die."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, let him be taken there!" she said, and it was done at once.

There was an instant stir in the crowd. A Frenchman seldom requires asking twice for help. The door of the carriage was taken quickly from the hinges; he was laid upon it. Several strong men were carried with offers of help, and he was carried quickly down the street to the hospital of St. John.

The countess walked by his side; she would not leave him for a moment. The usual crowd followed. It was not an uncommon, but a most picturesque procession, the wounded man, his mother in all the splendor of her ball attire, the diamonds gleaming in the light of the lamps, her jeweled hand clasping one of her son's, the crowd, all agape with wonder, following.

There was the deep, old-fashioned porch, with the bright light shining, and the great crucifix hanging in the hall. She rang the bell, and while they waited for an answer the countess saw the silent figure, with its white face and folded hands, lying on the seat. Even the stir of the crowd had not wakened Agatha from the deadly sleep of exhaustion. The countess went up to her silent figure, with its white face and folded hands, lying on the seat. Even the stir of the crowd had not wakened Agatha from the deadly sleep of exhaustion. The countess went up to her.

"Oh, Heaven, what a night!—how full of misfortune and accident!" In the confusion that ensued when the attendants hastened to answer the bell, they assumed naturally that the young girl lying on the seat belonged to the party. Agatha was carried into the hospital and taken to a room, and many hours elapsed before the truth was known.

The doctors examined the young countess, and formed a favorable opinion of him; he was not so severely injured as had been feared at first; and when madame la Countess, in her delight and gratitude, sat there weeping happy tears, one of the sisters came to inquire what should be done about the young lady, who did not seem to be injured, but who was very ill. The countess said, in surprise: "We had no young lady with us." Then he remembered the beautiful face in the porch.

"She does not belong to us," said the countess; "but I am so grateful to Heaven for its mercy, that if she be in want or in need, I will take care of her."

And that was how Agatha became the protegee of Madame la Countess Tiernay.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. THE CRY OF AN ANGUISHED HEART.

Madame la Countess Tiernay was one of the wealthiest and most generous ladies in Paris. She had been one of the most famous court beauties, and had married the Count Tiernay, one of the richest and celebrated men in France. Her life had been one long scene of brilliant enjoyment; she was one of the most popular queens of French society—no one more beautiful or more sought after. While she was at the zenith of her happiness and prosperity her husband died, and the beautiful countess was left with this one son. She gave up the fashionable world then, and devoted her whole existence to her son; and he, in his turn, was extremely fond and proud of his beautiful mother.

They went out together continually; the young countess was far prouder of taking his arm, and handsome mother to a ball than of escorting the loveliest girl in Paris. Madame la Countess was most charitable; it was one of her favorite virtues and occupations. It was said of her that no one ever appealed to her for help in vain. So that Agatha had fallen into good hands when she attracted the attention of Madame la Countess de Tiernay.

The result of the prolonged and repeated examination of the Countess was that his injuries were not fatal. Still, the most skillful doctors said it would be better for him to remain at the hospital for some days at least, lest the removal should injure him. The nursing at the hospital of St. John was carried on by a band of devoted sisters called "the Sisters of the Red Cross," a body of noble women, whose lives were devoted to good works. One of the kindest and sweetest among them, called Sister Angela, was placed in charge of the young girl found in the old stone porch.

The Countess de Tiernay had been struck with Agatha's almost angelic beauty, and had asked the sisters to find a nice room for her; and she was not to go into the wards where the great body of the patients lay—she was to be what was called a private patient—to have one of the prettiest rooms in the hospital, and the garden. She was to have every attention, every comfort at madame's expense; and when she grew better, madame would see what was to be done. No one knew anything of her—no one had seen her enter the great stone porch where the wooden crucifix hung. Two or three of the sisters stood round the bed whereon they had laid her; no fairer picture was ever seen than this—the face, white and still as sculptured marble—the long, dark tresses hung on the pale cheek; the wealth of shining hair lying like a veil around her. They drew nearer to her, these good sisters, who seldom saw anything so fair. One touched the white hand, so cold and still—the others raised a tress of the golden hair.

"She is English," said Sister Gertrude; "a fair, beautiful English girl; her hair is like gold, and her face like a white rose."

"She is so young," said Sister Clara; "and her face—oh, Madame! how beautiful it is, I wonder if all the English ladies are like her?"

"Do you think she is a lady?" asked Sister Anna, who rather disliked and mistrusted the term.

Sister Clara raised again the white hand that lay outside the counterpane.

"Look, sister," she said.

And one glance was enough. The beautiful, soft, white hand lying there was certainly the hand of a lady.

"Look, too, at her dress," said Sister Clara. "Everything she wears is of the most costly description; her dress is torn and soiled as if by long walking; look at the dead leaves clinging to it, but it is of the finest description; look at this handkerchief of the purest lace; indeed, dear sister, the poor thing is a lady."

"It does not matter much," said Sister Gertrude; "whether she is a lady or not; that is the last thing we need trouble about. Who or what she is does not concern us much, but what we can do for her? She is very ill."

"She looks to me," said Sister Anna, "as though she would never open her eyes again," and then the kindly sisters drew nearer in anxious dread.

"May Heaven pity her," said Sister Clara. "Surely she will not die without a word or a prayer. We must do something at once. Sister Anna you will be the best to remain with her. Sister Gertrude will you find Dr. Regnier at once?"

The sisters dispersed, each carrying away with her a vivid recollection of the beautiful English girl lying on what seemed to be a bed of death.

Then Dr. Regnier came, and looked astonished at the beautiful girl.

"Something serious," he said, to Sister Anna.

He bent down over the pale face, he laid his hand on a girl's heart.

"She is alive," he said; "but this is a worse case than the young countess's. He looked at the white face, and tried to raise one of the white eyelids.

"It is the brain," he said to himself; "I feared as much."

"Most probably, sister," he said aloud; "this is the swoon that often precedes brain fever. It will go hard with her, poor child! Nothing is known of her, I suppose?" "Nothing," replied the sister. "When they carried in Monsieur le Count, she was found just as you see her now in the porch. The Countess de Tiernay has taken charge of her, as an act of gratitude, she says, for her son's almost miraculous escape from death." "Said only the fair head stirred, and the beautiful eyes opened wide with a vacant stare."

"We better do? If we know anything of her story or antecedents, it would guide us." "Vane, Vane!" cried the girl; and the golden head tossed wearily on the white pillow. "Vane, Vane!" "Vane is a man's name," said the doctor. "Vane is certainly a man's name. Most probably a love story."

"Vane, Vane!" she cried; and good Sister Anna shook her head.

"It will be long before he hears you, my child," she said; but Agatha only looked as her cry with beseeching eyes, and uttered her usual cry: "Vane, Vane!"

"Brain fever," said the doctor, "and it will be a bad case; but she is in good hands. You can do nothing; more at present than use ice to the head."

The sister took up the long golden hair in her hand, the kindly, loving heart shining out of her eyes.

"I hope this will not be cut off," she said. "We will save it, if possible," he replied. "Vane, Vane!" cried the girl.

A burning flush mounted to her face; her eyes were full of wild, burning light; the white hands beat the air helplessly; the golden head was tossed incessantly to and fro; the quick, rapid cry of "Vane, Vane!" never stopped.

"That will be trying," said the doctor, as the voice reached to a scream of keen distress; "it will be very trying for you, sister."

"It is worse for her," said the kindly woman—"much worse."

But the time came when Sister Anna would have given anything for relief from that one piercing cry. It never ceased; at one time it was low and tender, then it rose into a prolonged wail of despair.

As the fever grew higher, she began to talk about other things. She lay and murmured something of a church—of a fair-faced saint with a palm branch—of her mother's grave; but all ended in the cry "Vane, Vane." She must have suffered terribly, the sisters said. "She has a fine, though delicate, constitution, and the fight will be for dear life," the doctor said.

The countess herself came often to the bedside, and more than once her eyes filled with tears as she heard that ever pathetic cry, "Vane, Vane!"

Then came the time of recovery, when by degrees the cruel mist cleared away, and memory, more cruel still, came in its place. Good Sister Anna will never forget the day when the beautiful eyes looked in her own, and the weak voice asked: "Sister, where am I?"

"In the Hospital of St. John, my child. Heaven be praised that you can speak sensibly."

"Where?—in what place?" "You are in Paris, my dear," answered the nun.

"Paris? I thought I lived by a lake," she said. "Paris? How did I come here?" "I cannot tell you; we found you in the old stone porch."

Slowly enough the memory of it came back to her. A stone porch, with a great crimson lamp burning. Ah! and a crucifix hanging on the wall. She could see the white lace and the crown-thorned head.

Why had she come there? Then she was in a railway train, traveling by night and by day with speed; and then she was standing on the terrace, with Valerie standing before her, and telling her, over and over again, that she had never been married, and she was not Vane's wife. She remembered it all then. She looked in the gentle face of the nun.

"Sister," she said, "do you think I am ill enough to die?"

"I hope not, my dear," was the gentle answer.

"Oh, pray for me that I may die. God hears the prayers of good people; pray that I may die."

"Death is not always better than life," said the sister. "You differ from the last young girl who I nursed."

"Do I? In what way? she asked, interested in what the sister was saying.

"Ah, my dear, she was a young girl, just like you, but French—not English; and the French are so emotional, you know—so quick. She had been in great trouble, and the doctor said she would die. In the middle of the night I was sitting with her, and I shall never forget how I was startled at the time. A low voice broke the silence of the night."

"Sister," she said, "pray Heaven that I may not die."

"Why, my dear?" I asked. "There are rest and peace in death."

"There is something better in life," she said. "There is time for repentance. Pray for me that I may not die, but that I may live, and suffer and repent."

"What an only son is to the mother who adores him? I adore my son—his is the whole world to me. Some time since, as you know, we were returning from a ball together, and by some accident our carriage was nearly destroyed, and he was almost killed. He was taken to the hospital, and by the prompt, kindly skill the physician, and by his life was saved. You, poor child, had taken refuge there the same night, and when I heard of you I vowed, as an act of gratitude to Heaven, I would make you my special care. Are you willing that this should be so?"

"You overwhelm me with gratitude, madame," she replied, with tears in her eyes.

"Nay, I would not do that, dear child. You agree to become my charge—that is well. Do not think that I wish to pry into your life, or ask any questions; there is but one I must ask, and my heart answers it before my lips speak it. One cannot help seeing that you have had a misfortune of some kind or other. Tell me, quite frankly, has it been your own fault?"

To herself, this kindly lady admitted that it would be just as easy to accuse an angel from heaven.

Agatha looked at her with a pale, tearless face.

"I hardly know how to answer your question, madame," she said. "How far I am to blame in the eyes of God I know not. I never had the least notion of wrong in my life; but I am afraid that I am weak, credulous, and ignorant enough to stand worthy of blame before Heaven."

"Poor child!" said madame, thinking how wicked any one must have been to take advantage of such innocence as hers.

"Very hard and bitter things have been said to me," she continued; "I cannot tell you if I deserve them. I can only say that of myself I would at any time prefer death to sin; but I have been sinned against. Madame, my dear young mother named me Agatha after the fair young saint on the old church window—a saint with a halo round her head and a palm branch in her hand, and her story is this, that she preferred to die rather than offend God. I would do just the same."