

now among the glorified. We shed many tears for her, yet we had to acknowledge that our loss was her gain. She had lived for years in a little cottage with one servant, and now that she slept her last sleep all was sold off, and the cottage passed into other hands.

Aunt Mary had for years kept a diary, and it is partly from this and partly from Mrs Wilton's tale that I gather the following.

## CHAPTER II.

A handsomer girl than Mary Barton at eighteen it would have been difficult to find, or one happier, more highly educated, wealthy, or accomplished. On the eve of her marriage to the man of her choice, her future did indeed seem bright.

The table was spread for the six o'clock dinner, and Mary and her mother, who were awaiting Mr. Barton's return, were talking softly together in the half-lighted parlor. Mary's future had been the subject of conversation, and Mrs. Barton had said how much she should miss her daughter.

"But, mamma, I shall see you nearly every day."

"I hope so, daughter, but after you are once married you will never be quite like the Mary of old."

"Indeed I shall; don't you remember the old couplet:

'A son is a son till he marries a wife,  
But a daughter's a daughter all the days of her life.'

I shall never change, mother dear, and even now, unspeakably dear as Charles Dakers is to me, I would not leave you if you required me."

"Thanks, my child, for your loving assurance, but I trust nothing will ever happen to part you and Charles; you have taken my words more seriously than I intended them. Miss you I certainly shall, for Maude will never be the companion to me that you have been; still I should be but a selfish mother were I to wish your marriage delayed for that reason."

Time had slipped by as they were talking, and it was not till the little clock on the

chimney piece struck the half hour that they were aware how late it was.

"Papa is later than usual to-night," said Mary, "he must be very busy."

"He has been for some time past, but he tells me the hurry will soon be over now."

At that instant the hall door opened and the father's step was heard on the stairs. He did not pass on to his own room as was his usual custom, but entered the room where were his wife and elder daughter,

"Mother, can you bear a little trouble with me," he asked, going over to her and laying his hands on her shoulders.

"Yes, Edward, whatever God sees fit to lay on us," was the reply.

"One of my clerks has absconded, taking with him large sums of money; it will go nigh to ruin me, Mary, but should I fail it will be honestly."

That Mrs. Barton and Mary could hear this news unmoved, was not to be expected; they felt it, and felt it keenly; but in the midst of the trouble arose the consolation that it was no fault of theirs. Bad news spreads fast, and though for that night the Bartons kept their trouble confined to the elder members of the family—Mary, Henry, James and Maude—by noon next day it was known far and wide, and speculation was rife among the gossips as to whether Charles Dakers would fulfil his engagement.

"It would be exceedingly foolish of him, nay wrong I may say, to tie himself to a poor wife," remarked Mrs. Sloane, who had long wished to call Charles Dakers son-in-law.

"Decidedly imprudent, to say the least," lisped pretty Minnie Bell, whose father was on the high road to be a millionaire.

"Never fear, Charles has too much sense to wish to marry a whole family; for that is what it really will be," said Mr. Sloane, who happened to enter his drawing-room during the conversation.

"I think it would be very mean of him if he did not," said Morton, a younger brother of Miss Bell.

"What? mean not to marry the whole family!" laughed Mr. Sloane. "Why, Morton, you are worse than the Grand Turk himself."

"You know I did not mean that," returned the boy, joining in the laugh, and so the