

how long the pastor's wife had been a hearer.

"Mrs. Spencer is upstairs," said Grace, drying her hands; "if you will please to walk into the parlor I will call her."

As soon as Sister Malilieu reached the parlor she said, "Grace, my errand is to you." She paused, looking at Grace with a new interest. Grace looked her best, in short gown and petticoat, and Sister Malilieu's private thoughts took rapid inventory. Magnificent voice, fine dark eyes and hair, not so very bad looking, but sunburned and roughened with hard toil. She might be improved, certainly is improvable. She is, like all these wild Irish, true-hearted, loyal and loving; she is usually good tempered and patient, and though she has not yet consciously found the Lord, she has felt after Him and He has found her, and called her. So thought the lady to herself; aloud to Grace, "I have come to you on an important errand."

Grace stared in blank astonishment as to what was to come next,—reproof she supposed; that was what she was most accustomed to.

"I have come to tell you that Providence has singled you out in a special manner. I may truly say to you 'The Master is calling for you.' The lot has fallen on you to be helpmeet to Brother Walsingham. Can you make up your mind to accept him?"

Grace stared at Sister Malilieu as if she did not understand her. "I am as much astonished as you can be, Grace; but it is quite true, and I am deputed to tell you of it, and bring back your answer." Grace always was so strange in her ways, instead of answering a word, she threw her apron over her head, and in this blindfold fashion rushed upstairs, nearly upsetting Sister Spencer, who was coming down; never stopping until she reached the attic, where she slept. She fastened the door, threw herself on her knees beside the bed and wept, sobbing out: "Oh mother! mother! I have no mother, no father! Oh mother, if I only had my mother!" Sister Spencer, tall and stately, took her way to the parlor, having from the upper window seen the pastor's wife coming towards the house; she heard Sister Malilieu's errand with pro-

found astonishment. Losing Grace was what she had never calculated upon; she had only thought of improving her, to add all the virtues she had not to those she had already, which at this moment looked more to her than they had done under provocation. But she is to be lost entirely, and by such an unheard-of occurrence. Still, except some common expressions of wonder at the ways of Providence, she preserved silence.

Grace sobbed out all her loneliness, and when the tumult of feeling in some measure subsided, she began to pray; for amid her bewilderment of mind the thought cleared itself that an answer must be given. Oh for wisdom to say what was right! Brother Walsingham was her ideal of all that was grand and noble and good. Gladly would she have followed him to be his servant for ever, feeling highly honored so to serve; but his wife—and she so unfit! Grace's thoughts could carry her no farther. She could not rise to the heroism of saying no, and with her own hand push away this wonderful blessing, though it was so mixed with pain.

Sister Spencer tapped at her door. Grace dried her eyes and opened it. The pastor's wife is waiting for her answer. Has she made up her mind? So, with swollen, tear-stained face, she returned to the parlor.

She will not say no; that is clear. There is escape from the kitchen, into a region where pens, ink, paper, books may be had with less self-denial; leisure at some times to read and write without being a transgressor. And then to be in the same house with Brother Walsingham, to hear his voice, and look at his face, to have him as teacher and guide. To say no to all this was impossible. But, then, suppose he was hoping she would say no? He might despise her, and that would be too bitter to bear.

"You are to remember, Grace," said Sister Malilieu, "that none of us can account for this lot; how it came to be there we know not. Brother Walsingham, believing firmly that it is of the Lord that the lot has fallen on you, waits for your answer."

Grace began to murmur something of unfitness and unworthiness.