

the dancer suddenly stopped short. She gave a cry, threw up her arms to the heavens above as in appeal, then hid her face in her hands, and sinking slowly, exhausted on the ground, stretched herself there with her head buried in the grass.

She had remembered, by a flash of returned reason, where and what she was. The boy and girl watching knew it; no human soul would have failed to understand the despair of that last pitiful gesture. They shrank back, awed by their young, intense pity for this disordered intellect, and the mystery and horror of why such suffering should be, when both shivered, as low moans came from that prostrate form, those of a soul in agony. The moans grew quicker, sharper; then followed a storm of sobs, blinding weeping choking cries upon cries.

The woman lying there knew herself at that moment, still young, passionate, with her life wasted, her brain wrecked by the cruelty of man; and "God had permitted it!" No hope, none, in the days stretching barren before her; but the dreadful certainty instead of more black tunnels of time, down which her spirit must wander, groping and weeping for light and company, or else tasting a fearful, delicious joy, to be afterwards bitterly scorned, like that from which she had just awakened. And still her cries echoed from the cliff-sides of the lonely glen, and rang up to the still blue strip of sky overhead, through which no angel-faces could be seen looking down in pitying consolation. They pierced the ears and wrung the hearts of the children, who felt weak to the marrow. Their bones, hearing them.

These dreadful cries against man; to God against God! Would they never cease? Brightened and heartsick, the boy and girl stole away down the glen; Blyth quite pale, and tears washing down Joy's cheeks. Neither had believed grown persons could be so miserable. Long after they had left the glen those shrieks still seemed to haunt their ears, and they would stop and listen to any faint sounds borne on the breeze. They only breathed freely—both with a great sigh of relief—when they saw the cheerful Red House Farm windows.

CHAPTER XIX.

"The balmies they were talking,
And we listened to what they'd say;
Says one: 'I saw a strange thing,
As I played in the wood one day.
I saw—and I saw—' so it chatted on,
And all wondered in innocent strife;
But we looked at each other, pale to the lips—
'Twas the secret of a life!"

Blyth held his peace about the late scene in the glen, when both children returned to the farm. But little Joy who was strangely pale and silent all evening, could not refrain from mysterious answers when Hannah made affectionate and solicitous inquiries of her. And so the matter was told to Berrington.

He spoke to both of the children seriously that night, explaining the horrors which even the most harmless poor souls, who suffered from occasional dark periods of obscured reason, had endured in asylums; so he and his neighbors and their fathers had heard tell. Of being chained to a wall, half naked, half starved, with less straw than a dog for miserable bedding; of indignities; of broken limbs and ribs; and the last glimmer of intellect suffocated, till Joy trembled and wept, suddenly stirred, poor child, by a storm of passionate emotion inexplicable to herself. At which Blyth, watching her, felt moved too, in an inward way; so that he was half ashamed of himself, though with little cause for that either.

Then the farmer lifted his pet on his knee, and consoled her. Nay, there was no cause for such fears. While he lived, no one should hurt a hair of the heads of those poor women-souls up the valley; and afterwards, please God he could trust his boy to guard them. Which Blyth, in his heart, there and then swore to do; outwardly he nodded. So Joy, who had hidden her face in his old velvet coat, listened to Berrington—her sobs lessening—who hinted how she herself, ay, and Blyth too in future, might help Miss Rachel in her good and great work. Especially he bade her, however, be careful now she was growing such a mortal big girl, to hold her peace on this matter, which Joy solemnly promised.

"And Blyth," eager for her comrade to be sworn likewise; "Why don't you tell him to be silent, too?"

"He is a boy; it matters more to thee," said Berrington, oracularly.

So both children forbore to speak of what they had learned, except to each other.

"So that is why Miss Rachel and Miss Magdalen live always alone. If you not often thought, Blyth—no, *felt*, their lives were strange? And this is their secret," whispered Joy, in an awed voice, as she and Blyth sat on a branch of their favorite old pear-tree, on high among the white blossoms, dangling their legs.

Blyth nodded, and said, slowly,
"I suppose so."

He had a way of being curt and oracular now, at times, like his father, which Joy found provoking, even unfair, when wishing to open her heart in a full disburdening, and, of course, interchange of confidences. Joy was so quick in appreciation, she was almost Blyth's companion in intelligence; for girls

"Grow upon the sunny side of the wall,"

and ripen soonest. Still, Blyth was four years older, and could recall many wandering comments and guesses in scraps between Dick and the shepherds, when the child first came to the farm. That she bore his mother's name of Haythorn signified little; for once, when he had a. if Joy was his cousin, his father had told him no, with a kindly admonition not to talk or trouble his own head, yet on the subject. Blyth, too, believed in the scapegrace father invented for the child by the gossips, the more so as his father, he noticed, had never contradicted any chance allusions thereto, while Hannah's portentous sighs were as so many blasts of affirmation. But he knew, of course, and often wondered over, Joy's visits to Cold-home, and puzzled himself much thereat. These visits were kept as carefully secret as could well be by Hannah from the few farm-laborers and the maids. Otherwise, what with the child's swarthy looks, not unlike Rachel herself, Berrington might not have escaped the gossipping tongues of the poor village-folk, who talked, often with cruel candor, of all the doings of their employers round the fogot-fires at night.

Country gossip is perhaps the worst gossip there is; for open-air life, while it keeps most who live far apart from each other innocent and kindly as dwellers in solitary tents, tends to make some brutish in thought, too, as their own herds of peaceful cows and silly sheep. So, when the poorer of this last said kind of out-door-living folk swarm together in little villages at night and talk little do they heed of the complex motives, the small ambitions, and more refined pleasures familiar, perhaps, to even as mean dwellers in cities. All is good or bad to them; what they do not understand they attribute to the blackest causes, and that without much malice, knowing no better. They feel so simply but strongly, and w^o, told they have a divine spark within them, know themselves so earthly.

Blyth solemnly believed Joy knew nothing of these surmises. But she was very sharp to hear and note, and could keep her thoughts secret, too. Also he supposed, feeling as grave as a young owl, she guessed nothing now of what was in his heart as they sat among the branches. Did she not, though; a something? For thought strangely communicates with thought, especially among those who live together and are in sympathy. And the little maid's face grew grave, too.

CHAPTER XX.

"Weep not, my wanton—smile upon my knee;
When thou art old, there's grief enough for thee."

GREENE

"Thou little child, yet glorious in the night,
Of heaven-born, freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke?"

WORDSWORTH.

Next day Rachel Estonia had gone forth alone towards the village where Joy went to school, hoping to have her eyes blessed by sight of the child; her chances for doing so had been so rare of late. More bold than usual, because feeling heart-starved for lack of love, she adventured herself down the steep lane leading to the village, which lay in a shadowy coombe.

The banks that rose on either side were nearly thirty feet high, and so steep and tangled with holly, briar, and a wildly luxuriant growth of flowers bushes and creepers, that any escape up them from the curious gaze of peering villagers was impossible. Still the men were at work in the fields; the women were, or should have been at their household labors, for it was three of the afternoon.

Rachel went slowly, therefore, down the narrow stony road, hollowed by so many winter rains, and generation of travellers

wending from the wooded rich valleys below or the wilder moors above.

She feasted her eyes with artistic appreciation of beauty on the banks on either side; the lincensed out-cropping rocks, or rain-slips exposing red soil, the waving fringes and banners of ferns and briony, the glory of broom, growing far up, and red campion and bluebells mingling in startling contrast; the proud hollies, like a serried rank of soldiers, meeting the sharp wind of winter highest aloft of all, and giving its name of Holmo Coombe to the dingle. By the roadside, a crystal streamlet hurried from the hills above. In winter it poured over the road, making the lane dangerous in times of frost. But now it only sang and tumbled in its stony channel, till, reaching the village below, it poured so clean and swift through the old moor-stone, ruined down the street that the gossiping housewives all washed their potatoes therein before cooking-time. Rachel could see the village lying deep below her now as she gazed down a bend of the road.

The thatched cottage straggled picturesque in the valley among the apple-trees, their cob walls of mud and pebbles leaning at all angles, and washed either white, buff, or a favorite warm pink. Noisy children, hens, ducks, and domestic animals scrambled and swarmed about the doors, with cheerful noises that came up the hill. How untidy, yet clean and happy, the village looked to Rachel's dark eyes as she gazed. It did her good to see other human homes even from afar; and she thought, with a pang, of their own bare, silent cottage, whose brown cob walls, the better to escape observation, were never washed of any cheerful color; and where the child, their one joy, only came at times. What a contrast!

But where was Joy? Some other children who lived on an upland farm, too, came tripping by, lushing their chatter and stealing curious glances as they passed Rachel. "Have I the evil eye, do they think?" she sighed to herself, and went on depressed, with slow, hesitating steps. She would so gladly have blessed their sunny heads and clear eyes. The lane turned sharply round some high rocks now, behind which Rachel heard a little voice singing, or, rather, trying to sing. She listened, then crept nearer—

"Tata be tata,
No be no!"

sang the little voice again and again, like a young bird repeating the first parent-notes it can mimic.

There was an ancient stone cross raised on two worn steps at one side of the hollow lane, and little Joy was sitting at its foot, swinging her sun-bonnet and humming with a defiant air to herself.

"Who taught you to sing that dear?" The child started, and looking up saw Rachel's deep eyes bent upon her. She gave one quick, frightened glance round, then seeing no Magdalen near was reassured. Rachel's look had a light to her, like love shining through darkness. At first she did not answer, but as the gentle woman sat down beside her, drawing the small form caressingly to her side, Joy nestled closer of her own accord; and presently a few questions elicited all.

"And so you want to sing, and to play the guitar?" said Rachel, dreamily.

"Yes, yes; teach me! The other children at school can't do that, if they do laugh at me and ask questions—why I have no father or mother?" cried the little girl passionately.

"What?" said Rachel, breathing the question low as if much moved, "Do they ask you about that, Joy? Tell me, dear. Yes, I must know; this is important."

Joy's face flushed a deep, hot red; but she turned it in sudden impulse up to the speaker, who now noticed recent tear-stains upon her cheeks.

"They do. That is why I would not go back with them to-day; I pretended not to care, and sat here, but— Oh! tell me, why does no one speak to me of my mother? I have asked Hannah about my father, and she said he was a wicked and cruel man; so I suppose he is dead. But she never says that of my mother. She only sighs and says she wishes I may only grow up worthy of her, but that I must ask no questions."

"Wicked and cruel," replied Rachel, murmuring to herself, while a spasm she could not control crossed her features, the outcome of a sharp pain in her soul, and her lips were dry as she went on, huskily, "Child, child, you must not judge your father. He may have been all that, and yet—and yet— Oh! how can we tell? Perhaps he never knew!

nerves meant to work such ill. What can a of your age, what can even women, guess of a man's temptations and trials? Never speak of it, Joy, never think of him—unless in your prayers; yes, yes; pray, pray hard that he may be forgiven."

"Then he is not dead?" said the child slowly.

"We do not know—no one does. He was alive, we heard, two years ago, but then we lost all news of him: dead to us, at least."

"To us," repeated little Joy, whose lustreous dark eyeballs were fixed with thoughtfully merciless scrutiny of her innocent ago full on her companion, whose emotion she perceived; while a dawning thought gave a strange, slow tone of happiness to her voice as she added, "You liked him, did you not? I know that, because your face looks so sorry, as if you wanted to cry. But why don't you tell me of her?"

Rachel started back, pierced to the heart, yet powerless before the child's words; looking at her with hopeless, miserable eyes, as if found guilty of a deadly sin, done, nevertheless, without her own knowledge.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Voice as an Instrument of Music.

She who taught the nightingale to sing, she whose early hymn the sweet lark warbles to the morning, she who pours forth the full melody from the deep throat of the thrush, and gives the little sparrow the pleasant, the articulated harmony, she also, when she gave to man a throat and breath, taught him to modulate. This is the work of nature, in harmony with the laws of nature's God. Thus far music is her gift. None of the "sweet-tuned instruments" known to human invention equals the natural voice in sweetness; they are all harsh or they are rough, when compared with the pure tone, the mellow softness of the throat. What was the great praise of Martini, but that he made the haut-boy emulate the sound of the human voice? Nature has given to man the first and finest of all instruments in his own frame; the ancients were employing their time useless when they endeavored to demonstrate in what country music first saw its origin. It is doubtless, coeval with the human fabric, and natural to all countries where men have lived.—[The Current.]

Giving Way to Moods.

It is unphilosophical and wrong to yield to moods. They rob life of much of its enjoyment. The mind is as amenable to the will as is the body. The most productive mental workers in all departments, are those who have their faculties under discipline, and who go regularly to their mental task and compel the obedience of the mind. To those who habituate themselves to this, and hold moods under control, there is no difficulty in performing prescribed tasks at allotted times. And such persons endure longest, because of the regularity of their habits. Moodiness is, indeed, a form of disease. It draws on the nerves and gradually leads to nervous prostration. When it controls the will, it has gained headway that is very dangerous. And thus its natural tendency is to injure health and happiness. To repress and overcome it, is to suppress a form of disease, which in its fuller developments is distressing and dangerous.—[Philadelphia Call.]

The Advantages of Good Temper.

There is always good policy in keeping one's temper. As often as temper is lost, a degree of influence is lost with it; and while the former may be recovered, it will be found much more difficult to recover the latter. The politician who allows himself to get angry in his capacity—whatever may be the provocation—does his cause an injury which his soundest argument will hardly repair. Just so with men of all professions, and with men of no profession. If they would be able to exert a sway in their sphere, they must learn to keep cool. Who ever listened to a discussion in which one party went raving mad, while the other maintained his composure, without having his sympathies enlisted with the latter, even though, in the beginning, his prejudice might have been in favor of the former? It is commonly taken for granted, and with a good share of reason, that he who has the best share of an argument will exhibit the most coolness.