

rays. But why was she standing thus idly?—she, the busy one of the whole village, whom fault-finding mothers were wont to hold up as a pattern to their daughters. Simply for this: it was reported that a luggage train had run off the metals a mile or so from the place, and it was likewise said that passengers were travelling by it, as was frequently the case at that particular hour of the day. The farmer was indulging in his afternoon's nap, and there were no cattle to worry her now (they were all dead and gone), and, moreover, the old farm itself was to be sold on the morrow; so that wandering restlessly about out of doors, she had heard the news, and now stood like many another in the village, waiting for she knew not what. Had this restless, longing impatience anything to do with those silly fancies which were past and gone? She was inclined to think that it had, and yet she had striven hard during all these years to forget. Her heart was not particularly heavy at the thought of the change which was to come to her; for somehow she felt that a change of any kind would be grateful just then; but oh, she was very, very restless; it was as if the old desires and old memories would come crowding upon her in a vague, undefined sort of way, and yet her thoughts and sympathies were all the time with the poor creatures who had, she feared, been hurried into eternity without a moment's warning. A neighbour passed, and she inquired anxiously if he knew aught of the accident. "Only this, that there is no life lost," said he hurried on his way. She was glad that there was no one dead, and yet her heart throbbled on; what had she expected? She turned away, and entered the house, visiting every room in order to see that all was as it should be—anything rather than brood over the past.

Tea was on the table, and Rose trying to look her best. Trying, did I say? Ah! well then I ought to add that she succeeded too. Very far and pleasant she appeared to an outsider, a tall man with a bronzed face and a long beard. A shadow darkened the window, causing Rose to look up. A low, murmured cry of joy and thankfulness, and then she stood in the doorway where he met her and clasped her to his heart. None can tell what that meeting was but she, the tried, patient woman, whose life had been one round of common tasks and common sorrows; and yet it had been a life of beauty, because it was a life of love.

At the old trysting-place they stand, and the red light of the setting sun flashing sideways upon them through the trees lends a depth and warmth to the scene which the two other pictures lacked. For was it not summer time? Summer with its glorious sunsets, which made up in a measure for the lack of youth in the long-parted lovers. Still to my mind Rose was sweeter and more lovable now than in the old days when her cheek had been more exquisitely fair and her hair a shade less brown. A loving life had refined, softened, and ennobled her; and I think her lover saw it too as, gazing fondly at her in the ruddy glow, he asked, "As the farm is to be sold, Rose, what say you to my buying it?"

She looked up; and was it the sunset glory tingeing her face, or was it the old crimson tide which that loved voice had often called up in her early girlhood?

"Rose, shall your home be my home? Say yes, darling."

"If you wish it, Ralph;" and the sunlight smiled glally upon them in token of his entire approval of the reunion.

So Ralph had gone to the New Country and come back a rich man. He was on his way to visit an uncle in Cornwall when the accident happened, and had it not been for an awkward interval between two passenger trains, which prompted him to take the luggage, I think that Rose would have had no husband. As it was, he was compelled to wait two hours for another train, and old scenes and recollections came upon him with such force that he resolved to see her once more, and we all know with what results.

If he had not obeyed this impulse? But there, nothing so sad shall mar the picture before us. Enough for us that we see her now with the rosy light gleaming full upon her upturned face; all the trouble is gone from lips and brow; only the tender lines, marks of her true womanhood, remain, and through all the sunset glamour the light of love and peace hold perfect away.

Still there will ever be traces of the past visible in her countenance, for never face can look like her face that has not known sorrow; never life can be what her life will be which has not at times been dreary and sad. So with the tender

laughs waving protectingly overhead, and with God's glory around them, we will drop the curtain, for the picture is perfect.

Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—

Of that which came between more sweet than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves

That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs

Which perfect joy, perplex'd for utterance,

Stole from her sister Sorrow.

Tennyson.

PRAY AND LABOUR.

FROM THE GERMAN.

THE year 1819 was one of great dearth and of much suffering to the poor. Especially did a poor widow of the name of Wilms and her three children have to endure at amount of privation, which we who have all our lives long had every comfort supplied to us, cannot even picture to ourselves. But this noble-hearted woman had so great a horror of everything in the shape of begging, that though her whole store consisted of three dishes of potatoes, she strictly forbade her children to breathe a word on the subject of their privations to anyone, lest it might seem as if they were soliciting help. For her own part she was resolved to share her little all among her children and herself, starve before she consented to beg.

The festival of Whitsuntide is, in many parts of Germany, a time not only for the upper classes to feast, but for distribution to be made among the poor. Nothing, however, came to poor Mrs. Wilms's table, but her few potatoes and the small amount of milk her half-starved goat still yielded. The love's spring weather had brought no amelioration to her lot. Whitsunday came and went, and the next, and at last the potatoes were all eaten, and though drawers, cupboards, and presses were all carefully looked through, not the slightest crust, not a fragment of pating did the poor widow find to appease the cravings of her children's hunger.

At last, with bitter tears and many sobs, the mother announced to her little ones that not a scrap of food was left in the house, and that greatly as she regretted having for the first time to break what had been the rule of her life, she was constrained to send them out to ask help from some of their richer neighbours. But the example of her whole life proved this timider than the injunction she now laid upon them. The elder girl looked up earnestly in her mother's face, and exclaimed, "Dearest mother, I'd rather lie down under a hedge and die, than beg," and the rest of these heroic children cordially chimed in with what their sister had said.

In the midst of her sorrows and terrible anxieties the poor mother could not but feel a strange gladness at hearing these words. However deep her poverty, she was yet rich in the possession of such children. It seemed to her, too, as if to help she had so long been quietly seeking of God must not be close at hand, inasmuch as "man's extremity is God's opportunity." Little Fritz, her youngest child, was standing at the door, when the man in whose house they lodged came up and said to him, "Well, Fritz, what have you had for dinner to-day?" But the little fellow recollected his mother's words about not making their destitution known, and he did not answer the question. It was repeated, and this time he replied that he must not tell. The landlord, however, insisted upon knowing, and little Fritz had no alternative but to say, "We haven't had any dinner at all to-day."

"What?" said the man, "do you mean to say you have got any food left in the house?"

"No, we haven't got any," replied the child.

The landlord then went up to the child's mother and informed her that there was no occasion at all for her and her children to starve, there being on that day a distribution of rye made at the Town Hall, in which distribution she might surely come in for her share of the corn.

But now came on another struggle in that much-tried heart. Was not this a kind of begging? And yet did it not seem as if God Himself were forcing her to do it? Done she felt must be, however she shrank from it. This distribution of corn was an act of public generosity—the gift of those in authority to the poorer members of their own community. She was bound to avail herself of it, and not let her children