

They now entered the church-yard, and Jane pointed with shaking hand to two humble graves, over which a tall, majestic elm, cast its broad shadows in the setting sun. She did not follow the orphan to the sacred spot where her parents slept, but sought the thick gloom of the sepulchral yew which shaded the remains of her whole family.

"Yes!" murmured the mourner of many sorrowful years; "all my kindred are here—I am the last of my race; old in grief, though still young in years. Oh! that my weary pilgrimage were past, and that I slept with them the tranquil sleep of death. But why should I repine? Thou, oh! Father, hast given to me a mission to perform on earth; to rear the tender orphan committed to my charge, and for her sake I must cherish life as a holy thing."

While seated beside her kindred dust, many were the anxious thoughts which arose in the mind of Jane Redgrave with regard to her adopted child. She had often wished to write to Mrs. Sternfield's friends respecting her, but then the thought of parting with the dear child had been so painful that she had always banished the idea. She had found upon the person of Mrs. Sternfield, after her death, a small pocket-book, containing her marriage certificate, the register of her child's baptism, and the direction of her parents' residence in Dublin, of Armin's aunt, and several letters from that lady to her unfortunate nephew. These she knew were documents of great importance to Rose, and she had preserved them with religious care, hoping that the day might yet arrive when the orphan would be restored to the wealthy friends to whom she appeared to belong.

While pondering over these circumstances she was joined by Rose, who told her that she felt more composed, and would not distress her for the future with such bursts of grief, that if she felt sad she would visit the grave of her parents and gather consolation from the holy thoughts which the sight of their humble dwelling inspired; and, kissing her aunt, she once more smiled through her tears. The friends proceeded homewards in deep and earnest conversation; both had become dearer and more interesting to the other, and sad as their lot had been, the bright spot in the desert waste of life, was the intense, enduring love, which they owned for each other.

On approaching their humble home, Jane Redgrave was greatly surprised at finding a travelling carriage drawn up at the gate, and on entering their little sitting-room, an old lady of a proud,

but rather prepossessing appearance, rose to meet them.

"You are the mistress of the house?" she said, resuming her seat, and motioning to Jane to take a chair beside her.

"I am."

"That is all right. I want to speak a few words to you in private. Who is that girl?" glancing up at Rose through her spectacles. "Is she your daughter? A pretty, a very pretty girl, too."

"No madam, she is the child of my adoption."

"Humph! I began to think as much. Yes! there is a likeness, (talking to herself,) a very strong likeness to him. This must be his child that the farmer told me of. What is the young person's name? Who were her parents? Are they dead? Come, be quick!—I want to know all about them, and my time is precious. The night will soon close in, and I hate travelling a strange road in the dark."

"What I have to relate about her parents cannot be told in a few words," said Jane Redgrave. "If, madam, you fear the dark, and will accept a bed in my poor house, I will do all in my power to make you comfortable. I have a neat chamber and a good feather bed, and clean linen at your service; and there is a tolerable public house in the village, which is but a mile distant, where your servants and horses would meet with good accommodation."

The stately old lady reflected for a few minutes.

"Well," she said, "I will accept your offer, and pay you handsomely for your lodging, as I much wish to know all the particulars respecting this girl. Indeed it is for this purpose that I have undertaken a long, and at my time of life, a perilous journey. But first get me a cup of tea, for I am faint and tired, and we will talk over these things at our leisure."

Jane Redgrave bustled about to obey the old lady's orders, while the bashful Rose timidly advanced to disencumber their strange guest of her rich satin bonnet and mantle. The old lady watched all her motions, which greatly embarrassed the poor girl.

"How old are you, my dear?"

"Sixteen, ma'am."

"Yes, that would be her age. Do you remember your own mother?"

"Oh, no! Jane Redgrave is the only mother I ever knew. She has been more than a mother to me."

"She looks a good woman. But why do you call her *Redgrave*? I thought that that was the name your father went by?"