

The Home.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

PART II.—UNFAITHFUL.

CHAPTER II.

GROWING OLDER.

AFTER that I went every month to carry my rent to my landlord ; and pretty much the same conversation passed between us each time, only he never again offered to give me a six-pence out. Now and then when I had received a letter from his nephew, Philip Champion, I took care to tell him about it, and how he was getting on well in the world, and how grand folks up in London thought much of him. The old man rather liked to hear of it, especially when Philip sent me word how he and his father were making money by their voyages out to foreign parts. Once I carried down a handsome shawl, far too fine for an old woman like me to wear, which Captain John Champion had brought for me all the way from India. My landlord told me I could sell it readily for ten pounds, and then the buyer would consider it a bargain ; but I would not lower myself by thinking of such a thing. Love is more than money.

Year after year I saw him growing more withered and shrunken, yet still in good health, and with his mind keen ; ay, keener than ever where money was concerned. He came by degrees to have a sort of liking for me—more because I never missed going with my rent to the very day than for anything else I can think of. There was never any change in the gloomy house, not even in the fire, which always seems smouldering sulkily in the big grate. How dreary this sameness was to me ! As bad even as the sameness of the bare walls of the workhouse, where no change ever came. He, with his riches, lived a life as dreary and desolate as the poorest pauper in the parish.

I believe Rebecca liked me a little also. I felt very sorry for her, and it came into my heart to take her each time a posy out of my garden, or an apple, or some early fruit, fresh gathered ; and she was pleased with them, for the master kept such a close hand on all expenses, that she scarcely tasted a morsel of fruit. She loved