

## THE SILVER LINING.

Of course, when father died, Elaine and I had to leave the house, and that was one of the bitterest troubles in our lives. We did so love the dear old place. But it had to be, for poor papa's successor was already appointed.

It's a truth that troubles never come singly. Here we had just lost the dearest of parents, we had to leave our home, and we knew not what to do, or where to go.

One thing, or rather two, alone were certain, that we must go, and also work for our own living, for when all the little outstanding debts were paid, the doctor for papa, and the last sad ceremonies, we had but twenty pounds in all the world.

People who knew nothing about it said it was a shame of papa; by which they meant—for he was the most generous of men—that charity should begin at home; but papa never could understand.

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," was his motto, and he never could keep his hand out of his pocket on hearing of a case of real distress.

Thus, for the living was but a small one, nothing was ever saved out of his income.

If anyone blamed him, we, his daughters, did not. Heaven bless him; but one did blame him cruelly, the only relation we had in the world, his half brother, Ambrose Warne, a retired merchant, and wealthy, but miserly, crabbed of disposition. He quarrelled with papa for his "extravagant benevolence," and when, during dear mamma's last illness, papa being in great straits, applied to him for help, he refused downright, throwing, as the saying is, his "foolish charity" in his teeth.

When papa died, of course we told uncle Ambrose, who, in a brief, business-like letter, offered us assistance, as, of course, using his own words, "our father's charity and benevolence had left his children beggars."

Elaine and I at once decided we would accept nothing from him, and, in a short, coldly civil reply, told him so, saying plainly we could not be beholden to one who had refused our dear father help in his greatest need. We quite approved of all papa had done, and were ready and willing to work for our living as he had.

There was our trouble—the trouble of thousands at the present day. We were ready and willing; but where should we find the work?

Like those thousands, we decided that our best chance was in London; so one day, after visiting every corner of the manse, and of the dear old garden, shadowed by the elms where the rooks built, and going through the trial of parting with papa's poor parishioners—Elaine and I, with very red eyes behind our crape veils, started for London, where we had arranged to take lodgings with an old servant who had married well, gone to the metropolis, and in her widowhood increased a small annuity by letting lodgings.

The good old soul, who never forgot we were the vicar's daughters, had the warmest welcome ready for us, therefore we did not find our new life so uncomfortable as we imagined we should at first.

There was a bright fire to cheer us, and a high tea, with some delicious cakes, just as Susan, or Mrs. Biggins now, recollected we used to have at the manse.

"Have you any other lodgers, Mrs. Biggins?" asked Elaine, as we took tea.

"Well, miss, I won't deceive you, I have," said our landlady. "I didn't mention it, because really he is that quiet, and keeps to himself, that I fancied he didn't much count. I hope you don't object?"

"Object?" I smiled. "What right should we have to do that, Mrs. Biggins? We begin to know the value of money I assure you. What is the gentleman?"

"An artist, miss. Whether much of a one I can't say, though some of the things he does do look sweet, and he's poor enough, I'm sure, to be a genius."

"Poor," said my sister, whose sympathies I saw at once were aroused.

"Poor, miss, very," proceeded Mrs. Biggins, who had been always given to loquacity, which had made papa remark that he was a brave man who married her. "He's a nice-looking young fellow, and, though his clothes is a bit worn, always looks the gentleman; but I suspect that good dinners is a rarity, I do—sometimes dinners at all."

"Oh!" cried Elaine, "that's dreadful."

"It is, miss. But he is, or tries to look so cheerful, and laughs at his poverty, and says that when his pictures sell, as they will one day—that's what he declares—he'll pay back all my kindness. He is a nice young man, that he is."

"What is his name?" asked Elaine, interested.

"Gerald Warne."

"Warne! Why, that's our name!"

"Yes, miss; it's funny isn't it,

"There is one comfort; he is no relation," said I, "for we are in the happy state of having none. Have you told him about us?"

"Well, no, miss; only so far as that I had two young ladies, gentlefolks, coming, for you see I wasn't aware just what you would care for me to say."

"We are very much obliged to you. If you please we should like you to say nothing of our past, or who we are, Mrs. Biggins, for Elaine and I have determined to forget all about our once having been 'gentlefolks.' If we are so, people will discover it without our telling them; and, knowing how difficult it is to get work, we have adopted for our motto 'No honest employment is derogatory.' So we are simply two young women who have to make our own living."

I need scarcely say that Mrs. Biggins' account of Gerald Warne had

aroused our interest, especially Elaine's. She was just nineteen, slight, graceful of figure, a blonde with pretty delicate features, a wild-rose complexion, and sunny hair that curled naturally over her head. I was four years her senior, taller and darker; some called me, for my style, handsomer, but that I don't believe, at least Elaine's was the most taking face.

We talked a great deal about our future plans that evening, and a great deal too about our fellow-lodger.

Elaine was always coming back to the subject "him." She wondered what his pictures were like; whether he really was a genius. Then she imagined his bravely working on when he had not sufficient to eat. In fact, she speedily made Gerald Warne out to be an artistic Chatterton.

"If we get on, Lil," she exclaimed, "we must ask him to tea. We can't well send him up a dish of oysters."

"No indeed, at their present price," I replied, "but you see, Elly, we have first to get on. His case may soon be our case, and in one thing be careful; knowing what pity is akin to, don't fall in love with him."

"I!" cried Elaine; disdainfully. "Let me return the warning. Hark!" as a latchkey turned in the lock, "there he is!"

Some one entered and went upstairs.

"Lil, he might almost be a ghost, for the sound he makes. It does not speak well for the soles of his boots," remarked Elaine.

The next day we had too much of our own affairs to occupy us to think of Gerald Warne. There were agencies to visit, and advertisements to peruse, a week of which heartbreaking work passed fruitlessly. During this we had seen Gerald Warne once as he passed our window. As to being a gentleman there was as little doubt as that he was handsome and intellectual-looking, also that his clothes were shabby at the seams; unfortunately there was no doubt about the latter, nor that his face was haggard, making appear large and more brilliant a pair of dark, handsome eyes.

Before the next week was over Elaine and I had both been successful. She had obtained an engagement in an art dealer's, and I found some pupils for German, French, music, and drawing.

Our spirits were wonderfully gladdened at having occupation. Indeed, we had been very fortunate, and felt gratefully happy. As to Elaine, she speedily, I found, began to revert to Gerald Warne.

"We certainly," she said, "must begin to think of those teas."

I own I commenced to feel nervous about her. She was always getting information respecting him from the landlady, and it was never cheering information.

Once Mrs. Biggins told, with tears in her eyes, of a great disappointment he had had in selling a picture.

"For the first time he looked quite broke," she said, "and owned he wanted the money badly."

"Why doesn't he teach, or draw, or paint sketches that may sell?" said I.

"He tries, miss, lots of times. He'd do anything, as 'pot-boilers,' I think he calls it; but luck's against him."

I noticed Elaine very thoughtful after that, and depressed.

"I fancy we had best move from here," I thought.

But, two evenings later, Elaine came in radiant. The cold, frosty air, or her joy, had made her colour dazzling.

"I've got some work for Gerald Warne to do," she exclaimed. "Something that, at least, will provide him with dinners."

It appeared that the art-dealer required an artist to undertake some artwork which needed both skill and taste.

"I spoke of Mr. Warne," exclaimed Elaine; "and Mr. Morrison says he may call."

So a little note was sent up, carefully worded, that it should offend no Chattertonian (false) pride, to Gerald Warne's studio the following morning. The same evening our fellow-lodger stood for the first time in our parlour—stood, those wonderfully brilliant eyes brighter with emotion, his figure all of a tremble, his tones unsteady, as he said:

"I have come to thank you; to say how grateful I am; yet can find no words appropriate to express how deeply I feel your kindness."

Then to my surprise, Elaine, quite sagely, as if years his senior, stepped forward, and taking his hand, replied:

"Then please do not try. We quite understand. Are we not fellow-toilers? If in that case we cannot help one another, who will help us? Mr. Morrison told me had engaged you, that he thought you very clever, and hoped his work would lead to better things. I was so pleased."

She looked so pretty as she spoke! I shall never forget the expression in Gerald Warne's face as he gazed at her's.

I have heard of a person's "soul going out" to another. Then I saw it. He bent down, and pressed her hand to his lips.

"Heaven bless you!" he said, earnestly, with a sob in his voice.

I knew from that moment that it was a case between them, which nothing in this world could alter.

After this Gerald Warne was very often in our parlour indeed; not only that, but sometimes his leaving the art-dealer's, by a strange coincidence would be at the same hour as Elaine's, and they would walk home together.

I was troubled at first; but the more I saw of Gerald Warne, the more I recognized he was a gentleman by birth and nature.

Besides, what right had I to endeavour to check the love growing so evidently stronger between them? Might it not prove a good thing for Elaine? Had she not seemed, indeed, as he said, to have brought him that aid which was to lead to fortune?

Mr. Morrison had been more than satisfied with his work, and already had introduced him to one or two who had purchased his pictures.

It was while our acquaintanceship was very young, that, as we three sat talking together, Gerald Warne said: