

CHAPTER IV.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

The week went by without bringing a second visit from Carry Lancaster. As to Becky, there was nothing before her but patient continuance in well-doing, and she began to ask herself whether she had any right to fret at all. Edmund Warrenne had never definitely declared himself her lover; he was free to woo another woman, if he wished to do so. Only Becky knew that he had sought to win her, and Mrs. Saunderson knew it, too. So she must mutely bear one of those nameless wrongs which many a good woman has borne in meekness; and in endurance she found an unexpected strength.

When Saturday came round again, she wisely determined to take a real, long country walk. A word to Martha, and the tea came up quite half an hour earlier than usual. Becky made haste to be off and away, and so avoid a possible interview with Carry. At five o'clock she had left the house, and was following a quiet road which led her out of the old town.

At last coming to the gate of a wide field, she paused, and silently enjoyed the sight of buttercups and clover. Purple tassels and golden heads were all whispering and nodding in the gentle breath of the west wind. A narrow path ran along the field, close to the hedge, and Becky was tempted to open the gate, and go a-trespassing.

She had not gone far, when she was startled by something which looked like a heap of clothes, lying among the long grass. Coming nearer to the heap, she discovered that it was an old woman in a swoon, her poor, white face half hidden by the flowers of the field. Becky chanced to have some smelling-salts in her pocket; she bent over the woman, raising her tenderly, and doing all that she could to revive her. Soon she succeeded in calling her back to life; the dim eyes opened, and rested wonderingly on the serious young face above her.

"Is your home near?" Becky said. "Do you think you can walk a little way?"

"Yes, dear, yes; I can walk if you'll help me," said Nurse Grantley, making a great effort to rise.

Becky supported her carefully, leading her down the field-path to the gate, and out into the road. The old woman pointed to a row of pretty little cottages and her new friend conducted her to the tiny dwelling at the end of the row. A young woman, with a child in her arms, met them at the gate.

"Oh, Mrs. Grantley, you've been taken faint again!" cried she. "Now just sit down quietly in your old chair, and I'll make you a cup of tea in a minute. Thank you, miss, for bringing her home."

"Let me come in with her," Becky said. "I can take off her bonnet, and get her quite tidy again, you know. The poor bonnet is sadly crushed, you see."

She felt drawn towards the gentle old woman, who was so trustful and grateful. Nurse Grantley had never been so daintily touched and set to rights; the small, slender fingers smoothed her hair, and put her cap on her weary head. And Becky found infinite comfort in ministering to this lonely creature. While her hands were busy with that frail body, another Hand, invisible and wonderfully tender, was touching her own bruised heart, and giving ease and peace. When we occupy ourselves with the troubles of others, God always concerns Himself with us and our affairs: and so in one way or another, the comforters are sure to be comforted.