

very gray since mamma died, though he was by no means old. At last he said: "Who has been talking before you, Elizabeth?"

"Aunt Henderson, when she was here last, was talking to mamma," I answered. So he made me tell him all I knew, his dark eyes looking through and through me all the time. Then he said, "Your mother, Elizabeth, was the noblest woman I ever knew. I have been better all my lifetime for having known and loved her. Your aunt did not understand what she was talking about; you must not think of or mind what she said. Your mother died young because the Lord loved her, and she left me with a recollection of her too tender and deep for words."

"I was afraid, papa, that the O was something wrong, when I never heard her spoken of but that one time," I said.

"God grant, my little daughter, that you may grow up worthy of such a mother," said papa, solemnly.

"But the grave is not in the churchyard, papa, where my brothers and sisters, and my other mamma, are buried," I persisted.

"No, my child, it is not, because your dear mamma died abroad."

"Abroad! Oh, papa! And did I not see her, as I think I did, before she died," I said eagerly.

"Yes, I expect you did," said papa, slowly, "though I have no distinct recollection of it. Your mother was long ill and weak, but she had one alarming attack, when we all thought she was about to leave us. It was at that time, I suppose, that she asked for you, and you were lifted up on the bed to see her, as you fancy you remember; but she rallied afterwards, and seemed better for a time."

"Why did she go abroad when she was so ill, papa?"

"In hopes that she might recover, dear. Her dearest friend, and a distant relative besides, Lady Fitzgerald, came

to see her, and persuaded me to let her accompany her ladyship abroad to try a change of air and a warmer climate. I hoped a change of climate would benefit her, and consented, to my sorrow. She did improve wonderfully for a little while, and we thought she would be spared to us; but she had a relapse, and died quite suddenly. I got there too late to see her alive. She is buried in a little village in the south of France. Her grave is far away from us, Elizabeth. Her loss was a sore trial to me; it was a triumphant going home to her. It was not because I thought little of your mother that you never heard me speak of her, but because her loss shadowed my life, and I could not bear to open the old wound. If I had known what your aunt said before you I would have told you about your dear mother while she was here. She knows well that your mother was very precious to me, and her memory must be precious to you, my little daughter. I have more than one friend at the court of the Great King."

Papa said these last words in an absent manner, and relapsing into silence, sat musing. I became quiet also, because I was comforted. When we were going to bed under Jane's escort—very unwillingly—papa called us back and kissed us tenderly.

We said our prayers and went to bed quietly. Walter was too angry at Jane, and I was too happy, to chatter as we usually did. I fell asleep and dreamed happy dreams; no shadow of the coming morrow darkened them with its woe.

### CHAPTER III.

Come, time, and teach me many years

I do not suffer in a dream;

For now so strange do these things seem

Mine eyes have leisure for their tears.

TENNYSON.

I remember that evening so distinctly, so sweetly, but the next day is all confusion in my mind. Jane said that