

of its real antiquity, and its shape was unique and picturesque, it was quite worthy of a place in the precious oak cabinet. He added that he would also forward a miniature Elizabethan cabinet, or jewel-case, which would be a pretty bit of colour for a centre-piece.

This had been long ago, in the brightest days of their friendship, and yet only last Christmas, when there was frost and snow and bitter winds, blazing log, good cheer, and warm friendship. She at the time had been enchanted at the prospect of the additions to her treasures, and for some while after that Christmas visit; but time had passed on, and no word or sign of it had ever reached her, and thinking that he had forgotten her, or for some reason did not care to part with them, she had not liked to remind him of his old promise.

But the real reason was that the little Elizabethan jewel case had been mislaid or stolen; it was nowhere to be found; and always imagining it must turn up some day, he had waited for this to send the ring with it. Four months, therefore, after his summer visit to Atherton, when he hungered for news of Gwendoline, and still the cabinet had not come to light, he determined to purchase another, and forward it with the ring. Elizabethan cabinets such as the one he had had were by no means so rare but that a little time and attention would be certain to procure another just as good as the first, and as she had not seen the other, any one would be the same to her.

After a few walks in certain narrow dingy streets in crowded neighborhoods, he hit on a cabinet of cabinets. It stood about a foot and a half high, and was covered with green silk in old embroidery; the stitches were rich and rare, and age had beautifully harmonized and softened the various greens; the little quaint old-shaped drawers were lined with a silk which once had probably been pink, but which was now of a pale salmon color. He knew that Gwendoline had an eye for color, and that she would rejoice over this new acquisition. In high spirits over his purchase, he packed up the ring, and facetiously hid it in one of the secret drawers, of which there were no less than three in this small cabinet or jewel-case.

Eagerly he fastened up the parcel, and sent it off, accompanied by a short note, apologizing for the delay which had occurred, and not giving any very satisfactory explanation of this either. At the same time he mentioned the fact of having placed the ring in one of the drawers. He wondered whether she would succeed in finding out its secret. After this, and it was gone, he watched each post anxiously for the answer, which he felt sure it would bring ere long.

The answer came, and, of course, it was a disappointment. The letter thanked him for the delightful additions to her cabinet of curiosities; the jewel-case, she mentioned, was to have the place of honor, in the centre of the oak cabinet, where its soft faded hue would harmonise all colors on each side of it; the ring was, she said, beyond compare and no thanks could be sufficient for it. It was a pleasant friendly letter, on the whole, and left nothing to complain of; indeed, he would have been more contented had it been freezingly cold, so that he would have had just cause for complaint. But it gave not the faintest clue to the state of things he most desired to know in Atherton; it touched on no memory of the past, and its chief offence was that it was not a letter of Gwendoline's own usual natural style—bursting into bits of fun, of joyous anticipations of some coming pleasure, of gossiping little confidences, and of warm-hearted interest and kindly feelings towards himself—little amusing feminine letters, which had always greatly charmed Basil Crawford.

When he had read this the cold grasp of the grey days took a firm hold of him, and he said to himself, "There was not much to remember, but she has forgotten everything;" and he turned to his work, saying it was all he had left him now.

But had Gwendoline forgotten everything? When she had written that letter her heart had rebelled against the words her hand had penned, and, in order to save herself from softening with regard to him, she kept on reminding herself of his extraordinary change of conduct to her in the summer, and of the unaccountable coldness he had, for some reason, seen fit to assume. In her pride and bitterness she scarce knew how clever and skilful were her own words and sentences; and, with a

heavy rebellious heart, she posted her letter before a night's sleep should soften and weaken her purpose; and, once gone, she was as miserable over it as Basil Crawford was to receive it.

One consolation, however, she had left to her, and that was a return to her new treasures. She touched them with tender lingering fingers, which seemed to embrace them. She had found out the secret of the hidden drawers with astonishing rapidity; and the ring found in one of them came to light with the additional pleasure of the slight mystery in which it had been hidden. She had rapturously shown it to one or two highly-favored persons, and then returned it to its own peculiar hiding-place; but for the first few days it came into her possession there was scarcely an hour that she did not unfasten that oak case—which stood in a somewhat dark corner of the drawing-room—open the Elizabethan cabinet, and pull out the secret drawer, and gloat over her wondrous ring.

The drawing-room was such a one as you only see in old-fashioned country houses. It was large and low, with three windows on one side opening on to a lawn, and a large window in another part of the room filling up a great recess, which was so deep that it appeared a room on its own account.

On the very first day when Gwendoline received her new treasures, she had been standing before the oak cabinet, poring over them for the tenth time, when the drawing-room door opened, and "Mr. Egerton" was announced. She had but time to thrust the ring into its hiding-place before she was obliged to turn and greet the visitor before the open doors of her small citadel. She had not intended to exhibit them to the Egertons, feeling always a reluctance to bring Basil Crawford's name before them, particularly before Claude, but now she could not avoid some explanation.

"Heigh ho! what a gorgeous addition to the collection," said Claude, planting himself before the open doors for a moment, to admire the quaint new centre-piece; "and where did that come from, Gwendoline?"

He then approached it more closely, to have a nearer and better view of it, and Gwendoline advanced beside him, leaving his question unanswered, and trusting he would not discover the secret drawer and its contents, for she felt an almost inexplicable desire that he should not see the ring. He admired it excessively; said he had never seen one like it before; opened and shut the little pink drawers consecutively, without having apparently the faintest suspicion that there was more than met the eye in this, as in all cabinets made in those wicked times. When the last drawer had been closed, he repeated his question.

"Ah, that is a very solemn and deep mystery," she said, in mock serious tones.

He looked somewhat surprised, but before another word could be said, the door opened, and "Mr. Cyril Egerton" was announced.

It was no uncommon thing for one brother to come in now whilst the other brother was at Birdhill; and as Cyril crossed the room he noted that their two heads were bent over some object in Gwendoline's well-known case. Both brothers had at times contributed various little offerings to this shrine; and seeing them thus, Cyril speedily came to the conclusion that some new offering of his brother's had just been added, and that both were admiring it in its new position. "Well, he might have shown it to me," he thought; "what a pass things are coming to!" All this crossed his mind whilst he walked along the drawing-room to Gwendoline's outstretched hand.

"Have you come to see the new curiosity?" was Claude's greeting.

And, accordingly, Cyril determined not to admire it much whatever its charm might be. He looked at it in a somewhat supercilious way, said nothing, and lightly pulled open and closed its little pink drawers.

Claude looked somewhat wonderingly at him. This was not Cyril's usually enthusiastic manner over anything new and artistic; and, as he watched him, an idea similar to Cyril's own crossed his mind; he said to himself, "Can he have found and purchased this thing without my knowledge, and in order to give it to Gwendoline?" This produced an uncomfortable, unpleasant feeling, and he drew back from the cabinet, and left the others in possession.

But Gwendoline only stood guarding her treas-

ure with all her eyes; but as Claude's more thoughtful ways had allowed the drawers to escape his notice, she felt that she had not much to fear from Cyril's careless touch. He, however, kept on opening and shutting them over and over again, somewhat to her astonishment, and never saying a word the while. This, again, was unlike Cyril, and she was greatly puzzled.

The fact, however, was that Cyril did not know how often he opened and closed those little drawers, nor did he see the green cabinet very clearly; his whole mind was occupied with a certain majestic pug-dog which he had seen in the nearest market-town in a shop which boasted the possession of "articles of virtue." It was as ugly a thing as could well be conceived—a pug-dog with goggle eyes, and a tongue which he apparently did not know what to do with, and a tail curling over its back. The whole dog was blue, green, and yellow, as if struck by lightning; but Cyril determined to drive to the market-town the next day and purchase it for the oak cabinet. He said to himself, "It will just do to stand above Claude's cabinet." He was soured and angry, for grey days were over them all.

(To be continued.)

CALLS FOR TENDERNESS.

We need the sick, the poor, the aged, to teach us mercy and love and kindness. Think of a society in which there is no call for tenderness! Soon we should be found killing not only the miserable, but the merely inconvenient. We should scruple at no murder by which a temporary end might be gained or a temporary whim gratified. The heart, made callous as the rock, would know no reluctance and no remorse.

But it is not enough for us to live in a world where there is suffering. We must bring ourselves into sympathetic contact with grief in order to be benefited by it. Into many households God has not sent the blessing of sickness; and its inmates need to go out to find that which is so necessary to their culture, and which Heaven has withheld from their own circle. And they need not go far. One who desires may find the poor, the weary, the needy, the diseased, in every place.

We know persons, however, who studiously avoid all scenes of suffering. They never visit the sick. If their nearest relatives require nursing, if their own children are attacked with disease, they have no large fund of sympathy and help, but spend the time in lamentations over the hardness of their lot.

We know others who seek in many ways to alleviate the griefs of mankind. We know a gentleman of wealth who encourages his children to spend a large part of the money he gives them in articles needed at the hospitals of the city in which he lives. If young men call on them at the time appointed to visit the sick, they are asked to go also; and if they take no interest in the errand of mercy, they are set down as unworthy of special attention. When those girls travel, they take with them, as companions, some of their poor acquaintances to whom the advantages of travel are denied. Several have been permitted in this way to go through Europe; and several, introduced to the best society, have formed matrimonial alliances there which they never could have made but for the considerate kindness of their wealthy friends, who were above the meanness of choosing associates exclusively from the rich. We know a church near Boston among whose members a club is formed to visit the hospitals of the city, and sing for the entertainment of the inmates, who cannot hear music at concerts or at church. We know many who contribute to help the children of the poor escape from the slums of the city in the hot weather. These are the persons who grow most in manhood and womanhood. Their hearts are made large and tender by their ministrations.

In which class shall we place ourselves? Among those who cannot look on suffering? Or among those who bear to it their help? We are persuaded that people in general go through the world without perceiving half the opportunities for the culture of tenderness which God has given them.