

trouble herself to wonder why they should be so anxious to leave her behind. But she did wonder why Isabel should come back to kiss her again, and why there were tears in her eyes, though her lips wore a very tender, tremulous smile. But before an hour was over she had forgotten her wonder, and wandered away through the pleasant garden down to the brawling river, feeling a strange thrilling of her pulses, a new gladness flowing through her being, as if some new and happy life had begun. So it had, indeed, for she knew that the future held some brightness, as of the past, and that her life was not ended yet. She had never thought very much about it, nor allowed herself to dwell very long upon the fact that death had swept away the barriers; only in her heart, deep down, hidden almost from herself, was a little well of sweetness, born of the thought that in time she would be reunited to her husband. It might be long or it might be short, only it would come; she did not care when; the conscious certainty was enough. She was thinking of him that day, recalling some very precious memories, filling her heart with recollections of the love and care with which, as a wife, she had been so richly blessed. Little did she dream how very near to her he was, that every moment was bringing him nearer to her side; nor did it occur to her that the excursion which excluded her was a little kindly stratagem to ensure a quiet, undisturbed reunion. She wandered along the river banks, dropping into the stream some red and russet leaves she had carelessly plucked in passing, and watched them dance upon the tiny wavelets out of sight. She was so glad of heart, she could have sung aloud for joy. She raised her happy face to the softened autumn sky, and thanked God for His goodness to her. She did not know why, but she felt overwhelmed by a sense of past and present mercy, vouchsafed from Heaven, and her heart seemed a perpetual well of praise. She came to a little patch of woodland by-and-by, and, turning aside, she entered the bosky glade,