

"O, I don't mind pain," he said, seriously; "one can't help feeling it; but I don't mind it, if I only knew what I should do when I get well again."

"Is there no hope of your being able to return to your old business?"

"None; the doctor says, none."

"But you can make shoes and baskets," said his wife hopefully.

"Yes; but that will be but a poor living for you, dear," he said.

"Not worse for me than for you, love. Do you think that I shall care, as long as we keep an honest face to the world, and are not ashamed."

He pressed her hand. For some time we talked about his future plans; and I think there is scarce any so stern as to think we desecrated the day in doing so. Then, as it was getting late, I bade them good night; and promising soon to return again, left them as I found them—hand in hand, and looking fondly in each other's eyes.

David slowly but surely recovered from the grievous accident, but his limb was too much shattered for him again to resume his business; and so, disposing of his wagon and horse, he cheerfully set himself to work at his new employment—that of making and mending shoes. He had formerly been intended for a shoemaker, but finding that he could earn more in his father's way, and having hereditary habits of activity which suited ill with sedentary employment, he had given it up—not, however, without having obtained a competent knowledge of the business. It was quite wonderful to see how soon and how easily he settled to his new work, without seeming to hesitate or repine for a moment—the very picture of patience and content. His wife, also, true to her promise reconciled herself to the change without any apparent effort, but even assisted him as far as she was able. For two years more, the last I spent at home, I was a constant witness of their cheerful struggles and well-earned success in their new walk of life, and then, called to a home of my own, I left forever the scene of my childhood.

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### CHAPTER III.—THE APPROACH OF NIGHT.

My husband was a lieutenant in the army; and shortly after our marriage, his regiment being ordered to India, we left England. It was some time before I again heard of my humble friends, and then came tidings of a new trial that had befallen them. It was in a letter from my mother, and ran thus: "You will be sorry to hear that another and more serious affliction has befallen your old friend David. For some time past his sight has been slowly failing. Your father has interested himself to gain for him the best advice, which has unfortunately proved quite powerless to arrest the distressing malady; he is now gradually becoming blind. It is a beautiful sight to see how admirably he bears the daily sense of increasing darkness that he knows must soon end in a hopeless night. As soon as he became aware of the dread certainty, he set himself to make baskets, working with his eyes closed, 'for practice,' as he said, with a smile. It makes me sad to think how we used to joke about those eyes that are soon to be shut for ever. His appearance has so much altered through affliction that you would scarcely know him; his hair is almost white and his honest features look quite handsome now." Grieved indeed was I to hear this sad news, and my eyes filled with tears as I pictured him sitting singing over his work, with his wife by his side and his children about his knees—whitehaired, with his eyes closed, as he so touchingly said "for practice." I