

GET INTO THE SUNSHINE.

"**E**ff! but, John, you have much to be thankful for."

"I don't see that," returned John Milroy, doggedly. "I should like to know what I have got to be thankful for. Seems to me I have a great deal to complain of."

"Nay, nay, man, never say that. Look on the bright side. Begin to count your mercies, and you'll find that they are more than can be remembered. When you're as old as I am, maybe you'll see it as plain as I do that there's more of good than of evil in the strangely-twisted web of human life. I am drawing very near to the grave now, and I can truly say, as I look back over the past, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

So spoke David Macintosh, a gentle, venerable old man, much beloved in the Highland parish in which he lived. A good friend was he to all who were in sorrow, for he had the tender, sympathetic nature of a true son of consolation.

But his words had now no soothing effect upon his neighbour, John Milroy, a sturdy, hard-working farmer, who had been laid aside from his work for many weeks by a sharp attack of rheumatic fever, and was but just beginning to get about again. His brow darkened as he bent forward in his chair with his eyes bent upon the glowing hearth. The kettle on the hob was singing cheerily; but there was nothing cheerful in John Milroy's appearance as he replied impatiently, "It's all very well for you to talk so, Macintosh. You never had a daughter who served you as mine has served me. To think of all that I did for her. No girl ever had a fonder father, though I say it myself. I denied her nothing. I never crossed her wishes except when I forbade her to keep company with a worthless fellow, who will never be worth his salt. And then for the sake of a fellow like that she leaves me to shift for myself, and goes off with him to the other side of the world. Ah! I did feel it hard, when I lay on that bed unable to turn myself for pain, that I had not a child to do anything for me."

"You might well feel it so," returned the older man. "Yes, you must have missed your daughter sorely when you were ill."

"Little she cares whether I miss her or not," said the injured father, morosely. "Her poor mother was a woman of another kind; but there's no such thing as gratitude now-a-days, I suppose. But she will rue her folly. You mark my words—my daughter will live to rue her folly. She thinks I shall be ready to forgive and forget at a word, but she will find herself mistaken."

There was a pause of some minutes ere David Macintosh spoke; but presently he ventured to say, "No doubt there's a deal of ingratitude in the world; but have you ever thought, Milroy, when pondering ingratitude, what a heavy case in respect to it our Father in heaven might make out against most of us? Look at yourself now. You were talking as if you had nothing to be thankful for; but think of the years

of health and strength God granted you ere this sickness came; think how He has blessed your toil; think of the mercies of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter."

"Ah, but I have known some bad seasons," said Milroy, grimly.

"True, but you have come out of them better than most men. How often have you said to me in harvest, 'After all, the corn is better than I thought it would be.' And then those strong lads of yours who have kept things so straight on the farm whilst you have been laid aside; surely any father might be proud and thankful to call them his sons. But when I remarked to one of them the other day how well his field of young turnips was looking, he said, rather dolefully, 'Yes, but father is sure to find some fault. He grumbles at everything; it's a way that he has.'"

"Did he say that?" exclaimed John Milroy, his eye kindling with anger.

"Ay, but don't be angry with your boy because I have dared to repeat his words. You will allow an old friend like me to speak a faithful word to you. I don't think you can know what a hold the habit of grumbling has taken upon you, nor how it darkens the home for your sons. There is nothing more fretting to a young spirit than perpetual grumbling and fault-finding. I wish you would try my plan instead, and begin counting your mercies. It pays to do so, for a thankful spirit is its own reward."

John Milroy looked as if he were inclined to resent the freedom with which his old friend spoke to him. An angry reply rose to his lips, but a feeling of reverence for the good old man, so near the end of his earthly pilgrimage, restrained him from uttering it. Then he remembered a verse he had read that morning in the book of Proverbs, which told him that "faithful are the wounds of a friend."

"I daresay you are right," he said, rather glumly, at last; "but I am not one of those who can be thankful for everything or nothing."

"For everything, not for nothing," corrected the other. "Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God.' Have you ever noticed how in almost all his epistles St. Paul calls upon his readers to give thanks?"

"I can't say that I have, though I have been reading the Bible rather more than usual since I have been laid aside," said Milroy.

"Why, that's another mercy," exclaimed old Macintosh. "Sickness is a real mercy when it leads us to study God's Word, and meditate upon it."

"Why, you'll make out presently that everything is a mercy," said John, with a smile.

"And so everything is," said the old man, brightly. "You'll learn to be thankful even for your daughter's undutiful behaviour if it teaches you how you have failed in your duty to your Heavenly Father. And when you find how much He has forgiven you, you will not find it hard to forgive her," he added, significantly. With that David Macintosh rose to take his departure.

"You must get out into the sunshine as soon as you can," were his last words. "What a mercy that you