

morbid depression they seemed to feel, I cannot say. I have some times wondered if it is not hard to place in the hands of those who have no prospect of enjoying them, descriptions of all the beauties of nature and art to awaken longings that cannot be satisfied, and excite tastes that will never be gratified. I think it is very hard, unless we remind them at the same time that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared of beauty and of bliss in Heaven for those who love Him.

Yes, the thought of Heaven! With it the laborer in the dark mine, or the dweller in the foulest alley, may read, without envy or despondency, of the most enchanting scenes on earth. Without it, how can he help feeling what a speaker expressed a short time ago at a meeting of Communists somewhere abroad, "Gentlemen" he said addressing the free-thinkers around him, "you have done away with hell, and we thank you for it; but you have also taken away from us heaven, and we mean to scramble for the good things of earth, as there is nothing to look forward to beyond it."

The poor girls I was speaking of were not, however, debarred from some of the pleasures which reading helps us to enjoy. The charms of very lovely scenery were within their reach. From their cottage door they looked on woods and fields, and distant glimpses of the blue sea. Wild flowers decked the pathways they trod—in the spring, a shower of white and pink blossoms, in summer, no end of roses, in the autumn, the gold and purple of gorse and heather, in the winter, an abundance of coral berries and always luxuriant evergreens decked the cottage gardens, and adorned the nooks and corners of their native village. They may have had many happy hours which no one knew of but themselves, and now they lie side by side in the churchyard!

I had planned to improve my acquaintance with my poor friend's children; to direct their reading into a channel which would counteract morbid tendencies; to lead them to appreciate more than they appeared to do their mother's unwearied devotion to them; but before I returned to the place which I was then leaving for some time, God had removed them from this world. Within a few days of each other both died of a fever. They had received the last Sacraments, and peacefully breathed their last. I can never forget my first visit to the cottage after my return. The look of that mother's face—it was strange that what had

been so sad before could be yet sadder. She did not speak at first but led me to the door of their room, and threw it open. Nothing in it had been altered. The books were in the same place, the unfinished fancy work lying on the sofa, dead flowers in the jar.

"I think I see them," she said, "when I looks at their bits of things. They was not happy here, poor lambs. I hope they be in heaven now; but I misses them day and night. There seems, you see, nothing to live for now."

The room remained in the same state until some time afterwards, when the house, being deemed unsafe, had to be pulled down, and the tenants moved to another cottage. During my brief sojourn in the neighborhood I often saw the broken-hearted mother.

After another absence of some months, I visited her again, and at once noticed a change in her countenance. Not that she looked happy, or even less wistful and crushed and careworn than usual, but still there was that in her manner which gave the idea that she had once more something to live for, and this proved to be the case. After I had been with her a few minutes she pulled a letter out of her pocket—a letter from India. It was from her eldest daughter, the soldier's wife. She said there was news in it. After being married eight years without having children, this daughter was now about to be confined, and both her husband and herself, she said, were overjoyed at the thought of it. "To think of her having a child, and for me to be a grandmother!" The poor woman repeated these words with something almost like a smile. It seemed like a gleam of light piercing for the first time through the darkness of her grief. Her whole heart fastened with intense feeling on the hope of seeing one day this expected child. And in due time another letter came, which announced the birth of a little girl, "the most lovely babe," the father wrote, "that ever eyes had beheld." From that day I had only to speak of the Indian baby, as we called it, and a real smile lightened the gloom of the sad face, as a gleam of sunshine brightens a rugged landscape. Each letter—and for two years they came at no very distant intervals—told wonders of the little child born far away on the banks of the Ganges; of its first taking notice, its laughing and crowing, its first teeth, its first steps, its first words. Never did a baby appear to be more worshipped by its parents. One day I was greeted with the tidings that there was