

of—what was to her the most intolerable anguish she had ever known, and it was with a feeling of unutterable relief that she rose at the summons of the servant, who came to announce that the tea was waiting in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER III.

Maud awoke on the following morning with that sensation of vague depression which people frequently feel when they have fallen asleep, stunned by some heavy blow. The sun was shining brightly into her room, the birds were singing merrily without, and the autumnal breeze was whispering softly amongst the trees, so she lay still for some moments, vainly trying to recollect what had happened, and to account for the weight upon her mind. When, at length, the full extent of her loss flashed upon her, she turned upon her pillow with a dreary longing that it was evening, so that she might sleep again and forget her misery. But wishing was no use, and the day stretched before her with its round of painful duties to perform, and these must be done; and besides, there was no one now but herself on whom her father could depend for assistance. So she rose and began to dress slowly, saying over and over again to herself,

“Be the day weary, or be the day long,
At last it ringeth to evensong.”

“I wish it would ring an everlasting evensong for me! oh, mother, mother, why did you leave me all alone?” Maud felt crushed, forsaken, as if life had nothing left for her now that her mother was gone. So it is always with the young. Their spirits rise and fall with every slight change of mental temperature, but let any severe trial come, any deep sorrow, and for the time their whole lifehood seems to be frozen up, their whole energies annihilated. Fortunately it is but for a while, for the endurance of such poignant grief, did it last, would inevitably goad the sufferer to madness, or kill him with despair. Later in life, whether from familiarity with pain, mental and physical, or from the absorbing interests of the minor details of existence, the feelings become blunted, and sorrow no longer takes possession of us with a grasp so irresistible.

When Maud entered the breakfast room, she found her father's place vacant. He had evidently breakfasted without her, so ringing the bell, she inquired of the man who answered it, if Mr. Brereton were out.

“No, ma'am, but Master breakfasted a good hour ago, and now he is in the library with Mr. Wellby,” was the reply. “He said that Sophy

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