

almost to hopelessness. She did not speak, but laid her motherly hand above the girl's slender pale fingers, and Sheila caught it, and laid her cheek against it. So they sat in silence for a time.

'Aunt Ailsa,' came at length very low from Sheila's lips, 'do you think it makes God very angry, if sometimes, when we are very wretched, we think we would not mind very much though death came to end it all?'

'My Sheila, these are not fitting words from your lips,' Aunt Ailsa replied quite gravely, though her lips trembled. 'God has blessed you, my darling, above many.'

'Oh, I know He has, and I am not ungrateful,' was the girl's passionate answer. 'But sometimes, auntie, I think it would be so easy to be poor, and even not in good health, if other things were different. Is it wrong to think that I have too much care? I can never remember a time when something did not weigh upon my heart. I have never been quite happy, I think, since mamma and I lived down by the river. It is so hard to grow up.'

'I know what weighs upon your heart, my darling. I understand it all,' said Aunt Ailsa softly.

'Not quite, auntie,' returned Sheila quickly. 'You know some things, but not all. It was very hard to bear when they went away,' she added simply, and without affectation. 'But there is something else. It happened nearly three weeks ago, and I have been trying to think what would be the right thing to do, Aunt Ailsa. I have found papa's will.'

'Bless me! Sheila, are you always harping on that old fancy yet?'

'No. I have found it, and here it is, Aunt Ailsa. See, I have brought it to you to read, for I have nobody in the world now, but only you.'

She drew the folded scrap of paper from the bosom of her dress, and gave it into her aunt's hand. Lady Ailsa put on her eyeglass, and scanned the few words which were of such serious import to the girl at her knee.

'I never heard of such a thing!' she cried indignantly. 'It was wrong and cruel of Macdonald to do this, Sheila. I cannot