

tinged with vivid rose, and eyes shining with suppressed excitement, she looked brilliant, but not beautiful.

"Yes, that's quite a charming costume," Becky said.

"What a demure little thing you are!" cried Carry, laughing. "I wish you enjoyed yourself as much as I do. You sit here dreaming your life away. No, don't ring for another cup; I merely dropped in to peep at you."

"I do not dream until the day's work is over," answered Becky rather stiffly. "And I don't envy your enjoyments."

"Don't you? Well, as you are not envious, I'll show you something. Look at this."

She held up a hand delicately gloved in lilac kid, and displayed the well-remembered bracelet on her wrist.

"It tells its own story," she went on lightly. "Life is full of surprises, dear. Of late I have learnt that someone has fallen in love with me. And as I'm a woman with a warm heart, I can't help being glad."

Before Becky could speak, with a parting wave of the hand and a dazzling smile Carry was gone—gone, leaving a faint perfume of heliotrope behind, and a girl sitting mute and motionless as an image carved in stone.

She had known sorrow in the past, but this was a grief of a new kind. It was a sudden revelation of the falseness of one in whom she had believed, a blow which stunned her heart, and seemed to strike all the life out of her. How long she sat there in silence she did not know; but at last, with a great effort, she rose from her seat, rang the bell for Martha to remove the teatray, and made haste to get ready for a solitary walk.

The fresh air did her good, and cleared her brain; but in the time that came after, she remembered that strange ramble as part of an unhappy dream. Working-people passed her, rejoicing in Saturday's freedom; all the lovers in Oakenbury seemed to have turned out on purpose to parade their bliss. They hung upon each other's arms, and were as sweet and silly as it is possible for engaged couples to be. Poor Becky, in her miserable loneliness, felt as if their simple joy was almost an insult. She was single while all the rest were plural; every lassie had her laddie, while she was left to walk uncomfited by any mate.

And then as the fresh scent of the fields stole over her, and the clear tints of the evening sky began to charm her weary eyes, she thought of better things. "Rise above it all!" said that inner voice which speaks to Christian souls. "You may have a few more tedious miles to tread, but when you gain the end of the journey, you will think very little of the troubles of the way. You will pass from time, with its fleeting emotions, into an eternity where only the incorruptible will remain. For here you have no continuing habitation, but you seek one to come."

She was still a sad girl when she went back to her rooms, but the worst was over. Martha, who always observed her quietly, saw that she looked pale and tired, and felt a great longing to comfort her.

"You've had a fagging day, miss," she said. "I'd go to bed early if I were you. You didn't drink your tea, and you never had a morsel of my cake. It's a mistake for a lady to come rustling and bustling in, when another lady is sitting down in peace."

"Yes, Martha," Becky answered, trying to smile. "But we have to hear these worries, you see."