

marriage, and we were to take the sacrament together. He had agreed with so much seeming pleasure that we should do so, that I hailed it as a happy omen—and on that memorable Sabbath morning entered a bower whose rose and jessamine had been twined by his hand—which made them doubly dear to me. It was a bright and balmy day—the sprays were bending beneath the dew drops, and the air was heavy with perfume; every thing was bushed and silent—even the song of the bird was tempered in its sweetness; and I prayed—oh! how fervently prayed, that I might—that we might together find ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’

I had escaped from the tumult of company to commune with my own heart, and He, to whom all hearts are open, knows, that I prayed more for him than for myself. Suddenly, the church bell sounded in my ear, and I rose to attend its blessed summons. I was pushing back the silver stars of a clustering jessamine that curtained the arbour’s entrance when I saw the object of my prayer coming towards me—perhaps I would not have drawn back had he been alone, but an intimate friend, who was to have been his bride’s-man, was with him, and I shrank beneath the shade. As they approached, they laughed and talked together, and so loudly that I heard what one of them would have given worlds I never had heard.

‘The sacrament will take up so much time, that I cannot meet you as I intended.’ This sentence attracted my attention—though when indeed did he speak that I was not attentive? Oh, how I shuddered at what followed!

‘Then, why do you go? Why submit to what you despise? I would not do it for any woman upon earth?’

‘I would do more than that for Rachel; but when once away from this, she will get rid of all her early prejudices, and become one of the world; her mind is comprehensive, and her love for me will tend to teach her the superiority of rational over her formal religion.’

‘To have a preaching wife—to be obliged to go to church, sing psalms on Sundays, and take the sacrament once a month—a pretty prospect of domestic felicity?’

‘Psha—you do not suppose that my present life is a type of what is to come?’ No, no—

I do not intend to be canonized under the denomination of Saint Alfred, but it pleases her, and believe me she is not half as bad as she was. I remember when she would not read a newspaper on Sunday.’

‘Is it possible?’

‘Fact—upon my honor. Now she is getting better and better. I must tolerate the mummery till we are married; and then—’

‘Kate, Kate, I heard no more. A torrent of bitterness overwhelmed me. The blessed sacrament to be termed ‘mummery’—the man for whom I lived and prayed to exult that my religion was declining—to plan its destruction. I do not ask you to pity me now, because my transgressions have been pardoned—my race run—my sorrows ceased their troubling—my spirit found its rest,—but then, or rather when restored to perfect consciousness, you would have pitied me.’

‘For weeks I could not leave my bed; the delirium of brain fever for a time spared me worse agonies, but the Temptation was with me still. I knew that Alfred’s attentions had been unremitted—that he had watched over me—they said he had prayed for me. Oh, to whom was he to pray? his people were not my people, his God not my God. And yet I loved him—I loved him in my heart of hearts—prayed for him; Kate, I pray for him still—at morn—at midnight—by the way side—and in secret; his name is on my lips—in my heart. My mother, though she knew by bitter experience that two can never be as one, except in the Lord, she almost wished me to perform my contract; she feared that, though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak—she talked of the believing wife saving the unbelieving husband. It might be so; and had I married, believing that he believed, I would have borne my cross; but the film had been miraculously removed from mine eyes: he was an acknowledged infidel, regarding the holy ordinances of religion as mummeries. Could I look up to select such a one as my guide through life? My father spurned me from him—talked of the lands which I had lost—the station I had cast away. My bride’s maids mourned that their splendid dresses could not be worn; and you, Kate, a little fairy of five years old, wept bitterly the loss of cake. But oh, when he, the loved one, promised to be all I desired; said that I could