

MILDRED ROSIER.*

A TALE OF THE RUINED CITY.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

CHAPTER II.

Beats there a heart, which hath not felt its core
Ache with a wild delight, when first the roar
Of ocean's spirit met the startled ear?
Beats there a heart so torpid and so drear,
That hath not felt the lightning of its blood
Flash vivid joy, when first the rolling flood
Met the charmed eye in all its ruthless strife,
At once the wonder and the type of life?

BIRD'S DEWICH.

So felt yet young Mildred Rosier, when, after a long day's journey through cross-roads and over desolate sheep walks, the broad and beautiful ocean for the first time burst upon her admiring view. She had read of the sea, had seen it in dreams, had loved it for its very name's sake; but never till this moment had she seen it in its majesty. "The sea! the glorious sea!" rose to her lips; but the exclamation was repressed when she saw the tears slowly trickling down her mother's pale cheeks. Within its depths her father had found a grave, and her brother, her dear Sydney, was a voyager upon its mighty expanse of heaving waters. Yet, spite of sad tales connected with the family history, Mildred loved the sea, and rejoiced that she had escaped from the populous solitude of London to become a resident near it.

As the postchaise left Westleton heath, and turned into the deep lane which led to the Brook Farm, Mrs. Rosier cast a desponding look around her, and turning to Abigail Atkins, an old servant who had nursed Mildred and her brother, and had become one of the family, she said with a sigh:

"Abigail, did you ever see such a lonely, desolate place? how shall we be able to pass the winter here?"

"It's better than London," muttered the old woman, who, born and brought up in the country, had longed to end her days amid its quiet rural scenes. "I have felt all day as if I were ten years younger; the thick, black, smoky air of London, was withering me up entirely. Depend upon it, madam, we shall be quite happy here."

"And so we shall, Abigail," said the smiling Mildred; "I could love you for saying so; we shall enjoy ourselves in this quiet retired place. See, dear mamma, what a beautiful view we have from the brow of this hill. The keen bracing sea-air makes me feel in such high spirits, and so hungry."

"It's very cold," returned Mrs. Rosier, drawing her cloak round her. "Put up the glass, Mildred, you will have plenty of time to look about you tomorrow; I cannot bear this raw air."

"Is that the house?" cried Mildred, as the chaise, after ascending the brow of a steep cliff, which commanded a fine view of the sea, stopped in front of an old fashioned farm-house with high gables and narrow windows, whose scanty quantum of dingy panes admitted a dull light into the low apartments, whose brick-paved floors, oak wainscots, and heavy beams, gave a melancholy air of discomfort to the place. A cheerful fire was burning in the huge old fashioned grate in the parlour, and no less a personage than Florence Barnham and her daughter, came forward to welcome the strangers. The kind-hearted hostess of the Anchor expected to find, in the sister-in-law of Peter Rosier, a woman in her own rank; how greatly was she surprised and taken aback when she beheld a *real* lady—a proud, noble looking woman, who received her attentions with a gentle dignity of deportment, which never for a moment forgot the respect which she considered her due, when addressed by an inferior.

"Mother, these are no neighbours for us," whispered Lucy, as she assisted Mrs. Barnham in preparing a cup of tea for the strangers. "She is a proud woman, that Mrs. Rosier. If she had mints of money she could not hold up her head higher. What do you think of her?"

"Little enough," said the widow; "such airs don't become her station. What was her husband? Old Peter Rosier's brother! I consider myself quite as good as her. The girl, however, is a sweet looking creature—a perfect beauty."

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