

whom she had learned to call "mother,"—and in whose presence she always wore a cheerful look.

To say that Mrs. Radcliffe was hard to please, even to unreasonableness, is not to over-color the facts, and yet it was because she did not wish to be so that she was more decidedly so. Had she complained or scolded, or found fault, it would not have been so bad; but to be perpetually lamenting that she was so much trouble and such a terrible burden, and so great an expense, and so in the way, and the cause of Vivian's sacrifice of her life, and a thousand other things, dinned continually, and finished with a sigh, a tear, or an outright burst of weeping, kept up a continual shower of sadness on the household. Then the manner of making her requests was so trying and unfortunate,

"Vivian, my love, I would like a few drops for this cough of mine; but, dear me, I am such a trouble to you, patient angel, and such an expense on your scanty purse, I feel guilty every time I am compelled to speak of these things. I feel I am standing in the way of your happiness. You are sacrificing your dear life, and I believe I am the most cruel woman in the world to allow it at all, and then, dear me, but for that "tacit understanding," you might have done so well. But then, of course, it would have broken my poor dear Roland's heart, for I know he loves you with an undying affection. Oh! it does so lacerate my heart to think of him toiling and suffering in that terrible place so far from us and home. Excuse my weakness, dear Vivian, you cannot yet fully understand the depth of a mother's love for a noble boy like Roland. It is not every mother who has a son like my dear boy. My heart swells with boundless love when I think of him. Oh what a hard fate!"

A kind cheerful word, a kiss, a patting of the cheek, a stroking of the hair, brought a temporary calm, to be followed by another request for a few fresh drops of ammonia to be added to her smelling bottle, followed by another discourse of a similar kind. Day after day, month after month, year after year, life went on in this way at the cottage. At length Vivian was in debt, and a still further curtailment was necessary, and there was only one way in which this could be done. The small girl was discharged, and Vivian took the entire responsibility of the work of the cottage.

Mrs. Radcliffe could not see that her complaining, sorrowing spirit was the most trying kind of fault-finding. She could not see that she was wearing Vivian's life out, and that she was breaking the most patient and loving heart that ever beat in human breast. She could not understand her own cruelty to the one who was making every sacrifice possible in her life.

The last few months things had gone worse. The remittances from Roland had not been as large or as frequent as previously, and he had explained it on the ground of his being out of work. Sometimes the larder was so empty that Vivian had gone supperless to bed, and often pinched herself in food to have to give to the querulous woman who, if Vivian did not love for her own sake, she at least loved tenderly for the sake of her son.

When Vivian was alone she often wept, but Mrs. Radcliffe was never allowed to see her reddened eyes. She bore her sorrows, apparently, without flinching, while the steel was passing through and through her soul.

It was well on into December. Letters had come regularly from Roland, still filled with words of hope; but no remittance. Vivian wept silently over the last one, and then put on her bonnet and went to the office of Fairchilds and Brooks, and asked for a loan on her cottage. They promised to search the title, and if satisfactory, would advance the money at once. One,

two, three days passed, and the fourth was just closing. It was Christmas Eve, and Mrs. Radcliffe and Vivian were sitting in the gloaming. Vivian was thinking of the empty larder and the slowness of Fairchilds and Brooks in closing the loan, and wondering what she would do on the morrow for food. A step was heard outside, the bell rang. Vivian answered it. The postman,—a letter from Fairchilds and Brooks. They found that before a legal mortgage could be given, all the children of the late Mr. Danforth must sign away their right to the property. As this could not be done until they were of age, the firm must decline to grant the loan.

Vivian had moved to the window to read the letter by the fading light, and having finished, it had fallen into her lap as she turned her face towards the frosty pane to hide the silently falling tears. Mrs. Radcliffe moved to the window, and taking a seat, looked out on the still night.

"Dear, oh dear, how sad I feel to-night, my dear Vivian. How it reminds me of twelve years ago, as I sat in the rectory window at Calcroft, and waited for my dear Roland to return to me. My heart was full of sorrow, and I have not known a happy day since. Oh, how miserable these thoughts make me feel, with my poor boy in that far-off land, amongst those heathenish people."

We left Roland undecided as to what he should do. Whether to make a strike for a fortune or labor on in drudgery and poverty. The success of some others inspired him, and he determined to try his chances. With prospector's tools and provisions he started for the forest. Day after day he searched for the precious metal, picking here, digging there, and hammering yonder. At night he slept, wrapped in his blanket and at dawn began his weary search. Six weeks had passed, and although almost disheartened, he still kept on. One day he found traces of what seemed to be a rich lead. For two days he worked, developing and staking his claim. Loaded with specimens, he made his way back, and, reaching the nearest government office, registered it. Then he exhibited his specimens of ore, and had some of them analyzed. Experts gathered to see the "rich stuff," and soon it was the talk of the whole section. Offers began to come in, and a wealthy company sent out experts to examine it. Upon their return an offer of fifty thousand dollars was made, and Roland refused it. Then another company sent out experts. The first company, fearing they would lose the opportunity of buying, doubled their offer, which was still refused. They then asked Roland to make an offer, and he said, "Double your offer and it is yours."

After some hesitation they did this, and Roland at once started for home. At first he thought to cable his intentions, but could not resist the temptation to take them by surprise.

On board the steamship on which Roland took passage, was Lord Bellington. Roland made his acquaintance, and enquired what had been done with Mr. Danforth's property, and received for a reply that there had been some difficulty, as the transfer was not complete at the time of Mr. Danforth's death, and it had remained without occupation, and he presumed must so continue until the youngest of Mr. Danforth's children became of age. Roland asked if the estate of Bellington would sell if the purchaser took the risk of the title. His Lordship replied that he presumed they would gladly do so. When the ship called at Queenstown, a telegram was sent to the solicitors at London, making an offer, and if the offer were accepted, they were asked to meet the ship at Liverpool with the papers.

When Roland arrived at Liverpool, he was met by a member of the firm, with the transfers ready. The money was paid, and