

it; only last Sunday he preached on the duty of loving."

"If your love only comes from a sense of duty I want none of it; you must give me something better than duty-love,—that is too cold for me."

"Father!" cried Stella earnestly, "you know I love you better than anything else; if you say I must not go to church, I——"

"You wouldn't have Miss Stella grow up like a heathen, sir," interposed Ruth in a quiet, grave tone.

Mr. Atherfield resumed his angry march up and down the room, and at length, by a tremendous effort, he commanded his temper, and answered calmly,—

"You're a bold girl, Ruth, to stand to your guns in this way; 'tis not every one has the courage to face me, but you're right, girl, have your own way, take her to church. I don't believe she'll forsake her old father for anybody else. And see for some one to teach her. I've come home flush of money now. You shall have plenty to-morrow; you can be trusted; you shall keep it, so as to have something to fall back upon when I am hard up."

As soon as Abraham was at liberty to drive them into Skirley, Ruth and Stella went down to the little port to make inquiries for a governess, from whom Stella could receive lessons; but they were unable to find one who could take her. Then Ruth thought of Miss Cousins, a kind old lady, the daughter of a former Vicar of Skirley, and a close friend of Mrs. Merton's. By her they were advised to apply at a school which had recently been established, and where, according to Miss Cousins, all sorts of outlandish subjects were taught.

"We never wanted to know how many bones we had in our bodies when I was young," said the old lady, "and I have got along very well without any such knowledge; but I daresay it is needed now, all the women seem to be turning into blue-stockings."

It was very evident to Ruth that Mrs. Wright, on whom they next called, was surprised that a servant should have been sent to make arrangements with her. She inquired for Mrs. Atherfield, and on hearing that she was absent from home, said she would write to Mr. Atherfield.

"Father doesn't like to be worried about these things," interposed Stella; "Ruth looks after me. He said Ruth was to arrange; whatever Ruth thinks is right he will agree to."

But Mrs. Wright waved her on one side, saying she preferred to deal with principals; she would write to Mr. Atherfield when she had considered the matter.

"Ruth," said Stella, "shall I ever grow to be like that? If Mrs. Wright is a lady, I don't want to be one. Now that dear old Miss Cousins is nice, even if she doesn't know the number of bones in her body."

Both the girls waited impatiently for the promised letter from Mrs. Wright. Mr. Atherfield gave it to Ruth, telling her to settle the matter as she thought best; but an unexpected opposition was thrown in the way by Abraham, who declared that he could neither promise to drive into Skirley on set days, nor could he spare the hours which must be given by Stella to her lessons.

"I'd have to waste two whole days a week, and I can't do it!" he declared; "the master would never wish it."

Finding that Mr. Atherfield agreed with Abraham in the matter, Ruth thought of walking down to Brunt Dale to make inquiries there, and, hearing of her destination, Mr. Atherfield sent a message by her to the wheelwright. "Tell Harker I have written to Kempstone to-day and sent him his money; so he may make himself easy, he will get his bond back in a day or two."

"There now, wife; what did I tell 'ee?" exclaimed John Harker when he received the message. "Didn't I say as Mr. Atherfield was a gentle-