

So they went. They did not leave the village; it was a pretty quiet place, and was full of old recollections to them—more bitter than sweet, perhaps, most of them—but still such as it would have been pain to separate themselves from entirely, as, indeed, it is always sad to part from things and places which years, either of joy or sorrow, have made us used to. So they did not leave it, but chose a little cottage, a mile or so from their former house—a pleasant little cottage in a dell, looking to the south, with honey-suckle and ivy twining together over it, up to the thatched roof. A cheerful little nook it was, not over-bright or gay, but shaded with large trees all round it, through whose green branches the sunlight came, softened and mellowed, into the quiet rooms. An old garden, too, there was, closed in all round with elm trees—a peaceful quiet place, where one would love to wander, or to lie for hours upon the grass, looking through the green leaves upward to the calm blue sky.

To Gabrielle, wearied with her sorrow, this place was like an oasis in the desert. It was so new a thing to her to find rest anywhere: to find one little spot where she could lay her down, feeling no care for the morrow. Like one exhausted with long watching, she seemed now for a time to fall asleep.

The summer faded into autumn; the autumn into winter. A long, cold winter it was, the snow lying for weeks together on the frozen ground: the bitter, withering, east wind moaning day and night, through the great branches of the bare old elms, swaying them to and fro, and strewing the snowy earth with broken boughs; a cold and bitter winter, withering not only trees and shrubs, but sapping out the life from human hearts.

He was a little delicate boy, that child of Gabrielle's. To look at him, it seemed a wonder how he ever could have lived through all their poverty and daily struggles to get bread; how that little feeble body had not sunk into its grave long ago. In the bright summer's days a ray of sunlight had seemed to pierce to the little frozen heart, and warming the chilled blood once more, had sent it flowing through his veins, tinging the pale cheek with rose; but the rose faded as the summer passed away, and the little marble face was pale as ever when the winter snow began to fall; the large dark eyes, which had reflected the sunbeams for a few short months, were heavy and dim again. And then presently there came another change. A spot of crimson—a deep red rose—not pale and delicate like the last, glowed often on each hollow cheek; a brilliant light burned in the feverish, restless eye; a hollow, painful cough shook the little emaciated frame. So thin he was, so feeble, so soon wearied. Day by day the small thin hand grew thinner and more transparent; the gentle voice and childish laugh lower and feebler; the sweet smile sweeter, and fainter, and sadder.

And Gabrielle saw it all, and bowing to the earth in bitter mourning, prepared herself for this last great sorrow.

The spring came slowly on—slowly, very slowly. The green leaves opened themselves, struggling in their birth with the cold wind. It was very clear and

brigh  
and t  
"I  
for yo  
"I  
warm  
said,  
let me  
"N  
come.  
"Y  
so wit  
An  
a very  
Gabri  
Poor  
happy  
with l  
beside  
feeble  
Poo  
that sh  
upon h  
how se  
"M  
see a vi  
It's the  
love th  
"Yo  
a little  
"Al  
do you  
when h  
"I r  
"Ho  
peace, I  
what I  
whole d  
"Yo  
for a li  
"No,  
voice tr  
could ge