

but as the words rippled forth upon the sweet, sunlit air, they reached the girl who for hours had lain unconscious of everything.

"Robin!" Her voice was very feeble, nevertheless he heard it. "Robin, I'd like to hear the children sing close here."

He had not heard the voices till then, but he arose at once to go and bring the songsters near. All save one were frightened at his request, but she, Minnie Grey, being struck with childish pity for Robin's woo-begone face, went back. She sang all the hymns she knew, and by-and-by Nannette slept. That sleep, through God, saved her life. After that she grew better. They said that she had not been well for days, and that the long journey had worn her out; therefore Robin determined that a second should not be risked till she was strong and able to endure it. As soon as possible he procured her decent lodgings in the village, and there left her when the feast was over, promising to return for her very, very soon, and Nannette felt quite sure, deep down in her warm, loving heart, that it was a sore trial for him to go away at all.

July came with its deeper foliage and still intenser heat, then Robin returned for Nannette, and found her once more radiant and full of health. Still a change had come to her, which even he found it not difficult to discover; she was learning the ways of the "housefolk." But Robin, who loved her so truly, cared not for her being a little peculiar—indeed, I think he but loved her the more.

"Robin, can we not live quietly, like the good people around us?" she whispered, as they stood in the gloaming after he had told her again the tale, which from the days of paradise till now has never grown old. "I love their ways, Robin, and we could be so very, very happy."

"Nonsense, Nannette." He spoke as though she were a spoilt child. "Nonsense, we shall be much more so among our own people: besides, I could not live like them," and he waved his hand in the direction of the cottages.

Nannette sighed; yet she could not forget the lighthearted freedom she had hitherto felt in her roving life, so it was no great trial for her to return to it again; for a time, too, it seemed best, and she was happy, intensely happy, in the days which followed.

They were married in a little rustic church, in a village near which their caravan stayed for the stipulated time, and Robin, as he led his bride through the crowd of gaping idlers, felt not a little proud of the queen he had chosen, and Nannette held her head very high; for Robin was her ideal among men, and oh, he would she knew be very, very kind! He had respected her whim respecting the marriage, and would he not be equally indulgent with regard to others. Their intercourse, too, had been so free and untrammelled even from childhood, that it seemed to them both that they had nothing new to learn of each other's ways, only now they would be as one, and new joys, new interests, be theirs while life should last.

Two summers had come and gone, and Nannette and her people were encamped in a wild, unfrequented spot by the sea-shore. It was autumn, and the wind, which was gusty and violent, tore up the canvas covering of their tents, so that they had again betaken themselves to the covered vehicle in which they travelled; yet they still stayed on, although a more sheltered place would have been preferred by all. Nannette was a mother, with all a young mother's engrossing loves and cares; yet as she sat and prattled nonsense to her baby, she could but listen in part to the conversation going on around. Robin was not there, and perhaps that was why she took so little heed at the first to what the others were saying; but a chance expression roused her by-and-by, then she listened intently, talking to her child the while. She was not blind to her people's faults, and once or twice had raised her voice against their wicked doings; but they heeded her not indeed, sometimes she fancied that they even hated her for her words; but Robin loved her, he was strong and powerful in their midst, so that she never felt real fear. Now, as I have before said, he was away, and she learnt that a something infinitely worse than any plan she had hitherto known of was on foot. Her baby slept, yet still she fondled and talked to it, all the while paying attention to the rest, who glanced her way ever and anon, as though they distrusted her and would fain keep this a secret to themselves. But they were too eager and clamorous to talk quietly. True, at times they whispered, and then Nannette lost the thread of the discourse; but she learnt enough to know that a vessel was expected to pass that

way during the night, and as it promised to be bad weather and very dark, they would make fires upon the rocks and so lure it onto deck. Such deeds they said had been enacted before upon the self-same spot, and the world had known naught of the matter. It had been supposed that adverse winds had blown the vessels aside from their course, and so they had perished. A lighthouse had been thought of, spoken of, but not built, and so the field still lay open for the wicked, murderous designs of such as Nannette's companions proved themselves to be. It made her shiver to listen, and yet how could she prevent it? Still her resolve was taken. With her baby in her arms, she stole quietly down to the shore, and there thought it all over. She knew to the full what she was about to do. Once, when Robin had been in a great passion, he had said that if she dared to thwart him or the rest in their plans she should be as nothing to him. She meant to thwart them now, and although she scarcely thought Robin could be so cruel (indeed, she almost believed that with her great love in the scale, she could lead him, were he by, to abandon this wicked scheme), yet she knew the rest; knew how the women envied her beauty, and the men hated her ways, the ways she had learnt in the village now so far away. If only Robin would come! and she pressed her child the closer to her, while her eyes eagerly scanned the coastline for his well known figure. Then far out over the sea a sail appeared, would it (she guessed) pass the fated spot while yet it was light, and the dangerous sands might be discovered? So she watched and waited, but the ship seemed to make no real headway; and, at a little distance from her, in a cavity of the rocks, hidden from the inland view, she knew the fires were being built. Carlo, Robin's dog, kept near to his mistress, barking furiously at the waves, as though he, too, would have warned the fated vessel if he could.

"Oh, my pet! my jewel! He will not come, and thou and I must flee before he returns!" Night was coming on apace, and Nannette leant her head down upon the soft, warm face of her child, and shed bitter, bitter tears; for, oh! she knew better than I can tell you how little mercy she might expect if she stayed on for her husband's return after what she was about to do. When the deed was done, even he would be furious in his anger. Oh! if he were but here, that she might plead with him to persuade the rest. Yet, had he been there, it would still have been the same, for Robin was no better than the others; only to her was he kind, and even with Nannette he could be selfish, and at times would brook no restraint from her gentle lips.

Nobody missed her; or, if they did, they sought her not. And, by-and-by, the dog lay down quietly at her feet, and darkness covered the land, while the night dews chilled, as it were, her very soul. The salt spray swept over her brow ever and anon, and the little babe in her arms was wet with it and the damp of the autumn night; but she, in her anguish, thought of naught but of what lay before her, and of Robin, whom she might never see again. True, she clasped the child tightly, and once, only once, repeated the words she had heard two long years before—

"Here we suffer grief and pain,
Here we meet to part again,
In heaven we part no more."

Heaven! Ye-, in heaven she knew there were no more partings; but was heaven for Robin and she? No, no! But would it not be best to let events take their course and stay on, trying to teach Robin all she knew of heaven? A bright gleam reflected upon the dark waters aroused her. The fire was lit. She watched the men pile fresh wood upon the heap, then they went away, for they feared discovery even upon this lonely, barren spot. So Nannette went bravely forward. This way and that she stirred the flaming brands, laying down her babe in order that she might heap sand upon the smouldering sticks, and so put them out entirely. Well for her that the fire could be seen nowhere but out at sea, or I know not what the gipsies might not have done to her in their uncontrollable rage—as it was she once more took her babe in her arms and walked slowly away, followed by the dog, who would not leave her in this her dire need.

"And you are quite sure of the date!"

"Quite sure, sir."

"I was in that ship, my good woman, and you in all probability saved my life. I wish I had known it before, and if you