

name, arose and came forward, I was prepossessed at once in her favour. On making inquiries, Alice found that Mrs. Vernon had, a few weeks before rented the room adjoining theirs, from Mrs. Watson.

"I do not know where she came from, or why she is so poor," remarked Mrs. Watson; "but she is a real lady, any one to look at her could tell that. She has never told me anything about herself, except that she is a widow, and both herself and baby are in black."

"Her baby—has she one?" said Alice.

"Yes, ma'am—a fine little boy, about a year and a half old. See, there he is."

We looked towards the part of the room to which she directed our attention, and there, from one of the beds, two or three little ones were peeping curiously at us.

"We have no wood; the last stick was burned this morning, so, to try and keep them warm, I put him and the children in bed. His mother," she continued, "has, until the last week, been sewing for some great store in the city; but now she is so sick that she can't work. Poor young creature, there she lies, more like death than anything else. She has not a cent in the world. I do what I can for her, but this cold, bare room," and she glanced sadly around, "tells you, ma'am, that it is not much. Would you believe it," she continued, in an earnest, sorrowful tone, "that some of the neighbours told me I ought to turn her out, as she could not pay her rent—that we were too poor to keep her; but could I ever look my innocent children in the face, or teach them again to pray to the merciful God, after such an act! No, ma'am, little as we have, she has less. Oh, that it were only more that I could do for her!"

On asking if we might see her, Mrs. Watson led us into the adjoining apartment. On a low cot, in one corner of the small chamber, lay a girl of about nineteen or twenty. She was asleep, and in silence we gazed upon her wan, young face. She was, indeed, no common person; and how lovely she must have been once! That pure white brow, from which the soft brown hair was pushed back, exposing the small exquisitely-formed ear! even now sorrow and suffering has not robbed her of all her beauty. The little white hand, also, which lay on the coarse dark coverlet, showed that she had never been used to any menial service.

"I don't like to see her sleeping so much," said Mrs. Watson, anxiously; "it is a bad sign, I am afraid."

"What is the matter with her?" asked Alice.

"I do not know," she replied. "Since she came here, she has not been well; she has a bad cough, and two or three times she has gone off in a dead faint. My heart has ached for her many a time, when I awoke in the night and saw, by the faint glimmer of light through the crack in the door, that she was still sewing—ill and weary as I knew she was—and then that dreadful cough of hers grew worse, and it is no wonder that it did, sitting up at night in the cold—for she could not always keep a fire burning—till it was long past midnight, and then, with aching eyes, and limbs numb with cold, she would go to bed, and lie, perhaps, nearly the rest of the night awake, coughing."

Just think, Ethel, what that poor young creature must have endured. Alice has, as far as she can, relieved her sufferings, and Dr. Marsden her physician, is attending Mrs. Vernon; but he says there is no hope for her; that she is in a rapid decline, and cannot live many weeks.

CHAPTER II.

Three weeks have passed since I wrote to you, Ethel. Three weeks to me of happiness and gaiety, while to the young and lovely one, from whose dying couch I have just returned they have been full of suffering and lonely sorrow. Emilio Vernon knows that her days are numbered—that she is quickly passing from this earth; but is she not afraid to die, for she is at peace with God, and the weary are at rest in the home to which she is going. Oh! if she could only take her child with her—her year old little darling. With what passionate tenderness she clasped him to her breast to-day when she spoke

of leaving him, and that wailing cry of anguish, "My baby, Oh! my baby." When she was aware there was no hope for her, she wrote a letter, and gave it to Alice to post. It was directed to a Mrs. Beaumont, New Orleans. She did not say to whom she had written; not a word of her past life has ever escaped her lips, but no answer has yet been received to her letter. Day after day has passed in anxious, weary suspense, and still there is no reply. It is grieving her very much, troubling even her dreams, for Mrs. Watson has heard her murmuring in her sleep the words. "Is there no answer? I will die without knowing. O pity me, and come!" To whom has she written, and who is it she wants to come to her? There seems to be some mystery about her fate, or why would she be so silent on the subject? Alice has obtained employment for Mrs. Watson's husband. Poor woman, how grateful and happy it has made her! It takes very little sometimes to cheer the heart of others—to bring back the glad light to grieving eyes, or the cheerful smile to pale lips, to which it has long been a stranger; and yet out of our abundance we too often withhold that little, and look with indifference on the sorrows or trials of others. They are nothing to us. We do not feel them, and self is all we care for.

In her next letter to me, not very long afterwards, she wrote:—No answer has come to Mrs. Vernon's letter. She said to us to-day, "I can no longer hope for one. I shall go to my grave unforgotten—unmourned—and my baby will be left alone in this cold, wide world." Alice took the little fellow in her arms, and bringing him to the bedside asked her, as she told me she intended to do, to give him to her care. "I am rich," said Alice, in a sorrowful tone, "but am lonely. I have no children, and will soon learn to love him dearly; and shall endeavour, as far as I can, to supply your place to him, if you will trust him to me."

It was a scene for a painter! That lowly chamber, with its rude couch, on which the young dying mother lay, with her hands clasped and her wan, lovely face turned with an earnest enquiring gaze on the beautiful, richly clad lady, against whose velvet cloak her little one had nestled his curly head! Mrs. Vernon looked at him and then to Alice's face.

"Take him, he already clings to you," she murmured in low touching accents. "Gladly do I commit him to your care, for there is goodness in your sweet face, and you know what sorrow is; for it has left its impress on your pale brow, and those who have suffered are seldom indifferent to the sufferings of others. I give my darling to you; and God grant that in that blessed home to which I am fast hastening, I may again meet both him and you."

A week later, she said:—I have just returned from Mrs. Watson's, but the sick room there is silent and deserted; and another grave bearing the simple record, "Emilio Vernon, aged twenty," has been added to the many in the crowded grave-yard. All is now over, and she is at peace; for God has wiped away the sad tears from her eyes in that home where there is no more sorrow or pain. Alice was with her when she died, and has taken the baby home, and is quite delighted with her charge. A handsomely bound bible, with his mother's name beautifully written in it, and her wedding ring, is all the poor child has to tell him of his young, unhappy mother, whose beauty, misfortunes and early death have impressed us so deeply.

CHAPTER III.

It is a warm starlight night, dear Ethel,—she wrote to me in the spring—and as it is yet early, the city is still alive, and the noisy rolling of carriages, the sound of hurrying footsteps, and the hum of voices comes to me in my lonely room, and from the clear far-off heavens the quiet stars, in all their brilliant beauty are looking down on the crowded streets, with their bright lights and busy throng. Old and young, rich and poor are there. Gay ones seeking pleasure—starving ones bread—the wicked their haunts of vice—the wealthy their princely homes; but all are not so full of the cares of this earth that they cannot look up to those beautiful heavens.

Many a glance of wonder and praise is raised to them, aye, of longing too from weary eyes; for there is rest there, but, alas! too many pass on without one thought of what is beyond—without realizing that this life, which engrosses all their attention, must end some day. Others have trodden those same streets, whose places are now vacant and their familiar faces no more seen. Where have they gone? Have they sought new homes in strange cities? Many have silent homes in the quiet cities of the dead, where the hurrying of footsteps, and the bustle of life is hushed. Mournful silence reigns there, and all that tells us they have lived and passed away, is a slab of sculptured marble, or a wooden cross, marking their last resting place, while above the same calm, stars on which they so often gazed, are keeping watch over their lonely graves. A card, with the name Mrs. Beaumont, was handed to me this afternoon. I remembered that that was the name of the person in New Orleans, to whom Mrs. Vernon had written. Alice was not at home, so I descended to the drawing room to see her. A stately, elegantly dressed lady threw back her veil, and rose to meet me. I started, for the handsome features I beheld were so like Emilio Vernon's.

"Are you Miss Lawton?" she asked in an aggrieved voice.

As I replied to her question, my heart sank within me, for I dreaded what would follow.

"Oh! where is my child?" she said, "my Emilio; is she yet alive?"

Her child! I could not answer. How could I look into her eager, anxious face, and tell her? From my silence, she learned the sad truth; and with a low, thrilling cry of bitter anguish she sank back upon the couch beside her.

"Oh God!" she cried, "am I, then, too late; my child, my darling Emilio, shall I never more see you?"

Her grief was terrible to witness. She could not weep; but, in wild tearless agony, paced the apartment—calling on her daughter, and saying her punishment was just. She enquired where she had been buried, and if I would go there with her. I could not tell her where her daughter had been interred, but I thought if we went to Mr. Howard, the clergyman who performed the burial service, he would inform us, or perhaps accompany us to the burying ground. In a few moments I was ready. Mrs. Beaumont drew her veil closely over her face, and passed down the steps. General Trumbull's carriage stood at the door, and wonderingly I followed her into it. It was so strange that that proud lady, clothed in velvet and ermine, sitting opposite to me was Emilio Vernon's mother, and we going to seek her grave in some humble burying ground. Mrs. Beaumont leant back in a corner of the carriage in silent grief. The only questions she asked me during our drive to Mr. Howard's were, how long her daughter had been dead, and where her child was. Mr. Howard was fortunately at home, and immediately went with us to the graveyard. In a remote corner of one of the crowded cemeteries of the poor we found Mrs. Vernon's grave. In wild anguish Mrs. Beaumont bent over—but in vain were those agonizing cries for her child. In her dark narrow bed she slept—slept on—only the chill breath of spring echoed back the wailing cry.

When we parted from Mr. Howard, on leaving the cemetery, Mrs. Beaumont asked him if he would visit her on the following day. I then took her to see her little grandson. At the sight of the lovely child, asleep in his pretty crib, in Alice's room, she wept long and bitterly. They were the first tears she had shed since she heard of her daughter's death.

CHAPTER IV.

In the next letter, she said, "Mrs. Beaumont has returned to her proud home in New Orleans, bringing with her a rich gilded coffin, enclosing the remains of her beautiful, unhappy daughter—who, in her pride and anger, she had about three years before sent from those stately halls, because she had dared to love and marry one whose only fault was poverty, but this in the proud mother's eyes was looked upon as a disgrace—nay a crime; and so she shut her heart