

her children greeted her that morning: they all felt it.

Nor was it long before they had tokens that earthly friends were very far from forgetting them on this Christmastide. Baskets and parcels arrived at the door, with gifts to keep and gifts to eat—roast ducks all ready for table, mince-pies and strawberries. They joyfully peppered their modest bit of beef, put it away, wrapped up in muslin, and all went off to church. The pudding had boiled before, and would only have to boil up again when they came back.

They had moved a long way off from old friends and neighbors, and Mrs. Marriott was glad of it. It is often said that in the colonies people can do any kind of honest work without losing position; and so they can—except taking in washing. Ladies may do their own washing, and do other people's too for love, but not take it in for a livelihood without being very much pitied. Mrs. Marriott had thought of all that when she chose her occupation, and yet she made the choice. She could no longer be on equal terms with her friends in outward things, do what she might: a little more or less difference hardly signified. She had never had time or means to keep up a large circle of acquaintances, or even to become very intimate with the few valued friends she had. These had grown nearer and dearer in the time of trouble, but not near enough for love to make all things equal now. Her chief concern was not to become dependent on their kindness; and George, who had most to suffer in the change, felt just as she did. He could bring his mind to meeting his old schoolfellows as he wheeled home the clothes, but not to carrying notes to their parents, asking for help either in money or in some kind of employment which would be given for the sake of helping the widow. Washing was in demand; people were glad enough to get it done. Still, he and Nellie were not sorry to live away down the Coxley Road now. They missed the river, though; and after their Christmas dinner, they locked up the house, and the whole family walked to the beautiful part of the town where the Avon flows past the College buildings, under the large weeping willows said to have grown from cuttings brought from the willow that grows beside Napoleon's empty grave in St. Helena. Mrs. Marriott left the others by the riverside, and took Davie with her to Mrs. Barton's.

The mistress of the house let them in, looking pale and careworn. Her husband, a banker's clerk, was at his post again, and able to go out with the children this afternoon; but he was still far from strong.

'And how are you getting on?' she asked, when she had answered her friend's inquiries.

'Better than we could have expected, for a first beginning,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'And having a holiday to-day, I thought we would come ourselves, and bring you back what you were kind enough to lend me in my trouble,' handing her the envelope containing the pound note.

The sudden flash across Mrs. Barton's face betrayed how glad she would be of a pound, but she drew back, exclaiming, 'Oh, my dear, I don't like to take it. You can't spare it yet, I am sure.'

'Yes, thank God I can,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'My little boy has earned it.'

Mrs. Barton laid her hand on Davie's shoulder. 'Thank you, dear,' she said, the tears coming into her eyes. Then she took his mother's hands and kissed her.

'You are the last person I ever should have thought could help me,' she said. 'God bless you. It comes just like a gift.'

Then Davie was sent into the garden, and the two women shared their griefs and comforts together.

'Oh, how you have lifted me up!' said Mrs. Barton when they parted. 'If the Lord can help you so, through your troubles, mine can't be too much for him.'

'There is nothing too hard for him,' said the widow; and she and Davie went their way.

When tea was over and put away, once more the children clustered round their mother—Nellie and Lily with garments of Davie's under repair in their hands; for they could not afford to play all Christmas Day long, when he was near coming to rags for want of stitches in time.

'And now about you, Davie,' said Mrs. Marriott.

He was sitting on the ground at her feet, his head resting against her knee. He raised it, and looking up with his wistful eyes, said, 'I don't want to stop at home, mother.'

The mother's heart throbbed with a sudden pride, relief, and pain, all strangely mingled. Now the brave child had made up his mind to go, she longed so to keep him.

'I'm afraid that it is right, Davie,' she said, laying her hand round his neck. He drew it close without speaking.

'It is not only for the money,' she continued. 'Mr. Foster knew nothing about us, except by being your father's customer—and he came out of kindness, to help us in our trouble. It wouldn't seem right to take you away, now you have learned to be some good, in the busiest time, when he mightn't get another boy.'

'Yes, mother,' said Davie. Mr. Foster's word of praise had been a great deal to him, although it made his sense of injustice all the keener.

'But couldn't we do something about Ned, mother?' asked George. He wanted to do a father's part by his little brother.

'I have been thinking that over,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'Get the Bible, dear.'

He did so, and the children who had no father on earth to guide them, waited to hear the Heavenly Father's word.

'There are three different places where the Lord says himself how we are to behave to those that serve us badly,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'You shall read them to us, Davie.'

She gave him chapter and verse, and he read first, from the 5th of Matthew, the passage ending, 'Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.'

'That is just exactly what you have been doing by Ned,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'He did you out of your holiday, and you did all his work for him.'

'I had to,' said Davie, opening his eyes wide.

'But you never made any fuss about having to, did you?' said his mother.

No, on reflection Davie could say that he had not.

'Then that was what Jesus told us to do, when we can't help ourselves,' said Mrs. Marriott. 'When we must be put upon, we are to take it cheerfully, for his sake. If we can help it, that mayn't always be the right way. Read on to the 44th verse.'

Davie read: 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you.'

'Do you think it was good for Ned to get off without being punished?' asked Mrs. Marriott.

'No,' exclaimed the two elder children, as if a new light broke upon them. Davie only looked up, puzzled.

'No, it was not,' said their mother, her needle flying, in her agitation. 'If it had

been George—there, I hope, for the Lord's sake, it never could have been! But if it had, I would have prayed on my knees that he might be thrashed well for it—thrashed so as he could never forget it. It would be the best thing to happen to him. And the worst—the very worst—would be to get him let off. You don't do good to them that hate you by letting them prosper in wickedness—if you can help it. Look in the 18th of Matthew, Davie, and see what it says there.'

Davie read the passage beginning: 'If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.'

'"Thy brother"—that would mean your equal—some one you could deal with,' said Mrs. Marriott, 'and you are not to put up with anything wrong he does, without trying to stop it. If he won't stop—it doesn't say that it is your place to punish him: you might be very kind to heathen men and publicans; but you can't make a friend of him or trust him any more, unless he says he is sorry, or does something to show it. We are not to punish our own enemies. Over and over it says, "Avenge not yourselves." That is the Lord's work. We couldn't be trusted to do it rightly. But, all the same, we are not to sit down and encourage any one in doing wrong, if we can help it. You can't help it, Davie. It wouldn't be a bit of use your speaking to Ned—nor to his uncle either, unless he does something against orders that ought to be told of. If he does, you tell his uncle of it before his face—not behind his back. But I know just how Mr. Foster would feel about his going off that Saturday. He would think "It's something between the boys, and I don't know what led up to it: I'd better let it alone." And the way Ned has gone on since, which I call worse—it's nothing to tell about at all. The only thing you can do is to go on doing your best by him, no matter what he does by you.'

'He thinks I do it because I am afraid of him,' said Davie.

'Well, so you have to be,' said Mrs. Marriott sadly. 'He has the upper hand, and he knows it, and so do you. You must just do like a girl I read of in a story. She was a witness in court, and the lawyer examining her asked her a question that put her blood up so—she would have knocked him down for it rather than answered, if she could. But in a court of justice, you have to answer—you must. So she just turned her face away from him, and looked up at the judge, than everyone might see she was answering to him, not to that lawyer, and said what she had to say; and it was very well for her that she did! Look away up to the Judge, Davie. It's not his will that Ned should be unkind, but we all see it clear that it is his will for you to stop there and suffer it; so, for his sake, you are going to bear it, and do more than you are compelled.'

Again a sense of awe filled Davie's heart. George bent over the Bible, and turning the leaves, read: 'Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.'

'Ah, and look a little farther, George,' said Mrs. Marriott.

'I know!' exclaimed Nellie; and she repeated reverently: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

'Do you think that Ned loves his mother like you love me, Davie?' said Mrs. Marriott, laying her caressing hand again upon his neck.

'No, I know he doesn't,' said Davie energetically. 'She whacks him when he hasn't done anything.'

'That is what Neds says,' said Mrs. Marriott correctly, 'but we can tell, by his saying it, that he can't feel the same as you do