

"*I wish I could,*" he answered, below his breath, for the blindness was still a dark horror to him. "But Allen?"

"He only asked about to-night, if I should go to chapel, and—"

"If he could walk with you. When are you going to be married?" he added, abruptly.

But Bessie only pointed out a loose, round stone in the crossing, as if she did not hear the question.

"Mother's not so well to day, and I cannot go so far as usual," she said, as they entered a narrow, crooked street.—"How bright and pleasant it must look out at the asylum now, with all the roses in bloom!"

"Yes, if one could *see* them."

"Richard, you are not thankful to-night for what you *can* enjoy," said the young girl, earnestly. "You have a cheerful home, and fresh, sweet-scented air and cheerful society."

"Go on, Bessie. You mean 'while you are shut up in this close street with a sick mother, and your bread to gain by your needle.' But then there is Allen!" and the gloomy tone came back again.

"Let him *be* there," Bessie answered, decidedly, pausing at her own door-stone. "Richard, you sang '*Benedic, anima mea*' this afternoon; remember it on your way home. I shall so long as my mother has a shelter, and I have health and strength to work for her. Take care now, and look out for the carriages and the crossings. I shall have time for a practice hour on Wednesday evening. You may come to tea if you like."

The blind man's staff rang upon the pavement as he went on his lonely way, not knowing that she stood upon the door-stone; and watched for his safety so long as he was in sight. He did not know what should make him so restless

and disturbed about this marriage. It was right and natural, and what he could have wished for Bessie. They would be finely paired, the high-spirited, energetic woman and her sailor lover. He so tall and bronzed, and stalwart, as Bessie's husband ought to be, frank and generous, as sailors ever are.

Richard Langdon, the blind music-teacher, still lived in the asylum where he had studied his beautiful art, with the love and confidence of pupils and teachers. The rooms were of noble proportions, the grounds fragrant with sweet-scented shrubbery, and cool with the shadow of heavy foliage. Here, he walked that still Sabbath afternoon, and thought upon his aimless, joyless childhood, and what if he had had a sister like Bessie, to cheer it. There were many hours when his mind preyed upon itself; it had always been so in the pauses in study, but never so much as now.

So he wandered down the rose-walk, listening to the murmur of voices that rose from the playground beyond the garden, and envying the children their Sabbath rest and peace. But his mind would go back to Bessie and their first acquaintance, when she came to offer her fresh, strong, but untrained voice to assist him lead in the chapel music. His nature was so gentle that her quick, stirring way was not pleasant to him at first; it was not his idea of womanlyness. He liked her better when he found how much in earnest she was to improve this one talent, and how grateful for his instructions. Now when they were together, he laid aside the timid uncertainty of step and manner, trusting to her guidance. When she was married, all these pleasant walks and rehearsals must end, for she would have new duties and