

where the wicked will cease from troubling, where the weary will rest, where the mourner, who has gone on his earthly way weeping, will see his sorrow turned into joy, and the parted ones will meet again in the light of God's presence. There are lives on which, without these thoughts, without this faith, it would be heart-breaking to dwell. With them it is possible to do so, and to derive benefit from it.

I know a tale of humble life which illustrates my meaning. Had I not been able to speak of "that better land" to one poor woman whose fate I watched for years, and had she not, though ignorant and slow of apprehension, fully appreciated such consolation, it would have been as easy to say to the raging sea "Be still!" as to have calmed her grief; as wise to have preached to the storm as to have told that child of sorrow that life could ever be fair to her. She inhabited one of the poorest cottages in a village where I once lived. Her husband was a common laborer. She was herself a hard-working, hard-featured person, tall and bony, with a sallow complexion, and a heavy projecting brow. Her appearance was anything but prepossessing at first sight, but to my mind there was an expression in her face which redeemed its plainness. The smile was pleasing though sad. I used to meet her carrying heavy pails of water, and doing all kinds of fatiguing work, but it was some time before we made acquaintance. At the village school I had often noticed her daughter—a thin, dark-eyed, intelligent looking girl of fourteen; another, two or three years older, lived also at home. The former seemed only delicate; the latter pale and sickly. Both had a melancholy expression of countenance, and when the younger left off going to school they seemed to keep aloof from every one.

One day I called on the mother. She was, as usual, hard at work, scrubbing the floor, but she stopped in order to talk to me, and this was the first of many conversations I had with her. It was not, however, from herself I learnt that her marriage was an unhappy one; that she had suffered much from her husband's unkindness; others told me so. He used to go away and remain absent for days, spending his money in drink, and when he was penniless came home. How she managed to live and to support her daughters was a wonder. To be sure she was never idle for a moment, and there was hardly any sort of work she did not accept. She told me that her girls were not strong enough to go to service. They were clever

with their needle, but it was not often that they got any sewing to do. What they were fond of was fancy work, and they were trying to obtain employment from a shopkeeper in the neighboring town.

I inquired if they were at home.

"No," she answered; "they had gone out for a walk;" and then, with some hesitation, she opened the door of a tiny back room behind the kitchen, and said, "They calls this their own room," and then added, "You see, they likes to be by themselves."

I looked in, and was struck with the effort that had been made, with the smallest possible means, to give to this little room an appearance of refinement. The walls were ingeniously papered with a variety of odds and ends, and ornamented with prints cut out of newspapers and framed with colored paper. There was no fireplace, but before the small-paned window hung a curtain made with faded pink and white gauze. On the table several books were arranged in nice order, and in the centre of it stood a jar filled with flowers. Some fancy work and bits of embroidered muslin were lying on a green faded three-legged sofa. Poor as were the attempts at beautifying this tiny sitting-room, they had succeeded in giving it an appearance quite out of character with the wretched abode to which it belonged. The mother said to me, in a tone that was half complacent and half apologetic:

"You see they be like that. It pleases them to make things look genteel. I should not mind it if they was happy. But they do want to go away and keep a shop somewhere together. They be not happy here, poor lambs; they was always tenderlike, so to say. My eldest daughter she married a soldier, and has been gone from me these many years. She is now in India. But these girls mope, you see; they are ashamed at home."

She did not say of what they were ashamed. Was it of their drunken father or their poor, illiterate, hard-working mother? I know not; but there was a sort of desponding tenderness in that mother's love which went to my heart. I tried to make friends with the girls, and I found them shy and reserved. I heard that they were attentive to their religious duties, and very fond of reading. They had perused over and over again all the books in the little village lending library. Had they read them to good purpose, or had the glimpses some of them afforded of more varied and refined modes of existence than their own tended to foster the