

told you about—that other. I shall never care for any one else."

"But, dear, perhaps you are mistaken in her. You did not know her so very well, or for very long; Norah's value you have tested."

"I love Beattie," said Mike simply; and his mouth wore the look his mother knew for unflinching determination.

"I shall never change," he said presently. "Norah would not care for half a heart."

"I am not so sure," said Lady Anstruther, smiling. "If you offered her the half to start with and told her where the other was—"

"Mother," said Mike suddenly, "you don't think Norah loves me, do you?"

"No one but Norah has a right to answer that question, dear," said Lady Anstruther. "But I do not think she will ever marry anybody else."

Mike was silent.

"Don't throw away what you may possess for a dream, darling," said Lady Anstruther presently. "Even in this matter there are others to think of besides yourself—your father, me, and perhaps Norah."

"Well, there's plenty of time," said Mike presently, with a sigh. "I'm not worthy of Norah—that's quite certain. But I promise you this, mother—I'll never marry at all, or I'll marry Norah."

Lady Anstruther shook her head.

"That doesn't sound altogether satisfactory," she said, laughing. "But don't look so gloomy about it. Hark! there is Norah's voice."

He stooped and kissed her, and hastened from the room.

Norah had indeed returned with her father. Lady Anstruther had been wrong in her surmise that the letters were not likely to contain news of anything exciting. The first Mr. Gilman had taken from the packet had been addressed in a handwriting which he did not at first recognise, and the envelope bore several foreign postmarks.

"What is this about, Norah?" he said, puzzled. "Who do we know out in Africa?"

Norah glanced at the letter, then gave an exclamation almost of awe; her complexion changed, and she looked for a moment as if she would faint, and a

trembling hand was laid for support on her father's arm.

"My dear," he said anxiously, "what is it?"

Her voice shook so that she could hardly speak.

"Father," she whispered, "the miracle has been wrought." Then, as he gazed at her wondering—"Don't you see? Look closer, dear! That writing is—Geoffrey's!"

"Geoffrey's! But Geoffrey is—Norah, can it be possible the boy is not dead, after all? Open it quickly—quickly! Here, sit close by me! Read it, child!"

And breathlessly, in tones that with an effort she rendered distinct enough for her father's hearing, Norah read the note.

It was not a very long one, and it had been written in extreme weakness. It told how he had been desperately wounded and left for dead, but how by the kindness of some Dutch people he had been taken care of and nursed through months of misery, when his mind as well as his body had been affected; how, when he began to recover, he had struggled back to a place of civilisation, only to be taken ill again, and brought near to death. How at last he had again recovered, and had learnt through an Englishman he had met, who knew him, that he was reported to be dead; how he sent this letter to Mr. Gilman rather than to his parents, lest the suddenness of the news should harm his mother. Possibly she might have heard through some official source, if it was yet rumoured in England. In that case they would want to know his whereabouts. He said that he was still hardly fit to travel, but he should sail as soon as possible.

The father and daughter sat silent, looking at each other, rejoicing, but overcome.

"Father," said Norah presently, "I prayed for this at first. I had heard of such things, and I could not, somehow, feel that Geoff was dead. But I gave up hope long ago."

Mr. Gilman turned to her with shining eyes.

"Norah," he said, "I understand you now. Will Sir John say, with you, the miracle has been wrought?"

The girl was silent. This prayer had

been answered; she could not doubt the other, which had been most frequent lately on her lips, would be likewise.

"Come, dear—we must not keep this to ourselves any longer. I will go to Lady Anstruther. The sad news we broke first to him; but this surely should go first to the mother."

But wonderful, incredible, unexpected as it was, after a year of mourning, the mother needed no telling. The sight of their moved faces, the letter which Norah held towards her, the trembling yet careful haste with which they strove to put into words the message of untold gladness, were enough. Or did she have a spiritual before an intellectual grasp of the truth? She knew the end while Mr. Gilman was still stumbling over his preliminary announcement of good tidings.

"There can be only one thing," she cried. "God has given me back my child—God has given me back my child!" But the joy was too great and she sank back fainting.

Her first words when she recovered consciousness were to Norah.

"His father," she whispered—"tell him!"

And relinquishing her to Michael's care, whom Mr. Gilman had hastily summoned, Norah went to fulfil her mission.

Very different was Sir John's reception of the news to that of Lady Anstruther's. No hint availed for him, no faltering words of something wonderful which had come to light roused his suspicion of the truth.

When Norah told him simply from whom a letter had been received, he could not believe. She showed him the letter, and though he shook with excitement he doubted still. The postmark was no guide. The date—when was it written? At last he read it. Norah watched his face. Slowly, slowly a light stole over it; the gloom passed away. Then he sat silent, looking straight before him. When at last he spoke, it was in a low voice, scarcely more than a whisper, and his eyes, which were upraised, were as the eyes of one who has been blind and now sees. His words were the words of his wife, and they came slowly, with long pauses—

"God—has given me back my child!"

(To be continued.)

VARIETIES.

MUSICAL ENTHUSIASM.

"Ah, you don't know what musical enthusiasm it is!" said a music-mad girl to Tom Hood.

"Excuse me, but I do," replied the wit; "musical enthusiasm is like turtle-soup; for every quart of real there are ninety-nine gallons of mock, and calves' head in proportion."

IN STUDYING HISTORY.—History should not merely gratify the reader's curiosity about the past, but modify her views about the present, and even determine her forecast of the future.

A MODEL ADDRESS.

Louis XIV. of France, when passing through Rheims, received an address from the mayor who, presenting him with some bottles of wine and some pears, said, "Sire, we bring your majesty our wine, our pears, and our hearts."

"Ah!" replied the king, laying his hand on the shoulder of the mayor, "that's what I call a model address."

BEING EDUCATED.—Opposition and danger are educations. Without war—no soldier; without enemies—no hero.

HIS FORTUNE WAS MADE.

The Inventor: "Ah, ah! My fortune is made! Hurrah!"

His Wife: "Now?"

The Inventor: "I've just perfected a duplex reversible device for automatically indicating to a woman whether her hat is on straight."

DEATH BRINGS CHANGES.

If death dissolves dear relationships it also creates others dearer still. Then, possibly for the first time, the brother becomes a friend; but then also the friend is often felt to be more than a brother.