

learn too early that he was handsome and rich. However, we'll talk of him any more, but you shall pick a trunk and join me at Miss Dalny's the day after to-morrow. I am my own mistress, and can start for home as soon as you pronounce yourself ready."

And with this understanding, Mrs. Carroll left her.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### LEFT TO HIS OWN RESOURCES.

At first, Frank demurred at parting with his sister, especially to a comparatively stranger.

"You have tired very quickly of our seclusion," he commented. "But why not have told me so, that I might have taken you to Dublin or London myself? You know, dear Rosie, I am neither a harsh nor an unreasonable brother, who would neglect or refuse your requests."

"You are the best and dearest of brothers," she exclaimed, coming behind his chair and putting her arms round his neck. "But you are very much mistaken in thinking me tired of the place. I shall gladly return to it, after a few weeks' absence."

"Then you are drawn from me by that irresistible magnet, fashionable society? Mrs. Carroll has talked of her gay acquaintances, till you are longing to see and be seen. Am I not right?"

Rosamond did not answer him directly. She was asking herself whether she ought not to tell him the actual reasons for her projected flight. What would he say when he learned that Lord Glanore was the man at whose name he had seen her slender and shied tears of mingled anger and sorrow?

But, on the other hand, she feared lest such a revelation from her lips might induce him to demand from Lord Glanore an explanation of his conduct. This would, in all probability, lead to a quarrel, for Frank was fiery-tempered when his honour or his sister's was brought into question; and even if the Viscount displayed tact and good feeling enough to avoid an open rupture, he would conclude that Rosamond had lied to avoid him, and be there accordingly.

Mrs. Carroll has so warmly invited me to be her guest," she said, at last, "that it has been difficult to refuse. The change will not do me any harm; and, however frivolous you may think me, I must honestly own that I wish to visit Dublin with her. Will you not consent to let me go?"

"Sure, Master Frank, ye'll not deny her?" put in Alice, who was looking at the window. "Tisn't I and my own self of strange beds and faces. But Miss Rosie's young and lively; and she'll be bringing us back all the news and the fashions. Mrs. Carroll has been here a fortnight. Kitty Maguire had a new pair of gloves, and red bows to them! And my brother's new pair of boots—what a receipt that'll ever be for the boys' shoes—no more to be made with them things, that's not to be lived on grapes, no ways at all!"

"Then, for the sake of the pursy wine, oh, Rosamond, I must consent to part with you!" laughed her brother. "Seriously, dear Rosie, I am glad for you to taste the pleasures of life now and then. I would not wish to condemn you to live the hermit always. Go and enjoy yourself. I'll write you a cheque on our banker, so that you may be able to indulge yourself in few additions to your wardrobe; and when the gaudies of Dublin lose their charms, give me word notice, and I will hasten to escort you home again."

So Rosamond went, and the quiet house seemed sadly dull without her; yet, in his secret heart, Frank was relieved by the knowledge that her affectionate eye was no longer upon his movements. As Alice had never presumed to interfere with him, he was now free to search for his fair incognito as long and as closely as he pleased; and he racked his brains to his plans and invent ingenious traps for snaring the shy and evasive girl, which would not be laid to his hand. Alice began to complain that "Master Frank pritty well lived in that dingy old chamber, where there was no getting at him, about a body were as nimble as a squirrel, and as light of foot as a fly. The menials said they got cold, and he never came to them, except when driven to it by the downright starvation."

Lord Glanore called a few days after Rosamond's departure, and Frank reluctantly came down from the Abbots' Chamber to receive him. The hope of being gladdened at some happy moment with a visit from the lady of the shagreened made him scrupulously attentive to his toilet, but this did not conceal his smitten eyes, and the weary look that his long and depressing watch had given him.

The Viscount asked if he were ill, but secretly heard the note which had been ushered into the room where he had been sequestered on his previous visit, and his gaze was fixed upon the door by which he entered, in the expectation of seeing her appear.

There had been a little local excitement concerning the discovery of a private still on Lord Glanore's estate, and this topic afforded some conversation for the gentlemen, but it flagged ere long. Frank had a suspicion that his mysterious damsel would, in some inscrutable manner, discover his absence, and take advantage of it to seek the chamber in search of her bracelet; while the Viscount was longing to ask for Rosamond, yet dared not.

"At last, he rose to go. "Will you convey to your sister my compliments, and regret that I have not had the pleasure of seeing her?"

"To Rosamond?—oh, yes," answered Frank, absently; and his visitor was provoked into adding, "Does Miss Dalton purposely avoid me?"

Immediately his young host was alive to the strangeness of this question.

"My sister—Miss Dalton—purposefully avoid you? I don't understand you. Why should she?"

"Why, indeed? I have the deepest respect for a young lady who to know is to admire!" Frank was a little annoyed at this.

"Your lordship is very polite—too polite, for we are plain people, and prefer plain language. As to my sister avoiding you, I ought to have mentioned that she is home."

"And you are here alone? I no longer wonder at your looking moped. Let me drive you with me to the lodge, and keep you there as my guest until Miss Dalton's return."

But Frank shook his head. "I could not weary you with my society for weeks, and you are mistaken in supposing that I am dull. I like to be alone sometimes."

"And she will be away for weeks!" said the Viscount unconsciously uttering his thoughts aloud. "I beg your pardon," he added, "as he saw Frank's look of haughty surprise. "As I was mentally asking myself what chance there would be of prevailing upon you to cruise with me along the Spanish coast while you are absolutely your own master. My yacht is a capital sailer, and you would bring back a portfolio full of sketches."

"It is a tempting offer," Frank admitted, "but I cannot leave home just at present. I thank you, but I am obliged to decline your kindness."

Lord Glanore wasted a good deal of time in trying to induce him to alter his determination, and did not rise to go till he saw that further entreaties would be thrown away.

As he was passing the mantel-piece, he was

attracted by a miniature of Rosamond, which her brother had just hung there.

The likeness was an excellent one, and his lordship stood gazing at it till Frank grew impatient, and asked if he knew whose portrait it was.

"It is Rosamond herself! The resemblance is marvellous; but she does not wear that pensive look now—it belongs to the days when I first knew her."

"When you first knew her!" cried the astonished Frank. "Is this meant for a jest, or—"

It was too late to recall the incautious observation, so his lordship quickly said, "My dear Dalton, I had no intention of mistaking you. I thought you must be aware by this time that I saw your sister on two or three occasions, at the gallery of a picture dealer from whom I made several purchases. I had not then succeeded to the title of Glanore, but was known as Sir Charles Tresilian."

"Tranquilly as these sentences had been spoken, the Viscount's heart beat fast as he passed for a reply, and saw Frank's brow darken."

"I have long wished to meet with Sir Charles Tresilian," said the young man, with stern emphasis. "I have an idea that he owes me an explanation of some impertinence addressed to my sister."

"On my honour, I am unconscious of having given Miss Dalton cause to be offended with me. I thought her charming, and with all due respect, I told her so."

"Taking an unmanly advantage of her youth, and my inability to protect her?" Frank hotly interposed.

"Reproach me if you will," Lord Glanore replied, with equal earnestness, "but believe my assurance that I am unconscious of having in any way annoyed or displeased Miss Dalton. What can I say that will convince you of my sincerity?"

"I have not professed to dispute it," said Frank, coolly. "We will, therefore, say no more on this subject. For my ignorance of the name your lordship bore prior to our acquaintance, I have only my own heedlessness to blame."

"Nay, I have been neglectful in not mentioning it earlier," his lordship observed, with apparent candour. "But one does not care to descend on one's genealogy, and I was not certain till I called here, that the Miss Dalton I had the pleasure of knowing in London was the sister of the man to whom I owe my title."

He spoke with great cordiality, but he could not dissipate the reserve of manner Frank had unwittingly assumed. While giving due credence to the Viscount's assertions, Rosamond's brother felt that all was not told. From Rosamond herself he meant to demand the explanations he was determined to have. He grew more and more dissatisfied as he recollected that she had been concealing from him the identity of Lord Glanore with his former patron. Was it to avoid him that she had been so desirous of accompanying Mrs. Carroll to Dublin, and why? Frank set his teeth in his lips, and his face took a venerable cast as he recalled the emotion she had once testified respecting Sir Charles, and coupled it with her silence now. Either his petted sister had weakly given her heart away unasked, or this pleasant, plausible Viscount was a villain.

With the briefest replies to Lord Glanore's civil speeches, Frank saw him to his carriage, and then sat down to write to Rosamond. Too impatient to await the coming of the man who collected the letters twice a week, he bade Gerry saddle his horse, and although Alice reminded him that the dinner was on the table, and would be spoiled entirely, he merely stayed to swallow a biscuit and a glass of wine, ere he galloped off to the next post town, to leave his epistle at the office himself.

He was so weary on his return, that he gladly exchanged his boots for the slippers Mrs. Brennan brought him, and agreed with her that he stood in need of a good night's rest.

As he went slowly upstairs, he paused at the entrance of the long, ruinous passage leading to the Abbots' Chamber. Was it worth while visiting it ere he sought repose? Alas! the fair spirit that once haunted it seemed of late to have deserted its precincts. Even the flowers which had once botanized her visits had withered days since, and no delicate hand had renewed them.

He stood for several seconds debating whether he should or should not steal softly onward, and glance around the silent apartment. Then, with rapid but noiseless strides, he traversed the intervening distance, and entered the deserted apartment, to him the most interesting and provoking spot on earth.

The hinges of the great oaken portal, which he had taken the precaution of oiling, swung back, and Frank stepped over the threshold, raising his lamp above his head as he did so. A faint sound, as of some one crying out in surprise or terror, caught his ear, and, at the same moment the rays of the light he carried gleamed on the slender figure of the lady of the shagreened.

(To be continued.)

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## TO THE BITTER END.

By Miss M. E. Braddon.

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### "THE TRUE TITIAN COLOUR."

The next morning was bright and warm, a real June morning; Sunday morning too, made joyous by the bells of Kingsbury church, chiming a hymn tune, that sounded sweet and clear across the intervening meadows, and came in at Hubert Walgrave's open window, blinding itself with a dream in which he fancied himself away from Brierwood, amidst the gorgeous upholstery of a West-end mansion, listening to a voice that was not so sweet as Grace Redmayne's. The bells awoke him at last, and he looked round him with a yawn, pleased to find himself in the quiet farmhouse.

"Thank Heaven for a tranquil day!" he thought. "No ritualistic ceremonials in an atmosphere of rondolotta and patchouli, with the thermometer at ninety; no Kensington-gardens after luncheon; no pretty scandals and inanities all day long; no dreary, dreary, dreary eight-o'clock dinner, with the dismal tramp of some solitary passer-by sounding in the intervals of the conversation all through the big dusty square; no Mendelssohn in the evening. Thank heaven for a day of repose, for a day in which I can live my own life."

This was ungrateful. The life of which Mr. Walgrave was complaining was a life that ought by rights to have been very pleasant to him; a life which, with more or less modification, he had elected to lead for the remainder of his existence.

He got up and dressed, taking plenty of time for all the operations of his toilet, enjoying the rare delight of not being in a hurry. He had been wont to live always under pressure; to dress with his watch open on the dressing-table; to breakfast with his watch beside his plate; to mete out the exact time which he could spare for his reading; to listen from place to place; to spend all his days in a kind of mental fever, half his nights in restlessness engendered of over-fatigue.

It was scarcely strange if he had broken down at least under such a life. But even now, warned by the doctors that he sorely needed rest, he could not be utterly idle. The habit of hard work was too strong upon him; and he had brought his books down to Brierwood, resolved to get through long arrears of reading.

The bells rang, and did not into silence—the sweet summer-silence, broken by the hum of bees and songs of birds, and the cuckoo's plaintive minor coming with a faint muffled sound from a neighbouring copse. The bells would ring again for the eleven-o'clock service; but Mr. Walgrave did not mean to go to church. He intended to abandon himself to the delight of thorough idleness; to drain the cup of simple rustic joys, which were so new to him. In fact, on this, he went down to breakfast in his morning-coat, wheeled the table to an open window, and then pounced at once upon a bundle of weekly papers, which he had brought down to Brierwood with him—the *Albion*, the *Saturday Review*, *Spectator*, *Observer*. This is how Mr. Walgrave enjoyed the country.

The church bells had rung their last peal before he had finished his leisurely breakfast, or got half through his papers; and the farmhouse was as quiet as some dim empty village church which a tourist enters with reverent footsteps on a summer afternoon. There was no one at home but Sally the servant-maid, shelling peas on a sunny doorstep in the back premises, and meditating upon the iniquity of the lodger, who sat half buried in the great arm-chair—a family institution sacred to the grandfathers and grandmothers of the Redmayne race—with his legs stretched out upon another chair, reading newspapers, while all right-minded people, not in service, were at church.

The papers were finished at last. Mr. Walgrave laughed once or twice over the broad columns of the *Saturday*—that half-cynical laugh which is called a snigger—pished and pshawed a little now and then, and finally tossed the heap of periodicals aside, muttering the usual remark, that there was nothing in them. All the freshness of the morning was gone by this time, and the sun was at his meridian. Mr. Walgrave strolled into the garden, took out his capacious cigar-case as he went along, and lit his favourite pipe. He walked over the same ground he had explored on the previous evening, staid at the roses, admired the old cedar, threaded the grassy mazes of the orchard, peeped into the farmyard, and made friends with an ancient gray donkey of benevolent aspect, whom he found resting his chin contemplatively on a five-barred gate; made friends with the donkey, and thought of that brightest of English writers, Laurence Sterne, who has associated himself with the same species for all time. The donkey is by nature a social beast; it is the chief affliction of his life, perhaps, that horses refuse to know him.

There was one old man in the farm-yard, sitting on the low wall of a pigsty, asleep in the sun. Mr. Walgrave came and went without awakening him.

"That is what rest means," he said to himself, as he walked slowly away. "I dare say it is perfect bliss to that man to sleep in the sun with the odour of pig's in his nostrils."

When he had made his circuit of the garden, dawdled over so long under the cedar, and sniffed at the roses, he went back to the house. Morning church was over. He snatched a rest, and saw a family party sitting at dinner in the parlour opposite his own. He caught just a glimpse of a youthful head, with reddish-brown hair, but he did not see the face belonging to it.

"The true Titian colour!" he said to himself, with only a passing glance, and walked into his sitting-room, incontinently.

The maid came presently to ask if he would take any luncheon. No; unless a basket of soda-water, which he had ordered, had come for him, he would take nothing. No basket had arrived. Goods were conveyed from London to Edinburgh in "less time than from London to Brierwood. There was no rail nearer than Tunbridge junction, and only a sleepy old carrier to bridge the intervening distance.

The maid returned to her dinner in the back kitchen; and Mr. Walgrave, having drained the cup of rustic pleasures, yawned, and looked wistfully at his law-books.

He had promised the doctor that he would rest, and had worked hard till three o'clock that morning. No, he could scarcely go to his law-books to-day. He wandered round the room; examined its artistic decorations—ancient prints representing the death of General Wolfe, the reformed House of Commons, Daniel in the lion's den, and so on—with a grim smile; looked at Isaac Walton, and Johnson's *Dictionary*; and an old volume of the *Farmer's Magazine*; and after this survey went back to the table by the window.

"I suppose I had better write to Augusta," he said to himself, opening a ponderous russia-leather despatch-box. "Of course she'll expect a letter. What can I write about?—that old man asleep among the pigs, or that friendly donkey? or shall I get into raptures about the roses, or that girl's voice last night? There's not much material for a Horace Walpole at Brierwood; but I must write something."

He took out a quire of paper stamped with a great gothic monogram, and began:

"My dear Augusta.—" (She's the only Augusta I know," he said to himself; "so it would be a lapse in grammar to call her dearest.")

"My dear Augusta.—" Just a line to inform you of my establishment at Brierwood, which is a pleasant old place enough: donkeys and roses, and pigs and strawberries-and-cream, and all that kind of thing; but dirtily dull. I have read all the papers, and fear I shall be driven to going to afternoon service at Kingsbury church, by sheer inability to get rid of my day. How horrified you will be by the levity of that remark! But I had intended to indemnify myself for all I have suffered from your favourite Mr. Redmayne, of St. Sulpice, West Drompton, by a temporary lapse into paganism. I dare say you are receiving your usual Sunday droppers—in discussing the sermon, the contents of the plate, whether liberal or otherwise, and the bonnets—while I write this. And then you will go to the Gardens, and walk up and down, and wonder at the strange beings over

deeps of society whom you meet there. Did you go to Covent-garden last night? I see they gave *La Favorite*. The air here is purely itself, and I think will set me up very shortly. I mean to obey the doctors, however, and withdraw myself from the delights of civilised life for a time—until the winter term, in fact. I need not say that my thoughts follow you in this seclusion, and that I wish you were here to brighten my solitude. Give my best remembrances to your father, and believe me to remain your affectionate

HUBERT WALGRAVE."

"I think it's about as innate an epistle as was ever penned," he said to himself, when he had addressed his letter to Miss Vallery, 10 Acropolis-square, South Kensington.

The fact of having written it seemed some relief to his mind, however. He cast himself down upon the hard sofa, and slumbered perhaps as sweetly as the old labourer in the farmyard. The afternoon bells woke him, and he got up quickly, and went to fetch his hat.

"I'll go and see what the barbarians are like," he said to himself.

He tapped at the opposite door, to ask his way to church. It was opened by Mrs. James, stiff and solemn in her Sunday cap and gown. She opened the door wide enough to give Mr. Walgrave a full view of the room; but the Titianesque head of hair was not visible.

"Gone to church perhaps," he thought, "or out in the garden."

Mrs. James gave him most precise directions for finding Kingsbury and Kingsbury church. It was a pleasant walk across the fields, she said.

"But you'll be late, sir," she added; "it's half-an-hour's walk at the least, and the bells have been ringing above a quarter."

"Never mind that, Mrs. Redmayne; I want to see the church."

"It is not much of a church for any one from London to see, sir; but the rector's a good man and a good preacher; you'll be none the worse for hearing him."

"I hope I may derive some profit from his instruction," said Mr. Walgrave, smiling.

He went by the meadow-path to which he had been directed, hugging the hedges, which grew high above him, rich in honeysuckle and dog-roses, foxgloves and fern. A delicious walk. He had no sense of loneliness; forgot all about Augusta Vallery and Acropolis-square; forgot to dream his ambitious dreams of future success; forgot everything but the perfumed air about him, and the cloudless blue sky above his head. He had nearly two miles to walk, but to this tired dweller in cities it was like a walk in Paradise. Though he had not very long been released from the regimen of a sick-room, he felt no fatigue or weakness, and was almost sorry when a turnstile let him out of the last meadow on to a little hilly common, in the midst of which stood Kingsbury church—an unpretending building with trees about it.

The service was conducted in a quiet old-fashioned manner. That ancient institution, the clerk, was in full force; the number of the hymn to be sung was put up in white movable figures on a little blackboard, for the convenience of the congregation. The sermon was a friendly familiar discourse, practical to the last degree, brightened by homely touches of humour now and then; a sermon which might fairly be supposed to come home to the hearts and minds of a simple rustic congregation.

While the hymns were being sung, Mr. Walgrave looked about him. He had taken his place at the end of the church, near the door, in the shadow of the little gallery, and could see everything without making himself conspicuous.

"Yes, there was the Titianesque head of hair; he recognised it in a moment, though he had only caught that brief glimpse through the parlour window. A girl stood in one of the high pews about half-way down the centre aisle; a tall slender figure, in a lavender muslin dress and a straw bonnet, under which appeared a mass of red-brown hair. He had no opportunity of seeing her face during the service.

"I dare say she has the complexion that usually accompanies that coloured hair," he said to himself—"a sickly white, pepper-corned with freckles. But if one dared guess by the turn of a woman's head, and that great knot of glorious hair, one might imagine her pretty."

One did imagine her pretty; or at least one was curiously eager to discover the fact. When the sermon was over, Mr. Walgrave contrived his departure so as to leave the church side by side with Grace Redmayne. He saw her glance shyly at him, evidently aware of his identity.

She was very pretty. That sweet fair face, which was actually by no means perfect, impressed him with a sense of perfect beauty. It was so different from—from other faces he knew, had such a tender softness and womanliness. "A face to make a fool of a strong man," he thought. "Inappily I was never in love in my life, and have a convenient knack of admiring beauty in the abstract. If I were a painter, I should be rapt to have that girl upon canvas," he said to himself. "What a Gretchen she would make!"

He walked at a respectful distance from her as they crossed the common, but ventured to overtake her at the turnstile.

"Miss Redmayne, I think," he said, smiling, as he fell back to let her pass into the meadow.

"Yes," she replied, with a little timid inclination of the graceful head, and blushing vividly.

"This was quite introduction enough for Mr. Walgrave."

"I have been to hear your worthy rector; really a charming old man—such a relief after the people I have to listen to in town! And your church is a delightfully rustic old place. The benches are rather hard, and your charity children make a somewhat objectionable noise with their boots. If they could be put away in an upper loft somewhere, like Eutyclus, only warranted not to fall down, it would be better."

Miss Redmayne smiled, yet felt a little angry with him for what she considered a sneer at Kingsbury church. It seemed as if he looked down upon all her surroundings from some inaccessible height which he occupied ever so remote from her. The notion was a foolish one, no doubt, but it pained her.

He went on talking of the church, the sermon, the children; and anon began to question his companion about Kingsbury and the neighbourhood—what scenes and places round about were best worth seeing, what walks he ought to take; and so beguiled the way by this converse, that the Sunday afternoon journey home,

which Grace was apt to consider rather a weary business, seemed shortened.

She told him about Sir Francis Clevedon's place.

"You will go to see Clevedon, of course," she said. "It is not a show place—not shown to strangers, that is to say; but as you know Mr. Wort, you would have no difficulty about seeing it."

"I have seen it—once," he answered rather absently; "but I wouldn't mind going over it again. A fine old house, with noble surroundings. Rather a pity that it should go to ruin, isn't it?"

"I think it will be restored soon," Grace answered hopefully; and then went on to tell the stranger all about Sir Francis Clevedon, and the probability that his kinswoman's timely demise would place him in a position to occupy the old house.

Mr. Walgrave listened with so moody a brow that Grace stopped suddenly by-and-by, wounded to think that her talk had wearied him. He was not even conscious of the stoppage, but walked on for some minutes lost in thought, until, awakening all at once from his reverie, he turned to her abruptly, and began some new subject, talking to her of the farm, her aunt and uncle, her cousins, her singing.

"I hope I didn't disturb you," she said, when he paid her some compliment about "Kathleen Marvornen." I am very fond of music, and it is my only amusement; but if I thought it disturbed you—"

"I beg to be disturbed like that every evening, though I don't suppose it will materially advance my legal studies. And so you are fond of music? Of course I knew that, after hearing you play and sing; there is a lute and a lute that can only come from the south—not to be taught by a music-mistress, teach she ever so wisely. Were you ever in London?"

"Never," answered Grace with a sigh.

"Then you have never been to the Italian Opera, nor to any of those concerts which abound in London. That is a loss for any one so fond of music as you are."

"He thought of all the loss in this girl's life—a life destined to go on to the end, perhaps, buried among green fields and farmyards. Here was a waste of raw, flower-like beauty, and a sensitive sympathetic nature."

"Poor little thing!" he said to himself compassionately; "she ought to have been born the daughter of a gentleman. It seems a bad thing for such a sweet flower to be thrown away. She will marry some great banking farmer, no doubt; one of those raw-bred lords who carried my portmanteau upstairs, last likely; marry him, and be happy ever after, not dreaming of having missed a brighter life."

"They walked on by the high tangled hedge in its glory of honeysuckle and wild roses. The barrier felt the very atmosphere a delight, after London, and "society," and hard work, and the thraldom of a sick room."

"It is a very sweet world we are born into, after all," he said, "if we only knew how to make the most of it."

His own particular idea of making the most of life hitherto had been, to bring himself to the very edge of the grave by dint of sheer hard work—work that had for its motive power only a selfish solitary man's ambition to push a little way in advance of his fellows. "To-day, amidst this fair rural landscape, which in its tender pastoral character was more familiar to him on the canvas of Creswick or Limel than in actual fact, he began to feel almost doubtful as to the soundness of his views, to meditate even whether it might not be better to take life easily, let Fortune come to him at her own time, and take his fill of honeysuckle and dog-roses—honeysuckle and dog-roses, and innocent girlish society like this, which seemed only an element of the pastoral landscape and the summer afternoon."

He found himself talking with unwonted animation presently—talking of himself as a man is apt to do when his interlocutor is a trifle beneath him in status—talking pleasantly enough, but with a dash of egotism, of his solitary life in London chambers, his professional sketches of London society.

Very speedily he discovered that he was not talking to a beautiful invalid. The girl's bright face flashed back every gleam of brightness in his talk. She had a keener sense of humour, as well as of poetry, this country-bred lass; had read a great deal of light literature, in the tranquil idleness of orchard and garden; had read her Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, her Byron, Tennyson, Hood, and Longfellow, not once, but many times, and with a quick appreciative mind.

"You remind me of Pendennis," she said smiling, when Mr. Walgrave had described his bachelor life.

"Do I? I would rather remind you of some one better than that selfish shallow young cynic—Warrington is the hero of that book. But I suppose a solitary man, working for his own advancement, always must seem selfish. If I had a flock of hungry children to toil for, now, you would think me quite a sublime character."

"I don't see why ambition should be selfish," Grace answered shyly. "I respect a man for being ambitious, energetic, industrious, though I am idle myself. There is my dear father, who has gone out to Australia to make a fortune; do you think I don't admire him for his courage, though it is such a grief to lose him?"

"Of course you admire him; but then he is working for you—he has a motive outside his own existence, and a very sweet one," added Mr. Walgrave in a lower key.

"He is working as much for Brierwood as for me; more, indeed. He is so proud of his good old name, and the house and land that have belonged to the Redmaynes for nearly 300 years."

The stranger's face darkened a little.

"Yes," he said moodily; "even in these philosophical days there are men who are proud of that kind of thing. 'What's in a name?' One man drags a time-honoured title through the gutter, and squanders a splendid fortune in unmanly frivolities; another works like a slave to create for himself a name out of namelessness. Fools both, no doubt."

They were at Brierwood by this time, and parted at the garden in quite a ceremonious manner. It was almost an adventure for Grace. She felt her heart beating all the faster for it as she ran upstairs to her own sunny room, with lattice windows, and great beams across the ceiling—a room in which man and woman had slept when James I. was king.

There was an odour of dinner in the house when she went downstairs presently, with a little cluster of red roses at her breast, and a