

after six, only to find that it was closed. After numerous inquiries and a long search he at length found Isaacs, a man of the same calling as Fagan, but several cuts above him, and much more good-natured.

Stephen saw there was no help for it; he must take him into his confidence, and together they repaired to the warehouse, prepared to wade through the contents of the six sacks which had formed Fagan's consignment of the night before.

While this long protracted search was being carried on, Walter Penny was leaning over the gate which led into a pine wood at the back of Bushbury Hall, feeling as if he had no spirit left in him. His impression of having put the notes securely in the pocket-book was so strong, that, though he joined with Mr. Croft in hunting for it in every likely and unlikely place on the farm premises, he had not the dimmest hope of finding it there. He could not imagine when or how he had lost it. It served him right, he supposed, for his carelessness, but it was just like his luck. What was the use of turning over a new leaf and trying to get on? He was bound to fail sooner or later. There was no hope now of winning his Mary; he should have to leave Bushbury with a cloud on him, and he might as well return to the old wild life, which at any rate had some excitement in it.

But only a year ago there had been a turning-point in Walter's career, when a helping hand was held out to him, and a voice, full of earnest pleading, had stirred the depths within and roused him—first to repentance, then to purpose and resolve. How well he remembered him, that young curate no older than himself, who had been—who was—his best and truest friend. No, he could not go back now; he could not be false to that friendship, nor to the love for a good woman, which had been helping him all these months along the uphill path. And so he fought his fight amongst the red sunbeams and sweet-scented pine trees, and the next morning found him in his old place, at the early service, praying for submission and strength.

He made a poor pretence at breakfast, and then wondering, not for the first time, what could have become of Oldroyd, he went to the Mertons' house with the intention of seeing his late employer, and settling one or two little matters before leaving the following day. He felt that he would rather get them off his mind at once, before he went to church again, and he had a hope of a few words of sympathy from Joyce, the only person now, he thought sadly, who believed in him.

It was ten o'clock, and Mr. Merton and his daughter were sitting in the parlor which looked out on to the garden. The Sunday peace had found its way into the pretty, cheerful room, and seemed to have had a softening effect even on the stern, hard-hearted old builder. He greeted his former workman civilly, and there was a degree less of ice in his tone as he bade him be seated.

Walter had barely begun what he had come to say, when the door opened, and Stephen Oldroyd walked in, looking dusty and tired, as well he might, for his paper chase had taken him half the night and he had ridden from Birmingham that morning. He went straight up to Walter and laid before him the familiar tattered envelope, dirtier than ever, but with the bank-note safe and sound inside.

'What!—what's the meaning of this?' cried Walter, starting up, while Joyce

clasped her hands with a cry of thankfulness, and the old man put on his spectacles and stared at the crackling piece of paper as if he had never seen a bank-note in his life before.

'It means,' said Stephen, 'that I have been a scoundrel, and done you about the dirtiest trick one man can play another.' And he made a full confession then and there before them all three.

'You told me once, Joyce, that I wanted a good humbling,' said Stephen some weeks later. 'I think I've had it. I don't feel like ever trusting myself again.'

'Ah, but you've found something better to trust in,' she answered softly, 'and because of that I'm not afraid to trust myself to you. I can look to you now to help me, and I want help so much. Oh, Steevie, it's more than I dared hope, or dream.'

For the discovery that he was not proof against temptation was a shock which upset all Stephen's old theories, and through the realization of his own weakness he had learned to seek a higher strength. When he and Joyce were married he neither expected nor wished her to 'do all his church-going for him,' and the husband and wife were ever, and most truly

'One

In spirit and the love of holy things.'

By the Side of the Cornish Sea.

(By Mabel Quiller Couch.)

In a quiet, uneventful country place life flows swiftly on, more swiftly apparently, perhaps, than in the busier, bustling atmosphere of a town, where one lives one's life more actively, conscious of every moment and hour of it; while in the country one day is so much like another that the days and weeks slip by unrealized, and one finds with a start that a month has gone, or a year, or Christmas is on again ere one realizes that summer is over.

Swiftly eight years passed away—the eight years of Zekiel Pendray's imprisonment. Eight years of hard work, peace and modest prosperity to Mercy Pendray and her father at Pensallas Mine. Now and again some of the other cottages out there had filled; but for the most part the women and children who formed the greater part of Pensallas's population were frightened at the loneliness of the cottages by the gaunt old mine on the moor, and preferred the more thickly-inhabited old town.

Mary Truman often spoke of these years as the happiest of her life, and time had brought healing and comfort to Mercy, too, so that her life had been far from unhappy. Hard work had helped her much to forget her troubles, and trusting faith had helped her more. Month after month and year after year she had worked away cheerfully, doing with her might all that came to her hand to do, trusting and hoping that all would come right in God's own time.

During all those eight long years she had not once seen anything of her old lover, David Warne. True, he had once written to her suggesting coming to see her; but Mercy had declined the suggestion with grave determination and no hesitation, and then had wept bitterly in the darkness of the night, when the old heartache came back again with all its old force.

Mary Truman's children grew up one by one, strong and healthy, and a credit to their mother and 'aunt,' as they called Mercy; and very glad the two women would have been to have kept them at home had the laundry work been enough

for them all. But, looking ahead into the future, they thought it would be far better for them to go into service, and learn something of which they could make sure of a home and a living.

So Lizzie, the eldest, who was sixteen, came to me to help in the nursery, where Master Michael was by that time domineered over by two small sisters; and Ellen, the second, went to live with Mrs. Parsons to be trained as a housemaid. Danny, the boy, who was barely fourteen, stayed at home for the time, as they could not do without him to carry the baskets of linen backwards and forwards, and the eggs and poultry to the town. A donkey and cart had long been added to the family possessions, and Danny and his donkey had become familiar sights on the road to Troon and everywhere around Pensallas.

As often as the law permitted, Mercy went to see her father in the prison, and a great source of joy it was to her, as the years went on, to see how softened and repentant he grew. At first she had found him hard and reserved, and apparently not at all pleased to see her, or interested in her or her movements; but as time went on he changed greatly—he grew gentler and kinder, full of remorse for the sorrow and disgrace he had brought upon her, and gratitude for what she had done to repair the misery he had brought on poor Mary and her children. His behaviour in prison became admirable, and his determination to lead a new and better life, and endeavor to some extent to retrieve the past, seemed sincere and strong.

Instead of the ten years of his sentence, he was, because of his good conduct, released at the end of eight; and as the time drew near his excitement and nervousness became almost painful, his remorse for what he had been and what he had become intense.

On one of the last visits Mercy was to pay him he broke down utterly at the prospect of beginning life again outside—a free man, yet with a past which would hang around his neck like a millstone.

'I must go right away, my dear,' he said miserably—'change my name, and go right away where no one won't know me. I'll get work and manage somehow, but I can't come back and be a disgrace to you and spoil your home and happiness again. I've tried to face it, but I can't.'

Mary was dumbfounded. It was the first she had heard of these feelings of his, and the knowledge was disappointment.

'Father, father,' she cried, 'you must come home! I have been looking forward to it all this long time. It's what I've been looking and praying and living for. Father dear, believe me, no one will throw up the past to you now. Everyone will be glad to give you a welcome. You must come to Pensallas; we all want you.'

Zekiel shook his head sadly. To begin life again at his age, and with a mountain of remorse crushing him down, made the thought of leaving prison anything but a happy one. But he could not go back—that was all he was aware of. He had ever been a home-keeping man; his own little country-side bordered his horizon, and life elsewhere held no charms for him. But he had got it into his head that to go away and efface himself as far as he was able was all he could do for Mercy, and the best he could do for her; so his mind was made up.

'Think of the sea, father; you couldn't live away from the sea, could you now?'

He shook his head again, still more sadly.

'I'd be terrible wisht without it,' he ad-