

would long to be where she could hear the free wind sounding through the forest branches, or rustling the waving corn—the birds singing among the leaves, the streamlet rippling over its pebbly bed, or the waves dashing on the shingly shore. She longed to stand among the ripening corn and gather the blue scabious, or the scarlet poppy yet “crumpled from its sheath,” to catch the scent of wild thyme when the bees were clustering, and sit on banks yellow with cowslips or purple with violets—or, best of all, to bury herself in the depth of leafy woods, and forgetting the dark and mocking past, live a new life alone with that benign nature, which

“Never yet betrayed the heart that loved her!”

CHAPTER XVII.

A GLIMPSE OF ANOTHER LIFE.

AT last Claire's wedding-day came. She was married in an old, very old church, brown with age, which stood at the opposite side of the street; and which, during all the years it had been standing there, and among all the bridal parties that had entered its doors, could never have received a fairer bride. Immediately after, she set out with her young husband to spend the honeymoon at his old home in beautiful Provence.

On the evening of that day so eventful to those few hearts who make up the little world of this simple story, Christian Kneller had fallen into his usual afternoon's slumbers; Mère Monica had begun to put the house into order after the late hurry and bustle which had somewhat disarranged the regularity of its arrangements; and, for the first time for several weeks, Marguerite went into her *atelier* and sat down by the window.

“Now it is all over,” she said, “now I may be quiet!” But in less than a minute

she moved restlessly. “I cannot be quiet,” she said wildly, “for quiet brings thought, and thought maddens me.”

Starting up, she went to a table, on which lay some of her favourite volumes. One was a copy of the first Aldine edition of Dante, bearing the date 1502, and the simple title of “*Le Terze Rime di Dante.*” Maurice had sent it to her from Italy before doubt had come to darken the brightness which his love for her had cast over the world, and the sight of it made her start as if the ghost of her lost happiness had risen before her. Throwing a piece of cardboard over it, she took up Goethe's *Egmont*, and began to read where the volume first opened.

“MOTHER.—Youth and happy love have an end, and there comes a time when one thanks God if one has any corner to creep into.

“CLARA. (*shudders, and after a pause stands up.*)—Mother! let that time come, like death! To think of it beforehand is horrible. And if it come—if we must—then we will bear ourselves as we may! Live without thee, *Egmont!* (*weeping*) No! it is impossible!”

Hastily turning from Clara's joyful surprise as her lover enters, Marguerite found her death scene, and read it eagerly. Then she shut the book. “I will paint her,” she said, “holding the phial to Brackenburgh with one hand, and pointing to the lamp with the other, the pale and livid hues of despair, and of the deadly draught she has taken, darkening her beauty, but the great might of her love still illumining her eyes, and shining through the gathering shadows of the grave. I see her standing before me now, and I hear her softly saying, ‘Extinguish the lamp silently, and without delay. I am going to rest. Steal quietly away. Close the door after thee. Be still. Wake not my mother!’”

In getting pencils and paper to make a sketch of the picture she had been imagin-